



Family Handbook

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Chatterbox Learning Center does not allow any weapons to be carried on persons (any person or employee entering the building), or on the premises. If a person is found to be in noncompliance with this regulation, they will be asked to vacate the premises. If a person should refuse to vacate the premises, the local authorities will be contacted.

Welcome to Chatterbox Learning Center, Inc. – Where Your Child’s Learning Journey Begins

At Chatterbox Learning Center, Inc., we believe that each child is a unique and capable individual who thrives in a nurturing and stimulating environment. We are committed to fostering a love of learning by encouraging curiosity, creativity, and confidence in every child.

Our philosophy centers on the whole child—supporting intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development through play-based learning and meaningful relationships. We recognize that children learn best through hands-on experiences and interactions with caring adults and peers.

We partner with families to create a strong foundation for lifelong learning, respect each child’s developmental pace, and embrace diversity as a strength. By promoting kindness, respect, and responsibility, we aim to inspire children to grow into compassionate, confident, and capable individuals.

This handbook has been created to outline the mutual rights and responsibilities of both families and our center, and to support a strong, collaborative partnership in your child’s early education. These policies are given to parents upon enrollment and are available to parents at any time upon request to the center director.

Mission Statement: *To provide superior care in a safe, loving and educational environment that will enrich and enhance each child’s growth through intellectual, emotional, social and physical development.*

ADMISSION

Age Range & Capacity

Chatterbox Learning Center, Inc. is licensed by the State of Wisconsin, Department of Children and Families to care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years, with a maximum capacity of 64 children at any one time. There are no limitations for enrollment at Chatterbox Learning Center.

Hours of Operation

The center is open Monday through Friday, from 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., year-round.

Trial & Termination of Care

Trial Period

Starting a new child care program is a big transition for both children and their families. Our team is dedicated to making this adjustment as smooth as possible by fostering a warm, supportive environment and maintaining open, consistent communication with parents.

The first two weeks of enrollment are considered a trial period. During this time, either the center or the parent may choose to end care with written notice. Parents are responsible for payment for all

days care was provided, as well as the full two-week trial period. The deposit may be applied toward one week of this period.

Termination Requirements

- Two weeks written notice required by either party
- Failure to give notice requires payment for 2 weeks
- Immediate termination may occur due to:
 - Unpaid fees
 - Repeated late pickups
 - Safety concerns
 - Non-cooperation with staff
 - Failure to complete required forms

Holidays Observed

The center is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

All regular fees will be charged for these holidays.

Emergency Closings

There may be times when an emergency arises which requires the child care center to close. If this occurs, we will send an email, text message or call parents/guardians to let them know.

Licensing Standards

Chatterbox Learning Center will post the following items for the public's review on the parent/guardian bulletin board:

- The center's state license
- A copy of the Family Handbook
- Any posted licensing violations
- Notices of upcoming closures
- Policy updates
- Other announcement

The number of children enrolled and present at the center will not exceed the limits set by Wisconsin State Licensing Regulations.

Attendance

Children may not be in care for more than 12 hours in a single day. Parents/guardians are responsible for the schedules they provide us with. We expect children to be in attendance on those days at those times. If a child who is scheduled to arrive at the center and we have not been informed of the absence, we will attempt to contact the parent/guardian to determine the child's whereabouts.

Confidentiality Policy

All child, family, and staff information is confidential. Access is restricted to:

- Parents/Guardians
- Center staff
- Licensing personnel

No personal or pertinent information is shared without written consent.

Abuse/Neglect Reporting

Staff are mandated reporters. Suspected abuse/neglect is reported to **Kiel Police** or **Manitowoc County Social Services**.

Each employee will receive training at least every two years in child abuse and neglect laws, how to identify children who may have been abused or neglected, and the procedure for ensuring that all known or suspected cases are immediately reported to the proper authorities.

If an employee or volunteer is suspected of mistreating a child, that person will be subject to immediate suspension pending the CPS or law enforcement investigation's outcome.

