

NECK OF THE WOODS

Center Based Childcare & Enrichment Program



Family & Caregiver Guidebook

Neck Of the Woods (NOW)
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PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

WELCOME TO NECK OF THE WOODS

At Neck of the Woods, we firmly believe in a strengths-based approach to education and learning, to social and emotional growth for children as well as their families and communities. Here, in the heart of the Mad River Valley of Vermont, we see ourselves as a vital thread woven into the tapestry of our community. With a child-centered approach to teaching a sense of place, a sense of self, and a sense of wonder, we encourage deep communication skills, collaborative play (& work!), natural affinity-building, academic growth, and holistic wellness. With inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach to education, in connection with Howard Gardener's Multiple intelligences, we strive to provide a high quality, developmentally appropriate environment. Our environment and our curriculum values the rights of children, emphasizes respectful communication, empowerment and resilience as key pieces of a healthy child that grows into a happy, healthy and well-adjusted adult.

THE 6 FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS OF NOW'S PROGRAMMING

Community

The bedrock of our values is the idea that Neck of the Woods is an integral part of our community. This includes understanding our role as partners to parents, caregivers, families, schools, and other community organizations that help grow children and families. As such, we seek to partner with parents, schools and community organizations to best support children as they grow.

Support

Individuals, families and children face challenges throughout life. As a connected support system for families, community and staff, Neck of the Woods is a resource to assist in navigating difficult situations. This may come in the form of skill-building classes, parenting/community support groups and training, and this will include connecting children, families and staff to the right help outside of our organization. NOW has a commitment to

- supporting the mental health and well-being of families, community and staff.
- providing staff with a livable wage, above the local area average salary for child care providers.

- recognizing that a liveable wage and affordable childcare are two very important factors that play a vital role in the health and well-being of our families, staff and children.

Empowerment

Neck of the Woods harnesses growthful empowerment in children, families, community and staff through self discovery and skill-building techniques, the modeling of strong communication, engaging environments with opportunities to contribute strengths and exercise new skills. Included in our curriculum are conflict resolution techniques, empowerment of children so they are able to grow, learn, take risks, make mistakes, and master new learning opportunities.

Resilience

Neck of the Woods offers a model for working through difficult moments, not only for the children we serve, but for staff and families as well. The ability to recover and rebound from difficult or challenging experiences is a key component to becoming a successful adult and community member. It is our hope that through practice and modeling both adults and children involved in our community will be able to foster resilience, and to find strength within themselves and also within a community that rallies together and supports one another.

Empathy

Neck of the Woods firmly believes that beyond all else the most important skill we teach is empathy. Like any muscle, empathy is something that must be practiced and exercised to grow and define. Empathy is a skill that, when developed, opens the door for healthy communication, positive relationships, growthful experiences and more opportunities throughout life.

Environmental Sustainability

We at Neck of the Woods are lucky enough to have stumbled on an offer to own a beautiful campus along the Mad River, with 11 acres, solar panels, and a building built to eventually be netzero. While we move in that direction, we believe that climate change must inform our decisions about infrastructure, programming, planning, and how we teach about the future. Children are aware, and we do them no service by hiding this change from them; rather, we work to give hope for the future by being proactive. Further, we ascribe to David Sobel's theory of place-based education and E.O. Wilson's biophilia, as described by Sobel, here:

*“Nature programs should invite children to
make mud pies, climb trees, catch frogs, paint their faces*

with charcoal, get their hands dirty and their feet wet. They should be allowed to go off the trail and have fun. Second, environmental educators need to focus way more on hands-on experience with children and way less on systematic knowledge. Or at least understand that systematic knowledge can emerge organically from lots of hands-on experience.”

(<https://orionmagazine.org/article/look-dont-touch1/>)

Through hands-on experience in the natural world, children learn to love and care for the earth, and Sobel asserts, evidence shows they later come to fiercely protect what they love. By making the simple tasks of ecological stewardship routine and unemotional, we make protecting the environment part of our day and make it automatic. When we add in the love of nature & deep understanding of ecology developed through experience, children are equipped to tackle climate change in their own ways, and we get to re-experience the joy of discovery along the way, as they share their finds and adventures with all of us.

HISTORY OF NECK OF THE WOODS

Neck Of the Woods (NOW) started in 2012 as Moretown Education Center for All (MECA), a childcare, after school program and summer camp based in the Moretown Elementary School. MECA started with twenty-five preschool and school age children, and grew over eight years to accommodate fifty-six preschoolers and ninety-five school age children by 2019 with summer camp serving one hundred and fifty children. As the program grew, it became time to expand to a space where creating more opportunities was possible for more families in a larger setting.

When the coronavirus pandemic upended everyone’s lives MECA became Neck Of the Woods, a non profit child care organization. Neck of the Woods was able to provide safe summer programming for families during the start of the pandemic and in doing so, ensured parents would have child care support by continuing to provide children with opportunities for social, emotional and developmental growth in a safe environment. Neck of the Woods partnered with the Mad River Valley Community Fund to work together to reach local families in need of support and enrolled 120 children ages 3-12 in summer camp programming across the Valley including the former Small Dog building adjacent to the Mad River in Waitsfield. Since that time, NOW has purchased the property and begun work to upgrade the campus, including the main building, a warehouse, and the surrounding 11 acres of land complete with trails and a large solar array that will eventually provide for all energy needs at NOW. As we look to the near

future Neck Of the Woods will house programs for infants through preschool, an after-school enrichment program, and youth leadership opportunities. The future will include training and support groups for parents and families, teen programs, collaborations with local mental health and education service providers, as well as classes for community members.

WHAT IS NOW?

