



**NISSE PRESCHOOL  
& KID'S PLACE  
FAMILY  
HANDBOOK  
2024-2025**

## **WELCOME TO NISSE PRESCHOOL & KID'S PLACE**

Welcome, Nisse Families!

We appreciate your interest in Nisse Preschool & Kid's Place. This booklet will let you know what you can expect from us, as well as what we will be expecting from you as families when you enroll your child in our preschool.

Nisse Preschool is a non-profit organization administered by a volunteer Board of Directors, who serve two-year terms. Please ask to see the Nisse Preschool Board of Directors handbook for more information on becoming a board member.

### **NISSE PRESCHOOL NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:**

Nisse Preschool seeks to prevent discrimination based on race, gender, religion, national origin, ability, and age.

### **ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION:**

Director:	Emily Secor	director@nissepreschool.org
Head Teacher:	Karen Frick	teacher@nissepreschool.org
Nisse Board President:	Jennifer Bliven	president@nissepreschool.org
Associate Teacher:	Laurie Betts	laurie@nissepreschool.org
Associate Teacher:	Jenessa Stoen	jenessa@nissepreschool.org

### **HOURS:**

Nisse Preschool's Hours of Operation are 7:45am-5:30pm Monday through Friday during the school year. Classes will begin the Tuesday after Labor Day with an end date similar to the Decorah Public School. Classes will closely follow the Decorah Public School Calendar, with the exception of the Wednesday 9:00am start time, and possibly additional days off for Nisse teacher collaboration.

4 and young 5 year olds attend Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 8:00am-1:00pm.

3 and young 4 year olds attend Thursday and Friday from 8:00am-11:00am.

Extended care is offered to all families for a fee of \$5.00 per hour.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Nisse Preschool will meet the ratio requirements of the Department of Human Services and the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant.

Students must be 3 years of age prior to September 15th to be enrolled in the 3-year-old program and 4 years of age by September 15th to be enrolled in the 4-year-old program.

The 4 year old class will have no more than 20 students. The ratio will be 1:10 adult/students at all times.

The 3 year-old class will have no more than 20 students. The ratio will be 1:8 adult/students at all times.

### **WHO WORKS IN OUR PRESCHOOL:**

**Head Teacher:** The Head Teacher will be a State of Iowa Certified Teacher and hold an early childhood endorsement.

**Associate Teacher:** There will be two associate teachers on staff. This person will have specialized training in early childhood education.

**Director:** The Director will be responsible for all business transactions at Nisse. This person will work with the Head Teacher throughout the school year.

**Extended Care Staff:** The extended care staff will be people who have an interest in working with children in a small setting.

All staff will be required to complete a background check and be fingerprinted prior to being included in the ratio. We believe that the most important asset of our school is the quality of our teachers. All staff members are experienced in working with young children and participating in a continuous program of in-service, workshops and training sessions. All teachers go through classes to be CPR and First Aid certified.

### **MISSION:**

The mission of Nisse Preschool and Kid's Place, a partnership of school staff, parents, and community, is to prepare students to be lifelong learners who can become successful, productive future citizens. This will be accomplished by recognizing the value of each individual and promoting academic and personal growth in a challenging and caring environment.

As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural desire to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner.

### **TOBACCO AND NICOTINE POLICY**

Nisse Preschool is a tobacco and nicotine free zone. Tobacco, nicotine and e-cigarettes and vaping are prohibited inside of the program, on the grounds to include employee's vehicles while at work, and in any vehicles used to transport children at all times. Providers/teachers/staff are prohibited from wearing clothing that smells of smoke when working.

### **ADMISSION POLICIES**

We follow the policies required by the Statewide Volunteer Preschool Program Grant and the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Each fall, Nisse will complete an audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form. Most forms may be completed electronically; if you wish to receive a PDF version of the enrollment forms, please provide your email address to the Director.

Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization record in IRIS format. These forms must be on file prior to the first day of preschool. In addition, any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form must be completed.

## **PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION:**

Our program is built around the concept that children are born ready to learn. As caregivers, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging. The following principles are excerpted from the *Iowa Early Learning Standards* (2006) and serve as the foundation for our curriculum.

- Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.
- Learning is sequential, building on prior understandings and experiences.
- Learning proceeds at different rates in each area and each child; children will show a range of skills and understandings in any one area of development.
- Learning in each area is interconnected. Young children learn best through experiences, which incorporate several areas of development.
- Learning is embedded in a culture. Children learn best when their learning activities are rooted in a familiar cultural context.
- Learning begins in the family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance.

All children have the potential to achieve the Iowa Learning Standards with appropriate support and instruction.

## **GOALS FOR FAMILIES:**

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- Families will advocate for their children.

## **CURRICULUM**

Curriculum at Nisse includes the child initiated and teacher directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Nisse uses the Creative Curriculum for Preschool® as guides for planning the curriculum in each of its program rooms. Each class has weekly lesson plans. These plans contain a number of activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group as a whole. Lesson plans may be changed in order to accommodate the children's changing interests.

Each classroom is set up in centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "free play" is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development of important social skills.

Learning concepts such as numbers, letters, colors and shapes are introduced through learning games, puzzles, circle time, etc. Reading readiness skills are developed by encouraging listening, following directions, sequencing, etc. We do not rely on worksheets in our learning environment.

Foundations is our new literacy program that we are implementing this year. All collaborative preschool partners are using this program to help bridge the gap from preschool to TK or kindergarten, as they are using this program as well.

Art activities are a natural form of expression. The children are provided with a variety of art mediums, allowing them to use their imagination and to create. The **process** of creating, not the “end product,” provides the child with the learning experience. Often children must “warm up” to getting their hands into paint, glue, etc. All children will be encouraged to participate in the art activities; however, the child will be allowed to decide if he or she wants to participate.

We love to have parents share their professions, hobbies, or culture with the children. If you have a special interest in one of the units your child is studying, please let the teacher know!

### **PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES**

We will use Creative Curriculum® as our curriculum series. All teachers will be trained in Creative Curriculum.

The Creative Curriculum® has nine Objectives for Development and Learning. They are:

- Social-Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts

### **ASSESSMENT (GOLD)**

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an online, ongoing, portfolio-based assessment system for children in the four-year-old program. GOLD blends portfolio-based assessment for **all** areas of development and learning with performance tasks for selected predictors of school success in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Specifically, the developmental domains on GOLD are: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and The Arts. Three times a year, teachers complete a progress checkpoint for each child across the required developmental domains based on analysis of portfolio evidence. Levels used to indicate how a child is doing at a checkpoint are based on widely held expectations for child development. Documentation for each child may also be collected on an ongoing basis across areas of development and examined regularly to assist teachers in completing progress checkpoints.

Teachers will be required to take anecdotal recordings for GOLD, during the four-year-old preschool time to meet the requirements of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant.

Our three-year-old program will have a set of social emotional guidelines that will be used to guide planning of activities in our classroom. They will be based on the Teaching Strategies Continuum.

### **Developmental Screening/Monitoring Tool**

The CDC Milestone checklist will be handed out to all parents at the parent meeting before school starts every year and repeated yearly as long as the student is enrolled at Nisse. The parents will be asked to hand in the completed questionnaire at the end of the meeting. Upon turning in the form, the teacher and parents will discuss if there are any concerns they noted on the form. If concerns are noted the parents and teachers will

discuss further if there are any plans in place to help the family or if further action will need to be addressed or worked on. The head teacher will also complete a CDC milestone checklist within 60 days of enrollment and at least annually to identify children who may need additional evaluation and/or intervention strategies.

### **DAILY ROUTINE**

The classroom's teachers work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small groups, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children **thrive** on consistency! Routines will be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

### **REST TIME**

The Iowa Department of Human Services requires that all children must be provided a regularly scheduled nap or resting time if at preschool five hours or more. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children should be provided alternative quiet activities if unable to rest. Children will be provided a cot with a sheet. Children may bring their own blanket to rest with. It will be left in the classroom and be washed after each use.

### **OUTDOOR POLICY**

Please remember to send outside gear every day (hat, gloves, snow pants, and boots). We have a very limited supply of extras at Nisse. Nisse Preschool will follow DHS standards for outdoor play. Children shall play outdoors when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

### **SNACKS**

A snack and milk is served each school day. Snacks will be provided by Nisse Preschool but donations are always appreciated. We ask parents, when donating a snack, to donate a healthy snack that is ready to eat from one of the food groups. Examples are provided in a handout, which is available from the teachers and is distributed to all parents at the beginning of the school year. All snacks must be store bought and arrive to school in the original package.

