



Parent Handbook

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www.mcum.org



PARENT HANDBOOK
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History

In 1939, the Bloomington Council of Church Women saw a need for child care for low-income working families on Bloomington's northwest side. Through their efforts, we were born as the Bloomington Day Nursery, the first all-day nursery school in Bloomington and the first licensed child care program in the county. Throughout our history we have been known by several names: The Bloomington Day Nursery, The Christian Center and Monroe County United Ministries. In 2017, we specifically named our childcare program Compass Early Learning Center.

Education Philosophy

At Monroe County United Ministries we believe that young children have a natural curiosity about the world in which they live and an innate thirst for learning. Some parents may not recognize that learning is taking place because we were taught using rote memorization and worksheets. At Monroe County United Ministries you will rarely see worksheets. The reason is that the teachers are using a philosophy known as developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and are engaging the child's mind in many creative ways. Developmentally appropriate activities are projects that are suitable to the child's age, individual talents, and culture. Our program's philosophy includes the belief that when presented with these materials and learning tools, a child grows and develops to her/his full potential. Our goal is to make education so much fun children will think that they played all day. In fact, the children are learning basic skills that are the foundation for their future learning. Because the learning has a more lasting effect than is achieved by worksheets, our developmental assessments confirm that this method is more fruitful in helping children to be ready for the next stage in their development or academic career. Teachers complete formal assessments just prior to your child's birthday and half birthday during the term of their enrollment. A baseline assessment is also completed within the first month of enrollment. We urge your attendance at the parent teacher conferences, plus you may request additional meetings at any other time you would like to discuss your child's progress. Remember - if it looks like fun and the assessments show their developmental skills are progressing within expected range – we've accomplished our goal! [02.A.01; 04.A.01; 10.A.01; 10.B.08]

Curriculum

The teachers use a variety of resources for planning the developmentally appropriate activities they offer the children. The curriculum guides teachers' development and intentional implementation of learning opportunities consistent with MCUM's goals and objectives. The Creative Curriculum is one of our main idea sources and has proven to be a highly successful approach to early childhood teaching. The teachers also use a variety of learning resources including the internet, resource books and their own creativity. Every teacher is introduced to the Indiana Department of Education's "Foundations for Young Children", the Indiana Academic Standards. The curriculum guides teachers to integrate assessment information with curriculum goals to support individualized learning. Our program has established goals that we strive to reach each year for each child. Some of these goals include: fostering a positive self-identity, developing social skills, encouraging children to think, reason, question, and experiment (which promotes learning in math, science and social studies), enhancing physical development, and a respect for cultural diversity. Long-range and daily

curriculum plans reflect these goals, which can be met through an integrated curriculum approach. [02.A.01; 02.A.02; 02.A.03; 02.A.04; 02.A.05; 02.A.06; 04.A.01; 04.D.04; 07.A.03; 10.A.01; 10.B.08]

Mission

MCUM creates lasting solutions to educational, economic and social injustice in our community through quality services, collaboration, and innovation.

NAEYC Accreditation

In the fall of 2004, MCUM received NAEYC accreditation for our child care program. NAEYC is the National Association for the Education of Young Children and one of the foremost leaders in the early childhood industry. Part of the accreditation process is a program self-study. The self-study consists of three parts: parent questionnaire, staff questionnaire and an administrative study. After all input is received from the various parties, an improvement plan is put into place. Each party has some area of responsibility for improving the child care program. After a period of time to develop and implement the necessary changes, an outside team from NAEYC visits to evaluate whether the program meets enough criteria to be accredited. Receiving this accreditation is an important achievement in our goal to offer the finest level of child care to families who could not otherwise afford to receive that level of care. Although the accreditation process, once achieved, is only required every 5 years, we intend to use the self-study annually as part of our program quality review.

Non-Discrimination Policies

Monroe County United Ministries shall not discriminate against any current or potential client, applicant, employee, member, volunteer or participant on the basis of race, color, marital, parental or familial status, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, nationality, age, disability, ancestry, reprisal, political beliefs, or any legally prohibited classification.

MCUM will not discriminate against enrolled children who have insulin dependent diabetes. We will perform necessary glucose testing and will perform such actions as dictated by the written authorization for care. We do not administer injections. Any special foods to be given or substituted on the menu are to be provided by the parents. Parents will provide all testing materials and will dispose of any hazardous medical waste. A detailed description of the policy and requirements regarding diabetes is available upon request.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Budget

Our agency is funded from a number of sources including parent fees, CCDF, several local churches, United Way, City and County government, state and federal funding and many individual contributors. It is the use of these other sources, especially the charitable funds that make our child care affordable. A program such as ours is only as good as the staff that provide and oversee the services, therefore staff costs are by far the largest share of our operating budget. This is why it is so important that parents pay their fees on time and with regularity.

Education/Training of Staff

We abide by the guidelines set forth by the State of Indiana center-based child care licensing standards. However, we see these standards as minimum limits of the education and experience required. Therefore, we really strive to exceed these limits and hire persons who are the most qualified at the time of hiring.

Child Care Director

State Regulations: The director must be at least 21 years of age, and meet one of the three following educational standards from an accredited college or university program:

1. A bachelor of arts (or sciences) degree in early childhood education or elementary education with a kindergarten endorsement; OR,
2. Any bachelor degree in arts (or sciences) with either 15 credit hours in coursework related to the needs, skills, development or teaching methods of children 6 years or younger or a CDA (Child Development Associate) credential; OR,
3. A two year associates degree in early childhood education and a minimum of three years of experience in an early childhood program.

Caregiver Qualifications

(at Compass Early Learning Center, this is the Teacher Aides, though many meet the standard for lead caregiver.)

State regulations: All caregivers must be at least age 18 with a high school diploma or pass an equivalency test. They must have reading and writing skills sufficient to perform the tasks required of them.

Lead Caregiver Qualifications

(at Compass Early Learning Center, this is the Teachers, though many meet the standard for Child Care Director)

State regulations: Lead caregivers must have one of the following:

1. A current CDA (Child Development Associate) credential;
2. An associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development;
3. A bachelor's degree in elementary education with a Kindergarten endorsement
4. A bachelor's degree in other areas with 15 credit hours in coursework relating to the needs, skills, development or teaching methods of children six years of age or younger.

Lead caregivers that do not meet the requirements above shall have these additional requirements:

- 1) 8 hours additional in-service training per year appropriate to the age group served by them
- 2) enroll in one of the educational programs listed above within one year of becoming a lead caregiver; and
- 3) provide documentation of successful completion of at least 6 credit hours per year.

In addition to these educational and experience requirements, all staff must pass a FBI fingerprinting search, an initial and random drug screening, a general health physical and an annual TB test. All staff are certified in pediatric first aid and CPR. Lastly, they must receive 20 clock hours of additional training each year.

Legal Responsibility

MCUM is governed by a Board of Directors who has legal responsibility over the programs and facilities. Some board members are appointed for one year and others are elected. Elected board members serve for three-year terms with a two-term limit. The Board has several committees that oversee various functions of the agency. The Program Committee is responsible to oversee and review parent surveys and policies pertaining to the child care program.

Staff Structure

Executive Director - At MCUM, the agency's highest staff member is the Executive Director. The Executive Director is primarily responsible for the overall operation of the entire agency, including the child care programs. While most parents will have little interaction on this level, any parent may make an appointment and speak with the Executive Director regarding concerns or aspects they like about the program.

Child Care Director – The Child Care Director is responsible for the overall operation of the child care programs. The Child Care Director oversees the staff, handles accounts and billing, oversees the operation of the food service program and guides the programs day-to-day operations. Any issues or problems not resolved on the classroom level should be brought to the attention of the Child Care Director.

Education Coordinator – The Education Coordinator is responsible for the curriculum of the school, oversees any needs for additional staff training and facilitates classroom staff meetings to do planning and resolve issues that arise in the classrooms. The Education Coordinator also oversees any assessments or evaluations of children and helps to create any education plan to facilitate their growth and development.

Lead Teacher – This teacher is one of our most experienced classroom teachers and may step in to assist parents with important questions when other administrative staff are absent.

Teacher – The classroom teacher is responsible for the overall functioning of the classroom. They work closely with the Teacher Aides in planning the layout of the room, the curriculum planning, and the activities taking place within the room and play areas.

Teacher Aides – Teacher Aides work closely with Teachers to carry out the planned activities of the classroom, assist with cleaning and maintaining order in the classroom and play areas.

Cook and Cook Assistant – The Cook and Cook Assistant have primary responsibility for the food service of the child care program. They plan menus, order food, rotate stock, prepare and serve meals and clean up the premises after the meal is concluded. Menus are based on seasonal foods and rotated every 4 weeks. All menus are approved by the Child Care and Adult Food Program and the premises are inspected regularly. Our goal is to provide healthy, well-balanced meals that introduce new foods as well as provide old favorites.

