

# Family Handbook



WOODS EDGE  
FAMILY CHILDCARE

**Mission:**

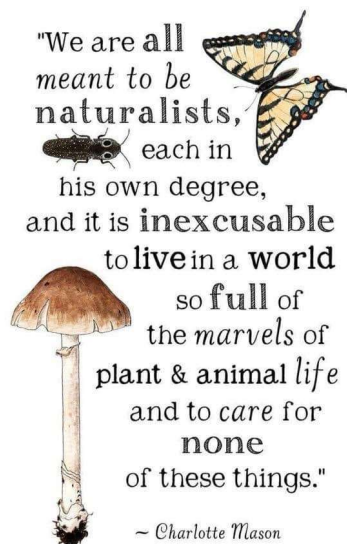
Located in scenic Warren County, New Jersey, Woods Edge Family Childcare provides a nature focused, play-based learning experience on our farmstead to foster self confidence in young learners and a bond with the natural world.

**Vision:**

To instill, not just an appreciation, but a love of nature and a connection with our local bioregion while providing quality care to our families.

**Philosophy:**

Our main focus is cultivating a bond between the child and the natural world around them. We do this through encouraging curiosity, daily outdoor play and building an appreciation of the natural wonders that surround us. We believe children learn best when they are allowed to lead and given the opportunity to take age appropriate risks. This approach allows children to build confidence, better understand cause and effect and develop skills to use their best judgement. Through observation, gentle reminders are used to encourage safety while building a mutual respect for others including the world around them. We believe that all weather is worthy of exploring and allow every child to discover the naturalist within.



*"Encouraging a child to go outside in all weather builds resilience, but more importantly it saves them from spending their life merely tolerating the "bad" days in favor of a handful of "good" ones - a life of endless expectations and conditions where happiness hinges on sunshine."*

-Nicolette Sowder, Wilder Child

## **Hours of Operation and Tuition Policy**

Woods Edge FCC's Nature School program runs on the school year calendar. The calendar for the current year will be distributed at the start of the school year and posted to the website [www.woodsedgefcc.com](http://www.woodsedgefcc.com). Tuition for Nature School is on an annual basis. Annual tuition is divided into 10 monthly payments and is due on the first school day of each month. A deposit equal to one month's tuition is required to secure your child's spot in the program and will be applied as the June tuition payment.

After school care is provided on Wednesdays and follows the RVCS school year schedule. Payment is due weekly the day of care.

Summer session schedule and payment details are posted each spring for the coming summer. A deposit is required to hold your child's place in camp.

Woods Edge uses Procure for billing and photo sharing. Tuition payments may be made through Procure or via cash, personal check or money order. If a payment is returned due to a lack of funds, the parent/guardian must pay a \$35.00 returned check fee. If a check is returned more than one time, only cash or money orders will be accepted as payment.

## **Subsidized Childcare Payments**

Families using the state child care subsidy program, Child Care Aware or United for ALICE tuition assistance are responsible for paying the difference between the subsidy allowance and the monthly tuition fee. This is called an excess fee and may be claimed on your taxes. Tuition for the month is due on the first school day of the month. The deposit policy in the above section applies to all families. The parent/guardian must agree to follow the subsidy program's time-keeping protocol. Parents must sign their child in and out daily via Procure. The parent/guardian is subject to all returned check fees and must adhere to the payment policies above.

## **Closure Dates**

Please see our attached calendar.

\*Inclement Weather: We follow Ridge and Valley Charter School for weather closures. If they close for inclement weather or shift to a virtual snow day, our program will also be closed. We build 4 emergency closure days into our program. If we use up the allotted days we will add days as appropriate on to the end of the year.

## **Termination Procedures**

We understand plans change. We will gladly issue a full refund for any cancellation requests given with 30 days notice. No refunds will be issued on cancellation notices received with less than 30 days notice.

The provider may immediately terminate the contract without any notice due to non-payment. There is a two (2) week trial period upon enrollment. If deemed not a good fit for the child or the provider, either may terminate this contract at that time.

The provider may also terminate this contract immediately due to persistent harm to other children or pets, or property damage.

## **Meals**

We will provide a morning snack of fresh fruit, vegetable, trail mix, etc. for Nature School and Summer Camp. Please pack a lunch for your child with a refillable water bottle and an icepack or thermos as appropriate. We do not have a microwave for warming food. Please notify of any food allergies.

A snack is provided for after school care and we will be sure to refill water bottles. Please notify of any food allergies.

## **Staff Training**

Provider, Alternates and Substitutes are all trained in First Aid/CPR, Health and Safety, Child Development, and Child Abuse and Neglect. A CARI clearance, fingerprints and physical are also required. Katie Styer is a Level 2 Nature Based Certified Educator through Eastern Region Association of Forest & Nature Schools.

## **Fire, Lockdown & Shelter-in-Place Drills**

Fire drills are conducted monthly, at varied times of day and during varied activities. Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place drills are each performed twice per year.

## **Social Media Policy**

Woods Edge Family Childcare does maintain a Facebook page, an Instagram account and a website. It is our policy not to post your child's name or any other identifying information. We ask that you do not share or post photos of other children in the program without the express permission of the parent.