Children will be encouraged to sample all foods that are offered, but will never be forced to eat. Please inform your child's teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made. For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child.

### **FOOD FROM HOME**

Children are welcome to bring in special treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies, dietary restrictions and Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant requirements, we require only supplying

store-bought snacks still in the original packaging. A list of healthy snack options approved by the USDA and Iowa Department of Education is available from the Director.

### **FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN**

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form, available in the office. This form will be posted in your child's classroom, as well as in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well.

### **LUNCH**

The children will have the option of purchasing hot lunches each day. The lunches meet DHS licensing requirements and are provided by Winneshiek Medical Center. Parents will be informed of the cost per lunch prior to the beginning of the year. (\$3.05 per lunch)

If packing a lunch, it must be nutritionally balanced and meet the same licensing guidelines as snacks. When packing your child's lunch it is required that their lunches include food from each of the four basic food groups: grain, protein, vegetable, and fruit. Remember we will provide milk or water with each meal. Do not send pop or chips. You are responsible for keeping the lunch cool, if necessary.

### **MILK**

Milk will be provided for the students for snack and lunch. If your child has a milk allergy, please let the Head Teacher know.

### **SUPERVISION POLICY**

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Teacher-child ratios are always maintained.

- Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently).
- Staff will count children before and after taking them outside. While outside staff will position themselves around the playground and will be alert to actively supervise children.
- Staff will position themselves around the room during play and will be alert and actively supervising children throughout the day. Staff will also account for all children with name to face recognition by visually identifying each child.
- When we leave the center, the child to teacher ratio is maintained and we will have 4 staff per 20 children. Each staff member will have a small group of children they will be required to supervise. They will be alert and actively supervise the children throughout the trip away from the center. Touch supervision (i.e. hand holding) will be used during times we are away from the center.
- We have a water table in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables. During these water play activities touch supervision is maintained.
- We do not go around bodies of water or play in pools.
- Staff are trained on active supervision during staff meetings and/or orientation.

### **PLAYGROUND POLICY**

- Children are supervised on the playground and outdoor area at all times.

- Children are taught to respect others by not engaging in rough play or pushing on the playground.
- Children are shown how to correctly use equipment and reminded are proper ways to use equipment.
- Playground equipment was installed according to the manufacturer’s instructions including anchoring. Also, the adequate fall surface has been maintained. The fall surface is poured rubber and is identified by its black and blue color and no other equipment is allowed on the fall surface around the slide.
- A monthly playground safety checklist is conducted and documented along with daily checks before we go outside. If anything is found not in compliance the director will be notified to take care of the problem. The playground safety checklist requires the staff to make sure there is no broken, missing, or damaged equipment. This safety check also includes making sure the playground is free of debris, litter, trip hazards, and standing water. The inspection of playground includes:
  - Missing or broken parts
  - Protrusion of nuts and bolts
  - Rust and chipping or peeling paint
  - Sharp edges, splinters and rough surfaces
  - Stability of handholds
  - Visible cracks
  - Stability of non-anchored large play equipment
  - Wear and deterioration
  - Safety hazards such as broken bottles and toys, discarded cigarettes, stinging insect nests and packed surfacing under frequently used equipment like swings and slides
  - Fall surfacing is at the required depth in all use zones
- Staff are trained on playground safety measures during staff meetings and/or orientation.

### **DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES**

The Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday class begins at 8:05am. The Thursday/Friday class begins at 8:00 a.m. Typical drop off time is between 7:45 – 8:00am. **No drop-offs are allowed before 7:45 am.** Classes end each day at either 11:00am or 1:00pm. Parents are expected to pick up your child on time. We will allow 15 minutes after class time for pick up, before charging for extended care.

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age appropriate, size-appropriate seat restraints. In order to ensure the maximum safety for your child, we ask that you drop off and pick up your child on the school side of the driveway. You should make your approach from North Street, from the alley behind the corner building. If you wish to come into the classroom to pick up or drop off your child, you are more than welcome to do so. We only ask that you park along North Street and walk to the school. This will alleviate congestion for those wishing to use the driveway.

**Children will only be released to a parent or an individual listed on the child’s intake form.** It is the parent’s responsibility to keep this information current. In the event that your child is to be picked up by someone that is not listed on the information sheet, you will need to give your child’s teacher a note listing the person’s name and phone number. We will ask to see this person’s driver’s license to verify his or her identity before releasing your child to this person.

