



The Meadows
Early Learning Center

Family Handbook

We are so happy that you have chosen to join our family! The Meadows is owned and operated by Katie McDonald. Katie has been in the child care field since 1998. She has a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling and Early Childhood Education and her Director's Certificate from the State of Colorado.

Our Director, Freedom Passarelli, has been in the child care field since 1999, has studied Early Childhood Education and Criminal Justice, and has her Director's Certification from the State of Colorado. Freedom is also a State Accredited Early Childhood Education trainer and Coach.

Our Philosophy

The Meadows takes a holistic approach to Early Childhood Education. We understand that many different aspects need to be met for a child to be able to learn and achieve their potential. The main focus of our philosophy and curriculum is addressing a child's social and emotional development. Children need to have safety and security both physically and emotionally to develop. We believe that self-esteem is critical to optimal growth in your children. For a child to develop high self-esteem, we focus on developing the socialization and self-help skills needed to succeed in other areas of development. We believe in letting children explore the natural environment and taking care of living things to help develop empathy and responsibility. During the educational/sensory exploration process, our children may be exposed to materials that say keep out of the reach of children. They must be exposed to different materials and experiences and learn how to utilize materials appropriately.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to ensure that all children have quality care and the ability to express themselves through language, art, music, and physical activity. With the emphasis on learning through play, they are building socialization and self-help skills that build up their self-esteem, which is needed to succeed in all areas of life.

Security

The safety and security of our children, families, and staff are of the utmost importance to us. To that end, we have a Fingerprint Detection system at the entry of the building that permits access only to authorized staff and families. Please do not let anyone follow you into the building. Everyone must use their fingerprint to get in to ensure the safety and security of the children and staff. Please notify a member of management if you see anything suspicious. In addition, the administration monitors The Meadows classrooms closely via a closed-circuit camera system.

Teachers and Staff

Our teachers are experienced professionals trained to guide your child's development and education. To maintain that high level of professionalism, we provide regular, ongoing training. All Meadows staff has been fingerprinted and has passed a background check. They also complete mandatory pre-service training. All children will be supervised by a member of The Meadows staff when in our care, regardless of their State classification/qualifications.

We encourage you to build positive relationships with your child's teacher and welcome your involvement in the classroom anytime. You are encouraged to have regular conversations and conferences with your child's teacher throughout the year.

It is against our policy for families to solicit our teachers to enter your private employ or that of another center at behest; If this should occur, there will be a \$5000 fee imposed on the family.

Curriculum

We utilize a play-based curriculum that focuses on Social Emotional learning as well as encouraging children to enjoy learning and help lead their learning. We also utilize the Colorado Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines to help guide the teachers. Children will not utilize the internet; however, teachers may show them information from the internet or other media.

Enrollment

The Meadows begins care at six weeks and accepts children until they go to Kindergarten. Our hours of operation are 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday for all-day child care and preschool, except for the days listed later in the Family Handbook.

Before enrollment, all families interested in attending the school must tour the facility. Families must disclose any expulsions or issues the child faces, including medical. If the child has had expulsions, the parent must explain what they have done to ensure their child's success. If the child has medical conditions, they must fill out an ADA packet and receive recommendations from their physician to be in a large group center. If the child is on an IEP/IFSP, it must be presented before enrollment. We do not discriminate based on disability in the admission/enrollment or access to our programs or services. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including the rights provided thereunder, are available from the Director. Should you require an interpreter to communicate with us or read any of our items, please let us know, and we will contact Developmental Pathways to provide an interpreter.

If the child is enrolled, the family must pay a registration fee and fill out enrollment paperwork, including immunizations, before the child's first day of attendance. A monthly hold fee of \$100 will be charged for children on the waiting list if enrollment is more than 30 days out from the initial tour. Registration is due annually in August, to continue enrollment.

