***Wee Kare Early Education Center***

***449 Berlin St.***

***Clinton, Ma. 01510***

***Phone: 978-365-7200***

***Fax: 978-365-7201***

Owner: Kenneth Munies

Director: Stephanie Blakeman

Hours of Operation: 6:00 AM-6:00 PM

Wee Kare Early Education Center offers:

-Developmentally appropriate curriculum

-Nurturing, clean, safe, environment

-Loving and quality care

-A fun place to learn, grow, explore and create friendships with peers

Wee Kare Early Education Center is committed to meeting the needs of the children in our care as well as to adhering to the guidelines and regulations set forth by the Dept. of Early Education and Care.

The Dept. of Early Education and Care (EEC) license Wee Kare Early Education Center. The Regional Office that licenses our program is located in Worcester at 10 Austin St. EEC may be contacted at any time regarding the compliance status and compliance history of our program @ 508-798-5180.

***Educational Philosophy and Approaches:***

The primary goal of Wee Kare Early Education Center is to provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment where children can develop a positive self-concept, have an opportunity to interact, play and develop relationships with peers, as well as staff and enjoy a positive early education and care experience. Our programs are offered to all children regardless of their parent/guardians’ race, religion, sex, cultural heritage, marital status, disability, national origin or sexual orientation.

We understand that children develop at different rates and thus tailor our programs to nurture and challenge each child and meet his/her needs regarding cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and moral development.

We Kare Early Education Center follows a developmental approach. Developmentally appropriate practice responds to the child’s interests and needs as well as fosters a child’s growth in all areas and allows him/her to develop at their own pace. The social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the children will be addressed by providing them with developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language arts, fine and gross motor, art, science, music, math, and socialization in large, small and individualized settings. It is believed that children learn best through play and active hands-on experiences in their environment.

***Open Door Policy:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center has an open door policy that encourages staff members to share ideas and suggestions.It is up to the Director’s discretion for implementing such ideas and suggestions.

***Our Programs:***

***Infant Care:***

Wee Kare early Education Center offers infant care beginning at 4 weeks to 15 months.

***Toddler Care:***

Wee Kare early Education Center offers toddler care to children 15 months to 2 years 9 months.

***Pre-school:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center offers pre-school to children 2 years 9 months to 5 years.

***Before and After School Care:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center provides before and after school care to children 6 years to 12 years.

Wee Kare Early Education Center provides care from 6 AM to 6 PM Monday through Friday. Before care for school age children begins at 6 AM and ends at 6 PM.

***Care during School Vacations:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center offers care to school age children between the ages of 6 years and 12 years Monday through Friday from 6AM to 6 PM when space permits.

***Snow Day Program:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center will offer care to school age children ages 6 years through 12 years already enrolled in our before and after school program from 6 AM to 6 PM on snow days. Our snow day program will occur as weather dictates.

***Registration /Admission:***

Wee Kare Early Education center’s programs are open to all families regardless of their parent’s or guardian’s race, religion, sex, cultural heritage, marital status, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or place of residence.

Registration for Wee Kare Early Education Center is ongoing. Families must complete all registration forms, provide documentation as required by the registration process, provide complete and up-to-date medical/health information, and pay the non-refundable fee of $75.00 per child. There is no registration fee for families who are on subsidized care.

The Director establishes and manages the admissions and enrollment procedures for all of the programs offered at Wee Kare Early Education Center. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining the annual fee schedule as well as managing the billing of clients. Any staff member who receives a question from a parent, guardian or other interested party involving enrollment procedures, fees, or billing, should promptly refer the question to the Director for a response.

***Please note: The Director has final say in establishing tuition and registration fees.***

***Staffing:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center Staffs its programs with a teacher child ratio as follows:

Infants: 1 staff member to 3 infants

Toddlers: 1 staff member to 4 children

Preschool: 1 staff member to 10 children

School Age: 1 staff member to 13 students

These ratios are also state guidelines. Please note: State regulations permit 7 infants in a group with 2 staff members.

Each classroom is staffed with a lead teacher or teacher and other supporting staff members. Supporting staff members may be, other teachers or lead teachers and teaching assistants. The Director assigns teacher responsibility for each classroom.

***Statement of Non-Discrimination:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families or in its employment practices, on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by Federal, State, or local law.

***Harassment:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination or harassment based upon such factors as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, gender, pregnancy, or childbirth, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. We trust that all persons affiliated with Wee Kare Early Education Center, including staff members, will act responsibly to establish a pleasant working environment free of discrimination.

Harassment includes verbal, physical and visual conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment or that interferes with work performance. Some examples include epithets, slurs, jokes, or other derogatory comments or gestures; posting of offensive statements, posters, drawings, cartoons; physical interference with normal work or movement; or other similar conduct. (See also the sexual harassment policy below).

You should treat any such incident as a grievance, to be promptly reported to the Director according to the Complaint Resolution below.

