



Walnut Hill
Early Childhood Center

PARENT HANDBOOK

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WALNUT HILL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Goshen Day Care Board, Inc.

Lee Wheeler, Executive Director

Jamie Pankoke, Center Director

Welcome to the Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center. It is our desire to provide your child with the highest quality, professional early education and care. We strive to partner with you, the parent, to make your child's preschool experience safe, fun, and full of discovery.

Mission Statement

Goshen Day Care Board, Inc. supports the community children and parents by providing high quality affordable early childhood education to help them grow both socially and academically.

Vision

Providing early pathways to full potential. Your child's individual learning style, his/her physical and social strengths, and special interests are primary considerations for facilitating comprehensive school readiness.

Administration

- Goshen Day Care Board, Inc. represents a variety of businesses, churches and other organizations in the Goshen community.
- The board ensures organizational health and resources necessary to offer the highest quality care and professional early education for community children.
- The board hires an executive director to oversee all aspects of the program.

History

- Walnut Hill began serving children in 1968 at the Walnut Hill Chapel on North Sixth Street.
- Fire destroyed the original site on October 29, 1989.
- Funds to remodel and build the current structure were provided by community individuals, businesses, clubs and churches.
- Community volunteers also donated 1600 hours of personal time to help with construction and keep costs low.
- Assembly Mennonite Church maintains ownership of the building facility.
- The relationship between Walnut Hill and Assembly Church is unique in that space was shared but programs remained independent.

- Walnut Hill moved into its own building on January 8, 2018, and added 2 more ages groups: infants and toddlers and two year olds. Walnut Hill currently resides at this new location at 1700 Shasta Drive Goshen, IN 46526.

Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

PROGRAM

Walnut Hill’s Sources of Income:

- Parent Fees: 43%
- United Way of Elkhart County 10%
- Government Vouchers 10%
- Government Food Program 12%

- Contributions from the Community 18%
- Grants to Supplement Fees 7%

Program Features

- Year around services
- Open 5:15 a.m. to 5:40 p.m.
- Professional and educated lead teachers
- Low child to staff ratio in four classrooms
- Family Services Coordinator
- State licensed
- Level four (highest possible ranking) of Indiana's Paths to Quality
- Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Days of Operation

Walnut Hill is open Monday through Friday 5:15 a.m. - 5:40 p.m. throughout the year with these exceptions:

1. Up to two weeks at Christmas (See Annual Calendar for exact days closed)
2. One week of Spring Break (usually the first full week of April)
3. The week of July 4th
4. Two/ Three days of Staff In-service to be announced

An Annual Calendar is provided to parents. The calendar notes the days parents pay and the days parents do not pay.

Early Education Statement of Philosophy

Children enrolled at Walnut Hill are provided developmentally appropriate learning experiences based on the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child and on the social and cultural context in which each child lives. Teachers, as facilitators, provide space and materials for children to freely explore, express ideas, solve problems, and plan ahead in a safe and nurturing environment.

Center Curriculum

Walnut Hill's curriculum format and philosophy is developed from these sources:

- The High/Scope Foundation
- The *Indiana Foundations for Young Children*
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Creative Curriculum

Assessment of Children's Skills:

Formal and Informal Assessment tools are used including:

- *Preschool Skills Checklist*
- *Yearly goal setting*
- *Kindergarten Readiness Checklist*
- *ISTAR-KR*
- *Developmental Continuum*

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Tour of the Center:

Before or during the enrollment process, families are given a tour of the center.

The Enrollment Process

The enrollment of children involves a meeting of parents and the Center Director.

Parents provide:

- Details of the child's birth and early development. Parents share when the child first walked alone, when first words were spoken and if there were delays or treatment for developmental issues.
- Current family situations that could affect the child.

- Information about the family's history and traditions including ethnic-specific information such as the child's first language.
- Information about allergies and previous injuries, illnesses, or hospitalizations and treatments. Parents also provide information on other physical or emotional conditions requiring individualized preparation and modifications.
- Names of individuals authorized to pick up the child as well as the names of any individual specifically unauthorized by legal documentation. This list receives strict adherence.
- Permission (or refusal) to photograph the child, to administer simple first aid, to give pain reliever, to apply sunscreen, and for the child to take walks around the neighborhood and to nearby parks.

Parents bring the following to the enrollment meeting:

- The child's birth certificate.
- A current record of immunizations.
- Pay stubs (2 biweekly paystubs or 4 consecutive paystubs) from all working adults in the family. Fees are based on gross income and family size. We have two paystub verifications per year. Failure to provide current paystubs during the week of paystub verification will result in a family being charged the full tuition fee of \$238 per child for infants, \$186.00 per child for toddlers and two year olds, and \$176.00 per child for 3-6 year olds per week until the paystubs are turned in.
- The first week's payment is due at the time of enrollment along with the \$25 classroom supply fee.
- A physician's note for any restrictions due to allergies or physical conditions. This note can also be faxed. It must be written on the physician's stationary or prescription pad with his/her name. We cannot provide food or drink substitutions for a child until we receive a physician's note stating the allergy or physical condition.
- Form showing any physical done within the past 12 months.
- Medical insurance card for the child.

Parent receives from the Center Director at enrollment:

- Center Philosophy called *Philosophy of Early Education and Preschool Curriculum for Parents*
- *Checklist for new parents*
- First Day Reminders and the names of classroom staff
- The Parent Handbook
- The Center's Annual Calendar
- A written copy of the Wellness Program

CENTER STAFF

Professional Staff:

- Executive Director holds a Bachelor's Degree
- Center Director holds a B.S. in Elementary Education.
- Lead Teachers hold an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education
- Lead Teachers with a minimum of a CDA may be named temporarily or if they are enrolled in classes towards an education degree
- Assistant teachers have earned or are working on a minimum of a CDA or equivalent.
- At least 50% of teaching staff hold a CDA or higher degree.

