



MARY JOHNSON CHILDREN'S CENTER

81 WATER STREET
MIDDLEBURY, VT 05753

(802) 388-2853
Fax (802) 388-3063

office@mjcvt.org
www.mjcvt.org

THE FAMILY HANDBOOK

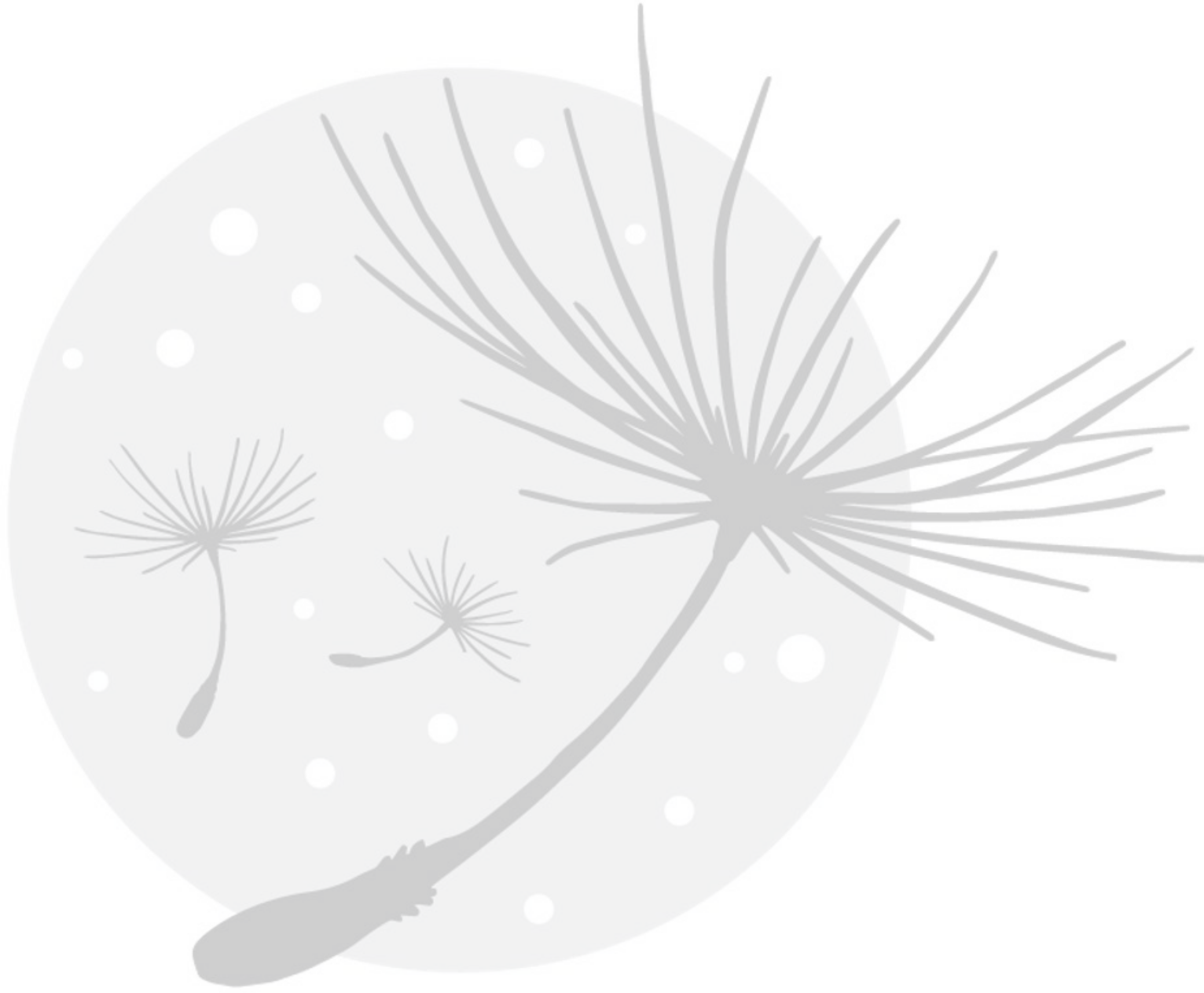


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Identity Statement	1
A Negotiated Curriculum	2-3
Admissions / Waiting List.....	4
Visiting / First Day(s).....	5
Arrival and Departure.....	6
Hours and Schedules / Late Policy.....	7
Daily Schedule.....	8
Tuition - Vacation Policy - Withdrawal.....	9
Snow Days and Emergency Information /	
Intoxicated/Impaired Parent Emergency Policy.....	10
Children's Belongings.....	11
Holidays, Birthdays and Special Occasions.....	12
Food.....	13
Special Diets/Food Allergies.....	14
Health Policy: Immunizations /	
When is it best to keep your child at home?.....	15-17
Medications / Medical Emergencies.....	18
Conferences / Field Trips.....	19
Behavior Guidance.....	20
Parental Access / Involvement / Photographs.....	21
Confidentiality and Release of Information.....	22
College Students / Head Start / Children's Integrated Services.....	23
Parking / Smoking Policy / Emergency Procedures.....	24
Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse /	
Feedback, Suggestions, Grievances.....	25
Equal Access / Anti-Harassment Policy.....	26

ENCLOSED: Family Handbook Agreement – Please Sign and Return to MJCC

Mary Johnson Children's Center Identity Statement

In 1970 a group of concerned Middlebury residents decided the community needed a safe, supportive program for the children of families who needed to work outside the home. They wanted to ensure that children, particularly the children of struggling single mothers were being well cared for. The Middlebury Day Care Center was created as one of the earliest full day, full year programs for working parents in Vermont. Now known as Mary Johnson Children's Center, the Center houses several other programs which support children and families. Remaining true to the goals of its founders, the renovated and expanded building reflects our belief in the importance of beauty, light and natural materials in the surroundings and lives of young children. The families who use the Center represent the range of economic diversity found in our community.

