

Student and Family Handbook



Bailey, CO



Welcome to Mountain Minis Early Learning Academy!

We are so honored you have chosen to be a part of our Mountain Minis family. We are thrilled to have your child join our center and we can't wait to embark on this exciting learning and growth journey together.

We are very proud of the center that we have created and aim to offer your family the best care possible in a safe, supportive and trusted environment. Each day with us will be a chance for your child to grow socially, cognitively, emotionally, and physically. As early as infancy, your child will be provided with learning opportunities adapted to fit his or her age, developmental stage, and learning style. Our year-round and all-day childcare in one location makes it possible for you to provide your child with the care and education that will help them become happy and healthy lifelong learners!

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Owner

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Mountain Minis Early Learning Academy

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Guidance for symptoms not due to a specific disease	Child or staff must stay home?
Vomiting	<p>Yes - Unless the vomiting is related to an existing chronic condition or is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home. If the vomiting is unexplained and inconsistent with the person’s baseline state of health, the child or staff member may return 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting. If the vomiting can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If a child with a recent head injury vomits, seek medical attention.</p>

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

Our play-based, child centered program reflects the integration of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional needs, language development, self-help and aesthetic perception for the total development of the child. Meaningful play encourages curiosity, discovery and problem solving which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image. This philosophy encourages learning through play in a variety of ways that cater to each child's individual learning style.

We believe that given the right environment a child's natural curiosity and creativity leads to endless opportunities to grow in knowledge and develop a love of learning. We provide that environment at Mountain Minis by making it a safe and nurturing place where your child will be encouraged to build, splash, dash, pretend and create their way to exciting discoveries about the world around them. We allow children to join the Mountain Mini Family as a 6-week-old and to stay with us throughout their preschool years.

Mission

At Mountain Minis, we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child and family we serve. Our center experience is designed to promote each child's own individual social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural instinct to explore, discover, create and become a lifelong learner.

Certification

Certified by the State of Colorado as a Large Childcare Center.

Ages of Children Accepted

6 weeks-5 years

Hours of Operation

7AM to 5PM Monday through Friday.

Holidays

Closed for the following:

New Years Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Plus 3 Developmental Planning days

Definition of Family

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

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and enrollment fee/tuition paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$100 is due at the time of enrollment for the first child and \$50 per additional child. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age.

Prior to your child's first day we will schedule a meet with the teacher and time to drop off all items needed in the classroom. This will give their teacher time to set their new cubby prior to their first day.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate based on special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

If your child has an identified special need, we will comply with federal, state and other related laws regarding child safety. Every effort will be made to accommodate children of special needs depending on availability of staff and other resources. Your child's health and safety are our top priority, and we may not have the proper qualifications among our staff to meet your child's current needs. In these situations, we will do our best to refer you to other childcare centers that may be better suited for your child.

Inclusion

Mountain Minis Early Learning Academy believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

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

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority for Mountain Minis Early Learning Academy. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of

children involved will never be given to families. Brightwheel is an app used to communicate between parents and staff. Please know that staff can read messages sent via Brightwheel. Please keep Brightwheel communication information things that you do not mind staff reading.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers and staff are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum.

Teachers and Assistants participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected with or sanctioned by **Mountain Minis Early Learning Academy**.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios in our classrooms:

<i>Room</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
<i>Adventurers</i>	<i>6 weeks-18 months</i>	<i>1 teacher:5 infants 9 children max</i>
<i>Climbers</i>	<i>12 months-36 months</i>	<i>1 teacher:5 toddlers 9 children max</i>
<i>Explorers</i>	<i>2.5 years-5 years</i>	<i>1 teacher:10 children 12 students max</i>

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications.

Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be provided to all families using Brightwheel.



Bulletin Boards.

Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc. All of this information will also be provided on Brightwheel.

Newsletters.

Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available on Brightwheel.

Email.

We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits.

Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

Conferences.

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

Complaints.