State Staff Requirements

Each Walnut Hill employee counted in the child/staff ratios meets state and center requirements as follows:

- Meets or exceeds the formal education as required by *Indiana Rules for Licensing Child Care Centers*.
- Has had a physical within 30 days of employment.
- Has First Aid certification. At all times during the day, one person is on site that has up-to-date CPR training.
- Has annual intra-dermal Tuberculosis test or chest X-ray.
- Has documentation of a national criminal history check (done through fingerprinting).
- Has documentation of a drug test.
- Has documentation that the employee is not listed in the State Central Registry.
- Has completed annual training as required in the *Indiana Rules for Licensing Child Care Center, Paths to Quality* and those of the *National Association for the Education of Young Children (20 hours annually)*.

Summer Staffing

College students are usually available for summer work and are hired to temporarily replace regular staff who desire one day per week or more off. Walnut Hill enjoys hiring these students to give them experience working with young children and to provide a boost to our summer program which includes trips to the park and other nearby establishments so enjoyable during the warmer months.

Minimum Child/Staff Ratios and Group Sizes (set by Indiana Licensing requirements)

Bumblebees (Infants and Toddlers)	Ladybugs (2 year olds)	Dragonflies (3 and 4 year olds)	Caterpillars (3 and 4 year olds)	Grasshoppers (4 - 5 year olds)	Butterflies (4 - 5 year olds)
1:4 Group size: 8 *This classroom must always have 2 teachers if there are infants in the room.	1:5 Group size: 10	1:10 Group size: 20	1:10 Group size: 20	1:12 Group size: 24	1:12 Group size: 24

In order to provide the highest quality care possible, Walnut Hill attempts to exceed the ratios at all times possible. At least 3 full time staff members are assigned to each room for the majority of the day (approximately 8-4p.m.). Class group sizes are also limited whenever possible in order to provide children with as much one on one attention as possible and to minimize noise. Classrooms are able to be combined at the beginning and end of each school day with ratios and group sizes followed for the youngest child in the group.

PROGRAM POLICIES/GUIDELINES

Discipline as Guidance:

Our educated and experienced classroom staff practice preventive measures to reduce the amount of challenging behaviors. We believe that all behavior has meaning and we do our best to understand the individual needs of each child. When challenging behaviors persist, we take a closer look at each child and ask the family to partner with us to develop a plan for ongoing guidance and discipline. The goal of all discipline techniques is to help children gain self-control and a

sense of fairness and respect for themselves and others. Children are taught to use words to tell others how they are feeling instead of using physical force.

No child is ever hit, slapped, spanked, dragged, pinched, pushed, or left alone in a room. Teachers do not use profanity or verbal tactics to frighten children. Teachers do not use food as a reward or a punishment.

Walnut Hill ECC follows the steps of the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning Suspension and Expulsion Policy Guidance for Programs as follows:

1. Classrooms are set-up with interest centers and a variety of open-ended materials that provide a purposeful, engaging environment. Classrooms also have materials that represent different cultures such as labels in English and Spanish, dress-up clothes that represent different cultures, play food or instruments that represent different cultures, and multicultural dolls, books, and pictures. The center has an open invitation for family members to come into the classroom and share information about their child's culture with the class.
2. Teachers use the ISTAR-KR assessment to evaluate the developmental level of each child and provide activities that are individualized for each child's developmental needs.
3. Center time is provided in the morning and in the afternoon so children can make plans and explore materials on their own, with friends, or with a teacher. During this time, teachers encourage children to try something new, allow others to join in their play, and problem-solve when conflict arises. Teachers also read books throughout the year that support following the rules, being safe, and listening to their friends and their teachers.
4. Teachers use Conscious Discipline methods to help children reach an executive state where they can problem solve. Classrooms have quiet spaces where children can go to be alone, take deep breaths, or look at a calming book with a teacher or on their own. Throughout the school year, teachers read books about feelings and talk about how to handle different emotions. They also provide activities that teach children about appropriate responses to feelings. Some classrooms post pictures of faces displaying different feelings and emotions and encourage the children to point to the face that shows how they are feeling that day. At center time, teachers get down on the children's level and interact with them and their peers as they learn how to play, get along, share, and problem solve.
5. When behavior concerns persist, the lead teacher sends a note home asking a parent to contact her. The first contact informing parents about ongoing discipline issues is preferably done face to face or over the phone.

6. During the first conversation, parents are informed of the details including the time of day problems occur. Parents are asked to partner with teachers by sharing successful strategies used at home. Together, parents and teachers carve out a plan for success. Every chance is given for children to make improvements and progress.
7. When partnering with the family does not help the behavioral concerns, the center will contact ECSEC (Elkhart County Special Education Cooperative) or Horizon Behavioral Consulting to schedule an assessment from a behavioral consultant. Families must sign a permission form stating that they give Walnut Hill ECC permission to have their child observed by a behavioral consultant. Walnut Hill Staff will follow the strategies and suggestions that they receive from the behavioral consultant for a period of 4 weeks. Teachers and administration will keep families informed frequently during this period of their child's progress. When families are asked to consider testing or therapy for their child, a list of various area services is provided such as First Steps, ECSEC, and Oaklawn Counseling. The parent's written authorization is required before information about a child is shared with other organizations. **In serious cases, testing or therapy may be required for the child to remain in the Walnut Hill program.**
8. Staff members must complete 20 hours of professional development and training per year and this includes training on challenging behaviors. All lead teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or elementary education and all teaching assistants are required to have a Child Development Credential or a high school diploma while working on a Child Development Credential. All staff members have completed a training on Conscious Discipline.
9. Walnut Hill staff will make every effort possible to work with a child and help them make positive gains in behavior. We will analyze our expulsions and suspensions yearly and work to decrease that number the following year.
10. When a child continues to hurt others or causes frequent disruption, despite all of the steps and measures mentioned above, the administration will communicate with the family and set a probationary period for the child. This time is used to make decisions in the best interest of the child. As a last resort, children whose behavior continues to jeopardize the safety or well-being of themselves or others are required to leave the program. Walnut Hill administration will assist the family in finding services or alternative placement.

