



**COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

Learning and Recreation for Life

# **Early Ventures Handbook 2024-2025**

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## Early Ventures Handbook

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# **CHILD CARE PROGRAM PLAN**

## **Philosophy**

Early Ventures Learning Center provides professional, quality care to meet each child's physical, emotional, social, and developmental needs during their time enrolled at our center. This is fostered by allowing the child space to grow, to be themselves, and to enjoy their time with other children and staff. Early Ventures continuously strives to provide high quality care in a safe, nurturing environment.

## **Goals**

Early Venture's goal is to provide a warm, loving, healthy, safe, and stimulating environment for children while under supervision of staff at all times. All aspects of a child's development are considered, including

- language, literacy, and communications
- mathematics
- social and emotional development
- approaches to learning
- the arts
- social systems
- physical and movement development, and
- scientific thinking

Our child-centered, curiosity-based approach uses research based curriculums to support children through their developmental milestones and encourage lifelong learning. A record is maintained for each child and developmental milestones are shared with families who choose to participate in conferences.

Early Ventures works in cooperation with families, the district, and the community to provide year-round infant, toddler, and preschool child care in a nurturing environment. We do this by providing age appropriate activities that foster the development of social, emotional, physical, educational, and independence skills.

We strive to keep parents/guardians actively involved in the care of their children while pursuing their own goals. We invite parents/guardians to review our program plans at any time and contribute their ideas to the Early Ventures Site Leader or the Ventures Coordinator. Parents/Guardians may review our program plan in the Parent/Guardian Handbook, located online and on site at Early Ventures. The program plan will be annually evaluated in writing by a staff person qualified as teacher status under DHS guidelines. Daily schedules and descriptions of developmentally appropriate activities can be found in each Early Ventures classroom and in Appendix A.

## **Enrollment**

Early Ventures Learning Center is licensed to care for 88 children. The center is licensed for 14 infants and a combination of 74 toddler/preschoolers. Enrollment cannot exceed 28 toddlers or 60 preschoolers.

An infant is a child at least 6 weeks old but less than 16 months, a toddler is a child at least 16 months but less than 33 months, and a preschooler is a child who is at least 33 months old but has not yet attended the first day of kindergarten.

## **Days and Hours of Operation**

Early Ventures Learning Center operates 51 weeks per year, Monday through Friday. The center is open daily from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Early Ventures is CLOSED on the following days:

Labor Day	New Year's Day
Thanksgiving Day	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Friday after Thanksgiving	Memorial Day
Christmas Eve	Juneteenth

Christmas Day  
At least 2 days before the start of summer programs  
Independence Day  
One week before the start of the school year

Early Ventures Learning Center reserves the right to close on days preceding or following these holidays. Decisions regarding operation on release days will be made based upon a minimum child enrollment and school district policies.

### **Program Options**

The childcare center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to care for children ages 6 weeks to the first day of kindergarten. It is staffed by a combination of site leaders, teachers, assistant teachers, and aides to meet required staff/children ratios at all times. The center offers five separate classrooms to meet the diverse needs of Early Ventures children.

**INFANT:** (Ages 6 weeks to 15 months) A loving atmosphere where intellectual and physical development are stimulated with music, literacy, language, muscle development, and exploration of the environment using age-appropriate equipment. A staff ratio of at least one adult to four children is maintained.

**TODDLER:** (Ages 16 months to 35 months) The curriculum is designed to cover areas of physical activities, language arts, creative thinking, socialization, communication, and self-sufficiency skills with emphasis on exploration and discovery. A staff ratio of at least one adult to seven children is maintained.

**PRESCHOOL:** (Ages 36 months until the first day of kindergarten) Opportunities are provided for large muscle activities, dramatic play, community exploration, and socialization as well as the above-named activities. A staff ratio of at least one adult to ten children is maintained.

### **RATIOS**

Early Ventures follows the Department of Human Services Child Care Center Rule 3 guidelines for staff to student ratios.

Infants will never exceed a 1:4 ratio  
Toddlers will never exceed a 1:7 ratio  
Preschoolers will never exceed a 1:10 ratio

### **FEES AND PAYMENT**

#### **Fees**

Early Ventures is a non-profit program operating on revenue collected from tuition. This program is not funded from the ISD #659 general fund. Parents/Guardians must contract with Early Ventures Learning Center for services needed and follow through with payments. Early Ventures rates vary depending on age and schedule options.

#### **Registration Fee**

There is a non-refundable registration fee which must be submitted at the time of initial enrollment. The fees help defray the cost of processing enrollment forms and immunization records, and most importantly, they help with the center's supplies.

#### **Payment**

Invoices are generated the first business day of the month and payment is due in full by the last day of the month. Families that have not paid by the due date will be assessed a \$20 late fee and contacted by email. While multiple attempts will be made to contact the family regarding an overdue balance, Early Ventures reserves the right to terminate child care services when payment is delinquent. Early Ventures also reserves

the right to send delinquent accounts to a collection agency. Families will be responsible for any and all additional collection fees accumulated while recovering monies on delinquent accounts. Should an account be sent to collections, the family may not re-enroll with Early Ventures for at least one year, regardless of whether the account has been paid in full to the collection agency.

Early Ventures strongly encourages all families to consistently check their accounts online and pay online. Co-payments for families on child care assistance are due bi-monthly on the 15th and 30th of each month. Parents/Guardians on child care assistance will be responsible for any and all costs not covered by county assistance.

## **ABSENCE**

Please notify Early Ventures if your child will be absent for any reason. Parents/Guardians will be billed for all scheduled days. Please remember, if your child is at Early Ventures, they will need to be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

A permanent schedule change during the school year requires a one month written notice. Schedule changes will be granted as space and staffing allow.

In February of each year, current families will have the ability to adjust their upcoming summer schedule as space and staffing allow. Current families that do not wish to attend in the summer can pay 50% of their fall contract through the summer months to hold their child's spot. This payment is not applied to their fall contract. For example, if your child is registered for M-F for the following fall, families may pay 50% of a 5 day contract for June, July, and August to hold their child's spot. Children that attend in the summer must be registered for a minimum of 2 days per week.

## **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

Parents/Guardians must sign in their child(ren) each day upon arrival in order to transfer responsibility of care from the parent/guardian to authorized Early Ventures staff. Once the child is signed in, parents/guardians may bring the child to the group, allowing for Early Ventures staff to facilitate the parent's/guardian's departure.

Upon departure, parents/guardians must sign the child(ren) out and let the Early Ventures staff know that they are leaving. Once the child is signed out, they are no longer the responsibility of Early Ventures staff. All children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m.

All parents and legal guardians are allowed access to their child any time while in the care of EV.

### **Late Pick-Up**

Early Ventures closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. as staff's day ends at this time as well. All children *must* be picked up by 5:30 p.m. If you will be late, you *must* notify Early Ventures. Parents/Guardians will be charged \$1.00 for every minute late according to the classroom's clock. (If you receive childcare assistance, you will be personally responsible for this charge.)

Every attempt will be made to contact parents/guardians and authorized persons. 911 will be notified at 6:00 p.m. if a child remains at the center. Multiple late pick ups can result in termination of care.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES**

### **Emergency Closing or Early School Dismissal**

- If school is closed for the day because of severe weather, Early Ventures will be closed that day.
- If school has a delayed starting time, Early Ventures will have a two-hour late start time of 8:30 a.m.

- If school is dismissed early, Early Ventures will close at 2:30 p.m.
- Weather-related announcements will be shared by KYMN (1080 AM), KDHL (920 AM) and WCCO (830) radio stations as well as WCCO-TV, KARE-TV, KSTP-TV, and KMSP-TV.
- Early Ventures families will also receive an email with any emergency closing announcements.
- Credit is not given towards Ventures programs for days or time missed due to emergency closings.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

Once registration is received, Early Ventures requires a one month notice for all withdrawals as your spot has been secured and staff have been put into place. This one month notice must be written and signed by a parent/guardian. If there is no notification, a one-month charge will automatically be assessed. These costs will appear on the final bill.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION**

Important parent/guardian communication will be sent via email, Seesaw, or as a hard copy that can be found in your child's cubby. There may also occasionally be signs or posters advertising upcoming early childhood or family events. Please make sure to check cubbies daily.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Children will be released only to their parent/guardian or to the authorized pick-up indicated on your emergency card or registration form. Staff will ask for photo I.D. from persons not familiar to them. If anyone other than the authorized persons will be picking up your child, you must turn in a signed and dated note to staff PRIOR to the scheduled pick-up time.

