

Parent Handbook



Postville Childcare Services, Inc.

"Equal Opportunity Provider"

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Mission Statement

Postville Childcare Center, Inc.'s (PCCS) mission is to provide children with an inviting, stimulating environment where play, developmental growth, and social skills are encouraged.

Goals

For the child-

1. to develop a sense of self, and increasing independence
2. to build physical strength, coordination, and motor skills
3. to establish a foundation for good health, hygiene, and safety
4. to express ideas and feelings creatively through various facets

For the parents-

1. to provide quality care for the child while the parent(s) pursue their own work, education, or other interest
2. to provide opportunities to meet and work with other parents and teachers, who have as their common concern, the interests and needs of their children

For the staff –

1. to work with children in a developmentally appropriate setting
2. to continue their professional development

For the community-

1. to help meet the need for quality early childhood education facilities
2. to provide employment opportunities
3. to offer a quality child care for individuals interested in the area
4. to contribute to the wholesome growth and development of its children

Board of Directors

- Membership

The PCCS Board of Directors will consist of no less than five, but no more than twelve volunteers, who are elected and voting members.

1. The President shall serve as the chairperson for the Board of Directors.
2. The Board shall consist of parents and community members of Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, and/or Winneshiek counties.

- Term of Elected Officers

The term of each Board Member shall be three years. Board Members elected to a position shall hold that office for one year and until their successors are elected and qualify.

- Election of Officers

At the first meeting of each new year, an election of officers will take place. Those who wish to be elected to an office need to inform the Nominating Committee at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Open floor nominations will also be taken that night. New committees will be formed and new members are encouraged to join.

- Responsibility of Board Members

President

1. Shall exercise general authority, subject to the control and direction of the Board, over the affairs of the Corporation.
2. Shall determine the agenda and preside at all meetings of the Board.
3. Shall appoint members for each of the Standing Committees and be an Ex-Officio member for all committees except the Nominating Committee.

Vice President

1. Shall perform any and all of the duties of the President in the event of his/her absence.

Secretary

1. Records proceedings of all meetings.
2. Prepares correspondence for all parties.
3. Maintains permanent files of all Board records and correspondences, as legally required.

Treasurer

1. Shall serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation.
2. Shall complete a quarterly audit of PCCS bookwork.

Other members

1. Support and assist the Director in the following areas:
 - a. Public relations for the center
 - b. Policy enforcement
 - c. Active on sub-committees
2. Make recommendations for the growth and development of the center.
3. Review, revise, and develop appropriate policies.

- Regular Meetings

The Board of Directors will meet on a monthly basis. Meeting times are the third Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are held at the Center. Special meetings may be scheduled as needed. Meetings are open to the public.

- Appeals to the Board of Directors

Parents must first attempt to resolve the concern with the classroom teacher and then the Director. The Director will respond to the grievance within five working days. A copy of the decision will be sent to the Board of Directors. If the concern is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, the parent must then submit the concern in writing to the Board of Directors at least one week prior to the next scheduled Board meeting. The concern will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Parents may address the Board for five minutes at that Board meeting. A special Board meeting may be called and a decision will be rendered within 30 days.

- Policy Adoption and Revision

There must be two readings of a new or revised policy before it takes effect. All proposed policies will be posted for parents to read prior to the second reading.

More information can be found regarding the structure and purpose of the Board of Directors in the PCCS Bylaws. If you would like to review them, please ask the Director for a copy.

General Information

- Hours of Operation

The Center shall be open for childcare Monday through Friday 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The center will be closed for the following holidays each year: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the Center will be closed the Friday prior. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the Center will be closed the Monday after.

- Closing of the Center

Weather conditions can sometimes be hazardous. If icy or snow covered roads make driving hazardous, parents are asked to listen to local radio or television stations for the official cancellation of PCCS. In the event weather would get bad during the workday, we would call you at work and inform you of the Center's closing and ask you to pick your child up.

