

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Animal Crackers, Inc. Childcare, Preschool and After School Center. We are delighted that you have chosen to enroll your child with us. We pledge to provide your child with a warm, nurturing, and educational environment where they can learn, develop and thrive. We provide quality childcare and preschool for children

Animal Crackers, Inc. was established in February of 1987 as a private non-profit, non-sectarian family orientated Childcare and Preschool Center. The Center was created and is currently overseen by a volunteer Parent Board of Directors. The Parent Board of Directors, the Teaching staff and the Executive Director are jointly responsible for the overall operational management of the Center.

The Teaching Staff at Animal Crackers, Inc. are carefully selected and trained in the field of Early Education and Childcare. All the Teaching Staff has successfully completed educational classes, credentials, attended various conferences and in-services in Early Childhood Development and has had previous experience in the field of Early Care and Education.

Animal Crackers, Inc. employs the Creative Curriculum and utilizes a child-centered approach to its classroom planning, where hands on active learning is encouraged and supported. Our educational curriculum emphasizes the importance of developmentally appropriate classroom environments and materials which are reflective of the children's interests and presents them with a wealth of educational opportunities and choices.

Animal Crackers, Inc. is licensed by the State of Wisconsin –Department of Children and Families. Periodic visits are conducted by the state licensing specialist which involves inspections of the facility, our policies and procedures, operations as well as reviewing the overall childcare provided by our agency. The Center is licensed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families-Licensing Bureau for 85 children. We provide care for children 6 weeks to 13 years of age. The Animal Crackers, Inc. Parent Board of Directors, the Teaching Staff and the Executive Director feel strongly that high quality childcare and education can only be provided if low child to staff ratios are maintained. (See our ratio comparison for further information).

The Center is also accredited by the City of Madison-Office of Community Services Child Care Unit. The City Child Care Specialists conduct annual reaccreditation visits, to monitor program content, physical environments, materials, policies and procedures, child/staff-parent/staff interactions and the overall operational management of the agency. Animal Crackers, Inc. has been City Accredited since 1989.

The Animal Crackers, Inc. Childcare, Preschool and After School program provides quality childcare and education for children and 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.

Animal Crackers, Inc. advertises through the public media to make openings known to the public. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. If you need an interpreter, translator and/or materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this service, activity, or program, please call 608-277-9990 at least three business days before the event, program or meeting. Please feel free to ask or discuss any of the Family Handbook with the Executive Director. Families also have access to all policies and procedures in their extended versions upon request. We are very happy to welcome you and your child to our school.

## **English Language Learners**

Interpretation of current materials is available upon request. Translation Services are available through the Department of Public Instruction Federal Food Program as well as through the Madison Public Schools. If you need an interpreter, translator and/or materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this service, activity, or program, please call 608-277-9990 at least three business days before the event, program, or meeting. Please feel free to ask or discuss any of the Family Handbook with the Executive Director. Families also have access to all policies and procedures in their extended versions upon request

## **Educational Philosophy**

Animal Crackers Child Care and Preschool Center offers your child an educationally and emotionally balanced program in a safe, child-centered environment of warmth and friendliness. The program gives your child opportunities for exploring, experimenting, and questioning through hands on active learning activities. These discoveries will encourage curiosity and self-expression. Animal Crackers, Inc. recognizes that all children are individuals. We believe in developing the whole child -- emotionally, cognitively, physically, and socially -- in accordance with his/her own needs and learning styles.

Our goals for your child include:

- Fostering positive self-esteem
- Building strong and effective communication skills through the expression of feelings and thoughts
- Modeling problem-solving skills
- Teaching non-violent conflict resolution

- Providing a physically and emotionally safe environment
- Demonstrating support for various family structures
- Helping children appreciate diversity
- Encouraging appropriate decision-making
- Teaching Kindergarten readiness skills

## **Creative Curriculum**

Animal Crackers, Inc. uses a hands-on active learning approach to support a child centered curriculum called Creative Curriculum. Creative Curriculum uses theory and research to aid teachers in their implementation of developmentally appropriate programming for children. Creative Curriculum also considers how children develop and learn, how the learning environment is structured, what children should be learning at the early levels, the role of the teachers and the role of the parents in the program. This teaching approach provides children with an environment which fosters growth in all areas of their development. Children are presented with a tremendous variety of opportunities to learn and explore their environment. Activities are carefully planned to provide stimulation and guidance in all major areas of child development. This curriculum framework addresses the need for children to learn, play and interact socially with others. Lesson plans at the Preschool level are developed to give children a variety of opportunities to experience interpersonal relationships, sensory exploration of natural and physical surroundings, intellectual stimulation, large and small motor development as well as many opportunities to explore language, literacy, and math skills. Special emphasis is placed on integrating diversity into everyday activities while supporting family structures of all types.