Nestled in the historic district of the shire town of Middlebury at the base of the Green Mountains, and near Otter Creek and its falls, we take much of our inspiration from our natural surroundings, from the local culture, and the state identity. We are a hardy, outdoor people with a love of the land. We are farmers, gardeners, artists and writers; hard working people who take care of each other in times of need. The beauty of our natural surroundings and the changes wrought on them by the seasons is a source of inspiration not only for the teachers, but also for the parents and children who make up our school.

The programs are not conventional or fixed but support the importance of play and evolve depending on the interests of children, teachers and families. We believe that all parents are the experts on their children and want what is best for them. We believe that teachers are collaborators, researchers, and nurturers who are dedicated to supporting children and parents. We believe in the extraordinary capability and intelligence of children. We believe in children's ability to construct their own knowledge. As a school we believe in making visible and giving voice to the rich potential and talent of children, and in the right of all children to have an environment where this talent and potential is respected and nourished.



A Negotiated Curriculum

Our approach to curriculum is a way of perceiving children, a way of working with each child, taking into consideration each child's unique self, beliefs, skills and interests. This approach—child initiated and teacher framed—demands a high level of teacher understanding, involvement and commitment. Teachers respond to children's interests and needs by providing an environment that is rich in materials and activities that specifically support those interests and needs.

Learning occurs when children are engaged in collaborative activity about something that deeply interests them...the teacher's role is to collaborate with the children in their exploration so [the teacher's] knowledge can scaffold (build upon) their understanding.

Lewin-Benham, NAEYC Beyond the Journal, March 2006



On a walk a teacher may observe that a group of children is intrigued with watching the water in Otter Creek flow under the bridge. This interest might provide for an in depth exploration of water. What floats? What sinks? What happens when water freezes? Melts? Where does water come from? Where does it go? What animals live in the water? The possibilities for exploration are endless and are constructed on the children's interests and then, through careful listening, extended by the teacher's use of questions and materials that are provocations to expand children's further exploration.

Often families are concerned, particularly as a child nears kindergarten, about “academics”. Our programs are built on the developmental principal that children are born learning, and that the learning that takes place in the first five years of life is greater than at any other time of life, including four years of college. Children are learning all day, from the time they get up until they fall asleep. They are learning to share, to make friends, to negotiate, to sooth themselves, to dress, to feed themselves. They are continually acquiring language and the understanding of complex concepts like family, community, neighborhood, space, time, and color. Their learning is never-ending.

Early childhood educators see learning from this perspective, and align the curriculum with the Vermont Early Learning Standards. We could teach very young children all the sounds and letters of the alphabet and to count from one to one thousand, but we don't believe that is the best use of their time. They will learn letters and numbers and how to read when they are developmentally ready, when those skills are the next logical step in their learning. Typically, but not always, children develop these interests when they are about four or five years old.

The Emotional Foundations of School Readiness that were developed by the national organization, **Zero to Three**, reflect the Center's goals for each child leaving the Center and entering kindergarten.

Confidence -- A sense of control and mastery of one's body, behavior and world; the child's sense that he is more likely than not to succeed at what he undertakes, and that adults will be helpful.

Curiosity -- The sense that finding out about things is positive and leads to pleasure.

Intentionality -- The wish and capacity to have an impact, and to act upon that with persistence. This is clearly related to a sense of competence, of being effective.

Self-Control -- The ability to modulate and control one's own actions in age-appropriate ways; a sense of inner control.

Relatedness -- The ability to engage with others based on the sense of being understood by and understanding others.

Capacity to Communicate --

The wish and ability to verbally exchange ideas, feelings and concepts with others. This is related to a sense of trust in others and of pleasure in engaging with others, including adults.

Cooperativeness -- The ability to balance one's own needs with those of others in a group activity.

These characteristics equip children with a "school literacy" more basic than knowledge of numbers and letters. It is these characteristics that are most closely associated with school success.

Five Guiding Principles for Children, Families, and Teachers

Be safe physically and emotionally. Respond to the needs of others. Be aware of boundaries, learn to regulate, control impulses, and practice self-awareness. Know when and how to ask for help. Actively supervise and respond. Individualize supports, challenges, and expectations.

Be actively engaged with others, experiences, the environment, and the community. Participate and provide feedback. Be genuine in your communications and actions. Explore with all senses. Rise to challenges and solve problems. Initiate and try new things. Ask questions and make comments. Make connections, contribute, and collaborate.