### **SIGN IN/SIGN OUT POLICY**

A daily attendance record is maintained in the Brightwheel App, including arrival/departure times. In our Brightwheel app each person who drops off or picks up their child will have a personal code to enter in at drop



off and pick up time. The parents/guardians are responsible for checking in and checking out their child. This will give us an accurate daily attendance record listing the times of arrival/departure of the child, as well as the person dropping off and picking up. If a child stays for extended care the parent, or person picking up the child, is responsible for checking out the child. Also a monthly pick-up calendar is maintained in the child's folder. On this calendar it is noted who is picking up the child and the expected time the child will be picked up.

A sign in/out sheet for visitors that includes name, date, time in/out, and reason for visit and contact information is kept in an open binder at the main entrance to our building.

We will notify the parent/guardian, at a minimum within an hour of a child's scheduled arrival time, if there is no communication from the parent/guardian about the child's absence.

### **LATE PICKUP POLICY**

This policy is a two-phase policy. The first time a child is picked up late, the parent will receive a pink warning slip. The second time a child is picked up late, and every time thereafter, the parent will be charged a \$1.00 late fee for every minute past 5:30 p.m. The fee will be added to the extended care bill at the end of the current month.

### **EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM**

The Extended Care Program will be available for those families who are not able to pick their child up immediately after their class has ended. For an hourly rate of \$5.00 per child, parents may opt to leave their child at Nisse until they are able to pick up their child. This service will be available on almost all scheduled preschool days until 5:30pm and is staffed by Luther College Students. If extended care will be unavailable for any reason the teachers will give parents notice at least one week in advance. The rates are based on quarter-hour increments and you will be charged for any portion of a quarter hour that your child is at Nisse. **You will be billed at the end of each month based on your utilization. A bill will be sent via Brightwheel on the first of each month.** This program is intended to be flexible to meet the needs of parents and families. In order to plan for staffing, we appreciate notification by Friday for the following week's schedule. However, we understand that schedules change and will attempt to accommodate last-minute changes. Please notify staff of schedule changes by sending a message via Brightwheel. **Payment for services is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the previous month's care. If payment is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, a \$25 late fee will be assessed. Extended care fees are not eligible for automatic withdrawal.** Failure to pay for 2 months of care will result in the child no longer being able to participate in the extended care program. If you know you will not be able to pay, please contact the Nisse Director.

### **PARENT ORIENTATION/MEET THE TEACHER/HOME VISITS**

Each family is strongly encouraged to attend three year-old and four-year-old parent orientation. This orientation is a great time for parents to learn of important policies and procedures which are also reviewed with the Board President and Director at this time, as well as the paperwork required for enrollment completed. Typically, "New Family Orientation" is scheduled in late August.

Meet the Teacher Night is held before school begins. This is a time for the students to come see their classroom, locate their personal space in the classroom, and deliver school supplies. Home visits will take place for the four-year-old preschool families. This will be arranged by the Head Teacher and typically take place two weeks before school begins. The purpose of these home visits is to learn about the children and meet them in the environment they feel most comfortable in. These visits are a requirement of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage you to be involved with your child and their school. There will be many opportunities for you to volunteer during the school year such as helping with fundraisers, helping with field trips, and sharing your talents with the children, to name a few.

We also need help from every family for each fundraising event. The Nisse Preschool Board works diligently to responsibly manage the school's resources. We try our best to keep tuition as low as possible for families and choose to supplement the school's budget by utilizing specific fundraisers. Opportunities to sign up for volunteer positions will be offered throughout the year. Most of the activities we plan would be impossible without the help of our wonderful parents. Thank you in advance!!

## **PARENTS IN THE CLASSROOM**

If you wish to be involved in the classroom on a regular basis (coming in to read a story, share an experience, help with an art project, etc.) please let us know. We always welcome an extra set of hands! Often children act very differently when a parent is in the classroom. If this appears to be a problem, we will meet to determine what will benefit your child the most. Parents who are in our classroom will be required to complete a background check, if included in child ratio.

