

PALMER LIFEWAYS

PARENT HANDBOOK

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PALMER LIFEWAYS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PARENT'S HANDBOOK

“HOME SUITE HOME”

The first thing you will notice when you walk into a LifeWays Early Childhood setting is that it looks and feels like home. That is because, in concurrence with current brain research and years of working with young children in other learning environments, we realize the best environment for the young child is a “home” environment. All types of tools needed for learning in the years ahead are provided in this type of setting with activities that focus on daily living, exploring and play.

What is happening when a child helps a caregiver fold the laundry, bake muffins or plant a garden? Measuring, counting, following directions, nutrition, sorting, color recognition, the process of following a task through to completion, and language skills, just to name a few.

The infants and toddlers are also preparing for a lifetime of learning when their natural explorations are not interfered with and they are given freedom of movement to truly discover themselves.

The institutionalization of childcare is what we are trying to change. At LifeWays we strive to create environments in which children feel secure and soothed, yet appropriately stimulated. Learning how to create such environments is part of the LifeWays training for caregivers and parents, which our caregivers are encouraged to complete.

It is important to us that, together with you, we form a partnership of care for your family. We look forward to building that partnership through our daily exchanges, our parent-caregiver meetings, and through our shared interest in your children. Please feel free to talk to any of the staff at any time about ideas, questions or concerns you have about your child.

On behalf of your children, thank you for choosing LifeWays for their place of care.

Warmly,
Lori Berrigan and the staff of Palmer LifeWays

ADMISSION PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

After the initial call or email and a center visit, parents submit the enrollment application form with the registration fee. This is followed by an interview with a caregiver, the parents and the child. Parents are given the Parent Handbook to take home and read and get back with any questions.

When the caregivers and parents assess that the center can meet the needs of their child and family, then the parents return all paper work including

- Yearly enrollment fee of \$125.00 – due when signing up or each September
- A signed statement that the Parent Handbook has been read
- An agreement to attend required parent-caregiver meetings
- Medical alert form and history
- Emergency cards
- Immunization record or waiver
- Any required school transportation forms
- Any other required forms for the child's file

When the enrollment fee and all completed forms have been received, your child will be considered enrolled.

Palmer LifeWays serves up to 40 children ages 6 weeks to 12 years of age. “In-service” care will be available for school age children. Limited spots will be available and children must be signed up in advance.

Infants and Toddlers Admissions

In addition to meeting the staff, parents of infants and toddlers will create an Infant/Toddler schedule that includes the following:

- Schedule of meals and feeding
- Types of food introduced and timetable for new foods
- Toileting and diapering procedures
- Sleep and nap schedule
- The child's way of communicating and being comforted
- Developmental and health history

Statement of Non-Discrimination

LifeWays services are available to all persons without discrimination of any kind. The only time a child's enrollment will not be accepted is if the parents or the caregiver feel that the center's services cannot meet the needs of the child. If the center is full, the child will be added to the wait list.

Parents will provide the following:

- Two full sets of spare clothes for children regardless of age
- Three pair of regular socks
- One pair of warm socks
- Proper undergarments (preferably wool or polypro)

- Hats for all seasons (wool or silk for children under 1)
- Proper outerwear for each season to include scarf, boots, mittens and snowsuits for winter and rain pants/jackets and rain boots for all other seasons
- Pillow with cotton pillowcase and a blanket for sleeping – these are to be simple as possible with no characters or caricatures on them. The Center will have a few available for parents who cannot provide these items.
- Breast milk or formula, cereal and bottles for infants
- Diapers – if using cloth, a zipped diaper bag must be provided for soiled diapers
- Wipes (cloth or disposable)
- Any special dietary food different from that supplied by the Center
- Lunch for children who attend lunch
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Inside slippers with rubber sole or simple inside shoes

All of these items must be brought on the first day in order for your child to stay. Also, spare clothing that becomes soiled will be sent home. It is required that the parents provide replacements for those items when the child returns. As your child grows, replacements will also be necessary. Although the caregivers will try to keep track of each child's belongings, and each child will have his or her own drawer/cubby in which to keep spare clothing, the staff is not responsible for lost articles.

A Further Word About Clothing

As you can see from the listing above, the way your child is clothed is important to us. Young children do not have the physical capacity to discern their need for warmth. In fact, many children will tell you they want their jacket, shirt, or hat off because they are hot. More often it is simply they don't want to feel the confinement of the clothing. As long as the child is not sweating we keep them well-dressed in layers that can be peeled as needed. If their hands and feet are cold that is an indication to us that they need another layer. We need your help on this by providing the various layers necessary.