***Sexual Harassment:***

Sexual harassment is a particular type of harassment. It constitutes unlawful sex discrimination and includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

* Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment.
* Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
* Such conduct has the purpose effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Specific examples of prohibited sexual harassment include:

**Verbal:**  sexual innuendos, suggestive or insulting comments or sounds, jokes or teasing of a sexual nature, sexual propositions or threats, continuing to express personal interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome;

**Visual:** sexually suggestive objects, pictures or letters; leering, whistling, or obscene gestures;

**Physical:** unwanted physical contact, including assault, sexual intercourse, touching, pinching, brushing the body or impeding or blocking movement.

Consistent with our general harassment policy, provided above, Wee Kare Early Education Center is committed to providing a workplace environment free of sexual harassment. Wee Kare Early Education Center policy prohibits sexual harassment by managers, supervisors, co-workers, agents or persons doing business with Wee Kare Early Education Center.

If you believe that you have been sexually harassed, or find your work environment to be offensive, it is very important that you bring this to the Director’s attention immediately. You should treat any such incidence as a grievance, to be promptly reported to the Director according to the Complaint Resolution procedure described below.

If, after investigation, it is determined that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, effective remedial action against the involved individual will be taken, consistent with the circumstances involved. Harassment in the workplace by any staff member will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Work related sexual harassment by vendors, clients, or other persons not employed by or otherwise closely affiliated with Wee Kare Early Education Center will be dealt with to the fullest practical extent. The remedial action taken by Wee Kare Early Education Center will be made known to the complaining staff member. Wee Kare Early Education Center will not tolerate retaliation against a staff member complaining of sexual harassment by any person.

Wee Kare early Education Center recognizes that the question of whether a particular action or incident is a purely personal, social relationship without a discriminatory employment effect requires a factual determination based on all facts in the matter. Given the nature of this type of discrimination, Wee Kare Early Education Center also recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment can have serious effects on men and women. Anyone who knowingly files a false accusation of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Finally, staff members are advised that the United States Equal Opportunity Commission and the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination also investigate and prosecute complaints of unlawful harassment in employment. Any staff member who believes he/she has a complaint of sexual harassment may file a complaint regarding incidents of unlawful sexual harassment with the local offices of either or both of these government agencies. The addresses and phone numbers of these organizations are listed on line and in the government listing of the phone book.

***Complaint Re and they should be managed solution:***

In every organization there are many differences of opinion about work-related situations and they should be managed or otherwise handled. Wee Kare Early Education Center’s policy is to provide staff members with an opportunity to present their complaints and appeal any decisions made by other Wee Kare Early Education Center staff members.

Wee Kare Early Education Center believes that no problem or complaint should be ignored or treated lightly. In most cases the problem or complaint is genuine and important to the person involved. Good judgment and sincerity in dealing in this area can be instrumental in building team work and motivation required for a successful program. Wee Kare Early Education Center seeks to resolve complaints or grievances fairly and promptly.

A grievance is a staff member’s expressed feeling of satisfaction concerning conditions of employment or treatment by Wee Kare Early Education Center personnel, agents and vendors. The following steps are available to any Wee Kare Early Education Center staff member who has a grievance.

* Address the matter with the lead teacher assigned to the classroom in which the incident occurs or to which it most closely relates.
* Address the matter with the Director

If the aggrieved staff member wishes to pursue the complaint, the next step in the grievance process is for the aggrieved staff member to promptly file a written request to the Director stating the nature of the problem, the efforts that the aggrieved staff member has made to resolve the problem, if any, the outcome of those efforts as well as the relief requested by the staff member. If the complaint is being made against the Director/owner, the aggrieved staff member should simultaneously provide a written request to the Director/owner.

Every grievance that is brought forward will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner. Depending upon the nature of the grievance, the grievance may be investigated by the outside agency (s) or authority (s) as deemed necessary or appropriate. In deciding how to investigate a grievance applicable laws or regulations must be considered.

Wee Kare Early Education Center will not retaliate against a staff member for filing a grievance or for cooperating in an investigation of a grievance. If a grievance is established, Wee Kare Early Education Center will discipline the offender, up to and including termination. Further, if Wee Kare Early Education Center concludes that a grievance was filed by a staff member who knew or should have known that the grievance was false, Wee Kare Early Education Center may discipline the staff member, up to and including termination.

*About Your Job:*

**Hiring Practices:**

The Director is responsible for hiring all staff members of Wee Kare Early Education Center. Wee Kare Early Education Center hopes that all persons who accept an offer of employment from Wee Kare Early Education Center are expecting to make a commitment to Wee Kare Early Education Center for at least one year.

***Initial Offers of Employment:***

No offer of employment to a perspective new staff member can be made until a CORI,DCF, and SORI has been complete. An offer to a perspective new staff member becomes final on completion of the process. An invitation letter, starting compensation rate and job description will be given when the program orientation is scheduled. The perspective new staff member will be asked to sign the invitation letter and job description and return the signed originals to the Director for inclusion in their personnel file. The new staff member will receive copies of the signed documents.