Administrative Structure

Maintaining a clear line of communication is essential for effective support and guidance. If you need assistance, please follow the chain of communication below:

Administrator – Colleen Steinbruecker
Center Director – Holly Ditmer
Lead Teacher – Donna Binversie
Lead Teacher – Alyssa Hemb
Lead Teacher – Heather Grunewald
Lead Teacher – Nicole Zastrow

Please begin with the Administrator and proceed down the list only if the preceding individuals are unavailable.

Method of Enrollment

Parents/guardians interested in enrolling their children at Chatterbox Learning Center must meet with the administrator or director to discuss their child's specific needs and to review program policies before the child is enrolled. A tour of the facility will be provided during this visit.

The following forms must be completed and returned to the center by the first day of the child's attendance.

- Parent Contract
- Form DCF-62 Child Care Enrollment Form
- Form DCF-44 Health History and Emergency Care Plan
- Form DCF-61 Child Care Intake for Child Under 2 Years (if applicable)
- Form DPH-419 Child Care Immunization Record (or electronic record of your child's immunizations – due within 15 days of child's first day of attendance.
- Form DCF-60 Child Health Report signed by a medical professional
- Photo Release Form Intake Form (Under 2)
- Feeding/Sleeping Schedule (if applicable)

The director will inform parents/guardians when updated forms are needed.

Items to be provided by child's family:

All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name:

- Diapers, wipes, ointment
- Formula/baby food/cereal (if applicable)
- Extra set of clothing
- Seasonal gear (hats, mittens, boots)
- Sunscreen
- Blanket or sleeping bag (in pillowcase)

Parent Visits and Communication

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during operating hours to spend time with their child. Telephone calls are also welcome and encouraged. Open communication is key to a successful child care experience.

Pets

Chatterbox Learning Center does not have pets on the premises. Prior to adding pets to the center, the director will notify parents/guardians in writing

Medical Log Book Procedure

All medication administered, accidents or injuries occurring on-site, marked change in child's behavior or appearance, or any observation of injuries to the child's body received outside of the center will be entered in the center's medical logbook. The center director is responsible for reviewing the logbooks every 6 months.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Chatterbox does not discriminate based on race, religion, disability, or any other protected characteristic.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Chatterbox Child Learning Center, Inc. supports and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We welcome children of all abilities and are committed to creating an inclusive environment.

We will make reasonable accommodations to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of the ADA. These accommodations are designed to support each child's ability to participate fully in our programs.

For more information about the ADA, please visit:

<https://www.ada.gov>

Access to Records

Parents may request to view their child's file or medical log (related to their child only) by contacting the center administrator.

Photos and Social Media

Teachers may occasionally take photos of children during activities. These photos may be used:

- In classroom portfolios
- Shared privately with families via email or Facebook

A separate media consent form is included in your enrollment packet. No photos will be shared without parental authorization.

Communication About Child's Progress

Each child's progress is communicated daily through the face-to-face conversations, daily sheets, or phone calls

Each day, families receive a summary of their child's:

- Disposition
- Eating and drinking habits
- Nap duration
- Diapering/toileting routines

Center Administrator:

Colleen Steinbruecker

Phone: 920-912-1480

In situations where only one staff member is present with a group of children, a designated second adult is always available and able to arrive at the center within five minutes. The assigned backup staff member is Lead Teacher Donna Binversie.

PARENT INFORMATION

Parent Information Board

Important information, including:

- The center's state license
 - A copy of the Family Handbook
 - Any posted licensing violations
 - Notices of upcoming closures
 - Policy updates
 - Other announcements
- is posted on the bulletin board located near the center entrance.

Family Involvement

We encourage families to play an active role in their child's experience at Chatterbox. Parents are welcome to share suggestions for activities or learning opportunities that support their child's growth and enjoyment.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

At least twice within every 12-month period, parents are offered the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher to discuss progress, development, and participation in the program. Conferences may also be requested by parents at any time to discuss concerns.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

- Parents must escort children directly into their classroom.
- Teachers must be aware of all arrivals and departures for attendance and safety.
- Children may **not** be left alone in the parking lot, lobby, or playground.
- If your child is outside at pick-up, **please notify the teacher directly** before leaving.

Absences and Schedule Changes

- Please notify the center as soon as possible if your child will be late, absent, or picked up early.
- If a child is absent and the center has not been contacted, staff will call the parent/guardian to confirm the child's status.

