

Parent's Handbook

STATEMENT OF POLICIES

MSUM Early Education Center
106A Lommen Hall • 477-2214

The Center has these phone lines:

Most calls should be directed to: 218-477-2214 (Director)

Lommen 110: 218-477-2398

Lommen 115: 218-477-2028

Kitchen and Lommen 114: 218-477-2032

Classroom by the gym: 218-477-2029

Teachers' Office: 218-477-2031

If you have an **emergency** call, please make that clear and ask that a message be delivered immediately.





What is accreditation?

Early childhood programs accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance with the Academy's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs, and been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria. A copy of the Criteria can be obtained from the Academy.

The Early Education Center has been accredited since 1987.

****All program information will be provided in another language when needed. Please let us know if there is anything more we can do to make you and your family comfortable in our center.**

Statement of Philosophy

Our child centered curriculum is designed by the lead teachers to be developmentally appropriate and supported by the Creative Curriculum framework. This collective curriculum addresses the central aspects of child development and assessment, focusing on individual needs of children and families. (2.A.01)

The Early Education Center offers educational opportunities for young children to explore and learn about themselves and their environment. Children will be able to participate in activities designed to promote their emotional, social and physical growth.

We believe that every child is entitled to experiences and education appropriate to her/his individual needs. Therefore, we are continually striving to provide the environment and activities which facilitate optimal growth and development of the whole child.

Our Center policies and practices support diversity among children, families, and staff. We encourage the acceptance of each person as an individual. No one will be discriminated against because of race, color, sex, age, ability, or national origin. The adults and children will help each other become aware of stereotypes and biases, and they will work to eliminate them from relationships in our program.

Each group of children will have a certified teacher plus at least one teacher aid. Our teachers are professionals with a college degree and specific training in early childhood. They are able to promote the acceptance of "self" and others, encourage problem solving, communication, and provide a caring, consistent role model for young children. The child's teacher will be the main contact for the parents. However, the director is also available to confer with parents.

Since we believe parents are an integral part of their child's program, our goal is to have them involved in their child's activities, whenever possible. We encourage them to grow in their parenting skills through educational programs, interaction with professionals, and through sharing with other parents.

The program seeks to work with other university departments, students, and the community to meet the needs of the children enrolled and their families. We value cooperation and collaboration as effective means to solving problems and we encourage adults and children to learn and practice these skills.

Objectives

The following are some basic objectives for our program. The children will:

1. Enjoy learning
2. Develop socially and emotionally
3. Be exposed to a diverse population where learning respect for self and others is an ongoing objective
4. Gain skill in communicating
5. Increase auditory and visual skills
6. Develop muscular coordination (both gross and fine motor) within the limits of her/his physical maturation
7. Solve problems independently and collaboratively through play and exploration of their surroundings
8. Increase their ability to think independently, make decisions, and perceive possibilities in open-ended situations
9. Grow in basic math and prereading skills
10. Creatively participate in art and music while learning the proper use of the tools and instruments related to these areas.

Absences

If your child will not be coming to the Center on a particular day, please call 477-2214. The State of Minnesota requires parents to inform the center within 24 hours if a child is diagnosed as having a contagious disease or lice. The center will, in turn, notify the other parents whose children may be affected.

Accidents and Emergencies

A minor injury will be reported to parents when they pick up the child. If an accident requires medical assistance, we will contact the child's parents or guardian and call his/her clinic. In an emergency we will alert 911. The center will not transport children for medical care.

Assessment

Assessments are an integral piece of our program. Our program uses assessments to support children's learning, using a variety of methods such as observations, checklists, rating scales, work sampling and individually administered evaluations. (4.A.01)

Families are encouraged to be involved in planning and implementing assessments. (4.A.02)

A Guide to Assessment of Children at the MSUM Early Education Center:

1. Why do we assess children?
 - To monitor development and learning
 - To guide our lesson planning and decision making
 - To identify children who might benefit from special services
 - To report information to families
 - To know what areas of the program need improvement
2. How do we assess children?
 - Informally through methods such as observation, checklists, rating scales, and work sampling
 - Other techniques such as anecdotal notes, documenting activities and achievements with photographs, and daily communication with family members
 - Engaging in conversations with parents, family and other staff to gain additional insight
3. What developmental areas do we assess?
 - Cognitive skills
 - Language
 - Social/Emotional
 - Approaches to Learning
 - Health
 - Physical development (including self-help skills)

Bathroom Policy

It is our policy for all children to use the same bathroom and swimming dressing rooms. However, if your child would prefer more privacy, discuss this with her/his teacher.

