

**WEAVER DAIRY
COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL
OPERATIONAL POLICY**

At the Weaver Dairy Community Preschool we have high ideals. We came together in hopes of creating a preschool that would serve the needs of everyone involved: children, families, and staff. We offer a ¾ day program (7:30-3:30), with ½ day slots as well. We made the decision not to offer full day care (7:30-5:30) for the following reasons:

1. While being part of a group setting is certainly beneficial to children in many ways, having to function in a group all day can be very stressful for young children. After a morning of playing hard, sharing and working cooperatively, children respond best to independent play and individual attention in the afternoons.
2. We feel very strongly that teachers working with young children should have a workday limited to 8 or fewer hours, including break time. Unfortunately, 8-hour workdays for staff and a 7:30 to 5:30 business day are not compatible. Asking teachers to work more than this increases the risk of teacher burnout. High teacher turnover rates are a chronic problem in childcare. We highly value our staff and want them to remain with us for as long as possible.

Our goals are many, but we view each as an integral part of our program:

OUR GOALS

- *To provide high quality childcare in a warm, nurturing and safe environment that is child and family centered.
- *To promote a cooperative climate where children are encouraged and empowered to solve conflicts by communicating.
- *To foster self-respect, respect for others and a respect for differences by creating an accepting environment where all children feel valued.
- *To provide a positive work environment and working conditions for staff. Traditionally, working conditions for childcare providers have been quite poor. We believe that the quality of care staff can provide on a long-term basis is directly related to working conditions (reasonable hours, reasonable pay, health insurance, sick leave, retirement, etc.).
- *To follow a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on individual children's needs, with a focus on encouraging growth in the four developmental domains as put forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): emotional, social, cognitive and physical.
- *To encourage a child's natural excitement for learning.
- *To support and facilitate open communication between staff and parents, creating partnerships to ensure that each child's (and family's) needs are being met.
- *To involve parents as much as possible in the everyday happenings at the preschool by requiring 2 hours of parental participation each month.
- *To act as a resource for families by making accessible information and literature on child development and parenting.
- *To foster and encourage respect for the environment and the world around us.

At the Weaver Dairy Community Preschool children have choices. We believe that giving children choices whenever possible, and encouraging them to make their own decisions, fosters self-esteem and helps children feel more in control of their world.

The daily schedule at the preschool allows for ample opportunities for both structured and unstructured activities. Experts agree that children learn best through play, and we play a lot. We play inside, outside, in large groups, small groups, and independently.

Our classrooms are organized to facilitate play in a comfortable, relaxing environment. You will find an art area, a dramatic play area, a manipulative area, a block area, a book/reading readiness area, and a science area all available to the children each day. We have an abundance of children's books always available to the children. Teachers and parents read stories frequently. Singing and music are integral to the program.

There is no formal academic instruction at the Weaver Dairy Community Preschool. You will never see worksheets or children being expected to do activities that are not developmentally appropriate. Instead children are exposed to pre-reading and pre-math skills and encouraged when they develop a natural interest in these areas.

Children will not be expected to keep their clothes clean. Children learn by doing, touching, experimenting and more often than not they get messy in the process.

Our staff are loving, experienced and qualified. Our teacher to child ratios are excellent. Staff work together as a team to provide a nurturing and loving environment for children.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

The preschool is open Monday-Friday 7:30-3:30

We offer :

3/4 day slots 7:30-3:30

1 1/2 day slots 7:30-12:30

Part week spaces are also available

HOLIDAYS:

The preschool will be closed for the following holidays: Labor Day, Teacher Work Day in October, Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday), Winter Break (same as the Chapel Hill-Carrboro public schools), Martin Luther King Day, Teacher Work Day in Mid-February, Spring Holiday (Good Friday and Easter Monday), Memorial Day, the week of the Fourth of July, and two Teacher Workdays in late August. Tuition is not affected by these closings.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

Decisions about school closings will be made by 7:00 a.m. based on the road conditions and weather reports. **At the onset of inclement weather Wdcp will be closed if the Chapel Hill/Carrboro Public Schools are closed.** At times it may be necessary to close the school after the day has begun, due to weather. Parents should listen to the radio on possible inclement weather days; **if the Ch Hill/Carrboro schools close early, we will also.** In the event of a mid-day closing, we will attempt to notify families by phone, however this is not always possible. It is your responsibility to determine whether we are closing early and pick up your child accordingly. Do this by calling the school or checking to see if the Chapel Hill/Carrboro schools are closing. Inclement weather days will not be made up and tuition will not be adjusted for days missed. To find out about closings or delayed openings please call the school to hear the message or listen to WUNC 91.5. 932-1300.