- Arrival/ Departure

Parents are required to check in with their child's teachers upon arrival at the Center and before departure. It is very important we know your child is here, so we may greet them. At the end of the day, we must know your child is leaving because we are responsible for your child's safety and we are liable if the child is missing.

Children are only released to people on the Pick-up Authorization form. Center staff may request identification before releasing the child. The parent must turn in written permission to the Director if someone, other than those on the Pick-up Authorization form, is picking the child up.

In the event of legal separation or divorce, parents shall provide the Center with a copy of the Temporary Order of Final Judgment of Custody, indicating who is the custodial parent and visitation. In all cases, the center will discharge the child to the custodial parent unless both parents sign a statement that the non-custodial parent may pick up the child and designate the dates and times the non-custodial parent will do so. In joint custody cases, both parents will be allowed to pick up the children. **We cannot deny a parent the right to their child without a restraining order.**

When entering or exiting the Center, your child needs to be accompanied by an adult. Children need to be brought to their classroom by an adult and contact needs to be made with the child's teacher in their room.

- Attendance Records

Parents must clock their child(ren) in and out daily indicating the time of arrival and departure. This is a state licensing requirement. Failure to do so will result in a \$5.00 charge for failure to punch your child in or out. This takes valuable time from office personnel when they have to fix it!

- **Waiting List**

A waiting list will be maintained for enrollment of children in all classrooms based on a first-come, first-serve policy. However, priority will be given to siblings of children already enrolled. In order for your child to be placed on the waiting list, a \$25.00 - \$35.00 (annual, non-refundable) registration fee must be paid and the following forms MUST be completed:

1. Read Parent Handbook and signed Enrollment Contract
2. Intake Packet
3. Emergency Medical Consent
4. Pick-up Permission Form
5. Field Trip Permission
6. Activity Authorization Form
7. Physical Exam
8. Immunization Record
9. CACFP Application and Permission Form
10. Photograph Release

All forms need to be signed by parents. These are state regulations and necessary for us if we are to meet your child's needs. As soon as all enrollment forms and the registration fee are received, you will be placed on the list.

Parents will be called when there is an opening for their child, with a deadline given for a response. If a parent refuses an offered enrollment space, he/she will lose his/her place on the waiting list and be placed at the bottom. If a family desires to be removed from the waiting list, they need to call and notify the Director.

- **Parent Participation/Visitation**

Parents are invited to observe and participate in the classroom. Parents are afforded unlimited access to their children and to the provider caring for their children during the center's hours of operation, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. Our center has an open-door policy, and you are welcome to stop by anytime. You are required to stop in the office and sign in, or out, so office personnel know you are in the building.

- **Volunteer Hours**

Volunteerism is one of the most important concepts in our society today. Parents teach a valuable lesson to our children when they see us volunteer in support of a project or program we believe in. This is why PCCS requires 10 volunteer hours from each family in our program and 6 hours from parents who use the center exclusively for preschool. There are multiple opportunities to get your hours in throughout the year. Some examples would be fundraisers, volunteering in the classroom or center, and helping with special events. Prior to starting a fundraiser, the volunteer hours it is worth will be laid out on the information sheet. Chaperoning field trips does not count toward volunteer hours. Look for these opportunities and more on the Parent Board outside the office. Failure to complete your hours will result in a charge of \$10.00 per hour, for all hours not completed, to be added to your childcare bill.

- Parent-Teacher Conferences

We believe that parents are a child's first teacher. We make every effort to keep you informed of all things that are going on in your child's life. Parents are encouraged to visit daily with their child's teacher about how their child's day was and about their general growth and development.

Please keep us informed of family issues, especially changes that may affect your child's behavior or emotional status. We can assist in a child's adjustment and understanding of changes only if we are aware of them. This information is considered confidential and is treated with respect and privacy. Teachers are responsible for supervising the children, so if your concerns will take longer than a couple of minutes, please schedule a time with the teacher to talk or stop in and let the Director know the situation and he/she will inform the teacher.