Behavior Guidance

Discipline is not to be confused with punishment and should be considered behavior guidance. The purpose of discipline is to teach children appropriate behaviors. Staff members are to provide a positive model of acceptable behavior. Teachers will work with parents to ensure that behavior guidance will be tailored to the development level of the child and that both center and home settings are consistent whenever possible. We will attempt to redirect children and groups away from problems toward constructive activity in order to keep conflict to a minimum. The staff will teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict. We will help children learn appropriate behavior through natural and logical consequences when there are no safety concerns. **Absolutely no form of verbal abuse or physical punishment will be used in our center.**

Birthdays

The Public Health Department does not allow any food to come into the center that is made at home. Since it is expensive to buy cupcakes, talk to your child's teacher for alternatives. It may be possible for you to bring a mix and eggs and the children can make a cake or muffins at the center, if the teacher knows ahead of time. (Little Debbie snacks, a fruit roll-up, etc. are often used.)

Building Evacuation

- **Fire Drills** – When there is a fire drill or a building evacuation, all children use the closest exit. The Sign-In sheets are used to account for each child. That is why it is so important for you to sign your child “in” and “out”. Children may go to the playground during a drill, but our usual destination is the Library. Parents who arrive at the center during an evacuation, should go to the Library, as well.
- **Tornado Drills** – If there is a tornado drill, the children go to the Lommen Basement using the stairs by the elevator. If there is less than a 5 minute warning, the children in the classrooms adjoining the gym will stay there.
- **Environmental Hazard** – see information in the classroom

Class Assignment

Children remain with the same classroom teacher for the year unless the director, teacher and parents agree that a change is needed.

Conferences

Each child's social, physical, emotional and cognitive progress is documented and reported to parents during fall and spring conferences. January is a time to schedule an appointment to visit with your child's teacher if you have any questions about your child's progress. The fall conference, however, is a time for the teacher to learn more about the child and his/her family. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment anytime they have questions or concerns that they would like to discuss with the teacher or director.

Confidentiality

Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g), records related to center children and their families, and information contained in those records, are to be shared with other staff or University officials only if that person has a legitimate educational interest (i.e., on a “need to know” basis only). Requests from third parties must have parental permission. (4.E.07)

Categories of individuals that would have access to a child's file include the following: (4.E.07)

1. Child's teacher
2. Parents/Legal Guardians
3. Student teachers
4. Director
5. Consultants

All lead teachers are required to complete a security/privacy training course on-line.

All children's records must remain in a locked filing cabinet.

All employees are prohibited from discussing children and families with, or in the presence of, other children and families.

Daily Parent Responsibilities

1. Sign your child “in” and “out” at the front desk each day. This is critical since we use this list to account for children in an emergency situation (fire, tornado, etc.). If a child is not present, and not signed out, we proceed as if the child is a **missing person**.
2. Please notify us anytime someone else will be picking up your child. Note this on the sign-in sheet and mention it to the teacher. If this situation should arise unexpectedly during the day, please phone the Director’s Office or the teacher.
3. Take home art creations.
4. Collect wet or soiled clothing and bring clean items the next morning so there is always one or more complete changes at the Center. (i.e. socks, shirt, pants, underwear—in a labeled plastic bag.)
5. Always have suitable, labeled outerwear available (i.e., cap, mittens, boots, and snow pants). We go outside almost every day. (Note OUTDOOR PLAY).
6. Pick up and read information on your child’s bulletin board.
7. If a parent appears intoxicated when he/she arrives to pick up a child, other arrangements will be made for the child’s transportation and care.

Daily Reports

A daily written report will be available for the parents of children in every age group.