WHO DO WE SERVE?

Yellow Room Toddlers (12-24 mos) ratio 1:4

Purple Room Middlers (2-3 1/2yrs) ratio 1:6, 1:7

Blue Room Preschoolers (3-5yrs) ratio 1:8

The Weaver Dairy Community Preschool accepts and welcomes children with special needs provided that:

1. Staff can meet the special needs of the child while still meeting the needs of all the children in the group.
2. The families of the children with special needs demonstrate a willingness to work with us in meeting the special needs of the child.

FEE SCHEDULE:

For current tuition rates see our Fee Schedule. Tuition is due on the first business day of each month. A \$10 late fee will be charged after the 5th day of the month. Tuition checks must be written for the correct amount to avoid creating problems with book keeping. Tuition checks that are written for an incorrect amount will be returned to the family for correction. Late fees will apply when checks are written for the wrong amount and the error is not corrected by the 5th of the month. When in doubt about the

correct amount, please ask.

DEPOSIT REQUIRED:

A deposit of \$500 for children who will attend more than 3 days per week is due upon acceptance of a child into the preschool. A deposit of \$300 for children who will attend 3 or fewer days per week is due upon acceptance. This deposit reserves a slot for your child. The deposit is **nonrefundable**, but will be held in a “deposit account” and applied to your child’s last month of enrollment, provided we receive 60 days notice of withdrawal. If you fail to give the required 60 days notice of withdrawal we will apply your deposit to your balance due. Please see requirements for “withdrawal” below.

If you submit a deposit to reserve a slot, and then later change your mind and choose to not attend, your deposit will not be refunded.

WITHDRAWAL:

It is our strict policy that at least 60 days notice is given, in writing, of a child’s withdrawal. This gives the program time to fill the space without suffering a financial loss. This is extremely important, as tuition goes directly to pay staff salaries and operating costs. Please note that this applies to graduating kindergarteners as well. In the event that you withdraw your child, you are responsible for paying her/his tuition for 60 days after we receive written notice of withdrawal. If you withdraw your child without giving us the minimum 60 days notice you will be held responsible for paying tuition for 60 days after we learn of the withdrawal, unless prior arrangements have been made, in writing, with the directors.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:

Ideally, the first step in the enrollment process at Weaver Dairy Community Preschool is a visit to the school to observe and learn about our program. It is required that your first visit be scheduled ahead of time, to be certain that one of the directors is available to meet with you. This visitor policy helps to ensure that “strangers” do not wander around on the school premises. Parents of children enrolled at the preschool are welcome to stop in at any point in time. Application is made to the preschool by completing an application form and paying a \$25 nonrefundable fee.

Before any child can attend the Weaver Dairy Community Preschool, we must have the following items on file:

1. A completed application for enrollment.
2. A completed child’s medical form signed (not stamped) by a licensed physician currently approved by the NC Board of Medical Examiners. Immunization records must be current.
3. A signed behavior management policy.
4. A signed permission notice for activities outside the fenced areas.
5. A signed participation agreement.
6. A signed statement acknowledging that families have read and understood all policies.
7. A signed financial agreement and deposit agreement.
8. An Emergency Contact Form.
9. A completed signature form for the North Carolina Childcare Laws.

At least one parent or legal guardian from each family must meet with the director(s) for an orientation and discussion of all preschool policies. For children entering our program in the fall, Parent Orientation will be held during our “Meet the Teachers” night in mid August. One or both parents or guardians must attend. Before a child’s first day, the child and parent or legal guardian should visit the preschool at least once.

We reserve the right to decline to enroll a child or to discontinue enrollment if we determine that WDCP and the child and/or parents are not compatible with or, are disrupting to, our program.