- Lock-Down Policy

Our center will go into a lock-down if there is ever an instance where we are concerned for the safety of our staff and/or our children. An example would be if there is a community threat, a prisoner at large, or if a threat of any type has been made against a child or staff. A lock-down is defined as all building doors and windows are locked, blinds are pulled, and all children are kept inside and away from windows. We will be in communication with law enforcement, and doors will remain locked until the threat is resolved. If a parent arrives to pick up a child while the center is in lockdown, the parent will be asked to remain outside the front entrance and the child will be brought to them. Parents will not always be notified of a lock-down.

- Discipline

The staff will provide positive guidance to children at PCCS. This includes conflict resolution strategies, setting well-defined limits, and using natural and logical consequences.

When necessary, "time outs" or a brief isolation from the group may be used. Prior to returning to the group, the teacher will redirect the child's behavior and discuss positive alternatives. All staff members follow the guidelines outlined in the Iowa Department of Human Services Daycare Center Standards and Procedures Discipline section. They read as follows:

1. No slapping, spanking, or shaking will occur.
2. No punishment that humiliates or frightens the child will be used.
3. No threats, verbal abuse, or derogatory comments will be made to the child.
4. Punishment is never used in association with a child's illness or toilet training.
5. A child can never be deprived of food or rest as a punishment.

Any concerns regarding discipline should be discussed promptly with the Director.

When a child behaves in a disruptive manner, or hurts other children, the quality of care for all is affected. When all reasonable alternatives have been exhausted and erratic, disruptive, or violent behavior is being exhibited, a phone call will be made to the parent. The parent is then expected to come and pick up his/her child. Any damage done to the Center's equipment will be the parent's financial responsibility.

In the instance a child has an ongoing disruptive behavior, or is hurting other children, staff will document the situation. Conferences will be scheduled with the parents to help determine why the behavior could be happening and a plan of action developed. Other resources, such as Keystone AEA, may be contacted. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive or physically violent and all alternatives have been exhausted, a child may be asked to leave the center. One week's notice will be given to make alternative arrangements, unless the Director deems otherwise.

- **Biting Policy**

Our goal at PCCS is to provide a safe and caring learning environment for children. When a biting incident occurs, there are many upset feelings. We take biting seriously. We want to find the reason that the child is biting and extinguish the behavior as quickly as possible. Biting is not uncommon, however, it does cause more upset feelings than any other behavior childcare. Parents of the child who was bitten, parents of the child biting, and our staff all want the behavior to end as quickly as possible.

Children bite for many reasons. Some of them include experimental biting, teething discomfort, becoming independent, learning to play with others, and frustration related to ability to communication, changes in their home life, sharing, or feeling threatened. We try to avoid biting by acknowledging that this can take place, especially with children through the age of two and providing extra close attention to the children's interactions at this age.

Our response to a child being bit is to:

1. Intervene immediately and separate the biter and the child who was bit.
2. Take the child who was bit and was the bite with soap and water. Then apply some ice to the bite. We will be sure to give the child plenty of attention and comforting until they are settled down and ready to rejoin the group.
3. For the child who bit, they will be removed from the situation for a brief period of time and be told in a calm, but firm, voice, "No biting, biting hurts."
4. Parents of the children will be notified of the incident with an accident/incident form.

If a child is becoming a frequent biter, we will have a conference with the parents to discuss possible solutions and assign a person to stay/shadow the child. We may also send a referral to Keystone AEA asking for their assistance in putting positive supports in place to help change the behavior. While using these techniques, most children resolve the biting behavior. However, if there is no improvement, we must take further steps to ensure the safety of the children in our care. Therefore, we may require that the child who is biting find another learning environment that will meet his or her individual needs.

- **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not allowed in any program area, child-occupied room, or on the PCCS premises. We are on school property and are required to be smoke free!