***Initial Compensation:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center pays all staff members by the hour, at rates that are set prior to hiring. In establishing rates of pay, Wee Kare Early Education Center may consider the particular position being filled by the staff member, the staff member’s educational credentials and prior experience, as well as rates of pay set by other centers of similar size with similar programs to those of Wee kare Early Education Center. Wee Kare Early Education Center’s practices on wage review and potential increases for staff members are set forth under “wage review” later on in this handbook. The wage ranges for each staff position at Wee Kare Early Education Center are set forth in Appendix A.

***Qualifications and General Record Keeping:***

Wee Kare early Education Center seeks to employ qualified professionals who share its philosophy of early childhood development and are committed to furthering the excellence of i’s programs. The Director, Lead teachers, and teachers must be certified through the state of Massachusetts, meet the requirements of applicable state laws and regulations, as well as meet other Wee Kare early Education Center requirements. Wee Kare Early Education Center requires that each staff member, upon hire or at any other time deemed necessary or appropriate by Wee Kare Early Education Center provide it with documentation confirming required certification.

***Health Related Requirements:***

According to EEC regulations, before Wee Kare Early Education Center may employ any person, it must require from the person a certification from a physician that certain health requirements have been met. The health requirements include the following:

* Evidence that the perspective employee has had a physical examination within one year prior of employment;
* Evidence of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
* a negative Mantoux TB test according to current Department of Health regulations; and
* a statement of any physical limitations in working with children, if, any. Thus prospective employees must be prepared to submit appropriate health certification to Wee Kare Early Education Center.
* Repeat physical examinations and TB tests are required every two years.

All costs of these health related requirements are the responsibility of each staff member.

***Criminal Offender Record Investigation (CORI):***

Each staff member, volunteer, intern or student teacher, or other person who works with the children of Wee Kare Early Education Center and has direct contact with children must have a background that is free of conduct that adversely upon his/her ability to care for or have contact with children. In accordance with applicable Massachusetts’ regulations Wee Kare Early Education Center requires any person who is offered a temporary position either as an employee, intern, or volunteer, satisfactorily complete the CORI check.

Staff members will be re-coried in accordance with current EEC regulations. Any questions about these regulations should be presented to the Director.

***Returning Staff:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center must retain flexibility in determining whether to invite staff members to return in subsequent years. In general and as business needs permit, Wee Kare Early Education Center welcomes an ongoing relationship with qualifies staff members who have performed well in their positions at Wee Kare Early Education Center.

Unless a staff member has been notified that his/her performance has been unsatisfactory or that Wee Kare Early Education Center will decrease the size of its staff due to budgeting or enrollment constraints, usually Wee Kare early Education center will invite the staff member to return for the next year.

At the staff members’ yearly review, the Director will notify the staff member of whether she /he will be invited to return for another year. Wee Kare Early Education Center will provide staff members who are invited to return with an invitation letter, their compensation rate for the next year and a job description. Staff members will be asked to sign the invitation letter and job description and return the signed originals to the Director for inclusion in their files. Staff members will receive copies of the signed documents.

Wee Kare Early Education Center does not promise that staff members who are invited to return for another year will receive the same schedule or the same number of work hours as they received the previous year.

***Initial Employment Period:***

Every person newly hired at Wee Kare Early Education Center is considered to be on a probation period for the first ninety days of employment. The probation period permits the new staff member to become familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the position and to demonstrate the ability to perform the job. It also permits Wee Kare Early Education Center to evaluate the new staff member’s ability to perform, as well as compatibility with Wee Kare Early Education Center and its educational philosophy. The ninety day probation period may be extended at the discretion of the Director.

The Director holds one-one meetings with the new staff member during the ninety day probation period to provide feedback and afford the staff member an opportunity to give input. If the Director has serious concerns about long-term compatibility of the staff member and Wee Kare Early Education Center, the new staff member will be so notified in writing before the end of the probation period. At the same time, the new staff member will be informed whether he/she will be invited to stay on at Wee Kare Early Education Center or not, and if so, under what conditions.

A documented account of serious concerns that were identified during the probation period will be shared with the staff member if the staff member is terminated by the Director.

***Orientation:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center provides an orientation for all new staff members. The Director is responsible for conducting the orientation. Usually the Director will conduct the orientation before the start date of the new staff member. The orientation will last between 2-3 hours.

At orientation the Director will provide staff members with all the information listed on the checklist provided by EEC as well as the parent handbook, employee handbook and any other information that pertains to Wee Kare Early Education Center.

The Director will provide staff members with modifications as they occur.

During orientation the Director will review the parent handbook, employee handbook, all documents on the EEC checklist, the health care policy, as well as the job descriptions. You are encouraged to ask questions that you may have about Wee Kare Early Education Center policies and procedures during the orientation. Of course, Wee Kare Early Education Center welcomes questions or constructive comments about such matters at any time and you should always feel free to discuss these matters with the Director.