## **How to Dress Your Child**

Please send your child with appropriate attire including:

- rain boots or waterproof snow boots as seasonally appropriate, an extra pair as back up
- rain suit or rain gear
- snow pants, winter coats, hats, and extra waterproof gloves
- sun hats, UPF clothing and swimwear or other quick drying clothing in summer
- layers for putting on or peeling off

Please send multiple changes of seasonally appropriate clothing and layers including socks and underwear. We are outside every day unless it is unsafe to do so (inclement weather such as thunderstorms, high winds, extreme temps, etc.). We get dirty, and wet. And sometimes we have toileting accidents so please make sure their bag is stocked daily with changes of clothing to get cozy and/or comfy and dry.

## **Biting & Stinging Insects**

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In some cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment. If

there is prior knowledge to suggest that a child will have an allergic reaction if bitten, then the provider must be informed.

Ticks are known to exist in our area. Please perform a tick check on your child at the end of each day. Information on safe removal of ticks can be found at [https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing\\_a\\_tick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html).

### **Animals/Pets**

We are a dog-friendly household so it may not be the appropriate place for children allergic to or fearful of dogs.

We also have poultry and livestock on the property. Although we make “field trips” to visit them, they do not share the common spaces used during care and handwashing will always occur after a visit with poultry or livestock.

### **Child Guidance**

We allow children freedom to problem solve on their own. When necessary, we use age appropriate redirection of behavior, logical consequences, and/or take breaks as needed in response to unkind or dangerous behavior. When a child steps away from the group, we offer to go sit with them. This calming time is used to talk over feelings, brainstorm solutions, and build provider/child relationships as we assist the children through their struggles. Forced isolation is not permitted at our program. If the child requests to be left alone, we respect their need for alone time also.

### **COVID-19 Guidelines**

To maintain the health and wellness of all children in our care, please keep your child home if they appear sick for any reason. Please see our Sick Policy/ Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion in this handbook.

Sick children will be excluded from care until they are fever free for 72 hours without medication such as Tylenol, Motrin or Advil.

If anyone in your household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, your child must remain at home following the NJDOH guidance.

We aim to be your child’s home away from home and as such we do not require masks to be worn while in care. Mask wearing is optional during our program.

We strive to use our outdoor spaces as much as possible as sunshine and fresh air aid in overall wellness. We will go indoors in the event of hazardous weather until it is safe to return outside.

### **Sick Policy/ Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion**

If your child is not feeling well, the provider will recommend temporary exclusion. Often this decision is not only based on your child’s physical symptoms, such as a fever, but also on their inability to be comfortable in a group setting. Some reasons of exclusion are as follows:

- A child is not able to participate comfortably as determined by the provider.
- The child’s illness or symptoms result in a greater need for care than the provider is able to provide without compromising the level of care provided to the other children.
- Has a fever of 100.4 F auxiliary (armpit) or 101.4 F orally
- Diarrhea that is not associated with a change in diet. Any diarrhea that is outside of what is considered a normal bowel movement for your child, loose, watery bowel movement that is not contained in diaper OR a child cannot make it to the toilet in time.

- Vomiting
- Complaints of abdominal pain lasting for more than 1 hour
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Unexplained rash
- Persistent runny nose or cough
- Pink or red conjunctivitis with white or yellow discharge
- Severe diaper rash lasting for more than 3 continuous days
- Impetigo
- Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection
- Head lice
- Open wounds unable to be bandaged

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, for the sake of your child and the other children in care, parents are expected to keep their child at home. Sick children and staff are to be kept out of class. They are unable to participate, may potentially infect other children and most importantly, need extra care that a group setting cannot provide. If the provider is uncertain about whether your child's illness poses an increased threat to themselves or to the children around them, the provider will exclude your child until a physician or nurse practitioner notifies the child care center that your child may return.

### **Infection Control Procedures**

Hand washing procedures include:

- After handling garbage or garbage receptacles
- Before and after eating or participating in a food activity
- After toileting or diapering
- After touching body fluids including after sneezing and coughing
- After handling animals or animal toys
- As otherwise needed

Hand Sanitizer will only be used in the event hand washing is unavailable.

Food preparation surfaces and tables will be cleaned before and after meal times/meal prep use.

### **Toilet (Potty) Learning Policy**

When you feel your child is ready for potty learning, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. PLEASE NOTE: We will only assist your child in potty training if you have successfully begun learning at home for one week prior.

We will follow through and encourage your child while in care. Potty learning will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. We require that the child be at least 2 years of age and must also show signs of readiness. Positive reinforcements and consistency must be continued at home.

Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we will use pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement. Parents should provide pull-ups, diapers (until child is ready for pull-ups only) and a few extra changes of clothing.

#### Proper Clothing

Do not bring your child in underwear until he/she has naptime and bedtime control established. During potty training your child needs to be dressed in "user friendly" clothing as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with an elastic waist. Please do not dress your child in the following:

No tight clothing  
No shirts that snap in the crotch  
No pants with snaps & zippers  
No overalls or bib type clothing  
No belts  
No one piece outfits

The clothes listed above can make it difficult for your child to reach the potty in time. Your child also needs to be able to pull his/her pants up and down and these items will hinder your child's ability to do so.

Please note: We are well acquainted with the "nature pee" as it can be difficult getting indoors to the potty when the children are involved in outdoor play but we cannot allow a child to run around naked or bottomless for the sake of toilet learning.

#### Required Supplies

The following items are to be left at childcare and replaced as needed. Soiled clothes will be returned in a plastic bag at the end of the day.

Two (2) changes of clothing including socks, an extra pair of shoes if available, and a bag of pull-ups – you will be notified when the supply is running low.

#### **Child Care Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with state family child care licensing regulations, child care services are available without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry.



AT WOODS EDGE FAMILY CHILDCARE

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