

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Rochester Child Care Center's "UP" Program! We are pleased to have your family in our program. This is an important time for you and your child, and we are here to answer any questions that you might have. Our afterschool staff is eager to get to know you and will be happy to help in whatever way we can. We believe that you are the most important person in your child's life, and we look forward to partnering with you to foster your child's development by providing a safe and healthy learning environment for your child.

This handbook is designed to familiarize you with our philosophy, program, and policies. It is very important that you read through this information carefully so that you can understand our policies and your responsibilities as a parent/guardian. We suggest that you keep this information handy, as you will find it will answer many questions that typically arise during the year.

Our administrative and program staff are here to assist you. The Rochester Child Care Center has an "open door" policy. Family members are always welcome. You can always contact either the administrative staff at our Charles St. center or the afterschool staff at your child's school age site. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. Active and open two-way communication will help to make sure that your experience at Rochester Child Care Center is a successful one.

Parent participation is important to us! We welcome your comments and suggestions, and encourage you to share your thoughts with us. Parents are invited to serve on our volunteer board of directors and participate in special activities and events. We look forward to being a part of the life of your family and providing healthy and nurturing early education and care for your child.

Sincerely,

Cora-Lynn Hoppe
Executive Director

Rochester Child Care Center

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Rochester Child Care Center

Who We Are

Established in 1976 as a private non-profit center with a volunteer board of directors, the center has maintained a consistent mission of providing high quality affordable child care to families in Rochester and surrounding communities. We currently serve around 450 children in our center, school age, and summer programs. We do our best to keep tuition at an affordable rate. All "UP" Program sites are licensed by the State of New Hampshire and have Licensed Plus status.

Our Impact

Research by the Afterschool Alliance has revealed the benefits of school age programming. Participation in quality programs is linked to improved behavior, standardized test scores, personal and social skills, educational aspirations, community involvement, and self-esteem. School age programs have also been shown to reduce youth participation in risky behavior.

By providing this structured school age care for children throughout Rochester, we also work to provide the best possible academic, social, and emotional support to the youth of our community. Our program also seeks to promote equality by helping the youth in our program to gain access to educational, social, and recreational resources.

Staff Qualifications

Our program staff meet or exceed the New Hampshire Child Care Licensing regulations for educational and experience requirements. All staff actively participate in ongoing professional development and meet Licensed Plus standards. Before hire all staff must pass a state police background check including fingerprinting.

Non-Discrimination Statement

We prohibit discrimination in any of our programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, or disability.

Board of Directors

Our Center is governed by a Board of Directors, which is comprised of community volunteers. The Board establishes our agency's mission and policies, and hires the Executive Director to implement them. Parents who are interested in finding out more about joining the Board are encouraged to contact the Executive Director for further information at (603) 332-9333.

Fundraising

Our agency schedules a variety of fundraising events throughout the year to help to keep tuition at a reasonable rate and to help us with program improvements. We rely on and truly appreciate parental support and assistance with these events.

Confidentiality and Client Records/Files

Rochester Child Care Center and its employees have both an ethical and legal obligation to respect the privacy of our clients. This includes protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of all information that we learn about our clients, their family members, and friends in the course of providing our services. Parents may be asked to authorize the exchange of information with schools or other agencies by completing an authorization form.

Services to Children with Special Needs

Rochester Child Care Center strives to provide the highest quality child care to children of all abilities. We are dedicated to meeting the unique needs of each child and we will assist families in networking to area services to provide additional supports as needed.

That said, our program model does not allow for consistent one-on-one support for each student and, as a result, it might not be the appropriate setting for all children. Due to staff ratios and the location of rest rooms at our sites we require that all "UP" Program participants are able to toilet independently without assistance. If we determine that we cannot serve your child, we are dedicated to assisting you in finding more suitable options.

Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect

New Hampshire Law (RSA 169-C: 29-30) requires that any person who has reason to suspect that a child under the age of 18 has been abused or neglected must report the case to the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). If a report has been made, the Executive Director may consult with DCYF regarding the decision of notifying the child's parent or guardian of the report. Out of respect to our parents, we prefer to communicate our concerns whenever possible. However, the agency may refrain from notifying parents based on individual circumstances or the request of state officials.

Our "UP" Program

Basic Information

We offer school age care at the Rochester's public elementary schools. Before school care begins at each of the sites at 6:30 am and ends when students begin their school day. We regret that we *cannot* accept students before our 6:30 am start time.

