



CRAFTSBURY SAPLINGS

A Community Children's Center

Family Handbook

2023 - 2024 Academic Year

Welcome!

Craftsbury Saplings' mission is to provide childcare to families in Craftsbury and surrounding communities, emphasizing community collaboration and exploration of the natural world. We value and nourish each child's innate wisdom, guiding them toward lifelong learning.

Saplings is a not-for-profit community children's center guided by a board of directors--a mix of parents and other community leaders. The Board meets once a month to uphold the mission of the organization and ensure its financial viability.

If you'd like to receive text message reminders about important dates and center closures, opt in [here](#).

Thank you for choosing Craftsbury Saplings. We look forward to getting to know you and your family!

Sincerely,

Carey Crozier, Board Chair

Melissa Jacobs, Executive Director

Emily Gletsos, Program Director

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ABOUT SAPLINGS

Guiding Principles

Our work with children is guided by the following principles to ensure a nurturing environment for the children in our care.

1. Child-centered
2. Emergent curriculum - focused on the needs and interests of our children
3. Intentional spaces - age appropriate and organized to foster growth and learning
4. Inspired by our surrounding community
5. Peaceful, direct communication, and supportive relationships
6. Inclusivity
7. Nutrition through healthy, local food, and gardening
8. Experiential learning
9. Nature and outdoor exploration

Definition of Family

In this handbook, we refer to “family” as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best interest, and responsibility of a child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided year-round from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, with the core day from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm with optional extended care for an hour in the morning or afternoon.

Holidays

We are closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. When holidays fall on weekends, Craftsbury Saplings will be closed on the alternate dates selected by the State of Vermont for government employees.

We are closed during the week of July 4th, the last week of December, and for a total of 7 days of inservice over the summer, 2 days in June and a week at the end of August. All additional closures are detailed in our [yearly calendar](#).

Admission & Enrollment

The [full enrollment packet](#) (Returning student packet) must be completed and submitted before your child's first day of enrollment.

Based on availability, Saplings admits children from 15 months to 5 years of age. We maintain a waitlist for interested families when there is no enrollment availability.

Inclusion

Craftsbury Saplings believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging in child care. Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, gender expression, religion, national origin, or ability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs. However, we must ensure that we can provide a safe, supportive environment. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage the full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At Craftsbury Saplings equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers and staff are hired in compliance with state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff *minimum* certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Lead Teachers	Completion of 21 college credit hours with early childhood or related field focus	1 years
Assistant Teacher	Completion of 3 college credits in early childhood or course in the fundamentals of early childhood education	1 year

Program staff participates in ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected to or sanctioned by Craftsbury Saplings.

Staff-to-Child Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks to ensure alertness, and to support a healthy work-life balance, during which time another staff member is scheduled to teach children.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Staff-to-Child	Max. Group Size
0-18 months	1:4	8
18-30 months (1.5-2.5 years)	1:4	10
24-36 months (2-3 years)	1:5	10
32-42 months (2.5-3.5 years)	1:6	15
36 months- Kindergarten (3-5 years)	1:10	20

Communication & Family Partnership

Bulletin Boards: Located in both classrooms, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, staff schedules, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters: Newsletters provide center updates, events, and announcements. Newsletters are sent via email or paper update. Please reach out to staff if you are unable to receive email and would prefer a paper copy.

Family Visits & Open Door Policy: Family participation is encouraged. You are invited to visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child during regular program hours. Each visitor must sign in and sign out to maintain the safety and protection of our children.

Conferences: Family and teacher conferences occur twice a year during the school year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time and we encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Child Records: You have full access to your child's records as required by state licensing regulations. We will produce records within five business days of the time of your request.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, reasoning, and critical thinking. We encourage understanding of that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others. The learning environment is intended to both reflect and affirm the individual families in our classrooms and expose children to experiences and ideas outside of their known worlds.

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we will conduct at least 60 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood 2 times a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. Permission slips for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities. Proper seat belts and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Transitions

Your child's transition to child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD). Rarely, a video may be used to demonstrate a lesson or stimulate discussion. All electronic media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Any electronic media use would not be the norm.