A general health appraisal must be provided within the first 30 days of the child's attendance and following all APA guidelines. If your child does not have a medical home, please let us know, and we can provide you with a list of resources for getting medical insurance or care. It is the enrolling party's responsibility to ensure your child's file is current and complete. Authorizations and permissions must be filled out annually. Address and phone number changes must be reported as soon as possible.

All children attending The Meadows must be fully immunized or be on a written delay schedule. The only exception is a valid Medical Exemption.

Attendance

For your child to get the most out of The Meadows's experience and education, all children must be dropped off by 9 am daily. This ensures consistency for your child and the classroom as a whole. We have found that a speedy drop off set's children up for a better transition into the classroom. To help with this, we ask that you give your child a fond farewell and quickly exit the classroom. Tuition will be due in full based on your child's schedule. Schedules changes must be approved at least two weeks in advance by management and will only be authorized if there is space available in the class and staff. The adjusted tuition will be charged and is non-refundable if not used. If your child is not in attendance, you must let us know. If the absence is due to illness, we must be made aware of the condition; this allows us to clean correctly and inform other families of signs and symptoms to be mindful of.

We do understand that sometimes there will be a need for you to drop your child off at a later time. **Drop-off will not be allowed after 9:00 am unless prior arrangements (at least the day before) have been made with a member of the management team** so that we can let the teachers know and plan for meals and staffing. All notices need to be in writing through Brightwheel. We do not permit children to be dropped off during lunch or nap time.

Our staffing is based off the times that you have reported to us your child will be here. If your child is dropped off more than 15 minutes prior to their reported drop-off time, without prior authorization there will be a \$30 fee assessed to cover additional staffing as required by Colorado State Licensing.

If your family takes a long-term vacation or absence, tuition will be due at your child's full rate to hold their spot. If you choose not to pay this hold fee and disenroll, you will be added to the waitlist and re-enrollment cannot be guaranteed and tuition will be instated at the most current rate.

Procedure for Identifying Children

To ensure that all children are accounted for at all times, The Meadows staff marks each child present on the classroom attendance when the child arrives in the classroom. Head counts and name-to-face are taken at least every 30 minutes, and significant transition times throughout the day. One group of children will be allowed on the playground at a time. A staff member will walk the playground to ensure that all children have entered the main building. Name-to-face will be completed as children are re-entering their classroom. At the close of each day, a visual sweep will be conducted of the premises; each classroom, bathroom, and closet is checked to ensure that all children have been picked up.

In addition, all classroom attendance in Brightwheel is reviewed to ensure that attendance has been taken and accurate. You must escort your child to class and check in with the teacher to ensure that your child is in the care of the teacher.

Tuition

Tuition is due for your child at the beginning of each week/month, for the entire week/month. Tuition rates will be subject to change with reasonable notice. Tuition is due regardless of your child's attendance. Scheduled drop-in days are non-refundable if not used.

Payments with a credit card are subject to a fee of 3% of the tuition payment.

Debit, check, and ACH draft will have no fee. Tuition is considered late if it has not been received on or before your child's first day of attendance. A late payment fee will be assessed to your account of \$50/100 if tuition is not received on time. All tuition and fees must be paid to avoid interrupting your child's care.

If tuition and fees are not paid by the second day of the week or the third day of the month, your child will not be able to attend until tuition and fees are paid. If this happens on more than one occasion, you will be asked to pay for your child's tuition in advance of their attendance. You can be dis-enrolled from the center if this happens a third time. If tuition and fees are not paid before discontinuing enrollment from the center for any reason, your account will be turned over to a collection agency. We will make every effort to work with families to conclude satisfactorily before sending an invoice to collections. *Any account sent to collections or small claims court will automatically be assessed a fee of \$200 due to the time needed for paperwork filing and processing.*

A \$50 processing fee will be charged to all returned checks and cards declined for any reason.

This fee is in addition to any charges that our bank may charge. If more than two checks are returned within three months, I will be required to pay with a different payment method. All tuition is paid through automatic draft only for families enrolled after August 1st, 2018.