Other Staff – There are several other staff that work for MCUM but are seldom in the child care facility. They work in our Self-Sufficiency Program or in an administrative capacity. All staff have their photographs posted near the front office to assist you in identifying these persons.

Volunteers - We have a number of volunteers who work in our agency and visitors to the classroom. MCUM supports education programs from Indiana University and Ivy Tech and we enjoy the assistance of a number of parent and local church volunteers. Volunteers who work 8 hours or more a month have been screened with a FBI fingerprinting search and are required to have a TB test. All staff and volunteers who work a regular schedule can be identified by their photograph on the parent announcement bulletin board across the hall from the check-in desk. Visitors and volunteers are asked to sign in when entering the building. Staff are strongly encouraged to introduce parents to any new people in the classroom. If you see a new face, never hesitate to inquire who is present in your child's classroom.

Child Care Program Description

Compass Early Learning Center - North

Enrollment 84 children maximum

Ages 18 months to 5/6 years old

Hours 7:00 am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday

Location Child Care Building

827 West 14th Court, Bloomington, IN 47404

(812) 339-3429 ext 10 and 19 Fax (812) 339-2912

Compass Early Learning Center - Downtown
Enrollment 60 children maximum

Ages 6 weeks to 5/6 years old
Hours 7:00 am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday
Location 1st Floor, First United Methodist Church
219 E 4th St, Bloomington, IN 47404

Our child care program is a full-day, year-round program. During the summer months, children at the North site in the Penguin, Otter and Dolphin classrooms will visit Mills Pool for brief periods weekly. We will alter our usual daily schedule to accommodate swim times and classrooms may be combined a little differently to adjust for summer schedules and enrollment numbers.

Child Care Usual Daily Schedule

This list is included to give parents a general idea about your child's day. Schedules are determined by the individual classroom staff and approved by the Education Coordinator and Child Care Director. Classroom schedules are posted in the classrooms. Every schedule will include a variety of activities, indoors and out, as well as show the appropriate meal times.

Schedule activities conform to licensing regulations, Paths to Quality and NAEYC standards of accreditation.

Circle Time: Teachers play one or more of the following activities: Conversation & sharing, music & movement, finger plays, stories, flannel board, or circle games.

Learning Centers. Children may choose from centers such as art, language, dramatic play, music, math/science, social studies, and large & small muscle movement.

Lunch. Wash hands & story if time permits before lunch. After lunch: Wash up & go to the bathroom.

Outdoor Play. Children select from a variety of outdoor activities such as sand play, using balls & large wheeled toys, swinging, climbing, gardening, jump ropes, nature walks, painting and so on.

Rest Time. Quiet time prior to rest: Children hear a recorded story, song or may be read to by staff or volunteers. As children wake, they read books or play quiet games on their cots; children who do not sleep or who awaken early are offered another section of the room to look at books, play with table toys, and engage in other quiet activities [03.D.01; 05.A.06; 10.B.13]

Child Care Goals

For the Children.....

1. To help each child develop a positive self-image.
2. To help the children learn to make decisions and to think for themselves.
3. To provide a secure and loving group environment for the children.
4. To enable children to broaden their understanding of the world around them.
5. To teach the value of sharing and cooperating with other children and adults.
6. To teach children to handle responsibility.
7. To help children learn to care for others.
8. To help children prepare for later education.

For the Families...

1. To provide quality care at a price which families can afford.
2. To provide good nutrition and health services, and to ensure the safety of their children.
3. To keep in close communication with parents about their child's growth and development.
4. To help families meet their needs through existing social service agencies. [10.A.01; 10.B.08]

Child Care Calendar

The child care program is based on 51 weeks per year. A calendar is established each August for the following twelve months. A copy of the current calendar is included in the enrollment packet. Efforts are made to coordinate closings with the public school system to minimize the days that families are without child care. The program will be closed between Christmas and New Year's.

Enrollment Eligibility and Procedures

- 1) Residency - Services under the sliding fee scale are only available to residents of Monroe County. Residency is determined by the actual address of the enrolling custodial parent. Proof of residency (copy of lease or utility bill in parent name may be requested).
- 2) Ratio of City to County – Due to funding restrictions MCUM must maintain a certain ratio of children who reside within Bloomington city limits. Therefore, some children will be put on a waiting list while others will be enrolled immediately.
- 3) Employment/School - All parents whose children are enrolled must have a verifiable need for the child care services.
 - employed 25 hour or more per week or
 - enrolled in an accredited educational program full-time or
 - combination of part-time employment (20 hours)/part-time school (6 credit hours)
 - If two parent household, both parents must meet the above requirements.
 - Priority enrollment is given to lowest income families.
 - Only accredited educational programs qualify for coursework and must meet State voucher program standards.

4. To enroll a child, parents must bring
 - certified copy of the child's birth certificate (it must have a raised seal on it),
 - child's social security number
 - insurance card or Hoosier Healthwise card
 - paycheck stubs for the previous 30 days or class schedule confirmation (if enrolling under the combination work/school eligibility, both documents are required)
 - child support documentation (if you pay child support through the clerk of the court and can produce a document showing regular payments, we can give you a deduction on your fees)
 - any other income (SSI, rental income, unemployment, etc.)
 - completed forms from Childcare Enrollment Packet
 - physical form and immunization record

A child will not be able to attend the child care until all of the necessary paperwork is completed and returned. Each child shall receive a health examination by a physician within one year prior to admission, but no later than one month after admission. Do not wait until your 30-day limit has elapsed to make appointment because we will be required to exclude your child until the appointment has taken place and the health form is returned to us. [05.A.01]

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

1. Parents may wish to apply for the child care assistance program, known as CCDF, through CHANCES AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH at 1-800-886-3952. We can help you apply for this program if you are not already on it. Parents who are eligible and do not choose to apply will be charged the full fee for care.
2. We make every effort to assist parents with enrollment or maintain their enrollment on this program, which may include reminders of upcoming appointments. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure they make and keep appointment and that they have the proper documentation to support their application. Parents who are eligible may elect to not enroll on the voucher, but they must then pay the full fee. At the same time, any parent who loses their voucher due to failure to recertify or submit required documents will not return to a sliding fee slot. They may pay the full fee and remain in the program.
3. Parents must retain their eligibility by maintaining full-time school or employment for the minimum number of hours per week (25 hours per week). Failure to do so can lead to a loss of funding from CCDF and their enrollment in our program.
4. Parents enrolled in this program are given a card to swipe for their attendance. It is your responsibility to swipe this card **each and every day**. We understand that sometimes other persons bring your children to school and they don't have possession of your card. In those cases, please swipe your card at the next opportunity. It takes a lot of staff time to monitor this program and reminding parents of each of these dates.
5. Please report a lost swipe card immediately as you have a limited time to obtain new cards before the claim is invalidated. You will be responsible for the full cost of care for any days the State declines due to unreported lost or stolen cards. Further, the State may withdraw the voucher if you are not using your swipe card properly. We strongly recommend that you record the 16 digit number from the card and keep it in a safe place.
6. **Cards may not be left on site at MCUM for any reason.**

7. Children must be in care for a minimum of 25 hours per week. If a child's hours do not meet the minimum, then the parent will be required to pay the full cost of care or use part of their allowed personal days. See vacation policy.
8. CCDF recipients will be required to sign a CCDF Program Agreement.

Maintain Eligibility

In order to remain at MCUM, the parents must be meeting the employment/school requirement, stay current in fees, update immunizations and keep the child care current on emergency information for the child. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in termination of services.

If a parent should lose their job, they will be allowed a 20-day job search per year and their fee for each child will be the lowest amount that is on the MCUM sliding fee scale. Parents must stay current with their fee to be eligible for continued enrollment while on job search.

MCUM reviews eligibility each year in February. At that time you will be asked to verify the last 30 days of income. Students will be required to submit a new class schedule for each semester (spring, summer and fall). However, you are responsible to inform us of any job or school changes as they occur. If you fail to comply, you may be charged the full fee for your child care, back to the date the change occurred.

Fees

Income verification is required in order to determine your fee scale level. This applies to all child care recipients, except those who choose to pay the full fee for each child enrolled. This information is updated periodically. Families who fail to report changes in income or to submit income verification forms on time may be charged the full fee for their child care.

1. Upon enrollment, an account is opened on the computer. Each child will have a personal 4-digit code in order for them to be signed in/out.
2. Fees are posted to your account each Monday for the following week. A Fee Payment Schedule will be provided. Parents are expected to keep their account current at all times. This serves to protect the school from withdrawal without notice and reduces the possibility of falling delinquent on your fees. Parents must give two-week notice that they intend to withdraw their child(ren). You may be charged two weeks of care if the Childcare Director is not notified prior to withdrawal.
3. You can make your payment in a variety of ways: 1) you can put your payment in an envelope with the child's name on it and put it into the drop box in the child care center (envelopes are provided); or 2) you may charge your fees to your MasterCard or Visa credit card; or 3) you may sign up for automatic payments by signing an authorization credit card charge form. Authorization forms are available from the office. **Please DO NOT PUT CASH OR CHECKS ON STAFF'S TABLES OR DESKS.** We will not be responsible for any cash payment that has not been given directly to office staff.
4. If necessary to keep current on fees, we will accept post-dated checks. Place the post-dated check in an envelope and drop it in the payment box.