***Continuing Education and Professional Development Training:***

***Requirements***

All staff members are required to continue training in early childhood development, for at least the number hours specified by current EEC regulations. The purpose of this requirement is to increase the skills and competence of the staff. The number of training hours varies depending upon the number of hours each individual staff member works. Currently Wee Kare Early Education Center requires full time employees to document at least 20 hours per year of training; part time employees who work 0-10 hours per week must document 5 training hours per year, 10-20 hours 12 hours per year, over 20 hours 20 hours per year, 1/3 of training hours must be with diverse learners. Wee Kare will provide two mandatory in house training days on Presidents Day and Columbus Day each year where the center will be closed for professional development.

***Procedures:***

On an ongoing basis, the Director will make information about possible continuing education and training available to staff members. Information on workshops, courses, conferences, and the like are available from the Director, who will provide them in a designated area in the office. Possible training opportunities are not limited to the ones provided by the Director. Staff members are encouraged to discuss specific continuing education or training opportunities with the Director and obtain advanced approval for any program in which the staff member wishes to participate.

Staff members must document all training hours on the EEC registry and provide the Director with documentation as well. The documentation should include the date(s) of training, time/duration, presenter’s names, topics addressed and to whom trainings were provided or made available for. Keeping the EEC registry active and current is the responsibility of each staff member.

***Tuition and Other Expenses:***

Most workshops, and courses and conferences will have fees associated with them. Each staff member is responsible for all fees associated with continuing education training, including travel, books, and materials. Staff members are not compensated for the time they spend pursing continuing education or training opportunities. Professional Development reimbursement will be looked at on a case to case basis.

***Job Descriptions:***

Current job descriptions of all paid staff positions at Wee Kare Early Education Center are attached at the end of the handbook.

You should direct any questions regarding your job responsibilities to the Director for clarification.

***Employee Status:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center’s staff members are hired in an employment status as follows:

* Full time, an authorized position with a regular work schedule of at least thirty hours per week.
* Part time, an authorized position with a regular work schedule of less than thirty hours per week.
* Temporary employees fulfill a short-term regular schedule of hours.
* Substitute employees are hired on an as needed basis and do not maintain a regular schedule. At any time during employment, staff members may be offered or may request a change in status. The Director will consider the best interests of the children, the staff, and Wee Kare Early Education Center when making any decisions about a change in status.
* Staff hired on or after March 1, 2015 will receive a childcare discount off tuition. The discount will be based off of years of service. (\*\*Infant tuition discount caps at 50% off\*\*) If you receive state assistants you can only qualify for one discount.

**Teaching Staff Full Time: Directors Full Time:**

First Year and under: 50% off First Year and under: 60% off

First Year to Second Year: 60% off First Year to Second year: 70%

Second Year Plus: 70% off Second Year Plus: 80%

***Director Supervision of Staff Members:***

The Director is responsible for supervising staff members and will hold one-one meetings with each staff member at least once every two months. The Director will observe and document each staff member’s performance and discuss the observation and documentation at the one-one meetings.

***Performance Appraisals:***

The Director reviews each staff member’s performance at least once a year. Performance reviews usually occur on the staff member’s first anniversary and each anniversary after that. The staff member will receive a written review. The Director holds one-one meetings with staff members throughout the year and provides feedback to staff members during those meetings as well.

Performance reviews generally include a review of the staff member’s job performance during the preceding period, his/her conformance to Wee Kare Early Education Center policies and procedures, attainment of any previously set goals and objectives, the staff member’s comments and any performance or other goals for the next evaluation period. Factors that Wee Kare Early Education Center may consider in the job performance appraisal include knowledge of the job, quantity and quality of work, attendance and punctuality, promptness in completing assignments, cooperation, initiative, reliability, and acceptance of responsibility. Each staff member will have the opportunity to review the written evaluation, provide a self-evaluation, and make written comments in response to the written evaluation prior to the final performance review meeting.

Staff members must sign their evaluations. A staff member’s signature indicates receipt of the evaluation; it does not indicate that the staff member agrees with the substance of the evaluation. Wee Kare Early Education Center keeps original signed evaluations for staff member files and staff members will receive a copy for their own records.

***Promotions:***

Promotions at Wee Kare Early Education Center are necessarily dependent upon the availability of a higher position category and a staff member’s ability to meet the required professional qualifications. Usually a staff member can be considered for promotion at Wee Kare Early Education Center only when that staff member has obtained further education and increased experience and demonstrated an ability to accept greater responsibility in the classroom. Staff members interested in furthering their education or increasing their experience are encouraged to speak with the Director.