Every classroom has a daily schedule and activity calendar posted on their Family Bulletin Information Board. Other memos and meal menus can also be found there. Conferences are held two time per year but can be scheduled anytime upon request.

## **Infant and Toddler Program 6 weeks- 2 ½ years**

Animal Crackers, Inc. individualizes the program of care for each infant and toddler. Infants and toddlers receive individual contact and attention, as well as opportunities for language development and learning experiences. Sensory-motor and cognitive activities are provided daily to complement play and routine care. A report of each child's activities is provided to the parents daily. Families and Teachers work together on supporting developmental milestones such as transition from bottles to cups, self-feeding, moving from cribs to cots, toilet training and classroom transitions.

Children are encouraged to form attachment groupings, especially with children ages two or younger. This is where children are placed in interactive play groups which help them form bonds with each other, as well as, with their teacher. We try to maintain these attachment groups as the children transition from one classroom to another. When

children transition upstairs to the 2-year-old program, they are given more opportunities to explore their environment through art and sensory projects, music, math, literacy, and movement. They begin experiencing small group time and teacher directed learning activities.

### **Preschool Program    2 ½ years- 5 years**

Programming for preschool aged children is based on the principles of developmentally appropriate practices promoted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities involving children's interests in the areas of arts and crafts, math and science exploration, dramatic play, small and large motor development, enrichment programs involving music, language and movement and age-appropriate fieldtrips. Teachers also work with the children on Kindergarten readiness skills, support problem solving and support children in their development of strong communication skills.

### **Madison Metropolitan School District Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Program**

Animal Crackers, Inc. currently collaborates as a Model II Program with the Madison Metropolitan School District to bring 4K programming to all children who are four years old by September 1. The Madison Metropolitan School District along with participating Early Care and Education Programs are excited to offer four- 3.06-hour day programs Tuesday-Friday using a curriculum which allows children to learn through play. Children will learn basic skills needed for entering five-year-old Kindergarten and learn how to thrive in a school setting. Families who are interested in learning more about this program should talk to the Executive Director.

### **After School and Summer Camp Programs Kindergarten up to 13 years**

Animal Crackers, Inc. offers an After-School Program for school age children. This program offers developmentally appropriate activities for school aged children such as science exploration, language and literacy, arts and crafts, storytelling, dramatic play, and quiet areas to work on homework. In the summer, Animal Crackers, Inc. provides a Summer Camp for school aged children involving arts and crafts, science and math activities, book clubs, journaling as well as many different fieldtrips. Fieldtrips are planned and include but are not limited to such places as the Capitol, the zoo, area parks, Olbrich Gardens, activities at the Monona Terrace, mini golfing, reading programs at the library, movies, Cave of the Mounds, local museums, ice cream shops, etc.

## **Field Trips**

All children are routinely provided with educational and recreational experiences outside the Center. The children may take short walks near the Center or travel to predetermined community locations for a variety of fun activities. Children are transported on field trips by school or city buses.

Families are notified in advance of the field trips. Notices are posted around the center. It is the parents/guardian's responsibility to read all Center notices, arrange for their child to be at the Center prior to departure time and inform the staff if their child will not be able to participate.

## **Food Program**

The Center provides your child with nutritious, well-balanced breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Animal Crackers, Inc. participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction. You will receive multiple forms when you enroll and annually thereafter updating your information. These forms provide Animal Crackers, Inc. with the necessary family information required by the Department of Public Instruction. Menus follow the guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Menus are posted weekly, giving families the opportunity to keep track of what their children are eating.

Infant formula is provided by the Center until the child's first birthday. In the event your child is on a special formula that is not readily accessible to the Center the families are asked to provide the formula along with a receipt for monetary reimbursement purposes. Baby food is also provided by the Center. Families of infants will be given their child's feeding schedule daily. Nursing mothers are always welcome and encouraged to come and feed their child during operational hours.