A Center Comprised of:

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

- *Year-round childcare for children from 6 weeks of age to Kindergarten*
- *Research-based best practices for early childhood development*
- *A focus on enriching the whole child through emergent curriculum*
- *Nurturing deep relationships in children and adults*
- *Cultivating brain-body connection*

AFTER SCHOOL & SUMMER CAMP CARE

- *School age children from entering Kindergarten to 6th grade students*
- *Middle school Leadership Training summer opportunities combined with playful summer camp experiences*
- *A focus on strengths based education in the outdoor environment*
- *Problem and project based themes, derived from children's interests and passions*
- *Leadership and empowerment through camp positions working with younger children*

AFFINITY-BASED ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

- *Student led clubs and activities*
- *Development of leadership skills*
- *Opportunities for community service*
- *Integrated arts in fine arts, drama, music, dance, yoga, and more*
- *Community kitchen*

SUSTAINABLE CAREERS FOR STAFF

- *Working towards a livable wage for all employees*
- *A strong focus on the mental health and wellbeing of every employee*
- *A commitment to provide continued high-quality education and training*

WHO TO CONTACT:

- General Information
 - info@neckofthewoodsvt.com
 - Phone: (802) 496-6689
 - Fax: (802) 806-1005

HOURS OF OPERATION:

Neck of the Woods is licensed to be open Monday through Friday weekly, 7:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Current times of operation are as follows:

Early Childhood Program

Monday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Afterschool: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

School Age Program

Aftercare

Monday through Friday: From the end of the school day to 5:00 p.m. at Moretown Elementary only

Wednesday Outdoor Education:

Wednesday: 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. located at Waitsfield Church

School Age Summer Camp:

Monday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The summer camp program is taking place once again in the summer of 2021 for children ages 3-12 years. Information regarding the 2021 summer programming is available on the Neck Of the Woods website or by request from info@neckofthewoodsvt.com

All times and days of operation may be affected by state-mandated covid protocols, licensing requirements, weather, or state of emergency in the future, and any changes to staff to child ratios made by the state.

NOW 2021/2022 Calendar

Neck of the Woods is Closed the following dates:

June 21-25, 2021 end of academic year/summer setup

August 16-20, 2021 to prepare for the academic school year

September 6, 2021 Labor Day

October 11, 2021 Indigenous People's Day

November 24-26, 2021 Thanksgiving Break

December 23-31, 2021 Winter Holiday Break

January 17, 2022 Martin Luther King Day

February 28/March 1, 2022 Town Meeting Day and Feb break

May 30, 2022 Memorial Day

June 20-24, end of academic year/summer setup

Neck of the Woods has a shortened day for all ages from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm for the weeks aligned with school break. These are the following dates:

Feb 21-25, 2022

April 18-22, 2022

These two weeks we will be open for school age programs. Please inquire at info@neckofthewoodsvt.com

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

LICENSE

Neck of the Woods is a licensed early childhood and school-age childcare program. Our state license is through the Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division and Childcare Licensing. *Our proof of license can be found on the Bright Futures Information System under the name, Neck of the Woods (NOW), as well as on the wall in each classroom.* Licensing regulations can be found online at

https://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/CDD/Docs/Licensing/CBCCPP_Regulations_FINALE.pdf

STARS

Neck of the Woods participates in Vermont's Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) for Child Care Early Education. STARS recognizes the accomplishments of registered and licensed child care programs. As a new program we are at the early stages of this process.

CLASSROOM RATIOS

Our ratios are set by the state and depend upon the age of the children within the program. For infants, the state ratio is 1:4, but we strive to provide a lower ratio. Older infants (over the age of 12 months) are still in a 1:4 ratio, and two year olds are in a 1:5 ratio. For preschool and kindergarten children our ratios are 1:10. For children in first grade through sixth grade state ratios are 1:13. The youngest child in the group determines the ratio of teacher to student.

SCHEDULE & TUITION

The NOW program accepts children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. The Early Childhood Education programs serve children ages 6 weeks to Kindergarten, and the School-age Aftercare Program serves children in the K-6th grade age range. Outdoor Education is available from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays only for children enrolled in grades K-6th grades.

Prior to your child's first day attending the NOW Program parents/guardians must complete the NOW enrollment form. These online forms can be obtained through NOW's Office Administrator via phone 802-496-6689 or email info@neckofthewoodsvt.com, or our website Neckofthewoodsvt.com. Once you have filled out the form for the program you are interested in for your child(ren), the director of your child's program will reach out to schedule a tour, and to answer any questions you may have. After a tour, if you decide to enroll your child, you will work with the director to set up classroom visits. We recommend two half day visits for older children as they transition to the program. Following these visits we will work with you to determine if your child is ready to begin the program or needs more transition time.

The NOW Program requests that parents call by 8:00am if their child will not be attending NOW that day. The attendance of children affects our staffing throughout each day.

TUITION RATES:

Neck Of the Woods enrollment and payment policy:

Infant, Toddler and Preschool Tuition is based on an average monthly rate that will remain constant throughout each month for the year. Families are billed monthly and any changes in schedule needed will need to be approved by the Director prior to the 15th of each month, when bills for the following month will be sent. If a schedule change is needed after the 15th of one month for the following month, this will be reflected after the next billing cycle.

Infant/Toddler:

Ages: 6 Weeks to 3 years old

Days/Hours of Operation:

Monday through Friday

7:30a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Flat monthly rate based on days enrolled:

5 days/week: \$1,408/month

4 days/week: \$1,126/month

3 days/week: \$845/month

2 days/week: \$563/month

Preschool:

Ages: 3 - 5 years old

Days/Hours of Operation:

Monday through Friday

7:30a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Flat monthly rate based on ays enrolled:

5 days/week: \$1,192/month

4 days/week: \$953/month

3 days/week: \$715/month

2 days/week: \$477/month

After School Option for Preschool-6th Grade children coming from other schools to Neck of the Woods After School Programs:

Monday through Friday

2:25p.m. - 5:00p.m.

