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Parent Handbook

Mission Statement: To serve, educate, and support children and families from all backgrounds. We strive to create an environment where learning can be achieved with the least-restrictive and most creative approach.

Melrose is a non-profit day care that cares for children from ages 2 to 5, we are licensed for 45 children through the state of Iowa, but we like to keep our program at about 30 to 35 kids to be able to care for each child needs effectively. Our program runs Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 5:30pm. Please keep this handbook for future reference, if you have any questions that are not answered here please feel free to ask our staff. Our staff is available to you at any time during our hours of operation. If there is a question one staff member cannot answer they will locate the staff member who will be able to help you.

Let's start with the basics:

Daily Schedule:

6:30-7:30 Free Choice Activities

7:30-8:15 Indoor/Outdoor Activities

8:15-8:30 Hand-washing and story-time

8:30-9:00 Breakfast

9:00-10:30 Small Group Activities

10:30-11:15 Indoor/Outdoor Activities

11:15-11:30 Hand-washing and story-time

11:30-12:00 Lunch

12:00-2:00 Naptime

2:00-3:30 Indoor/Outdoor Activities

3:30-4:30 Snack and Small group activities

4:30-5:15 Free Choice indoor/outdoor activities

5:15-5:30 Stories, songs, and videos

Outdoor play includes, but isn't limited to: sand box, swings, imaginative play, tricycles, sidewalk chalk, garden exploration, environmental investigations.

Indoor play includes, but isn't limited to: blocks, legos, sand and water play, music exploration, imaginative play, library, dolls, puzzles, games.

Small group activity time includes: age appropriate preschool activities that we have designed around the importance of play, art projects that work on small motor skills, games that work on gross motor skills, games and activities that promote learning.

Philosophy: Melrose has a play based philosophy – playing to learn/learning to play. Our philosophy is based on research by Jean Piaget who states that play meets the physical, intellectual, language, emotional, and social needs of children. Play is the first way that children learn to make sense of the world at a young age. It is by far the most defining characteristic of childhood and the most important aspect of childhood as well.

Enrollment: Before your child can start we need all of their paperwork filled out completely and turned in a full 24 hours before they are to attend their first day at Melrose. Immunization records must be up to date.

Orientation: Every child is unique and special, so our orientation plan is not a one-plan fits all. Every child is going to come into their first day at the center with different expectations and fears. Basically, whatever is going to make you and your child the most comfortable we will accommodate. Some

families find dropping off and having their child stay a full day is what they will do. Some families gradually step into day care by dropping off for a few hours a day and then picking up before leaving their child for a whole day. Some families want to stay at the center with their child for the first day or two while their child adjusts. You get to choose how your child will become oriented with the center. Part of the orientation process is also reading through this handbook and asking questions, please ask the director or assistant director if you have any questions.

Curriculum: Melrose follows the same curriculum as the Iowa City School District's preschool program, The Creative Curriculum. We have mixed this curriculum with the Hawaii Early Learning Profile, which better suits our philosophies and goals as an early learning child development program.

Field Trips: The center takes many field trips, especially in the summer months when travel is easier. We use the Cambus and city bus lines to transport the kids. We also walk to many different parks in our neighborhood daily. Throughout the school year, along with trips to the parks nearby, we also go the Iowa City Public Library once a week for story time. On any given day we will leave at 9:30am, if you plan to drop off your child after that time let a staff member know or there might not be anyone at the center to accept your child.

Transportation: Melrose does not provide transportation to or from the center. Field Trip transportation is always done by either walking or riding public transportation.

What your child will need: Please bring bedding for naptime. A blanket is a must, sheets are optional, crib sheets fit our cots. Bedding comes to Melrose on Mondays and go home on Fridays to be washed. Since we love to play outside, expect your child to get dirty, send them in clothes that can get dirty. Leave an extra set of clothes in their cubbie to use in case they need a change. In the summer we'll play in the water on hot days so swimsuits will be requested. Jackets in the fall and spring and winter weather gear in the winter including a heavy coat, snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens. Please be aware that children's backpacks will be checked weekly for hazardous materials, including diaper rash cream, chap stick, and anything that could be harmful if swallowed, if possible leave these items at home or give them to a staff member when entering the center.

