

Whitefish Township Community School

Preschool Handbook



Michigan Great Start Readiness Program

Our Philosophy

Whitefish Township Community School (WTCS) participates in a consortium of schools across the Eastern Upper Peninsula to provide access to early childhood education through the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP).

It is the intent of WTCS to propose and support early childhood programs that recognize each child as a whole person, with his or her own strengths, whose growth occurs in developmental stages that are sequential. The curriculum activities are planned, multicultural, non-sexist, and developmentally/age-appropriate. A qualified and nurturing relationship between home, school and the wider community is developed as well as many opportunities for the participation of parents and other family members in the education of these young children. A continuing evaluation system which assesses and reviews the progress, performance and development of children, personnel, and the overall program is completed bi-annually.

It is with these goals in mind that we have chosen to implement the High Scope preschool curriculum in our pre-school programs. Our curriculum encourages both children and adults to experience active learning. Through carefully planned child initiated activities, strategic room design, and age appropriate equipment, the adults provide an environment for children that supports, challenges, and develops the emerging abilities of young minds and bodies. A typical daily schedule is included in your enrollment packet.

Our pre-school activities are designed with an emphasis on developing large and fine motor skills by focusing on the existing interests and talents of our children, then to develop decision making skills, empathy and concern for others, self-discipline, self-confidence, self-reliance, cooperation, and communication skills by expanding the existing strengths and accomplishments of each individual child.

If you would like further information, please feel free to stop in, or contact our main office at (906) 492-3353.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

We Agree-You Agree.....3

Schedule.....3

Enrollment Procedures3

Withdrawal Policy3

Criminal History Clearances4

Suspected Child Abuse.....4

Food Program/Child Feeding Policy.....4-5

Fee Policy5

Staff Ratio.....6

Child Wellness.....6-7

Medications7-8

Disruptive Behavior.....8

Appropriate Clothing8

Weather/Outdoor Play8-9

Closures.....9

Transportation9

Field Trips.....9

Field Trip Transportation Rules.....10

Photographs.....10

Visiting.....10-11

Toys from Home.....11

Volunteer Supervision Plan/Screening Statements.....12-13

Preschool Contract.....14

We Agree- You Agree Our Part – Your Part

We attempt here to define clearly WTCS Preschool's policies in some of the most common areas of concern, both to parents and staff members. We strongly feel that open communication between parents and members of our staff about our respective responsibilities is essential to fully meet your child's developmental needs. Please read the following policy statements and discuss with us any particular concerns.

Please sign and return to the Preschool a copy of each form you have reviewed. Your child will then be fully enrolled in our center.

Schedule

The WTCS Preschool will be open Monday through Thursday, 8:00am – 12:10pm. Preschool will begin around the first Monday closest to October 1st and run until mid-May. We will follow the district calendar for days off, snow days, and holiday breaks. The district calendar is included with your enrollment packet and available online at <http://whitefish.eup.k12.mi.us>.

Enrollment Procedures

An enrollment packet **must** be completed and returned before your child may attend preschool. These packets are available from the school office.

Copies of **birth certificates, up-to-date immunization records, a health appraisal (physical), and proof of income** are required by state law and must be received **before** your child starts preschool. All information is kept confidential and may be returned to you at the end of the school year.

The WTCS Preschool Contract located in the back of this handbook must also be signed and turned in before your child may start.

Withdrawal Policy

Notice of withdrawal must be given to the Lead Teacher or Superintendent if your child will no longer be attending the center.

All efforts are made to assure that children enrolled in preschool adjust to the daily routine of school as easily as possible. Should a child have difficulty with this adjustment the staff and parents will work together to resolve the problems and assure a positive experience for the child, parent and staff.

Staff and Volunteer Criminal History Clearances

R 400.5102

To insure your child's safety, a criminal history information clearance form is signed by all of the Preschool staff. All staff are also required to have a central registry clearance check through the Department of Human Services (DHS) on file. The LifeScan corporation completes a criminal history on the Lead Teacher and Director, as well as all school employees upon initial hire, through a fingerprint scan. All other support staff and volunteers will have a background check (ICHAT) done through the Michigan State Police.