Locations: Moretown Elementary School or Neck of the Woods building

After School Rates:

Flat Daily Rate: \$20/day
Start Date: Open enrollment

-Each family is billed monthly

-If a child misses time (illness, vacation etc.) payment will still be required.

-If NOW is required to close due to inclement weather, or other emergency closings, payment will still be required

-Invoices will be sent midway through each month, reflecting a bill for the following month. Full payment for the following month will be due by or before the 1st of that month. If payment is not received by the 1st of each month a late payment fee of \$20 will be added to the bill. If payment is not made, including the \$20 late payment fee, by 20th of the month the family will be sent a notice that their childcare slot will no longer be available by the end of the month if payment is not made.

Example:

October Bill:

Invoice Emailed on Sept. 15th

Payment Due by or before Oct. 1st

No payment made on Oct. 1st

\$20 late payment fee applied on Oct. 2nd

No payment made by Oct. 20th

Care discontinued by Oct. 31st

- All families are required to pay an annual \$25 supply fee that will be reflected in the first invoice sent to families upon enrolling.

- The NOW program accepts subsidized funding for qualified families. If you need information regarding subsidy please contact the Family Center of Washington County (802) 262-3292. All paperwork must be handed in prior to your child's first day of attendance.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES:

Arrivals: Children may arrive any time after 7:30 am, although we respectfully request

notice via phone call or app if your child will arrive later than 10 am. All children attending NOW should be dropped off by a parent/guardian at the building door that corresponds with their child's classroom. Please see the health policy for further information on excludable symptoms.

Departures: Parents/guardians should send a HiMama message to staff upon arrival to pick up children. Staff will escort the child out of the building to parents/guardians picking up.

Sign In/Out: We use the HiMama child care management system for sign in and out. Every parent/guardian, emergency or approved pick up will be given sign in information. Children will be signed in and out by teachers at NOW using this app.

Unauthorized Pick Up: Unless authorized, it is not acceptable for anyone under the age of 18 to escort a child to and from the program. If anyone not listed as an authorized pick-up person will be picking up your child there must be written notice or a phone call must be received in advance. Anyone unfamiliar to the teaching staff will be asked for identification and a phone call will be made to parents/guardians before the child can leave the premises.

Inclement Weather, Natural Emergency, or other Emergency Situation: Please see the attached emergency preparedness plan for Neck of the Woods. We will follow the HUUSD district closing schedule; if there is a closing or delay based on weather for the HUUSD schools, Neck of the Woods will also be closed or delayed. Please check school closings on VPR and WCAX if in doubt. We will also send a center-wide email, and a notice via our child care management app.

DAILY SCHEDULES

Approximate Daily Schedule (may vary by age & classroom):

7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Free time inside/outside depending on weather
 8:30 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. Morning meeting
 8:40 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Snack
 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Structured activity/free play (curriculum/hikes/playground)
 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Lunch
 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Quiet activities (books and puzzles)
 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Nap
 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Clean-up from nap/pack-up
 2:30 p.m. After School starts
 3:00 p.m. Snack

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. After school program: Outside/Free choice/Activity

Infant & Toddler Schedules:

All Infants and young toddlers are on their own schedule, and we respect their natural rhythms, as well as family guidance on their child's day. As older infants transition to young toddler days, they will gently be guided into the rhythm of the toddler classroom schedule.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring:

- *Infants:* enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 8-12 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- *Toddlers:* enough clean bottles/sippy cups for one days use (if applicable), 8-12 diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- *Older Toddlers:* at least two changes of clothes (more if potty training) as well as diapers/pull-ups or underwear if going through toilet training.
- *Preschoolers:* at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes. Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost.
- *Footwear for all children:* Indoors children may wear indoor shoes, slippers, or socks, and outside they must have a pair of outdoor shoes that are appropriate for weather conditions.
- *Outdoor Gear For School Ageds:*
 - ~At least two pairs of clothes including underwear and socks
 - ~Outside clothing (weather appropriate -- rain boots and raincoat for rainy days; Hat, mittens, winter boots, snow pants, and winter jacket for Winter; shorts, t-shirts, a bathing suit, and towel for Summer; etc..)
- *For all children:* Sunscreen, insect repellent, lotion for after handwashing, & lip balm (all labeled with your child's name), as needed.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity, or for rest.

Other Required Items

Please make sure your child has the following items at school:

- Rest-time items: NOW will supply your child with a rest mat or crib. Please bring a small blanket, a flat sheet for the nap mat, and/or pillow (not for infants). A stuffed animal, doll, soft toy or comfort item is sometimes helpful at naptime. Please label everything with your child's name!

Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home, and watch for messages on our child care app. At times, we may launder clothing and nap materials here.

Lost & Found

We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. You can ask for lost items via HiMama and bring found items to the teachers to place in the Lost-and-found Box located in each classroom. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property. We ask that clothing or personal items of considerable value or sentimental value be left at home, as we can not guarantee children will not misplace them. All personal items MUST be clearly labeled, and labels checked periodically to be sure they have not worn off.

Food & Drink

Snack: We ask that parents/guardians provide children with both a morning and afternoon snack, as well as lunch. Children tend to eat a lot during their days at NOW, expelling a great deal of energy, working bodies and minds so the heartier snacks and meals can be, the better. We believe that good nutrition is absolutely essential for proper health and learning in young children, and ask that families do their best to provide healthy options.