After one year of enrollment, you will be eligible for two weeks of vacation at a 50% discount. Vacation time cannot be broken up and must be used in one week. Vacation time renews in August with our school year.

Withdrawal

If you should decide to withdraw your child from The Meadows, you must provide a two-week written notice. Weeks are charged fully; we do not discount for partial weeks attended. Should you not give this notice, you will be charged for the final two weeks whether your child attends or not.

We require all families to keep a checking account or credit card on file to cover any fees or unpaid tuition left upon departure. We do our best to work with families and understand that financial burdens can be exceptionally stressful; therefore, we are more than happy to set up a weekly payment plan with any family.

If a family is asked to leave our school due to the conduct of the child or the family, all paid tuition is non-refundable

Accounts will be charged collections fees if a balance is unpaid after 30 days from the last day of attendance.

Checking In and Out

The safety of our families and staff is of utmost importance to us. Upon enrollment, you will be fingerprinted to gain entrance to the building. You will also be invited to join our platform to check on your child and receive daily reports. Should someone else need to pick up your child, they will need to present identification to be verified against your paperwork, and then a member of The Meadows staff will escort them to your child's class and take care of checking your child out. Children must be accompanied to and from their classroom by an adult and checked in with one or both of the teachers in the classroom. Children must be clocked in and out daily to ensure that all children are accounted for and that attendance is correct.

Late Pick Up

All children must be picked up before the close of the center. If you cannot pick up your child on time, please let us know as soon as possible who will be picking your child up in your absence. Please remember to have them bring their identification so that we can release your child. If your child is not picked up and we are unable to get in contact with you, we will move on to the people on your child's emergency contact list. If we cannot get in touch with someone who can pick up your child, we will have to notify the authorities, and we will follow their guidance. For all children picked up after 6 pm, there will be a fee of \$10 per minute. This fee must be paid

before the child's next day of attendance. If this occurs frequently, children can be dis-enrolled from the center.

Field Trips

We do not take children on Field Trips. We bring in outside vendors for the children during the year. We would leave the building if there was an emergency and had to evacuate the premises.

Holidays

The Meadows will be closed on Memorial Day, Juneteenth, The week of 4th of July, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, The Day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Eve through New Year's Day. If the holiday falls on a weekend, we will be closed either the day before or the day after the holiday. In addition, The Meadows will be closed on President's Day, Indigenous Peoples Day, and one Friday in August for in-service training. Tuition is due in full for the week of the holiday. We reserve the right to add additional closures with a two-week notice.

Visitors

All visitors to the center will be greeted and asked to sign in and state the purpose of their visit. To ensure the safety of children, families, and teachers, all visitors must present picture identification. A member of The Meadows staff shall always accompany visitors. Family members are encouraged to visit at any time and will be asked to follow the same procedures listed above. Your child will appreciate your attention and enthusiasm, and you'll enjoy seeing what goes on during our busy days. Visiting your child during classroom hours helps you get to know our teachers and other children and lets you keep in touch with your child's daily world. If the visit is too distressing for the child/children, the visitor will be asked to leave.

Emergencies

All staff members are trained on emergency procedures before employment at least once more per year. For children to respond to emergencies in a safe and orderly fashion, they will participate in different drills at different times throughout the day during the school year. Should an emergency affect The Meadows, we will notify you as soon as it is safe. We must have all of your correct contact information in the case of an emergency. Should we ever have to evacuate the building and you need to be reunified with your child, please ensure that you have proper identification, as your child will not be released without it. **Should the center need to close for an extended time, tuition is due unless otherwise communicated.** We will do our best to help you find temporary care. We may not be able to follow our policies in the case of an emergency. In the event of a pandemic, we will follow all CDC or Health Department mandates, and we may need stricter policies if it is in the school's best interest.

Evacuation Sites: [3D Church in Parker](#) Secondary: [South Metro Fire Station 45](#)

Reunification: A Meadows staff member will meet you at the site, verify your identification, and bring your child to you.