The afterschool schedule at each site varies depending on the staff and the needs of the children, but the following is a sample schedule to familiarize you with the program. Afterschool care begins each day when the first students finish their school day. They are given time to socialize and play freely before heading outside for their recommended hour of physical activity. When the students come inside after play, they enjoy a USDA-subsidized healthy snack together as a group. After snack, the students begin homework time: our qualified staff helps them to complete their homework for the following day. Finally, students enjoy structured enrichment time often based on the interests of the students.

Kindergarteners released before the end of the regular school day are cared for by our staff and may go home on a bus or stay to participate in the afterschool program.

"UP" Enrichment Program

Rochester Child Care Center's "UP" Program Unlocks Potential! We want to help every student realize their full potential by extending the learning that takes place during the school day.

In addition to the healthy USDA-subsidized snacks, homework help, and structured and free play described above, we're working to bring in qualified volunteers from the community to teach art, dance, music, language, gardening, to lead students in community service projects, and more! These programs will be offered at no additional charge.

Snacks and Food Information

Food Program Information

All meals at the Rochester Child Care Center are served under the guidance of the CACFP Child Nutrition Program. Due to our participation in this program all parents, regardless of income, are required to complete paperwork annually. Eligible families are encouraged to participate in the breakfast program at their elementary school.

The school age program serves children one afternoon snack each day. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are served during our summer program. Parents are responsible for supplying food during all other full day care.

In accordance with Federal Law and the US Dept. of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Rm 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Food Allergies and Restrictions

In compliance with CACFP regulations, if your child has special meal restrictions or food allergies that require accommodations, you must provide us with written documentation from your child's physician. A special meals form must be completed by a health professional before any meal substitutions or exceptions can be made for your child. We are extremely careful about food allergies at our school age sites. None of our sites allow peanut or tree nut based food to be brought to the site given the frequency and severity of peanut allergies.

Outdoor Play

Because outdoor play and exploration are such an important part of your child's development, our programs plan daily outdoor activity time every day. Please be aware that if your child is well enough to attend the program, they must be able to participate in outdoor activities. Children are restricted from using the playground equipment once the ground is frozen, per licensing regulations. Please make sure that children are dressed appropriately for all seasons. Flip Flops or loose sandals are not safe on playground equipment. Please bring sneakers or other footwear for gym and outdoor play.

*Please note: Rochester Child Care Center is not responsible for lost items brought from home. Please mark all clothing with your child's name and be sure to leave all valuables such as toys or electronics at home.

Program Policies

Daily Arrivals and Departures

All children must be escorted to and from the school age sites and signed in and out on the program attendance sheet. Always notify a staff member when you are picking up or dropping off your child and make sure that your child is never unattended in the building at any time. Once a parent has signed a child out of our programs, they are responsible for the supervision and safety of their child. Children deserve our undivided attention, please do not use your cell phone during pick up and drop off times. We regret that we cannot allow children to walk home from any of our school age programs without an adult.

School age Program Afternoon Absences

It is mandatory that parents/guardians call the Center to inform us if their child is going to be absent from OR late to the after school program. This information must be called in to the Center office at (603) 332-9333 by 12:00 noon each time your child will be absent, including if your child will be absent or dismissed early from school for an illness or appointment.

Authorization for Pick-up

As part of our enrollment procedure, parents are required to provide us with a list of people who are authorized to pick up their children from the school age sites and/or who will be called when a parent can't be reached to pick up an ill child, etc. It is recommended that parents/guardians list these names in the order in which they would like people contacted, including their own information. We will NOT release a child to any adult who is not on this authorization list without written and dated authorization submitted to the center office or school age program. ALL adults, including parents, must be able to present photo identification when picking up children from the program. Due to our large number of employees, staff members may request identification until they become familiar with a child's parents and extended family. This is to ensure your child's safety, so please inform all alternate pick-up persons that they will need to bring appropriate identification with them. If an unfamiliar adult cannot produce a photo ID to verify their identification, we will not release a child to them. **In order to promote the safety and well-being of children, no child will be released to anyone under the age of 16.**

If both biological parents are included in the enrollment paperwork, regardless of change in marital/relationship status, biological parents cannot be deleted from a pick-up list or denied visitation without documented court authorization. Any court-authorized documents regarding custodial changes or restrictions must be submitted to an administrator in the main office before our staff can enforce these changes. It is our goal to support the individual needs of our families, but we will only do so within the required constraints of the law.

If a parent/guardian or designated pick-up person is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol/drugs when they arrive at the program, the individual may be called aside by a staff member to discuss the concern. The Center will provide assistance with contacting an alternate adult or taxi to provide necessary transportation if a parent confirms they are in need of assistance. If the situation isn't able to be resolved and the agency still has concerns about the well-being of the child, the agency will contact the authorities.