Be respectful of others, materials, and the environment. Use strong listening and communication skills, being aware of the messages sent verbally and non-verbally. Have an open and understanding mind set. Value differences.

Be responsible. Initiate, give your full attention, and follow through with expectations. Be proactive and dependable. Be an active and responsive community member. Take care of your needs and do your best. Communicate ideas and feelings. Create a positive environment for all.

Extend kindness to others. Be friendly and care for others, going above and beyond. Empathize and show compassion. Offer support and show appreciation. Celebrate successes.

Admissions

In the Mary Johnson Children's Center programs we are committed to creating a diverse community of children and families. Families are encouraged to be proactive in their search for an early childhood program, and if they believe they are interested in enrolling their child at the Center they should ensure that their child is on the Center's waiting list. The Center serves children who are 18 months old until their entrance into kindergarten.

When enrolling children, we strive towards creating a balanced group of children and families. The following criteria are all considered:

- Age range
- Sibling status
- Gender
- Children and families with special needs
- Enrollment contracts
- Date of placement on waitlist

Rates are spelled out in the Center's tuition contract that must be signed and returned at the time of enrollment. **If your child receives state tuition assistance, all paperwork must be processed before your child begins.**

If your child is 3 or older by the start of the school year, you may qualify for funding from your local school district via the Universal PreK Program. Before enrolling, eligible families will receive and must submit a school district form by mid-Summer allowing Mary Johnson to access this funding for their child.

Mary Johnson Children's Center programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, special need, medical condition, ancestry, sexual orientation or citizenship.



Waiting List

Families are encouraged to put their child's name on the Center's waiting list as soon as is possible. It is not uncommon for expectant parents to have their unborn child on the Center's waiting list. While most children begin their Center experience in the early fall with the start of the traditional academic year, the Center may have unanticipated openings at any point during the year. Families move, jobs change, families' needs change and consequently some openings occur at unanticipated times.

A family can place their child's name on the waiting list simply by calling the Center. You will be asked for your name, your child's name, your child's date or expected date of birth, your address and your telephone number. You will also be asked for what you think might be your child's attendance schedule at the Center, three, four or five days per week. There is no fee or deposit for putting your child's name on the waiting list and there is no commitment on your part to enroll your child if an opening becomes available.



Visiting

Prior to enrolling a child at the Center, all families are asked to tour the Center, observe the classrooms and ask any questions they may have. While lunch, outdoor time and naptime are integral components of our day, morning visits are preferable as families can most easily see the program dynamic and meet teachers with the least disruption to the classrooms.

Once a family has determined that they would like to enroll their child at the Center, they will be scheduled for a Welcome Conference when they will sit down with their child's teachers and share information about their child and to ask any questions about the classroom and the Center.

It is particularly important that children visit the Center, see their classroom and meet their teachers prior to their first day.



First Day(s)

The first day can be stressful, not only for children but for parents as well. Our experience has also shown that occasionally a child will breeze through the first day's separation and then experience a difficult separation on the second or third day. It is important for parents to talk to their child about what to expect: that (s)he will be with other children, who the teachers will be, and explain that you will be coming back later in the day. You may want to spend a little extra time with your child to help them settle into an activity before leaving. If the separation is difficult when you do leave, it is best to simply say goodbye and leave. More often than not, the child will be upset for a short time, then settle into the classroom and be fine. We will help in any way we can. You may also call and check on how your child is doing later. Teachers will call a parent if there are any significant concerns.

Arrival and Departure

- **Arrival:** We ask that children arrive at the Center by 9:00. Our experience has shown that children who consistently arrive after the rest of the class have a more challenging time entering and joining in classroom activities.

Transitions can be hard and some children experience difficulty saying goodbye in the morning. To help with morning goodbyes we have “waving windows” in the downstairs hall and the upstairs classroom. Teachers will be ready to help families whose children are having difficulty transitioning, and families should always feel free to call the Center to see how their child is doing.

Just as it is important to consider arrival time, it is important to consider the end of the day. Late pick-ups are upsetting for children who are waiting. Families who are chronically late, or are consistently one of the last families to arrive at the end of the day should be concerned about the effect this can have on their child, and the messages this unintentionally sends. Children—and adults—can be tired and extra time and patience is required. For children who find it challenging to leave, it can be helpful to establish a routine with the help of the classroom teacher and stick with it.

- **Sign in/out:** Please be certain that your child’s teacher is aware of when you are arriving or departing. It is very important that your child be signed in and out each day by you or an authorized adult.

- **Release of Children:** Children will not be released to an unauthorized person. Families should list those people who are authorized to pick up their child on the child’s enrollment form. In a rare emergency situation, arrangements can be made verbally. If the person picking up the child is not known to the teacher, information about the person must be provided, including their name, phone number, and physical description. This person will be required to show picture ID. If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up a child, the child will remain under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher will speak to the individual and explain the policy that no child will be released without written authorization from the parent. Families are requested not to ask the Center to release their child to a sibling who is under eighteen.

- **Emergency Contacts:** Families **must** provide the Center with the name, address and home and daytime telephone numbers of **TWO** people to contact in an emergency if the family cannot be reached. The family provides this information on the child’s enrollment form. Be sure to update as necessary.