Car Seat Safety

The State of Colorado requires that all children up to 8 be in a car seat or booster seat. If The Meadows is aware that your child is not in a car seat/booster seat, we will first speak with you. If the situation continues, we will notify the authorities. If you need help getting a car seat, please let us know so that we can help you.

Weather Delays/Closures

The Meadows Early Learning Center takes the safety of our families, children, and staff very seriously. There are times that the weather in Colorado will make it unsafe for people to travel to or from The Meadows. We will follow the Douglas County School District for weather closures and delays. A delay means we will open at 8 am. We also reserve the right to close if we deem it necessary or to remain open if we disagree with the closure.

We may also need to close due to other emergencies or if it is unsafe to be in the school.

You will be able to find closure updates on Facebook, Brightwheel, and Channel 9News.

Tuition will remain due in full on the next open day.

Weather and the Outdoors

At The Meadows, we believe that children thrive when exposed to the outdoors and having contact with nature. To this end, children will go outside at least twice per day. Children will have time to commune with nature and the outdoors on their own, and they will be exposed to intentional learning. If the weather is above 92 or less than 32, we will not go outside, and the children will do gross motor in their classrooms. Families are asked to ensure that children are dressed for the weather and have weather-appropriate clothes in their cubby for weather changes.

We also ask that parents provide children with rain gear and outdoor weather gear, as it is crucial for children to experience the outdoors in different types of weather. Children will only be taken out of doors in inclement weather if they have the proper gear. If the NWS or local authorities deem it hazardous to be outdoors for any reason, children will use their classroom for gross motor.

Sunscreen must be provided and be labeled with your child's first and last name. We cannot use aerosol sunscreen. Children should come with sunscreen on in the morning. We will put sunscreen on before going outside at all other times.

Meals and Nutrition

The Meadows will supply all meals for children aged one and up through a catering service. The cost of all meals is included in your child's tuition. We believe everyone deserves access to high-quality food with carefully considered ingredients. We believe in food that tastes good and promotes growth and development.

Baby food, formula or breast milk, or special milk for children must be provided by the family. All bottles should be prepared the day before dropping off and labeled with your child's first and last name and the content. You may not add anything to your child's bottles, including food or medications. Should this be necessary, you must have a diet form filled out by a physician. If possible, breast milk should be brought in a container smaller than serving size so that none is wasted.

We begin offering water in sippy cups at six months, and by the age of 1, all children should be off of a bottle and on a sippy cup only. Exceptions can be made for children with a developmental delay with a health plan from their doctor.

We begin offering whole milk at age 1. Should your child have an allergy or other dietary issue that requires them to have special milk or remain on formula/breast milk, you must have a special diet form. Families must provide special milk and be brought in the original container and labeled.

No outside meals will be allowed in the center without a health plan from your child's doctor. This ensures that all meals are healthy and safe for other children who may have allergies. **Children should bring in a water bottle to ensure hydration throughout the day. If your child comes with a sippy cup or water bottle of juice, soda, or any substance other than water or approved milk, it will be disposed of.**

Meal times are 8 am for breakfast, 11-12 pm for lunch, and 3 pm for a snack. In infant rooms, meal times are as needed. We stop serving breakfast PROMPTLY at 8:30 am to allow the classrooms to begin the curriculum. Due to health code regulations, we cannot save breakfast for children because we cannot maintain the proper temperatures.

During classroom celebrations, we ask that you limit the number of sugary foods that you bring in and encourage healthy fun snacks.