5. A \$25 registration fee is due upon enrollment, plus two weeks of child care fees. If more than one child is being enrolled, a \$15 registration fee is due for each additional child who is enrolled at the same time. Siblings enrolled at a later date will be charged the full registration fee.
6. Families who are behind a week in their fees will receive a reminder notice. This initial notice is a friendly reminder. If payment is not received that week, a second notice will be put out the following Monday which gives a deadline for payment. If payment is not received by that deadline, the child may be withdrawn until the bill is paid in full. Payment agreements can be made to help a family catch up on their bill. However, they must be kept or the child will be withdrawn from the program.
7. It is our goal to provide services at prices that are affordable. If you need to make financial arrangements, we strongly urge you to call the Child Care Director at (812)339-3429 for a payment agreement.
8. Receipts will be placed in your child's folder the following day. If you do not receive a receipt, contact the office immediately.
9. **If you wish to pay in cash, please bring exact change. We do not keep cash in the Childcare office.** We will gladly accept a larger payment on your account. We are not responsible for any cash put in the drop box, hand it directly to an administrative staff person – do not leave it on the counter or on someone's desk.
10. Late fees will be charged if you fail to pick up your child by 5:30 PM. The charge is \$15 **per child** per 1/2 hour or any fraction thereof. Our teachers have families, too, so please be considerate of their time. Children who are left late more than three (3) times may be withdrawn from the program. Any additional costs (**late fees or swim fees**) will be added to your account and must be paid within 5 working days.
11. We will provide to families currently enrolled, at no charge, an annual summary of fees paid in the previous year for tax purposes. Statements will not be given to families who have withdrawn from the program with delinquent balances. If you withdraw in good financial standing, you will need to contact the office to obtain your copy.
12. Families who have withdrawn from the program and who owe balances will be turned over for collection. All costs of collection, plus interest, will be added to the child care balance due. This is an option of last resort for us. We do not want to turn these over to collection. We also do not want to be forced to pass along the bad debt of unpaid fees to every family by increasing our sliding fees to cover this loss. You can help us to avoid either of these negative outcomes by staying current with your fees.
13. Payments by check made for you by a family member or friend should have the name of the child written on the memo section of the check to ensure proper credit. Checks must include a driver's license number.
14. MCUM charges for 6 holidays a year to be determined at the beginning of the calendar year. Though other holidays may be observed, you will not be charged for them. If your child is absent for any reason, you must still pay for the days she/he could have come to school.
15. If you have paid ahead of our billing, you will have a credit balance. This is shown on your receipt by a parentheses around the credited amount, i.e. (200.00).
16. At the end of each program year, we close our child care accounts. This means we must receive full payment by a certain date. These dates will be announced in advance. Please take this into consideration when planning your payments.
17. Our policy on bounced checks is that we will re-run a check if this is the first time. If a different check bounces, we will require all future payments to be cash or money orders. A \$20 service fee

is added for all bounced checks. To get your bad check returned to you, you must bring in cash, a money order, or pay with Mastercard/Visa for the amount of the check plus the service fee. Unclaimed bad checks will be turned over the prosecutor for collection. [10.B.08]

General Policies and Information

Release of Children

When a child is enrolled at Compass Early Learning Center, an emergency information form is completed. On this sheet, the enrolling parent is required to list those individuals who may pick up their child(ren). For the child's protection, the child will only be released to those individuals listed on the emergency form. In case of a last minute change, a telephone call to the office will be acceptable. However, identification will be required of this individual in order to release your child. [05.A.01; 10.B.08; 10.D.06]

Children will not be released to persons under the apparent influence of drugs or alcohol or other safety risk. Staff will contact a person from the emergency list to pick up the children or Child Protective Services. If the impaired person proceeds to remove the child anyway, staff will note the vehicle make, model, license plate number and call 911 to report it.

Arrival/Departure Communication: Parents should expect to be greeted at drop-off and pick-up. Children should be addressed by name at drop-off and pick-up. Conversations with staff should be limited to a few minutes. If you need a longer time to discuss an issue, this meeting should be scheduled with the teacher. Make sure to check your child's journal at pick-up. [10.D.06]

Restraining Order

If there is a restraining order from the court, a copy must be on file. As the enrolling parent, if you should decide to violate this restraining order, it should not be done at the child care center.

Custody Issues

Please do not bring custody issues into the school by asking staff to provide information to be used in custody suits. This creates a situation where we are forced to choose sides in custody conflicts. This may include asking for verbal reports about interactions between the child and other parent, written reports or testimony. Information regarding the child's developmental assessments, progress and day-to-day adjustments/activities may be only given to the enrolling parent/guardian, unless we have a specific permission from the enrolling parent/guardian or a court order to provide this information to others.

Due to safety issues, it is imperative that we be able to reach parents during the day. Also, Licensing requires that ill children be sent home during the day to reduce passing illness to others. Therefore parents **must** provide alternative name and numbers on the emergency form of individuals who can be contacted during the day and/or will be able to pick up the child when ill, if the parents cannot be reached or come themselves. If we attempt repeatedly to reach a parent or their contact numbers without success, we are then required to contact child welfare. We do not wish to take this step, so make sure we can reach you or your alternates at all times.

Absence and Tardiness

- Children should arrive at school by 9:00 AM. If your child will be late, please call us at 339-3429 x 19. Children who come to school later than 9:00 without a call risk having their child excluded for that day. Consistent tardiness may be grounds for termination of services. If you are going to be late, you should feed your child before arriving as the meal service for breakfast concludes earlier. You cannot bring food and drinks into the child care facility with your child, so please take care of this before you arrive.
- We expect children to come to the program regularly. All enrollments are based on five days a week unless special arrangements have been made with MCCSC Special Education Program. Children who do not maintain regular, full day attendance may be dropped from the program.
- Read carefully all the policies described in the health section of this handbook.
- Late fees will be charged if you fail to pick up your child by 5:30 PM. The charge is \$15 per child per 1/2 hour or any fraction thereof. Our teachers have families, too, so please be considerate of their time. Children who are left late more than three (3) times may be withdrawn from the program.
[10.B.08]

Change in Schedule

Parents must keep the Childcare Director informed of changes in their daily schedules. Any time that your work or school schedule changes, please communicate this immediately. These changes have serious consequences for our staffing patterns. Parents must adhere as closely as possible to their agreed schedule. Parents enrolled in school should give a copy of their class schedule to the office for each new semester (Fall, Spring and Summer). Never hesitate to inform us of unusual circumstances that warrant temporary changes of schedule; we'll accommodate changes whenever we can. Advance notice is the key to our ability to be flexible.

Vacation Policy

- Parents pay their weekly fee even if child is absent (vacation or sick).
- Families receiving child care subsidies (CCDF) are limited in the number of days they can be absent from the program. Parents may choose to use these days for vacation, personal days or sick days. However, we urge caution in the use of these days because if a child is absent after these days are used up for the year, the parent will be assessed the full fee for that time period.
- Please inform the childcare office when your child will be absent.
- Parents who withdraw their children for summer have no guarantee of a re-enrollment slot in the fall, although we will attempt to accommodate families who wish to re-enroll.

Special Needs

We serve a number of children who have special needs, speech/language delays, English as a second language, etc. MCUM is familiar with community resources and works with a variety of therapists and agencies to develop appropriate plans for the success of each child being served. If a child has an IFSP, IEP or other individualized plan, the staff will incorporate the child's needs into the daily curriculum. A team meeting will be held with the teacher, Education Coordinator, parent and the specialist. We require parental support and follow through when working with children who need therapy or services beyond the classroom plan. We may discontinue services to children if the parents do not pursue avenues of professional treatment for specific problems. Compass Early Learning Center's child care program will accept only children who are at a stage of growth and

development which enables them to benefit from its program and for whose age level the child care is staffed and equipped to provide care. Compass Early Learning Center will not permit or maintain any child whose needs it obviously cannot meet or whose behavior would be dangerous for other children. Special care plans will be completed with the parent, teacher and Childcare Director. A health care provider will put into writing any special medical procedures.