## **CUSTODY**

Ventures staff will not be involved in custody disputes between parents/guardians. In the event of a divorce, separation, or joint custody ruling, every effort will be made for Early Ventures to treat each parent/guardian equally. If parents/guardians have custody issues, they must provide Ventures staff with a copy of any relevant court orders. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to work out the scheduling and payments for child care. The person identified as the primary account user is responsible for making payments associated with the Ventures account, unless a court order states something different.

## **ENROLLMENT FORMS**

Early Ventures must have the following information on file for each child:

1. Early Ventures contract for services
2. Emergency information
3. Immunization record
4. Healthcare summary (completed by your child's doctor)
5. Infant dietary instructions (if applicable)
6. Health updates

Children may not attend Early Ventures until all information is in and forms are completed and up-to-date. It is the family's responsibility to keep us informed of changes in your child's file (for example, changes in employment, phone number, address, authorized contacts, etc.) Please submit these changes in writing.

## **CONFERENCES AND TOURS**

Parents/Guardian may request a conference or tour with either the Ventures coordinator or the site leader before their child is enrolled in the center. The conference will help familiarize families with the program, Early Ventures policies and procedures, and the center's space, including their child's classroom. Staff will

also ensure that the family's paperwork is complete and up-to-date as well as answer any questions.

Conferences on a child's progress in the program will be offered to the parent/guardian twice per school year. A written assessment will be provided that will report on a child's academic, physical, social, and emotional development. These conferences may be done via phone if it is more convenient for the family.

## **OUTSIDE CHILD CARE SERVICES**

While Early Ventures cannot prohibit employees from providing child care services outside our typical program and hours, it is strongly discouraged. Early Ventures will not be responsible for any acts or omissions of an Early Ventures employee should they provide families with outside services.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Due to district policy, we are not able to celebrate birthdays with a sweet treat (cookies, cupcakes, donuts, etc.) Families are more than welcome to provide a treat that is not food related (stickers, pencils, etc.), but it is certainly not necessary.

Children will be recognized and celebrated in their classroom when it is their birthday through items and rituals that do not involve food.

In order to be fair to all children, we request parents/guardians handle party invitations outside of the program. It is not Early Venture's staff responsibility to hand out invitations.

## **INSURANCE**

Early Ventures Learning Center is insured through the ISD #659 insurance carrier. The center does not operate any vehicles for the transportation of children. Staff are not authorized to transport children in their personal vehicles under any circumstances.

## **CHILDREN'S ATTIRE**

Children should be adequately dressed for indoor and outdoor activities EVERY day. Winter outdoor play will require a jacket, snow pants, boots, hat, and mittens or gloves. All belongings should be labeled with the child's name. A lost and found is available within the childcare center for parents/guardians to check periodically. Early Ventures Learning Center will not be responsible for lost or missing items.

An extra set of clothing should be sent with children or left at the center. All items children bring should be clearly labeled with the child's name and left in the child's cubby. Dirty clothes will be sent home each day. When extra clothes or winter outdoor clothes are needed and are not available, parents/guardians will be notified and required to bring them.

All children in diapers will be checked a minimum of every two hours when awake and changed as needed. Parents/Guardians are required to provide diapers and wipes for their child. Parents/Guardians will be billed \$1.00 per diaper change when diapers have not been provided from home.

For toddlers and preschoolers, please have shoes for your child at the center each day. Infants will need shoes once they are walking independently. No boots, stocking feet, slippers, flip-flops, or bare feet in the classrooms.

## **HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION**

A medical record will be maintained for each enrolled child. A current health care summary, including any known allergies or health concerns, and an immunization record must be on file for each child. These forms must be completed and returned to Early Ventures BEFORE the child can attend. The center will provide all necessary forms that must be signed by a physician. Children moving up to the next classroom must have



immunization records updated by their physician. Children under 24-months old must have yearly exams.

## **ALLERGY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

Before a child can attend Early Ventures, parents/guardians must provide documentation of any known allergy. Early Ventures will maintain current information about the allergy in the child's file and an Individualized Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP) will be developed. The ICCPP will include a description of the allergy, specific triggers, avoidance techniques, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and procedures for responding to an allergic reaction, including medication, dosages, and a doctor's contact information. Early Ventures staff will review ICCPPs at least annually or following any changes made to allergy-related information in a child's file or on their ICCPP. Documentation of staff review will be kept at Early Ventures.

Children's allergy information will be readily available at all times including when on site and when on field trips. Allergy information will also be readily available to all Early Ventures staff in areas where food is prepared and served.

Early Ventures staff will contact a child's parent or legal guardian as soon as possible in any instance of exposure or allergic reaction that requires medication or medical intervention. Early Ventures will call emergency medical services when epinephrine is administered to a child during care.

## **MEDICATION PROCEDURES**

Whenever a child requires oral or surface medication, including over the counter medications, parents/guardians must fill out a written authorization form. A separate form is needed for each medication. The form includes: child's name, name of drug, quantity to be dispensed, time to be dispensed, doctor's authorization, and any special handling needed. Medication must be in the original container with legible information. Any container that does not meet these requirements will be returned to the parents/guardians. The staff member who administers the medication will indicate the date and time a medication was given, print their name, and sign the form. These records will be kept in the child's file. Written authorization is required by parents/guardians for the administration of syrup of ipecac.

## **CHILD CARE CENTER HEALTH PROCEDURES**

**Diapering Procedures:** Parents/guardians must provide disposable diapers and wipes for their child's diapering needs. The center has extras only for emergencies. Below is the diapering procedure followed at Early Ventures:

1. **Preparation:** wash hands, assemble supplies within arm's reach, cover diapering surface area, and put on clean gloves
2. **Dirty Phase:** place child on diapering surface, remove soiled diaper, cleanse diaper area of child, remove gloves
3. **Clean Phase:** apply ointment as directed, apply clean diaper, dress child, wash the child's and provider's hands, and return the child to their activity
4. **Clean up:** dispose of soiled items, clean and disinfect, and wash hands
5. **Communicate:** record and report (time of day, wet, dry, or BM)

Staff check for signs that diapers/pull-ups are wet or contain feces a minimum of every two hours when children are awake and when children wake up from naps. Diapers are changed that are wet or soiled within five minutes of discovery, or as soon as circumstances permit.

Diapers worn by children should be able to contain urine and stool and minimize fecal contamination of children, caregivers/teachers, environmental surfaces, and objects in the child care setting. Disposable diapers with absorbent materials (ex. polymers) should be used unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit the use of disposable

diapers (such as allergic reactions). When children cannot use disposable diapers for medical reasons, the reason should be documented by the child's primary health care provider. Early Ventures does not use cloth diapers.

**Toileting:** Children must be fully potty trained and able to use a typical toilet independently by the time they reach four years of age. Should a child that is four years or older have a poop accident, parents/guardians will be called and asked to pick up their child. Should a child that is four years or older have a pee accident, they will be asked to change into their spare set of clothes. Soiled clothes will be put in a plastic bag for parents/guardians to take home. Should children that are four years or older have more than one accident in a day, parents/guardians will be called and asked to pick up their child. If a child continues to have frequent accidents on a daily basis, Early Ventures may terminate care until the child is completely potty trained. Written warning will be given to parents/guardians before this action takes place. Children may not move up to the Butterfly Room unless they are fully potty trained.