Please do not send your children in clothing you do not want to get dirty. Sturdy play clothes that are not ripped or torn work well. We will let you know if there are days we would like to have the children dress up, such as festival days.

In an effort to support the children's free imaginations, we ask that you do not send your child in clothing that is decorated with television or media images. Alternatives to the above would be clothing comprised of:

- Solid colors
- Stripes
- Polka Dots
- Patterns

We also ask that all outerwear and accessories (including indoor shoes and lunch boxes) also follow these guidelines. Please choose plain shoes that do not include electronic lights, sounds, wheels, or commercially produced pictures.

Our goal is to foster a learning environment with minimal distractions for students. Thank you for your commitment to creating and maintaining the highest quality environment for our children.

Outdoor Gear and Shoes

We go outside in all weather. Please make sure your child has both rain and snow gear for the different seasons. Also, the right shoes/boots are a must. Flip-flops and dress-up shoes are not very practical for outside play and should be left at home. Sturdy tennis shoes (or similar), and rain/snow boots are a must for outside play.

Closings

We will be closed the following days:

Labor Day/ September 3rd, 2018

Thanksgiving Day and the Day After / November 22nd-23rd, 2018

Christmas Break / December 24th, 2018 to December 28th, 2018

New Year's Day/ January 1st, 2019

Martin Luther King Jr. / January 21st, 2019

Memorial Day / May 27th, 2019

Fourth of July

Preschool has a 2-week break December 24th, 2018 to January 4th, 2019. Regular care is available December 31st, 2018 and January 2nd – January 4th, 2019

Spring Break is March 11th to March 15th, 2019. No preschool. Regular childcare available.

Scheduling

Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

All hours must be scheduled at least a month in advance, and you are obligated to pay for all scheduled hours. Changes in schedule must be submitted to the Administrator by the 20th of the previous month. All families on State assistance understand they are responsible for all charges not covered by the State.

Sample Daily Schedule (Back Room)

7:00 to 8:00 a.m. Arrival and breakfast time

8:00 a.m. Play

9:00 a.m. Circle

9:30 a.m. Fruit Snack

9:45 a.m. Outside Play

10:30 a.m. Snack Time

11:00 a.m. Daily Activity

11:30 a.m. Lunch

12:00 p.m.	Clean up, brush teeth and washing face and hands with warm cloths to prepare for nap.
12:15 p.m.	Patting Down – live music, story
12:30 p.m.	Nap
2:45 to 3:15p.m.	Nap time ends – tidy beds
3:15 p.m.	Personal Care
3:30 p.m.	Outside Play
4:00 p.m.	Afternoon Snack
4:15 p.m.	Play – Inside or Out (depends on weather)
5:15 p.m.	Outside Tidy Time
5:30 p.m.	Good-Bye

Sample Daily Schedule (Front Room)

7:00 to 8:00 a.m.	Arrival and breakfast time
8:00 a.m.	Play
8:30 a.m.	Start of Preschool
9:00 a.m.	Circle
9:30 a.m.	Story
10:00 a.m.	Fruit Snack
10:30 a.m.	Daily Activity
11:15 a.m.	Snack Time
11:45 a.m.	Clean-Up and Dress for Outside
11:50 to 12:30	Outside Play
12:30 noon	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Clean up, brush teeth and washing face and hands with warm cloths to prepare for nap.
1:15 p.m.	Patting Down – live music, story
1:30 p.m.	Nap
2:45 to 3:15p.m.	Nap time ends – tidy beds
3:15 p.m.	Personal Care
3:30 p.m.	Outside Play
4:00 p.m.	Afternoon Snack
4:30 p.m.	Play (Inside or Out) or homework time
5:15 p.m.	Outside Tidy Time
5:30 p.m.	Good-Bye

Please note that within this schedule, each infant has their own individual schedule of feeding, sleeping and diapering. Also – younger children may eat lunch earlier and go back for nap earlier.

Outdoor time may be replaced with Indoor Play if the temperature is below -5 or the wind is too strong.

Snacks and Lunch

2 snacks a day (for full time care) will be provided by Palmer LifeWays. As cooking is part of our curriculum, children will often participate in the making snack with care givers. Lunch will not be provided. Please send a lunch with your child if they are

staying through lunch. We ask that lunches include healthy and whole foods. Please limit the amount of sugar in your child's lunch.