- **Fire and Tornado Emergencies**

Our center practices monthly fire and tornado drills, in compliance with licensing regulations. In case of an evacuation of the Center, staff and children will walk to the YMCA and parents will be contacted.

Enrollment

- Enrollment Policies and Procedures

Enrollment shall be open to all children, provided the Center can meet the needs of that child. Children can be enrolled for full, part-time, preschool, or drop-in care. Enrollment shall be determined by the date the child was placed on the waiting list.

- Probationary Period

Upon enrollment, each child is placed in a two-week probationary period to ensure that the childcare arrangements are a good fit for the child, teachers, and other families of the center. During this time, the center reserves the right to terminate care if the arrangements are not working. The Director will notify the family verbally and in writing. The family will be given a reasonable time to work to correct or improve the explicitly defined deficiencies, unless these deficiencies are such that they are grounds for immediate dismissal. If satisfactory improvement does not result, childcare may be terminated.

During the probationary period, advance payment for scheduled hours may be requested. Hours used beyond scheduled hours will be added to the bill the following week.

- Age Requirements

A child must be at least two weeks when enrolled and may not attend the center past the age of 12.

- Registration Fee

A \$25.00 yearly registration fee will be required for each child or \$35.00 per family. Registration fees are nonrefundable and required upon registration of your child to the center, or placement on the waiting list, and renewable each August. Payment of this fee is considered to be a contract between the Center and the parent(s).

- Enrollment Forms

Enrollment shall be contingent upon the receipt of all enrollment forms including:

1. Read Parent Handbook and sign Enrollment Contract
2. Intake Sheet
3. Emergency Medical Consent Form and Card
4. Pick-up Permission Form
5. Field Trip Permission
6. Activity Authorization Form
7. Physical Exam
8. Immunization Record
9. Teacher's Classroom Form
10. CACFP Application and Permission Form
11. Photograph Release

- Scheduling

Your child’s hours will be contracted weekly. Children who are under 24 months must be contracted for a **minimum of 20 hours per week** and children two years and older must be contracted for a **minimum of 15 hours a week**. School age children must contract a **minimum of 5 hours a week**. Contracts must be submitted by Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. for the following week. You are responsible for the hours you contract. Families who do not turn in their weekly contracts by 5:30 on Wednesday will be charged \$3.50 and scheduled automatically using the hours contracted the week prior. You will then be financially committed to those hours. If you do not return your weekly contract for more than two weeks and have not notified the Director, your spot will be filled with another child on the waiting list.

If your child is not scheduled and is brought to the Center, he/she will not be allowed to stay if it does not work with staffing ratios (see ratios on page 16). If you need to add a day, it is your responsibility to contact the Director to check on room availability.

Daily staffing and food preparation for the Center are based on attendance. You need to notify the Center by 8:00 a.m. if your child will be absent. You may call PCCS at 563.864.7669 or contact via e-mail at postvillechild@centurytel.net.

- Sick/Vacation Days

Each child will be given a set number of sick/vacation days **per year**. These days can be used when you have contracted the day and are unable to come. These days have to be used in whole or half amounts and cannot be carried over from year to year. Whole or half day amounts are based on the hours you usually schedule.

For example, if you regularly schedule 8:00 to 12:00, and your child is sick, you would need to use a whole day to cover these hours because these are the hours you regularly schedule. If you choose to use half a day, it would cover two of the four hours you regularly schedule. Another example, would be if your child gets sick at the Center and has to be picked up, and you want to use a sick/vacation day, you will pay for the time they were there and have to use a half day of sick/vacation to not have to pay for the rest of the day he/she was scheduled to be at the Center.

These days cannot be used once notice of discharge/withdrawal has been given. Your sick/vacation days are determined by the number of hours you regularly contract.

The chart below shows you how many sick/vacation **days per year** you get based on how many hours you regularly contract:

<u>Hours</u>	<u>Number of Sick/Vacation Days</u>
30 +	4
15-29	2

Parents who only utilize PCCS during the school year or summer will have their sick/vacation hours prorated out for the number of months they use PCCS services. Once your sick/vacation hours are gone, you are then committed to any hours you are not here.