Cultural Relevance and Social Justice

We provide a learning environment that both reflects and honors the cultures, languages and backgrounds represented in our classrooms and exposes children to the diversity of lived experience not present in the school community in a fair, accurate and respectful manner. We utilize books, music, games, art and a wide range of activities to engage children in this learning. We integrate developmentally appropriate anti-bias activities into our curriculum and support the development of critical thinking skills.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for the many cultural practices and beliefs of children, families, staff and community members. It is our desire that all staff and families feel welcome to share their unique family holiday rituals or celebrations with the school community. If your family would like to include the classroom in a holiday celebration or ritual, please contact the Program Director to arrange a time to come into the classroom and share a holiday tradition with the community.

Birthday party celebrations are exciting for young children. Craftsbury Saplings celebrates a child's birthday through a variety of ways including: song, crafts, and with sharing of snacks and food. Birthdays may include cakes and cupcakes that are served after a healthy snack. Parents may provide a birthday treat or the children in the class may prepare a treat for the special child's day. Families should let their child's teacher know in advance if they will be bringing a treat. We ask that parents adhere to any classroom food and allergy restrictions.

Toilet Training

We use an approach to toilet "learning" that we believe is the most advantageous to the child because it

allows for independence and experiential learning. We encourage children to wear cotton training pants or underpants for at least part of the day. It is easier for children to feel that they are wet when in underpants so they can start to recognize the feeling and learn some control over their bladder. Underwear is easier to change than diapers and gives the child an opportunity to assist in dressing themselves at an early age. They can quickly become proficient at pulling their underpants up and down, which will greatly aid in their self-confidence and independence. We want to make it as easy as possible for the child to succeed in their personal care and physical independence.

We give regularly scheduled bathroom breaks where children are invited, never forced, to use the toilet, and we bring them to the bathroom as soon as they are wet.

We give the child whatever time is necessary for toilet-training without being judgmental. In learning anything new, there is a period of absorption of information before it can be constructively used. The length of time for this varies with each person. If the proper information is given at an early age, and the child is allowed the time it takes to control all body parts, awareness, and control will come naturally and without a great deal of conscious work.

GUIDANCE

Guidance Philosophy

Craftsbury Saplings embraces the whole child. We are committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and emotionally safe environment. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community. We help them feel emotional safety with their emotions, whether they be anger, sadness, jealousy, etc.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear guidelines, and involving children in problem-solving helps children develop their ability to become self-disciplined and responsible members of the school community. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people and property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Discipline Policy

The goal of the Center is for each child to develop a sense of respect for themselves and others, develop emotional literacy and communication skills, and to find success in the social environment of the classroom. Teachers approach conflict with positivity and strive to create an environment that models expected behavior, helps children to enter and exit peer groups with increasing skill and satisfaction, and learn to live in a respectful and cooperative manner. We have a non-authoritarian approach to education. We do not use extreme incentives, rewards, punishments, or coercive behavior. Emotional growth is a priority, and we offer emotional support for frustration, separation, connection, cooperation, and self-reliance, and foster age-appropriate conflict resolution. Through appropriate adult/child interaction, anticipatory guidance, well-established guidelines for appropriate behavior, and active listening to children's responses, teachers get to know each child and what additional limits and adjustments are necessary.

In the event of a conflict any child involved will be given time to sort out their feelings as well as figure out positive conclusions and redirection. "Time out" will not be given. If a child is being unsafe to other children and not able to shift their behavior, it will be offered to take some time with a teacher or alone somewhere to

cool off depending on what works best for the child in that situation.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Craftsbury Saplings has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child's behavior becomes problematic for the health and safety of individuals and/or the community, we intervene immediately to support all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. It is our experience that challenging behavior is often the way a child expresses an unmet need. As such, staff work to understand what need the child is expressing through their behavior and work to meet it. Limits and expectations are clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. If you have any concerns about social dynamics or challenging behaviors with your child, please contact the Program Director.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding them only for as long as is necessary to calm the child and ensure the safety of the situation.

Safe Touch

At Craftsbury Saplings, touch is an important part of relationship building, comforting, regulating, learning and play. All staff at Craftsbury Saplings will engage in age-appropriate, safe touch when engaging with children in our care. Age-appropriate safe touch is gentle, positive, natural, and consensual, when there is not an immediate safety risk, and does not promote a teacher/student power dynamic. Staff will use language to encourage the learning of appropriate, consensual (non-verbal and verbal), and safe touch. Appropriate touch does not assert power over a child.

Staff will engage in role modeling of appropriate touch and articulate consent and necessary touch. For example: "I am picking you up because I don't want you to get hurt."