Child Release Policy

- Children will **only** be released to individuals authorized by the parent/guardian.
- If someone unfamiliar to staff is picking up a child, even with consent, they **must present photo ID**.
- No exceptions will be made to this policy for the safety of all children.

Babysitting Policy

To maintain professionalism and protect both staff and families, **Chatterbox staff are not permitted to babysit for families currently enrolled at the center.**

This policy is based on guidance from the **Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Licensing Bureau**. Outside employment relationships can create the appearance of favoritism or conflict and may affect the integrity of care provided at the center.

CHILD EDUCATION

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

Our program follows a developmentally appropriate approach, focusing on the individual needs, interests, and abilities of each child. Teachers use observations and assessments to create meaningful learning experiences tailored to each child's developmental level. Activities are designed to support growth across all domains—cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and language—through hands-on, play-based learning.

Educators plan flexible, responsive activities that reflect the children's curiosity and developmental progress. This individualized approach allows children to explore and learn at their own pace while promoting confidence, creativity, and a love of learning.

Cultural Awareness and Seasonal Celebrations

At Chatterbox, we celebrate cultural diversity by incorporating a variety of books, music, foods, classroom materials, and guest speakers that reflect the backgrounds of our children and families. We welcome and encourage families to share their cultural traditions and experiences with the center.

While Chatterbox is not affiliated with any religious organization and does not follow a specific religious doctrine, we may include age-appropriate activities related to widely recognized holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

Families are encouraged to communicate any concerns or preferences regarding holiday activities so we can respect and honor their wishes.

Media Use

On occasion, children may watch developmentally appropriate educational videos or television programs that support classroom learning or special events. Media is used as a supplemental tool and will never take the place of hands-on activities, exploration, or teacher-child interaction.

Early Morning & Late Afternoon Care

For children who arrive early or stay later in the day, engaging and purposeful activities are provided to ensure they remain connected, comfortable, and involved, even within smaller group settings.

Transitions

Teachers use transition activities (e.g., songs, movement, or conversation) to prevent long periods of waiting or inactivity.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor time is a vital part of every child's daily routine. Weather permitting, children will enjoy:

- Play structures
- Sandboxes
- Water tables and sprinklers (in summer)
- Shaded areas for group games and picnics
- Open space for exploration and exercise

Children may also take supervised walking field trips around the neighborhood or to a nearby park.

Infant & Toddler Programs

Care & Environment

Our infant and toddler classrooms provide a warm, nurturing, and sensory-rich environment designed to support early development. Features include:

- Low child-to-staff ratios to ensure personalized care
- Soft toys, engaging materials, and visually stimulating surroundings
- Support for key developmental milestones such as rolling, crawling, standing, and walking
- Frequent verbal interaction, cuddles, and consistent positive reinforcement

Daily Routines

Each infant and toddler follows an individualized schedule for eating, sleeping, diapering, and play. Parents complete a detailed Intake Form at enrollment, which is reviewed and updated every 2–3 months to reflect their child's changing needs and routines.

Safe Sleep Practices

Chatterbox follows SIDS prevention guidelines:

Infants are placed to sleep on their backs unless a signed waiver is on file

Cribs have firm, snug-fitting mattresses

No blankets are allowed for infants under age 1; however, sleep sacks are permitted

Parents receive the *Babies Sleep Safest on Their Backs* pamphlet upon enrollment

Preschool Program (Ages 2½–4 Years)

This program focuses on learning through play, designed to spark curiosity and support foundational skills in a fun, nurturing setting.

Daily activities may include:

- Circle time
- Story time and language development
- Art and sensory play
- Science and math exploration
- Music, cooking, and movement activities
- Introduction to shapes, colors, textures, and numbers

Children are encouraged to build confidence, develop self-help skills, and express creativity while participating in age-appropriate group and individual activities.

School-Age Program

Chatterbox offers a structured, engaging program for school-age children, including:

- Before- and after-school care
- Homework support
- Games and enrichment activities
- Outdoor play and team-building exercises

During summer months and school breaks, a special seasonal program is offered with expanded activities, field trips, and hands-on experiences tailored to older children.