When packing a lunch for your child, please include nutritious and low-sugar foods. Sandwiches, rolled-up deli or cooked meats, vegetables with dip, hard-cooked eggs, yogurt, sliced fruit and cheese are all good options. A healthy snack should consist of fruits, vegetables, whole grains etc. Please refrain from sending your child with sugary snacks- candy and sugary drinks are not allowed as a lunch or snack option. An insulated thermos is an excellent choice if you wish to send warm food, and is especially good for outdoor education days. Please send your child's lunch in a well-marked lunch box or bag. Lunchtime is a time for teachers and children to enjoy good food and the company of one another. To maintain a positive atmosphere, we will not dictate the order in which your child's lunch is to be eaten. Questions of "what should I eat first?"

are met with “What do you think?”, except for sweets, which we ask you to leave at home, or we may ask children to save them for home. We strive to foster independence and self-confidence and this continues into mealtime. Pack a lunch that you feel good about your child eating in any order (and be aware that desert-type items are often eaten first). Candy is not allowed at school, and this includes “fruit snacks” and “gummies”. There are many school lunch foods that are essentially candy, and we ask that you do not send these items with your child.

If providing your child with a snack becomes a financial burden please speak with the NOW Directors, and we will work out snacks and meals for your child. However, we do not have a stocked kitchen at Neck of the Woods at this time, and do need advanced notice. For help with the school lunch program, please email us at info@neckofthewoodsvt.com

Families with children in child care in Vermont are encouraged to follow the guidelines for nutrition put forth by the Child and Adult Care Food Program standards set by the USDA. Please see these guidelines in our addendum.

While we are currently not enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, it is our intention to explore the feasibility of offering this option as soon as possible (see free lunch program below).

Please pack children with lunch boxes that contain at least one ice pack to keep food fresh. The NOW program is not a Peanut Free Zone, however, there will be a notice that will go out to all families if this changes.

Water Bottles: Please provide your child with a clean, full water bottle at the start of each day. Water bottles can be refilled from bottled water sources at the center but we would appreciate children arriving with full water bottles. Please label your child’s water bottle with their name.

School Lunch: Lunch can be provided through the public school lunch program. Parents will notify the NOW Directors if they would like their child(ren) to take part, and Directors will provide parents information regarding the school lunch sign up process. At this time, lunches and breakfast are free for all students who sign up.

Food Allergies Please let us know of any and all food allergies your child has, as well as the severity. If your child has an allergen to a common ingredient such as gluten, dairy or eggs, it is helpful to provide us a “special snack” to keep on hand so your child is not left out on a special snack day

Infant and Toddler foods and bottles: All infant and toddler food must be provided for

each day. Keep in mind sometimes children eat more in one day, and we request that you leave a few extra options for your child in case they are hungry beyond that day's foods. Please provide us with enough bottles for your child for the day. Older children should have at least 2 sippy cups. Please label all foods, cups, bottles, formula, and breastmilk with your child's name and the date.

Formula and Breastmilk: Formula and breastmilk must be labeled with your child's name. Breastmilk must also have a date on it. We can utilize frozen breastmilk.

Infant Feedings Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child's home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to six months.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

EMPOWERING OUR FAMILIES FOR THE FUTURE

ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT

In ordinary times, the center's physical space is set up to encourage connections & communication between groups of children so that they come to recognize themselves as part of a larger community. In covid times, this type of engagement was restricted to the single group's classroom; as Vermont opens up based on the current available science, so do we here at Neck of the Woods. The environment is set up to be enticing, engaging, and to create meaningful interactions with peers, adults, and materials. Materials are selected to spark learning and curiosity, and may include traditional toys, real life objects, natural materials and loose parts. The natural world and our 11 acre parcel of land are central pieces of our programming, from infancy through school-age

summer camps.

ROLE OF TEACHER

We see the adults at NOW as being guides, narrators, and facilitators for children to explore with, mirror, observe, and make connections with. Teachers not only provide learning experiences, but model behaviors and give words for emotions, express themselves so children learn to share their own thoughts and feelings, and help children take ownership for their own minds, hearts, and bodies. Adults model collaboration with one another and parents, as well as with children, and help children to collaborate with one another. Adults provide experiences where children can be self-directed and successful.

We align our curriculum model with the Multiple Intelligence theory of Howard Gardner, and project-based teaching theories such as Emergent Curriculum and Reggio Emilia. Early Childhood Education theory is often changing and shifting, and best practices include utilizing the Vermont Early Learning Standards, developmentally appropriate practices, and current research on education, psychology, and brain-based learning. Teachers also observe children across their abilities, using informal and formal assessments, recording skills, and watching the hard work of play.

ROLE OF CHILD AS LEARNER

Children of all abilities and interests are active, engaged, and determined learners bursting with curiosity and potential. They are contributing members of society, home, and school, and all have the right to their education. Special rights are afforded to those who need extra in order to access their right to an education. Children learn through play and imagination, and this work of childhood is to be respected and honored.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Here at Neck of the Woods, we encourage families and the community to engage with us, our program and their children. No parent or caregiver will ever be denied access to their child, at any time, unless there is a legal reason to do so. While covid policies presented to us by the state health department prevented us from inviting families into the building in the ways we are used to, such as at pick up or drop off, or from engaging in the classroom as we would normally encouraged, all parents & guardians are always able to access their child at any time. As vaccination rates increase, allowing us to engage with families and the community, we will continue to update our policies and share those changes with the Neck of the Woods center and neighborhood.

We see NOW as a piece of the larger Mad River Valley community, and we recognize families as valued, essential partners in the systems that support young children's

development, learning, and wellness. We encourage caregivers to share their skills, talents, time & effort with our center, and always welcome input about ways we can better support families.

HOW WE EMPOWER CHILDREN THROUGH OUR PROGRAM

Classroom and Behavior Management:

Our center, culture and philosophy in the classroom promotes growth and learning in all children of all abilities, backgrounds, and differences based on their personal strengths. Inspired by the idea that all children encompass multiple intelligences and everyone has strengths to share, we manage behaviors from a positive perspective. We view the environment and curriculum as an additional teacher. A carefully planned space and activities lead behaviors naturally in a positive direction, where children are allowed to shine and show their best selves. Further, we recognize that negative or disruptive behaviors are an expression of needs and wants, and we can help children to meet such needs in a safe and appropriate manner.