For persons with a disability, we have handicapped parking spaces reserved by the front door at the North center. Our downtown site has drop-off parking right next to the facility doors. [07.B.04; 10.B.10; 10.D.06; 10.D.10]

Community Connections

We introduce the children to a number of local events and agencies. We utilize Monroe County Public Library, Indiana University, Bloomington Playwrights Project, and Wonderlab to name a few. Transportation is through the Bloomington City Transit. We are able to make referrals to First Steps and work with MCCSC staff to enhance a child's needs. If a family is in need of special services, we link them to the appropriate agency. [10B.01]

Outside Play

1. Children are expected to come to school properly dressed for outside play on a daily basis. We encourage and urge children to wear hats, mittens, etc. but cannot force children to wear cold weather gear. In some cases, staff may request parental support on this matter.
2. State regulations require that children be taken outside daily unless the temperature falls below 25 degrees without wind chill or precipitation. The State does not prohibit children going out at lower temperatures. Teachers, at their discretion, may take children out for shorter periods of time at colder temperatures.
3. Children will have outside play twice a day unless weather, air quality or environmental safety conditions pose a health risk.
4. Please do not request exempting your child from outside playtime. The entire class will go outside together; there is no one available to supervise your child in a separate setting. If your child is too ill to go outside to play, he/she is probably too ill to attend school. [03.D.01; 05.A.06; 05.A.07]

Bad Weather/Snow Days

Generally we will close any time that Monroe County Community School Corporation also closes due to poor weather conditions. This includes closings that might be announced early in the morning and those that occur mid-day. Closings will be posted to MCUM's Facebook page, as well as on the following stations:

Radio Stations:

WBWB 97 FM WHCC 105.1 FM
WFHB 91.3FM WFHB 98.1 FM
WVNI 95.1 FM WBIW 1340 AM
WCBK 102.3 FM

TV Stations: Channels 13

When the start of the MCCSC school day is delayed we are open with normal time schedules. If the weather worsens during the day and necessitates early pick up, parents will be called. Parents will be called first, then those identified as having permission to pick up the child will be called if the parent cannot be reached. Please keep all telephone numbers current for yourself and your emergency pick up designee.

Prohibited on MCUM Property

The following are prohibited on MCUM property (including the parking lot):

- smoking;
- use of alcohol;
- use or possession of firearms is prohibited unless the person is required to carry a firearm as a condition of their employment; and
- use or possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances.

Inspections

Compass Early Learning Center programs are licensed by the State of Indiana as center-based care. Facilities and records are inspected regularly by the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration (FSSA), the State Fire Marshal, and Child and Adult Food Program. We work diligently at meeting the requirements of these agencies and consistently receive high marks from these inspections. Parents are welcome to review our most recent inspection reports upon request.

Confidentiality

All employees are required to exercise discretion in regard to all matters pertaining to official business and records. Any information that has been received by an employee, directly or indirectly, must be maintained in confidence. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action. [04.E.07; 10.B.08]

Journals

Journals are a means for teachers to communicate with parents when face to face daily interactions are not possible due to staff shift changes or other barriers to daily conversation. Completing journal pages is a very time consuming task, so parents must indicate they are reading the pages by putting their initial at the end of each page. Journals that are routinely not initialed by the parent will be discontinued. Please do not remove pages from your child's journal. Enrolling parents may request a copy of a journal page if needed. Teachers may provide information that may require a follow-up conversation or conference, with or without the Child Care Director or Education Coordinator. Please schedule one with the teacher at a time convenient to both of you. Please don't "drop in" expecting to have this sort of conference, as the teacher must attend to the classroom schedule. [07.B.01; 07.B.05; 07.B.06; 10.B.08]

Access to Client Files

In order to maintain confidentiality of client files, it is our policy to limit access to client files to appropriate staff and regulatory agents. Program participants, or their legal representative, have access to their own files in the presence of an appropriate staff member. A list of individuals authorized by the parent/legal representative to have access to health information about the child is kept on file. Files are stored in a room that is locked and secured by an alarm at night. After the file storage limitations have expired, all confidential records are shredded. [04.E.07; 05.A.01; 10.B.08; 10.D.05]

Participants with Blood Borne Diseases or Communicable Illness

It is the policy of Compass Early Learning Center to adopt the following policies/practices regarding program participants or staff:

- All child care staff will be provided with information regarding first aid procedures, including the use of Universal Precautions. All employees are expected to comply with recommended procedures for infection control and to minimize the risk of exposure to other infectious agents. Failure to comply with universal precautions may lead to termination of employment.
- Program participants or staff known to be infected with blood borne diseases or other communicable illness will not be restricted from attending as long as their health permits; their attendance does not create a significant risk of transmission of illness; and their health allows them to perform tasks as assigned. These participants or their guardian(s) and staff will be counseled about the potential risk associated with providing child care services where due to close physical contact, sub-optimal hygiene, and the larger pool of infectious possibilities characteristic of child care settings may increase their risk of secondary infections and ailments.
- It is the policy of Compass Early Learning Center to consider information regarding the health status of its participants and staff as confidential.

Field Trips

Compass Early Learning Center does not provide home to center transportation. When we transport children for field trips, we utilize the city bus system, Rural Transit or we hire a bus company that carries liability insurance. These agencies have in place alternate transportation arrangements if there is a problem.

We use group permission signup sheets for specific field trips where the children are transported to another location. The signup sheet includes where the children will be going, how they will get there, and the time they will leave and return. When an event is taking place that parents do not want their child to participate, they must find alternative care for their child for that day, as the entire class will go on a field trip together.

When the children are taken on field trips a number safety precautions are taken.

- Staff must maintain child/staff ratios at all times.
- Compass Early Learning Center carries liability insurance that includes field trips.
- Vehicles are smoke free.
- Children will be only load/unload on curb side of the vehicle.
- The staff takes copies of emergency forms for children and staff attending.
- At least one staff carries a cell phone.
- A first aid kit with emergency numbers is taken.
- Staff account for all children before, during, and after field trips.

[10.B.08;10.B.12; 10.D.06]

Television and Movie Policy

We do not use television or movies as entertainment in our child care facility. All videos shown must be part of the educational component of the program and relate to the theme of the week. Movies shown will be rated "G". Videos will not be shown to toddlers (children 29 months and under).

Swimming at Compass Early Learning Center North Center only

Children (3-5 year olds only) enrolled during summer should bring a swimsuit, towel and a bottle of 30 SPF sunscreen (all items labeled with child's name) for daily use. The children swim at Mill's Pool. To use the pool, The City of Bloomington's Park and Recreation Department requires certain information from all families and a fee could be accessed. You will be notified of any fee for a swim pass. Children may bring flip-flops or jelly shoes for use in the pool area. They must also be provided with shoes suitable for active playtime for the rest of the day.

Children Transitions

Teachers ensure smooth transitions from one teacher to another, one classroom to another, one program to another. Every attempt is made to provide continuity of care up to 30 months. Children are given every opportunity to get to know their new teacher prior to moving into their new environment. MCUM staff make great efforts to get to know every child in the program to ensure the child's comfort when they do move from one group to another. [10.B.13; 10.B.14; 10.B.15]

Please Notify the School

- If there is any change in telephone number, address, employment, income or household size.
- If there are changes in the home which may disturb your child. It will help us to understand and to help.
- If your child has a communicable disease.
- If your child has head or body lice.

Staff to Child Ratios

Each group of children (class) is assigned teaching staff who have primary responsibility for working with that group of children. The teaching staff provides ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being.

Compass Early Learning Center meets all requirements of staff to children ratios as mandated by our license. Ratios are maintained during all hours of operation (including field trips and outdoor classroom times). We have several methods for ensuring proper ratios. First, we endeavor to hire qualified staff to fill full-time and part-time permanent positions to provide proper staffing. Second, we are always recruiting qualified substitutes that work well in a variety of settings with a variety of age groups. When there is a combination of ages within a group of children, staff shall determine the ratio required by the age of the youngest child in the group. This includes opening and closing times. We will merge classrooms or groups in accordance with licensing standards to best utilize the staff available [10.B.11; 10.B.12]

Supervision

Compass Early Learning Center adheres to a policy of direct supervision. This means classroom staff are taking an active supervisory role with the children, will have all children in sight and sound and will be alert to any problems that occur. The oldest children may be permitted to use the bathroom or put something in their cubbies without direct sight. Staff will check on those children if they do not return promptly to the group. [03.C.02, 03.C.03, 03.C.04, 03.C.05]

Nap Time

During the rest period for children toddler age and older, staff will supervise sleeping children within sight and sound and never leave them unattended. The cot placement and classroom environment are arranged to allow direct supervision. Caregivers will supervise children at fifty percent (50%) of the required child to staff ratio provided that:

- (1) the required child/staff ratio is maintained on the premises;
- (2) required caregivers are immediately accessible; and
- (3) a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the children in the class are asleep.