Diapering and Toilet Training

Families must bring in all diapers and toileting supplies at The Meadows. We ask that families label all items to ensure they are used for the right child. Classroom staff will notify you when you are low on supplies, so your child does not run out. If your child runs out of supplies, you will be notified as soon as possible and must bring in a new supply before your child can be dropped off. Children's diapers are changed as needed and checked often. If your child requires or you would like your child to have diaper cream applied, you will need to provide that as well. There is also a medication form that you would have to fill out. Diaper cream can be used with only parent permission as a preventative; if your child develops a rash and needs cream, there is a medication form that will need to be filled out by you and your child's doctor. No baby powder will be applied. All creams must be in the original container and labeled. **Baby wipes must be provided in a hard plastic container due to licensing requirements and to prevent plastic bags in classrooms.**

Toileting is a team process here at The Meadows. When your child exhibits interest or signs of being ready to toilet train, we will partner with the family to plan what will work best for each child. As with all milestones, children toilet train at their own pace, and with the proper support at the center and at home, your child will soon master this skill. Children will not be forced into toilet training; all children are encouraged to try to toilet training. It is essential to respect all children's comfort levels during this journey so that the outcome is positive and they can succeed. Children can be offered incentives during toilet training if the family and staff determine that this is an effective strategy; however, The Meadows will not use food or candy of any kind as an incentive. We also ask that once your child begins toilet training, they no longer come in clothes that require snaps, such as onesies or overalls. Please be sure to provide pullups that Velcro on the sides. With 10-14 children in a classroom and diaper changes every two hours, our teacher can be changing anywhere from 60 to 90 diapers per day. Pullups that require pants and shoes to come off can take additional time away from supervision and curriculum.

To prevent the practice of borrowing diapers from other children in the school, parents will be charged \$2.00 per diaper if diapers have not been provided, the cost of which will be added to your child's tuition.

Clothing and Personal Items

Your child should arrive each day ready to learn. This means dressed in clothing that is comfortable for the temperature, with layers that can be removed. Please be mindful that children pulling up or are walking will require something on their feet to prevent slipping on our tile floor. For safety, all children who are walking must wear closed-toed shoes daily.

Children should wear simple, washable clothing and comfortable closed-toed shoes when coming to The Meadows. Children will be very active during the day and will likely get dirty. All clothing should be labeled and weather appropriate. We ask that you bring a change of clothes for your child each season and keep them in your child's cubby for accidents. You will also need to supply a wet bag for your child, in case of accidents. Please ensure your child is not wearing any jewelry that dangles or can get caught on play equipment or pulled by peers.

Children should not bring personal items to school, except for show and share days and nap time. All items brought into the school should be labeled with your child's first and last name. We ask that you do not send in anything too special or expensive as children get excited, and accidents happen. Any item for nap time needs to be small enough to fit in your child's cubby. We cannot be held responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items. Please ensure that all items are brought in a reusable tote or backpack, as we cannot have plastic bags.

Families are responsible for bringing in all items needed for their children. All necessary items are listed in the classroom welcome letter. Additional items may be required, and the list is not exhaustive. All items must be labeled and provided promptly. If items requested are not brought in, children may not be able to attend as we cannot provide items for all children. Items may include sippy cups for infants six months and older, extra clothes, diapers, wipes, creams, sunscreen, etc. If items are not labeled prior to drop off, the teachers will label them with a sharpie or other method of labeling.

Medication

When at all possible, children needing medication should be kept home. If the family and physician decide that children can be in care while on medication, the child is welcome to attend. To dispense over the counter medication, we will need your written permission. Written parental consent is only suitable for one week or three days when giving certain pain relievers. There may be some instances your written permission, and that of your child's physician will be needed. These permissions must be renewed after ten days. Medication can only be given at times dictated by a physician and cannot be given on an as-needed basis. All forms must be filled out and turned in to the center staff before medication can be administered. Medication will be stored in a secure area away from children. All medicines brought into the center must be in the original container, labeled, and marked with the child's first and last name. Please do not remove any paperwork listing the side effects. Please do not leave medication in your child's bag or cubby. Medication should only be left with members of management. Medicine and the forms should be reviewed before the family drops off so that they can be reviewed for accuracy. Medication will not be administered without the proper documents.

Illness

The Meadows is not licensed to provide care for ill children. Children exhibiting any of the following symptoms must be kept at home for at least 48 hours (this could increase to 72 if there is a health issue in the community or the school) or until symptom-free without medication. Please DO NOT give your child medication to mask their symptoms. Children and families should stay home when not feeling well.