Drop off and Pick up:

We recommend sticking to a routine for dropping off your child, explain to them that you are leaving and you will be back, then say goodbye. If they cry we recommend leaving so they will understand the routine. They will be less likely to cry every time they are dropped off if they can predict what will happen. We don't allow drop offs during naptime, it is just too disruptive in our little house while the other kids are sleeping. You must pick up your child before 5:30; the late fee is \$2 a minute for every minute after 5:30 that you are late.

Attendance Policy: Tuition is set at a monthly rate, if your child is gone for a week that will not affect your tuition rate. If your child will be absent for a month or more and you would like to keep your spot please see the director or assistant director to reserve a spot for your child. If your child is gone for a month without any notification and tuition is not up to date their spot will be forfeited. If your child will be leaving the center permanently please let us know at least two weeks in advance, if possible.

Access Policy:

We have an open-door policy at Melrose for our parents. Please feel free to come visit your child at anytime. If you would like others, such as grandparents, relatives, or friends to be able to pick up your child, or to visit your child, at the center please make sure they are listed on your child's emergency contact sheet. Or let us know if there is a change in your pickup person. We won't release a child to a person who isn't authorized to pick them up. Staff will ask for identification from anyone who is unknown to them.

Access to information regarding your child is also an open-door policy; feel free to ask all questions you may have. Staff will be able to answer any questions that do not encroach on the privacy of any of the other children at the center. All policies and handbooks are available upon request.

Bringing things from home:

We prefer if you leave all toys at home, we know it's hard to negotiate when you are getting your child out of the house every morning, but we will not be responsible for lost or broken toys that come to the center. Also, please leave candy, gum, food, money, cell phones, and anything else your kids might try to pocket at home. Small things are easily lost in the shuffle of the day and many of them are considered choking hazards for small children.

If you bring a backpack to the day care to leave in your child's cubbie please make sure there is nothing dangerous in the backpack, this includes things small enough for a child to choke on, diaper rash cream, any kind of medication (even in a childproof container), chap stick, hand sanitizer, or anything that could be harmful if swallowed. Any of those items can be given to staff to keep until the day is over.

Special Needs: If your child has any sort of special need please inform the director or assistant director to set up a care plan for them. As well as setting up a care plan we will help find any and all necessary services that will help your child be successful.

Confidentiality and Incident Reports: We do our best to preserve every child's confidentiality in the center. Incident reports are filed whenever a child is injured or purposefully injures another child. Names are never used on these reports to preserve confidentiality and staff cannot divulge that information with you. If your child is injured seriously you will receive a phone call right away and also receive a written report. If it is a minor incident, you will receive the report at the end of the day when you pick up your child, these reports can be found in your mail file folder.

Staff: Melrose Staff is made up of three to four full time teachers and ten to fifteen part-time staff who are attending the University for degrees in all topics including: psychology, elementary education, secondary education, graphic design, marketing, communications, pre-med, biology, pre dentistry and social work. All staff and volunteers have background checks before they begin working at Melrose, they are fingerprinted by the FBI as well. They are all trained in CPR and first aid and stay up to date on all professional growth hours annually. They are all mandatory reporters of child abuse and are trained to know what indicators are consistent with child abuse.

Weather Related Closings:

When the weather is cold and snowy we close when the road conditions are predicted to be unsafe for driving. If the Iowa City Community School District closes schools due to heavy snow or ice we will be closed as well. If the schools close just for frigid temperatures we will stay open. To keep informed please check KCRG.com on those snowy days to find out if Melrose Day Care is closed.

Holidays that Melrose will be closed:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The Friday before Easter

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving and the Friday after

Christmas Eve and Christmas day

New Year's Eve

The dates around Christmas and New Years that Melrose will be closed depend on the amount of staff we have in town to work; many of our staff are University of Iowa students who don't permanently reside in Iowa City. We feel it is important for our staff to be able to make it home for the holidays.

Nutrition/Allergies:

We provide breakfast every morning at 8:30, lunch at 11:30, and snack at 3:00. All meals are developed with guidelines from the Child and Adult Food Care Program through the federal government, which Melrose is a member. If your child needs a specialized diet please discuss this with the director or assistant director. We may need documentation from your doctor to serve your child options that we don't offer to the other kids because we are members of the government food program. If your child has a food preference or allergy that we cannot accommodate we will ask you to prepare food at home that we will serve to them here. Common food preferences we already accommodate are refraining from: pork, beef, milk, peanut, soy, egg, and wheat.