Snack examples:

- Hot grains and fruit
- Warm muffins or bread
- Soup and bread
- Vegetables and dips
- Cheese and crackers
- Popcorn
- Applesauce
- Yogurt and Granola

Costs

- Part Time Up to 5 hours
- Full Day Over 5 hours

A minimum of a part-time day will be billed

12 weeks to 18 months

- Part Time \$450
- Full Time \$860

Daily Rate:

- Part Time \$25
- Full Time \$50

18 months to 36 months

- Part Time \$440
- Full Time \$850

Daily Rate:

- Part Time \$25
- Full Time \$50

36 months 7 years

- Part Time \$420
- Full Time \$770

Daily Rate:

- Part Time \$23.50
- Full Time \$45

7 to 12 years

Part Time \$405
Full Time \$690

Daily Rate:

Part Time \$22
Full Time \$40

Please note that 4 and 2 day preschool are tuition based. The total cost for 35 weeks for the 2018-2019 school year is:

4 Day \$3290.00
2 Day \$1645.00

Preschool dates are August 27th, 2018 – May 16th, 2019

Lunch to be provided by parents daily

There is no preschool over Christmas Break (2 weeks)

December 24th, 2018– January 4th, 2019

Or Spring Break

March 11th to 15th, 2019.

A 3% tax is added to all tuition and registration fees for the city of Palmer while we are in the Palmer City Limits.

All hours must be scheduled at least a month in advance, and you are obligated to pay for all scheduled hours. Changes in schedule must be submitted to the Administrator by the 20th of the prior month for billing and staff purposes. These changes may be emailed or a change in schedule request form may be filled out. All families on State assistance understand they are responsible for all charges not covered by the State. All hourly charges will be rounded up for billing purposes.

Daily attendance records

All families are to sign-in and then sign-out at the front- office. Parents are required to phone their child’s caregiver first thing in the morning if their child is unable to attend.

Tuition and Care Payments

Tuition is billed on a monthly basis and families are required to pay at the beginning of the month unless a different plan has been arranged. If no payment is received by the 15th of the month, and no other arrangement has been made with the Administrator, your child’s place will become available to children on the wait list.

Complaints and Parents Right to Know

We ask if there are any complaints that you talk with the person involved first. They may ask the program administrator to be a witness to the conversation if desired: or, in the case of the concern being about the program administrator, they may ask a full-time

caregiver to attend the meeting as a witness if so desired. Such conversations will be noted and placed in the personnel file. As always, it is our goal to work as a team to provide the best care for your child(ren).

PARENTS' GUIDE TO LICENSED CHILD CARE (STATE OF ALASKA)

◆ **Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.**

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision. Visit, ask questions, and carefully compare several programs. Licensed care includes child care homes, group homes, and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

◆ **Licensing is a key to quality child care.**

Licensing promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center, group home, or home is granted a child care license, it must meet minimum health, safety, and program requirements (see summary below). A licensing representative from the Department of Health and Social Services visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

◆ **You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.**

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensors generally visit once a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether the child care program meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

◆ **If you have questions or concerns about your child's care.**

Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact your local licensing office. The Child Care Program Office will investigate your complaint. Your local licensing office address and phone number is



Department of Health and Social Services
Child Care Program Office
3601 C Street – Suite 140
P.O. Box 241809
Anchorage, AK 99524
(907) 269-4500 or toll free within Alaska at 1-888-268-4632

HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY CENTERS CARE FOR? (Children under the age of 13, including children related to caregivers under the age of 12)

CHILD CARE CENTERS

- 13 or more children
- 1 caregiver for every 5 infants
(birth through 18 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers
(19 months up to 36 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 10 preschool children (3 and 4 year olds)
- 1 caregiver for every 14 kindergarten children (5 and 6 year olds)

- 1 caregiver for every 18 school age children (7 through 12 years old)

PARENTS

- Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child
- Are responsible for monitoring their child's care
- Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child, and update it at least semi-annually
- Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care
- Receive written child care policies

LICENSING

- Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregiver) are in care
- License must be renewed every 2 years
- Facility (including building, staff and program) is assessed before a license is issued
- Complaints are investigated
- Licensing files are open to public review

CAREGIVERS

- Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way
- May not have a physical, behavioral, or domestic violence problem that poses a significant risk to children in care
- Administrator, caregivers of a facility, and those 16 or over having contact with children in the facility must have a valid criminal history check that is conducted by the State of Alaska Background Check Unit.
- Administrator, caregivers of a facility, and those 16 or over having contact with children in the facility must be fingerprinted
- Caregivers meet early childhood training requirements
- Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times