- Fever of 100 or higher (99 or higher if multiple symptoms)
- Nasal/eye/ear discharge that is not clear
- Continuous/Severe or uncontrolled cough or Wheezing
- Vomiting (twice in 24 hours)
- Unexplained or concerning Rash
- Recurrent diarrhea (3 or more; or one if additional symptoms present)
- Any diagnosed communicable disease
- "Flu like," Covid, or other symptoms
- Head lice
- The inability to participate in class
- Children should remain home the day of vaccines in case of adverse reactions.
- Siblings should remain home if one is sick to ensure isolation of symptoms.

Children may NOT return early with a doctor's permission. At the very least, we will follow the guidance from the CDC and the Colorado Department of Public Health for exclusions. We may exclude children for a more extended period should management determine that is necessary. You must notify us as soon as possible if your child has been diagnosed so we can alert other families and staff and take the proper precautions at the center to avoid further spread. If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will notify you as soon as possible and expect your child to be picked up as quickly as possible, **within one hour**.

We post ALL illnesses on Brightwheel to maintain open communication and transparency. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding these diagnoses. Our illness policy may become stricter if the CDC, the local health department, or management deems that there is a pandemic or outbreak of any kind. We can also increase the strictness of our policies to do

what is best for the entire school, including quarantining whole families in the event of an exposure. **Violation of this policy could result in immediate termination. This policy is fluid and can change at any moment. Brightwheel will always have the most up-to-date information.**

Allergies/Asthma

If your child has allergies/asthma, please inform The Meadows staff upon enrollment so that we can take the proper precautions and have you complete the appropriate paperwork. All medication policies concerning medications will need to be followed. Allergy/Asthma health plans expire after one year and must be redone. Your child **CANNOT ATTEND** if we do not have the proper medication and documentation to ensure their safety.

Injuries and Accidents

Our staff is trained to be watchful and take precautions to prevent accidents and injuries. Children receive instruction on safe practices at The Meadows and are guided away from dangerous behavior. Although safeguards are in place, accidents and injuries are still possible. Should your child have an accident or suffer a minor injury while at The Meadows, we will administer basic first aid, and you will be notified either via phone/Brightwheel or accident report at pick up, depending on the severity of the injury. If your child needs non-emergency medical care, we will call you promptly so you can arrange for them to be seen by a doctor. In an emergency, we will call 911 and notify you. In the event of a hospitalization, we ask that you stay in contact with us as we care deeply about your child and would like to help with the healing process.

Program Schedule

With the exception of meal time, nap time, and outdoor time, each classroom's schedule is based on the needs of the children in the class. The schedule can and will change with the needs of the children in the classroom. Each class will strive to offer group learning time, individual learning time, free play, and outside/gross motor time. Nap time will be provided for all children from at least 12-2:30, except infants, who will be allowed to have their natural wake

and sleep pattern. The Colorado State Licensing Department requires that we allow children a minimum of 30 minutes of rest time. While some children may not nap on weekends or at home, we ask that nap schedules be allowed to form as needed while at school. **Children will not be woken up from naps except for doctor appointments.** Children are encouraged to have a full-time schedule, especially in the younger classrooms; this will help them with adjustment and consistency, as well as forming a connection with their caregivers and classmates.

SIDS and SUIDS Prevention/Reduction

To help prevent and reduce the risk of SIDS and SUIDS in the child care setting, the following policies have been implemented:

- Infants shall be placed on their backs to sleep.
- Infants who take a pacifier will be encouraged to take a pacifier during sleeping.
- Infants are only allowed to sleep in a crib.
- No items can be in or over the crib. Children may not wear hooded outfits while sleeping.
- Infants may only use sleep sacks as covers.
- Sheets should fit the mattress snugly.
- Infants cannot be given bottles in their cribs.
- Infants, while sleeping, should be checked on often (less than every 15 min).
- Infants should not be exposed to cigarette smoke either at home or at the school. If a person is a smoker; they should wear a smoking jacket, put long hair up, and wash their hands before picking up or caring for a child. If possible, smoking should be done outside and away from children.