***Personnel Records:***

***Content***

Wee Kare Early Education Center establishes personnel files as a record of employment for all staff members. Usually personnel files include the following records:

1. Employment form, including the new hire orientation or staff orientation form.
2. Performance evaluations
3. References
4. Notices of salary adjustments
5. Staff member education and training records
6. Notices of counseling or disciplinary action
7. Documentation relating to required health requirements
8. Documentation of CPR and First Aid training
9. CRI results
10. Staff information form (name, address, telephone number etc.)
11. Copies of educational transcripts, diplomas, or certificates
12. State specific licensing requirements and trainings
13. Resume

It is important that these are accurate and current. Wee Kare Early Education Center staff members individually bear some responsibility for maintaining their accuracy. For example, staff members are responsible for informing the Director of any change of name, address, telephone number, or emergency contact. Additional documentation, such as letters of commendation, may be added to a staff member’s file.

Legislation mandates that employees be given the right to their personnel records. The law provides that if an employee submits a written request to review or copy their personnel file, the employer must provide this opportunity within 5 business days. The file must be reviewed or copied at the work place during normal business hours. At Wee Kare Early Education Center any member may review his/her personnel file upon request to the Director.

***Confidentiality:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center believes in respecting the rights and dignity of each staff member. Therefore, it is Wee Kare Early Education Center’s policy to limit/control the collection, maintenance, use and disclosure of information retained in staff member’s personnel files. To this extent, Wee Kare Early Education Center seeks to adhere to the following:

* Collect, use and retain personnel information about a staff member that is required for business or legal reasons.
* Provide each staff member the opportunity to inspect and verify the accuracy of information in his/her personnel file.
* Limit the internal availability of personal information to those individuals/agencies with a business “need to know”.
* Refuse, except in specific circumstances, to release information to outside sources without the staff member’s written or verbal approval. Exceptions include employment verification and legal requirements such as employment dates and positon (s) held.

***General Policies:***

***Consistency of Care***

***Attendance and Punctuality***

Dependability is essential to providing quality care at Wee Kare Early Education Center. When you are absent from work, someone has to take your place so that scheduled programs can continue for the children. For example, a co-worker may have to sacrifice a day or other time off to cover for an absent staff member. Also, staff absences can be troubling for the children and disrupt the flow of the day, for both the children and other staff. Staff members are thus encouraged to limit absences to the extent reasonably possible.

***Staff Member Absences Due to Illness and Chronic Absences:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center recognizes that there will be times when staff members become ill. All staff are expected to use good judgment in deciding when to stay home from work because of temporary illness and should consider not only their wellbeing but the equally important health of the children and other staff members. When in doubt, you should let the Director help you decide. The Director may require a doctor’s note verifying illness of any staff member.

A poor attendance record (excessive absences or late arrivals, even 5 minutes per day) regardless of reason or notification, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

***Basic Guidelines for Absences:***

Staff members who will be absent or tardy should follow these basic guidelines:

* Arrange for a substitute
* Call the Director 24 hours in advance if possible
* In an emergency, call the Director at least one hour before your scheduled time to arrive if possible
* You must call personally, except in the case of an emergency
* You should check with the Director well in advance of your scheduled start time each day of continued absences unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.
* If late, you must call and confirm that you will report to work and give your estimated time of arrival.

***Daily Schedule:***

***Assignments***

Work hours and classroom assignments for all classes and other programs are set by the Director, who is responsible for ensuring that Wee Kare Early Education Center programs are properly staffed at all times. The Director may consider staff member requests in scheduling their work hours and classroom assignments. Ultimately, however, the Director must establish work schedules based primarily on Wee Kare Early Education Center programmatic needs, including the number of children enrolled in any given program and health and safety needs of the children. If and when changes to your hours are made, your salary will be adjusted accordingly.

***Supervising the Classroom:***

The Director has general managerial responsibility for all staff members. However, on a day-to-day basis in the classroom, the lead teacher assigned ass head of the classroom supervises supporting staff assigned for that particular classroom or program involved.

***Presenting a United Front and Resolving Differences Privately:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center expects supporting staff members to respectfully accept direction from the lead teacher assigned to the classroom. If a supporting staff member has a question or concern about anything that occurs during a preschool session or other program, he/she should first discuss the matter confidentially with the lead teacher, as soon as the circumstances permit. Supporting staff members should avoid challenging the lead teacher who is head of the classroom publicly or in front of the children.

Wee Kare Early Education Center encourages staff members to make all reasonable efforts to resolve issues of disagreement amongst themselves. However, if a dispute does arise about a work related should promptly him/herself discuss the situation with the Director.

***Work Hours:***

Staff members who are assigned to open the center must be punctual, you are responsible for turning on the lights and preparing the classroom for the children’s arrival.

The Director may require staff members to work beyond their regular hours. Staff members who work beyond their regular hours on a specific day may request that the Director adjust their hours on another day, but such adjustment is discretionary with the Director. Staff members are of course compensated for any extra time that they work, at their normal rate of pay.

***Breaks:***

All staff members will receive a ½ hour lunch break if you work 6 hours. A fifteen minute break will be given to staff members who work 4 hours. All breaks will be scheduled by the Director. Staff members are compensated for their ½ hour and 15 minute breaks that are scheduled and approved by the Director. Compensation is at the normal rate of pay.