Appropriate touch at Craftsbury Saplings includes but is not limited to: Hugging, handholding, patting or rubbing backs, and assisting in physical activities such as dressing and toileting.

Examples of inappropriate touching include but not limited to: Any form of physical punishment, tickling, restricting or physically restraining the child's movement in any way unless referenced in restraint policy, violating laws against adult/child physical/sexual contact, and forcing of hugs or kisses.

Children should not be carried unless necessary for comfort or safety.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. If in an extreme case where a child is having dangerous behavior repeatedly in a way where the child is not able to be safe or needs one-on-one attention for a significant amount of time, the family will be asked to come pick-up their child.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

In the event a child's needs or behavior are consistently outside of the realm of support for Craftsbury Saplings after attempts to adjust care within the context of our program, staff will notify parents in writing of the need to find a more suitable setting for care.

TUITION & FEES

Payment

The Center is a nonprofit organization that is dependent upon tuition for its operation. Tuition rates are set by the Center's Board of Directors and take effect at the start of the fall academic year. Families should plan for incremental adjustments to tuition annually to account for the cost of living and changes to the cost of programming.

Tuition does not vary on partial weeks, like Thanksgiving and other shorter weeks, and the full weekly tuition is due on those weeks. The Center has included three tuition-free weeks that take place when the program is closed to children - the week of July 4th, the last week of December, and the last full week in August.

Invoices are sent out at the end of each two week billing period. Payment will be due within one week of receipt, with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Current payment options include ACH, credit card, or check. Cash is not accepted.

Financial Aid

We strongly encourage all families to apply for Vermont's State Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP). This program reduces childcare costs for families and supports our program financially. To apply for CCFAP, contact the following resources for your town of residence. An extended list of resources by town are [linked here](#).

Lamoille Family Center

Residents of: **Elmore, Wolcott, Hyde Park, Craftsbury, Hardwick**

Last Names A-F: Debbie Trombly, 802-730-7806

Last Names G-Z: Kerri O'Halloran, 802-888-5229

Kingdom Care Child Connection @ Umbrella NEK

Residents of: **Lyndon, Sheffield, St. Johnsbury**

Last Names A-L: Cathy LaBounty, 802-748-1992 x 321 or cathy@umbrellanek.org

Last Names M-Z: Phoebe Courtot, 802-748-1992 x 323 or phoebe@umbrellanek.org

Residents of: **Newport, Derby, Irasburg, Albany, Glover, Greensboro**

Last Names A-Z: Jackie Jeorg, 802-487-9041 or jackie@umbrellanek.org

At Craftsbury Saplings, we are committed to supporting all families to have access to high-quality childcare in their communities. We strive to create a program that is financially self-supporting, accessible to families of all income levels, and supports staff with living wages, benefits, and incentives.

After you have applied for CCFAP, if you still have unmet financial needs please reach out to the Executive Director, melissa@craftsburysaplings.com, in order to explore additional options.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

We prefer to receive payment via Automatic Debit (ACH). All returned checks or rejected ACH or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$30. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions within a month period will result in the suspension of enrollment if payment is not made within 48 hours.

Tuition for Illness Absences

When a child is out sick, tuition will be billed, as the Center's expenses do not change.

If a child is out sick for more than three days, a family is responsible to pay full tuition for the first three days, and has the option to pay what they can for 3 subsequent days per trimester. Days are cumulative on a trimester basis (September through December, January through May, June through August) and credits are offered at the end of the trimester to be applied to your account. No more than 3 days per trimester will be credited per trimester.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absences

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 am, please call us at 802.586.2875 or email your classroom teacher and melissa@craftsburysaplings.com. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Withdrawal

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Families are responsible for payment for 2 weeks after notice of withdrawal has been sent.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions as to where the records should be sent is required.

Unexpected Closure and Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced by email and/or text message. We will follow the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) decisions about weather related school closures. We require tuition payment for unexpected closure days.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

PICK-UP & DROP-OFF

Sign In/Out

Please be certain that your child's classroom teacher is aware of when you are arriving or departing the program with your child. This allows them to sign your child into the classroom and assume responsibility over your child.

Arrival

Extended care arrival is between 7:30 am and 8:30 am, general arrival is between 8:25 and 8:45 for Pre-school and 8:30-9:00 for toddlers. Please do not arrive after 9:00 am. Our experience has shown that children who consistently arrive after the rest of the group have a more challenging time entering and joining in activities.