SAFETY

- Children are always supervised by an adult
- Caregiver with First Aid and CPR training is always present
- Facility is free of hazards inside and out
- Medicine and toxic materials are labeled and stored safely out of reach
- Firearms and ammunition are prohibited in a child care center. Firearms and ammunition must be stored as required in regulation for a child care home and group home
- Electric outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- Emergency information is kept for each child
- Facility must meet specific requirements for transporting children

HEALTH

- Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- Meals and snacks are nutritious
- Children are immunized or have a valid exemption
- Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- Facility must meet regulations if caring for mildly ill children
- Facility may not care for a seriously ill child unless a medical provider approves attendance
- Drinking water is safe
- Smoking is not allowed
- Medicine is given only with parent permission
- Food preparation and handling are sanitary

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- Infant walkers are not allowed
- Toys are adequate and varied

- Children have storage space for their belongings
- Children under age 5 must have a cot/mat/bed and bedding that is clean and sanitary for resting
- Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that could increase the risk of suffocation

PROGRAM

- Promotes children's healthy development
- Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities
- Program includes minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours facility is open between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- TV, movie viewing and computer and video game playing are limited to children's programs and do not exceed 1½ hours in a 24-hour period
- Computer learning activities do not exceed 2 hours a day
- High risk activities are not allowed
- Parent permission is required for moderate risk activities (for example, field trips)

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

- Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child
- Sets realistic expectations and clear and consistent limits
- Is not related to eating, napping, or toileting
- Child may not be removed from other children for more than 10 minutes
- Corporal punishment of children in care is not allowed. (Corporal punishment means “the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, punching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.”)

FIRE SAFETY

- Facility meets fire safety standards
- Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and documented

Supervision of Children

A weekly staff plan is created to ensure that adequate childcare ratios are met and all children are supervised at all times. Please be sure to notify us if you need additional care or will be out so that our schedule can reflect these childcare needs.

Termination

Parents may terminate enrollment as needed, but they are required to give the Center one month written notice prior to termination. If one month written notice is not given, parents will be responsible for an additional month of tuition. Preschool is a contract for the school year and parents are responsible for complete payment of the preschool program if signed up for preschool.

Palmer LifeWays has the right to terminate a parent/provider contract at any time with or without notice. All contracts with the State of Alaska will be honored. Any disagreements can be taken up with the Administrator. This decision may be appealed to the Department of Health and Human Services at 3601 C. Street, Suite 140 Anchorage, AK 99524 or by calling 1-888-224-4536.

Late Charge

There will be a charge of \$10.00 per 15 minutes late. This will be added to the next month's bill. There will be a charge of \$10.00 if payment is received after the 15th of the month.

Insufficient Funds

A charge of \$35 will be added to your bill due to insufficient funds.

Change of address, place of employment or phone number

Parents must notify the center immediately about any changes in their job, work schedule, work phone and/or changes in the designated contact person(s).

Center rules, license, and regulations

Will be available to parents in the office.

Parental notices

Will be kept near the exit door of each family grouping and in the office.

Confidentiality

All records and information about your family and child(ren) are confidential. The only time will be shared is if the parents gives us written permission or as required by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Child Abuse and Neglect

We are required by law, that if at any time, any staff member suspects abuse or neglect, we have no more than 24 hours to report this information to the Office of Children's Services (O.C.S)

Child Guidance Policy

Our discipline is intended to be proactive rather than reactive, starting with how well-organized the caregivers are. Caregivers will move to situations that could be potentially problematic and diffuse them before they are out of hand. Social challenges are handled on an individual basis and usually through the use of stories, redirection, positive encouragement and modeling of the appropriate behavior. Finger plays and games are used as redirection tools for toddlers and preschool-aged children. Discussion, explaining feelings, and verbal negotiating are social tools that work best with older children, school age children; thus we try not to use these with our younger children.

Conflict

Conflict is a part of life. This is a skill that some adults still struggle with in their adult life. It is our goal to help children work through conflict. This does not always look like the perfect Waldorf classroom. As young children learn to navigate this social terrain, they will often have impulses beyond their control. These impulses are hitting, biting, screaming and/or throwing. It is our goal to help young children learn to use words and control these impulses in a group setting, thus preparing them for academics in school. If you have questions or concerns about your child's behavior or another child's behavior, please talk with staff or Ms. Lori.

Parent Nights

Parent nights are offered from September through May. Parents are encouraged to attend these nights to learn more about the Waldorf Philosophy and incorporate new ideas into

their family. Our hope is to both support the child and the parents in our world of information. There is often conflicting information. We can share with parents the reasons behind why we do what we do and the goal we are working towards. Everything we do is done in consciousness. Please plan to attend these nights.