Attendance

1. Effective skill building occurs more often when children attend regularly.
2. Children benefit when they are brought to the center by **9:00 a.m.** each morning and when the arrival and pick-up times are consistent. A consistent pick-up time ensures appropriate staffing for each time of the day.
3. Children attend no longer than **9 hours** per day unless parents/guardians notify the center.
4. Parents notify the center when children must be absent or late for a day.

Three-Week Trial Period

While Walnut Hill believes the school should be ready for the child, there may be individual children whose best interest cannot be served in a structured environment. Therefore, the first three weeks of enrollment are a trial period during which both parents and teachers make a determination. A personal meeting is arranged with the family when alternate arrangements are advised. Young children may miss their parent in the beginning. Patience on the part of staff and parents is required. In most cases, the child adjusts well within a short time.

Withdrawal Notice

Parents provide a two-week notice when a child is to be withdrawn. This time gives Walnut Hill the opportunity to contact another family on the Wait List and for the new family to give proper notice to current care providers. It is also important for children to have time to say goodbye to the other children and the adults in their classroom.

Child Abuse Reporting

The center complies with the mandates of the Division of Family and Children regarding the reporting of any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. If your child has bruises or other signs of injury, **tell the lead teacher** the cause.

Pick-up and Delivery of Children

State regulations for licensed centers require parents to sign their children in and out each day. When dropping off your child, please accompany your child to the classroom or to the playground where his/her group is playing. **Be sure a staff person knows your child arrived** and when you are taking the child from the classroom or playground at the end of the day. While staff keep ongoing record of the specific children present, a parent alert is needed. If someone else is dropping off your child, it is your responsibility to ensure they also know the process.

Children are released only to a parent/legal guardian, or to another person authorized by the parent. Please be sure to update your list of persons authorized to pick up your child. Call the center if you are sending someone different. Tell the new person you are sending that identification is required. **We will not release your child to anyone not on your list without your notification.**

Car Seats/ Booster Seats

Indiana Rules of the road include the requirement for children under the age of 8 to be secured within a car seat or booster seat in the backseat of a vehicle. Let the center know when you are unable to purchase these items. The Center Director has extra booster seats and car seats for short-term borrowing if a parent forgets to bring a car seat.

Children Picked Up For Summer School/Other Activities

Children who are attending other activities off center grounds are released only with a written notification. Without proper notification, children will not be sent on a bus or with any individual.

Field Trips

Insurance companies do not allow staff to transport children in their personal cars. Therefore, any field trips planned depend upon volunteer drivers. If an event is planned with enough parent drivers, all current rules of the road, including the use of necessary car seats or booster seats etc., are followed.

Parents are asked to sign a “blanket” statement at the time of enrollment granting permission for Walnut Hill staff to take their child on neighborhood walks or walking trips to local parks. Additional parental permission is required when children are to be transported in the vehicle of volunteers.

Smoking Ban

Smoking is not permitted at any time inside the building, on the playground, inside a vehicle used for a field trip, or during a walking field trip when center children are present. Parents must put out cigarettes before leaving their own vehicle so partly used cigarettes do not land in the Walnut Hill parking lot.

Alcohol Impaired Persons

As a state licensed childcare center, we cannot place your child in a vehicle if we believe the driver is intoxicated. If you occasionally stop for drinks after work, please arrange for someone else to pick up your child for that day. Please relay this information to anyone else who picks up your child.

Late Pick-up Fee

Walnut Hill closes at 5:40 p.m. A five-minute margin is provided. At 5:46 p.m. a late pick up fee will be charged to your account. **This charge is \$1.00 per minute the child remains.** This fee is charged because staff members are required to give up their personal plans when parents are late.

Policy Regarding Children Left after 6:30p.m. in the Evening

When children are left after closing time, every effort is made to locate a person named on the child's desk card. Parents are strongly urged to give the center several names and telephone numbers when one or both parents are going out of town. If by 6:00 p.m. all efforts fail, and no one is found to come for the child, the person in charge contacts the Center Director. The Center Director will come to the center and stay with the child and continue to try to locate a parent or person authorized to pick up the child. If by 6:30 p.m. all efforts fail and no one is found to come for the child, the Center Director can choose to continue to stay with the child at Walnut Hill and try to reach a parent or authorized person or call Child Protective Services. No one at Walnut Hill wants to call CPS!

Confidentiality

Children's records are open only to directors, lead teachers, parents, and government overseers. Parents are asked to sign a release before information about their child is shared with outside professionals. Walnut Hill must comply with subpoena orders issued for children's records.

Privacy Policies

Staff and parents have responsibilities to protect the privacy of individual children and families.

1. Communication between school and parent regarding the child's progress and any concerns including discipline issues, are limited to the Center Director, the Executive Director, and the child's Lead Teacher. Support staff and teacher assistants are required to refer the parent to one of these professionals. Teacher assistants may report information about the child's physical health and well-being for the day when a parent inquires and the Lead Teacher, Center Director, or Executive Director are not available. Information about another parent's child is not shared or inferred.

2. Staff and parents are not authorized to include pictures of center children other than their own children on their phones or on personal social media pages. Comments about children from other families are not written on personal social media sites. Walnut Hill does utilize social media to communicate with families and market our services. Pictures will only be posted by approved staff and with written consent from parents/guardians.

3. Only children whose parents have signed authorization are included in photos and center videos including photos featured in local newspapers, in center newsletters, reports, brochures, or social media, or the center's website. Teachers are permitted to take photos of any child for the purpose of classroom bulletin boards or classroom portfolios.