In the Early Childhood Program this may look like redirection, gentle reminders, adult intervention, talking through a situation, or removing a child from an unsafe environment. We see young children as unique individuals who are learning what it means to express themselves, get their needs met, and engage with others. Rather than forced apologies, we put the focus on checking in with one another around feelings and safety, followed up by asking what we can do to work towards a solution together. For young children this is often an apology, or a hug, or the sharing of a toy. Working through the process helps them to name & share their emotions, hear others, and to work collaboratively to support a safe and welcoming space in the classroom for all.

When difficult situations arise with older children, adults observe to see if children are able to handle the situation themselves, and follow up by making observations about what went well. Solutions may include redirection, engaging children in creating solutions, and encouraging them to take ownership over their own behavior and the effect it has in their learning environments. We utilize a system for conflict resolution that we call “fire breaks”. It is a tiered process that allows children to step away from the group, and center themselves, and then to share with an adult and other children involved how they perceived the situation. We also ask them to check in with others and ask how they are feeling. Together, they will then work on solutions. Adults are present to help as needed, but children lead so that the solution is authentic, positive, and easily implemented. Once resolution has happened, children rejoin the group.

At all times, safety and respect are non-negotiables, and we work to help children understand what that means, and what it looks like. We expect that they may forget, have questions, need guidance, and make mistakes. Through these processes we are able to help children bloom into compassionate, respectful, resourceful and responsible young people.

Biting Policy: In children under age three, biting is a typical behavior that occurs. There are numerous reasons why a child might bite: instinct, a result of a lack of words or maturity to express needs and wants, sore teeth, cause and effect exploration, imitation, satisfying an oral-motor need, in self-defense, to communicate hunger or fatigue or another need, to communicate difficult emotions, and even to get attention at times. Punishment does not stop biting behavior. Multiple strategies can be used, based on the reason behind the biting. Biting will always be responded to quickly, and the child who has been bitten will be attended to. Both children's needs for safety and security will be attended to, and children will be removed from one another. Adults will always be close at hand, and will be able to move quickly to deal with any emergency situation, including biting. For very young children, alternatives will be provided for biting into, such as teether toys. All toys will be disinfected before being offered to any other child. Parents of children will be contacted as soon as reasonably possible to be informed about the incident.

Confidentiality/Reporting/Program Concerns

Student Confidentiality: All children's records are kept confidential, unless there is information on file that will permit the program to coordinate with other appropriate agencies. In issues dealing with school teams, we will ask parents to sign a release of records. We will also adhere to HIPAA and FERPA laws as they apply to certain confidentiality situations.

If there is an incident that occurs on school grounds that involves more than one child, it is the policy of the NOW program to inform both parents/guardians of the children involved. Due to our confidentiality regulations the other child's names will not be given.

Furthermore, any time NOW needs to communicate with your child's doctor, other caregivers, school & for any referral reasons to an outside organization, you will need to give written permission to do so, and for what purpose that communication is needed. We have a form in the parent packet, which you can request another copy of, or you may write out your own. This form will be dated, utilized for a specific amount of time, and may be rescinded for any reason you have. Lastly, this form will be kept in your child's file.

Photographs and Publicity: Photographs will be taken at the Program periodically throughout the year to put up around the rooms, for parents/guardians to view, to occasionally be put in the local newspapers, on our Website, on our childcare management app and shared with other families, on our NOW Facebook and Instagram pages. The Program will provide a photography permission form to photograph and publicize pictures of your child.

Mandated Reporter Policy: Staff members of the NOW Program are mandated by State of Vermont Law to report any suspected or observed abuse and/or neglect of children.

Reporting Concerns about the Center: If you have any concerns regarding the Center about which you feel you cannot speak to the Executive Director or Program Directors please call the State Agency Consumer HotLine 1-800-540-7942.

Family Information kept on file as per state child care regulations under section 3.4.4

- A completed child's admission form signed and dated by the parent that includes the first date the child attended the CBCCPP and the 32 days and hours the child is regularly scheduled to attend the CBCCPP T
- The child's name, current home address, and current home telephone number
- Identification of child's home language
- The child's date of birth
- Name, address, and all applicable current telephone numbers for parents
- Name, address, and all applicable current telephone numbers for at least two (2) other people designated by the parents as emergency contacts
- Names for all persons authorized to pick the child up from the CBCCPP
- Record of an annual physical and health history as required in the rule 5.1.2 of these regulations that includes the name and telephone number of the child's primary health care and dental care providers (if the child has a dental care provider)
- A description of any special medical, developmental, emotional, or educational needs of the child including allergies, existing illnesses or injuries, previous serious illnesses or injuries and any prescribed medication including those for emergency situations
- Written authorization from the parent for the CBCCPP to be able to obtain emergency medical care and transportation
- Child's immunization record or Vermont Department of Health approved

- exemption document as required in the rules in section 5.1.3 of these regulations
- Written permission from parents for the CBCCPP to transport the child, if transportation is provided, as required in the rule 5.10.6.6.1 of the regulations
 - Written permission from parents for the child to participate in swimming activities, if swimming activities are a part of the program, as required in the rule 5.10.5.1 of these regulations
 - If applicable, a copy of court orders on custody and visitation arrangements as required in the rule 3.6.4 of these regulations
 - If applicable, any obvious injuries discovered and documented on daily health check as required in the rule 5.3.2 of these regulations.

Health Policies

If your child is not healthy enough to participate in the program, as determined by the NOW staff, they should not be attending the program that day. If your child is not feeling well the NOW staff will check symptoms and temperature. Please see the symptom list and additional Covid Health Policy below.