Rest or Naptime

Rest or nap time will be provided for all children under the age of five who are in care for more than four consecutive hours. Children who do not fall asleep within 30 minutes may get up, and those who wake up early will be allowed to do so. Awake children will be offered quiet, appropriate activities with guidance from a teacher.

Infants under one year of age will rest in a playpen. Children over the age of one will use a sleeping bag for rest time. Parents/guardians are responsible for laundering their child's bedding or sleeping bag at least every five uses, or sooner if it becomes wet or soiled.

Center Schedule

Each classroom will have its own detailed daily schedule posted on the parent/guardian bulletin board and in their classroom. This schedule will list outdoor play time, mealtimes, nap/rest time, special activities, and other structured and unstructured time. A sample schedule is included below.

Night Care

Chatterbox Learning Center does not provide night care.

NUTRITION

Meals and Snacks Provided

Chatterbox Child Learning Center provides:

- **Morning Snack** (~8:30 a.m.)
- **Lunch** (~11:30 a.m.)
- **Afternoon Snack** (~2:30 p.m.)
- **After-School Snack** for school-age children

We follow USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards to ensure meals and snacks are nutritious, balanced, and appropriate for young children.

Menus are posted in the kitchen and in each classroom regularly and are available upon request. Any changes or substitutions in the menu will be posted with the original menu. Parents are encouraged to review menus and discuss any concerns or dietary needs with the Administrator.

Child Guidance and Food

Children will not be forced to eat; they will be encouraged to try new foods as appropriate. Meals will not be withheld as a form of punishment. To support development, we provide child-sized dishes and utensils.

Mealtimes will include meaningful conversation and will promote social interaction, encourage good table manners, and develop sound nutritional habits. Our staff model healthy eating behaviors in the presence of children, eating the same foods as children and refraining from eating or drinking non-nutritious foods in front of children.

Kitchen Cleanliness, Dishwashing

Eating surfaces will be washed and sanitized before and after meals and snacks. Staff and children will wash their hands before and after eating. Dishes will be washed and sanitized in accordance with licensing regulations.

Detailed kitchen instructions

- Chatterbox Learning Center does have a kitchen with a stove, refrigerator, and microwave. The kitchen has been inspected and meets all building code requirements.
- Refrigerator (40 degrees F or colder) and freezer temperatures (0 degrees F or colder) will be properly maintained.
- Proper hand washing procedures will be followed to prevent the spread of disease.
- Hand washing procedures will be posted at all sinks.
- All cleaning products will be kept in a separate, locked cabinet apart from all food and food items.

Food storage

Food will be stored off the floor and in airtight containers after opening. Containers will be labeled and dated.

Breakfast

- The center does not provide breakfast. However, children may eat breakfast brought from home if it is consumed before 8:00 a.m.
- Children arriving after 8:00 a.m. should have already eaten breakfast at home.
- Parents may send dry breakfast items (such as cereal or granola bars), which must be stored in airtight containers labeled with the child's full name.
- If breakfast is brought from home, the center will provide milk or juice to accompany it.

Snack Contributions

Once per month, each family is asked to provide two nutritious, unopened snacks (e.g., graham crackers, saltines, Goldfish) for classroom use. These snacks must be:

- In original packaging
- Clearly labeled with the child's name
- Sufficient to serve the entire classroom

Special Dietary Needs

- Special diets, including supplements or nutrient concentrates, will be followed only with written instructions from the child's physician and at the parent's request.
- Parents must list any known food allergies on the enrollment form. These forms are reviewed and updated regularly.
- Allergy-safe substitutions will be made for children with documented allergies.

Food from Home

- Parents may send extra food for children attending early or late hours.
- Chatterbox may supplement meals or snacks brought from home if they do not meet CACFP nutritional guidelines.

Birthday Treats

We recognize the importance of birthdays in a child's life. Parents are welcome to bring in a nutritious snack for their child's birthday. Please consult with your child's teacher in advance, especially if there are allergies in the classroom.

Feeding Infants and Toddlers

- Each infant or toddler is fed according to individual feeding schedules provided by the parent.