- Extended/Summer/Maternity Leaves

In the instance that a child is going to be absent for 4 or more weeks, families will be allowed to break contract by paying a non-refundable, \$100.00 fee to hold their spot until their return. PCCS will keep \$30.00, and upon your return, apply the remaining \$70.00 to your next bill and reinstate your contract. If a family fails to return, PCCS will keep the entire \$100.00.

- **DHS Assistance**

Families who have applied for assistance, and are waiting for approval, will be treated as private pay family until a notice of decision has been received. At that point, if there is a co-pay, the money paid thus far will be kept to cover one month of co-pay at the maximum units. For families who have assistance and a co-pay, you will be required to keep your co-pay caught up to avoid childcare privileges being revoked.

- **Financial Arrangements**

Your fees established are based on the hours contracted the week prior. If your child is sick or out for a day you had scheduled, you will be charged, unless you use a sick/vacation day. (Additional hours your child is at the center above what you have contracted for the week will be billed at the rate within your contracted hours for the week.)

Weekly bills will be placed in your Center mailbox outside the office. Tuition is due by the end of the week unless other arrangements have been made. Accounts are payable no later than 14 days after the billing date. After 14 days, tuition is considered late (see below for our late payment policy). If you need other arrangements made, please speak with the Director.

Checks are to be placed in the check box outside the office. There will be a \$30.00 charge for all returned checks. After two returned checks, the account will be turned to a 'cash only' account. A child whose parents have failed to pay an outstanding balance by the end of the third week will be denied entry to the center and his/her place will be filled with a child from the waiting list.

Collection Procedure for Late Tuition

- Week 1: A \$10.00 late fee is charged.
- Week 2: An additional \$10.00 late fee is charged and arrangements for payment must be agreed upon between the parent and PCCS. If no arrangements are made, childcare services will be denied.
- Week 3: A registered letter will be mailed to the parent(s) requesting a payment plan, plus another \$10.00 late fee. Childcare services will be denied until a payment is made.
- Week 4: A second registered letter will be mailed to the parent(s) informing them small claims court has been contacted, plus another \$10.00 late fee will be charged each week until payment is made.

- **Late Pick-up**

Late fees will be assessed at \$1.00 per minute, per child for every minute a parent is late picking up his/her child past closing time. Since we must pay teachers overtime after 6:00 p.m., we must be reimbursed. Also, we never leave a teacher alone, so if you are late, two teachers must stay, and they have commitments as well.

Please call if you are going to be late to save us the time of trying to track you down and to keep your children from worrying. Discussion with the Director should take place earlier in the day to make special arrangements if you know you cannot make the 6:00 p.m. timeline. After an hour, the local authorities will be contacted to pick up children still at the Center.

- Discharge/Withdrawal

Discharge from the center will occur for the following reasons:

1. Unpaid tuition;
2. Enrollment paperwork is not completed and returned when requested;
3. Center policies and procedures are not being observed;
4. Center and staff cannot provide the type of care a child may need.

You will need to provide written notification to the Director two weeks prior to the withdrawal of your child from the Center; however, further notice is appreciated. You will be charged your last contracted hours, for each week your child does not attend and we are not notified. If two weeks pass and we have not been notified of the child's withdrawal, your child's place will be filled and you will be billed for the two weeks.

Health Information

- Sick Child Policy

Our policy is set up to protect children against the spread of illnesses. Children who are ill should not be brought to the center. School-aged children who are absent from school due to illness should not attend the center. We ask that you alert the staff if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, such as strep throat or chickenpox, a sign will be posted at the main entrance and in each classroom.