After thirty (30) minutes, staff shall provide supervised alternate activities for non-sleeping children. There are times when an older child may not be in sight (using the restroom). Staff are aware of and positioned in ways they can appropriately supervise the classroom as they assist waking children. [10.B.08; 10.D.01]

Child Abuse or Neglect

It is our policy that the agency will comply with state laws and regulations pertaining to child abuse and neglect. All child care providers are mandated by law to report instances of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Family and Children.

We have specific procedures to follow in the event an allegation is made against a staff person. A staff person is put on administrative leave while the claim is investigated. Claims that are substantiated will result in the dismissal of the employee. We will contact State Child Protection Services if an allegation is made known to us, but will also provide this number to any parent who requests it. [10.D.03]

Child and Adult Food Program

We provide a morning snack, breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack per day. Meal time is an opportunity for the staff and children to sit together and engage in conversation. This meal program is provided through reimbursements from the Indiana Department of Education (Child and Adult Food Program) and fundraising contributions. A food form is required from all families enrolled. This form may need to be completed again when your income or household size changes or when the State requires Compass Early Learning Center to do so. The parent is not charged for the lunch program.

Our meals are planned to be nutritious, well balanced and to conform to the highest standard of the Child and Adult Food Program. Vegan/Vegetarian diets are not accommodated in our food service program. A CACFP medical statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs form must be completed and submitted before any meal substitutions can be made. Please contact the Childcare

Director for this form. Medically ordered special diets, i.e. lactose intolerance or food allergies, will be accommodated at a charge to the parent. We will charge for the cost of the food item and an additional charge for us to obtain it. Parents may supply the required special foods to avoid these additional charges. It will always be more economical for parents to supply the food than for us to procure it. Parents should read the posted menus carefully in order to note when these foods are required and will deliver them in unopened, commercially sealed containers to the cook. [03.D.07; 03.D.12; 10.B.08; 10.D.01]

Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

WIC provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. For more information go to www.in.gov.

Parties/Celebrations

State regulations prohibit home baked goods in the school. All items must be store bought, unopened and in the original packaging Individual birthdays will be celebrated with a gift, singing and talking about their special day. Parents may send a treat for the entire class for special occasions. The following items are suggested: fresh fruit and vegetables and crackers.

Physical Activity

1. Children have at least 120 minutes of active playtime each day.
2. Children participate in outdoor active play daily when weather conditions permit. Staff will consult the Child Care Weather Watch chart for temperature and humidity conditions that may exclude outdoor play. Activities will be substituted when outdoor play is excluded, i.e. Minds in Motion, dancing in classrooms, calisthenics in hallway.
3. Physical activity is neither denied nor required as a form of punishment. Alternate physical activities may be substituted when staff determines the child's behavior during the primary activity puts their or others health and safety at risk, i.e. swimming pool or climbing equipment.
4. Screen time is limited to children ages 3 and up and is limited to 2 hours per week. Screen time must be directly tied to the curriculum.
5. Inactive time (excluding naptime or eating) when children are seated for more than 30 minutes at a time is limited to one time a week or less.
6. Children with special needs are provided opportunities for active play while other children are physically active.

Nutrition Education

1. Nutrition education will be provided through meal time discussions about food.
2. Facilities will collaborate with community groups/organizations to provide opportunities for nutrition education beyond onsite curriculum.
3. Books and other educational materials depict healthy foods and healthy messages.

4. Our facility builds awareness among teachers, food service personnel, and other staff members about the importance of nutrition, physical activity and wellness.
5. Nutrition education information shared with children, families and staff members is based on current science and national health recommendations.

Health

Health General Notes

Child care staff maintain health records for each child. Nutritious meals and snacks are an important component of our programs. Children receive a daily rest period. Children are given the opportunity to brush their teeth daily. Each classroom is provided appropriate storage equipment for toothbrushes and staff give children instruction of dental hygiene techniques. Compass Early Learning Center staff conduct a daily health check for every child each morning.

Parents sign a release that includes names of authorized people to access their child's health information. In addition, the emergency contact information form is renewed annually to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information. [05.A.01; 05.A.16]

Proper Clothing for Activity and Season

Send children dressed for active and/or occasionally messy play and dressed for the weather. We reserve the right to provide a change of clothing when children attend in clothing inappropriate to the season e.g. thin summer dresses worn in winter. [05.A.07]

Health Examinations

1. Each child shall receive a health examination by a physician within one year prior to admission, but no later than one month after admission. Proof of age appropriate immunizations must be received within 30 days of enrollment and updated as immunizations are given. Do not wait until your 30-day limit has elapsed to make appointment because we will be required to exclude your child until the health exam or immunizations has taken place and the form has been returned to us. You will be asked to supply an appointment card to the office staff.
2. When a rash or other symptoms are noticed at child care, the staff may ask a licensed health care professional affiliated with MCUM to examine the child. Parents will be informed of this action and the recommendations for treatment. Parents may choose to have the child examined by their own physician and a new plan of treatment implemented. [05.A.01; 10.D.05]

Waiver of Immunization Requirement

The Department of Family and Children Regulation 3-4.7-86 permits a waiver of immunizations, physical examinations, or physicians statements for those families whose religious beliefs prohibit the same. However, Compass Early Learning Center reserves the right to temporarily exclude children who are not immunized when control of contagious disease is necessary. This policy exists to protect all the children in Compass Early Learning Center programs, not to single out a specific individual or groups of individuals.

Medications

1. Medications must be handed directly to the Child Care Director, Education Coordinator, or anyone working in the front office. All medications are stored in the Health room, not the child's classroom.

At the end of the day to pick up medicine, please see one of the above named persons; do not remove medications by yourself.

2. We cannot give medications unless it is in the original container with a label that states the child's name, doctor's name, prescription number, name of the medication, date and instructions. Staff dispensing medicine will record it on a log indicating the time of administration and their initials. Unused medicine must be taken home or it will be discarded.
3. We cannot give aspirin or over-the-counter cough syrup unless a physician prescribes it. Over-the-counter medicine must be treated the same as any prescription medication. The container must have the child's name, doctor's name, name of medication, date and instructions. Each time the child is sick an over-the-counter medicine is required, a new doctor's prescription must accompany the medicine. A PARENT IS ALLOWED AND ENCOURAGED TO COME TO THE CHILD CARE AND ADMINISTER OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE. Parent must bring medicine when they come and take it with them after administering the medicine. [10.B.08; 10.D.01; 10.D.10]

Illness

1. Please keep children home if they show signs of illness and call us to let us know - especially if the illness is communicable. Please call before 9:00 AM. A daily call is required for sick children.
2. We cannot keep ill children at school. If a child has a fever or other signs of illness, a parent will be notified to pick up their child. The child will be kept comfortable in the health room until they are picked up. If a parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will then be called. Please keep all telephone numbers current. We follow the American Academy of Pediatrics Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools Signs and Symptoms Chart for when a child will be required to be picked up and when they can return to the child care.
3. When we don't know why a child is absent, we are left to guess the reasons. That is why we need a daily call for any absence. If we do not receive contact from the parent, we will assume the child was withdrawn and the slot may be given to another.
4. If a child is ill for more than five (5) days in a row, state regulations require a doctor's statement of good health before the child may be readmitted to the school. [05.A.04; 10.B.08; 10.D.01]

Due to safety issues, it is imperative that we be able to reach parents during the day. Licensing requires that ill children be sent home during the day to reduce passing illness to others. Therefore parents **must** provide alternative name and numbers for the emergency cards of individuals who can be contacted during the day and/or will be able to pick up the child when ill, if the parents cannot be reached or come themselves. If we attempt repeatedly to reach a parent or their contact numbers without success, we are then required to contact child welfare. We do not wish to take this step, so make sure we can reach you or your alternates at all

Allergies

Please notify us of any allergies, food allergies or other medical conditions. For children with special health or food allergies, the child's health care provider must give Compass Early Learning Center an individual care plan that is prepared in conjunction with the parents and specialists involved in the child's care. Parents give consent, upon enrollment, for Compass Early Learning Center to post any allergies. Allergy lists could be posted in each classroom office, the health room, and the teachers' lounge. All

food allergy lists are posted in the kitchen. Parents may be required to bring in alternate foods to replace items on the menu, i.e. replacing cow's milk with a soy product. [05.B.05]

Head Lice

The following procedures are to be used in case of contact with head or body lice:

- Notify the school immediately.
- Do not send the child to the program until he/she has been treated with special shampoo.
- Proof of treatment must accompany child when he/she returns.
- We reserve the right to exclude children where proof has not been satisfactorily provided.
- When lice is found while the child is at the program, parents will be called to pick the child up immediately.