***Staff and Curriculum Meetings:***

According to EEC regulations, the Director holds staff meetings every month. Curriculum meetings will follow staff meetings. Meetings will be held after the school day and all staff members are required to attend. Staff members are compensated for up to 2 hours per meeting at their normal rate of pay.

***Parent Teacher Conferences:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center holds parent-teacher conferences every 3 months for infants, toddlers and children with disabilities, twice a year (every 6 months) for preschoolers and once a year for school age children. Lead teachers are responsible for writing and conducting parent-teacher conferences. On occasion and with prior approval from the Director, other staff members may attend, for example, for training purposes.

The first conference will be held three months for infants, toddlers and students with disabilities and 6 months for preschoolers after your child’s enrollment date and every three months for infants, toddlers and children with disabilities and every 6 months for preschoolers after that. School age children will have a conference at the end of their school year. For these conferences, the lead teacher will prepare a written progress report, which is shared with the enrolled child’s parent/guardian. This report focuses on the child’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and moral development. Lead teachers should share with parents/guardians the progress of each child and any concerns that may have arisen with respect to the child in the classroom.

Staff members must also be available to meet with parents/guardians throughout the school year, on parent-teacher conference nights and upon parent request.

Additional information about parent-teacher conferences is provided in Wee Kare Early Education Center’s Parent Handbook.

***Confidential Information:***

During your time at Wee Kare Early Education Center, you may be exposed to information regarding children, families, and other staff members that is sensitive and confidential. Such information should never be discussed casually. It is extremely important that you keep discussions with parents and staff on a professional level. If you hear something sensitive being discussed outside of Wee Kare Early Education Center or are asked about a matter that relates to a child enrolled in the center or his/her family and are concerned about the appropriateness of participating in the discussion, you should treat your knowledge of the matter as confidential and refrain from sharing what you know. After that, you may refer the question to the Director, if you wish. Even casual remarks can be misinterpreted and repeated so you will need to maintain confidentiality at all times. Disclosure of confidential information is a serious matte rand may be considered cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

***Custody Issues:***

Occasionally, child care centers such as Wee Kare Early Education Center are placed in difficult positions by parents who are involved in custody disputes. In the absence of a court order, Wee Kare Early Education Center cannot deny a parent access to his/her child. Even with a court order, our ability to deny access is limited to notifying promptly the custodial parent and the proper police authority. Difficulties of this type must be discussed with the Director. Staff members are instructed not to place themselves or the other children at Wee Kare Early Education Center in jeopardy to mediate a family dispute or to attempt to enforce a court order.

***Electronic Communication:***

All aspects of Wee Kare Early Education Center’s computer, technology and communication systems are the property of Wee Kare Early Education Center and are provided by Wee Kare Early Education Center only for use in conduct of Wee Kare Early Education Center business or work related matters. Any personal use of electronic systems is expected to be incidental and kept to a minimum.

***Cell Phones:***

The use of cell phones during work hours is prohibited unless otherwise instructed by the Director. Cell phones may be used during break times only.

***Telephone:***

The telephone at Wee Kare Early Education Center is a business telephone. It must be readily available for business use and must be kept clear in the event of an emergency for communication with parents and work related business.

***Keys:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center provides staff members with keys to the entrance of Wee Kare Early Education Center. Keys are to be used exclusively for access to Wee Kare Early Education Center by staff members to whom they are issued and for no other purpose.

***Please Note:* Keys will be issued to staff members who will open and close the center only.**

***Professional Appearance:***

Staff members are required to present themselves in a manner that allows comfort, flexibility, and ensures safety as they perform their jobs, while at the same time allows the staff member to be viewed with credibility by a parent or visitor. Appropriate clothing, jewelry, and nail length will allow you to bend, get down on the floor and work with a variety of materials in close contact with young children. All staff members are expected to represent Wee Kare Early Education Center as professionals in both appearance as well as in interactions with children and adults.

Male employees are required to wear neat and clean khakis, slacks, professional jeans free of rips and tears, shorts, (Bermuda length) sweaters, tops, (logo free) and shoes. (Skin bearing clothing along with t-shirts, shorts, pajamas attire and sandals of any kind are unacceptable.) Hair color should be professional and or natural.

Female employees are required to wear neat and clean khakis, slacks, professional jeans free of rips and tears, shorts, (Bermuda length) sweaters, tops, (logo free) and shoes. (Skin bearing clothing along with t-shirts, shorts, yoga pants, leggings worn as pants, pajamas attire and sandals of any kind are unacceptable.) Hair color should be professional and or natural.

An employee may be sent home to redress for work if the Director sees fit.

Visible tattoos and facial piercings are not allowed.

All employees shall maintain grooming and attire standards, which bear a reasonable relationship to their work.