Annual Health Checks: Melrose participates in healthy child care Iowa, so once a year in the fall the Lion's Club comes to Melrose to do a vision screening for all the children. Also, once a year, in the summer, The Iowa Department of Public Health comes to Melrose to perform dental screenings. You will be advised of the upcoming screenings and will have to give your permission at the time of the screening, they will be provided at no cost to you. Along with these screenings it is required that your child keep an up to date physical from your doctor on file with us. This physical should include a yearly hearing screening and developmental screening provided from your doctor. It should also include a blood lead screening because your child could have elevated levels of lead in their blood because they attend daycare in a house that was built before 1978. We have taken all precautions to keep the exposure to lead to a minimum, the window sashes have been painted over and some windows aren't opened at all. The center has been tested for lead with results registering under 0.42%. The EPA says anything that test under 0.5% is not a lead based paint.

Melrose Emergency Procedure:

In any emergency situation the staff and kids will have the Melrose cell phone, if cell service is out and the daycare is not safe for the kids we have three evacuation site locations, you will be notified by email, text, and a phone call in case of an evacuation. The three sites we could be evacuated to are: the University of Iowa Hospitals at the Family Care Center Entrance, the Iowa City Public Library, or the Herbert Hoover Library and Museum in West Branch, IA. A sign will be posted at the Center's main entrance with evacuation location. In the event of an evacuation our number one goal will be reuniting all of our kids with their families.

Power Failure: Center director or Assistant Director will contact MidAmerican to determine the length of the outage. If the center cannot operate for the length of time of the power outage parents will be called to pick up their children.

Tornado: In the event of a tornado warning the sirens outside will alert us to go inside, once inside we will take the children to the basement in the front of the house and have all the kids sit on the floor under the stairs, the safest place in the house in the event of a tornado. There is a first aid kit, weather radio, and flashlight on the shelf in that corner. We will stay in this place until the warning has been lifted. In the event of a real tornado, after the threat is over parents will be called. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Fire: In case of a fire inside the daycare we will make sure all the kids exit the building as efficiently as possible. There are two exits out of the building, the front door and the back door. When we evacuate out of either exit we will assemble at the garden in the front yard, where we will account for all children and staff with a name to face roll call. From there we will walk across the street to the University of Iowa Hospital Family Care Center entrance to wait for parents to come pick up their kids. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Medical or Dental Emergency: If your child has a dental emergency while at the center you will be notified immediately by phone, if you cannot be reached the center director or assistant director will take your child to the emergency room. Any kind of incident that requires first aid to be given to your child will be documented with an incident report that will be signed by the caregiver who administered first aid and will be signed by you to be kept in your child's file.

Stranger Danger: If the kids are outside when a dangerous adult should happen upon the center all staff are to help the kids to get inside as quickly as possible. The doors will be locked until the police arrive and take care of the dangerous adult. If the dangerous adult is already inside and getting the kids out of the house is a safe option then all staff and kids will exit the house and walk across the street to the University of Iowa Hospitals Family Care Center entrance. From there if we will not be able to go back to the center we will call parents to come get their kids. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Intoxicated Parents or Caregivers: Police will be called if a care giver seems intoxicated when they come to pick up their child.

Evacuation: In the event of an evacuation of the daycare we will walk across the street to the University of Iowa Hospital and meet at the Family Care Clinic entrance. If we are evacuated out of neighborhood we will evacuate to the Iowa City Public Library and if we are evacuated out of town we will be at the Herbert Hoover Library and Museum in West Branch, IA. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Lock Down: If the daycare is locked down we will take the kids to the basement to wait out the lockdown. In the event of a lockdown, no one will be let in or out of the building. And contact parents if

necessary. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Flood: In the event of flooding in the immediate area of the center, parents will be notified to come pick up their children at the center.

Earthquake: In the event of an earthquake in Iowa the center will evacuate the building, meet at the garden and determine the next steps to take depending on structural damage.