4. Parents wanting to take photos or video recordings may include only their own child. Exceptions include photos taken during classroom parties, field trips, and special activities in the classroom or center-wide activities such as the Ice Cream Social or other family events.

5. Parents with concerns about another child must voice the concerns well away from the listening ears of other staff, children or parents. Comments and concerns can be voiced to the Center Director, Executive Director, or Lead Teacher in private.

Information to /Authorization from Parents

1. The parent enrolling a child specifically names authorized and unauthorized persons. Only persons actually named are included on the unauthorized list for that child. Persons specifically authorized may pick up the child. In order for a person to be on the unauthorized list for a child, we must have a legal document stating that restriction.
 - a. Authorized persons present picture ID before a child is released for the first time.
 - b. Children are not released to specifically named unauthorized persons for any reason.

- c. The parent is contacted for verbal authorization before allowing persons not specifically named as authorized to visit children.
2. The parent enrolling a child reveals custodial arrangements of child's mother and father. Information about the child's progress or behavior is provided only to the custodial parent unless that parent provides written authorization for others to receive information.
3. Information about the parent's weekly fee amount or financial account is provided only to the custodial parent.
 - a. The amount due on a delinquent account is not shared with anyone other than the custodial parent.
 - b. Funds are received from the non-custodial parent or others only if the person knows the amount due or wishes to make a payment without knowing the weekly fee or any delinquent amount.
 - c. The receipt for payments actually made by someone other than a custodial parent will exclude information about any balance due.
 - d. Walnut Hill informs the custodial parent about any payment made on his or her child's account including any amount still due or amount overpaid. Overpayment becomes a credit.
 - e. Any reporting of a discrepancy between actual amount due and actual amount paid is the responsibility of the custodial parent.
 - f. Neither non-custodial parents nor anyone other than custodial parents are informed about the child's enrollment on a government program.
4. Child Protective Services personnel, police officers, or other officials must show identification before being allowed to see or talk to children. The center is obligated to permit officials to talk to the child or check on a child's presence at the center.

By law, Walnut Hill cannot prevent a custodial parent or a parent who shares legal custody access to his or her child.

Grievance Procedure

When a parent has a concern, including concerns related to civil rights, please approach staff in this order:

1st Your child's Lead Teacher

2nd The Center Director

3rd The Executive Director

Parental concerns are not voiced to teacher assistants or the office manager. If satisfaction is not gained with the Executive Director, the parent is invited to ask the Director for a hearing before a committee from the Goshen Day Care Board. The decisions of the board are final.

OUR CLASSROOMS

Bumblebees Age 6 weeks to 23 months Caterpillars Age 3-4 years

Ladybugs Age 2 years Grasshoppers Age 4-5 years

Dragonflies Age 3–4 years Butterflies Age 4-5 years

Children generally move to a new classroom at the beginning of the summer program or at the start of a new school year but can be moved up to provide space for new children. Two or more children are generally moved up together so children move with a friend.

Cubbies, Hooks, and Parent Mailboxes

Each child is assigned a cubby for an extra set of clothes and winter or summer clothing and a hook for coats. Each family has a mailbox outside the classroom door. Please check your parent/family mailbox each evening for notes from the center or work that your child created during the day.

We encourage parents to look over the child's "work" for the day. Interest shown at this early stage sets the tone for his/her school years ahead. At Walnut Hill, children are encouraged to create their own art rather than completing coloring sheets or making crafts identical to those of other children. The results can look less than valuable to adults but are treasures to the child. Ask your child to tell you about his creations. Perhaps you and your child can choose a few samples to keep in a special place.

Toys from Home

Please **do not allow your child to bring toys from home.** Children and teachers are dismayed when a child's personal belongings are taken or broken. Please do bring in interesting items from nature that relate to the weekly theme or

encourage interesting conversation. Watch your child's Classroom Newsletter for requests for items to accompany current themes. See your child's Lead Teacher with other questions.

Dressing for Full Participation:

- Dress your child in play clothes and shoes so your child can fully participate in painting and playing indoors and outdoors without worrying about ruining clothes. Staff do use paint smocks and make every attempt possible to keep children clean throughout the day, but clothes may still become stained from time to time.
- Write child's name on outdoor clothing. Devise some method to help your child keep track of mittens such as attaching them to yarn which threads through the sleeves of a coat.
- When outside weather conditions present a risk and children cannot play outside, they are provided large motor activities inside. Inside large motor equipment meets requirements set forth by the state of Indiana for licensed centers. Outside and inside large motor play is supervised by adult staff. Please notify your child's teacher if your child cannot participate in somersaults and other tumbling activities.
- Watch the weather. As colder weather approaches, send sweaters and jackets. For those seasons when the temperature varies throughout the day, please send clothing in layers that can be added or removed.
- If your child's clothing becomes very soiled or wet, he or she is asked to change into dry clothing. While the center has some extra clothing, parents are asked to be sure their child always has an extra set of clothing available. See **Extra Clothes** below.

Summer Time Clothing:

Children do not play outside when the heat index is 90 degrees or higher in the summer. Children do not go outside during an O-Zone Alert.

- In the summer time, shoes which slip on and off easily are convenient. Shoes are required when riding a bike outside. Notify your child's teacher if you do not want your child to remove shoes at any time. Note: The playground is raked every morning before children go outside.
- A swimsuit and towel are needed for water play during the summer months. Please place names on both. Sunscreen will be applied to all children before going outside to play or for water play if the parent signed authorization during enrollment.

While staff will watch your child for signs of sunburn during water play, please talk to your child's teacher if your child should wear a t-shirt or have some other protection from the sun.