Should you have a complaint regarding our center, we encourage you to speak with the Director or Management to resolve the problem. If you wish to file a complaint about this center, you can contact:

Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care

1575 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203

Tel: (303) 866-3755 Fax: 303.866.4453

Publicity

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

CURRICULUM & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curriculum that is developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to

advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Transition:

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

Transition from home to center: Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs: Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Transition to elementary school: Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Television Time

Our staff is not permitted to use electronic devices to "entertain" the children at any time. We are dedicated to making full use of educational T.V. and videos. On a special occasion, children 3 and above have an arranged movie day, this is treated as a special treat for the class. Children 2 and under will not be allowed any screen.

Electronic Media

Classrooms may utilize ipads for educational purposes during circle time no more than 20 minutes per day maximum.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

We encourage fun celebrations with parent involvement such as coming to the class to read a book or making a healthy snack with the preschool and pre-k classrooms. We also ask that the celebration does not include gifts, as that may cause a disruption. Staff will supervise any special event and will remain in ratio.

Rest Time

It is a requirement by law that all children under the age of five have a rest time during the day. All Children in our center are asked to lie quietly on their mats for at least 30 minutes without disturbing the other children. A book or quiet activity is provided for them after this 30-minute period. Please provide your child with a crib size fitted sheet and blanket for rest time. You will need to take it home each weekend to wash their sheet and blanket. If your child will be leaving during rest time, please call in advance so the other children will not be disturbed.

Infants nap on their own schedule. We follow Safe Sleep guidelines. Infants need to sleep in their crib and must be placed on their back. There cannot be any blankets or stuffed animals in the crib with them. They are allowed to have a pacifier, if there is an attachment on the pacifier it must be removed during rest time. While we respect whatever sleeping arrangements you may have at home, keep in mind that we can only allow infants to sleep in a crib. Colorado State Child Care Licensing prohibits us from allowing infants to sleep in car seats, swings, bouncers, or even on the floor. If an infant falls asleep anywhere but a crib, we are required to move them to a crib. If they are used to co-sleeping or sleeping in a swing, there may be a very difficult transition to sleep in a crib at school. You can bring in a sleep sack if you would like that to be used during naps, per licensing, sleep sack may not restrain arms, this includes swaddling practices. Please note that our infants are not allowed to cry it out for more than 10 minutes.

Diapering

Children requiring diapers will be checked for wetness or feces at least every two hours, or whenever the child indicates discomfort or exhibits behavior that suggests a soiled or wet diaper. The child shall be changed when found to be wet or soiled. A diaper changing station or changing area shall be provided and located separate from any food preparation, storage or serving area and will comply with Colorado Department of Health and Environment Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Childcare Facilities. We will keep a personal log of each child for parent's review. Diapers, diaper cream, wipes need to be provided by parents. If your child is potty training and you will be sending pull ups, we require that you send pull ups that detach on the sides. Along with several sets of clean clothes for emergencies.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. . Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Your child cannot move into the Preschool classroom until your child is properly trained and in underwear without consistent diaper. We want potty training to be a positive and successful experience for everyone. If a child has a potty accident, they will be cleaned up and put in the extra clothing that you provide. If we do not have any appropriate extra clothing for your child, you will receive a phone call or Brightwheel message asking to bring some in, or the child will have to be sent home. If a child has a bowel movement in their underwear, the underwear will be thrown in the trash.

GUIDANCE

The policy on discipline is a Colorado Child Care Licensing rule and regulation.

General Procedure

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

Acts of Aggression and Fighting

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all the children.

Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. The use of redirection and positive guidance strategies are implemented to help teach the children appropriate ways to communicate their feelings and interact with others.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care.

Examples of such instances include:

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

If there is a concern about a child's behavior, a report will be given to the parents. We will ask for a conference and set up a behavior plan. If the behavior continues, we will refer the child and family to work with our early childhood mental health consultant in order to advise the center as to how we can best serve your child.

Attendance & Withdrawal

Absence/Late Arrival

If your child is going to arrive after 9AM, please contact the center. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. If your child will be absent for the day, it is important that we are notified. If we cannot be reached, please leave us a message with your child's name, age, date and a reason for his/her absence.