Closing/Late Pick-up Fee

All school age programs close promptly at 6:00 pm. Parents are asked to arrive on time so they and their children can vacate the building by 6:00 pm. Anyone arriving after 6:00 pm is charged a late fee, which is added directly to your account and is due with your tuition payment for the following week. Parents are charged a flat rate of \$15.00 for late arrival after 6:00 through 6:15. Parents arriving after 6:15 will be charged an additional \$15.00 for each 15 minute window after that.

Be advised that if we are unable to reach you or an authorized pick-up person after the center has closed, we may need to notify appropriate authorities. Please be aware that repeated lateness, or failure to pay late fees, could be cause for dismissal from the program.

Emergency Closings

When the school district declares a delayed opening or early closing, all sites will be open to provide care until the start of the school day or until the school age programs would normally close. There is no additional charge for this extended care. **Please note:** only children signed up for before school care may attend delayed opening care, and only children signed up for afterschool care may attend early release care.

When the school district declares a school cancellation for snow or other inclement weather, our school age programs are combined into several sites that offer full day care. Parents will be given information about their designed site at the beginning of the school year along with the opening times of our programs. In all cases of full day care due school cancellation, parents of school age children will be charged the full day rate should their child attend that day. Please note that this may not be your child's regular site. Be sure to always check for storm closing information on WMUR channel 9 or www.wmur.com.

School Vacations and Scheduled Closings

Several "UP" Program sites remain open and provide full day care during school vacations and regularly scheduled school closings such as holidays, teacher workshop days and others. Families are responsible for providing children with morning snacks and lunch on these days. The schools that are available for full day care are designated by the Rochester School Department annually. You will be informed regarding the school your child may attend for full day care.

Please note that parents must sign their children up at least two weeks in advance to attend full day care or vacation weeks. Sign-up sheets are available at the "UP" sites. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee that a spot will be available for every child because we are limited by space and staff ratios.

Families will not be charged for care during school vacation weeks if your child was not signed up. ***However, if you do sign up for full days and vacation days and do not cancel the Friday before care is to be provided you will still be charged for the days you signed up for.*** Weekly rates will remain the same if children do not attend during all other school closings. Please see our tuition/fee sheet for full day and vacation week fees.

In the fall of each year you will receive a calendar notifying you of the school age program's scheduled closings. In addition to some holiday closings, our school age program closes for scheduled staff training and program preparation days. Specific details are sent to parents each calendar year. Tuition remains the same during the weeks we have a closing, as they already have been included in your tuition rates.

Illness and Medication Policy

Our Center works hard to provide a safe, healthy environment for all children. Parents are required to provide us with a copy of their child's immunization record and a current physical prior to their enrollment in our program. Per licensing regulation, children must have documentation of a physical updated at least one year prior to their enrollment date.

We work hard to prevent illness and injuries at our program. All school age staff are required to have current CPR and First Aid certification. Minor injuries, such as bumps, scrapes, and small cuts are treated by our staff using "universal precautions" when administering first aid. Parents are notified of all injuries through written "Injury Report Forms" that require your review and signature. In the case of an injury that may require a physician's attention, a staff member will call you regarding the situation and if it is not an immediate emergency, you will be asked to pick up your child for medical attention. If emergency medical treatment is required we will call an ambulance, and you will be notified of the situation and be asked to meet us at the nearest medical facility.

We also work to prevent the spread of illness by adhering to the "universal precautions" cited in our communicable disease control procedures. This includes disinfecting surfaces and toys in the school age sites as necessary, wearing gloves when administering first aid, and promoting important health practices like proper hand washing.

It is important to note that our agency does not have the resources for caring for ill children and we ask that you keep your child at home when they are not feeling well. If your child is well enough to attend school and our school age program, they must be well enough to participate in our program. This includes outdoor play. Should your child become ill while at the school age sites, you will be called and required to arrange for your child to be picked up immediately. **Parents must keep their authorization list and home/work phone numbers updated as changes occur so that we are able to contact you whenever necessary.**

Administering Medications

Parents must adhere to the following procedures in order for us to medicate your child. **Parents must carefully and completely fill out a medication form for each prescription/nonprescription medication that is to be administered.** These forms are available in the main office at the Charles St. center. All medication must be brought in its **original** container with the child's name, current date, the dosage information, and the physician's name printed clearly on the label. Non-prescription medications such as cough syrups, Tylenol, etc. must also be in their original containers and be accompanied by written authorization from your doctor to provide them to your child as needed throughout the year. For your convenience, physicians can fax necessary information to us at 332-3912. Please know that we are NOT able to administer medication without all of the required information.