***Transportation:***

***To and From Wee Kare Early Education Center***

Parents are responsible for transporting their own children to and from Wee Kare Early Education Center. Parents have the responsibility for their child and his/her wellbeing until the child enters the classroom and is acknowledged by a teacher. Only after a child has entered the classroom, does it become the responsibility of Wee Kare Early Education Center’s staff members to care for that child. Some children will be dropped off by the public school bus for after school care. The Director will assign a staff member to meet the bus and safely escort the children into the classroom as soon as they are dropped off the bus. Unless parents have previously notified the program of the child’s absence or alternative arrival time, a teacher or the director shall immediately notify parents (or emergency contacts, if necessary), if/when a child, who is transported by a transportation provider, does not arrive at child care within 30 minutes of his/her scheduled arrival time.

***Field Trips:***

Children will be transported to and from field trips by a school bus. Under no circumstances may a staff member drive or transport children enrolled at Wee Kare Early Education Center. Furthermore, staff owned vehicles may not be used to transport children to or from any field trip.

***Medical Emergencies:***

In the event of an emergency, parents will be notified immediately. If the nature of the emergency so indicates, a Wee Kare Early Education Center staff member will call 911. Children will be transported to the University of Massachusetts Medical Center (University Campus) or another designated medical treatment facility, either by the child’s parent/guardian or by ambulance. If the injured child is to be transported to the hospital by ambulance, and a parent/guardian is not available to go, The Director or lead teacher must accompany the child to the hospital and stay with the child until a family member arrives. If needed to maintain a legal staffing ratio, a staff member on site must make every effort to call in a substitute teacher, volunteer, or parent to cover the Director or lead teacher’s absence.

***Emergency Situations and Evacuation:***

***Fire, Natural or Man Made Disaster***

Staff members must remain alert for any threatened or actual emergency inside or in the vicinity of the building. Such emergencies include fire, natural disaster, such as a hurricane or tornado and manmade disaster. Any staff member who becomes aware of an actual or threatened emergency should immediately notify the Director.

In case of an actual or threatened emergency in or around the building, the Director must first determine whether it is safe to evacuate. In making this determination, the Director should contact either the Clinton Fire Department. If it is not safe to evacuate, the Director will notify the staff, and under these circumstances, Wee Kare Early Education Center staff members and children are to remain in the building until further notice.

***Evacuation:***

If evacuation is indicated, the staff members are to take the children outside to a location designated by the Director. This may be the playground area, the parking lot, the front of the building or another location recommended by the Clinton Fire/Police Department.

Wee Kare Early Education Center practices an evacuation procedure with the children once a month. This procedure is reviewed by the Director with staff members at various times of the day and with all age groups. At the sound of the alarm/bell, the children should be instructed to stop what they are doing and walk quietly to the main classroom door. The Director will assign one of the staff members to take the attendance clipboard, go to the front of the line and lead the children down the stairway closest to the classroom and out the closest door. Another staff member will be asked to check the building for any remaining children and staff. Staff members and children will then all gather outside in the designated location and the staff member who had the attendance clipboard will promptly take attendance to make sure that all the children are present and accounted for.

If the stairway closest to the classroom is not available, the staff member in charge will quickly determine the next safest exit and lead the children to safety.

If we do evacuate the building, everyone will remain outside until it is safe to re-enter. In the case of an ongoing emergency, where it is not safe to re-enter the building, the Director will try to contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible to let them know what happened and where the children are located. If the telephone lines and cell phone lines are not working, the Director will ask emergency personnel to contact the parent/guardians.

Wee Kare Early Education Center will dismiss children to their parents/guardians at the designate location and staff members must remain at that location until all of the children have been dismissed.

***Loss of Power, Heat, or Water:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center will not operate our programs without appropriate availability of power, heat, or water. Staff members should promptly notify the Director if they become aware of a problem with any Wee Kare Early Education Center systems. If Wee Kare Early Education center is to be closed because of deficiency in any of these systems, the Director will notify the parents/guardians before the time that the day usually begins. If we lose power, heat, or water while we are in session, a staff member will notify parents/guardians to come and pick up their child/ren. Children will only be dismissed to a parent/guardian or other authorized person by the parent/guardian.

***Inclement Weather Conditions:***

In case of inclement weather, we will open unless a state of emergency is issued.

***About Your Pay:***

Staff members are paid on a bi-weekly basis. Initial payments may lag one or two weeks behind a staff member’s starting date. Staff members receive a check issued from Wee Kare Early Education Center. Staff members are not permitted to receive advances against future earnings; they will only receive actual wages due, on regular pay days.

***Time Sheets and Records:***

All staff members are required to complete an individual time sheet showing the days and hours worked. The time sheets cover a two week period and should be signed by the staff member at the end of the pay period. Staff members are paid their regular hourly wage for actual hours worked as scheduled and approved by the Director.