****Parent Criminal History Clearances****

To insure your child's safety, all parents are required to sign a *criminal history information clearance* and to get a *central registry clearance check through the DHS* (all non-parent volunteers are required to have a DHS clearance on file to participate in our program). These forms are included in your enrollment packet. This allows the parents to work in the classroom and to drive on field trips. A Volunteer Supervision Plan must be filled out by all parents who enter the classroom/go on a field trip that have not obtained a DHS central registry clearance. An ICHAT will be completed on all parent and non-parent volunteers.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

R 400.5102 (2) (d)

The Michigan Child Protection Law mandates that anyone involved in childcare immediately report any suspicion of child neglect or abuse. Reporting the situation to administration or other staff does not relieve the caregiver of the mandated responsibility to report to Child Protective Services/ Department of Human Services (DHS). We are held liable under the law if we do not report any sign of possible abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). We will document all suspicious signs of abuse and neglect. Failure to report abuse or neglect is a crime that can result in legal penalties. All verbal reports to CPS must be followed up in writing to CPS within 72 hours. The investigation of allegations, including the interviewing of children and adults, is the responsibility of the licensing consultant or the CPS worker.

Food Program


WTCS Preschool will meet the child's nutritional needs for that part of the day, which he/she spends at the center. We provide a well-balanced breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, or mid-afternoon snack. We are not only committed to quality care for your child, but also to good nutrition. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a federally funded nutrition education program that was created to ensure that childcare centers provide nutritious food for children. The health and wellbeing of the children is our number one priority. Free and Reduced lunch applications are provided in your enrollment packet.

***No person because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap shall be excluded from participation in be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination in our United States Department of Agriculture donated food and child nutrition program. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.*

Child Feeding Policy

Our school adheres to Ellyn Satter's division of responsibility in feeding:

Feeding demands a division of responsibility

<p style="text-align: center;">Adults Are responsible for <i>What, when, and where</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Children Are responsible for <i>How much and whether</i></p>
<p>We provide nutritious, regularly scheduled meals and snacks.</p>	<p>We trust children to manage their own eating.</p>
<p><i>Meals and snacks are an important part of our program day.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We take time to help children relax and prepare to eat. • We sit down to eat with children and have good times. • We help children learn to behave well at meal and snack times. 	<p><i>Children will eat, they will eat what they need, and they will/earn to eat the new foods that we offer.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We let children pick and choose from the food we make available. • We let children eat as little or as much of the food as they want.
<p><i>We follow federal and state guidelines to plan meals and snacks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We keep in mind the special food needs of small children. • We offer familiar and popular foods along with unfamiliar foods. • We let children eat what they like and also try out new foods. 	<p><i>Some days children eat a lot, other days, not so much. But they know how much they need.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not limit the amounts children eat. • We do not force children to eat certain foods or certain amounts of food.
<p><i>We follow guidelines on wellness to cook food low in fat.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use meat, poultry, and fish as well as cooked dried beans. • We use lean red meats but do not restrict red meat. • We serve 1% milk. • We let children help themselves to salad dressings, butter and/or margarine. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Also see Ellyn Satter's books, <i>How to Get Your Kid to Eat ... But Not Too Much,</i> <i>Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense,</i> and <i>Secrets of Raising a Healthy Eater.</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="font-size: small;">Copyright © 1997 by Ellyn Satter. May be reproduced for free distribution only to child care parents. May not be modified in any way. Credit and further information lines must appear on each copy. For a mailing, call 800/468-7976 or check our web site: http://www.ellynsatter.com</p> </div>

Fee Policy

Our preschool program is funded through the State of Michigan Department of Education. The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a grant to help children get ready for school. The grant awards a per-child amount, each year, for eligible four year old. Parents will not be charged for eligible children. Children ineligible for GSRP will be charged a sum equal to the state per-child grant amount prorated on a month to month basis.

Staff Ratio

As a condition of the grant, our staff ratio will be 1:8 and there will be no more than 18 registered children in any class session. Licensing allows for a 1:12 ratio for this age child. If there are more than 7 children present, another adult will be in the room. This smaller ratio will allow staff to give your child more one-on-one time and attention.