- Parents are responsible for supplying formula, breast milk, jarred baby food, and cereal until the child transitions to the center’s menu.
- Daily records are kept for each infant/toddler, documenting mood, feeding, diapering, and nap times.

Safe Heating Procedures

- Breast milk and formula will be warmed using warm water, **not** heated in a microwave.
- All staff are trained in and consistently follow safe food handling practices

Breastfeeding Support Policy

Chatterbox Learning Center proudly supports breastfeeding families, including staff. Our policy ensures a welcoming and accommodating environment through the following practices:

1. Private, Comfortable Space

A designated area is available for nursing or pumping, equipped with seating, an electrical outlet, and access to running water to ensure comfort and privacy.

2. Refrigerated Storage

A dedicated refrigerator is available for storing expressed breast milk. All containers must be clearly labeled with the child’s full name and the date.

3. Respect for Feeding Preferences

- Staff honor parents' feeding preferences, such as holding off on a bottle if a parent is on their way.
- No solid food or formula will be offered unless specifically requested by the parent.
- Infants are always held during feedings—bottles are never propped.

4. Staff Training

All staff members receive training on the safe handling, storage, and feeding of expressed breast milk.

5. Support for Breastfeeding Employees

Employees who breastfeed may take flexible breaks for pumping or nursing. Time beyond standard breaks may be made up using flex time or accrued leave.

6. Education and Awareness

Breastfeeding-friendly resources and educational materials are displayed throughout the center to promote awareness and support.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL POLICIES

Safe Sleep

To reduce the risk of SIDS:

- Parents receive the Babies Sleep Safest on Their Backs pamphlet.
- Infants are placed on their backs to sleep unless there is a signed waiver from a physician.
- Crib mattresses are firm and fitted.
- No blankets are allowed in cribs for children under age one; sleep sacks or wearable blankets are allowed.
- Infants' heads remain uncovered during sleep.

Illness Policy Children may not attend the center if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100°F (oral) or 101°F (underarm) or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Undiagnosed rash
- Contagious disease in its infectious stage
- Suspected strep throat until diagnosis is confirmed
- Children must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning. If a child becomes ill while at the center, a parent or emergency contact must pick them up within one hour. Sick children are cared for separately in the staff office until pickup. Children must be healthy enough to participate in outdoor play.

Mildly Ill Child Care

This service is not provided.

Exclusion for Specific Conditions

- **Head lice:** Must be nit-free to return
- **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:** Child must be fever-free with all blisters dry/scabbed

Medication Policy

- A signed Medication Authorization Form is required for any prescription or over-the-counter medication, including creams and ointments.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container.
- All medication administration is logged in the Medical Logbook.
- Physical Exams Children over the age of 2 must have a physical every two years. Records are maintained as required by licensing regulations.

Injury & Incident Reporting

- Minor injuries: Washed, bandaged, or treated with ice and recorded in the Medical Logbook
- Serious injuries: Parents notified immediately; written report provided within 1 day and reported in the centers medical log.

- Emergency care: Preferred hospital used when possible; otherwise, **Aurora Sheboygan Medical Center**
- Injuries off-site follow the same procedures
- Injuries requiring medical attention or caused by an animal are reported to DCF within 24 hours
- Biting -- Although biting is a developmentally typical behavior in young children, the center takes proactive steps to minimize occurrences. When a biting incident does occur:
 - The affected area is promptly cleaned and treated.
 - The child who bit is gently guided toward more appropriate behavior.
 - The incident is documented in the center's medical log.

Immediate Notification Situations

Parents will be notified immediately in the event of any of the following incidents:

Head injuries

Seizures

Accidental consumption of the wrong breast milk or exposure to known allergens

Ingestion of poison or incorrect medication

Hygiene & Sanitation

Staff and children wash hands frequently throughout the day

Gloves are worn during diapering and when handling bodily fluids

Toys and learning materials are sanitized on a regular schedule

Soiled items are placed in sealed plastic bags and sent home the same day

Allergies & Health Conditions

All allergies and health conditions must be documented on enrollment forms

Relevant information is shared with staff on a need-to-know basis to ensure the child's safety

The center makes every effort to accommodate children with special health needs

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Child Release Policy

- Children will only be released to individuals listed on the Child Enrollment Form.
- A photo ID is required if the person picking up is not familiar to staff.