Procedure in Event of Injury

1. In the event of a minor injury, child care personnel will implement standard first aid techniques. Only staff certified in First Aid will give first aid treatment. Parents will be contacted through the numbers given on the emergency card.
2. In the event of a serious medical emergency, one staff member will begin first aid treatment. A second person will call for an ambulance; will telephone the parent or failing that, the person on the emergency card; and contact the Child Care Director and/or the Executive Director. A staff member who is known to the child will travel with the child to the hospital.
3. Some injuries are not severe enough to warrant transport to the emergency room by ambulance, yet the injury may require treatment beyond first aid levels. In these instances, the parent will be contacted to come and transport the children themselves. [10.B.08]

Need to Change Clothing

Aside from children who are not yet independent in their toileting skills, parents will be informed at the end of the day why it was necessary to change a child's clothing.

Health Workshops

We provide several workshops each year on health and safety issues of interest to parents. If you have any health and safety issues you would like to see addressed at a parent workshop, please do not hesitate to speak with us about that.

Safety

Proper Footwear

Always send your child with close-toed shoes that fasten - no sandals (must strap behind the heel), clogs or flip-flops. Improper footwear is a common cause of injury.

Sign In/Out

Come all the way into the classroom when bringing or picking up your child. ***We are not responsible for your child until he/she is brought to the teacher.*** We also might have an important message for you. **YOU MUST SIGN IN AND OUT EACH DAY.** You are responsible to inform any persons who may pick your child up for you to sign in and out as well.

Emergency Information

Make sure we always have two current emergency telephone numbers on our file. It is very difficult when we cannot reach a parent consistently with these numbers. Parents must provide an alternative if they can't be contacted consistently. In event of a necessity to reach a parent and if we attempt repeatedly to reach a parent or their contact numbers without success, we are then required to contact child welfare. [10.B.08]

Safety Drills

To insure the safety of the children during a fire, monthly fire drills are performed. During tornado season, tornado drills are practiced as well. Each classroom has these emergency plans posted by the door including an exit map. [02.K.04;10.D.08]

Pick-up and Drop-off Procedures

- Clearly indicate who is authorized to pick up your child. Only adults over 18 years of age should pick up children. We will verbally discourage noncustodial parents, but cannot be held responsible if parent takes the child.
- We reserve the right to deny release of a child to parents, relatives or friends whom we suspect of being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or conditions that may be harmful to a child.
- Make sure the person dropping the child off knows to clock them in, to take them to the classroom and *to turn them over to the teacher*. It is not acceptable to leave the child in the hallway assuming her or she can find their own classroom or to watch them from afar to enter the room on their own. The teacher may have an important message for the person dropping the child off or the class may be participating in an activity elsewhere in the building.
- Teaching takes place all day long, regardless of your personal schedule. Please be considerate of the teachers and the activities taking place in the classroom as you come and go. Don't yell across the room to your child or otherwise disrupt the children. If you need a conference with a teacher, please schedule it, rather than trying to "catch" them at the end of your day – they have activities planned for children up to closing and are obligated to carry those out. Please do encourage your child, if playing alone, to clean up their activity before leaving for the day.
- Increasingly we experience difficulties with cell phone etiquette. A few parents are entering the facility, picking up their child and clocking in/out while being engaged in a cell phone conversation. This poses difficulties for staff who wish to communicate with parents and it gives children the impression that they are not important to that parent. Further, we have had problems with vulgar language or other expressions being said while on a cell phone. Be mindful that conversations that you, or others with you, may be having on a cell phone may be inappropriate to be overheard. It would be best to finish personal conversations outside the school before picking up or dropping off your child. [10.D.06]

Behavior Problems

If a child has behavior problems that pose a hazard to staff or other children or are extremely disruptive to the school, that child may be withdrawn from the program for safety reasons. Please carefully read the section on Discipline/Behavior Management.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural, developmental behavior in which many young children engage, especially during their second and third years of life. We recognize that biting is a distressing activity for families, staff, and the child who has been bitten. Because biting is so distressing, everyone involved would like to eliminate it quickly. Unfortunately, a quick fix is not usually available. However, biting does require immediate action by staff to comfort the child who has been bitten, express disapproval of the action, and work to find the cause of the biting.

Children bite for a variety of reasons so it's important for adults to get to the cause of the behavior. Most of the reasons for biting are not related to behavior problems nor does biting make the biter a bad child. Since biting is developmentally related, it is more common for toddlers to bite than for older preschool age children.

Staff members respond to biting as they would other aggressive behavior:

- by calmly, yet firmly telling the biter that biting hurts and is not allowed
- by comforting the victim immediately and providing first aid if needed
 - wash the bite with soap and water
 - apply ice to reduce swelling
 - if the skin is broken, universal precautions are followed
- document the biting in an incident report

When a particular child bites on a regular basis, the center staff attempt to find the cause of the biting and take action to prevent future incidents. The staff look at:

- the precipitating factors such as time of day, area of the classroom, the activity, other children involved, etc.
- changes in the child's life such as health problems, teething, the absence of a family member, the birth of a sibling, transitions, etc.

The staff will then develop strategies to help prevent further biting. These might include:

- ensuring that there are enough materials, including duplicates, for the children to use
- ensuring that there is enough space in the classroom and that there are quiet times in the schedule
- ensuring that there are enough opportunities for positive sensory experiences in the classroom
- shadowing a biter in situations and times when the child has bitten before
- providing teething toys for children who are getting new teeth
- showing disapproval of biting
- working collaboratively with families to reduce or eliminate biting

The family of a bitten child is notified of the incident the day the incident occurred. Confidentiality prohibits the staff from divulging the name of the biter. The family of the biter is informed personally and privately the same day.

All biting incidents are documented by the teacher(s) in an incident report which is reviewed and

approved by the Center Director. A copy of the incident report is given to the family. The other copy is kept in the Center's incident report file.

Driving Too Fast

Please be aware of the dangers of pedestrians in our driveway and around our childcare sites. Have an awareness that children may cross in front of you unexpectedly. Children frequently exit our doors and may start across the parking lot without looking en route to the playground or pool. Parents who are observed driving too fast may receive a reminder card to improve their awareness of the problem and to make them alert to the danger they pose. Please help us maintain vigilance in this matter and drive slowly while within the perimeter of the grounds. [10.D.06]

Fire Lane (Compass Early Learning Center North)

Please do not park in front of the fire gates at the end of the building. If we have a fire, the fire trucks cannot get access to the classrooms.

Dangers of Idling Cars

It is a danger to air quality to leave your car idling in the parking lot except to warm it in the coldest weather. On certain days, carbon monoxide can be drawn into classroom windows. In some cities (not Bloomington-- yet), children are prohibited from playing outside due to poor air quality—usually from automobiles. We request that all families refrain from leaving their cars running while dropping off or picking up their child.

Leaving Children Unattended

It is considered child endangerment to leave a child in a car while the parent is absent for any reason. Please do not leave unattended children in cars, whether running or not, whether locked or unlocked.

Emergency Action Plan

Compass Early Learning Center has adopted an action plan to put into effect in the event of an emergency. These plans include strategies for sheltering-in-place, evacuation to the administrative building on our campus and evacuation off premises. In the event of an evacuation, the safety of the children is our primary consideration. If we leave our campus, information will be broadcast on all the local radio stations giving information as to where you may pick up your children. We will also post a notice on the front doors of the center indicating where we have gone. Once we are completely away and established at our evacuation center, we will contact you or other persons on the child's emergency cards to have someone pick up the children as quickly as possible. Parents must make immediate arrangements for the pickup of their children following a disaster. This will allow staff to better deal with special needs of injured children or staff or address the needs of the center or their own family. Parents/guardians who pick their children up at an alternate location must sign for the children and state where they are taking them. If a parent calls in the name of a new pickup person, the person picking up must show a photo ID, preferably a drivers' license. If parents/guardians or emergency contacts cannot be reached within 3 hours of closing, staff may contact Child Protection to take over

the care of the child(ren). Parents will need to supply new contact names and phone numbers of persons who can take custody of children when they are not available.

Certain disasters such as a toxic spill or other biohazard may require quite drastic measures and result in conditions that are unsafe for us to allow people to enter our facility. In that case, the doors will be locked and no one will be granted access until local authorities assures us that it is safe to open the doors. This is to guarantee the safety of all the children. We have enough food and water on our premises to remain comfortable for up to three days. Parents are asked to understand the reasons why such a drastic measure would be taken and to not ask us to risk opening the facility to allow them entry or release their children.

Any parent with questions about our emergency action plan is encouraged to contact the Childcare Director or Executive Director and speak with them about their concerns or to receive a copy of our written plan. [10.D.08]

Environmental Program

We adhere to the highest standards to keep our facilities clean and well maintained but at the same time eliminate certain hazards to children and vulnerable adults. We practice integrated pest management to reduce the exposure to pesticides, recycle our office paper, cardboard, glass and metal, and have eliminated or reduced our exposure to lead, mercury, asbestos and other health hazards. It takes effort from each and every staff member to maintain a high level of cleanliness and organization from each office or classroom and including the communal areas of our facilities. Staff are expected to become familiar with these practices and maintain a high level of commitment in this area. [10.D.01]

Pets

Compass Early Learning Center will not permit pets with fur or feathers on site, except as “visiting” pets for educational or demonstration purposes.