COVID HEALTH POLICY:

CHILD CARE GUIDANCE

- All children, their families and staff must comply with and ensure daily monitoring of COVID19 exposure and COVID-19 symptoms (see below).
- Staff and children and/or their families should complete an exposure and symptom screening before arriving at the program.
- Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 (unless vaccinated) or who has COVID-19 symptoms (regardless of vaccination status) should remain home, and should follow Department of Health guidance regarding quarantine and testing.
- Temperature checks should be performed at home before departing for child care/recreational programs. Individuals with a fever (100.4 or greater) should not come to care.
- Children or staff arriving visibly sick to care should be screened (including a temperature check) and sent home if symptomatic, regardless of vaccination status.

COVID-19 symptoms include the following:

- Cough
- Fever (100.4 or greater)
- Shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or body aches



- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (diarrhea is defined as frequent loose or watery stools compared to one's normal pattern)

Masks

Masks must be worn in accordance with the Vermont Forward plan. Staff and children should follow CDC guidance for selecting and wearing properly fitted masks. CDC recommends no masks for children under 2 years of age. As such, children under 2 years of age must not wear masks. Masks are developmentally appropriate when children can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering. Children who have a medical or behavioral reason for not wearing a facial covering should not be required to wear one. These decisions should be made in partnership with the health care provider. **Guidance on Mask Exemptions in Children and Adolescents** provides guidance for the rare conditions that allow children or adolescents to qualify for a mask exemption. Masks with ties are not recommended for young children as they pose a risk of choking or strangulation. Children/staff should not wear masks while sleeping, eating or swimming (or when they would get wet). Reinforce physical distancing during these times, as appropriate.

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/2021-child-care-and-summer-guidance.pdf>

UNIVERSAL GUIDANCE

1. Stay home if sick. Organizations must have policies in place to remind employees to stay home if they have [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#). No symptomatic or COVID-19 positive workers are allowed on site. Unvaccinated employees who have not had COVID-19 in the past 90 days and have had close contact for more than 15 minutes with any person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 14 days or for 7 days prior to obtaining a COVID-19 test. See the [Department of Health's guidance](#)  for more information on work place exposures.
2. Wear a mask. The State of Vermont currently has a [mask mandate](#)  in place. All employees must wear face coverings over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others. In the case of retail cashiers, a translucent shield or "sneeze guard" is acceptable in lieu of a mask if the employee works alone and does not interact with customers outside the workstation. Businesses, non-profit and government entities may decline service to individuals who are not wearing a mask. This includes refusing service to those who are exempt from the mask mandate, however, the business shall provide an alternate way for those unable to wear a mask to access the business, such as offering curbside pick-up, delivery, or other innovative solutions.
3. Ensure six-foot spaces and uncrowded places. Employees must observe strict social distancing of 6 feet while on the job. Businesses and non-profit or government entities

must ensure customers observe strict social distancing of 6 feet while on location, to the extent possible. Employers are encouraged to use their best efforts to accommodate those workers who may have childcare needs which cannot be met due to the closure of schools or childcare facilities for reasons relating to COVID-19.

4. Practice good hygiene. Employees must have easy and frequent access to soap and water or hand sanitizer during the duration of work, and handwashing or hand sanitization is required frequently including before entering, and leaving, job sites. All common spaces (when open) and equipment, including bathrooms, frequently touched surfaces and doors, tools and equipment, and vehicles must be cleaned regularly and, when possible, prior to transfer from one person to another, in accordance with [CDC guidance](#).
5. Think before you travel. Follow the state's travel guidance and educate your employees and customers about the state's policies. Guests of lodging, campgrounds and other accommodations must complete a [Certificate of Compliance](#)

<https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/vermont-forward/business-operations#specialized-guidance-education>

Covid-19 DAILY SCREENING PROCESS

We provide a link to a health screening that families must complete every morning at drop off for each child as well as staff. The link can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/An1bP9DA3LG3JHtj8>

Cleaning Process

Cleaning agents:

- Disinfectant sprays certified as effective by CDC
- All disinfectant sprays must be sprayed and sit for 5 minutes before wiping down.
- Each surface is cleaned after each use, including tables, chairs, any other surfaces, sinks and toilets.

SAFETY MEASURES THROUGHOUT THE DAY

- Children will wash hands when arriving for the day, before and after eating, after playing with manipulatives or shared items, after bathroom usage, after sensory play, when entering the classroom and before leaving each day.
- Staff will wash hands at the start of the day, between handling children, before food prep, after food prep, after bathroom usage, after helping children with

toileting needs, arrival inside and before they leave. - Hand sanitizer will be readily available at all times for outdoor cleaning of hands as well

- All staff and children MUST wear masks indoors and when they are unable to socially distance up to 6ft apart outdoors.
- Children will have separate spaces to keep items from home (individual tubs & backpacks in cubby rooms) that will allow their items not to touch other children's items.

Naptime (if applicable):

- Children will be spaced at a 3 foot apart minimum for nap/rest time, as far as possible, given room space, safe supervision and class size restrictions.

Mealtimes:

- Children will be spaced at a 3 foot apart minimum while eating, and will eat outside whenever possible.
- Adults warming food/helping with lunch boxes will wash hands before handling children's food/lunch boxes as well as after food prep and in between each child's food prep.