Due to various food allergies, we ask that you do not bring any food into the classrooms without checking with the teachers.

## **Updated USDA Nondiscrimination Statement: 06-20-22**

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.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

**1. mail:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

**2. fax:**

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

**3. Email:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## **Children's Dress and Supplies**

The children are given the freedom to explore and create through a variety of mediums. They explore and learn by gluing, painting, cooking, playing in water and sand etc. Although smocks are provided, dress your child in old clothes as they may inadvertently be damaged by these activities.

The children go outdoors daily. Please dress them according to the weather. In the winter, provide a warm coat, snow pants, hat, mittens, and boots. Tennis shoes or shoes that tie or buckle are good for summer. Flip-flops and jellies are dangerous when running, jumping and climbing and therefore are strongly discouraged. During the summer, a swimsuit and towel are good to have on hand for outdoor water fun.

The Center will not be responsible for toys or other belongings brought to the Center. We ask that you use discretion in assisting your child to choose the appropriate toy if toys are brought to school for special occasions. Children are not allowed to bring violent toys to the center (i.e., toy guns, knives, or weapons). Also, please check with your child's Teacher about specific toy policies for each classroom. Any toy brought to the Center should have your child's name clearly marked on it. Toys brought to the Center are the responsibility of the children.

We request that each family provide the following items for their children:

**Please label all items brought to the Center with your child's name.**

#### **INFANT AND TODDLERS**

EVERYDAY ITEMS	WINTER CLOTHES	SUMMER
Light weight coat	Snowsuit	Insect Repellent (optional)
Several changes of clothes	Boots	Hat
Favorite toy/blanket/pacifier	Gloves and Hat	Sunscreen (optional)
4 labeled plastic bottles-if needed		
Weekly supply of diapers		
Large container of wipes		

#### **PRE-SCHOOLERS AND SCHOOL-AGERS**

EVERYDAY ITEMS	WINTER CLOTHES	SUMMER
Extra clothes	Snow pants	Insect repellent (optional)
	Boots	Hat
	Mittens	Swimsuit and towel
	Hat	Sunscreen (optional)

You must complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form for both sunscreen and insect repellent prior to application.

## **Behavioral Guidance Policy**

At Animal Crackers, Inc. the purpose of behavioral guidance and management is to provide, for every child in our care, an environment in which children play together, respect one another, learn and grow as individuals. For this to happen successfully, young children need to be given developmentally appropriate guidance by responsible and caring adults. Teachers model appropriate pro-social behaviors and encourage children to work through conflicts and problems in appropriate ways. As young children develop their own sense of identity, they will no doubt have occasional difficulty with their problem-solving abilities. When these situations occur, the teachers view them as “teachable moments” where positive behavioral guidance is used to teach the skills needed for problem solving and non-violent conflict resolution.

Behavioral guidance contributes to children’s growth and development by teaching the child how to effectively handle difficult situations and make positive choices. It is the adult’s right and responsibility to provide positive behavioral guidance strategies that encourage and support children’s positive social and behavioral skills.

Positive behavioral guidance enables teachers to assist children in developing positive self-esteem, self-control, and respect for the rights of others. The guidance used is fair, consistent, objective, and respectful. Children’s behavior will be redirected when appropriate. Teachers will intervene to prevent a situation from becoming a crisis. Families will be notified of aggressive and offensive behavior, and their help in addressing the behavior will be required. If the aggressive/offensive behavior continues, the child’s enrollment may be terminated. All terminations will be given to families in a written format.

The use of physical punishment or verbal punishment that is humiliating or frightening is prohibited. Families will also be required to follow this policy and avoid any physical or verbal punishment that is humiliating or frightening.

## **Family Involvement**

At Animal Crackers, Inc. we strive to build strong and meaningful partnerships with families. We strongly encourage family participation in our childcare, preschool, and afterschool program. Family involvement plays a vital role in ensuring that our Center maintains its high quality of care, education, and future viability.

Families are encouraged to become involved with our Parent Board of Directors and/or be involved in committees. Our Parent Board meets monthly to discuss current events,



update policies, plan fundraising activities and lend support to all the families, the Administration and the Teachers. Committees meet on an “as needed” basis. We have several ongoing committees addressing areas such as special events, building projects, marketing strategies and finance. All families are encouraged to participate and share their talents and expertise. We are always interested in family’s ideas, concerns and general information. Your involvement and commitment play a crucial role in our program.