Child Wellness

R 400.5111 (1-7) & R 400.5113c (1-4)

State regulations require us to maintain a medical record on each child and for the child to have a physical examination within 30 days after their admission to the center. The Health Appraisal form (included in your enrollment packet) is to be filled out by you and your family doctor, and returned to us as soon as possible (ASAP). For the protection of all the children, your child should be kept at home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms:

1. A fever above 100 degrees F
2. Diarrhea
3. Nausea or vomiting
4. Yellow or green discharge from the nose
5. Rash of unknown cause
6. Sore throat
7. Continuous or severe cough
8. Sores that appear infected or contagious

These symptoms may indicate such infectious diseases as measles, chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, head lice, scabies, or mumps, which are all reportable by state law to the Public Health Department. If a physician diagnoses your child with an infectious disease, **you MUST notify the Center** so that we can notify all parents of any symptoms to watch for, and the Public Health Department.

***When a parent is notified of an illness/infectious disease you have 1 hour in which to pick your child up.**

In case of illness, accident, or changes in the health of a child while at Preschool, the Staff will initiate the following procedure:

1. ISOLATE the child in an area away from the other children but still be supervised. Place the child on a cot with his/her own blanket. The blanket must be taken home by the parent to be laundered in hot water.
2. NOTIFY the parent(s) according to the Child Information Card as to the child's illness and arrange to have the child picked up from the center. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH PARENT TO BE SURE THAT THERE ARE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AVAILABLE IN THE EVENT THAT YOU CANNOT PICK UP YOUR ILL CHILD.**

3. DISINFECT items and facilities (toys, toilets, lavatories...) the child had used before he/she became ill, and shall not be used by any other person until thoroughly cleaned and sanitized using a bleach solution. Bedding will be sent home with the ill child for the parent to launder and return to the center.
4. ALERT any parents of children with whom the sick child was playing with, so they can watch for symptoms. If a communicable disease was contracted by someone in the center, parents will be notified (posting in conspicuous place, face to face, phone call, or in writing) of the name of the disease, the symptoms, and that their child may have been exposed.

IF YOUR CHILD IS ON MEDICATION, HE/SHE MAY NOT RETURN TO THE CENTER UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN ON THEIR MEDICATION FOR 24 HOURS, UNLESS A DOCTOR'S NOTE STATES OTHERWISE.

Medications R 400.5113b (1-8)

Only staff may administer medications when the following conditions are met:

1. Medication, prescription or nonprescription shall be given or applied ONLY with prior written permission from a parent. The medication permission form must be filled out and signed. Please be sure to date the form for each day the child is to receive the medication. This form is available in your enrollment packet.
2. ALL medication must be received in the original container, stored according to instructions, and clearly labeled for a named child.
3. Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given according to those instructions.
4. ALL medication shall be kept out of reach of children and shall be returned to the child's parent. If you bring medication for your child, it is your responsibility to remember to take it home at the end of the day. If you bring medication for your child, it is your responsibility to remember to take it home at the end of the day. The school is under **no** obligation to drop off forgotten medication.
5. A caregiver shall give or apply any prescription or nonprescription medication according to the directions on the original container unless authorized by a written order of the child's physician. We cannot administer medication inappropriately to a child based on a parent's desire to give the child medication. This includes "sharing" of prescription medication among siblings unless all names are on the prescription.
6. Topical nonprescription medication including, but not limited to sunscreen, antibiotic cream, insect repellent . . . Requires annual written parental permission.
7. The center will maintain a record as to the time and the amount of medication given or applied with the exception of the topical medication (#6) on a form with the signature of the caregiver.
8. We will not administer aspirin under any circumstances.

In the event of a medical emergency or accident, we will first attempt to contact the parents and the child's own physician. **Part of this agreement is your authorization for WTCS to contact your family doctor and take whatever emergency medical measures are deemed necessary for the care and protection of your child enrolled at the school.**

Dealing with Disruptive Behavior

1. The adult will communicate with the child concerning the behavior with a reminder of the center rules.
2. If limits/rules are violated again, the child will be restricted from the area for the rest of the activity period and redirected to another learning center.
3. For repeated incidents or more extreme cases, the parent will be notified.