Days and Hours of Operation

We are open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. During the months of late August through May, the center follows the MSUM Academic Calendar. Each family will receive our school calendar at the time of enrollment.

Diapering Procedures: (5.A.08)

Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces are to be immediately placed in a plastic bag (WITHOUT RINSING or AVOIDABLE HANDLING) and sent home that day for laundering.

Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or soiled at least every 2 hours when children are awake and when children awaken (Parents are welcome to check the diapering charts in the two younger classrooms.)

Staff make sure that diapers or pull-ups are changed when wet or soiled.

Staff change children’s diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas only.

Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.

Discrimination

If you feel that you or your child have been discriminated against in the operation of this program, please discuss your concerns with the teacher or director. You may ask that other parents be present at the meeting. We will make every effort to deal sensitively and effectively with these concerns.

Dress Code

Children are encouraged to dress in comfortable clothing that can be washed easily. We encourage children to participate and be creative with art materials, etc. We will use smocks, and try to use paints, etc., that are washable, unless we notify you of a special project. Cowboy boots, dressy shoes, flip-flops, sandals, ballet slippers, and clogs are not suitable for wear in the center, since they may cause accidents when children are climbing and running. We encourage sensible shoes with rubber soles or tennis shoes. Bare feet, stocking feet, and slippers are not allowed by State Fire Code. (Broken glass could cause serious injury in a fire). Remember this especially when your child begins to wear snow boots in the winter—you’ll need to provide shoes to wear inside.

Enrollment

The center gives enrollment priority to Minnesota State University Moorhead students. Faculty and staff have the next opportunity to register their children in the program. If there are additional openings, they are available to the general public.

Fees

- **Registration Fee:** This is an annual fee. The money is used for art materials, field trips, etc.
- **Tuition:** Although Minnesota State University Moorhead does provide a financial subsidy, the center is primarily self-supporting. The children's tuition pays for the staff salaries, supplies, etc. **Because our costs do not vary with individual absences or illness, we do not make refunds.** A computerized bill will be posted the first of each month and is due by the 20th of that month. If tuition is not paid by the end of the month, payment collection will be handled by the University and the child may be withdrawn from the center.

Billing changes are made only at the beginning of a new semester. If a toddler turns 3 during a semester s/he will be charged the preschool rate the following semester.
- **Payments must be made at the MSUM Business Office.**

Field Trips

If the center schedules a trip outside of the university campus, parents will be notified of the destination, date, purpose of the trip, and means of transportation in advance. Children will participate only if the parent signs the permission form.

Grievance Procedure

We expect that the center will meet the needs of each child. If you should have a grievance, the following procedure has been set up so your concern can be properly addressed.

A grievance is defined as a statement alleging a violation of the policies of the Early Education Center.

A grieved person will first attempt to solve the problem in an informal manner by talking to the classroom teacher. If that approach does not end in a satisfactory solution for the complainant, the grievance must then be put into written form and submitted to the Director. They will meet with the grieved person within 5 working days and a final resolution will be made at that time.

Gum and Candy

Since we are trying to promote good nutrition and dental health, we ask that children do not have gum or candy with them when they come to the center. There is also the danger of children choking on these items when they play.

Late Fees

Late fees will be charged at the rate of **\$1.00 per minute**. This fee is charged after 5:30 p.m. or after a child's morning period has expired. If parents are late more than once, this fee may be increased. The amount due will appear on the monthly bill.

Licensing

The center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. If you want to speak to our Licensor, call 651-296-3971. The center's license is #801582.

Mandated Reporting

Minnesota state law created a legal mandate for professionals and their delegates who work with children. Our staff members are required to make a child protection report if we know or have reason to believe that:

a child is being abused or neglected, or has been abused or neglected in the past three years

If you would like additional information, please contact the center director or call Moorhead Police Department and ask for "Child Protection" division.

See additional information in Appendix 1.

Media Use

The use of passive media such as television, film, video tapes and audio tapes is limited to developmentally appropriate programming. (2.H.01)

Medical Information

(Its the Law!)

The State of Minnesota (9503.0140) requires our center to obtain a current physical examination, signed by the child's source of medical care, before the child is admitted to the program or within 30 days of entrance. Documentation of current immunization, a notarized statement of parental objection to immunization, or a medical exemption is also required at that time. Reexaminations are required whenever a child 24 months or older moves from the toddler to preschool age group or enters kindergarten.