Fundraising activities are ongoing at Animal Crackers, Inc. The money earned from fundraising is earmarked for special projects, educational supplies, and materials. In general, the money is used to improve the environment and its materials in which your child develops, plays and learns. All families are expected to participate in fundraising activities or through contributions of money which are tax deductible. Families are also encouraged to be involved at other levels. Family members are viewed as “partners” and need to follow all the rules and policies of the Center. Mutual respect is a must. We need ongoing communication with families to provide the best quality care for the children. Families are also required to meet all paperwork deadlines and return all necessary materials when due. Families are also required to change personal information (such as contact numbers, job information, addresses, etc.) immediately.

While on the Animal Crackers, Inc. premises families may not use physical punishments and/or verbal threats that are emotionally harmful, physically hurtful or frightening to their children or to any Animal Crackers, Inc. staff member.

The Center is required to have a copy of all court orders regarding family rights, responsibilities, and child access guidelines. In the event a family member would like to have one on one time with the Teachers or the Executive Director, they are encouraged to schedule a time, preferably with 24 hours’ notice.

Any family action that deliberately undermines the Center’s ability to provide quality care for your child could result in Administrative/Parent Board intervention and possible termination. Animal Crackers, Inc. reserves the right to terminate any family that puts an intolerable strain on the teachers or administration.

## **Center Events**

The Center holds various family and staff socials throughout the year. These include but are not limited to spring and fall clean-ups, potlucks, art auctions, open house nights as well as the Parent Board of Directors Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is usually held in September and is the forum for which new Parent Board members are elected. You will be informed via family notes and flyers as to the dates of the upcoming events. All families are encouraged to attend and participate in these events.

## **Center Closings for Holidays and Staff Training Day**

The Center will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July as well as one additional day to be determined, Labor Day and the Friday before Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day as well as the Friday after Thanksgiving, and the week where Christmas Eve and Christmas Day fall into. If the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day falls on a weekend, the Center will be closed the weekday(s) closest to the Holiday. The Center will also be closed on the last Friday of April for the Staff Training Day. Weekly fees will remain the same regardless of holiday closings. On a yearly basis, the Parent Board of Directors will decide which days the Center will be closed during the week of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

## **Closing Due to Weather And Unforeseen Events**

In the event there is a situation that renders the Center unable to operate within the State of Wisconsin Child Care licensing guidelines such as but not limited to: climatic weather, power outages, damage to premises, loss of water, etc. the Center retains the right to cease operations and close the Center until the situation has been rectified. If the Madison Public Schools are closed due to climatic weather and/or poor road conditions, the Center will also be closed. If threatening weather appears during the day and/or when the Madison Public schools are closed the Executive Director will consult with the Parent Board Chair and may decide to close. Families will be notified by phone and voice messages will be left on their contact number. The Center will contact the radio and television stations if necessary. Weekly fees will remain the same regardless of closings.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

At Animal Crackers, Inc. we respect the privacy and confidentiality of all families. Matters concerning a child, and/or their family are verbally discussed with that family only. All information concerning children is kept confidential and will only be released under court order.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

It is the legal obligation of all childcare workers to report suspected or known cases of abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. Since indicators are not always clear, the decision to make a child abuse report is not an easy responsibility but is one required by the law surrounding mandated reporters. All staff are trained every two years in Child Abuse and Neglect/Mandated Reporting Procedures.

## **Grievance Policy**

Families who have concerns about classroom activities or personnel, should attempt to resolve the problem directly with the staff member that is involved. If the situation isn't rectified and both parties are aware of this, the situation should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall respond to the grievance within one week of the issue being brought to their attention. If the issue is still not resolved satisfactorily and both parties are aware of this, a letter outlining the concerns should be written by the family and forwarded to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, with a copy given to the Executive Director.

It is important that during this grievance procedure that the family makes the Teacher and/or Executive Director aware of the fact that they are not satisfied with the result prior to taking the next step. It is only in this awareness that the process can be supportive to those involved. Copies of the Grievance Policy and Procedure are available in the office.

Families should feel free to address issues with their child's Teachers on an ongoing basis. For a more in-depth review of how your child is doing, family-Teacher conferences are held twice a year (usually in November and April) and/or can be scheduled anytime if needed.