Hours and Schedules

Families can choose a three, four or five day option. If a child has a part week schedule and a family has the occasional need for an additional day, the family should check with their child's classroom teacher to see if the schedule can accommodate the family's need for care. They must also notify the office of any schedule changes.

When they enroll their child at the Center, families will be given "Important Dates to Remember" which is a calendar of Center dates including when the Center is closed for holidays, teacher in-service, as well as parent workdays and other events. This schedule can also be found on the Center's website at www.mjccvt.org.

The Center is traditionally closed for five days at the end of the academic year in mid to late June, and for a week before the beginning of the academic year in late August. This time is spent for teacher in-service training and upkeep of the facilities.



Late Policy

We all have times when everything seems to conspire against us. The flat tire, the car that won't start, the traffic accident that leaves us stuck in traffic; all are realities of life. For these reasons, families are expected to arrange for a back up person to pick up their child in the event of an emergency. While it happens rarely, families should be assured that in a family emergency, the family's emergency contacts will be called and the Center will make sure that a staff member stays with their child until arrangements can be made.

However, these highly unusual circumstances are the exception and families must leave sufficient time to get to the Center to pick up their child in a timely way. **We ask that families plan for at least 15 minutes in the building at the end of the day for pick up. Families who are still in the building past the closing times will be assessed a fee of \$20.00 incrementally for each 15 minutes past closing time.** This payment goes to the teacher who has to remain with your child. The clock in the Center's kitchen shall be used to determine that time. Parents will be billed for this charge.

Daily Schedule

Each classroom will have its own unique schedule that will be posted in each classroom. Activities and schedules change according to the curriculum and the seasons.

Tuition - Vacation Policy - Withdrawal

The Center is a nonprofit organization that is dependent upon tuition for its operation. Tuition rates are set by the Center's Board of Directors and take effect at the start of the fall academic year. Tuition is calculated on a yearly basis, but for the convenience of families, is broken down into a weekly payment. Every family must complete a Tuition Contract before their child enrolls in the Center. If your child receives state tuition assistance, all paperwork **MUST** be processed and approved before your child begins.

Tuition does not vary on partial weeks that include holidays or in-service days, and the full weekly tuition is due on those weeks. In addition, the Center has calculated into the fee structure two "tuition-free" weeks and the December holiday break.

Vacation / Tuition-free week: Parents are also given the option of taking one "tuition-free" week during the program year, from September through August, when their child does not attend the Center. The Center's Board instituted this policy in an effort to encourage families to take vacation time together without "double paying". To qualify for this tuition reduction, the family must notify the Center's bookkeeper and their child's classroom teachers in advance of the vacation week that their child will not be attending the program. Vacation may cross over a weekend as long as the five days are consecutive. On some occasions a child may be ill for an entire week or five consecutive days in two different weeks. In this circumstance, the family can request to use this week as a tuition-free week, even without prior notice. The family must still inform the Center's bookkeeper.

Discounts:

1. Universal PreK Program

Mary Johnson participates in the Universal PreK Program with area supervisory districts. Families whose children qualify (children generally must be 3 years old by September 1 of the new school year, and live in one of the districts that participate) will have their tuition reduced for 10 hours per week for 35 weeks of their early childhood education, September through May. If a family qualifies for this discount, no other discounts will apply.

2. Second Child Discount

Families with two or more children attending the Center can receive a 20% discount on the child(ren) with the lowest tuition rate. This does not apply to children participating in the Universal PreK Program.



Summers: There is a 3-day minimum enrollment for the summer months. If you choose not to attend in the summer and return in the fall there will be a flat fee of \$1000 with two \$500 payments due at the beginning of July and August respectively.

Withdrawal: If a family decides to withdraw their child from the Center, they are responsible for giving two weeks' notice. Families wishing to withdraw their child, but who fail to provide a two-week notice, will still be liable for the last two weeks' tuition.

Tax / Payment Receipts: Many families require a receipt for childcare for tax or employer reimbursement purposes. If you require one, please contact the business office at Mary Johnson Children's Center. **Please**

allow up to two weeks for processing, especially during tax season.

Employer Federal ID#: 03-022-4359

Snow Days and Emergency Information

If the Center is to be closed due to weather conditions, this information will be posted on the Center's website, www.mjccvt.org. The Vermont Broadcasters Association will be called and the information will be on local radio and television stations that are part of this service.

Traditionally closings have been shown on television stations WCAX (Channel 3), WPTZ (Channel 5), and radio station WOKO (98.9FM) as well as other Vermont stations that offer this service.

If there is an emergency during the school day that requires that the Center leave its Water Street location, the Center will evacuate and go to one of the three evacuation sites in the emergency plan. For travel to a distant evacuation site, children will be evacuated via cars, with or without car seats. Parents will be called once the evacuation and relocation is complete and will be directed to the appropriate evacuation site. While every effort will be made to put this information on the website, there is no guarantee that this will be possible to achieve from the evacuation site.