If your child has a medical condition that contradicts this policy, they must have a health plan from their doctor. If you have any additional questions regarding SIDS/SUIDS, you can view the website www.sidsandkids.org

Video and Television Viewing Policy

Television and video viewing will be limited to 30 minutes per week in classrooms with children aged two and over. Television and video will not be allowed in classrooms with children under two. Any television or video viewing will enhance what the children are learning in their current curriculum or during special events. All Television or Video should be G/PG rated and previously reviewed by the teacher for content. Exceptions may be made for special occasions and holidays. An alternate activity will be offered during the viewing time. Supervision will remain the same as if it were not a special occasion.

Positive Guidance

The Meadow staff will use a social-emotional-based procedure for guidance with all children. Our goal is to find out the reason behind children's behavior and correct it so that the outcome is positive. Staff will always use a positive approach with children and encourage correct and positive behaviors. Discipline will be positive guidance, redirection, and consequences will also be natural and logical. Children are encouraged to work together to solve all problems in the classroom and support each other. Staff will model correct behaviors and guide children when they are working together to solve classroom issues. Behavioral expectations are consistent with the child's development and age. We will with our families, create and maintain a program-wide culture that promotes children's mental health, social, and emotional well-being; Many things can impact a child's behavior. If your child is experiencing any changes at home that could affect their behavior at school, please communicate with us.

If it becomes clear that the child needs some additional strategies in the classroom to help them succeed, the child will be placed on a behavior plan in which the parent and the pediatrician are the first resources. To the extent feasible, every effort will be made to have the children remain in the center, including mental health evaluations or screenings by the appropriate agency. Once strategies have been given, meetings will continue with the staff, management, and parents to ensure a team-based support plan for the child. Should these strategies fail or parents refuse participation, the family will need to find alternative care for their children.

Transitions

When your child is ready to transition to the next classroom, we will inform you approximately two weeks in advance via letter and verbal communication. We will have your child visit the new classroom throughout the two weeks to get to know the teacher, routine, and the new children. We will also have you visit the new room for the same reasons! If you have any questions or concerns during this time, don't hesitate to ask.

After your child has been in the new class for a while, please check in with the teacher or management to let them know how it is going. When your child is ready for new milestones (solids, toilet training, etc.), the teacher will communicate with you and create a plan for moving forward. Families are expected to follow our transition plans for milestones, and if there are any concerns should meet with the classroom teachers and management team. **Families refusing to cooperate with transition plans are grounds for termination of care.**

Communication

Open communication is a large part of your family's experience at The Meadows. You will receive daily communication about your child's experiences at the center. You are also encouraged to have discussions with your child's teacher and the management at the school regularly. Please ensure that you have enabled notifications on Brightwheel, our primary mode of daily communication. Brightwheel will always have the most up-to-date policies. Keeping you updated on your child's activities and progress helps to continue the connection at home. We will often send home notes or emails regarding our center's upcoming events. If you need a language translator to communicate with our staff adequately, please let us know, and we will work to accommodate you. We currently have on-call Spanish, German, French, and Italian translators. Should we have a classroom with a dominant language other than English, we will have a teacher in the room who speaks the dominant language.

We will offer Family/Teacher conferences twice per year in May and November to discuss your child's development and classroom progress. Should there be any concern about your child, we will work with Child Find, Developmental Pathways, or an agency of your choice to have your child assessed additionally for any needed services. We have an open-door policy, and we encourage you to use it!

The handbook is updated as necessary. We do our best to communicate all changes and updates. Brightwheel will always have the most up-to-date policies and information.

Please do not communicate with our teachers through text message, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, or any other type of social media. Our teachers must have boundaries between work and home, which must be respected.

If you have any information to share with your child's teacher, we ask that you send a Brightwheel or communicate at pick up, if it cannot be shared in a timely manner at drop off, as our teachers are supervising children.