## **Probationary Policy**

All children enrolled in Animal Crackers, Inc. shall be subject to a probationary period of at least six months. The purpose of this period is to observe the child's transition into the childcare center. If concerns regarding the transition arise, the child's teacher, as well as the Executive Director will discuss concerns with the family. Animal Crackers reserves the right to terminate enrollment during the probationary period.

The Center reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment immediately, if the child's behavior is uncontrollable and places other children or staff at risk of harm. At the family's request, efforts will be made to help in obtaining alternative placement for their child.

## **Enrollment Policy**

Enrollment in each age group is limited and is based on a first come-first serve basis according to age and classroom. Full time is considered four or more days for more than 4 hours a day. Part-time is calculated by 3 or less days a week. Half days are less than 4 hours a day. Once a classroom is full, a waiting list will be maintained to inform interested parties of any vacancies. All families must complete a tour before being placed on the waiting list. **The waiting list is free of charge and in no way guarantees a spot.**

All enrollment forms need to be thoroughly completed and must be returned on or before the child's first day at the Center. A child is considered enrolled at Animal Crackers, Inc. when all tuition and fee requirements have been paid and the required paperwork is completed and returned to the office. Families will have access to all of their child's files, portfolios, conferences sheets and any other pertinent information involving their child. Once your child is enrolled at the Center, we must receive any changes in address, telephone numbers or health information immediately. It is very important for us to know how and where to reach you at all times when your child is at the Center.

We strongly urge you to bring your child to the Center for a pre-enrollment visit. This will help in making your child's transition to the Center a positive experience.

### **Family Postings**

In the hallway at the front entrance, a Family Bulletin Board is maintained with up-to-date information regarding, but not limited to the following:

- Licensing Rules and Regulation
- Family Handbook
- City Accreditation Packet
- Center License Certificate
- City Accreditation Certificate
- Results of most recent licensing inspection, citations, enforcements, and memos
- Department of Public Instruction memos and posters
- Menus
- Chain of Command/Delegation of Administration Authority
- Americans with Disability Act Statement
- Minutes of most recent Board Meeting

### **Accountability of Children**

All families are required to notify the Center if their child will be absent. In the event a family member does not notify the Center prior to 10AM, the Center will make every effort to contact the child's family and emergency contact person.

The ratios of children to teachers are: **AC Ratios    State Ratios    Max. Group Size**

Children 6 weeks - 12 months	4:1	4:1	max. group size of 8
Children 12 months - 2 years	4:1	4:1	max. group size of 8
Children 2 - 3 years	6:1	7:1	max. group size of 12
Children 3 - 4 years	8:1	10:1	max. group size of 16
Children 4 and 5 years	11:1	13:1	max. group size of 18
Children ages 6 to 11 years	16:1	18:1	max. group size of 18

The Center may use the state ratios during the day and in the first and last 2 hours of each day if needed.

## **Drop off and Pick Up Procedures**

Animal Crackers, Inc. opens at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 5:30 p.m. ~~Normally, your drop-off and pick-up time should be limited to a few minutes in the classroom to lessen the emotional strain on your child, create a comfortable transition and establish a consistent routine.~~ See amendment to Drop off and Pick Up Procedures below. An adult (**18 years and up**) must accompany the child to his/her classroom, sign the child in and make the Teacher aware of the child's arrival. An adult (**18 years and up**) must pick up the child, sign them out and make the teacher aware of the child's departure.

Each child must be picked up by an adult who is authorized to pick up on the enrollment form. If there is a change in who is permitted to pick up your child, you need to inform the teacher and the office in writing or with a phone call.

We understand that young children cry when their family members leave during the first days of enrollment and at various times while at the Center. Try to manage the separation "matter-of-factly". Your calmness will show your child that you feel he/she can handle the situation. When it is time to leave, please do so. Prolonged departures with lots of physical contact may make the situation more difficult. The Teacher is there to assist you and your child through this transition time.