Health Policy for non-Covid-19 illness:

- Vomiting: Must remain home until 24 Hours after last episode of vomiting
- Cold symptoms, negative Covid test: Must remain home until 24 Hours after fever is gone without the use of NSAIDs or fever reducing medicine.
- Streptococcal Infections: Must remain home until 24 Hours after medication is begun or 4 doses. (Includes Scarlet Fever and Strep Throat)
- Conjunctivitis: A prescription eye drop medication must have been given for 24 hours before returning
- Chicken Pox: When the last sore is scabbed and there is no oozing
- Impetigo- 48 Hours after medication is begun and the area is totally scabbed over
- Measles- 5 Days after rash appears and a note from a physician • Head Lice- After a prescription shampoo is administered and ALL the eggs are removed. The child will need a follow up treatment in one week Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) 5 Days after the diagnosis
- Bacterial Meningitis- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Polio- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Shigella- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return

- Campylobacter- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Salmonella- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Giardia- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Diphtheria- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Tuberculosis (Active)- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Hepatitis A- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Rubella (German Measles)- The child shall be excluded from the program setting until a medical professional indicates that it is safe for the child to return
- Coxsackie- After a rash is no longer visible
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)- 10 Days after diagnosis • Diarrhea- 24 hours after last episode of diarrhea
- Fever- 24 hours after fever is gone
- Purulent Conjunctivitis- 24 hours after antibiotics have been given.
- Severe Coughing- 24 hours after coughing has subsided • Jaundice- 24 hours after symptoms are gone
- Rash (with fever or behavior change)- 24 hours after physician has been seen and determines the circumstances of the rash

If your child has a contagious illness or has been exposed to any of these symptoms it is your responsibility to report this to the NOW program. It is the responsibility of the program to inform you if your child has been exposed to these symptoms while s(he) was in attendance. In the event of a medical emergency or accident the Program will contact parents/guardians, the child's pediatrician and E.M.Ts if necessary. If parents/guardians cannot be reached the emergency contact will be called. All Neck of the Woods employees are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Medications:

If your child is receiving medications within Program hours the medications must be sent enclosed in its original packaging, labeled with a pharmacy or over the counter medication label. Medications must be brought to your program's NOW Director or Staff by parents/guardians. If the medication must be administered during a time that your child attends NOW please inform the NOW Director or staff. Please inform the NOW Director if you will be sending in medications with your child who is taking the school bus. Medications will only be administered if a completed medication form is filled out by parents/guardians. NOW will have forms for parents to fill out if medications will need to

be given. All staff will complete the state training on medication administration within one year of hire.

Keeping Our Center Healthy:

Children and adults will be washing their hands on arrival at the Program each day, after using the toilet, before meal times, after blowing noses, coughing in hands, before preparing and/or serving food, after playing in stagnant water with others, and after cleaning.

Parent/ Teacher Communication

A summary of the day's activities is posted on the white board outside your child's classroom each day, and big updates will be posted via our childcare management app. This lets parents know what ideas are being explored, as well as specific activities that have been done and what is being planned for the weeks ahead. This can be a good "jumping-off point" for talking with your child about the day's events, as well as finding other things to do at home that relate to what's happening at NOW.

Once a month our center-wide newsletter will be sent in an email.

Conferences

Parent Conferences are offered in both the Fall and Spring and are an opportunity to discuss your child's development. However, a conference can be arranged at any time to address issues that must be addressed immediately.

Safety

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playgrounds and 11 acres are used as an extension of the classroom & curriculum, and our daily activities involve the outdoors whenever weather permits. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name. We will play outdoors in all but extreme weather. Please be sure that your child has appropriate clothing for each season.

- Winter: Full snowsuit or snow pants and jacket, hat and insulated mittens and insulated boots.
- Spring and Fall: Warm layers, rain boots, rain pants and jacket.
- Summer: Sun hat and light layers to protect from the sun.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play Outdoor play will not occur if the outside

temperature is greater than 98°F or less than 0°F degrees. Short intervals of winter play will happen between 0-20°F

Safe Water-Play

Unsupervised water play will not happen. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease. In summer, wading pools and the river may be visited, but swimming in deep water is not an option. Children will always be supervised near water, and adults will have radios and phones to contact other staff whenever children play in water. All water play in the river, wading pools, sensory bins, or other places will adhere to the rules set by the state of Vermont regulations for Center-based Child Care & Preschool Programs regulations, as per the link listed above.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. 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 swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations, and all classroom staff have up to date infant, child & adult First Aid and CPR certification.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Masking & Social Distancing policy

We require all adults and children over the age of 2 to wear a mask, both indoors and outdoors. Even while masked, we encourage children to remain 6 feet apart whenever possible. However, we do recognize that this is difficult for children, and will guide them by example and with gentle reminders. No child will be put down or punished for having a hard time remembering to do this.

We also understand that it may not be developmentally or medically appropriate for every child. For these children NOW will work with the child's family and that child's medical provider to find the right solution.

We recognize children need mask breaks from time to time. In each classroom, children will be allowed to take mask breaks away from other children, and teachers will guide them on how to do that safely, and will monitor cleaning needs after a mask break.

Children under 2 must not wear masks, as per the state guidance on covid in child care centers, which may be found here:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID19-Health-Guidance-Childcare-Summer-Programs.pdf>

PLEASE PACK NUMEROUS MASKS EACH DAY as masks may get wet, soiled, break or get lost, and children need to have others to wear. Also please take all soiled masks home daily to be washed and repaired. We do have a few child-sized masks available, but it is the family's responsibility to mask their child.

All adults on the grounds of Neck of the Woods must wear masks at all times, and this includes parents & caregivers during pick up and drop off. Parents and guardians of the enrolled children shall have access to the facility at any time however, we encourage families to drop off and pick up outside, however, if a family has a desire to entire the program this is allowable as long as masks are worn, hands are washed upon entering the facility and all covid protocols are followed while present in the facility.

Safe sleeping policy

All children are monitored during naps and sleeping. As per state regulations, we will ensure that each child, except school-age children, has an individual crib, port-a-crib, cot, mat, or bed that is safe for the child's age and development, in good repair, and used by only one child each day. No child shall nap directly on the floor or on furniture not designed for sleeping. Cribs or port-a-cribs shall be used for children under twelve months of age. Children shall not nap in cribs or port-a-cribs if they are physically able to climb out unassisted. All cribs and portable cribs will meet Consumer Product Safety Commission 16 C.F.R. Part 1220. NOW will maintain documentation of each crib's compliance with this mandate, and any crib that does not meet 16 C.F.R. § 1220 is removed from the premises. Cots, mats, and mattresses shall be nonporous or have nonporous coverings. Each child shall be provided clean, individual bed linens either by NOW providing them directly or requiring parents to provide them. No child shall nap directly on nonporous coverings. These are sanitized daily.