**Handling and Disposal of Bodily Fluids:** Surfaces that come in contact with potential bodily fluids, including blood and vomit, must be cleaned and disinfected according to MN Rules, part 9503.0005, subpart 11. Per guidelines, Early Ventures will have disposable gloves, disposable bags, and eye protection on site. Blood contaminated material must be disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie and sharp items used for a child with special care needs must be disposed of in a "sharps container." The sharps container will be stored in the NCEC nurse's office, out of reach of children.

**Medical Conditions:** Lesions, open wounds, potentially infectious sores, or skin conditions that may discharge on a child's body will need to remain covered while children attend Early Ventures. This policy is strongly enforced to protect others from the potential of exposure to bodily fluids. Early Ventures will change bandages or re-apply them as necessary. Parents/Guardians may be required to supply bandages or dressings that are needed.

**Naps and Rest:** A crib will be provided for all infants in which the center is licensed to provide care. All cribs will conform to federal crib standards and EV staff will follow DHS regulations in adhering to crib safety standards, including routine crib inspection requirements. All Early Ventures staff will also receive annual training in the reduction of risk of sudden unexpected infant death.

All cribs will have a firm mattress with a fitted sheet that is appropriate to the mattress size that fits tightly on the mattress, and overlaps the underside of the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling the corner of the sheet with reasonable effort. Infants may only be placed in a crib with a pacifier (optional) and inside a sleep sack (optional). Infants may only be swaddled in a sleep sack if written consent from a parent/guardian has been received and the infant has not yet begun to roll over on its own. Infants may not wear clothes with hoods or bibs when they are in their cribs. Early Ventures kindly asks families to avoid sending infants in hooded clothing, unless it is an additional layer of clothes (like a sweatshirt over another shirt) that can easily be removed for rest time. In the infant room, pacifiers must also be free of any other objects (like small stuffed animals).

All infants will be placed on their backs for all naps. Parents/Guardians that do not wish to have their child placed on his or her back will need a signed physician approval form before Early Ventures will accommodate the request. Early Ventures will also require parents/guardian to sign a waiver stating that ISD #659 and its employees cannot be held liable. An infant who independently rolls onto its stomach after being placed to sleep on its back may be allowed to remain sleeping on its stomach if the infant is at least six months of age or EV has a signed statement from the parent/guardian indicating that the infant regularly rolls over at home.

Should an infant fall asleep before being placed in a crib, EV will move the infant to a crib as soon as is practicable. The infant will always be in sight of EV staff until being placed in a crib. Should an infant fall asleep while being held, EV staff will consider the supervision needs of the other children in the classroom

when determining how long to hold the infant before placing the infant in a crib to sleep. The sleeping infant will never be in a position where the airway may be blocked or with anything covering the infant's face.

Prior to toddler and preschool nap times, each child will use the toilet or be diapered and hands will be washed before going to the nap area. Small blankets and pillows may be brought from home and laundered weekly or when soiled; no sleeping bags or bed pillows please. Adults will rock toddlers and comfort other children (rubbing heads, backs, etc.) as needed. All cribs and cots will be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. After 30 minutes, all children that have rested quietly and are awake may go into another area for quiet play. As children awake, they will join the others in the play area.

**Food storage:** Milk and formula will be kept refrigerated at all times. As with other food, milk or formula not consumed by the child during normal feeding times will be disposed of. At the next feeding, fresh milk or formula will be offered. When parents/guardians bring bottles, they will be placed in the refrigerator until feeding time. A separate bottle is required for each feeding time. All bottles and infant food items must be labeled with the child's first and last name. Food supplements and medications will be given to children only with a signed statement from the parent/guardian and the physician. Whenever a child requires oral or surface medication, parents/guardians must fill out a written authorization form. Parents/Guardians shall provide the center with the child's diet plan, as recommended by their physician, and the eating habits of their child.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

The center will provide a morning and afternoon snack. Nutrition Services offers a fee-based lunch when school is in session. A menu is available at the beginning of each month and families must notify classrooms by 8:15 am of whether their child needs a hot lunch for the day. Children that prefer cold lunches should bring a bag lunch clearly labeled with their name. Pop and juice boxes will not be allowed in cold lunches as milk is required. Milk will be available and will be billed separately. Children 12-24 months are served unflavored whole milk and children 2 and up are served unflavored 1% milk. Foods that need to be microwaved will not be allowed except in the infant room. Cold lunches must meet USDA requirements. Supplements will be provided if necessary at a cost to the parent/guardian of \$0.75 per item.

Northfield Public Schools Department of Nutrition Services is responsible for providing hot lunches as Early Ventures does not prepare food on site. Nutrition Services follows all procedures and practices that are in compliance with the requirements for food and beverage establishments in chapter 4626, which include: hand washing; maintaining hot and cold food temperatures at safe levels; washing of food, utensils and equipment; and serving of food.

**Reusable Cups and Water Bottles:** All cups used for milk must be treated as single-service cups and be cleaned and sanitized after every use using procedures that comply with the Food Code under MN Rules, chapter 4626.

Cups or water bottles that are used for water only, must be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day using procedures that comply with the Food Code under MN Rules, chapter 4626. All water bottles/cups used for water are assigned to a specific child and labeled with the child's first and last name. Water bottles/cups are stored in each classroom either in a child's cubby or in a specific classroom spot designated for water bottles. Water bottles do not look the same and are unique to each individual in the classroom to help reduce the risk of a child using the wrong water bottle or cup.

## **SICK CHILD/ABSENCE**

Please notify Early Ventures if your child is ill or will be absent. Parents/Guardians will be billed for all scheduled days. Please remember, if your child is at Early Ventures, they will need to be well enough to participate in all activities including outdoor play.

If children receive over the counter medication before they arrive at Early Ventures, parents/guardians must inform Early Ventures staff. If a child becomes ill while at the center, staff will make arrangements with the parent/guardian for pick-up of the child. Sick children will be isolated, but supervision will be maintained at all times. A parent/guardian is required to inform the center within 24 hours if their child contracts a contagious disease. Early Ventures will post the information the same day that any contagious disease is reported. The health department will be notified of any reportable disease or illness.

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is considered a sick child and must be isolated from other children at the center. The family will be called immediately and the sick child will be isolated on their cot/crib until the parent/guardian can pick them up.

**Conditions:** A contagious illness or condition as specified in Minnesota Statute rule 3 part 4605.7040, or:

- A child with chicken pox, until the lesions are crusted over.
- A child who has had 2 loose stools since admission that day.
- A child who has vomited since admission that day.
- Any bacterial infection that has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy.
- A child who has ringworm or scabies that is not treated.
- A child who has lice that has not been treated or any nits remaining in the hair.
- A child who has a 100 degree temperature or higher.
- A child who has an undiagnosed rash or sore, discharging ears or eyes, or discharging lesions on their body.

Children must be fever, diarrhea, and vomit-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, before they can return to Early Ventures. Sick children will be supervised at all times.

## **EMERGENCY AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURES**

**1. Administering First Aid:** All staff members will be trained in Red Cross First Aid and infant and child CPR. In the event of an accident, a staff member will evaluate the accident and decide on the appropriate course of action. Minor accidents such as scraped knees, etc. will be washed with warm water and soap. A bandage will be applied. Parents/Guardians will be informed of any such incidents upon pick up. Accident reports will be filed any time it is necessary to call parents/guardians or if the incident requires treatment by a physician. A report must be filed with the Commissioner within 24 hours of any injury requiring medical care.

### **2. Accident Prevention Procedures:**

**A. Injury:** Equipment will be kept in good repair. All sharp items such as scissors and knives will be kept out of the reach of children. Blunt end scissors will be used by children.

**B. Burns and Electrical Shock:** All outlets not in use will be covered. Cords that are being used will be placed in outlets out of the reach of children. Use of electrical equipment in the children's play area will be kept to a minimum. Items that produce heat will not be allowed in the children's play areas. Water at the faucets will not be more than 120 degrees to prevent scalding. Flammable items such as gas or lighter fluid will not be stored at the center. Storage areas will be kept free of combustible material and trash. Furnishings will not be highly flammable.