**Under no circumstances should your vehicle be left running and unattended while you drop-off or pick-up your child-even in cold weather. This is extremely dangerous.** Your vehicle should be parked in a designated parking space in the parking lot. **Parking along the playground fence is not permitted.** Families who violate these policies will receive one warning from the Executive Director. **Families who repeatedly violate the policy may be dismissed from the Center.**

Amendment 6/1/2020- The front door will remain locked to all families. When families drop off their child/children they can either ring the doorbell and wait to be greeted at the door by a staff member or feel free to call ahead. Staff will receive the child/children at the door and proceed with the daily screening process which includes taking their temperature which will need to be below 100.3. Elevated temperatures will be closely monitored throughout the day. The staff will also screen children and look for the following symptoms such as shortness of breath, red eyes, shows signs of fatigue/malaise or has persistent dry cough. Staff will spray hand sanitizer on the children's hands and take them to their classroom. When families pick up their child/children they should ring the doorbell. They will be greeted by a staff member who will bring their child/children and their belongings to the families.

## **Tuition and Other Fees**

The Center accepts all tuition assistance from outside agencies. In the event families are receiving tuition assistance, the onetime registration fee of \$50 will be waived. Fee determination will be based upon contracted hours prior to start date. Families can adjust their contracted hours with four weeks written notification if ratios allow.

Tuition fees are to be paid prior to care provided. Tuition bills are issued 3 days in advance and are due on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month. You will receive a monthly bill as the amount due. Your child's enrollment may be terminated if tuition payment is 30 days late without approval. If families would like a payment plan, they should make an appointment with the Executive Director to create a payment schedule. The Center accepts Wisconsin Shares electronic transfers, checks and money orders as methods of payment. The Center does not allow the use of cash in any transaction. The Center will pursue collection of all unpaid tuition through Small Claims Court.

Animal Crackers, Inc. also has a small scholarship fund to support families who are experiencing short term financial hardships. To inquire about these funds, please set a time to meet with the Executive Director.

When a family terminates their enrollment or is terminated by the Center if there is an overpayment of any fees made to the Center, the Center has 30 days from the child's last day of attendance to return the overpayment to either the family or the institution-(State of Wisconsin, Dane County, City of Madison, Protective Care, etc.).

If your check is returned by the bank due to non-sufficient funds, the Center then reserves the right to request that future payments be made by cashier's check.

Weekly fee payments remain the same when a child is not in attendance due to illness or any other personal reason.

Children enrolled at Animal Crackers, Inc. are entitled to one week (i.e., five consecutive business days) of vacation per calendar year. No tuition is assessed for this vacation week and your child's slot will stay reserved for that week. Four weeks written notice of the upcoming vacation is required so the Center can be staffed accordingly.

Animal Crackers, Inc.'s budget and fee schedules are reviewed yearly by the Finance Committee and the Parent Board of Directors. Fee increases may occur with advance notice at the beginning of the calendar year. Families will be given a 30-day notice of all increases.

In the event families need to dispute any tuition or fees, they should contact the Executive Director verbally and put their dispute in writing. The Center has 10 business days to respond verbally and in writing to the family's dispute or concern. In the event the family's dispute or concern is not satisfied, the family can request the Executive Director forward their concern in writing it with the Parent Board of Directors. The Parent Board

of Directors has 10 business days to respond to the dispute/concern both verbally and in writing. All Parent Board of Directors decisions are considered final.

## **Late Tuition Policy and Fees**

Regardless of your payment type, the Late Tuition Fee Policy stands firm for all families. If tuition payment has not been paid by ten days (the 13<sup>th</sup>) after the due date you will be charged a \$10.00 late fee along with your original balance owed.

If tuition again has not been paid by the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month, you will be charged an additional \$15.00 late fee along with your original balance owed. These late fee charges will total \$25.00 for the month. If tuition payment still has not been received by the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the month, this could result in possible termination of enrollment at Animal Crackers, Inc. and we will turn your case over to collections to retain the unpaid balance.

## **Late Pick up Policy and Fees**

Our Center's operational hours are from 7:30AM to 5:30PM. It is very important that you be on time to pick up your child every day. If you find yourself unable to make the 5:30PM pick up time, it is your responsibility to make other arrangements for their child. Late pickups put an unfair burden on the teachers and the Center. In the event you are late in picking up your child, there will be a late fee assessed to you (to see assessed fee amounts, see late slips located in the office).

Every clock is different. We operate by the digital clock located in the office. We suggest that you give yourself plenty of time to pick up your child since you need to be physically out of the Center by 5:30PM.

In the event you are running late, please call the Center to let us know what is happening so Teachers can make the necessary arrangements for the comfort of your child.