We do not discriminate against families on the basis of age of parents, gender of parents, race, color, religion, disabilities, national origin, affectional preference or marital status.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES:

Parents must accompany their children into the classroom and make certain that a teacher knows when a child has arrived. Parents must also be sure a teacher knows when a child is leaving school. Parents must keep children with them in the parking area. Staff must be informed in writing if someone other than a child's parent will pick the child up from school. If a child departs late there is a late fee of \$5 for every 10 minutes or portion thereof. This applies to both the 3:30 pick up time for the 3/4 day and the 1/2 day pick up times (12:30 for Blue room, 12:15 for Purple, 12:00 for Yellow). It is best if the parent arriving late acknowledges that they're late, and offers to pay the late fee. If it is not mentioned, parents will be notified with a "Late Fee Notice" if late fees are due.

All children must be supervised at all times while on preschool property, for this reason we request that siblings who do not attend WDCP accompany parents into the building at arrival and departure time. Please do not leave children unattended in vehicles.

HEALTH POLICY:

If a child is not well enough to function comfortably at school, she should stay at home until fully recovered. If a child is not well enough to go outside, he should not be at school. Outside time is an integral (and required) part of our program. Suppressing a child's fever with medication and sending them to school is not acceptable. If a child becomes ill at school, the Weaver Dairy Community Preschool will notify parents to come and get the child as soon as possible.

Children may return to school after an illness after 24 hours have passed with no fever (a temperature of 100 degrees), vomiting, or diarrhea.

If your child has a communicable disease (chicken pox, strep, flu, etc.) we ask that you notify the preschool immediately so that all families can be informed that their children may have been exposed.

MEDICATION:

It is a **state licensing regulation** that no medication can be given without the signed consent of a **doctor** and the submission of a medication permission slip (to be completed by the parent). **This includes both prescription and over the counter drugs which are ingested (such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Benedryl, etc.).** It is not necessary to obtain a note from a doctor for topical medications such as diaper cream. There is a medication permission form for you to sign in your child's classroom. It must be filled out completely and accurately in order for us to administer medication. Medicines must be stored in the preschool's locked medicine boxes and all medication (prescription and over the counter) must be in its original container.

Lotions, lip balm, sunscreens and rash creams are considered by the Division of Child Development to be topical medications and must be kept in our locked boxes.

MEALS AND SNACKS

WDCP provides a morning snack and an afternoon snack for children. We ask that families provide a lunch and a container of milk each day for their child. We will provide a dessert of fresh fruit for the children each day and we request that families do not send any sweets in their child's lunch. We have found that calling it "dessert" is an excellent way to get children excited about fresh fruit. When possible we serve hormone-free milk, organic produce and snacks with no artificial colors, flavors or trans fats.

State licensing nutrition policies mandate that all lunches include the following: a protein, a bread, a fruit and a vegetable and milk. A list of lunch ideas will be provided to families along with a more detailed description of the requirements.

Please note that if you send carrots in your child's lunch they must either be finely shredded or cooked until soft. Raw carrots are very chokable.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY:

Teachers will work to promote self-control and self-esteem among the children. Our approach to discipline is never punitive. We try to approach discipline as an opportunity for learning and developing self-control.

You will hear teachers telling children what to do as opposed to what not to do, so that expectations are clear and messages are positive. For example you will hear "use your walking feet"

instead of “don’t run!”.

You will hear teachers praising acceptable behavior.

You will hear teachers encouraging children to “use your words” to solve problems. We try to help children develop communication skills and to help them to recognize and express their emotions.

Logical consequences are used whenever possible. Child development experts agree that natural or logical consequences are much more effective in helping a child learn self-discipline than the use of punishment. For example, if a child is throwing sand you might hear us say, “If you are going to throw sand, you will have to leave the digging area” rather than “if you throw sand you will have to go into time-out”. Having to walk away from the sand is a logical consequence and it makes sense to children.

Children that are having self-control issues or acting aggressively may be asked to spend a short period of time away from the group. This is seen as an opportunity for the child to calm down, not viewed as a punishment. Once composure is recovered, the child will be invited to rejoin the group.

Physical punishment is obviously never used at the preschool and we respectfully request that if families use spanking as a discipline method at home, they refrain from using any physical punishment or threat of physical punishment while at the preschool. We also never use psychological punishment, ridicule or profanity in disciplining children and will not allow any adult to use such means at the preschool.