Winter Time Clothing:

State regulations require children to go outside for a period of time every day, weather permitting. When the temperature with the wind chill factor is 25 degrees or higher, we will go outside. Your child will need these wintertime articles of clothing to remain comfortable in these temperatures:

- Mittens
- Hats
- Boots
- Snow pants
- Heavy coats

PLEASE BE SURE YOUR CHILD HAS EXTRA CLOTHES!

Parents are required to send an extra set of clothes to school including underwear and socks in case of accidents or spills. Place extra clothing inside a plastic bag labeled with your child's name. The center has a limited supply of extra clothing available, but children prefer their own. If your child is given center clothing, please launder and return them within one week.

Video and Media Policies

TV/DVD's are used only when the content coordinates with the weekly theme and are not a part of the day-to-day routine. The center owns videos/DVD's with children's literature and those related to science, numbers, and social studies themes. Media is generally very short and is always appropriate for young viewers. Any TV usage in a classroom must be educational and optional for children. Parents discuss with the lead teacher any plan to bring in a video/DVD for children to see. The center has several standards we must follow. Thanks!

Classrooms may have computers or other technological devices (such as tablets) with early education material available. Software includes language and literature, numbers, science, and social studies themes. Time is limited for children on these devices and children take turns using them individually or in a small group.

Each classroom has audio equipment so children can listen to books on tape and a wide variety of music types representing the cultures of the children enrolled in that classroom.

CENTER HEALTH PROGRAM

As a licensed center, Walnut Hill adheres to the standards of the Indiana State Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning, the State Fire Marshal's Office, and the Indiana State Food Program. A pediatrician consultant approves our Health Program.

Staff Physicals and Health Training

All classroom staff have a current physical at the time of hire and receive an annual Mantoux TB test. Staff are trained in First Aid including proper diapering techniques and universal precautions. At least one person with up-to-date Pediatric CPR training is present at all times. Administering medication requires specific training and a second adult witness. Parents may ask to see the classroom's recording of diapering or administration of medication for their child.

Children's Physicals and Immunization Records

Indiana Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers include:

1. *All children and adults in licensed centers have a physical on file within 30 days of enrollment. Staff receive TB test or chest x-ray annually.

2. *All children in licensed centers have an updated immunization record within 30 days of enrollment. Immunizations must follow the schedule published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The record must include the month, day, and year of each immunization.

3. A parent may request their child be exempt from immunizations, physical examinations, or medical treatment based on religious beliefs with the following conditions as stated in the **Indiana Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers**:
 - a. The parent shall provide a signed, written request for exemption based on religious beliefs.

 - b. The center shall keep the request in the child's health record.

- c. Nothing in this provision prevents the child care center from using emergency first aid techniques to treat the exempted child.

*** The center is mandated by the state to dismiss a child when the physical or immunization record has not been submitted to the center within the 30 day period.** Discuss any questions or concerns with the Center Director.

General Illness

- Children **stay at home** when they have a temperature over 100.6, an unexplained rash, diarrhea, vomiting, a communicable disease, or when the child is unable to participate in the daily experiences at child care. **Children sent home with a fever must be fever free, without the aid of a fever reducer, for 24 hours before returning to the center.**
- Parents can request their child **stay inside for up to three days** when the child is mildly ill but is not sick enough to stay home. A doctor's note is required for children to stay indoors longer than 3 days.
- When children become ill at the center, parents are notified and are asked to pick up the child immediately. Illness is defined as:
 - A temperature over 100.6
 - Repeated vomiting
 - Excessive pain or discomfort that isn't alleviated with Children's Pain Reliever.
 - Serious, unexplained rash
 - Signs of a communicable disease
 - Unusual lethargy

Head Lice

Understandings concerning head lice have changed in recent years. Walnut Hill follows this advice from the Center for Disease Control:

1. When one case of live lice is discovered in a child's hair, all children in that classroom are checked for live lice.
2. Children with live lice are sent home immediately. Parents are provided with current information about lice and necessary cleaning to be done.
3. When only nits are found, the parent is contacted and asked whether an effective lice removal product has been used within a 2 week period of time. If the product was used, the nits are considered dead but still may be removed by the parent.
4. Children can return to the center after a lice treatment has been used at home. Parents bring the empty product container to the center so staff know the product used.
5. Nits may be seen in following days as the hair shaft grows out but are considered dead as long as an appropriate treatment or product has been used within a 2 week period.
6. Center cots, bedding, furniture and rugs are cleaned and sanitized when a case of live lice is discovered.
7. Cases of live lice are listed on the Contagious Disease Chart on the Parent Board in the lobby

Pink Eye

1. Pink eye is very contagious. Parents are called to pick up their child when a child exhibits symptoms of pink-eye. Symptoms may include swollen eyelids, pink or red color to the white part of the eye, yellow or white drainage from the eye, or sensitivity to light. Parents are advised to seek a medical diagnosis and medication.
2. Children diagnosed with pink-eye must have used medication for 24 hours before returning to the center. If a doctor determines that a child does not have pink-eye and has nothing contagious, the child may return to the center immediately with a doctor's note.
3. Center cots, bedding, and other items are cleaned and sanitized when a case of pink eye is discovered.
4. Cases of Pink Eye are listed on the Contagious Disease Chart on the Parent Board in the lobby.

Health Precautions and Practices

- Children and staff wash hands after using the bathroom.
- Staff wash hands and wear a hairnet and a fresh apron when preparing or serving food to children.
- Children and staff wash hands before and after eating.
- Children wash faces before lunch and after lunch as needed.
- All children brush teeth at least once daily.
- All classrooms have at least one week each year on the themes of: Nutrition, General Safety, and Personal Safety.
- Staff are required and children are advised to wash hands when entering and leaving the center.
- With signed authorization from parents, sun-screen with SPF of 15 or higher is applied to the exposed skin of children in the summer time.
- With signed authorization from parents, insect repellent is applied to children one time daily when insect pests are prevalent. Only products with DEET are used.
- Outside play is cancelled during an O-Zone Alert.
- The facility has been tested and found to be free of radon and lead.
- Pest control uses integrated pest management with applications completed when children and staff are not present.