Pick up is limited to **adults 18 years or older**. If you wish to request an exemption to this policy, present your written request to the Executive Director. Exceptions may be granted on an individual basis.

## **Termination of Enrollment**

Animal Crackers, Inc. reserves the right to refuse care for any child that puts an intolerable strain on the classroom. Before a child's enrollment is terminated, every effort will be made to try and remedy the situation with Teachers and parent/guardian involvement, as well as other professional recommendations. In the event that a child's extreme behavior becomes uncontrollable and may place other children or teachers at risk

or harm, termination may be immediate (See Behavior Guidance Policy and the Probationary Policy) Enrollment at Animal Crackers, Inc. may be terminated for persistent and/or chronic behavioral or emotional activity including but not limited to the following: hitting, biting kicking, improper throwing of objects, verbal abuse, swearing, excessive withdrawal, anti-social behavior, inability to form relationships, inappropriate sexual behavior, threatening violence or exhibitionism. The activity of the child needs to be observed by more than one employee of Animal Crackers, Inc and shall be documented in the child's file. Animal Crackers, Inc. reserves the right to utilize the services of outside agencies to assist in deciding the continued enrollment of the child.

Enrollment may also be terminated for any of the following reasons:

1. Non - payment of fees
2. Failure to submit required forms and paperwork
3. Failure to observe the rules and regulations of the Center
4. Needs of the individual child cannot be met by the Center

When families decide to withdraw their child from the Center, four weeks **written notification** is required. Enrollment is considered terminated four weeks after written notice is received. If a child stops coming without verbal or written notice, enrollment will be terminated one week after the last day of attendance. Families are still responsible for paying for the 4 weeks' notice after the last day of attendance and all other outstanding/and or accrued fees issued by the Center. Families who receive tuition assistance are also responsible for notifying their funding agents to terminate further payments. In the event it is the Center's decision to terminate enrollment, the Executive Director will work with the family to establish the last day of enrollment for tuition payment purposes.

## **Medical Policy**

Each child must have a physical examination by a licensed physician not more than six months prior or three months after the first day at the center. Each child must have subsequent examinations as advised by the medical practitioner. Parents of children under the age of 2 are required to submit to the Center, physical examination forms every 6 months in accordance with the State Licensing Regulations until their child turns 2. Once they turn 2 years of age, children are required to have a wellness check every 2 years. Medical Records, as well as shot records, are kept on file at the Center and must be kept up to date by the parent/guardian.

## **Health/Wellness Policy** updated 6/1/20

A child showing any signs of illness should not be brought to the Center. A sick child



can spread his/her illness to other children and staff placing an unfair burden on the classroom. Family members should call the office to inform us that their child will not be in attendance. When a child becomes ill at the center, a teacher or the director will notify the family. It is important that parents/guardians pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time after receiving the call, preferably within one hour.

**Keep your child home if:**

- The child has a temperature of 100.3 degrees or more under the arm. ~~The child may return to school after being fever free, without the aid of a fever reducing medication, for 24 hours.~~ \*See amendment below. In the event medication is used to lower the fever, check the label and note the time between doses. After the last dose, that amount of time must be added to be truly “fever free”. Staff reserves the right to ask for a Doctor’s note before the child can return to the Center.
- The child has vomited, has diarrhea, or has severe nausea. The child should be able to tolerate a normal diet for a full 24 hours before they return to the center. Your teacher will provide a note at pick up that will indicate the earliest date that your child can return to the center. For example, if your child experiences diarrhea/vomiting on a Monday, the earliest day they could return would be the following Wednesday. If they were sent home on a Wednesday, the earliest they could return would be following Friday.
- The child has an infectious disease (strep throat, pink eye, impetigo, chicken pox, etc.). Follow your doctor’s advice. A child needs to be on antibiotics for a full 24 hours. The child should be free of fever and feel well enough to participate in regular activities when before they return.
- The child has an unexplained rash or lesion. Ask your physician if the rash is contagious and wait until treatment is in progress or the rash has cleared up before allowing the child to return to the center. If the rash is not contagious, you will need a doctor’s note stating the rash is not contagious for your child to be cleared to return to childcare.
- The child is unable to play outdoors

If a child has been ill with a bacterial diarrhea infection, infectious hepatitis, infectious mononucleosis, tuberculosis, strep, staph infections or an unexplained rash he/she must have a doctor’s written permission to return to the center. Animal Crackers, Inc. still reserves the right to send any child home that is unable to participate in normal activities, even with a Doctor’s note.