## **NEWSLETTER**

A monthly newsletter will be sent out by the Head Teacher with general activities that went on throughout the month.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Two times per year a personal conference will be held for all children in our 4's preschool program to discuss your child's progress and/or kindergarten readiness. At this time the teacher and families will review the online GOLD® Assessment reports. Additional conferences may be scheduled anytime a need arises by contacting the teacher.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Nisse offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Parents will be notified at least one week in advance of all field trips. Parents will be required to fill out a permission form at the time of registration. If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip, please find alternative childcare arrangements for that day, as we will not have staff available to stay behind with children not participating in the field trip.

As a participant in our preschool program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to: walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds; trips to local businesses. Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times.

We will use the Decorah Community Schools busing for field trips that require transportation beyond walking distance. (4's preschool program only)

## **CLOTHING**

Please send your child to Nisse Preschool in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Play is usually active and often messy; comfortable, washable clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program. Outdoor play is scheduled every day as an essential part of our planned curriculum. We expect all children to

be dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. Shoes should be rubber-soled and enclosed. Tennis shoes are recommended and flip-flops are discouraged.

All children occasionally get their clothes wet and have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child into an extra set of clothing provided by the family. Your child's teacher will request that you bring a complete change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at school and replenished as needed. Please be sure to clearly label all items of clothing. Let the teacher know whenever your child's clothing or other items cannot be located. Staff will notify you via Brightwheel if your child experiences an accident at school, and their dirtied clothing will be sent home in their backpack. Please send a replacement set of clothing back to school with your child the following school day.

### **WEAPONS/VIOLENT PLAY**

There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play at Nisse. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play. If a child brings a weapon to Nisse, the weapon will be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

### **BRIGHTWHEEL APP**

Brightwheel is the application that is used for our classrooms. All forms, communication, and payments are done on the Brightwheel app. Parents are required and responsible for setting up their account prior to the first day of school. Contact the director if there are any issues or questions with setting up your account.

### **TUITION FEES**

The fee for the Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday class is determined in accordance with the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Grant and at this time is free.

The fee for the Thursday/Friday class is \$135.00 per month. Families are encouraged to utilize auto-pay on the Brightwheel App. The statement will be sent through email on the first of each month, October through April. First and last month's tuition are to be paid together. This payment is due by the first day of school. This is the tuition payment for September and May.

Tuition assistance is available through HAWC Partnerships for Children. **We encourage families who feel they may be eligible to apply. Contact the Director for additional information.**

### **PAYMENTS:**

**\*Tuition payments are due the first class session of each month\*** Method of payment, if not paid on the Brightwheel App, should be in the form of a check or cash. Deliver checks to Nisse Preschool via your child's folder or drop it off when you are picking up or dropping off your child. Our costs are averaged over all months of the school year, and tuition is charged in equal installments. A service charge of \$25.00 will be assessed on all returned checks. ***PLEASE WRITE CHILD'S NAME AND PURPOSE OF THE PAYMENT ON THE MEMO LINE.***

**NOTE:**

We are a nonprofit organization working on a tight budget and appreciate your cooperation in following the policies set by the board. If unusual circumstances occur, please contact the Director.

**ILLNESS**

Our first priority at Nisse is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- **Fever**, until 24 hours of no fever, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including: lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- **Diarrhea** (not associated with diet changes or medications) until diarrhea stops or the continued diarrhea is deemed not infectious by a licensed healthcare professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- **Vomiting** (two or more instances in past 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- **Pink eye** (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated
- **Head lice**, from the end of the day until after first treatment
- **Scabies**, until after treatment has been completed
- **Tuberculosis**, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- **Impetigo**, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Strep throat**, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- **Chicken pox**, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- **Pertussis**, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- **Mumps**, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- **Hepatitis A virus**, until 1 week after onset of illness
- **Measles**, until 4 days after onset of rash
- **Rubella**, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- **Herpes simplex**, with uncontrollable drooling

A child who becomes ill while at Nisse must be removed from the classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be sent to the office to rest and wait for his/her parent to arrive. For this reason, we ask families to make every effort to pick up a sick child as soon as possible. If the Director is not available; the child will be placed in a quiet area to rest where teacher supervision can occur.

Nisse Preschool staff reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any

exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed healthcare professional stating that the child is not contagious.

**Please send a message via Brightwheel, contact Nisse at 563-382-4794, or email the Director and Head Teacher by 8:30am whenever your child is ill.**

### **NOTICE OF EXPOSURE**

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be posted at the door to your child's classroom. Additionally, families who have provided an email address will receive email notification of the illness. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the Director immediately.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the Director will notify the health department.