Notification of Families:

1. Families are immediately notified when their child is suspected of having a communicable disease. The Center Director lists cases of communicable diseases on the Communicable Disease Chart posted on the Parent Board in the North Lobby.
2. Families are told the signs and symptoms of the disease, how it is transmitted, and when the child can return. Parents can ask for a copy of the state Communicable Disease Chart which lists the details of the disease or condition.
3. Families are notified when their child has sustained an injury serious enough to leave a large cut, a black eye, a *goose-egg*, or other signs of moderate to serious injuries. Parents can decide whether or not to pick up the child based on the details provided by staff.
4. Families are always notified about any serious injury and about the need for the emergency room. If a parent cannot be reached or cannot get to the center within a short period of time, a seriously injured child will be

taken to the emergency room and the parent is advised to go directly there. A staff person always accompanies a child until a parent arrives.

Injuries

Center staff is trained in First Aid and at least one person trained in pediatric CPR is present at all times. Injuries are handled according to severity:

Minor Injuries

1. Staff administers basic first aid to children.
2. Parents receive written notice in the child's cubby on the same day the injury occurred.
3. Parents give careful instructions when a child's special physical or health conditions require an immediate call regardless of the injury's severity.
4. Parents report to staff any bruise or other wound noticed on their child if there has been no notification.

Major Injuries

1. Staff persons administer preliminary first aid.
2. Parents are called for further decision making.

Medical and Injury Emergencies

1. A staff member calls 911 to get an ambulance. A staff member accompanies the child to the hospital with the child's **Permission to Treat form** provided by the parent.
2. Parents are contacted immediately. Parents use their family's insurance carrier when doctor's care or emergency room treatment is required.

Medication: Indiana State Policy

There are two types of medications that can be administered in licensed centers:

1. Prescription medications must have the following information on the label:
 - a. child's name

- b. current date
 - c. doctor's name
 - d. name of medication and strength
 - e. directions or number of times to be given
2. Over-the-counter medications accompanied by written permission from your physician on his/her prescription pad or letterhead. This can be faxed to the center.
 3. Other over-the-counter medications are not administered according to Indiana State Policy.
 - 4. Center Procedure for Administering Medications/Treatments Meets State Requirements:**
 - Parents take all medication directly to a staff person to be signed in.
 - Parents sign permission and write directions regarding any administration of medications.
 - Documentation is taken and maintained in the classroom. Walnut Hill does not administer medication without permission of parents.
 - Records are kept of the times and dosage of medicine given to children.
 - Two staff must be present when medication or treatments are administered to children. Teacher assistants must have a lead teacher, the Center Director, or the Executive Director witness and sign the Administration of Medication form. Lead teachers have another lead, the Center Director, or the Executive Director witness and sign.
 - The center's pediatric consultant has provided a "blanket" prescription for child strength acetaminophen for children with mild pain or a temperature of 100 degrees or higher. At the time of enrollment, parents may choose to sign or refuse to sign a "blanket" permission to give their child a non-aspirin product, as permitted by the State of Indiana.
 - Parents are always permitted to come to the center to administer medication to their own child.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Each classroom and meal preparation area requires a Cleaning Schedule posted outlining both the frequency and the method used to sanitize the area, including proper use of supplies or materials. Restroom floors, toilets, and sinks are sanitized at least once daily. Classroom floors are sanitized daily. Cots, blankets, and bedding are assigned to one child and sanitized at the end of each week. Water and sensory tables are sanitized after each group's use. Children with open wounds do not use water or sensory tables. Special precautions are taken when children have been ill.

Naptime Practices and Precautions

- Cots are placed at least 2 feet apart, alternating placement of children's heads and feet.
- One staff person observes sleeping children at all times during the naptime.
- Children do not cover their heads with blankets or pillows. Staff members do not cover children's heads with blankets or pillows.
- During naptime, classrooms maintain enough light so all children can be easily observed.
- Parents can inform staff when children need to be awakened to use the bathroom during naptime.
- Children who remain awake after 30 minutes are allowed to do quiet activities at the table area.
- Parents inform the center if they prefer children to be awakened at the end of naptime.
- **Note: State regulations require staff to allow sleeping children to sleep until they wake naturally unless the parent requests otherwise.**

Security Measures

1. Walnut Hill has a number pad in the lobby. Families entering must enter the number code for their child's classroom. The hallway door will unlock when the correct code is used.
2. Office staff persons working during pick-up time require unknown persons to provide a picture ID. Parents and guardians must come in person to add a person to their child's pick-up list.
3. Center staff persons will stay alert to people or unknown vehicles sitting in the parking lot. They will report any peculiar behavior. Non-staff members are not allowed to enter the playground areas through the fence.
4. Center staff persons keep with them at all times and in all places, a list of children present. Names are crossed off as children are picked up.

Fire and Storm Drills

Children practice monthly fire and storm procedures, weather permitting. Fire Drill and Storm Drill procedures are posted in each classroom.

Evacuation

The center has an agreement with East Lake Athletic Club permitting the center to walk the children to their building if there should ever be a fire or other disaster that would prevent children from re-entering the center building. Staff would use the center's desk cards to call each child's parents from the club to pick up their child there. This Evacuation Plan is posted in each classroom.

Snow Closing

Walnut Hill remains open even when the public schools are closed unless there are several business closings as well or when there is a state or local mandate to remain off the roads. Announcements of snow closings are made on WNDU, WSBT TV stations and posted on the program's Facebook page. If the center closes after children are at the center, parents are called to pick up their children. Staff persons remain with the children until parents arrive. Parents pay for a full week of child care unless we close for more than 2 days within the same school week.