Illness

A child who is not feeling well is more sensitive and needs the TLC of home. Any child with a fever over 100 degrees, with a contagious illness or a child who has vomited or had loose stools within 24 hours, will not be admitted to the Center on that day. Children must be symptom free for 24 hours or have a written doctor's note in order to return. When a child becomes ill, we will make the child as comfortable as possible away from the other children and call parents to pick up the child. We expect parents will be able to pick up children readily.

Medication

A written authorization must be dated and signed by the parents in order for a caregiver to give prescription and non-prescription medication or to apply skin creams or sun creams to a child. All medications must be in their original container with original label. These are to be labeled with the child's name and the dosage and directions for administration.

Caregivers will not give fever reducers (Tylenol and/or Advil) to children for fevers.

Medical log responsibilities and entries

A written record, including type of medication given, dosage, time, date and the name of the person administering the medication, shall be made in the center medication and injury log book the same day that the medication is administered.

Minor injuries, handling and parent notification

When a child receives a minor injury, the caregiver will spend a brief time soothing the child with warm cloth, hugs and kisses, and a band-aid if needed, then encourage the child to return to what he or she was doing. Parents will be notified (verbal or written) upon pick-up regarding the nature of the injury.

Emergency medical facility and procedure

In case of a serious accident or injury, after following First Aid procedures, the child will be transported to Mat-Su Regional Hospital either by ambulance or by the parents if it is determined that an ambulance is not needed. All effort will be made to contact the parents or emergency contact prior to transport.

Fire Drills

Monthly Fire Drills will be conducted. It will be the responsibility of the caregivers to escort all the children to a designated area outside in a calm and orderly manner and then to conduct a head count. It will be the responsibility of the Administrator (or designated

Administrator) to check the bathrooms and all rooms to be sure that no child was left behind and then to collect a head count from the caregivers.

Poisonous Plants

Palmer LifeWays will not have poisonous plants on site.

Pets

Palmer LifeWays will not have pets on-site.

Smoking

Smoking will not be permitted at Palmer LifeWays. Please refrain from smoking in your car or in our parking lot.

Firearms and Ammunition

Firearms and ammunition are prohibited

Television and Computers

There will be no television or computer time at Palmer LifeWays. The administrator will have a computer on-site for business only.

Field Trips and Transportation

Permission slips will be sent home for field trips. If a child does not have a signed permission slip, they will be unable to participate in the field trip.

Parent Visits

Parents shall be allowed free access to their children and to all areas of Palmer LifeWays.

Substitute Caregivers

Substitute Care givers may be used in case of emergency or illness. Substitute Caregivers will always be on-site with a designated caregiver.

Policy Changes

Parents will be notified at least 2 weeks in advance of any changes to Palmer LifeWays policies.

ENROLLMENT FORM

I AGREE TO ENROLL MY CHILD, _____, AT PALMER LIFEWAYS. I HAVE RECEIVED THE PARENT HANDBOOK AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS. I HAVE ALSO REVIEWED THE PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND AGREE ALL APPLICABLE CHARGES. I UNDERSTAND THAT PAYMENT IS BASED ON ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT AND NOT ACTUAL TIME USED (except for overtime usages). I WILL NOTIFY PALMER LIFEWAYS 1 MONTH PRIOR TO TERMINATION OF THE ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FULL AMOUNT FOR PRESCHOOL IF MY CHILD IS SIGNED UP FOR PRESCHOOL (EVEN IF I CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW MY CHILD FROM PALMER LIFEWAYS)

Child's:

Age _____ Birthdate _____
Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____

Please initial:

____ I give Palmer LifeWays permission to transport my child to/from Birchtree Charter School or Academy Charter School

____ My child may participate in local neighborhood walks with Palmer LifeWays staff

____ I give Palmer LifeWays permission to apply insect repellent/sunscreen as necessary

____ I give Palmer LifeWays permission to apply supplied diaper cream

____ I give Palmer LifeWays permission to apply Neosporin (or similar) to small cuts and scrapes as necessary

____ I will attend all parent/caregiver meetings scheduled

____ I HAVE/ HAVE NOT ENCLOSED MY \$125.00 (3% tax) ENROLLMENT FEE (non-refundable) (Please make checks out to Palmer LifeWays)

____ I give permission for my child _____ to be photographed by Palmer LifeWays.

____ I do not give permission for my child _____ to be photographed by Palmer LifeWays

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____