Saying goodbye: Each child will approach goodbyes in a different way. Some children handle it fairly well, some show signs of distress and then settle in shortly after, and for some it can be a real challenge. We are here to support you and your child's needs. We will help you establish a routine that works for your family for saying goodbye at school.

Departure

Pick up times are between 3:00 pm and 3:30 pm, or 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm for extended care.

Just as it is important to consider arrival time, it is important to consider the end of the day. Children—and adults—can be tired and extra time and patience is required. For children who find it challenging to leave, it can be helpful to establish a routine with the help of the teacher and stick with it. Late pick-up means that

staff need to stay over their scheduled work time. Please be respectful of pick-up times to support our staff.

Release of Children

Children will only be released to an authorized person. It is important to list those people who are authorized to pick up your child on your child's enrollment form or communicated directly to the Executive Director. If the person picking up your child is not known to the teacher, teachers will ask for photo identification.

In an emergency situation, arrangements can be made verbally for a person not listed to pick up your child. *This person will be required to show a picture ID.* If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up a child, the child will remain under the supervision of the teacher. A supervisor will speak to the individual and explain the policy that no child will be released without verified authorization from the parent. Families are requested not to ask the Center to release their child to a sibling who is under eighteen.

Emergency Contacts

Families must provide the Center with the name, town of residence, and daytime telephone numbers of TWO people to contact in an emergency if the family cannot be reached. The family provides this information on the child's enrollment form. Be sure to update as necessary. See more information on Emergency procedures in the [Emergencies section](#) of the document.

Clothing

We encourage lots of active play, so children should be dressed comfortably in clothing that can be washed and will not cause alarm if splattered with paint, mud, or other potentially staining substances.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Clothing borrowed from Saplings will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center. Even with labeling, clothing can go astray, so families are asked to make sure that their child's clothing does not have particular sentimental or monetary value.

What to Bring

To empower children to care for their personal items, it can be helpful for children to arrive with a small backpack that they can carry themselves and fits in their cubbies. Please have a bag each day with the following labeled items:

- **Toddlers:**
 - 2 sets of extra clothing in separate zip lock bags including socks and underwear
 - Warm shirt layer (sweater, sweatshirt)
 - For toilet training children - additional pants and underwear
 - At least six diapers if applicable.
- **Preschoolers:**
 - One to two complete change of clothes including socks and underwear

- o Warm shirt layer (sweater, sweatshirt)
- **Clothing and supply suggestions for all children:**
 - o Closed toe shoes for outdoor work and play no sandals
 - o One pair of indoor shoes - for monthly evacuation drills, children will wear these outdoors
 - o Labeled water bottle

Fall/Spring Additional Items: pair of rainboots, rain pants, rain jacket, sunscreen and bug spray. *Note: We have rain suits available at Saplings if your child does not have full-coverage rain gear.*

Winter Additional Items: Snow pants (extras if you have!), warm socks (not cotton), long underwear, warm snow boots, neck warmer/balaclava, hat, 2-3 pairs of mittens one pair should be waterproof. We will go outside every day, rain or shine, snow or sleet, so please bring clothes so your child will stay comfortable and warm. If it is below 10 degrees we will not go outside.

Rest Time Items: In a compact bag with handles, please send in with your child a sheet and blanket. You may also send a small pillow and one comfort item if desired for rest time. Nap linens will be sent home on Fridays (or the last day your child attends the program in a week) for laundering and should be returned with your child the following week.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a cubby. Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center except for one sleep comfort item that should remain with sleep materials. Any toys that are brought to school will need to stay in a child's cubby or nap bag.

NUTRITION

Meals

Food preparation and mealtimes are important components of the Center's culture and curriculum. While meals offer an opportunity for children to learn concepts in areas such as nutrition, math, science, and language, their greatest value comes from the social interactions and cultural competencies that result from the shared experience of sitting with others and sharing a meal.

The Center offers children a morning snack (between 9:00-10:00), lunch (between 11:30-12:30), and afternoon snack (between 2:30-3:15). Menus are sent out via email weekly. If families are aware that their child might not eat a particular meal that is offered, they are welcome to send in a lunch. There is a refrigerator provided in the kitchen for this purpose. Please inform staff if a child has their own meal.