Vacation

Mountain Minis does not currently offer vacation days. Should your child be absent for a family vacation, tuition is still due for that time out. Additionally, Mountain Minis must be notified of the extended absence of a vacation at least two weeks prior.

Withdrawals

A one month written notice for a schedule change or to withdraw from Mountain Minis is required. Full payment of tuition is required regardless of withdrawal date unless tuition has not been billed for that month. We suggest giving a month notice and departing for the following month. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

Right to Dismiss

It is the goal of Mountain Minis to work with the families to maintain enrollment. However, there are times when it becomes necessary to dismiss children from our program. Some reasons for dismissal are, but not limited to, chronic late payments, failure to update records, continual late pick up, lack of parental cooperation, failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time, gross misconduct on the part of the parent or child, lack of respect towards the staff and children, a threat to the safety of others, destruction of property, etc.

If there is a concern about a child's behavior, a report will be given to the parents. We will ask for a conference and set up a behavior plan. If the behavior continues, we will refer the child and family to work with our early childhood mental health consultant in order to advise the center as to how we can best serve your child.

Should any of the following occur the child may be removed from the center without notice:

- If a child is an immediate danger to her/himself, other children, staff, or Mountain Minis community members.
- If a parent or guardian is verbally or physically aggressive to a staff member, children or other Mountain Mini community members.
 - A parent/guardian refuses to work with our team and early childhood mental health consultant to best serve the child and the overall success of our program.
 - If a parent /guardian actions are detrimental to our program/ Mountain Minis community.

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

Tuition is paid using Brightwheel. Please contact the Center's Director for help to set up payments online via Brightwheel. **Tuition is due the 1st of every month.** There is a \$25 late fee per day for payments not initiated on the 1st of every month. An invoice will be sent via Brightwheel on the day before tuition is due. If you do not receive an invoice you are responsible for contacting the office and requesting one.

There is no reimbursement of tuition for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

Children are encouraged to begin attendance with Mountain Minis at the beginning of each month. If your family chooses to start mid-month you will still be charged for the entire tuition month. Expect Mountain Minis to increase tuition 8-12 percent each year to cover the costs of living, benefits for our staff, and building/property costs. Tuition increase will go into effect starting January 2025 and each January after.

Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (C-CCAP)

If your family is eligible for childcare assistance, we encourage your participation in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (C-CCAP). You must activate your CCAP ATS pin number before the first day of childcare. Mountain Minis does not allow parents to start childcare if ATS pin number is not activated for your child. CCAP parental fees are due on the first of every month. A \$25.00 late fee will be charged if the full payment is not received by the close of business on the first. If payment has not been collected by the close of business on the third day your child may be discharged from the center for non-payment. Non-payment of C-CCAP parental shares are reported to the Department of Human Services. Attendance during non-authorized time will be charged to your account and it would be your responsibility to pay in addition to your parental share. For example, these charges could include attending full-time when authorized part-time, loss of C-CCAP, or attending on non-authorized days. C-CCAP families are allowed 1 absence per month. Any absences above this amount will be charged to your account and are your responsibility to pay. C-CCAP permitted absences must be used in the same month. C-CCAP absences cannot be rolled over to future months.

Late Pick-up Fees

Mountain Minis closes at 5:00pm, Monday-Friday. Parents will be charged \$5.00 for every minute a child is present after their contracted pick-up time (this will pay for the teachers' time when they have to stay past their scheduled-out time). Teachers will record late fees for processing. If there is a late pick-up fee, parents will receive a written notice from the Center's Director stating the amount of the late pick-up fee. The fee will be added to your payment the following month.

Special Activity Fees

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore, we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$25 will be added for each day that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Additional Fees Credits

- **Withdrawals** - if a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a 2 week written notice of withdrawal, a 2 week tuition fee may be applied. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

Credits & No Credits

- **Credit will not be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits for sick days. Sick days are pre-considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.
- **Credit will not be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will not be credited for that day.
- **Yearly Refurbish and Enhance Cost**- Once a year, in August, we will bill each child’s account for a Refurbish and Enhance Cost: \$70 per child. This cost will help go towards any new furniture, toys, curriculum, arts/crafts, etc.. that is needed in the center.