**C. Poisoning:** All medication and toxic substances, such as household cleaners will be placed in/on shelves out of reach of children. All staff will be instructed on items that are toxic and on the proper storage of such items. Staff will know procedures for accessing the poison control center.

**D. Aspiration or Choking:** Food items will be chosen carefully and foods difficult for children to chew or eat will not be served. Toys will also be chosen for the appropriate age levels. Small and easily broken toys, balloons, and toys with loose parts will not be allowed. All staff will be trained in CPR.

**E. Suffocation:** Plastic bags and other materials that could cause suffocation will be kept out of the reach of children. The area will be checked regularly for items that may cause suffocation and these items will be immediately removed.

**F. Traffic and Pedestrian Accidents:** Corridors will be kept clear for easy exits and traffic patterns. Floors will be safely carpeted or tiled and the center will have adequate lighting. Early Ventures staff will conduct a daily inspection of potential hazards in the center and on the outdoor activity area.

### **3. Fire Prevention and Response Procedure:**

**A. Fire Evacuation Plan:** The fire evacuation routes are posted in each room. They are located next to the doors and show the closest outside exit as well as secondary exits. The center will conduct routine fire drills to be prepared for any fire that could occur.

**B. Fire Drills:** All staff and children will participate in routine fire drills. The fire evacuation routes will be discussed and a record kept of all drills, indicating the date and time drills were practiced. A procedure to account for all children will be part of each drill. Staff will be trained to know who is responsible for which areas and the phone number of the local fire department.

**C. Procedure in the Event of a Fire:** Staff will know the location and proper use of a fire extinguisher and how to close off the fire area. All staff will participate in fire drills to provide proper training in how to carry out fire procedures.

### **4. Natural Disasters:**

**A. Tornadoes:** In the event of a tornado, staff will gather all children together and go to the designated tornado safety area. All children will be instructed to remain seated until danger has passed. The center will maintain a log of the dates and times of monthly tornado drills from April to September.

**B. Blizzard:** In the event that parents/guardians are delayed in picking up their children, the center will remain open to care for the children until the parents/guardians arrive. Early Ventures will follow ISD #659 school closing policies.

**C. Other Natural Disaster:** In the event that there is a natural disaster, Early Ventures will follow ISD #659 policies and procedures.

**5. Missing Child:** When staff are unable to locate a child, all children will be asked to sit in one room. A check by all available staff will be made of the center and surrounding area. If the child is not located, the person in charge will notify the Northfield Police Department and the child's parents/guardians.

**6. Release of Children:** Children will be released only to their parents/guardians or persons authorized on the emergency card. No one other than the authorized person will be allowed to pick up children from the

center. If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, parents/guardians will be notified, and if necessary, 911 will be called.

**7. Incapacitation or Suspected Abuse:** In the event a person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse attempts to pick up a child, the caregiver is directed to release the child only to those persons who are authorized. If the caregiver suspects an authorized person of being incapacitated or a suspected abuser, the child must still be released. The caregiver is then mandated to report the suspected neglect or abuse to the Northfield Police Department and/or the Rice County Human Services Department.

**8. Abandoned Child:** If a child is still at the center after the regular closing time, the staff person will contact the parents/guardians. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the staff will contact all other people listed on the child's emergency card to pick up the child. The center will remain open until the child is picked up. If a child remains at the center at 6:00 p.m., 911 will be notified.

**9. Source of Emergency Medical Care:** Northfield Hospital

**10. Accident Reports:** A log will be kept of all accidents that occur at the center. The written record must contain the name and age of the person involved; date and place of the accident; injury or incident; type of injury; action taken by staff; and to whom the accident, injury or incident was reported. This log will be reviewed at least semi-annually and steps will be taken to prevent accidents from reoccurring.

Should a serious injury or death occur while a child is in EV's care, EV staff are required to report the incident within 24 hours of being notified of the incident. The report will be submitted electronically to DHS on the Child Care Center Serious Injury and Death Reporting Form.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Early Ventures has a written emergency preparedness plan using the Child Care Emergency Plan form developed by the commissioner. This plan includes: procedures for an evacuation, relocation, shelter in-place, and lockdown; a designated relocation site and evacuation route; procedures for notifying a child's parent or legal guardian of the evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown, including procedures for reunification with families; accommodations for a child with a disability or a chronic medical condition; procedures for storing a child's medical necessary medicine that facilitates easy removal during an evacuation or relocation; procedures for continuing operations in the period during and after a crisis; procedures for communicating with local emergency management officials, law enforcement officials, or other appropriate state or local authorities; and accommodations for infants and toddlers. The Emergency Preparedness Plan is available on site and upon request.

## **PERMISSION SLIPS**

Field trips will be announced in advance and parents/guardians will be asked to sign permission slips for any trip taken by the center that would require transportation. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign a blanket permission slip for trips that are within walking distance from the center, i.e. parks, library or local businesses. Students training in the fields of childcare and education occasionally visit Early Ventures for observation, practicum, or student teaching. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign permission forms before their child participates in any formal observation. Parents/Guardians will also be asked to sign a form before their child's picture is used for publicity.

## **PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS**

- Children that are four years old and older are expected to be toilet trained and to be able to use a typical toilet independently.
- Children must be able to independently participate in developmentally appropriate group

settings with similar age peers.

- Children must be able to independently follow simple directions appropriate to the child's age.
- Children must have the ability to play and work cooperatively with similar age peers without adult facilitation.
- Appropriate to the child's age, children must be able to safely and successfully transition from one activity to another.
- Children must be able to be successful in a group setting that is consistent with the Department of Human Services staff to student ratios for child care.
- Appropriate to the child's age, children must be able to independently participate in the general education curriculum.

## **SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Early Ventures is not designed to provide long-term 1:1 assistance for children. If a child receives 1:1 student support in the classroom, or has a behavior plan developed, Early Ventures must have a meeting with the family prior to the start date in order to determine the appropriate level of support needed to help the child be successful. Information regarding a student's needs will not be used to prohibit a child's enrollment in Early Ventures, unless it is determined they will need significant assistance beyond our program's capabilities.

**Rationale:** As a public institution, Northfield Public School's Community Education strives to provide equal access and opportunity for all people. However, since programs offered through Community Education are fee based, our program is equally obligated to provide affordable services for the broadest possible spectrum of the population. Unlimited access for children with special needs would significantly increase costs and could result in the complete elimination of multiple programs. Limiting access to only those children who can be included with no additional support, though, is clearly not in keeping with our mission as a public agency. Accordingly, this policy has been developed after reviewing case law regarding program access of a community service for disabled individuals under the rehabilitation act. The purpose of the policy is to provide maximum access for children with special needs while preserving the affordable nature of the program for the public at large.

**Pre-enrollment Conference and Release of Information:** Parents/Guardians of a child with special needs who wish to enroll the child in Early Ventures are asked to contact the Ventures Coordinator. A pre-enrollment conference will be held to discuss the nature of the special need and the extent of support services which are needed. At this conference, parents/guardians will be informed of the Community Education policy of consulting with school staff and examining student files if the child is enrolled in the Northfield Public Schools. If the child is not enrolled in programs provided by the Northfield School District, parents/guardians will be asked to sign a release of information for other agencies/schools that are currently providing services for the child. These releases are not mandatory in order for services to be provided, but will result in a more complete individual service plan.

**Provision of Additional Financial Resources:** If it is determined that additional financial resources are necessary in order to make the program accessible and beneficial, the following procedures will be used.

1. Modifications which are necessary to make facilities accessible will be undertaken by the school district if they are economically feasible. These may include but are not limited to bathroom grab bars, wrist operated sinks, etc. If these modifications are not feasible, providing accessibility through use of mobility aides, etc. will be pursued. In these cases, the provisions included in Item 2 will apply.
2. Items which are considered personal support services are the responsibility of the specific program in which that particular child is involved, provided that they do not increase the cost of the service by more than 5%. If the cost does exceed 5%, additional costs will be the responsibility of the

parent/guardian. Examples of personal support services may include, but are not limited to, transportation, mobility aides, behavior management aides, and/or nursing services for children that are medically fragile or have multiple handicaps.