Children with the following conditions **may be permitted** to attend:

- 1) Infants and young children may have as many as six respiratory illnesses each year. These diseases include - the common cold, croup, bronchitis, pneumonia, and otitis media (ear infection).
- 2) Children who are carriers of an infectious disease in their stool or urine that can cause illness, but who have **no** symptoms. Exceptions include *E. coli* O157:H7, *Shigella* or *Salmonella typhi*;
- 3) Children with conjunctivitis (pink eye) who have a clear, watery eye discharge and **do not** have any fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness;
- 4) Children with a rash, but **no** fever or change in behavior;
- 5) Children with cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection, parvovirus B19, HIV or carriers of Hepatitis B;
- 6) Shingles, children shall keep sores covered by clothing or a dressing until sores have crusted;
- 7) Children with influenza may return to early childhood education and care when the child feels well enough;
- 8) Children with Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) **do not** need to stay home as long as the wound is covered and drainage is contained;
- 9) Children with norovirus infection who have **no** diarrhea and are not otherwise ill, may remain in the program if special attention is paid to handwashing, proper diaper disposal, and maintaining a clean environment. See part II for children who have had diarrhea and/or vomiting;
- 10) Children who have ringworm. Children with ringworm should **not** go to the gym, swimming pools or play contact sports. Treatment may take at least four weeks;
- 11) Children with viral meningitis may return to child care when the child feels well enough.

To ensure the overall health and safety of all the children, we ask that you not bring your child to child care if one or more of the following exists:

- 1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child care center activities including outdoor play;
- 2) The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without risking the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;
- 3) The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child care center's activities:
 - a. Fever, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to be included at the facility;
 - b. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness like:
 - i. Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness,
 - ii. Uncontrollable coughing,
 - iii. Unexplained irritability, fussiness, or persistent crying,
 - iv. Difficult breathing,
 - v. Wheezing,
 - vi. Other unusual signs for the child.
- 4) Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV);
- 5) Lice, until the child has been treated and there are no nits;
- 6) Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, hard stools, or medication that may cause gastrointestinal damage such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin;
- 7) Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines that the cause of the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration;

- 8) Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than two hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms;
- 9) Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines that the child is noninfectious;
- 10) Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease;
- 11) Diarrhea, defined as loose, watery, and frequent stools. Children with diarrheal illness of infectious origin generally may be allowed to return to child care once the diarrhea resolves, except for children with diarrhea caused by Norovirus, *Salmonella typhi*, *Shigella*, or *E. Coli* 0157:H7. For *Salmonella typhi*, three negative stool cultures are required. For *Shigella* or *E. coli* 0157:H7, two negative stool cultures are required taken at least 24 hours apart. If treated with antibiotics, samples should not be taken less than 48 hours after therapy is done;
- 12) Norovirus, children not in diapers and child care center staff with diarrhea and/or vomiting should remain at home until 24 hours after diarrhea and/or vomiting cease, and until stools are formed. Children in diapers should remain at home for three days following cessation of diarrhea and/or vomiting and until stools are formed;
- 13) Erythema infectiosum (5th Disease), keep child at home if fever is present;
- 14) Pink eye (conjunctivitis) with purulent discharge (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), child may go back to child care when all symptoms are gone;
- 15) Scabies, until after the first treatment;
- 16) Tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend care;
- 17) Impetigo, until 24 hours after the child started medicine from the health care provider;
- 18) Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after antibiotics are started;
- 19) Varicella-Zoster (Chickenpox), until all sores have dried and crusted;
- 20) Pertussis, until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment have been completed or 21 days of cough if no antibiotics are given;
- 21) Mumps, child can go back to child care five days after start of symptoms or until symptoms are gone, whichever is longer;
- 22) Hepatitis A virus, until one week after start of symptoms;
- 23) Measles, until four days after onset of rash;
- 24) Rubella, until six days after onset of rash;
- 25) Herpes simplex, children with herpetic gingivostomatitis, an infection of the mouth caused by the herpes simplex virus, who do not have control of oral secretions, shall be excluded from child care. Children with mild cases who do have control of their mouth secretions may not have to be excluded; or
- 26) Meningitis (bacterial), child may return to child care 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

If a child becomes ill while in child care and it is determined that the child should be sent home, PCCS staff will:

- Contact the parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent;
- Care for the child apart from other children;
- Give appropriate attention and supervision until the parent picks the child up; and
- Give extra attention to hand washing, diaper changing, disinfecting surfaces .