Intoxicated/Impaired Parent Emergency Policy

If an obviously intoxicated/impaired parent comes to retrieve a child, program staff will encourage the parent to find someone else to pick up the child. If the parent's behaviors do not seem to be impaired, the staff will ask the parent if they are OK to drive or would like help calling a ride. If the impaired parent insists on retrieving the child and drives away with the child in the car, the police will be called and given the license plate number.

Children's Belongings

Clothing and Extra Clothing:

We encourage lots of active play, so children should be dressed comfortably in clothing that can be washed and will not cause alarm if splattered with paint, mud or other potentially staining substances. We also play in water tables, with hoses and in other water related activities and although we encourage the use of smocks, children often need a change (or two) of clothing during the day. Families are asked to keep adequate changes in their child's cubby. Parents are also asked to provide pull-ups and diapers, as needed.

During warm weather families should provide a bathing suit and towel daily.

Families should remember that children are taken outdoors daily, weather permitting, and should be dressed accordingly: a light jacket, hat, good walking shoes and rain boots for damp days in fall and spring; a heavy winter jacket, snow pants, mittens, scarf, hat and snow boots in winter. When there is snow, children must have snow pants and boots to go outside.

If families want the Center to help keep track of their child's clothes, please label everything. Even with labeling, clothing can go astray, so families are asked to make sure that their child's clothing does not have particular sentimental or monetary value.



Toys from Home:

For many children, something from home helps during transitions. These special objects are used for comfort, and to keep children connected with their home. Items brought from home will be respected as a particular child's and the child will be given the choice of keeping the item safely in their cubby or sharing it with other children. The Center does not take responsibility for lost or broken items brought from home, so we ask families to ensure that their child does not bring an item from home that is so special that it would cause significant distress if it were lost or broken. We also ask that children not bring war toys or fighting figures.

Holidays, Birthdays and Special Occasions

Celebrating holidays offers many opportunities for fun, excitement and camaraderie, and for meaningful learning about similarities and differences. We want to deepen, broaden and enrich children's experiences of holidays, yet we know that young children are easily overwhelmed by the excitement and pressure of holidays. Therefore, we emphasize calm, understated expressions of celebration. We also look to economic and material simplicity to give children (and their parents) some respite from the commercialism which has grown up around the major holidays. We know that most cultures celebrate similar milestones at similar times of the year, and focusing on the celebrations of non-dominant traditions enriches and balances children's awareness of the world.



Birthday party celebrations are exciting for young children. MJCC celebrates a child's birthday through a variety of ways including: making banners, signs and crowns, giving of birthday books, and with sharing of snacks and food. Birthdays may include cakes and cupcakes that are served after a healthy snack. Parents may provide a birthday treat or the children in the class may prepare a treat for the special child's day. Families should let their child's teacher know in advance that they will be bringing a treat.

The Center is an inclusive environment and we request that unless a family is inviting the entire class to a party, that invitations be mailed and not distributed at the Center. A Center directory with families' addresses and phone numbers is distributed in the fall, listing all families who wish to be included.



Food

Food and meals are significant and integral components of the Center's culture and curriculum. While they offer an opportunity for children to learn concepts in areas such as nutrition, math, science, and language, their greatest value comes from the social interactions and cultural competencies that result from the shared experience of sitting with others and sharing a meal.

The Center offers children a light breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Monthly menus are available in the kitchen, and posted on the Center's website. If families are aware that their child might not eat a particular meal that is offered, they are welcome to send in a lunch. There is a refrigerator provided in the dining room for this purpose. (Please note that **Mary Johnson is a Tree and Ground Nut-Free Program.**)

Meals are served family style and adults and teachers sit and eat with the children. Children serve themselves and learn to self-regulate by observing their own hunger and fullness cues. Staff members encourage children to try new foods, but never force, coax, or bribe children to eat. Experience has shown that children will often try a new food after they have been exposed to it on previous occasions. Frequently families are amazed by what their child will eat at the Center but will not eat at home. Staff members do not praise children for finishing food or cleaning their plates. Mealtime is never used to discipline or scold children.

The food is prepared at the Center and is based on Federal nutritional guidelines. The Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and families are required to fill out the Child Care Food Program Eligibility form each year as part of their child's ongoing enrollment at the Center.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.



We serve a variety of healthy and appealing foods. All of our meals are prepared from whole ingredients—often from scratch—and we incorporate seasonal produce as available. We have developed a lunchbox guide encouraging families to provide healthy choices from the CACFP meal components of grains and breads, protein, meat and meat alternatives, vegetables, and fruits. MJCC is committed to providing children with low-fat or skim milk and/or water. MJCC discourages including non-100% juice in parent-supplied meals and snacks.

Families are always welcome to join their child for lunch.

Lead Testing in Drinking Water

Lead exposure poses a special risk to young children because they absorb lead into their systems more easily than adults do. Lead can slow down growth, impair development and learning, and can cause behavior problems. Act 66 (2019) requires all Vermont schools and licensed or registered child care providers to test their drinking and cooking water for lead. Individual program results may be found here: <https://leadresults.vermont.gov/>

Special Diets/Food Allergies

Special Dietary Needs

If a family observes certain dietary practices, the Center will work with them to try to make sure that these practices are observed. The Center does not have the capacity to prepare meals for special diets, but families are welcome to send in food on those days that the Center's menu does not conform to their practices. Families can arrange to meet with the Center's cook to talk about a plan for their child's meals.