Children are never forced to eat or sleep though both will be encouraged. Toileting accidents are accepted as a part of childhood. Food and rest are never denied to children as a form of punishment.

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

By enrolling at the Weaver Dairy Community Preschool, each family is agreeing to complete 2 hours of parent participation each month. We believe that parent participation is essential to the smooth operation of the preschool and to the quality of each child’s preschool experience. For more details on parent participation, please see the Parent Participation Agreement.

In addition to meeting the 2-hour parent participation requirement, each family must also do the following:

1. Make arrangement to attend the required parent orientation visit (without your child). One or both parents will meet with a director to review policies and procedures. In addition, we will ask that you and your child come for at least one classroom visit to help your child acclimate, before his or her first day. If your child will be starting with our new school year you will be required to attend a scheduled group visit, with other newly enrolled children, in August.
2. Communicate! Children’s home lives and school lives are not completely separate. When something significant is going on at home, you can bet we will see signs of it at school. Please let us know when something unusual happens at home (someone is visiting, Mom or Dad is away on a trip, a death in the family, a change in the daily schedule, etc.).
3. Check the board posted beside the door leading into your child’s classroom daily. We will use this board to convey a good deal of information and will assume that parents read it regularly.
4. Check your child’s cubby each day; taking home all papers and artwork to avoid having cubbies become messy and overcrowded. Please read notices put in children’s cubbies, including our monthly newsletter.
5. Attend parent-teacher conferences each year to discuss the child’s progress and exchange information about your child and the program. If the staff has any concerns about a child’s behavior or development, we will discuss these issues with the family. We may request or recommend that a child be screened/evaluated by a specialist. The program’s goal in suggesting screening is always to get more information, so that we can work collectively to help the child be successful.
6. Participate in 1 parent-teacher workday (held on Saturday mornings) annually.
7. Attend 1 “Meet the Teachers” information meeting each year in the Fall.

We also strongly encourage families to attend preschool picnics and social events. This is a great way to get to know staff and other families. We will have a Fall picnic, a Winter holiday tea party, and a Spring picnic.

Parent/Staff Communication Policy

If a parent has a question, concern, or issue regarding the program, he/she should communicate with one or both of the directors. We welcome phone calls and are always willing to set up a special conference to meet with parents upon request. At WDCP we are firm believers in healthy communication and are constantly exploring new ways to improve in this area.

If a parent should ever have a question, concern, or issue with a particular staff member, we ask that the parent communicate directly with that teacher. We value our staff, feel confident we share a common philosophy, and respect their inherent desire to be addressed personally regarding classroom concerns. If a parent does so without success or if they feel the severity of their concern requires attention on an administrative level, the parent should then speak with one or both of the directors. The director's role will be to listen and assess the circumstances. Based on the information gathered, the directors will decide how to proceed. Depending on the circumstances, we may decide to act as mediators, but direct communication between parent and teacher will usually be required in addressing classroom concerns. The director will be happy to provide classroom coverage to allow a teacher and parent to meet.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY:

The Law in North Carolina states that anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect is required to report that suspicion to the Department of Social Services of the county in which the child lives. A report is simply a request for an investigation. Anyone who makes a report in good faith is protected from civil and criminal liability. When you suspect child abuse, when a child tells you that she/he is being abused, or when another child tells you about a child being abused, you are legally obligated to report it.

It is "WDCP'S" policy that when a teacher suspects a child is suffering from child abuse or neglect:

*A director will be informed immediately.

*A director and the teacher together will decide if enough information has been gathered to warrant the suspicion and if so who will make the report to Social Services.

*In an emergency situation, if a director is not immediately available, the teacher will make the report to Social Services, write up a summary of the situation, and inform a director as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

TOYS:

The Weaver Dairy Community Preschool strictly limits the type and number of toys a child may bring to school. Toys and other items from home that provide a child with a feeling of security and comfort are allowed. Blankets, dolls, and stuffed animals are welcome. All other toys should be left at home, especially action figures, barbies, battery operated toys, and any weapon related toys. The Weaver Dairy Community Preschool has an absolute NO GUNPLAY rule.