- **Exposure to Disease**

Parents are required to notify the Center whenever the child has had or been exposed to a contagious disease. In turn, the Center will notify parents when their child has been exposed to infectious diseases. A sign will be posted outside your child's room, as well as on the parent board by the time clock, when a disease has been reported within the center.

When considering the length of time a child will be excluded from the Center because of an illness, the Center will observe the recommendation made by the Childcare nurse consultant.

- Administration of Medication

Assuring the health and safety of all the children in our Center is a team effort by the childcare center staff, family, and health care provider. Understanding each of our responsibilities, as well as the policy and procedures concerning the administration of medication is crucial to this goal. Listed below are our guiding principles and procedures of our medication administration policy:

1. Whenever possible, it is best that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done, so that the child receives their medication prior to going to childcare and again when returning home.
2. The first dose of a new medication MUST be given at home with sufficient time before the child returns to childcare to observe their response to the medication given. When your child is ill with a communicable disease, children are required to be on the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to childcare. This is for the protection of the child who is ill, as well as the other children in childcare.
3. When a medication is brought to childcare, it cannot be kept in the possession of the child. Medication must be given to the teacher in the classroom, where it will be taken to the lobby and kept in a locked cupboard or in a locked box in the fridge.
4. All antibiotics, medications, or materials applied to the skin will be administered only when there is a signed Medication Authorization form completed by the parent or guardian. Your child's teacher will help you complete this monthly form. When medication is administered, the time, date, and staff initials will be recorded on the medication authorization form. In the event, medication is not given when authorization is in effect, a reason will be noted on the form.
5. All medication authorization records for months past are kept in the specific child's file at the center.
6. Any prescription medication brought to the center must be specific to the child who is to receive the medication. It needs to be in its original container, have a child-resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the following information: pharmacy name, pharmacist phone number, child's full name, name of health care provider, prescribing medication, name and expiration date of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions. (If you ask at the pharmacy, they will give you another marked container for childcare care if it is a medication you need to keep in two locations.)
7. Any over the counter (OTC) medication brought to the center must be in the original container and be age/weight appropriate for the child it is to be given to. If an OTC medication is brought that the center feels uncomfortable giving, a doctor's note will be requested prior to the medication being given.
8. Medications given in the center will be administered by a staff member who has had training in proper medication administration.
9. For children who receive medications given on an ongoing or daily basis, the staff will advise the parent or guardian one week prior the medication needing to be refilled.
10. Information exchange between the parent or guardian and the childcare provider about medication that a child is receiving should be shared when the child is brought to and picked up from the center. Parents or guardians should share with the staff any problems, observations, or suggestions they may have related to their child's medication, and likewise with the staff from the center to the parent or guardian.
11. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the parent or guardian when it is no longer needed or able to be used by the child.

Confidentiality related to medications and their administration will be safeguarded by the center Director and staff. Parents or guardians may request to see or review their child's medication records maintained at the center at any time.

- Accidents or Incidents

Accidents or incidents, resulting in injury to a child will be reported the day of the incident, in writing, to the parent or person authorized to pick-up the child. If the accident or incident requires more medical attention than can be given at the center, the parent will be notified first. In the event that the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed will be contacted. The written report shall be prepared by the staff member who observed the incident or accident and shall include a general description of the incident or accident and the action taken, if any, by the Center. A copy of the report will be given to the parent and one will be kept in the child's file.