Custody Arrangements

- A signed, written custody agreement must be provided to the center.
- The center will follow the custody agreement as written and will not make changes without joint authorization from both parties.

Suspected Impairment

- If a parent or authorized individual appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the center will contact local authorities and the child's emergency contacts to ensure the child's safety.

Language Access

- Enrollment forms and other materials are available in alternative languages upon request.

RATES & PAYMENTS

Fee Structure

- Registration Fee: \$40 per child (non-refundable)
- Materials Fee: \$25 annually (on anniversary start date)
- Deposit: \$100 (applied to first week of care)
- Late Payment: \$15 per day
- Returned Check Fee: \$30
- Late Pickup: \$5 per 5 minutes
- Field Trip Fees: As applicable

Billing

- Invoices are due by Friday each week
- Payment box located near the front entrance
- Most forms of financial assistance accepted

Holiday Closures (Paid Days)

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Vacation Policy

- Full-time families: 4 unpaid sick/vacation days/year
- Part-time families: 2 unpaid days/year
- Vacation requests must be submitted one week in advance
- Repeated late pickups may result in loss of vacation days
- Unused vacation days are forfeited upon withdrawal

Center Agreement

Parent/guardians agree to:

- Pay registration fee and deposit
- Begin attendance on agreed start date
- Request translated forms if needed
- Follow all center rules and policies

Discharge Process

A parent/guardian may decide to terminate child care enrollment at the center at any time.

Parent/guardians must give two weeks notice to the center director and all fees will be collected for the two weeks, even if the child is no longer attending. A written appeal may be submitted in case of disagreement

Reasons for Discharge

- Non payment of tuition or fees (grounds for immediate termination, without notice)
- Lack of parent/guardian cooperation
- Inability for Chatterbox Learning Center to meet the needs of the child.
- Failure to complete and return the required forms by their due date
- Any family member treating staff with disrespect, abusive language, violence, or threat of violence (grounds for immediate termination, without notice)

Center Initiated/Behavior Related Discharge

Chatterbox Learning Center is committed to keeping parents and guardians informed of their child's development and progress. If a child experiences difficulty adjusting to the daily routine, following classroom expectations, or presents safety concerns, the following steps will be taken:

1. Initial Communication

The teacher will provide a verbal update to the parent or guardian, outlining the observed concerns and discussing possible strategies for support.

2. Follow-Up and Behavior Plan

If the concerns persist after two weeks, a formal meeting will be scheduled with the center director, classroom teacher, and parent/guardian. Together, a written behavior support plan will be developed to assist the child. This plan will be documented and kept in the child's file.

3. Reevaluation and Next Steps

If no significant progress is made within 30 days, a second in-person conference will be held. At this time, the behavior plan may be revised, referrals to outside support services may be offered, and in some cases, termination of care may be considered.

Before any decision to terminate care is made, every effort will be made to seek appropriate support services or referrals to help the child succeed.

Transportation Policy

Chatterbox Learning Center does not provide transportation in vehicles owned by the center, the licensee, or the employees. However, public transportation is used for field trips requiring transportation, i.e. school buses.

When Transport Occurs

- Field trips
- Medical emergencies
- Evacuations

Safety & Procedure

- Valid insurance and driver's license on file
- Child safety restraints used
- Emergency contact and first aid supplies kept in vehicle
- Vehicle safety checks conducted
- Attendance is taken on and off the vehicle
- Permission slips sent home before each field trip

CHILD GUIDANCE

Distraught Children

When a child is crying, upset, or distressed, staff will use age-appropriate methods to comfort and calm them. This may include gentle touch, cuddling, rocking, offering a drink, or talking calmly to help them express their feelings. If the child remains upset, we may contact a parent or guardian to discuss the situation and check if it could be a sign of illness.

Positive Guidance

We guide children's behavior by setting clear rules and using positive language. Staff explain and model expected behaviors, such as saying "Let's use quiet voices" instead of "Don't yell."