In the case of all children, open constructive communication with the child, with the parent, and with the staff is the essential factor toward the healthy emotional/social development of the child.

Appropriate Clothing

We are concerned for your child's comfort and safety at the Center. Therefore children should wear simple, durable, and washable play clothes which do not inhibit their participation in activities. A vinyl smock will be provided for painting, water play and other messy activities. Please remember that this is your child's "home" while you are at work or school. Please dress him/her in appropriate play clothes and shoes that will permit the child freedom to play and explore.

The following articles of clothing should remain in the child's bag:

- One or more pair of undergarments
- Jeans or pants
- Undershirts
- One or two pair of socks
- Shirt

An extra change of clothes is needed for "emergency" situations. Please replace the clothing that is used on the next day that your child returns. You may be called at work if your child does not have clothes to change into.

Weather/Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, outdoor activities are a part of our program. In cold weather, each child needs to have: **Hats, snow pants, mittens, boots, and a warm coat or jacket.** We discourage the use of scarves for outdoor play. The children may play outdoors unless it is raining, very windy, or below the temperature of 20 degrees. Please dress your child for outdoor play. **If your child is too ill to play outdoors, he or she is too ill to attend school.**

An extra pair of shoes or slippers, which may be left in the cubby, is also advisable. If you forget to send warm clothing for those fun, winter days outside, all children may not be able to play outside due to staff ratio: one teacher cannot be permitted to stay inside with just one child when the teacher is needed to help supervise the children outdoors.

All clothing must be labeled with your child's name. The school is not responsible for any property that is lost while the child is at the center.

Closures

Should the school need to close due to severe weather, we will contact the local TV stations (TV 9&10, Fox 32, 29&8, 7&4) and the local radio stations (99.5, 102.9, 93.9, 101.3) to announce the closure. Should there be a 2-hour delay; preschool will be canceled for the day.

Transportation

Children must be accompanied by a parent or designated adult into and out of the center or to the bus in the morning.

If you wish to have someone pick up your child other than the people that are listed on your Child Information Card as authorized to do so, please notify us in writing beforehand. *In order for WTCS to accept legal responsibility, and as a requirement set forth by the Department of Human Services (DHS), your child must be signed in and out every day by the person that drops off and picks up unless they are transported by bus.*

Field Trips

Field trips and nature walks are considered an integral part of our educational program and children may be taken periodically to nearby places such as stores, libraries, woods, fire department, etc. Staff will provide the same adequate responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided while in attendance at the school. The parents of the children are encouraged to participate on field trips and may transport children in their personal vehicles. **Your permission for your child to participate in such excursions is part of this agreement.**

Any child under the age of 4 years old is required by law to be in an approved seat. Children between the ages of 4 and 7 but under 4'9" in height are required to sit in an approved car seat. Those children 4 years and over 4'9" in height are required to wear a seat belt in the correct manner.

Field Trip Transportation Rules

1. Vehicle requirements:
 - a. seats facing forward
 - b. cab of truck only
 - c. no loose, heavy objects in passenger area
 - d. good operating condition-tires, brakes, horns, lights, wipers, etc.
 - e. restraint devices appropriate to age must be used
 - f. children and adults occupy designated seating positions- capacity in car in accordance with manufacturer's rated seating capacity
 - g. have a first aid kit
 - h. children may not share a seat belt

** Passenger vans with seating capacity of 11 or more are prohibited.

2. Driver requirements:
 - a. valid driver's license (photo copy needed in classroom)
 - b. fewer than 6 active points on driving record
 - c. carry a list of children in vehicle and parents/guardians names and phone numbers
 - d. be familiar with first aid kit
 - e. a certificate of no-fault insurance in my possession
3. If 8 or more children ride in a vehicle, there must be an aide, in addition to driver. Aide must be 16 +, seated with children, and responsible for supervision.
4. Children should enter and leave from curbside.
5. Children may not be left unattended.
6. Children need to be helped in and out of vehicle.
7. Field trips are planned so children are not in transit longer than one (1) continuous hour.