3. Should it be necessary for parents/guardians to seek financial assistance to cover increased costs, Early Ventures staff will be available to assist them in locating possible sources of help through community agencies and organizations.

**Implementing and Monitoring the Individual Service Plan:** The coordinator of a particular program in which the child is enrolled will be responsible for developing a service plan. This plan must be in place within 1 week of the date on which the child began using the service, and a summary of the plan will be reviewed with the parent/guardian and placed in the child's file. Site visits from special education staff or staff of other agencies that provide service to the child will be arranged to obtain input and suggestions. Consultation with classroom teachers will also be scheduled as appropriate. The Ventures Coordinator is responsible for obtaining this information, including it in the child's plan, and making sure that any staff members who work with the child are familiar with the contents of the plan. All individual service plans must be reviewed and approved in writing by the Ventures Coordinator and the parent/guardian of the child. Modifications in the service plan will be made as necessary with joint approval of parents/guardians and staff. Any changes in the plan will be documented in writing and placed in the child's file. Any information concerning the child that is written in the staff log will be shared with the parents/guardians in a timely manner.

**Policy on Behavior Management:** Children who have been specified as special education students or students whose behavior cannot be managed through the application of existing behavior guidance policies that are in place for the various programs, will be considered special needs children for the purpose of this policy. This definition will be applied whether behavior problems result from temporary individual stresses, mental impairment, as a result of neglect or abuse, or as a result of long term emotional and behavioral disorders. In cases when these behaviors are documented prior to the enrollment of the child, the procedures used will be the same as those described previously for serving children with special needs. If the problem surfaces after the child is enrolled, a conference will be scheduled in accordance with existing behavior management policies. The purpose of the conference will be the same as that of the pre-enrollment conference already described. Timelines for the development and implementation of an individual service plan will also be the same as those previously mentioned.

**Termination of Services:** If the staff determines that an individual behavior guidance plan is not effective and no other options are available, it is possible that service will no longer be provided for that child. Termination of services will be considered if the child constitutes a danger to other participants, themselves, if behavior is so disruptive that it prevents the accomplishment of overall program goals, if the child cannot participate in a group setting with similar age peers, or if the child consistently requires more staff attention than is allotted in licensing ratios. The decision to terminate services will be the responsibility of the Ventures Coordinator.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE PROCEDURES**

The center's daily scheduling, curriculum plans, classroom arrangement, and staffing pattern are designed to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences, including respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children. To provide for the safety of all children, as well as the individual development of each child's self-help and self-control skills, staff maintain daily routines and provide appropriate limits for each group. These routines and limits are frequently discussed and defined with the children. Consistency and knowing what to expect throughout the day helps children develop a sense of trust and understanding of their environment and encourages self control. The goals of child guidance are to help children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and with the environment and to develop internal self-control. Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits, and experiencing



logical consequences of their behavior.

Early Ventures operates on the premise that young children are never “bad.” Many discipline problems arise from too much excitement or over stimulation, rather than direct disobedience. Continual positive reinforcement will be used to encourage acceptable behavior. Staff work towards changing behaviors using positive techniques. These techniques include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Working with the children to develop rules that are stated at the children’s developmental level.
2. Clarifying the consequences of not following rules before an incident occurs.
3. Having age-appropriate expectations for children.
4. Allowing children time to practice following new rules and acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
5. Reinforce desirable behavior by praising or rewarding the child. When the child realizes that attention comes from appropriate behavior, that behavior is more likely to continue.
6. Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child’s unacceptable behavior.
7. Ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
8. Redirect children away from the problem toward a constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
9. Teaching children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
10. Short breaks, which are noted and logged.
11. Protect the safety of children and staff persons.

**Biting:** Unfortunately, biting is a natural development stage that many children go through and it is one of the most common and difficult behaviors in a child care setting. Biting can occur without warning and it provokes a strong emotional response from all involved parties. Biting typically tends to be a temporary stage, most common in children ages 13-24 months. Toddlers may bite for a number of reasons as they are in the process of learning socially acceptable responses to their environment and given situations. Toddlers often bite as a result of teething, frustration, over-stimulation, impulsiveness, excitement, lack of self-control, attempting to get attention, lack of verbal skills, or even hunger.

Early Ventures staff work with all children to promote socially acceptable responses and behaviors. Biting is addressed in all classrooms, but a consistent curriculum is used more specifically in the toddler room. The curriculum includes a variety of age-appropriate books about biting and an assortment of games that help children learn what teeth are used for and when teeth should not be used. Group time often includes questions such as, “What do we put in our mouth?”, “What are our teeth for?”, and “What can we eat?” as well as having children practice “using their words.” “No Biting” pictures are also posted in the room.

Early Ventures staff also complete an annual training called “When Biting Happens” to review helpful tips on biting prevention as well as circumstances or situations that often provoke biting.

Should a biting incident occur at Early Ventures, staff address the biter in a firm, matter-of-fact voice (not

angry or yelling) saying, "No biting. Biting Hurts! Teeth are for eating food." Staff comment on how the other child is feeling. "Look, \_\_\_\_\_ is crying. They are crying because you bit them. Biting hurts." Staff may also have the biter comfort the other child by bringing them an ice pack. The biter is redirected to another activity or separated from the group and placed on a break. The child that has been bitten is comforted and the bitten area is washed with warm water and soap. An ice pack is applied. The biter sees sympathy and comfort towards the bitten child. An incident report is filled out by staff and logged in the incident binder. Families of both the biter and the bitten are notified.

Should a child bite repetitively, staff will meet with the biter's parents/guardians to create a biting plan of action. Every biting occurrence, including attempted bites, will be charted and location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances will be indicated. Staff and parents/guardians will look for any patterns in the biting and both will consistently encourage the use of words to express feelings and emotions. Biting plans will be tailored to the individual child and appropriate steps will be implemented.

## **BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES**

If staff's attempts at discipline do not work and a child continues to exhibit persistent unacceptable behavior, the following will occur in the Early Ventures preschool classrooms:

1. Parents/Guardians will be notified, informing them of the reason for referral, previous action by staff, and the actions taken by the disciplinary personnel. Staff will continue to observe the child's unacceptable behavior and record incidents and staff responses.
2. When a child's behavior is continually upsetting or dangerous to others or the staff, a conference will be called with the parents/guardians. A behavior plan will be developed. The plan will include specific details working towards eliminating the behavior problems. Suggestions may include, but are not limited to, environmental changes, incentive programs, more direct services and/or professional services, and referrals for behavior assessments.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the following actions will occur:

**Behavior Incident Reports:** A Behavior Incident Report is completed when a serious disciplinary action occurs. Behavior such as violent outbursts, willfully hurting other children, throwing objects, inappropriate language, leaving the room/building/group, verbal or physical abuse of the staff, not listening to staff or following directions, creating an unsafe environment, or the inability to adjust to the program guidelines will be considered serious disciplinary concerns. Charges will be assessed for behavior leaves resulting in 1, 3, and 5 days off. Should a child receive a sixth Behavior Incident Report, charges will end with the last date of service, and alternate care must be found immediately as the child will not be allowed to return to the program.

*1st Behavior Incident Report:* Parents/Guardians, site staff, and child will discuss the behavior to resolve the situation. Parents/Guardians will be informed that "should a second Behavior Incident Report occur, a meeting will be scheduled to include the parent/guardian, child, site staff, and Site Leader."

*2nd Behavior Incident Report:* Parents/Guardians will be contacted for a meeting to include the parent/guardian, child, site staff, and Site Leader. The process continues should a parent/guardian refuse to attend a meeting. Parents/Guardians will receive a written warning that "should a third Behavior Incident Report occur, the child will need to take a one day leave of absence from the program."

*3rd Behavior Incident Report:* Parents/Guardians will be notified by telephone or in person

that the child will need to take a one-day leave of absence from the program on the next scheduled day. (Fees will be charged during this absence.) Parents/Guardians will receive a written warning that "should a fourth Behavior Incident Report occur, the child will need to take a three-day leave of absence from the program."