Transfer of Records

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

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

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on Brightwheel.

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

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 7AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and check them in.

We close at 5PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If parents do not arrive to pick up their child from the program by 5:00pm, staff members will first try to contact the parents using all phone numbers provided on the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form. If parents are unable to be reached, staff members will try to contact all emergency contact persons. If staff members are unable to contact emergency contact persons, the Center's Director will be notified and they will then notify the Department of Human Services and/or the Park County Police Department.

Obligation to inform Law Enforcement or When we have to inform Police

If we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child, to protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

What to Bring

Infants:

- Premade bottles everyday (please label with first and last name and specify formula or breastmilk)
- Sippy cup if applicable
- Solid food or snacks if applicable
- Sleep sack (NO Swaddles)
- Pacifier if applicable
- At least 6 diapers per day
- Wipes
- Unmedicated Diaper cream (Must label and sign topical form)
- At least 2 changes of clothes per day.

- Crib sheet (Mini crib size)

Climbers:

- Premade bottles everyday (if applicable)
- Diapers
- At least two changes of clothes per day (including socks)
- 2 dry bags for soiled clothing
- Light jacket
- Winter coat, hat, & mittens, boots (winter only)
- Diaper cream
- Pack lunches in a small lunch box (labeled with first and last name)
- No glass containers
- One sippy style water bottle (labeled)
- Sunscreen that is labeled with child's full name and expiration if child will not be using the center's designated sunscreen
- A cot sheet (mini crib size), blanket, and a small lovey to stay in the classroom (*sent home weekly for washing*)

If your two-year old is potty training, you will need to provide these supplies:

- 5 complete changes of clothing (pants, shirt, underwear & socks)
 - 3 Dry bag for soiled items
 - Extra shoes
- Pull ups must be able to open/close from the side for ease of application

Explorers:

- A labeled water bottle
- Two Dry bags for soiled items
- A cot sheet (mini crib size), blanket, and a small lovey to stay in the classroom (*sent home weekly for washing*)
- Two extra sets of clothing, shoes, socks and underwear to keep in their cubby
- Snow boots, winter jacket, gloves, hat and snow pants during winter months •
- Sunscreen that is labeled with child's full name and expiration date if child will not be using the center's designated sunscreen

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. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a cubby. This will provide storage space for your child's personal belongings. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home. Please mark items of clothing that may become separated from your child. Gloves, coats, hats, etc. should have the family name on them for easy identification. Please check cubby on a weekly basis to ensure your child is stocked up with their classroom supplies. If a note has been sent home and the child does not have the adequate supplies (clothes, wipe, diapers) you will be required to bring them or pick up your child. At the end of the week all washable cubby supplies must go home to get washed. All art-work must be taken home

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at check in. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

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.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

Parents or guardians must provide a cold lunch that will influence healthy choices for their children. All foods brought to our program should meet the requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. (see attached information for guidance) If meals do not meet these requirements, Mountain Minis will supplement the child's meal with foods that meet this requirement and remind parents of our policy. We are committed to supporting the health and well-being of children and their families. Therefore, sugar-sweetened beverages of any kind (soda, fruitades, fruit drinks, flavored milks, and sports and energy drinks) candy, cookies or cupcakes/cake will not be served and should not be brought in by a parent or guardian. We believe in positive guidance techniques that assist children in learning appropriate behavior expectations. Food is never used as a reward for reinforcing behavior, at any time, during the program day. All Children eat meals and snack supervised in their rooms with their teacher.

This time is also used as an opportunity to teach children acceptable social table manners. Please note all lunches are stored in their cubbies and are not refrigerated or warmed. Please ensure to pack their lunch in a bento box style container.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.

½ turkey sandwich
Celery sticks
Raisins
Milk/water

Chicken strips
Roll
Orange wedges
Broccoli
Milk/water

Peanut butter on graham
crackers
Apple slices
Carrot sticks
Milk/water

Yogurt
Crackers
Sugar snap peas
100% juice



MMELA is a NUT-FREE ZONE

We cannot have anything containing any kind of nuts, please read labels carefully and check – it is surprising how many things have nuts!