If a child's behavior becomes challenging, they will be redirected to another activity. Children are offered a variety of age-appropriate choices and given attention before issues arise.

Our goal is to help children build self-control, confidence, and respect for others. We never withhold food or physical activity as a form of discipline. When needed, we redirect children to safe activities and talk with them about safety.

Prohibited Actions

In line with Wisconsin child care regulations, any actions that are harmful, cruel, or humiliating are strictly prohibited. This includes anything that could cause emotional, physical, or psychological harm—even if requested by a parent or guardian.

Prohibited actions include:

- Hitting, spanking, pinching, shaking, or any form of physical punishment
- Yelling, threatening, or making hurtful comments about the child or their family
- Tying, restraining, or locking a child in a room or small space
- Withholding or forcing food, drinks, or naps
- Punishing a child for accidents during toilet training

Transitions

Children do best when they don't have to wait long during transitions. We plan routines like toileting, eating, and moving between activities to keep things moving and avoid long lines or large group waiting.

Promoting Positive Behavior

Classroom arrangement, materials, and programming are scaled to the developmental level, size, and ability of children, which will contribute to providing clear guidelines and promoting positive behavior.

Parent/Guardian Involvement in Solving Behavior

All efforts will be made to work out a plan for behavior management between staff and the parents/guardians to see if challenging behaviors can be managed and/or corrected. The teacher will ask for a parent/guardian/teacher conference to discuss the behaviors in detail. Input from parents/guardians on behavior management is vital.

Techniques Staff Will Use to Control Unwanted Behaviors

- Supervise the children carefully and intervene before a problem occurs
- Redirect a child to an alternative activity
- Keep routines and expectations predictable
- Set good examples and use positive reinforcement
- Discuss any concerns with parents/guardians

Time-Out Procedure

A "time-out" is a break from the large group, provided by the teacher, to support and give an opportunity for the child to calm down and regain composure. A time-out may only be given to a child who is 3 years of age or older and may not exceed 3 minutes.

Before a time-out is given to a child, the teacher will use other techniques to calm the child. Some of the techniques may be one-on-one activities, redirection, small group activities, breathing exercises, calming experiences, conversations between the child and the teacher.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Monthly Drills

- Fire, tornado, and evacuation drills are conducted monthly
- Emergency procedures are posted in every classroom

Emergency Phone Numbers

Emergency phone numbers for WE Energies, the non-emergency police and fire departments, Poison Control, and the emergency back-up provider will be posted near the phone in each classroom, the center office, and the kitchen. These postings will also include the center's address and phone number.

In Case of Emergency

- Emergency cards are kept on classroom clipboards
- In serious medical situations, children transported to **Aurora Sheboygan Medical Center**
- A staff member remains with the child until parent arrives
- Parents are notified immediately

Emergency Contact

- Donna Binversie

Missing Child Procedure

If a child is discovered missing, staff must immediately notify the Director. Additional staff will conduct a thorough search of all areas inside and outside the center.

If the child is not located promptly:

- The child's parents/guardians and/or emergency contact will be notified immediately
- Local law enforcement will be contacted without delay
- The Director will report the incident to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) within 24 hours

If a staff member is alone on-site when a child is reported missing, they must immediately contact the designated emergency backup person for support and assistance.

Daily Attendance

Chatterbox Learning Center uses a paper tracking system to ensure staff are always aware of each child's location. All staff receive training on how to properly use this system.

During early morning drop-off and late afternoon pick-up—when classrooms may be combined—teachers are responsible for knowing which children are in their care at all times.

Parents/guardians or authorized adults must accompany children into the building and sign them in at the start of the day, including the arrival time. At pick-up, they must sign the child out and record the departure time.

Staff will verify that attendance records match the actual number of children in care during every transition and at least once per hour throughout the day.

Fire

If there is a fire or a fire drill goes off, the director or person in charge will contact the local fire authorities/911 and children will be evacuated by all available staff through the nearest exit. The attendance form and list of phone numbers for parents/guardians and emergency contacts will be taken out by each teacher to ensure all children are accounted for, and all families can be notified. Infants will be evacuated four to a crib with emergency provisions and all children will be taken outdoors to the corner of Dewey St. & Riverview Rd. The director or person in charge will check classrooms, bathrooms, and staff areas to make sure all persons are evacuated.