Should you have a concern or procedural complaint with the school or a teacher, you should speak to management. We will do our best to work with you to come to a satisfactory conclusion. If you have a licensing concern, please see the last page of this handbook.

Family Conduct

To ensure that you, your child, our staff, and all that enter The Meadows enjoy a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment, anyone entering The Meadows must only engage in actions that demonstrate respect for others. Behavior that is inappropriate, illegal, threatening, or disrespectful in nature or language that is abusive or instigative is not acceptable. We are a drama-free center, and if you or anyone associated with you brings drama into the center, you will be asked to seek alternative care.

We expect our families to be our partners in their children's care. We need active participation and communication from our families. If families cannot communicate or participate in our program, you may be asked to find other care.

We recommend that you do not engage in social networking with your child's teacher to avoid any issues now or in the future. Babysitting is allowed after hours unless it affects the relationships within the school or classroom, and the teacher should not feel pressured.

If you or any other person appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at pick-up, you will be asked to have someone come and get you and your child. If you refuse a ride and leave with your child, we will notify the police department and child protection services with all information required. We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone, without warning, that violates this policy.

Custody/Legal Issues

At The Meadows, our first responsibility is to the children. When custody issues arise, we are here for your child and family, but we will stay out of all custody issues. If custody issues or restraining orders involve your child, please let us know so we can be prepared. Both parents listed on the enrollment paperwork will have full access to the child's file, documents, and belongings and access to the child's teachers.

Unless notified otherwise, both parents are fully responsible for the full payment of tuition. If your family is interested in creating two separate accounts for billing, we will need this documented in writing, signed by both parties, and notarized.

If an enrolled family seeks any litigation or advice of an attorney against the school or one of its employees, care will be terminated immediately.

Your Child's First Day

Any new thing can be scary for young children. Here are a few things that you can do to make the first day easier on your child:

- Arrive together slightly early so that you have plenty of time with your child
- If your child seems fine at drop-off, we recommend leaving quickly to avoid causing any distress.
- Remind them that you are going to come back.
- Please talk with your child about all the new friends they will make.
- Be excited! If you are enthusiastic, they will be too.
- Expect tears. The first days and weeks can be tricky. It will take some time.
- If they need a security item, let them bring it.
- Bring in a family picture for the family board in their classroom.
- Call to check on them as often as you feel you need to. You can either speak to the classroom teacher or the Director.
- Take a picture! This is an exhilarating day for you and your child; you will want to have the memory.
- Be happy that you have chosen the right place for your child and know they are in safe hands, will make new friends, learn, and have fun!

Acknowledgment and Receipt of Family Handbook

I, _____ acknowledge that I have received The Meadows Family Handbook. I understand that a lack of enforcement of a certain policy at any time does not indicate that the particular policy is no longer in effect. If we do not exercise a right provided by this agreement, that does not mean we have given up that right. And failure to enforce one or more terms of the handbook does not waive the right to enforce any other terms. The Meadows Early Learning Center reserves the right to make any policy or financial changes at any time when it is in the school's best interest and will not compromise the quality of the children's care.

I, _____ have read and understand all the policies in The Meadows Family Handbook.

Child's Name

Parent's Name

Date

Signature

Director's Name

Signature

Date

Your child was recently enrolled in a childcare program that the Colorado Department for Human Services licenses. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for operating a childcare facility. If you have not done so, please ask to see the license.

Most licensed facilities make every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. Unfortunately, on a rare occasion, an incident of abuse may occur. If you believe your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your county social services department. The telephone number to report child abuse in your county is listed below.

Douglas County Human Services
4400 Castleton Court
Castle Rock, CO 80109
303-688-4825

Colorado law requires that childcare providers report all known or suspected child abuse or neglect cases.

For additional information regarding licensing or if you have any concerns about a child care facility, please consult the Colorado Office of Early Learning at 1575 S. Sherman St. Denver, Colorado, or by phone at 303-866-5958.