Food Allergies

MJCC follows state and federal requirements for accommodating children with a food allergy or intolerance. Families are asked to provide the Center with a statement from their Physician stating the nature of that food allergy and suggested alternatives to that food before we can make any dietary accommodations. Medical statements are available in the office or from the CACFP food program coordinator. If the allergy is severe, classroom staff and the cook will meet with the family to construct a plan for the child. Warnings of the food allergy will be shared with all Center staff and all those who may work with the child. An emergency plan will be readily available in the Center's kitchen and in the child's classroom. In extreme circumstances the knowledge of this allergy, but not the name of the child, will be shared with the parents of other children in the child's classroom so they may be aware of foods that are restricted in the classroom. **Families MUST provide classroom staff with an unexpired EPI pen if the allergy requires such intervention.**

Mary Johnson is a Tree and Ground Nut-Free Program.



Health Policy

Immunizations

The State of Vermont requires that each enrolled child have on file at the Center a completed immunization record listing types and dates of immunizations. The record should attest that the child has been immunized in accordance with the schedule of immunization determined by the Vermont Department of Health. We can obtain your child's immunization record on the VT Department of Health database if you give your permission on your enrollment form. Families who relocate from out-of-state, should have their physician fax their child's updated immunization record to us at (802) 388-3063.

If a child is not, or only partially, immunized for medical or religious reasons, you must give us a Vermont Department of Health Exemption Form. These forms are available online at www.healthvermont.gov under the links: "Immunizations & Infectious Disease" then "Child Care Providers" then "Forms".

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease present at the Center, all susceptible children—including those with medical or religious exemptions—are subject to the exclusion guidelines as described in the Vermont's Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations.

When is it best to keep your child at home?

Please see VT Department of COVID Health Guidance at https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CYF_VTBacktoChildCareAfterIllness.pdf

There is no doubt that a child in an early childhood program is exposed to contagious illnesses. Colds, ear infections and the latest sore throat can quickly work their way through an early childhood classroom. We understand how challenging it can be for a parent who needs to leave work or miss work because a child is ill. However, it is beyond our ability to care for a sick child within the Center.

Generally, if your child does not feel well, please do not send your child to the Center. Please call the Center at 802-388-2853 to let the program know your child will not attend that day.

In an effort to keep the spread of contagious illnesses to a minimum, it is Center policy that a child who has the following symptoms remain at home until symptoms subside:

- Temperature of 100 or higher (must be **fever free for 24 hours without medication** to return to school)
- Vomiting, or diarrhea (must **wait 24 hours after symptoms subside** to return to school)
- Persistent loose cough
- Unusual skin rashes
- Flu type symptoms (muscle aches, headache, sore throat)
- Red eyes with drainage

****The guidelines on the following pages are also provided, but they cover only the most common of childhood illnesses and we ask that you call the Center if you have any questions. In addition we will continue to follow VT Department of COVID Health Guidance. When in doubt, call your child’s health care provider or MJCC’s main office. Information on when to stay home and when to return to care is included in your packet and can also be found here: https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/CYF_VTBacktoChildCareAfterIllness.pdf**

Illness/Infection/Symptom	Should You Stay Home?	When Can You Come Back?
Cold	Yes, if any symptoms below are present; otherwise, No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever with behavior change • Difficulty breathing • Severe cough • Blood red or purple rash • Unable to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to participate • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Coxsackie (hand mouth and foot disease)	Yes, if any symptoms below are present; otherwise, No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever with behavior change • Difficulty breathing • Blood red or purple rash • Unable to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to participate • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Chicken pox	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On medication or treated as recommended by a health professional if indicated for the condition and for the time required to be readmitted. For conditions that require application of antibiotics to lesions or taking of antibiotics by mouth, the period of treatment to reduce the risk of spread to others is usually 24 hours. • Able to participate • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Earache / Infection	Yes, if any symptoms below are present; otherwise, No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever with behavior change • Unable to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to participate • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Fever Temperatures considered meaningfully elevated above normal are: 100° axillary (armpit) 101° oral 102° rectal Aural (ear) equal to oral or rectal	Yes, if any symptoms below are present; otherwise, No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior change • Unable to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to participate • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Fifth Disease Roseola	Yes, if any symptoms below are present; otherwise, No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash with behavior change or fever • Has oozing/open wound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to participate • On antibiotic medication at least 24 hours if indicated. • Exclusion criteria are resolved