Photographs

Photographs of children participating in preschool programs may be taken from time to time, and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, or other publicity materials. WTCS may also keep scrap/picture books of the children throughout the year for everyone to enjoy. **Your permission for photographs including your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement.**

Visiting/Questionnaires/Concerns

Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom at any time. We believe that strong parent interest and involvement are essential to excellence in any early education program. We urge you to consult with the staff members whenever any significant problem regarding your child arises either at home, or at school. If you do not have the opportunity to talk with staff on such occasions, please send a note with your child to explain the situation. Any

help that you can provide, that will allow us to understand your child better will be appreciated.

In addition, we seek your involvement as a parent in the school programming, particularly following the progress of your child. We encourage you to participate in the family related programs that are scheduled during the year, more importantly; we encourage you to take advantage of opportunities for daily contact with the staff.

Toys & Other Things from Home

Parents are asked to help their child understand that it is not wise to bring to school toys or other things that he/she may not wish to share with the group. WTCS cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal possessions children bring to school.

Please do not send your child with gum or while they are chewing gum. THANK YOU!

At WTCS, we hire new employees from time to time and admit children to our programs regardless of race, color, creed, age, or sex.

WTCS Preschool has attempted through these pages to outline its duties and responsibilities, concerns, and expectations, as well as your obligations as a parent of an enrolled child. These conditions have been carefully planned in order to insure the comfort and protection of your child. As a parent, you can expect that we will adhere to all state and community licensing rules regarding fire and safety precautions, health, sanitation, and adult staffing requirements. We will do our best to provide your child with a program of education to suit his/her needs and a physical environment in which they can feel both secure and free to grow. Toward achieving these needs, we encourage and welcome your comments and suggestions, and extend our sincere thank you for your cooperation in these efforts.

WTCS reserves the right to add new policies to this handbook as needed, or to amend any existing policy, if necessary.

VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION PLAN

Care-giving staff will directly observe all adult-children interaction and the volunteer will not be alone with children at any time, including toileting children.

Each Volunteer who has not obtained a Department of Human Services (DHS) Central Registry Child Abuse/Neglect Clearance will be directly supervised by an appropriate care-giving staff member at all times.

Date. _____

Signature of Volunteer

Center Name

STAFF/PARENT/VOLUNTEER SCREENING STATEMENTS

I, _____ certify the following:

- I am aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law.
- I have been informed of the center's policies on child abuse and neglect.
- I understand that, as a caregiver, I am mandated by law to report abuse and neglect of children to my local Department of Human Services immediately. A written report will follow within 72 hours to DHS.

Signature

Date

Have you ever been involved in substantiated abuse or neglect of children?

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, explain:

Signature

Date

Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation?

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, explain:

I, _____ certify that I have a **valid driver's license, clean driving record** (less than 6 points) and that my vehicle is safe to transport children in. I have a **certificate of no-fault insurance in my possession**. I understand that all children will be properly restrained in appropriate seats. All children between the ages of 4 and 7 but under 4'9" in height need to ride in appropriate car seats. Children should not sit in front seats of cars with air bags. If necessary, the front seat will be placed as far away from the dash as possible. I have read the field trip transportation rules (as stated in parent handbook) and will follow them.

Please provide a current copy of a valid driver's license with this certification.

WTCS PRESCHOOL CONTRACT

- _____ I have read this handbook fully and understand the contents.
initial
- _____ I give my permission for my child to leave the school on walking trips or to go on
initial field trips with no more than one (1) continuous hour of riding time. Parents will
be notified prior to the field trip.
- _____ I give my permission to have my child's picture taken.
initial
- _____ I give my permission to share my name and phone number with others in the
initial class, and with the elementary school.
- _____ I give my permission for my child _____ to use a
initial topical non-prescription medication such as hand sanitizer (cleaning cream),
sunscreen, bug spray, or an antibiotic cream to scrapes. Crossed out or written in
medications will be considered NOT authorized by you and to NOT be used on
your child.

Topical Medication NOT to be given:

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____