If a child is exposed to a communicable disease at the center, the families will be informed by the staff. We ask that families notify us of any exposures outside the Center.

**MEDICATION:** Medication will be stored out of reach of children. Medication will only be given upon the written permission of the parent. When you bring medication to the Center, ask the teacher for the “Authorization to Administer Medication” form. Medication must always be in the original container bearing the child’s name and prescribed dosage. Please send a medicine spoon or syringe with liquid medication.

According to State Licensing, medication may only be administered for the time frame listed on the container, whether prescription or non-prescription. To administer medication beyond the advised time frame, ask your physician for a new prescription and/or written note describing the dose and length of time it should be given. The center is not allowed to store medication at the Center once the time frame for its use expires, therefore, take all medications home after the expiration date.

When sending in “over the counter medication” with your child, please check the label for instructions. If the label reads “see physician for dose” for the age of your child, we need a doctor’s note stating your child’s name, describing the dose, how often we can administer the medication and over how many days the medication should be given. This doctor’s note needs to state the type of medication-with the brand name of medication being used. We will not administer any over the counter medication to children under the recommended age without a doctor note.

**ACCIDENTS:** Any time a child is hurt or injured at the Center an accident report is completed by the staff member/s witnessing the event. Families will be notified immediately if a serious accident occurs. Families will be notified by telephone or on the daily written report of other injuries. If the injury requires medical attention and parents are not reached, Animal Crackers, Inc. reserves the right to seek emergency medical care and treatment as needed. If your child needs medical attention, they will be transported by ambulance to the hospital identified by their parents in their enrollment file,

**SANITATION:** Special care is taken to ensure that toys and equipment are kept clean and germ free. Infant toys are cleaned and sanitized daily. All classrooms are sanitized daily by a professional cleaning service. Our changing areas are cleaned and sanitized after each diapering. Staff thoroughly washes their hands before and after diapering to inhibit the spread of germs. Families are encouraged to wash their hands and their child’s hands upon entering and departing from rooms. Our staff follows OSHA’s Universal Precautions when dealing with illnesses and injuries in the program.

## **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Prevention Policy**

Animal Crackers, Inc. has a vested interest in all children’s wellbeing; therefore, we have written a SIDS Policy for the safety of your child. The State of Wisconsin Children and Families Regulation and Licensing Bureau has passed a law that requires childcare centers that care for infants less than one year of age to train all employees and volunteers in SIDS prevention to reduce the risk of SIDS. Thus, all infants 12 months and younger

will be placed on their backs to sleep.

## **Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma Policy**

Animal Crackers, Inc. has vested interest in all children's safety; therefore, all staff are trained in the prevention and recognition of Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) and Abusive Head Trauma (AHT). The State of Wisconsin Regulation and Licensing Bureau passed a law that requires childcare centers that care for children under the age of 5 to train all employees in the prevention and recognition of Abusive Head Trauma/Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Reviewed 8/2020

- **Amendment to Health and Wellness Policy**

As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, we have made the following changes to our Health and Wellness policy which will remain in effect until further notice:

Animal Crackers, Inc staff will screen your child daily upon drop off. If your child is showing respiratory symptoms including but not limited to frequent coughing, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, red eyes, or experiencing a headache, we may ask that your child be free of these symptoms before returning. In the event your child has a temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher, your child may return to school after being fever free, without the aid of a fever reducing medication for 72 hours (3 days). In the event medication is used to lower the fever, check the label and note the time between doses. After the last dose, that amount of time must be added to the 72 hours to be truly "fever free". Staff reserves the right to ask for a Doctor's note before your child can return to the Center. Staff will also evaluate your child's temperature and symptoms prior to check in on their first day back at the Center. In the event a child becomes sick, we ask that families make a reasonable attempt to pick up within 30 minutes.

In the event a child is diagnosed with COVID, the staff will work with the Public Health Department, the Department of Children and Families, the City of Madison Child Care Unit and your child's primary care provider to support your child's return. If we have a confirmed case of COVID at Animal Crackers, Inc., we will work with the Public Health Department, the Department of Childcare and Families, the City of Madison Child Care Unit and other regulatory officials to determine a course of action that must be taken to ensure the safety of all children and staff.

Updated 6/20/22