Blizzard: The daycare will close in the event of a blizzard. If children are still present and parents cannot make it to the center, the children will shelter in place until the blizzard passes. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Bomb Threat: The center will evacuate to the University of Iowa Hospital Family Care Center entrance and the center will close until the threat has passed. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Chemical Spill: The center will evacuate to the Iowa City Public Library at 123 S. Linn St in downtown Iowa City the center will close until the threat has passed. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

Health Hazard: The center will evacuate to the University of Iowa Hospital Family Care Center entrance and the center will close until the threat has passed. Parents will be contacted by phone, email, and text. And information will be available at KCRG.com.

No Weapons on Center Property: No weapons are allowed on center property.

Lost or abducted child: If a child goes missing, staff will immediately search the area where the child was last seen while someone calls 911. Enough staff will be left with the remaining children to keep ratio, extra teachers will search until help arrives. The parents of the child will be notified immediately by phone after the 911 call is made.

Continuity of Operations: In the event of any kind of serious disaster the center will continue to run based on staff availability and the structural integrity of the center itself.

Biting Policy:

Kids sometimes bite. We'd prefer if they didn't, but we don't live in a perfect world. If your child bites someone you will be informed. If it becomes a constant problem that isn't solved with redirection, conversations, and taking breaks from play time then we will have to have a conversation with you as to whether or not your child is right for our program. Some children do better with more structure than we provide. We believe in free play, lots of art expression, and making good choices. Not all kids thrive in that environment. Incidents are filled out for both the child that bites as well as the child who was bitten and first aid will be administered to both children as well. No children's names are ever used on incident reports to preserve the confidentiality of all the children here.

Grievance Procedure:

If, at any time, you have an issue involving your child's care at Melrose please discuss it with our teachers, we will try our hardest to find the best solution for the problem. If you are not satisfied with the results that come from a discussion with our teachers you can either meet with the director or assistant director or present your issue in writing to the director, assistant director, or the board that governs the day care

Discharge Policy:

Once in a while we find a child who doesn't thrive in our program. If your child's needs are not met in our program and we can't find the resources we need to help your child we may have to ask for their

removal. Generally there will be warnings before a discharge and you will be informed in a confidential meeting. Any unused balance of fees will be refunded.

Financial Policy and Rates:

Fulltime monthly rate is \$785

Part-time monthly rate is \$640 (25 hours per week)

The tuition, which is set by the board that governs the day care, is due at the first of each month. Other arrangements can be made if you discuss it with the director or assistant director. If your payment becomes delinquent by more than thirty days you may lose your spot at the day care, unless you have already made special arrangements for payment. A deposit of \$50 is necessary to secure a placement at Melrose. This deposit will be credited to your first month's tuition.

Illnesses and medications:

Please do not bring your child to the day care when they are ill. If they are running a fever they aren't allowed to come back to the day care until they are fever free for twenty-four hours without medication. If your child has something contagious, like pink eye, they have to be on antibiotics for twenty-four hours before they can return to Melrose. To prevent a contagious disease from spreading rapidly in the center children will be excluded from Melrose if they have a fever or signs of a contagious disease. Before your child can return to day care after an illness you must inform us of their symptoms so we can be vigilant in keeping disease from spreading around the center.

If your child becomes ill we will call you and ask you pick up your child as soon as you possibly can.

Reasons that your child might not be able to stay at Melrose are: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, mouth sores, rash that is spreading, pink eye, lice, scabies, or symptoms of any contagious diseases that are easily spread among children.

If your child needs prescription medication during the day please bring the medication in the original prescription bottle. Make sure your child's name is on the bottle. Give the medication to a staff member and explain how the medication should be dispensed. We may ask you to fill out a medication procedure worksheet to make sure the medication is given to your child properly and it will authorize center staff to dispense medication to your child.

Discipline:

We try to set well defined limits for all of the children to follow, but we understand every child in our program is unique and special. We try to find what works best for each child when they are having a hard time making positive choices. We use redirection and distraction often, we discuss ways to "use our words" in conflict resolution, and help the children understand what a "good choice" is. We do use time-outs or breaks; these are used when the child is in obvious need of a break from their situation. A timer is set for breaks or time-outs for one-minute for every year the child has aged. Breaks can also be a time to sit in the office with a teacher to discuss alternatives to the choices that were made which either hurt a friend, hurt ourselves, or were destructive in nature.

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