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has bruising not associated with injury • Has joint pain and rash • Tender, red area of skin especially if it is increasing in size or tenderness • Unable to participate 	
Itching	<p><i>For Chickenpox, Scabies and Impetigo:</i> Yes</p> <p><i>For ringworm and head lice: Yes, at the end of the day</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families should consult a health professional at the end of the day for treatment. <p><i>For pinworm allergic or irritant reactions, and eczema: NO, unless:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears infected as a weeping or crusty sore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On medication or treated as recommended by a health professional if indicated for the condition and for the time required to be readmitted. For conditions that require application of antibiotics to lesions or taking of antibiotics by mouth, the period of treatment to reduce the risk of spread to others is usually 24 hours. For most individuals with insect infestations or parasites, the readmission as soon as the treatment has been given is acceptable. • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Illness/Infection/Symptom	Should You Stay Home?	When Can You Come Back?
Lice	<p>Yes, at the end of the day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families should consult a health professional at the end of the day for treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On medication or treated as recommended by a health professional if indicated for the condition and for the time required to be readmitted. For most individuals with insect infestations, readmission can be as soon as a complete treatment has been given • Able to participate • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Strep Throat	<p>Yes, if any symptoms below are present; otherwise, No:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to swallow. • Excessive drooling with breathing difficulty. • Fever with behavior change. • The child meets other exclusion criteria • Unable to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to swallow • Able to participate • On medication at least 24 hours • Exclusion criteria are resolved
Whooping Cough	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days after antibiotics are started or 3 weeks after onset of cough

Medications

Prescription and Non-Prescription

If a child requires a prescription or non-prescription medication while they are at the Center, families must sign an “Authorization to Dispense Medication” form, which are in each classroom. If the medication is for on-going usage, i.e. an inhaler, there is a form for on-going medication. The medication should be given to the classroom teacher who will place the medication in a childproof medicine box, or in the refrigerator if necessary.

- **The medication must be in its original container from the pharmacy and must have the child’s name and date of birth, the prescription name and date, the physician’s name, and the dosage amount and time.**
- There also must include the reason for the medication, how and when it is administered, any medical allergies and any other special instructions.
- **EPI Pens: Families MUST provide classroom staff with an unexpired EPI pen for allergies that requires such intervention.**

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident, the Center will contact the family or emergency contacts. If it is impossible to reach either and emergency treatment is required, the child will be transported to Porter Medical Center. The family’s authorization for the Center to contact your child’s physician and take whatever emergency medical measures are deemed necessary is part of your application. **It is critically important that families keep the Center updated on any changes in any of their telephone numbers, including cell phones and work place numbers.**



Conferences

Each family will have the opportunity to meet formally with their child's teachers to review their child's progress report twice annually. However, families should by no means feel that this is the only time when they can speak with the teacher about their child or any concern that they might have. Families should feel free to call their child's teachers and set up a time to talk whenever they wish. Although families should always feel free to check in about their child's day when either picking up or dropping off, conversations that are more in depth or require confidentiality should happen away from the classroom.



Field Trips

The Center is fortunate to be within walking distance of downtown Middlebury with its library, green, pedestrian bridge, shopping area, Otter Creek, skating rink, playgrounds and other places of interest. Classrooms make full use of this proximity and frequently walk throughout the community and explore both man made and natural environments. Teachers carry cell phones with them on any trip. A family's permission for their child to leave the Center's property is included in the enrollment packet.

Trips that require transportation are much less frequent, both for financial and logistical reasons. The Center uses vans from the Parent Child Center and requires the use of car seats to transport children. Families will always be notified before such an outing to ensure that arrangements are made for the drop off of car seats. Parents are always welcome to participate in these adventures.



Behavior Guidance

The goal of the Center is for each child to develop a sense of respect for themselves and others. Teachers strive to create an environment that encourages children to make positive choices, to enter and exit peer groups with increasing skill and satisfaction, and to learn to live in a respectful and cooperative manner.

Discipline is not considered punishment. Inner discipline is the goal and is the result of an evolving process occurring within the child. Through appropriate adult/child interaction, anticipatory guidance, well-established guidelines for appropriate behavior, and active listening to children's responses, teachers get to know each child and what additional limits and adjustments are necessary. Over a period of time children internalize the concept of self-control, and will acquire measures of inner discipline.

Even with all the best intentions and interventions, there are times when a child might become frustrated or angry and strike out, perhaps hitting or biting a classmate or teacher. The Center does not use "time out" for many reasons based on child development and experience. If a child strikes out, is having difficulty with classmates, or is being disruptive in an unacceptable way, a teacher will work directly with that child until the situation is resolved and the child can be successful.



We are committed to implementing best practice in early childhood education by providing nurturing and responsive relationships within a supportive environment for all children and families. We do this in partnership with families, cultivating trusting relationships through open and caring communications. There may be times when experiences and circumstances in a child's life are such that we need to call on the support and expertise of local resources to help in problem-solving and developing strategies to support all of us working through a developmental need.

Exclusionary measures will be used as a last resort when all possible supports have been exhausted and there is a determination that MJCC is not the appropriate setting for a specific child. In such a case, staff will work with families to develop a seamless transition plan.

Parental Access

Families always have access to their child, their child's files and, within reason, to their child's teacher.

The Center recognizes in most situations both parents have a legal right to be a part of their child's life. The Center denies a parent access to their child only if there is a legal document on file that addresses that denial.

Parent Involvement

Families are always welcome at the Center. The Center encourages families who might have a particular talent, story or interest to share these with us. Skills such as sewing or carpentry are also always welcome.

In the fall and spring the Center asks families to come on a Saturday morning from 9-noon to help with various tasks that need to be done, like refilling the sand area, raking gravel, planting flower pots or putting away the out of season equipment. If families are unable to attend a scheduled workday, there are always projects that can be completed at home. All help is greatly appreciated.