Keep in mind that this means we cannot serve children nut milk/yogurt either (almond, cashew, etc.) We may have children who have life threatening allergies to both; thank you for your help in keeping our kids safe.

Food Allergies

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

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

At meal time the table is set with real or disposable plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Children are encouraged to serve themselves. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid and CPR for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up.
- Infants are fed “on demand” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly).
- 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. Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. 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 3 months.
- Formula must be brought to the premises pre mixed. Bottles will be heated or served cold based on family preference.
 - Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Toddler Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include but are not limited to: *hot dogs that are not quartered lengthwise, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.*

HEALTH

Immunizations/Physicals

For the safety of all children and staff members, children must be properly immunized. Colorado law requires all students attending Colorado schools and licensed child cares to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless they have a medical or non-medical exemption on file. You must file an exemption at each school or childcare that the student attends. To protect unvaccinated children, students with an exemption from one or more required vaccines may be kept out of a school or childcare during a disease outbreak. Please Note the state of Colorado requires us to have a new immunization record each time a child is vaccinated (or alternatively an exemption form). In addition, we are required to have a general health appraisal form at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 months and at 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Mountain Minis will send a notice one month prior, but It will be the parent/guardians responsibility to provide us with a general health appraisal form and current immunization/exemption form. If a parent or guardian does not comply with this policy it may warrant dismissal. We can utilize Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) to pull Immunization records, but we would rather have parents provide us with the signed immunization record. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding CIIS.

An up-to-date immunization record and a physical examination signed by a physician is required prior to the child's enrollment date. Infants and toddlers under 2 years of age must follow the recommended Academy of Pediatrics schedule for routine health evaluations. An annual physical is required for children between the ages of 2-6. A current physical is valid for 364 days from when the doctor's visit occurred. If your child has a food or medicine allergy, a physician must indicate the allergies on your child's physical form. If there is a food allergy or intolerance, a special diet statement must be completed by the physician noting the specific food substitutions that need to be offered. This special diet statement must be updated once a year. Children with special health care needs requiring intervention and/or medication including seizures, asthma, diabetes, severe allergies, heart or respiratory conditions, and physical disabilities must provide a written health care plan providing instructions for care. The Health Care Plan must be written by the doctor and signed by the physician and parent and provided to Mountain Minis prior to their first day of care.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies.

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

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Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children, you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately. Your child will remain in the classroom may remain until the parent/guardian picks up the child. If your child has a fever over 100.4 degrees, suspicious rash, three incident of diarrhea or vomiting, an infectious disease, generally not feeling well, is not able to participate in regular activities, and is requiring more attention than usual we will ask that you pick up your child within one hour. If your child is sent home, they must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the center or have written consent from their physician.

Please do not bring your child to school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- *Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.*
- *Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.*
- *Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher.*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Vomiting*
- *Communicable disease*

Guidance for symptoms not due to a specific disease	Child or staff must stay home?
Severe or new cough	<p>Yes - Severe cough is often present in people with infectious respiratory illness. A person with severe, uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, or rapid or difficulty breathing (if new or worsening from baseline) should not attend school or child care and should talk to a health care provider.</p> <p>If all symptoms are consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the person is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>Students and staff may return to school following discussion with a health care provider, even if the cough is not fully resolved.</p>
Diarrhea Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine	<p>Yes - Unless the diarrhea is related to an existing chronic condition, is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home, or is consistent with the person's baseline.</p> <p>The child or staff member may return to school or child care 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea unless the diarrhea is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the diarrhea is explained by a specific illness, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p>
Fever Fever is a temperature of 100.4° F or greater. Babies who are 3 months or younger need to see a health care provider right away for a fever of 100° F or higher. Call your health care provider for any fever in an infant aged 6 months or younger.	<p>Yes - The child or staff member may return to school or child care if the fever has been resolved for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications unless the fever is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer.</p> <p>If the fever is consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the person is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>A temporary, elevated temperature due to overexertion or overdress, without other symptoms of illness, should not be considered a fever.</p> <p>For more information about fever, read Children's Hospital Colorado's recommendations on fever care for children.</p>
Flu-like symptoms Fever with sore throat or cough Other flu symptoms can include runny nose, congestion, fatigue, body aches, vomiting and diarrhea.	<p>Yes - Children and staff may return to school or child care as long as they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms are improving, unless the symptoms are caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the symptoms can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>In consultation with a health care provider, additional evaluation for flu-like illnesses, sore throat, and upper respiratory symptoms may be appropriate, including evaluation for strep throat.</p>