*4th Behavior Incident Report:* Parents/Guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that the child will need to take a three-day leave of absence from the program beginning with the next scheduled day. (Fees will be charged during this absence.) Parents/Guardians will receive a written warning that "should a fifth Behavior Incident Report occur, the child will need to take a five-day leave of absence from the program."

*5th Behavior Incident Report:* Parents/Guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that the child will need to take a five-day leave of absence from the program beginning with the next scheduled day. (Fees will be charged during this absence.) Parents/Guardians will receive a written warning that "should a sixth Behavior Incident Report occur, the parent/guardian will be required to find alternate child care immediately. The child will not be able to return to the program. Charges will end with the date of the sixth Behavior Incident Report.

*6th Behavior Incident Report:* Parents/Guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that alternate care will be needed immediately, as the child will not be able to return to the program. Charges will end with the date of the sixth Behavior Incident Report.

**Early Ventures Prohibits the Subjection of a Child to Corporal Punishment:** This includes, but is not limited to, rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking.

**Early Ventures Prohibits the Subjection of a Child to Emotional Stress:** This includes, but is not limited to, name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.

**Early Ventures also prohibits:**

- Punishment for lapses in toileting
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior
- The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm
- The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying
- No child may be separated from the group unless the following has occurred:
  - Less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior have been tried and were ineffective
  - The child's behavior threatens the well-being of the child or other children in the program

A child who requires separation from the group must:

- Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person.
- The child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.
- The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops

Children between the ages of six weeks and 16 months must not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

All separations from the group must be noted on a daily log that must include: the child's name, the staff person's name, time, date, information indicating that less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior, and how the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in care.

If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's parent/guardian shall be notified and the parent/guardian notification shall be indicated on the daily log. If a child is separated five or more times in one week, eight times or more in two weeks, the procedures for Persistent Unacceptable Behavior must be followed.

A copy of the center's behavior guidance policy as defined by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Service, Division of Licensing, is on display at the center. A copy is also available from the program coordinator at any time. The policy defines the general requirements of behavior guidance, procedures for persistent unacceptable behavior and actions that are prohibited by either staff or children.

## **PETS**

Early Ventures will inform parents/guardians and obtain signed permission before any pets are housed at the center or any pets visit the center.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN VISITS**

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the center at any time during the normal hours of operation. We encourage family volunteers in our classrooms. Please speak with the site leader for further information.

## **TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR DIVISION OF LICENSING**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your child's care, the telephone number of the Department of Human Services - Division of Licensing is 651-431-2000.

## **TOYS**

Early Ventures asks that all children leave their toys at home. Small, soft toys such as stuffed animals are allowed during rest time for children in the toddler and preschool rooms or infants that are over a year and sleeping on a cot. Musical or noise-making toys will not be allowed as they may disturb others that are napping. Children may also bring a toy from home when there is a scheduled "show and share" day. All other toys should be left at home or will be placed in the child's cubby to be taken home at the end of the day. Toy weapons or toys that contain any weapons are not welcome at any time. Our center is fully equipped with an adequate supply of age-appropriate toys for the children and toys brought from home often create problems. Early Ventures cannot be held responsible for lost, broken, or missing items.

## **MANDATED REPORTING/MALTREATMENT OF MINORS (SEE ATTACHED DHS DOCUMENTS)**

Children need a safe, nurturing environment that allows them to grow, learn, and feel loved by their caretakers. In order to grow and learn, children's minimum needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, bathing, clean clothes, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love, a feeling of importance, and a safe, non-violent home setting must be met. When these needs are not met, a child cannot grow and learn as easily. If you are temporarily or permanently unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs, Early Ventures staff is mandated by Minnesota State Law to file a report with a county child protection agency. It then becomes the role of Child Protection to work with your family to ensure that your child's needs are being met. Should you have difficulty in providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, or safety, you are encouraged to ask for help. Our staff will help you find a community resource that can offer assistance. Some 24-hour community resources which can help you when you find that you are experiencing more stress than

you can handle, include:

- Parents Anonymous 1-800-225-4073
- Rice County Crisis Hotline 1-800-607-2330
- Rice County Child Protection 1-507-332-6214
- Rice County Crisis Nursery 1-507-332-6255
- Department of Human Services, Maltreatment Intake Line 1-651-431-6600
- Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing 1-651-431-6500

Early Ventures expresses a commitment to provide an environment that encourages every child's safe growth and learning. If you feel that our staff is not meeting your child's needs, we encourage you to talk with the site leader. Should you feel your child's needs are consistently not being met, our staff will work with you to identify your child's needs and assist you in meeting them. As mandated reporters, Early Ventures staff are required to make a report if there is reason to believe that a child is currently being neglected, abused, subjected to witnessing domestic abuse, or has been within the past three years. For more information on mandated reporting, please see Appendix C.

## **INTERNAL REVIEW**

When an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, Early Ventures will complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and will take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review will include an evaluation of whether:

- Related policies and procedures were followed
- The policies and procedures were adequate
- There is a need for additional staff training
- The reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved
- There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of the children in care.

The internal review will be conducted by the Ventures Coordinator. If the Ventures Coordinator is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Director of Community Education will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Based on the results of the internal review, Early Ventures will develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or Early Ventures, if any.

## **NORTHFIELD DISTRICT POLICY REGARDING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE**

Please see Northfield's district [Policy 413 Harassment & Violence](#), the [procedures](#), and the [reporting form](#).

## **DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM**

Early Ventures reserves the right of immediate dismissal of a child from Early Ventures based on probable cause as listed below:

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN RELATED PROBABLE CAUSE FOR DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM:**

1. Failure to complete, sign, and return appropriate program forms
2. Harmful, threatening, or inappropriate behavior toward staff, children, or other parents/guardians
3. Consistent late or non-payment of tuition and program fees

4. Repeated instances of failure to sign child in and out
5. Lack of adherence to Early Ventures policies and procedures
6. Repeated instances of late pick up

## **STAFF POLICIES**

1. Children are to be supervised at all times. Children are not to be left in a room or on the playground alone, even for a few minutes. All ratios will always be met.
2. Staff members are to engage and interact with children, not isolate themselves or converse at length with other staff members.
3. Discipline is to be dealt with in a positive manner. Talk to the child without raising your tone of voice. Try to determine the child's reason for the misbehavior. Consult the center's discipline policy for further details and follow accordingly. If separation from the group is necessary, a written report must be filed.
4. Children are expected to treat others with respect. They learn by example and their role model is you.
5. Staff members are expected to sit with the children during snack and meal times.
6. All employees will be hired for a six-month probation period. Employees will be evaluated following Northfield Public School's evaluation process.
7. Early Ventures child care center does not discriminate in its hiring practices. Northfield Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer.
8. All Early Ventures staff are required to have standard first aid and CPR training within 90 days of the start of work.
9. All Early Ventures staff will meet annual training requirements set by the Department of Human Services.
10. ISD #659 is a smoke free district. Smoking is not allowed in any district building or on its grounds.
11. All records at the childcare center are to be kept confidential. This includes, but is not limited to: children's records, personnel records, accident, and discipline reports. Staff will release records only to those people who have access as required by law.
12. As per DHS rule 17 Part 9543.1020, subpart 14, drug and alcohol use is prohibited. Individuals, subcontractors, and volunteers when directly responsible for children served by the program are prohibited from abusing prescription medication or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol. This includes any level of use that impairs or could impair the person's ability to provide care or services.
13. Early Ventures staff should never restrain a child, unless the child or another person, is in immediate physical danger (Example: a child is trying to run into a busy road with oncoming traffic). Restraint should be as minimal as possible and released as soon as the child or others are no longer in immediate physical danger. Prone restraint is never allowed. Prone restraint is a physical hold or mechanical restraint that places a person in a face-down position.