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, and as age-appropriate thereafter, health records document the dates of services to show that the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the scheduled recommended, published in print and posted on the Web sites of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service (CDC-USPHS), and the Academy of Family Practice. (5.A.01)

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry to the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for any immunization for which parents are using religious exemption. (5.A.01)

Each semester we will update your child's record including emergency contact information (a new yellow card will be given out). (5.A.01)

Allergies

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutritional needs, the child's health care provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. (5.B.05)

The program protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. The program asks families of a child with food allergies to give consent for posting information about that child's food allergy (name, allergy and photo) and, if consent is given, then posts that information in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses, so it is a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day. (5.B.05)

Staff maintains areas used by staff or children who have allergies or any other special environmental health needs according to the recommendations of health professionals. (5.C.04)

Areas used by staff or children who have allergies to dust mites or to components of furnishings or supplies are maintained by the program according to the recommendations of health professionals. (9.D.07)

Food Concerns (5.A.14)

Toddlers/twos do not carry sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking

Teaching staff offers children fluids from a cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

Children should not come into the center with personal food items.

Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. (5.B.02)

All foods and beverages brought from home are labeled with the child's name and the date.

The program serves only whole milk to children of ages 12 months to 24 months.

Staff does not offer children younger than four years of age these foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. (5.B.14)

Staff cut foods into pieces no larger than ½ inch square for toddlers/twos, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability. (5.B.14)

Health Policies

The program has and implements a written agreement with a health consultant who is either a licensed pediatric health professional or a health professional with specific training in health consultation for early childhood programs. (5.A.02)

1. Legally, we are not allowed to care for any child with a communicable disease.
2. If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will contact you or your designated alternate and ask that your child be taken home.
3. Children with the following symptoms will be sent home until improved or until a doctor diagnoses the child as non-contagious:
 - a) any indications of childhood illnesses—chicken pox, mumps, etc.
 - b) fever (this usually indicates the presence of infection)
 - c) pink eye or suspected pink eye
 - d) vomiting – children will be excluded if they have vomited in the last 24 hours
 - e) impetigo, lice, ringworm, scabies, or undiagnosed rash
 - f) diarrhea — child will be excluded until diarrhea has stopped
 - g) significant respiratory distress
 - h) other—at our discretion
4. Occasionally the sick child may not be contagious but may be so run down that he/she is more susceptible to other illnesses or is just not feeling well enough to remain at the center. We will then suggest that you keep your child home for his/her benefit. (5.A.04)
5. A child's temperature should be normal (98.6 degrees) for at least 24 hours before she/he returns to school. Even a child with serious infection may show no signs of a fever upon waking in the morning.
6. Parents will be notified at the onset of, or exposure to a contagious illness in the group.
7. It is always best if the parent can come to the center to administer medication to the child. However if this is not possible, we must have written permission to give medication. Proper forms are available at the sign-in desk. Only prescription medicine will be given. Medications must be labeled with child's first and last name, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it. (5.A.11) (Lead Staff will receive training annually on administering medications.) Complete form and prescriptions should be left with a teacher or a director.

NO OTHER STAFF MEMBERS ARE ALLOWED TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION. Please do not ask us to give cough syrup, aspirins, etc. IPECAC SYRUP will only be administered at the center if the staff member is directed to do so by the POISON CONTROL CENTER or a physician. Parents will be notified immediately.

8. Parents must sign a permission form before the center can use diapering products, sunscreen or insect repellent on a child. (5.A.07)

**Only when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to high risk of insect-borne disease will they be used. We will only use repellents containing DEET. Staff will apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission. (5.A.07)

Insurance

As an adjunct to Minnesota State University Moorhead, the Center is not allowed by regulation to carry liability or accident insurance. Each family must make arrangements for insurance.

Tooth Brushing

At least once, daily teaching staff provide the opportunity for tooth brushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. (The use of toothpaste is not required.) (5.A.16)

Pets/Animals (5.C.05)

Classroom pets or visiting animals appear to be in good health

Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.