Movies/Music

We listen to only "kid-friendly" music and watch only G rated movies. PG rated movies are watched only with parent permission.

Withdrawing from the School age Program

Parents are responsible for giving us at least one-week notice when withdrawing their children from the program. A child will be considered automatically withdrawn from our school age program after two weeks of absence if no contact has been made with the center. Accounts will be charged accordingly.

Behavior Guidance and Discipline

We believe that discipline is the process through which children will learn self-control. Discipline is not punishment and must be productive for children. It is teaching, guiding, and redirecting behavior. The first priority in all of our programs is to provide children with a safe and healthy environment. We exist as an organization to care for children, and our disciplinary methods are also caring in nature.

In an effort to provide the best possible care for all the children, all children enrolled need to observe the 'Up-Program' Expectations. This includes but is not limited to:

- Children must keep body parts and other objects to themselves.
- Respectful use of language is required. Inappropriate content and slander will not be tolerated.
- Children need to stay in supervised areas. These are designated to us by the Rochester School Dept.
- Children must follow reasonable requests of 'Up-Program' staff.

We have ZERO TOLERANCE for bullying, defined as a single significant incident or a pattern involving verbal, written, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another child which:

- Physically harms a student or their property;
- Causes emotional distress to other students;
- Interferes with students engaged in social and educational opportunities;
- Creates a hostile environment or;

- Substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the program

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If the student is struggling with any of these expectations the staff will be required to take the following steps:

1. A phone call will be made to the parent/guardian as a brief phone conference to assist with the child's behavior.
2. If the child continues to display inappropriate behavior, a call will be made to pick up the child.

After three repeat issues that require documentation, the student will remain out of program until a conference between the program director and the parent/guardian has been arranged. This meeting is to help discuss current strategies and the current needs of the child and their family. If the resources of the Up Program are not able to keep the child, staff, and other children safe in program, you may need to find alternative care.

Safety is our number one concern when it comes to a child's care. Be assured the staff work diligently to make your child's experience in our program positive. However, the UP Program reserves the right to terminate childcare without notice for extremely unsafe, disruptive, and violent behaviors.

Upon enrollment you will be asked to sign a "Behavior Guidance Policy."

Parent/Guardian and Staff Interactions

Rochester Child Care Center believes that a successful program experience requires a relationship of respect between staff and parents/guardians. Demonstrating positive adult interactions is crucial for setting healthy examples for all children. Communication between parents/guardians and Up-Program staff is expected to be appropriate and professional. If a parent is communicating in a hostile, disrespectful manner to Up-Program staff, proper follow up will take place by administrative staff. If a parent has concerns, questions or feedback that may result in a high stress conversation, they are strongly encouraged to bring them directly to the Up-Program Director, Hannah Bancroft. Our number one goal in parent/guardian and staff communication is to uphold a safe, comfortable, healthy environment for all involved.

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

Rochester Child Care Center strives to provide the highest quality of care and education to children of varying abilities. We have a long history of providing care and programming to children with special needs and are dedicated to meeting the unique needs of each child.

We have learned that in order for children to be successful it is imperative that we work closely with parents, the school department and other providers and have thorough information, consistent collaboration and open two-way communication among everyone involved.

The Process:

When a child with a diagnosed disability is enrolled in our program we request that parents/guardians meet with the program director/coordinator and teacher/Site Director if possible to share information regarding the child's needs and plan ways our program can accommodate these needs. Parents will be asked to give permission for Rochester Child Care Center to obtain and share information with the school department and/or other service providers.

We request that the child's IEP or IFSP be shared with our program so that we may learn about specific strategies and strive for consistency as much as possible.

Once the child is attending our program we may ask for parent/guardians to meet with us as needed to address specific challenges should they arise. We may seek out other sources of expertise after obtaining parent permission or make referrals to outside agencies with parent permission.

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The Law:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitations Act

This law outlines the specific responsibilities of caregivers of children with diagnosed disabilities and outlines the parent/guardian's responsibilities to provide information and collaborate in planning for their child's care. Programs are required to make "reasonable accommodation" to include children with disabilities. Accommodations that pose an undue hardship on the program or pose a safety risk to the children in the program are not required. An example of an accommodation we would consider to be one that creates an undue hardship is the provision of a one on one aide.