Other Closings

The State of Indiana does not permit child care centers to remain open without electricity at any time of the year or without heat in the wintertime. If children are already at the center, we can wait a limited length of time to see if utilities will be restored. If children are at the center, parents will be called to pick up their children. Staff will remain with the children until parents arrive.

Announcements of Closings

WNDU and WSBT TV as well as the Walnut Hill Early Childhood Center Facebook Page will list any weather –related or facility related closings.

FOOD PROGRAM

Walnut Hill's written Food Program is approved by the Division of Family and Children and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Nutrition Program

Parents are given a Center Nutrition Plan at the time of enrollment. This document contains information the parent may want to know about the food provided to their child. Walnut Hill menus have been changed to comply with the Gold Level – the highest level of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The Gold Level adheres to the state's strictest food guidelines for young children.

Breakfast	Morning Snack	Lunch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juice is limited to one time per week or less Whole grain is served 3 times or more per week Sweet items are limited to 2 times or less per month A different fresh fruit is served at least 3 times per week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juice is limited to one time per week A different fresh, frozen, or canned fruit is served at least two times per week Sweet items are limited to 2 times or less per month Crackers are served no more than 2 times per week At least 1 healthy meat/meat alternate must be served each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole grain is served at least 3 times per week Processed meats are served no more than one time per week A fresh (raw) fruit is served at least 1 time per week Fresh (raw) vegetables are served at least 2 times per week Juice is not served for lunch Beans or legumes are served at least 2 times per month

***Serving Times**

For Children 6 weeks – Age 3 Years:

Breakfast: 7:30 – 8:00

A.M. Snack: 9:15

Lunch: 11:15

P.M. Snack 2:15

Grasshoppers (4-5 year olds)

Breakfast: 7:30 – 8:00

A.M. Snack 9:30

Lunch: 11:30

P.M. Snack 2:30

Butterflies (4-5 year olds)

Breakfast: 7:30-8:00

A.M. Snack: 9:45

Lunch 11:45

P.M. Snack: 2:45

Weekly Menus

Menus follow precise guidelines so children receive appropriate amounts of protein and vitamins. Weekly menus are posted on the Parent Board, in the office, and in each classroom. See the Center Director for additional information, to discuss your child’s individual needs or to request your own copy of each week’s menu.

State and Federal Food Guidelines

The Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program provides oversight for the Walnut Hill meal service. CACFP, State Licensing, and NAEYC criteria are followed:

Children under age 4 are not served:

- Hotdogs - Whole or sliced into rounds. Note: Sausage links, hot dogs rounds can be served if cut in half or into fourths for children under age 4.
- Whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas and hard pretzels
- Spoonful of peanut butter
- Chunks of raw carrots

- Meat larger than can be swallowed whole

For all children:

- One percent milk is served
- Sweetened juices are not used at mealtimes. Fruit juice is 100% juice that is enriched with Vitamin C

Food Allergies

Kitchen staff makes appropriate changes in the menu for specific children with health issues or allergies related to food. **State regulations require a physician's order written on his/her prescription pad or letterhead and posted in the center kitchen. This order can be faxed to the center.** Children will receive an alternative food with the same nutritional value. Families can request a copy of the altered menu.

Additional Reasons for Special Diets

Families can request menu changes for their children in these circumstances:

- Families who practice certain religions may inform the center about foods their child does not eat.
- Families who are vegetarian may inform the center about foods their child does not eat.

Children will receive an alternative food with the same nutritional value.

Children with Special Needs

Center staff provides for children whose special circumstances require extra consideration or assistance at mealtime. A daily written report about the foods and amounts eaten is provided to the family requesting changes to the regular menu.

Breakfast Serving Time

Breakfast is served to all children who arrive by 7:45 a.m. Parents are asked to inform the teacher if the child already had breakfast at home. **If your child needs something to eat on the way to the center, please leave that food in your car. The state of Indiana does not permit children to bring food from outside into the center.**

Birthday and Other Special Treats

1. The kitchen manager provides a juice bar for each child on his/her birthday. The entire class participates in a small celebration. Parents are welcome to attend. Parents can also send a camera if photos of the event are desired.
2. State regulations do not permit parents to bring home-made birthday treats or other food items from home to be served to your child's classmates.
3. Store-bought snacks brought in an unopened package are permitted by the state but are not encouraged by Walnut Hill. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing in items for special occasions.
4. Parents may bring napkins or other small items to make their child's birthday celebration special. Parents coordinate these plans with the classroom lead teacher in case there are food allergies or other restrictions for some children.
5. Parents are asked to be cautious about bringing in extravagant items that some other families may not be able to afford.
6. Other alternatives, such as buying a new book for the classroom, bringing in a healthy snack, or volunteering in your child's room are encouraged to make your child's day special.

PARENT FEES

One feature that sets Walnut Hill apart is the center's Scholarship Program available to all families. Weekly fees are determined by your specific family's size and income.

Weekly Payments

1. Fees are due each Friday or Monday for the upcoming week of care. Parents are welcome to pay for several weeks in advance, if more convenient. Fees are considered "late" if paid after Monday at closing time for the current week of service. An extra \$5.00 fine is attached to fees paid after Monday evening. When fees are not paid by Tuesday morning, children are discontinued until fees are paid in full.
2. A \$25 Classroom Supply Fee is charged at the time of enrollment and with the start of each new school year in August.
3. When the Office Manager, Center Director, or Executive Director are available, cash and checks can be handed to that person. Receipts are provided at that time for cash and are available for checks if requested.
4. When staff members other than the office manager, Center Director, and Executive Director are working in the office or when the office is not staffed, parents place their cash or check inside a Fee Payment envelope. These envelopes are located on the office window ledge. Complete the identification information on the outside of the envelope and place it inside the locked mailbox located on the wall next to the office window in the lobby.