Guidance for symptoms not due to a specific disease	Child or staff must stay home?
Vomiting	<p>Yes - Unless the vomiting is related to an existing chronic condition or is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home. If the vomiting is unexplained and inconsistent with the person's baseline state of health, the child or staff member may return 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting. If the vomiting can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If a child with a recent head injury vomits, seek medical attention.</p>

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration provided by a physician. The medication must have the original packaging with it. You will need to sign a medication administration form prior to medication being administered to your child. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

As per State Guidelines, trained childcare staff members can administer medication. Occasionally, children will need to receive medication while at the Center. If you choose to come during the day to administer the medication, we welcome you. Another option is to ask the center to assume the responsibility under the following guidelines: Prescription or over the counter medication must be prescribed by a physician for the child to receive the medication. Under no circumstances are we able to administer medication that was prescribed for another child or member of your family. Prescriptions must be in the original container with your child's name on the prescription and the correct vessel to disperse the medication. No medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, can be administered to a child without written/signed doctor and parental authorization.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. Medication should be handed to management and will be kept in a cabinet in the main office.
- **Non-prescription medications** require a note signed by the physician and family. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received. (The only non-prescription medications that can be administered for three days without permission for medication form is ibuprophen or acetaminophen if it was authorized on their annual health form, all other non-prescription medication needs the permission for medication form signed by the parent and the physician.)
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** Topical preparations such as lip balm, Aquaphor, diaper rash ointments, sunscreen, bug sprays, and other ointments may be administered to children with written parental authorization. Please do not send them to school with your child; they must be given to management with the proper written authorization. These preparations may not be applied to open wounds or broken skin unless there is a written order by the prescribing practitioner.

Over-the-counter medication must be kept in the originally labeled container and be labeled with the child's first and last name. In the case medication needs to be given on an ongoing, long-term basis, the authorization and consent forms are reauthorized on an annual basis. Any changes in the original medication authorization require a new written order by the prescribing practitioner and a change in the prescription label. Mountain Minis has staff members trained in giving medications. Medications are kept in an area that is inaccessible to children unless used for a life-threatening illness. If a child needs medication for a life-threatening illness, the medication is kept in the room. Children are not allowed to bring medications to childcare unless accompanied by a responsible adult. If a medication is out of date or no longer being used, parents are responsible for picking up the medication. If the parent does not respond, the center will dispose of the medications. Disposal of medications is documented.

A written medication log is kept for each child. This log is part of the child's records and contains the following:

- *Child's name*
- *Name of the medication, dosage, and route*
- *Time medication is to be given*
- *Special instructions*
- *Name and initials of the individuals giving the medication*
- *Notation if the medication was not given and the reason*

Communicable Diseases

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

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

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 playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Please have children wear closed toed shoes.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

In the event of inclement, excessively hot, or excessively cold weather, children will be kept indoors. Alternative gross muscle activities will be offered in the classrooms. When the temperature is below 10 degrees or over 95 degrees the children cannot go outside. Outside play may be limited if the temperature is below 20 degrees or above 90 degrees. In the case of inclement weather or poor air quality, teachers may cancel all outdoor activities. Parents are encouraged to dress children appropriately for the severe weather, as we do play in the snow, walk in the rain, and explore the wonderful weather of Colorado

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Should your child be involved in a non-urgent incident/accident in the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an incident report, and the parent will receive a copy of the report via Brightwheel app. If your child is involved in a more serious incident/accident or receives an injury to the head or face a call will be made immediately to the parents and possibly a call to 911 will be made if deemed necessary.