***Wage Review:***

Actual wage increases are first and foremost dependent upon the ability of Wee Kare Early Education Center to financially support the adjustment. If funds are available for wage increases during any particular fiscal year, wage increases will be awarded according to staff member’s level of performance and job responsibilities. Even if funds are available for wage increases in any fiscal year, poor or unacceptable performance will not merit an increase. In some cases, wage increases may be deferred for a specific period of time pending improved performance.

***Guidelines for Working with Children:***

***Children’s Arrival and Departure***

Parent/guardians must accompany children directly to the classroom. A Wee Kare Early Education Staff member will sign in the children as they arrive. Maintaining accurate daily attendance records is crucial to safe care.

Staff members should make every effort to recognize and greet each child and parent/guardian as they arrive each day. Staff members must also complete daily attendance (arrival and departure) records for each child. Under no circumstance may a parent leave a child at Wee Kare Early Education Center prior to opening.

The importance of making sure that a child is picked up by an authorized person cannot be overemphasized. Staff members must know this policy thoroughly and follow it without hesitation. Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written approval are allowed to take a child from Wee Kare Early Education Center. Any newly authorized person, or person with whom staff members are not familiar as an approved party, must be asked to present adequate identification before a child is released. Children are not allowed to leave Wee Kare Early Education Center unless accompanied by an approved individual.

***Presenting a United Front and resolving Differences Privately:***

Wee Kare Early Education Center expects supporting staff members to respectfully accept direction and guidance from the lead teacher assigned to the classroom. If a supporting staff member has a question or concern about anything that occurs during a pre-school session or any other program, he/she should first discuss the matter confidentially with the lead teacher, as soon as the circumstances permit. Supporting staff members should avoid challenging the lead teacher who is head of the classroom publicly or in front of the children.

Wee Kare Early Education encourages staff members to make all reasonable efforts to resolve issues of disagreement amongst themselves. However, if a dispute does arise about a work related situation, which cannot be promptly resolved between persons involved, the complaining staff member should promptly himself/herself discuss the situation with the Director.

***Guidelines for Working with Children:***

***Supervising Children:***

Discipline and guidance given to a child at Wee Kare Early Education Center will be consistent and based upon understanding the individual needs and level of development of a particular child. The goal of all discipline at Wee Kare early Education Center is to maximize the growth and development of the children, while protecting the group and the individuals in it. Our ultimate aim is for children to learn self- control. We take a positive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors. Care will be taken that all safety rules and limits are clearly explained to the children frequently so they feel secure that the adults are in charge and care enough to keep them safe. If talking with a child and/or an explanation of “acceptable behavior” is not sufficient, then redirection might be necessary as a calming method, not as a punishment. The child is allowed to return to the group activity following redirection when he or she feels ready to do so. “Time out” is not a behavioral management tool the we will use with your child(ren).

In any case however, Wee Kare Early Education Center strictly prohibits the following:

* Spanking or other corporal punishment
* Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment.
* depriving children of meals and snacks
* force feeding children
* disciplining a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toiletry
* labeling or “name calling” such as “bad boy” or “naughty girl”. Wee Kare Early Education Center believes that it is always the behavior that is unacceptable and not the child.

***Reporting Suspecting Violations of Wee Kare Early Education Center:***

If any staff member has a concern that another staff member may have violated Wee Kare Early Education Center’s behavior management policy, the concerned staff member should use the procedure afforded by the complaint resolution mentioned previously in this handbook.

***Managing Infectious Diseases:***

Staff members should wash their hands often. The following procedures apply:

***Immunizations:***

The Director is responsible for monitoring the staff member’s and children’s files to ensure that all Massachusetts Board of Health regulations are met for immunizations and that physical examination s are up-to-date.

***Health Care Consultant:***

The information for Wee Kare Early Education Center’s current health care consultant is attached. The Director should notify the health care consultant of any outbreak of infectious disease at Wee Kare Early Education Center, within 24 hours.

***Signs of Infectious Disease:***

Staff members are required to be alert for sign of infectious diseases including but not limited to the following: impetigo, conjunctivitis, herpes, and streptococcal infections. Some typical signs of infectious disease are rashes, fever, sore throat, diarrhea, discharge from the eyes or lesions around the mouth. Staff members must report any signs of any infectious disease in a child to the lead teacher of the classroom.

If there is any question about possible symptoms of infectious disease, the Director should call the health care consultant for assistance and a recommendation of whether the child should be permitted to remain at the center or should be sent home.

***If Signs or Symptoms of Infectious Disease are Present:***

**Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form:**

**We are happy to have you on board at Wee Kare Early Education Center and are pleased to provide you with the Employee Handbook.**

**We hope the handbook helps you understand Wee Kare’s culture and expectations, and that they will continue to serve you as a general reference.**

**If you have any questions about the handbook or about working at Wee Kare, please speak with your director.**

**Since the information provided in this handbook is critical to our shared success, we use this form to document that you have received the “Employee Handbook”.**

**Please complete and sign below:**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**I received and understand the “Employee Handbook”**

**I commit to speaking with my director if I have any questions.**

**Employee Signature Date**

**Director Signature Date**