Special Information

- Field Trips

PCCS plans and carries out occasional field trips for the children to supplement the learning that takes place in the classroom. On these occasions, additional staff will be in attendance to provide increased supervision. These additional adults may be volunteers, parents, or staff. Except in the case of routine daily walks and stroller rides near the center, parents will be notified one week in advance of any field trips.

When a field trip requires transportation, the Postville Community School District buses will be used. Children who are under three cannot attend. All 3 year olds will be buckled into the bus seats.

- Non-Center Activities

Children attending non-center activities will be required to have written permission from the parent prior to the activity. Parents are responsible for insuring proper transportation to and from these activities.

- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

All employees of the Center are mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect, as required by Iowa law. Procedures are posted on the parent board outside the Director's office. Staff are to immediately report to the Department of Human Services, when in the course of working with a child, suspicions of the child having suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental injury, the presence of illegal drugs, or the denial of critical care.

- Ratios

PCCS complies with the Iowa rules for ratios of children to staff members. They are:

<u>Age of Child</u>	<u>Number of Staff</u>
Under 24 months	1 caregiver for every 4 children
2 years of age	1 caregiver for every 6 children
3 years of age	1 caregiver for every 8 children
4 years of age	1 caregiver for every 12 children
5 + years of age	1 caregiver for every 15 children

Our ratios are sometimes lower than the mandate, resulting in even more attention for your child. In our infant rooms, we try to staff 1 caregiver for every 3 children for more one on one time.

- Childcare Food Program

The center is a participant in the federally funded Childcare Food Program, serving breakfast, lunch, and snacks. These meals are prepared according to the CACFP guidelines, ensuring they are nutritionally balanced.

- **Meals/Snacks**

A weekly menu will be posted on the parent board informing parents of what will be served for breakfast, lunch, and snack. Breakfast is served to everyone at 8:00 a.m. If you want your child to eat, they must be here by that time. Lunch is served at 11:00. Meals are served family-style so children can improve their sense of independence, social skills, and fine motor skills. Please do not send food or drink with your child, as that is not allowed in the food program, unless there is an allergy, medical condition, or religious reason to do so.

If your child has a food allergy, please inform us prior to enrollment. We are required by the food program to have a doctor signed Allergy and Food Exception statement on file for children who need special exceptions made to their diet.

Snacks are served in the afternoon. Please notify the staff if you would like to provide a special snack, such as a birthday treat, in place of morning or afternoon snack (see *Special Treats* below).

- **Special Treats**

Any treats brought need to be discussed and approved by the room teacher in advance. They also need to be "in store" pre-packaged and in sealed containers or wrappings. Healthy snacks such as string cheese, granola bars, apples, bananas, etc. are encouraged.

Program Information

- Curriculum

Our center has a different theme for each week and teachers are expected to plan developmentally appropriate activities for the children using this theme. These activities are a balance of quiet and active, as well as indoor and outdoor activities. Some of the activities are child initiated and some are adult initiated.

We believe it is important for the children to get involved with their environment, which means sometimes they will get wet, sandy, painted, or “goopy”. These are important learning experiences, and we want your child to be comfortable participating in them. Please send your child in play clothes so that he/she can participate freely, without worrying about getting “dirty.” Make sure his/her shoes enable them to play hard without tripping and getting hurt.

In addition, outdoor play is an important part of our program, so be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather: shorts, t-shirt, snowpants, boots, coat, gloves, etc. We like to go outside everyday, so the children need the appropriate clothing to do so.

The activities planned in your child’s room will be posted outside the room at the beginning of each week. Take a look at them and see what exciting things are being planned for your child and plan appropriately!

- Report Forms

Written daily report forms to parents will be used for children under 24 months of age. For children over 24 months of age, information will be shared verbally.

- What NOT to Bring

There are several items we request that you do NOT allow your child to bring to the center. They are:

- money
- gum
- videos
- candy or food
- toys (especially guns or toys that facilitate violent play)

If these items are brought, the staff will collect them, place them out of the child’s reach, and send them home. Most likely, a staff member will request a parent take the item with them.