Biting

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

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

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

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

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

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

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

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

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

Suspected Child Abuse

All employees of a childcare center have a legal responsibility as a mandated reporter to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately according to the Child Protection Act of 1987 in the Colorado Children's Code. A mandated reporter may confer with a Director or supervisor to see if they have "reasonable cause to know or suspect" that child abuse or neglect has occurred. Ultimately, however, the mandated reporter has a personal responsibility for making the report, and the mandated reporter cannot avoid that responsibility by asking a supervisor or employee to determine whether the report should be made. The telephone number for the statewide hotline to report abuse/neglect is 1-844-CO-4-KIDS.

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and

may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

All teachers monitor attendance by updating their attendance records throughout the day and by counting and matching the numbers of children present with names on attendance records. Teachers are trained to use a name-to-face utilizing Brightwheel. Scanning the room for the whereabouts of children and what they are doing is an additional way teachers keep children safe. Teachers are taught to be aware of their surroundings during their scheduled time at the center for the safety of everyone. Children are accounted for when transitioning from the classroom to another location and upon return, as well as when new staff enter the classrooms.

In the case of a lost child, all available staff members will conduct an immediate building and grounds search. Teachers will check to ensure an authorized adult did not sign out the child. If the child is not located within ten minutes, the parent/guardian/sponsor will be notified by phone, the authorities will be notified, and this will be reported to the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Child Care Licensing.

Fire Safety

The Center conducts regular monthly fire drills. Building maps are posted near the door of every classroom. Children are taught to respond quickly but calmly to the fire alarm. The teachers in each classroom are responsible for ensuring all children are accounted for, ensuring that all children leave the classroom and lead children out of the building. The First Aid kit, attendance record and emergency contact information will remain with the teachers. The children will walk in a single file line to a designated spot and remain in a group. Once in the designated spot the lead teacher will again take roll call and report the number of children to the Director. Teachers are taught to remain calm and in control at all times so not to frighten the children. The Director is responsible for the overall count of children and staff. Children may return to the building once the director has instructed the classes to do so. If an evacuation is necessary, our designated primary pick up location is Platte Canyon Fire Protection District Department located at 153 Delwood Dr Bailey 80421 and our secondary location is Deer Creek Elementary. We will contact parents as soon as possible but please note this will be depending on the evacuation orders and ability to contact families.

Tornado Drills

As required, the Center conducts tornado drills. In the event of a tornado, teachers are to quickly and calmly lead children to the designated "safe" areas within the building. (If out on the playground, the class immediately enters the building and goes to the designated safe area for their group.) In the case of a tornado, children will be immediately grouped into a central room, hallway or bathroom. The teacher will have the attendance records, a First Aid kit and emergency contact information for each child. Mountain Minis practices emergency tornado

drills to ensure proper procedures will be followed. Once at the designated spot, the lead teacher will again take roll call and report the number of children to the Director. Teachers are taught to remain calm and in control at all times so not to frighten the children.

Active Shooter Drills

In the event an active shooter becomes a danger to those inside Mountain Minis, the staff and children will be taken to a location designated in the evacuation plan. Teachers are to quickly and calmly lead children to the designated "safe" areas within the building. (If out on the playground, the class immediately enters the building and goes to the designated safe area for their group.) The lead teacher in each classroom is responsible for ensuring all children are accounted for, ensuring that all children leave the classroom and lead children to the designated spot. The teacher will have the attendance records, a First Aid kit and emergency contact information for each child. The children will walk in a single file line to a designated spot and remain in a group. Once at the designated spot, the lead teacher will again take roll call and report the number of children to the Director. Teachers are taught to remain calm and in control at all times so not to frighten the children.

Security Door

Only current staff, enrolled children, their families and office-escorted visitors may enter the building. All visitors must sign in at the front office and will be escorted to their destination. Mountain Minis does not offer a public bathroom or telephone.

Emergency Transportation

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

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies are reviewed quarterly and updated annually or more frequently and are available for review upon request. To view the center policies, please contact the center director.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Early Childhood Education Center Family Handbook**, and reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Mountain Minis Early Learning Academy** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Early Childhood Education Center Family Handbook**.

I have read and agree to the above policies.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date