The local fire authority will call all clear to re-enter the building once it is safe to do so. If we are unable to return to the building following an evacuation, the children will be taken to location, until parents/guardians or another authorized adult will be contacted to arrange pick-up.

Fire evacuation drills are practiced once a month January through December. All drills will be documented on form DCF

Tornado

In the event of a tornado warning, the children will be taken to the interior hallway near the utility closet by all available staff members. Blankets, a portable radio, and flashlight, with extra batteries for both, are kept in the office. Attendance and emergency contact information will be brought along by the classroom teacher. The director or person in charge will check classrooms, bathrooms, and staff areas to make sure all persons are in the shelter area. Staff will engage the children in quiet activities until we are informed by the authorities that the danger has passed.

Tornado drills will be conducted monthly from April to October and documented on form DCF-F-CFS0543 Safety And Emergency Response Documentation Group Child Care Center or electronically

Threat to the Building or Occupants

Depending on what the emergency is, if possible, evacuation of the building will be initiated using the fire evacuation procedure. If it is not possible to evacuate the building, each classroom will take cover in a secure area. The main door will be closed and locked; all other doors will be closed and locked as possible. 911 will be called. The teacher will keep children calm and in one area of the room until the threat has passed, or the police or fire department has arrived. Law enforcement and parents/guardians will be immediately contacted to advise them of the threat.

Allergic Reactions

Each child with an allergy will have a written care plan that includes instructions regarding the allergen, steps to be taken to avoid that allergen, and a detailed treatment plan in the event of an allergic reaction, including the names, doses, and methods of prompt administration of any medications. The care plan will include specific symptoms that would indicate the need to administer medication. Center staff will review allergic reaction protocols at least two times per year to ensure each child's safety and well-being.

If a child has an allergic reaction that does not appear to be life-threatening, has a suspected allergic reaction, or contact with/ingestion of an allergen, staff will review the emergency care plan to determine the steps that need to be taken to ensure the child's health and well-being. The staff will follow the steps in the emergency care plan and:

- The director will notify parents/guardians immediately after medical personnel have been notified of any allergic reaction or possible contact with food that may cause an allergic reaction.
- If needed, the child will be transported to Aurora Sheboygan Medical Center for care. The director will stay with the child until the parent/guardian arrive.
- The incident will be documented in the medical logbook.

All staff have training in infant and child CPR, AED, and first aid techniques.

Emergency Medical Treatment

If there is a medical emergency with a child or adult requiring emergency medical treatment, 911 will be called. Staff will perform first aid according to their training, initial check, call, and care procedures. Children present will be taken from the area calmly by available staff for supervision and safety. If it is a life-threatening situation, with no time to consult the child's file or parent/guardian, 911 will be called. If an ambulance is needed, parents/guardians will be responsible for any medical costs incurred. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible after contacting 911. The injury will be recorded in the medical logbook upon return to the center.

Safe Location for Children After Emergency Evacuations

If an evacuation off the premises of the center is needed, all people will go to corner of Dewey St. And Riverview Rd

Severe Weather

- Parents notified if early closure occurs
- Center remains open unless travel is unsafe for staff

Loss of Building Services

Families will be notified if the following occurs:

- Heat: Indoor temperatures fall below 67°F.
- Air Conditioning: Indoor temperatures rise above 80°F (backup fans will be used if cooling is not restored within 2 hours).
- Water: Water service is unavailable for more than 2 hours — the center will close in this case.
- Electricity: A power outage lasts more than 2 hours without a backup source — the center will close.
- Phone Service: Phone lines are down — staff will use personal cell phones to maintain communication.

Other Weather Emergencies

- In the event of earthquakes, floods, landslides, mudslides, lightning, wildfires, or winter weather we look for guidance at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html>

Terms of Agreement

This handbook represents a 12-month agreement between parents and Chatterbox Learning Center. If not renewed at the end of 12 months, the existing agreement remains valid until a new one is signed.

Mother/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Father/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Administrator Signature _____ **Date** _____