## **RISK REDUCTION PLAN**

Early Ventures has developed a Risk Reduction plan in order to comply with Minnesota Statutes, section

245.66 subdivisions 2 and 3. Risk Reduction Plans are in place to assess risks among children in our environment and ensure there are procedures, policies, and staff training sessions in place for all risks determined. The Risk Reduction Plan is available on site at Early Ventures and will be reviewed annually. All Early Ventures staff will receive an orientation to the Risk Reduction plan prior to first providing unsupervised direct contact services and will review it annually thereafter.

## Appendix A: Daily Schedules and Curriculum

### Caterpillar Room (Infants)

Below is a very general schedule as much flexibility is needed within an infant childcare setting. Each child's schedule will be based around their biological schedule of when they need to eat and sleep.

7:00-8:00 am	Check-in/Report with parent/guardian
8:00 am	Diapers
8:00-9:30 am	Bottles and morning nap
9:30-9:45 am	Morning snack
9:45-10:15 am	Curriculum (circle time, sing-a-song, stories, games, sensory and art)
10:00	Diapers
10:15-11 am	Outside/Gross motor
11:00-11:30 am	Lunch
11:30 am-Noon	Bottles
12:00-3:00 pm	Nap time (diapers as they wake)
1:00-3:00 pm	Gross motor and sensory activities (as kids wake)
3:00-3:30 pm	Afternoon snack and bottles
3:30-4:00 pm	Curriculum (circle time, sing-a-song, stories, games, sensory and art)
4:00-4:30 pm	Outside/Gross motor
4:30-5:30 pm	Bottles, diapers, and check out/Report with parent/guardian

### Bee Room (Young Toddlers) and Ladybug Room (Older Toddlers/Young Preschool)

Toddlers range in age from 16 months to three years old. As toddlers may be new to child care environments, we highly encourage families to incorporate some of this routine into their children's daily lives at home. This will establish normalcy and make sure their children do not feel overwhelmed by the change in routine.

Below is a typical daily schedule. Schedules between the two classrooms vary based on the needs of their students.

7:00-8:15 am	Check-in/Report with parent/guardian/Morning stations
8:15-8:30 am	Diapers/Bathroom/Stories
8:30-8:45 am	Circle time/Music
8:45-9:30 am	Gym/Gross motor
10:00-11:00 am	Outside
11:00-11:30 am	Smart room or table activities
11:30 am-Noon	Lunch
12:00-12:15 pm	Diapers/Bathroom/Stories
12:15-3:00 pm	Rest time
1:00-3:00 pm	Gross motor/Sensory (as children wake from rest)
3:00-3:15 pm	Diapers/Bathroom/Stories
3:15-3:30 pm	Afternoon snack
3:30-4:15 pm	Art/Stations
4:15-4:30 pm	Circle time/Music
4:30-5:30 pm	Outside/Gym



**Firefly Room (2 Years Before K) and Butterfly Room (1 Year Before K)**

7:00-8:00 am	Check-in/Report with parent/guardian/Learning stations
8:00-8:30 am	Gym/Large motor
8:30-8:45 am	Morning meeting
8:45-9:00 am	Snack
9:00-10:00 am	Small group learning stations
10:00-11:00 am	Outside
11:00-11:20 am	Social-Emotional curriculum/Reading corps groups
11:30 am-Noon	Lunch
12:00-12:45 pm	Outside/Gym
12:45-1:00 pm	Bathrooms/Rest time prep
1:00-2:45 pm	Rest time
1:30-2:45 pm	Quiet activities as children wake
2:45-3:00 pm	Wake up/Bathrooms
3:00-3:30 pm	Afternoon snack
3:30-3:45 pm	Circle time
3:45-4:15 pm	Small groups/Stations
4:15-5:00 pm	Choice time
5:00-5:30 pm	Outside/Gym

All classrooms at EarlyVentures Learning Center use Mother Goose Time Curriculum, which is a research-based curriculum that incorporates 33 skills into playful games and discovery projects. The cross-disciplinary model supports a child's on-going social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. Authentic assessment allows staff to capture learning as it happens through observations, work samples, and skill charts.

The preschool rooms at Early Ventures also use Second Step, which is a social emotional curriculum. Second Step helps teach the youngest learners how to listen, pay attention, manage behavior, self-regulate, and get along with others. Skills and concepts are taught through short, daily activities.

## **Appendix B: Procedures for Children of Area Learning Center (ALC) Students to Access Early Ventures**

1. The ALC student's child must be eligible for county support (Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)) to pay for the cost of Early Ventures. CCAP does not cover Early Ventures full daily rate, thus the ALC will be responsible for covering all charges the county does not cover.
2. The ALC student has to be enrolled in, or have successfully completed, the parenting class offered through the ALC. The class will be taught by a Community Education Parent Educator.
3. The ALC needs to notify Early Ventures no later than February 1st of how many summer and school year INFANT slots the ALC would like to hold and pay for. A child can be considered an infant and be enrolled in the infant room until they turn 19 months. Due to current families, Early Ventures will not hold TODDLER slots.
4. If a new toddler or preschool spot is needed for the ALC, Early Ventures will determine if space is available after Early Ventures' current family registration (typically held in early-mid February). If space is available for a new toddler or preschooler, the ALC will need to determine if they want to commit and pay for the slot prior to Early Ventures' new family registration (1st week of March). The ALC will be responsible for paying for this slot for the duration of the school year or until Early Ventures can fill the slot with a community member.
5. If a current ALC student that has a child enrolled in Early Ventures is not graduating at the end of the school year and will need an Early Ventures slot (in any room) the following year, the ALC student will be treated as a current family and will need to follow all current family registration guidelines.
6. If an ALC student is enrolled in Early Ventures' summer program, the ALC will be charged for the entire summer, not just days the ALC is in session. This will also allow the ALC student to access childcare in August or days the ALC is not in session.
7. The ALC will be charged all registration and snack fees for each ALC student's child in Early Ventures. Child Care Assistance typically does not cover these fees.

## Appendix C: Mandated Reporting

Clear Form



DHS-7634A-ENG

DHS-7634A-ENG

2-21

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL - LICENSING DIVISION

# Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting

This form may be used by any provider licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, except family child care. The form for family child care providers can be found in eDocs #7634C.

## What to report

- Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to [Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03](#), and pages 3-6 of this document. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

## Who must report

- If you work in a licensed facility, you are a "mandated reporter" and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.
- In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

## Where to report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division's Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to the local county social services agency at 1-507-332-6214 or local law enforcement at 911.

## When to report

- Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

## Information to report

- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

## Failure to report

- A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03.

## Retaliation prohibited

- An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at):
  - an employee for making a report in good faith; or
  - a child who is the subject of the report.
- If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

## Staff training

The license holder must train all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

## Provide policy to parents

For licensed child care centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request. The definitions section (p. 3-6) is optional to provide to parents.

*The following sections only apply to license holders that serve children. This does not include family child foster care per [Minnesota Statutes 245A.66, subd. 1](#).*

## Internal review

- When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.
- The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:
  - related policies and procedures were followed;
  - the policies and procedures were adequate;
  - there is a need for additional staff training;
  - the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
  - there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

## Primary and secondary person or position to ensure reviews completed

The internal review will be completed by the Ventures Coordinator . If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Director of Community Education will be responsible for completing the internal review.

## Documentation of internal review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

## Corrective action plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

## Definitions

Found in [Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03](#)

### **Egregious harm** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 5](#))

"Egregious harm" means harm under [section 260C.007, subdivision 14](#), or a similar law of another jurisdiction.

[Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.007, Subd. 14:](#)

"Egregious harm" means the infliction of bodily harm to a child or neglect of a child which demonstrates a grossly inadequate ability to provide minimally adequate parental care. The egregious harm need not have occurred in the state or in the county where a termination of parental rights action is otherwise properly venued. Egregious harm includes, but is not limited to:

1. conduct towards a child that constitutes a violation of sections [609.185](#) to [609.2114](#), [609.222, subdivision 2](#), [609.223](#), or any other similar law of any other state;
2. the infliction of "substantial bodily harm" to a child, as defined in section [609.02, subdivision 7a](#);
3. conduct towards a child that constitutes felony malicious punishment of a child under [section 609.377](#);
4. conduct towards a child that constitutes felony unreasonable restraint of a child under [section 609.255, subdivision 3](#);
5. conduct towards a child that constitutes felony neglect or endangerment of a child under [section 609.378](#);
6. conduct towards a child that constitutes assault under section [609.221](#), [609.222](#), or [609.223](#);
7. conduct towards a child that constitutes solicitation, inducement, or promotion of, or receiving profit derived from prostitution under [section 609.322](#);
8. conduct towards a child that constitutes murder or voluntary manslaughter as defined by United States Code, title 18, section 1111(a) or 1112(a);
9. conduct towards a child that constitutes aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit a murder or voluntary manslaughter that constitutes a violation of United States Code, title 18, section 1111(a) or 1112(a); or
10. conduct toward a child that constitutes criminal sexual conduct under [sections 609.342](#) to [609.345](#).

### **Maltreatment** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 12](#))

"Maltreatment" means any of the following acts or omissions:

1. egregious harm under subdivision 5;
2. neglect under subdivision 15;
3. physical abuse under subdivision 18;
4. sexual abuse under subdivision 20;
5. substantial child endangerment under subdivision 22;
6. threatened injury under subdivision 23;
7. mental injury under subdivision 13; and
8. maltreatment of a child in a facility.

### **Mental injury** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 13](#))

"Mental injury" means an injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as evidenced by an observable or substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to the child's culture.

## **Neglect** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 15](#))

- A. "Neglect" means the commission or omission of any of the acts specified under clauses (1) to (8), other than by accidental means:
1. failure by a person responsible for a child's care to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, health, medical, or other care required for the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so;
  2. failure to protect a child from conditions or actions that seriously endanger the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as a failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect;
  3. failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements appropriate for a child after considering factors as the child's age, mental ability, physical condition, length of absence, or environment, when the child is unable to care for the child's own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care;
  4. failure to ensure that the child is educated as defined in sections [120A.22](#) and [260C.163, subdivision 11](#), which does not include a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications, consistent with section [125A.091, subdivision 5](#);
  5. prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, as defined in section [253B.02, subdivision 2](#), used by the mother for a nonmedical purpose, as evidenced by withdrawal symptoms in the child at birth, results of a toxicology test performed on the mother at delivery or the child at birth, medical effects or developmental delays during the child's first year of life that medically indicate prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, or the presence of a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;
  6. medical neglect, as defined in section [260C.007, subdivision 6](#), clause (5);
  7. chronic and severe use of alcohol or a controlled substance by a person responsible for the child's care that adversely affects the child's basic needs and safety; or
  8. emotional harm from a pattern of behavior that contributes to impaired emotional functioning of the child which may be demonstrated by a substantial and observable effect in the child's behavior, emotional response, or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development, with due regard to the child's culture.
- B. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to mean that a child is neglected solely because the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care in good faith selects and depends upon spiritual means or prayer for treatment or care of disease or remedial care of the child in lieu of medical care.
- C. This chapter does not impose upon persons not otherwise legally responsible for providing a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, education, or medical care a duty to provide that care.

## **Physical abuse** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 18](#))

- A. "Physical abuse" means any physical injury, mental injury under subdivision 13, or threatened injury under subdivision 23, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care on a child other than by accidental means, or any physical or mental injury that cannot reasonably be explained by the child's history of injuries, or any aversive or deprivation procedures, or regulated interventions, that have not been authorized under section [125A.0942](#) or [245.825](#).
- B. Abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or legal guardian that does not result in an injury. Abuse does not include the use of reasonable force by a teacher, principal, or school employee as allowed by section [121A.582](#).
- C. For the purposes of this subdivision, actions that are not reasonable and moderate include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
1. throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child;
  2. striking a child with a closed fist;
  3. shaking a child under age three;
  4. striking or other actions that result in any nonaccidental injury to a child under 18 months of age;
  5. unreasonable interference with a child's breathing;
  6. threatening a child with a weapon, as defined in [section 609.02, subdivision 6](#);

7. striking a child under age one on the face or head;
8. striking a child who is at least age one but under age four on the face or head, which results in an injury;
9. purposely giving a child:
  - i. poison, alcohol, or dangerous, harmful, or controlled substances that were not prescribed for the child by a practitioner in order to control or punish the child; or
  - ii. other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination, or judgment; that result in sickness or internal injury; or that subject the child to medical procedures that would be unnecessary if the child were not exposed to the substances;
10. unreasonable physical confinement or restraint not permitted under [section 609.379](#), including but not limited to tying, caging, or chaining; or
11. in a school facility or school zone, an act by a person responsible for the child's care that is a violation under section [121A.58](#).

### **Sexual abuse** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 20](#))

"Sexual abuse" means the subjection of a child by a person responsible for the child's care, by a person who has a significant relationship to the child, or by a person in a current or recent position of authority, to any act that constitutes a violation of section [609.342](#) (criminal sexual conduct in the first degree), [609.343](#) (criminal sexual conduct in the second degree), [609.344](#) (criminal sexual conduct in the third degree), [609.345](#) (criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree), [609.3451](#) (criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree), or [609.352](#) (solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct; communication of sexually explicit materials to children).

Sexual abuse also includes any act involving a child that constitutes a violation of prostitution offenses under sections [609.321](#) to [609.324](#) or [617.246](#). Sexual abuse includes all reports of known or suspected child sex trafficking involving a child who is identified as a victim of sex trafficking. Sexual abuse includes child sex trafficking as defined in section [609.321](#), subdivisions 7a and 7b.

Sexual abuse includes threatened sexual abuse, which includes the status of a parent or household member who has committed a violation that requires registration as an offender under section [243.166, subdivision 1b](#), paragraph (a) or (b), or required registration under section [243.166, subdivision 1b](#), paragraph (a) or (b).

### **Substantial child endangerment** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 22](#))

"Substantial child endangerment" means that a person responsible for a child's care, by act or omission, commits or attempts to commit an act against a child under their care that constitutes any of the following:

1. egregious harm under subdivision 5;
2. abandonment under section [260C.301, subdivision 2](#);
3. neglect under subdivision 15, paragraph (a), clause (2), that substantially endangers the child's physical or mental health, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect;
4. murder in the first, second, or third degree under section [609.185](#), [609.19](#), or [609.195](#);
5. manslaughter in the first or second degree under section [609.20](#) or [609.205](#);
6. assault in the first, second, or third degree under section [609.221](#), [609.222](#), or [609.223](#);
7. solicitation, inducement, and promotion of prostitution under section [609.322](#);
8. criminal sexual conduct under sections [609.342](#) to [609.3451](#);
9. solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct under section [609.352](#);
10. malicious punishment or neglect or endangerment of a child under section [609.377](#) or [609.378](#);
11. use of a minor in sexual performance under section [617.246](#); or
12. parental behavior, status, or condition that mandates that the county attorney file a termination of parental rights petition under section [260C.503, subdivision 2](#).

**Threatened injury** ([Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 23](#))

- A. "Threatened injury" means a statement, overt act, condition, or status that represents a substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse or mental injury.
- B. Threatened injury includes, but is not limited to, exposing a child to a person responsible for the child's care, as defined in subdivision 17, who has:
  - 1. subjected a child to, or failed to protect a child from, an overt act or condition that constitutes egregious harm under subdivision 5 or a similar law of another jurisdiction;
  - 2. been found to be palpably unfit under section [260C.301, subdivision 1](#), paragraph (b), clause (4), or a similar law of another jurisdiction;
  - 3. committed an act that resulted in an involuntary termination of parental rights under section [260C.301](#), or a similar law of another jurisdiction; or
  - 4. committed an act that resulted in the involuntary transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child to a relative under Minnesota Statutes 2010, section [260C.201](#), subdivision 11, paragraph (d), clause (1), section [260C.515, subdivision 4](#), or a similar law of another jurisdiction.
- C. A child is the subject of a report of threatened injury when the local welfare agency receives birth match data under section [260E.14, subdivision 4](#), from the Department of Human Services.