Envelopes are removed when office staff arrives in the morning and again before they leave in the afternoon. No cash or checks are kept inside the mailbox overnight.

5. Computer receipts are issued for cash payments. Receipts for checks can be requested.
6. At the end of each calendar year, parents receive a print-out of all fees paid during the year. This is an important tool at tax time.

Fees when Children are Absent

1. Full fee will be charged whether or not your child is in attendance. This policy is standard for child care centers.
2. Parents pay 1/2 of the weekly fee to hold a spot for their child when children are absent for an entire week for vacation or for any other reason. Parents are allowed two such half-fee weeks per school year (August to August) and should notify the Center Director in advance when planning to use a ½ fee week if possible.
3. Cases of a child needing to be out for an extended period due to prolonged illness, a job layoff, or other family crisis are handled on an individual basis.
4. Walnut Hill attempts to stay open during the winter as much as possible. In the event that we must close due to safety precautions set by the Department of Transportation or other Government agencies, parents pay for a full week of child care unless we close for more than 2 days within the same school week.
5. Parents pay for two days each school year when staff members are working but children are not present. These are days that teachers and other staff spend time learning more about the field of early childhood education and working in their classrooms to keep them clean and organized. Since these days contribute to your child's education and well-being, we charge for the full week. See the yearly calendar for these dates. If you need assistance finding back up child care, speak with the Center Director.

Scholarship Program

1. A scholarship based on household size and the total income of all adults living in the home is used to determine the family's weekly fee. Four weeks of pay stubs are required to verify income (four consecutive or two biweekly).
2. Pay stubs are checked again every six months and fees adjusted accordingly. Parents are also asked to update or verify their contact information at this time.
3. Parents are required to notify the center if their household income increases or decreases throughout the year.

4. Families who qualify for government assistance for fees are expected to enroll and to adhere to all requirements for that program. Eligible families who fail to meet government requirements may be charged the current full market rate for child care.
5. While the weekly rate may be adjusted on a temporary basis in times of unexpected emergency, Walnut Hill must have consistent funds to remain available to other families. Consistent policies guarantee fair treatment of all families.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Center Director is employed as an advocate for the child and the family.

- She listens to family concerns and problems and helps families find solutions through center resources and referrals. She assists families with relationships and monetary concerns.
- She asks 1-2 parents from each classroom to act as advisors who help the center make policy changes, plan a fundraiser, make decisions related to expenditures of proceeds from any family fundraiser, and plan family center events.
- She provides lists of community agencies that can help.
- She may have access to small monetary gifts donated by community groups to help families with unexpected emergencies.

How We Communicate with Parents

1. A Parent Board is located in the front lobby and contains general information about the center such as the role of parents and teachers, weekly menus, CACFP information, activities taking place within the community for a given month, and the communicable disease chart.
2. Daily News is written on a dry erase board in each classroom to inform parents about the day's activities. Please take time to read it with your child. Parents will also find a daily schedule and weekly lesson plans posted in the classroom.
3. A center-wide monthly newsletter with information and parenting advice and ideas is sent out to all families.
4. The Classroom Newsletter is a one page announcement of events in your child's classroom. The backside is used to share parenting ideas and advice.
5. Informal notices to Parents, written in Spanish and English, are often posted on the main entrance door or on a dry erase board on an easel in the lobby.

Opportunities to Share Information or Talk to Your Child's Teacher

1. Child Interest Inventory is provided to families during the enrollment process. Please tell us about anything your child has special interest in. Tell us how your family celebrates holidays. Include your family's traditions, music preferences, and special foods you enjoy.
2. Parents talk to the Classroom Teacher when dropping off or picking up their child. If the teacher is not immediately available, please leave a message with an office person to have the teacher call. Your needs are important to us so if you are passing through before office staff arrive, feel free to call the center on your break or lunch hour.
3. An Open House is scheduled each fall to give opportunity for parents and lead teachers to meet and for parents to have an introduction to the classroom and its routines.
4. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held each fall and spring. This is a special time to discuss your child's progress and to set goals together as a team. Special conferences can be called by teacher or parent any time either party wants to discuss the child, the family, or the program.

Parent Evaluation of the Program:

Assessments forms are distributed to parents annually. Parents are asked to give feedback concerning all aspects of our program. These are taken seriously and are the basis for changes. Results and changes to be made are shared with parents, staff, and the Goshen Day Care Board.

Family Visits to the Classroom:

Parents or grandparents are encouraged to make arrangements to join their child or grandchild for lunch or to go along on a trip to the park. If someone from your family plays an instrument or has something interesting to share, let your child's teacher know. During enrollment, parents are given a Parent Interest Survey on which they can share anything they would be willing to share with the classroom. Classroom visitors enhance our program. Note: Visitors are not counted in the ratio and are not left alone with children.

Children's Library

A variety of seasonal books are located in the front lobby for check out. Parents may check these books out to read with their child at home. There is a sign out sheet next to the books where parents can write the date, their name, and the title of the book they are checking out. When parents return a book, they can check out another book. We do ask parents to limit the check out to 2 books at a time and always bring the books back before checking out more so that as many families as possible can enjoy the books.

Parent Library

A variety of parenting books and other resources are located in the center director's office. Parents may check out these items for 2 weeks. New books are added annually to keep this resource current. At enrollments, parents are given a list of resources.

Family Engagement Kits

We have a variety of family engagement kits that can be checked out for one week at a time. These kits contain fun activities, games, and toys that you can use with your families at home. Each kit comes in a plastic tub or bag and has a paper with a list of all the materials enclosed and instructions. This paper comes in English and Spanish. The kits are located in the Center Director's Office, and can be checked out by signing the sign-out sheet in the Center Director's Office.

Thank you for allowing Walnut Hill to serve you and your family!