BIRTHDAYS:

If you are planning a birthday party for your child, please do not distribute invitations at school unless all of the children in your child's group will be invited. Mail invitations or call parents using the Family Directory we will provide. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please consult your child's teacher or a director about how to do this.

ITEMS TO BE PROVIDED BY PARENTS: LABEL EVERYTHING!!!

1. Parents will provide their child's lunch and a container of milk each day. Lunches must be placed in the refrigerator each morning and cannot be reheated at lunchtime. Label all containers and cups. We prefer that lunches be packed in compartmentalized tupperware-like containers with a single lid. This allows for easy storage in the refrigerator and easy set-up/clean-up.

2. Parents will provide diapers and wipes (if applicable). We request that families do not send children in “pull-ups”. In our experience, they do not help children learn toileting and they make diaper changing much less convenient for staff. When sending in wipes, please send in unscented wipes.

3. Parents must keep at least one complete change of clothing in their child’s cubby. Please check often to ensure a good fit and season appropriateness.

4. Families do NOT need to provide linens for naptime. We will furnish the sheets for the sleeping mats. If a child has a special blanket from home to rest with, you are welcome to send that in.

USE OF ANATOMICALLY CORRECT TERMS:

At WDCP we believe it is important to use anatomically correct terms with the children when diapering/toileting and when children express curiosity about their bodies. We want children to be comfortable with these terms and with their bodies from an early age.

ON SITE ENRICHMENT:

At WDCP we do not go on field trips due to the fact that it is extremely difficult to properly install car seats. We do offer a variety of on site enrichment activities (where instructors, educators, or other individuals with talent and experience in working with young children visit our program). Some examples include: dance class, musical performances, plays or a visit from The Museum of Life and Science. Our enrichment activities are subject to change from year to year. **An annual enrichment fee will be collected at the beginning of each school year** and an “enrichment calendar” will be distributed in the Blue and Purple Rooms.

WDCP CLEANING SCHEDULE:

Toilets, sinks, tabletops and counter tops are sanitized as needed and at least daily. Diapering surfaces are sanitized after each use. Carpet and rugs are vacuumed daily. All indoor trashcans are emptied daily. All dishes used are washed daily. Floors are mopped as needed and at least weekly. Naptime linens and classroom linens are washed weekly. Trashcans are washed monthly and spray-sanitized daily. Monthly cleaning includes dusting and cleaning refrigerators.

TODDLER SCHEDULE

7:30	Children arrive Hand washing and free play
8:45	Outside time
9:30	Hand washing and snack
9:45	Diapering/hand washing/group dancing
10:00	Small Group Time Outside time
10:45	Small group time Outside time
11:30	Hand washing/ lunch
11:30-12:00	Diapering/hand-washing/outside time

12:00	Departure for ½ day children/nap
2:00	Wakeup time/diapering and hand washing
2:30	Hand-washing/snack/free play
3:00-3:30	Outside time/departure/hand-washing

Toddler schedule is adaptable to individual children's needs.

TWO-YEAR OLDS and YOUNG THREES

7:30-8:45	Children Arrive, Greetings and Self-Selected Activities in Centers
8:45-9:30	Outside Time
9:30-10:00	Hand Washing and Snack/ Potty and Diapering, Hand Washing
10:00-10:45	Group I: Circle Time and Open Centers Group II: Outside Time
10:45-11:30	Group II: Circle Time and Open Centers Group I: Outside Time
11:30-11:45	Outside Time or Movement Inside
11:45-12:30	Hand Washing, Lunch, Potty and Diapering, Hand Washing
12:30-2:30	Nap/Quiet Resting
2:30-2:50	Nap Ends, Potty and Diapering, Hand Washing, Snack
2:50-3:30	Self-Directed Activities in Centers, School Closes at 3:30

PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE

7:30-9:00	Children arrive, greetings Free play in centers
9:00-9:30	Outside time
9:30-9:45	Snack time
9:45-10:00	Story time
10:00-10:30	Group gathering
10:30-11:00	Group gathering
11:00-11:40	Open centers
11:45-12:00	Story reading/or outside time
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Settling for nap, toileting, books
1:00-2:30	Nap and quiet activities on mats for non-nappers
2:30-2:45	Snack time
2:45-3:15	Free play in centers
3:15-3:30	Outside Time and Departure