Program staff make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal

Reptiles are NOT ALLOWED in the classroom because of the risk for salmonella infection.

****NOTE**:** The use of alcohol-based hand rubs in lieu of hand washing is not recommended for early education and child care settings. If these products are used as a temporary measure, a sufficient amount must be used to keep the hands wet for 15 seconds. Since the alcohol-based hand rubs are toxic and flammable, they must be stored and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. (5.A.09)

Outdoor Play

Please send appropriate clothing so that your child can participate in outdoor activities. Full-day children will be outside almost every day for at least a short time. We feel that outdoor play is valuable physically. Children usually eat and rest better when they have been outside.

The physicians we have consulted said that, generally, children that are well enough to be in a center situation should be able to play outside. We will, of course, make special arrangements, for a day or two, if your child has a note from a physician. This is often difficult to arrange, so let us know as early in the day as possible.

Program Plan

The child care program plan is on file in the Director's Office and can be reviewed there.

Research and Public Relations

Parental permission is necessary before a child can be involved in research or a public relations activity.

Rest and Relaxation

Full-day children will be encouraged to rest for at least 1/2 hour each day. Please send a towel or favorite blanket. Your child may also be more comfortable with a stuffed animal. Parents are responsible to launder and return items weekly or as needed.

Parent/Guardian Visit

You are always welcome in the Center. But, please be considerate and do not disrupt by visiting with the teacher if she/he is involved in a group activity. If you have an interest, story, or talent that you are willing to share with the children, please let us know. If your child has trouble separating from you, it would be best if you visited when she/he could leave with you. The observation booths offer some parents an opportunity to watch their children interact in this environment.

Parking

Please use the drop-off area near the intersection of 6th Avenue and 13th Street South. Stickers for this lot are available at the Director's Office. **These stickers allow for 10 to 15 minutes of parking time.** You may also park on the south side of 6th Avenue.

Storm Policy

In the morning we will open as long as MSUM is open for classes. Closings are announced on the mnstate website (www.mnstate.edu), over every local radio station. If inclement weather should arise during the day, we may close early even if MSUM does continue their classes. Parents will be charged the regular rate for partial days. Please take note of the weather as it is sometimes difficult to reach parents. Since MSUM is very cautious about closing, use your own judgment. You may wish to pick up your child when the public schools announce closings, since this may better indicate the appropriate weather for children.

Toys

It is extremely difficult for us to keep track of children's toys, etc. Therefore, we ask that you **DON'T** send things from home, except a stuffed animal to be used at rest. Please don't let your child bring war toys for any reason!

Transportation

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from the center. When children participate in a field trip, the center uses university vehicles or the Metro-Transit. If university vehicles are used, child restraints or seat belts are used according to Minnesota State Law.

University Participation

Since the program is affiliated with Minnesota State University Moorhead, students from Education, Health and Human Services may be involved with the children in the classrooms. Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education students may be assigned to the center for practicum and student teaching experiences. Students from other departments may do observations, projects or engage in research in our program, with parental permission. The classroom teacher will always remain the contact person for parents and will be ultimately responsible for the activities in her/his room.

Withdrawal

By Parent: If parents withdraw their child from the program, a two week notice is required and tuition will be charged during that period.

By the Director: Upon discretion of the program director, it may be determined that the needs of a student may be beyond the program's service delivery capacity. In such a situation the parents will be given a three week notice that the child is being withdrawn. The parent/s may choose to have their child leave before the end of that period. Tuition will be charged through the child's last day of attendance.

Visitor Registration

The center welcomes parents, university personnel and students, as well as community professionals to Lommen Hall. All visitors, other than parents of children in our program, who want to go to the classrooms, should stop at the directors' office, 106A Lommen, when they arrive.

**If you have any questions or concerns about any of these policies,
please bring it to the Director's attention.**

Appendix 1

WHO SHOULD REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

WHERE TO REPORT

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at 651-297-4123.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at 218-477-5200 or local law enforcement at 218-299-5104.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at 651-296-3971.

WHAT TO REPORT

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

RETALIATION PROHIBITED

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

FAILURE TO REPORT

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.