The Center also has various evening events, potluck suppers, classroom meetings and other times that families have the opportunity to help the Center by giving important feedback on the direction of the curriculum and to share their ideas on their child's learning and Center experience.

Photographs

The Center staff is continually photographing the children and the work that they are doing. These photographs, almost all taken on digital cameras, are used to display children's work and activities in the Center. They are also compiled for families as a record of their child's time at the Center.

Occasionally, the local newspaper photographer stops by to photograph children for the newspaper. A family's permission to use photographs of their child without compensation is part of the Center's Enrollment Form. Families who do not wish for their child's photograph to be used in any out-of-Center publicity should make that clear on their Enrollment Form.



Confidentiality and Release of Information

All Center teachers and staff must sign a Statement of Confidentiality, which states that they will not discuss a child or family with anyone outside the Center or with anyone within the Center whose responsibilities do not require such knowledge. All employees are cautioned about using a child's name or a family's name when parents, children or other persons might overhear them.

We ask families to respect these same guidelines and to refrain from discussing—either in the Center or in the community—what might be considered personal information about children and families that they acquire through their time in the Center.

If children are receiving services from other community agencies, their families will be asked to sign a Release of Information form that will allow that a child's teacher's work with the other agency or agencies involved to best coordinate services for that child.

Parents of children who will be entering kindergarten are also asked to sign a Release of Information so that teachers may share progress reports and other information with the receiving school.



College Students

The Center is fortunate to be within walking distance of Middlebury College. For many years college students have worked at the Center, often as part of the federal work-study grant program. Hence families will often hear these students referred to as “work-studies”. Each student is interviewed and undergoes the same criminal checks that all staff undergoes. These students bring an energy and enthusiasm into the Center that we highly value. They assist in the classrooms and help monitor the classrooms particularly during staff meetings and other team meetings. They bring not only their youth and enjoyment of being with children, but also give the staff much needed time to meet to plan curriculum.

Integrated Family services

The Center partners with the Counseling Service of Addison County to provide Therapeutic Child Care, a specialized approach to working with children. Representatives from CSAC spend time observing in our classrooms. These observations inform the advice and guidance given to teaching staff.



Parking/Parking Lot

The Center's parking lot is particularly busy at the beginning and end of the day. Although the Center has no way of monitoring its parking lot, it is requested that for everyone's safety:



- Children may not be left unattended in cars in the parking lot.
- Cars are never left running.
- A child never leaves a car or the building unless they are holding the hand of an adult.
- Cars are driven slowly both in the parking lot and on the driveway.
- The handicapped parking spaces are not used by anyone without a handicapped permit displayed.
- Children are not transported to or from the Center without appropriate car seats or restraints.
- Paper, food or artwork that is mistakenly dropped in the parking lot is retrieved.
- Families should not ask the Center to release their child to a sibling under 18, even if the parent is waiting in the car in the parking lot.

Smoking Policy

The Center is a smoke free environment and no smoking is allowed within the building or on the Center's property, including the parking lot.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

Teachers in an early childhood program are mandated reporters. This means that they are obligated by law to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the State of Vermont. Families should be aware that in reporting suspected child abuse, no definitive judgment is made by Center staff. Personnel from the State of Vermont Department of Children and Families decide whether evidence exists to determine whether or not a report is upheld.

Feedback, Suggestions, Grievances

The Center's teachers are professionals and they welcome comments and suggestions. Over the years parents have provided the Center with valuable input that has assisted the Center in evaluating and improving its program. Yearly, a parent questionnaire will be sent home. The Center encourages families to answer the questions honestly and to let us know their perspective on how the program is working for them.

When areas of concern arise, the problem should be addressed with the child's classroom teacher who will work with the family and attempt to reach a solution. If additional communication is necessary, the family should address the problem with the Center directors. If the family is still not satisfied, a written appeal may be made to the Center's Board of Directors who meets regularly.

Families have the further option of appealing at any point to the Child Care Consumer Concern Line at 1(800) 540-7942.

Child Care Licensing Regulations

Child Care Licensing Regulations govern child care programs in the State of Vermont. These rules are minimum requirements established to protect the health and safety of Vermont's children in out-of-home care and ensure that children in child care programs in Vermont are provided with wholesome growth and educational experiences. Child Care Licensing Regulations for Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs may be found here: http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Docs/Licensing/CBCCPP_Regulations_FINAL.pdf



Equal Access

Following State of Vermont and Federal guidelines, Mary Johnson Children's Center, Inc. is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public, and that all activities and programs are non-discriminatory in design, application, and performance. MJCC does not and will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, gender or gender identity, age, military status, genetic information, handicapping condition and/or disability or sexual orientation.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Mary Johnson Children's Center Programs are committed to providing a safe environment for all, free from harassment of any kind. To that end, parents, caregivers or designees assigned to drop off and pick up children are expected to treat all employees, fellow parents, and children with dignity and respect. We expect the same from our staff.

We take all complaints seriously. Most harassment is unlawful and we will follow up on all reports of any kind, whether unlawful or not. Please contact Human Resources or the Program's Director with any questions or concerns.



Revised: August 2021