Children shall be supervised by staff while napping or resting. Staff shall directly observe a sleeping infant at least every fifteen minutes to check the infant's face, view the color of the infant's skin, and check on the infant's breathing. Lighting to permit appropriate supervision shall be provided in sleeping areas where children are napping or resting. This means that staff can see the child's face, view the color of the child's skin, and check on the child's breathing. Wet or soiled cots, cribs, mats, and bedding shall be changed promptly and stored in a sealed plastic bag or container until laundered. Bedding used by a child shall be stored in a manner that prevents contact

with bedding used by other children.

Infants at rest:

Infants will always be allowed to nap when tired, and will always be placed on their backs to sleep in a crib or port-a-crib. No infant will be placed to sleep on soft surfaces, such as a couch or sofa, pillow, quilts, sheepskins, or blankets. Infants will not be placed in car seats, swings, high chairs, stroller, jumping chairs or similar equipment for sleep. Any child that falls asleep in this type of equipment shall be gently transferred to a crib or port-a-crib as soon as feasible.

Each crib and port-a-crib shall have a firm, tight-fitting mattress covered by a tight-fitting crib sheet. Soft objects, toys or loose bedding shall not be used in infants' sleep areas. Soft or loose bedding includes bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, and bibs. Infants shall not be swaddled for sleep. Clothing sacks or similar clothing designed for safe sleep may be used. Bibs, necklaces (including amber teething necklaces), and garments with ties or hoods will be removed from the child prior to placing the child in the crib or port-a-crib. No positioning devices shall be used unless required by the child's health care provider. Instructions for the use of any such device shall be kept in the child's file in writing from the child's health care provider. Infants shall not be placed in cribs or port-a-cribs with bottles. Pacifiers are permitted in cribs and port-a-cribs with parental permission. Pacifiers may not have cords or clips that may pose a strangulation risk.

Rest for Children over 12 months of age:

The program Directors/Lead Teachers will be sure the classroom's schedule is designed to ensure that every child younger than school age and present for five hours or more shall have the opportunity for sleep or rest. Children over twelve months of age may sleep/rest with blankets, pillows, and soft toys. Children shall not be required to sleep. Children who do not nap shall be provided space and equipment for quiet play, and allowed to get up after a reasonable amount of time.

Drug & alcohol policy for parents, caregivers, & staff

All child care centers in the state of Vermont have a no-smoking policy for staff and parents on the grounds at any time. We also require that our staff be drug and alcohol free on the grounds at all times. Further, no designated pick-up person appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be allowed to remove a child from the property and a back up person from the child's list will be contacted.

Water & Lead-Testing

Our drinking water is tested as required by the state of Vermont. However, we are required to provide bottled water at this time as a provision of our current license. We are in the process of modernizing our current water system and it will meet all public water standards when it is finished.

Emergency policy & procedures

- In conjunction with Waitsfield and Washington County preparedness, Neck of the Woods has developed a plan for emergency circumstances that could arise. A full emergency plan is given here as an addendum to this handbook.
- In the event of an emergency, families will be contacted via phone, brightwheel, and through social media.
- Whenever it is both possible and safe, children and staff will remain at the Neck of the Woods building.
- Weather delays or closures sometimes occur. We recognize that families often need to work, regardless of weather. Our decision will be made separately from local schools, with input from the road crews serving our area, and is made by 6 am. Families will be notified via brightwheel and text message.
- In the event of an intruder in the building, lockdown procedures will take place within each classroom. In the event of a potentially violent situation outside of the building, lock-in procedures will be implemented, and all children will be moved to a secure interior space.
- Natural disasters that threaten the safety of the building or property will require the most senior staff present to make a decision about evacuation. In the event of an evacuation, children and staff will walk to the following location: The Hartshorn Farmstand. If that location is not secure, children and staff will walk to: Mad River Park. In the unlikely event that the building is not safe, and walking to either previously listed locations is also not safe, children and staff will be evacuated by vehicle to Waitsfield Town Offices. Families will be notified via brightwheel, an email, and whenever possible, a phone call.

Please ask to see the Emergency Plan full document for more information and details.

Differences and Inclusion

We define diversity as inclusive of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, neurodiverse learning styles, age, ability, nationality, immigration status, physical appearance, religion, belief systems, language, and more. A diverse, inclusive, and respectful community enhances the academic and emotional intelligence of all students and lays the foundation for them to make a change in meaningful and mindful ways.

We believe that inclusion of all kinds enables us to better understand ourselves and others, value multiple lived experiences, practice advocacy, and become co-conspirators and activists towards creating a more just and equitable world.

Differences lift us.

Holidays:

We believe in respecting and celebrating the families we serve, and recognize that this means there may be a range of holidays, celebration styles, and important traditions in our NOW family. Some teachers are more comfortable than others bringing holiday traditions to the classroom, but all families are always welcome to share about their culture, history, and unique experiences with the classmates in their child's group. We also welcome parents (post covid) who wish to share a teaching experience or project about their cultural history with NOW.

Racism:

Racism of any kind at any time will not be tolerated. That said, we recognize that expressions of racism are a teaching opportunity, and we will use it as such. A year has gone by since George Floyd's murder. Here at Neck of the Woods, we believe that Black Lives Matter and that justice begins with the conviction of Derek Chauvin for his murder. We recognize the systemic racism within this country and will continue to educate our students about these injustices. We, as an organization, are making a commitment to continue to examine our own personal biases and to promote inclusion here at Neck of the Woods through employment opportunities, enrollment, and challenging systemic racial issues wherever we see them.