Termination of Services

In adherence with NH Child Care Licensing regulations, Rochester Child Care Center for all of its programs agrees to:

- Work with parent/guardians to use multiple intervention strategies to assist the child to be successful in the program
- Seek out additional resources and referrals
- Provide staff with professional development as related to the child's special needs
- Child behaviors shall be documented and if after using the strategies noted above Rochester

Child Care Center determines that services need to be terminated, the program shall maintain the child's enrollment for two weeks thereafter. Parents shall be informed and resource and referral information whenever possible. Immediate expulsion may be necessary if the child's behavior poses a serious safety risk to him/herself or others.

Parent/guardians will be provided all documentation involved in making the decision to terminate their child's enrollment at the center.

Tuition Information

Tuition Payment Policy and Late Payment Charge

As a non-profit agency, we rely heavily on your prompt payment for the important service we provide. Payment is expected in advance, on Friday, for the upcoming weeks of care. Parents who are repeatedly late with their payments risk losing their child care services. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged if tuition becomes 2 weeks past due. Accounts three weeks in arrears will result in termination.

Parents of children enrolled in the school age program must make payment to our center office at 95 Charles Street in Rochester. We can accept mailed payments and credit cards in person or over the phone. Automatic payment services are also offered to our customers, contact our office at 332-9333 to set this up. We **cannot** accept payments at our school age sites.

Please understand that we are not financially able to extend credit. Failure to make payments is serious and is cause for dismissal from the program. Services cannot be provided to families whose accounts are overdue. Should circumstances arise that temporarily affect your ability to adhere to our payment policy, you must immediately contact our business office to discuss an appropriate solution.

If you pay by check, and our bank does not honor it, you may be required to make future payments by cash, money order, or cashier's check. You will be charged a \$25.00 fee for all bounced checks.

*Tuition must be paid weekly in full regardless of your child's attendance in our program and regardless of scheduled holiday closings. **If you sign up for full days and vacation days and do not cancel**

the Friday before care is to be provided you will still be charged for the days you signed up for.

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Tuition Assistance

We accept the state of New Hampshire CCDFS Scholarship program. All paperwork must be submitted to your local Department of Health and Human Services office.

Visitor and Volunteer Information

Visitor Information

We maintain an open door policy for all of our parents, but remind parents and guardians that we encourage visits that are conducive to the routine of their child's program. While visiting our sites, we prohibit parents from disciplining other children or from disciplining their own child in a manner that is not within the philosophy of the agency.

Volunteer Information

Volunteers from the community are essential to the success of our school age program. Parents and other members of the community possess a wide range of interesting and important skills – building and construction, foreign language, cooking, gardening, and more – that they can offer to our youth. We hope to offer our students the chance to experience all of these activities so that they can begin to see which sorts of activities fascinate and delight them. By serving at our school age program sites, volunteers help to provide equal access to the many educational activities that are fundamental to positive youth development.

The Rochester Child Care Center is fully committed to involving and supporting volunteers. We will work to ensure that our volunteers have positive and rewarding experiences during their service. All volunteers go through a state police background check including fingerprinting. To learn more about our volunteer opportunities and policies, please contact Cora Lynn-Hoppe at (603)332-9333 and request a copy of our volunteer handbook.

Our Summer Program

Basic Information

In addition to its school age program, the Rochester Child Care Center also offers a summer program that runs throughout summer vacation. Parents are responsible for bringing their child to their designed site. The schools that are available for summer care are designated by the Rochester School Department. You will be informed regarding the school your child may attend for summer care.

The summer program runs from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays. The children enjoy free and structured play, quiet time to focus on reading and other games, time for socialization, shared meals, enrichment activities, and field trips.

Snacks and Food Information

All meals at the Rochester Child Care Center are served under the guidance of the CACFP Child Nutrition Program. Due to our participation in this program all parents, regardless of income, are required to complete paperwork annually. Children are served breakfast, lunch, and PM snack each day during our summer program.

Field Trips

The summer program features several field trips. Our goal is to allow children to leave the city and to experience nature, and so we tend to take children to state parks, mountains, beaches, and lakes.

Parents will be given a list of field trip locations at the beginning of the summer, and each family will need to sign field trip permission forms in order for their children to participate.

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Children must be dropped off at their summer program site by 8:30 AM on field trip days to ensure that we leave on the bus on time. There will be no care provided for children who do not arrive at the site by

8:30 as all staff members attend the field trips. For safety reasons, all children attending field trips must wear Rochester Child Care Center t-shirts that are purchased by families at the beginning of each summer.

There may be instances when children who do not follow adult supervision on field trips are asked to not attend a future field trip for their safety and the safety of others.

Please be sure to keep this book handy for future reference. Once you have signed the tuition contract, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to the information included in this handbook. If you have any questions, please feel free to give us a call at (603) 332-9333