Meals are served family-style. Children serve themselves and learn to self-regulate by observing their own hunger and fullness cues. Staff members encourage children to try new foods, but never force, coax, or bribe children to eat. Experience has shown that children will often try a new food after they have been exposed to it on previous occasions. Staff members do not praise children for finishing food or cleaning

their plates. Mealtime is never used to discipline or scold children.

The food is prepared at the Center and is based on Federal nutritional guidelines. The Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and families are required to fill out the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#) form each year as part of their child's ongoing enrollment at the Center. We serve a variety of healthy and appealing foods. All of our meals are prepared from whole ingredients—often from scratch and locally and seasonally sourced.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, including religious dietary restrictions, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

If a food restriction is medically necessary, we need a note from the doctor and we can offer a substitution. In these cases Saplings can still be reimbursed by the state for meals for this child. If the food restriction is preferred but not medically necessary, Saplings will not be eligible for reimbursement from the CACFP.

Food allergies can be life-threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. See section of handbook on [food allergies](#).

HEALTH

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children and center staff, you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. Please reach out to center staff if you have questions whether your child should attend programming when exhibiting symptoms.

Upon arrival at the center staff will observe children for symptoms of illness or injury. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list.

- Illness that prevents your child from normal participation in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (99.5°F or higher under the arm, 100.4°F or higher on forehead or in the ear) during previous 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
- Diarrhea
- Child has difficulty breathing or a severe cough
- Vomiting – during the previous 24 hours.
- Scabies, chicken pox, impetigo
- Head lice until after the start of treatment
- Mouth sores with related drooling.
- Rash with with oozing open wounds, joint pain, bruising, tender red area of skin
- Sore Throat with inability to swallow or excessive drooling
- A physician or other health professional has written an order that a child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours or more.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours or more.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;

- o The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. (We have a form that must be filled out for medications to be administered at the center, please obtain forms from the Staff Coordinator or Program Director.)
- There is a release form in our Enrollment Package that allows for administration of ibuprofen and/or acetaminophen in an emergency situation (e.g. you child spikes a fever at school and you are not able to pick them up for two hours). Staff will obtain additional verbal consent before administering those medications.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

SAFETY

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. All regular center staff working directly with children will be trained in child and infant first aid and CPR. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of head injury, swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance. We will contact you or an emergency contact as soon as the emergency allows.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior for the situation. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten. For continued incidents of biting, we will work together with the families to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

Our role at Craftsbury Saplings is to support our families. If you are in need of resources, please reach out to us so we can connect you with local support.

As childcare professionals the staff at Craftsbury Saplings are mandated by law to report to state agencies if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. This includes physical injury, emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, inadequate food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, or abandonment.

In the event that Saplings makes an abuse or neglect report, the child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our

center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident center staff will contact 911 for emergency support. Additionally, the Center will contact the family and/or listed emergency contacts and/or the child's physician. The family's authorization for staff to contact your child's physician and take emergency medical measures are deemed necessary as part of your application. It is critically important that families keep the Center updated of any changes in any of their telephone numbers, including cell phones and workplace numbers.

Emergency Contacts: Families must provide the Center with the name, address and home and daytime telephone numbers of TWO people to contact in an emergency if the family cannot be reached. The family provides this information on the child's enrollment form. Be sure to update as necessary.

We have developed an Emergency Response Plan for a variety of emergency situations both natural and human-caused. A copy of the Emergency Response Plan is on file for you to view upon request.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with hardwired combination smoke and CO alarm with battery backup, all exits are marked with internally illuminated exit signs with battery backup and emergency lights.

Our fire evacuation plan is updated on a yearly basis. We conduct monthly evacuation drills with children and staff.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

We are committed to providing the highest quality child care we are able. To obtain a copy of the Child Care Licensing Regulations for Center-Based Child Care and Preschool Programs, please visit the Child Development Division Laws and Regulations [website](#).

If you have a concern about your child's treatment while in our care, we ask that you speak to a teacher first. If your concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, then you should contact the Director. If your concern is still not addressed to your satisfaction, you may contact the Board of Directors via phone or email see contact information on our website Craftsburyaplings.org.

You may also contact the Child Care Consumer Hotline at 1-800-649-2642 to share any concerns you may have with the Department of Children and Families Child Development Division.

Center Policies

Our center policies are reviewed yearly and updated as needed. Policies not contained in this document are available for review upon request to the Center Director.