Developmental Assessments

All children enrolled in Compass Early Learning Center receive developmental assessments within 3 months of enrollment. The assessments obtain information on all areas of children’s development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health and physical development (including self-help skills). Some assessments are performed by outside providers and other assessments are performed by Compass Early Learning Center staff. Classroom teachers will assess their own group of children. Copies of these assessments are given to parents as they are completed and may be available to the public school upon request with a signed release from parents. Original assessment documents are kept in the child’s confidential file.

Assessments have multiple purposes and uses.

- Arranging for developmental assessment and referral for diagnostic assessment when results indicate a need.
- Identifying children’s interests and needs.
- Describe the developmental progress and learning of the children

- Improves curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment.
- Plan program improvement.
- Communicate with the parents the results.

Assessments are achieved through a variety of methods such as teacher observations, rating scales (such as Ages and Stages: Social Emotional), Indiana Standardized Tool for Alternate Reporting: Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR), work sampling and individually administered tests. Any published assessment tool Compass Early Learning Center uses is evaluated on the reliability and validity to ensure that the results obtained with the tools are valid for Compass Early Learning Center purposes. These assessments are crucial in reporting the developmental progress of a child. Consideration is given for students who have difficulty in any assessment method due to family culture, experiences, the child's abilities or disabilities, and home language. Parents who are bilingual may be requested to assist in necessary translations for assessment purposes. Parents are given verbal reports of teachers' observations of their child at least four times a year. Parents are also provided opportunities to meet with teachers two times per year at which time they are given written reports of the same information.

The staff provide families with information about the choice, use, scoring and interpretation of assessment methods that include:

- The purpose and use for which an assessment is designed and its programmatic purpose and use;
- The interpretations of the results and their meaning in terms of future learning opportunities for their child;
- The way teaching staff or others have been trained to use assessment procedures and interpret results as well as the conditions under which the child will be assessed;
- Access to or information about the specific instruments used.

Upon initial enrollment, parents are asked to complete a Developmental History Form. Other in-house assessment tools may include, but not limited to, the following: 1) Ages & Stages: Social Emotional, and 2) IStar-KR Entrance Assessment. Upon hire, staff receive in-service training in accepted practices in administration and interpretation of test results. Teachers can explain the purpose, values and uses of the assessments to their parents during Parent/teacher conferences. These assessments are further reviewed by the Education Coordinator. Parental input during assessment is solicited and taken into consideration before any plan is made. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled and plans are put into place to help the child improve in any areas needed. Parents may be provided with suggestions to try at home and/or other resources to assist them. Parents are requested to give consent for Compass Early Learning Center staff to release information with other appropriate agencies regarding the results of any assessment performed.

Assessment results are used to support curriculum development. Lesson plans are created or adjusted to meet children's needs. Weekly classroom staff meetings are held to discuss the curriculum and specific children's needs. If a teacher feels they need additional information on a specific need, they would meet with the Education Coordinator. The Education Coordinator would give suggestions or request a meeting with the parent and the teacher. Prior to the meeting the Education Coordinator would gather information on providers that deal with that specific need to share with the parent. The Education Coordinator would help guide the parent through the referral process.

[02.A.05 ; 02.A.06; 04.A.01; 04.A.02; 04.A.03; 04.B.01; 04.B.02; 04.B.03; 04.B.04; 04.B.06; 04.C.01; 04.D.02; 04.D.04; 04.E.02; 04.E.05; 04.E.06; 04.E.07; 07.A.01; 07.A.03; 07.A.06; 07.A.08; 07.A.09; 07.B.01; 07.B.03; 07.B.04; 07.C.08; 10.B.01; 10.B.08]

Discipline/Behavior Management

We believe that learning self-control begins with a loving environment and that "positive discipline" is helping children to learn and grow. School staff and volunteers guide behavior by redirecting children to more positive activities and by giving positive reinforcement as much as possible. Behavior problems will be addressed with parents and documented in the child's file. Keep in mind that something that is a minor problem when the child is younger can become a major problem if exhibited by an older child. We do not believe in spanking children. Spanking, or other forms of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited. Teaching staff never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. We prefer the methods of redirection and modeling to achieve cooperation. [01.B.09; 01.B.10; 01.E.01; 01.E.02; 03.B.12; 03.F.03; 10.B.08]

Teachers will note observations of challenging behavior and will document this in the child's portfolio. [03.B.12; 01.E.02]

Children who are not able to respond to our intervention strategies may need more professional care than our program can provide. If feasible, a meeting will be held with the parent, behavioral professionals and the Compass Early Learning Center staff to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior. We expect parental support to help resolve these issues. We will work with parents who pursue these outside treatment options as much as possible, but will not provide services to children who consistently injure other children or staff. Parents who refuse to pursue treatment or therapeutic recommendations may be asked to withdraw their children from the program. If parents have questions or concerns as to any particular incident involving their child, they are encouraged to speak with the Childcare Director. The Childcare Director or Education Coordinator may also contact you about persistent behavior problems with your child. [03.B.12]

Conscious Discipline

We are excited to introduce you to our comprehensive classroom management program called Conscious Discipline. It is a way of organizing our classroom around the concept of a School Family, where each member learns the skills needed to successfully manage life tasks such as learning, handling frustration, communicating effectively, being sensitive to people's needs and getting along with others. Conscious Discipline empowers teachers and students with Seven Basic Skills of Discipline.

1. **Composure**: Becoming the person you want children to be.
2. **Encouragement**: Building a School Family.
3. **Assertiveness**: Saying "no" and being heard.
4. **Choices**: Building Self-Esteem and willpower.
5. **Positive Intent**: Creating teaching moments.
6. **Empathy**: Handling the fussing and the fits.
7. **Consequences**: Helping children learn from their mistakes.

We are implementing many new and exciting structures, routines, and rituals and will be seeking information about your "Home Family" to create a sense of connectedness.

Here are a few explanations of the strategies:

The Safe Place: Children will be learning that if they are upset, sad, mad, crying, or are just having a difficult time and need to remove themselves from the activity, they can go to the Safe Place. The child will go there to regain composure using deep breathing techniques they've learned at school (S.T.A.R., drain, pretzel or balloon). As soon as they regain composure, they go back to what they were doing. There are many items in the Safe Place, such as a stress ball, scented stickers, sensory bottles, music, books, stuffed animals, a mirror, and pictures to help them identify how they are feeling and what they can choose to do to calm down. Each classroom and the front office are equipped with a Safe Place and all staff is trained in how to teach your child the techniques needed to regulate their emotions.

Baby Doll Circle Time: This routine is the foundation to Conscious Discipline for Infants and Toddlers. The children will each have their own baby doll for circle time. During this time, the children will interact with their baby dolls in the same manner that the adults in their lives interact with them. For instance, if we play peek-a-boo with your child, your child will play the same game with the baby doll. In doing so, the children re-experience our connection over and over again, helping to optimize their development. We will be asking you for any games/rituals you do with your child at home so that we can form more caring relationships and bridge the gap between the home family and the school family.

As we strengthen our School Family, you will see, hear and experience many new rituals. A few of them include:

“Wish You Well Ritual”: This ritual is done whenever someone is not feeling well, absent, or just having a rough day. This simple, yet powerful ritual can also be implemented at home!

“Greeting Ritual”: These Hello and Goodbye rituals will create strong connections with the entire “School Family”. Examples of this ritual include: high fives, knuckle bumps, hugs, and butterfly handshake. This is another ritual that can easily be implemented into your home family.

“Safe Keeper Ritual”: Each member of the school family has a role. Adults keep the children safe and the children help keep it that way. You will hear this statement throughout the school, instilling the importance for caring for others (and keeping them safe).

We are excited to be taking this journey with you and we will be offering many opportunities for you to learn more about Conscious Discipline and how it can positively impact your home family. Please don't hesitate to call or stop by the office if you have a question or would like more information about the really cool stuff going on in our classrooms! You can also learn more about Conscious Discipline by visiting www.ConsciousDiscipline.com.

Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement

The Education Coordinator coordinates **opportunities throughout the year for parents to be involved in a variety of ways**. This is an excellent opportunity for families to work on projects to support the program, meet others for general support and plan special events. Fill out a parent involvement survey so you can be involved in the way that fits your schedule. [07.A.12; 07.A.13; 07.A.14]

Transition Meeting

New Transition: When a child enrolls at MCUM, the teacher completed a baseline assessment and transition form. Within the first month of enrollment, the Education Coordinator will meet with the parents to discuss the results of the assessment, how the child is transitioning to our program and any questions/concerns the parents may have.

Classroom Transition: When a child moves from one room to another, the teacher will meet with the parents to discuss the transition and any questions they may have. This meeting should take place within the first three weeks of entering the new classroom.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent involvement in the child care programs is encouraged and can be achieved in a variety of ways. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled two times annually, during the months of your child's birthday and half birthday. Informal conferences regarding specific behaviors or situations are strongly encouraged to help us better understand your child's situation. [07.B.01]

Parents as Visitors

Parents are always welcome as visitors to their child's classroom during the program's regular hours of operation. If you would like to join your child for a meal, make arrangements ahead of time so you will be included in the meal count. Otherwise, feel free to drop in anytime. [07.A.11]

Parenting Workshops

Parenting workshops are available as funds are available. We try to offer workshops that interest parents in the evenings, with a light meal and child care provided. Please let us know of any particular interests you have on workshop topics. In the past, we've had workshops on behavior management, rainy day activities you can do at home, reading readiness, stress reduction techniques, raising capable kids, car/bike/home safety, and various health questions such as asthma or childhood illnesses.

Parent Survey

We have adopted the NAEYC Self-Study as our primary quality assessment technique. A parent survey is part of that self-study. Please read the survey carefully and provide your honest opinion; we use the results of the survey as input for our annual improvement plan.

Parents as Volunteers

Some parents work as volunteers at MCUM and at our Compass Early Learning Center sites, and helpers are always needed. These experiences are not limited to the child care programs, so if you have an idea or area of interest that you would like to become involved with, let us know!

Parental Input/Family Practices

Staff welcomes input from parents regarding family values and practices and will incorporate these suggestions as is reasonable to do so. Certain practices cannot be incorporated such as corporal punishment or exceptional dietary practices.

Parent Complaints

Constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements are always welcome at MCUM. Please do not hesitate to contact the Child Care Director or Executive Director regarding your concerns or ideas. We would much prefer to hear from you than have you leave the child care program unsatisfied without any awareness of your concerns. We ask that parents express their concerns in a calm manner, especially when the children are present. Verbally abusing the staff by speech or tone will not be acceptable. Staff are expected to treat participants with respect and dignity and we expect to be treated the same way.
[10.B.08]

Independent Agreements between Parents and Staff

From time to time parents have made agreements with staff that are outside of the regular programs here at MCUM. Examples of this would be if parents hire teachers to do babysitting during evenings or on weekends or if teachers initiate special personal time with children enrolled in program. We encourage parents and staff to continue with these types of arrangements, but do caution parents to understand that these extra-curricular experiences are optional activities and are not covered by our insurance nor does MCUM assume any responsibility for accident or injury during extra-curricular activities.

What to Send (or Not Send) to School

- Car seats shall not be left onsite, unless the person picking up the child needs the car seat and is different than the adult dropping the child off for care. Please label with your child's name. Car seats may not be left in the classroom. Please check with the office where the designated space to leave car seat.
- For safety reasons, we do not permit the wearing of open-toed shoes or footwear without heel straps, flip-flops, or clogs at school.
- Bottles, pacifiers or sippy cups are NOT allowed for children in our older classrooms.
- If you are going to be late, you should feed your child before arriving as the meal service for breakfast concludes earlier. You cannot bring food and drinks into the child care facility with your child, so please take care of this before you arrive.
- No gum, suckers, cough lozenges or hard candy is allowed.
- Children may bring a small doll, blanket or stuffed animal to sleep with at naptime. Compass Early Learning Center provides a cot-sized blanket for each child; please do not bring in sleeping bags or large pillows.
- For children requiring diapers, parents must send diapers in the original packaging and baby wipes. Please check with your child's teacher on your child's supply of diapers and wipes. If a parent doesn't provide these items, we may charge to provide them.
- A change of clothing for your child should be kept in their cubby. If your child uses their change of clothing, please send in another set of clothes with them the next day. We have a small supply of donated clothing on hand, and if your child is sent home in them, please send them back after laundering.
- Children enrolled during summer at Compass Early Learning Center North should bring a swimsuit, towel and a bottle of 30 SPF sunscreen (all items labeled with child's name) for daily use. Children enrolled during the summer at Compass Early Learning Center Downtown should bring a bottle of 30 SPF sunscreen for daily use.
- **Do not send in toys with your child**, these are often a source of conflict at school. We will not be responsible for lost or damaged toys.

Funding Sources

Fees

Fees are based on a sliding scale with the incomes at the top level paying the full cost of child care. Donations are used to make up the difference between the actual cost of child care and the amount families are charged. Sibling discounts are given for additional children. Donations are used to cover these costs also. These subsidies may be suspended if parents fail to provide and maintain accurate income information.

Parents must provide income verifications in order to receive the subsidized child care rates. Parents are expected to notify the school of any fluctuations in income (up or down) immediately. Failure to turn in verifications in a timely way may result in being charged the full fee. Income verification is required upon enrollment, whenever a change is reported and it is updated annually. Income is also reported on the food application upon enrollment in the program and it is updated annually. Income includes but is

not limited to: wages and earnings, reportable tips, child support, social security, unemployment compensation or payments made in lieu of or in addition to child support.

Government Subsidy Programs

It is important to remember that there may be more children eligible for some of the funding sources, such as CCDF than we have funds available. In that instance, families may choose to enroll their children in a sliding scale slot until an opening occurs. Parents who are eligible may elect to not enroll on one of these programs, but they must then pay the full fee. At the same time, any parent who loses their funding due to failure to recertify or submit required documents will not return to a sliding fee slot. They may pay the full fee and remain in the program.

These funding sources do not cover registration fees, late pick-up fees or swim fees. These costs remain the responsibility of the family. If these additional costs are delinquent, we reserve the right to terminate the child from the program.

Some families may qualify for child care subsidies (CCDF Vouchers) under this program administered by CASY (CHANCES AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH 1-800-886-3952). Inclusion in this program provides a family with a voucher that they may take to any provider who will accept it. See section on CCDF under Enrollment Eligibility and Procedures. Parents who are eligible may elect to not enroll on the voucher, but they must then pay the full fee. At the same time, any parent who loses their voucher due to failure to recertify or submit required documents will not return to a sliding fee slot. They may pay the full fee and remain in the program.

Office of Family and Children (Welfare)

Some families may qualify for child care subsidies under programs sponsored by the Department of Family and Children. These may include Impact Support Services, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) or Wards of the Court.

Child and Adult Food Program

Compass Early Learning Center receives a partial reimbursement for food costs from this state lunch program. Parents are required to complete documents to supply information for this program. For more information see section on Food Service and CACFP.

Contributions

Each month, MCUM receives cash contributions from religious organizations, businesses, clubs, organizations, individuals and United Way who support the goals of our agency. This money is used to make up the difference between parent fees and the costs of quality child care for those families who do not qualify for any other level of assistance. They also support the Self-Sufficiency program at MCUM.

Withdrawals/Termination of Services

1. Compass Early Learning Center requires two weeks advance notice of withdrawal. This enables the school to contact families who are awaiting enrollment to prepare to enter the school. Failure to give this notice will result in loss of prepaid fees.
2. Services may be terminated if the parent falsifies information on intake/enrollment forms or otherwise knowingly falsifies information.
3. If a child has behavioral problems that pose a hazard to staff or to other children, or are extremely disruptive to the school, that child may be dropped from the program for safety reasons. Foul or abusive language towards others will not be tolerated. Fighting or any form of physical aggression may be reason for termination of services.
4. Vandalism, maltreatment or destructive actions toward MCUM facilities or property are grounds for termination of services.
5. Services may be suspended or terminated if child care fees are consistently delinquent or if a payment agreement is not honored. Parents who fail to keep a payment agreement may also lose their CCDF funding for child care fees.
6. We prefer to speak with parents about their concerns before they withdraw from our programs to see if we can come to resolution with any problems they may experience. Even if we cannot accommodate a parental request, it is important for us to know of these needs; it will help us to improve our services and take these issues into consideration in our future planning.
7. Verbal abuse, threats, shouting or physical aggression towards staff by parents, relatives or other parties will not be tolerated and may result in termination of services. Parents who have complaints are urged to speak with the Child Care Director or the Executive Director when they are able to calmly discuss the problem.
8. Failure to abide by the policies and practices of the school, or if families act in a consistently uncooperative manner, will result in termination of services. This may or may not be finalized in writing.

Grievance Procedure

It is the policy of MCUM to provide a means for all participants to use in the event a participant has a complaint. The procedure is as follows:

- Discuss any complaints with the Child Care Director. If unresolved, go to next step.
- Request a meeting with the Executive Director. If unresolved, go to next step.
- Send a letter to the Program Committee of the Monroe County United Ministries Board of Directors. Briefly outline your complaint and the result you desire. A meeting may be scheduled with the Program Committee, the Executive Director and you. Address your letter in the following manner: [10.B.08]

Program Committee Chairperson
Monroe County United Ministries, Inc.
827 W. 14th Ct.
Bloomington, IN 47404

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