### **HANDWASHING**

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcare centers such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Other times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- Upon arriving at the center
- After using the toilet
- Before and after mealtimes
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off the faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Prescriptions must be given to a staff member in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. Nisse Preschool staff will not administer any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form. Forms can be obtained from your child's teacher or from the Director.

Medications are stored in a locked box. The Medication Authorization Form must remain with the medication at all times. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at Nisse Preschool.

Medications are administered only by staff members who are certified in Medication Administration, who at this time are the Head Teacher and the Director. When a medication is given, the teacher will document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given.

Nisse Preschool staff may not administer over-the-counter medications (Tylenol, cough syrup, Benadryl, etc.)

Even the simplest and safest drugs can sometimes cause a reaction.

**Emergency medications** such as those prescribed for diabetes, asthma, or life-threatening allergic reactions, and **long-term medications** such as Adderall or Ritalin may be administered as needed by the Head Teacher and/or Director. These medicines must be in the original container and labeled by the pharmacist. The label must include the student's name, the physician's name, the name and strength of the drug, the amount to be given, the frequency of administration, and the date the prescription was filled.

**Short-term prescriptions** (those which are administered for 15 days or less) will be not dispensed to those students who are enrolled in preschool programs only. Students who are taking short-term prescriptions and are enrolled in the extended care program after their preschool class may bring medicine to be dispensed by the Director or Head Teacher during program hours, **if absolutely necessary**. The guidelines listed above regarding emergency and long-term medications must be met before any short-term medicine can be dispensed.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS**

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Nisse Preschool using an Accident/Incident Report. All biting incidents shall be documented as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report needs to be completed for the biter as well as the child who was bitten. Use great detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted before pickup. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All accident/incident reports must be given to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH INCIDENTS**

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, a Health Incident Form will be completed. A copy of the form will be given to the parent and the original to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via a sign posted on the main entrance to the center explaining the illness. In addition, parents with children in the classroom of the infected child will receive an email regarding the illness.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES**

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the food serving area. All staff working in the classroom of a child/children with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child/children have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

### **DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS**

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURES**

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick

up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Nisse Preschool staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. **It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.**

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Head Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director or Associate Teacher until a parent arrives.

**If the child requires immediate medical attention:**

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Director or other teacher will contact the parent(s).

**MISSING CHILD POLICY**

If a child under our care is missing, we will complete the following actions: conduct a complete search of the building (inside and out) checking with everyone to find out when the child was last seen. If the child is not found, call 911. Give a detailed description of the child including what they are wearing and any place they might have gone. Also, let law enforcement, parents, and HHS know where the child was last seen. Along with contacting 911, the parent/guardian and HHS child abuse hotline will be notified. If staff observed the child being abducted, we will call 911 immediately and give a complete description of the child and the person (if staff sees him/her). If we are given advance warning that someone is coming to take the child, we will remove the child from the area by taking him/her to another part of the center. Then, when the person arrives to take the child, we will not give them any information about the child and try to get him/her to leave. If he/she refuses to leave, we will call 911. An incident report will also be filled out.

As a preventative measure staff are trained in active supervision and no child is left unsupervised. When moving from one area to the next children are counted frequently to make sure no child is left by themselves. Staff will also account for all children with name to face recognition by visually identifying each child.

**STRANGULATION PREVENTION POLICY**

Unintentional strangulation is a safety hazard that can cause injuries and even death in young children.

Eliminating strangulation hazards helps keep children safe.

- String and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck will not be accessible.
- Window draperies do not have any straps or cords.
- Parents will be asked to remove hood and neck strings from clothing.
- If lanyards are used by staff, they will be the breakaway type, or lanyards will not be used. If lanyards are used by children they will be the breakaway type.
- Dramatic play items with handles or straps will be removed or shortened.
- Our program does not allow pacifiers.

### **SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLANT**

Between the months of March and October, all families are allowed to supply the preschool with sunscreen for their child/children for outdoor activities. A permission slip must be on file before sunscreen will be applied to a child while at the preschool. It will be applied by classroom teachers regularly throughout the day, as requested by parents. Parents are encouraged to apply insect repellent if desired to their child before arriving at Nisse for the day, as Nisse staff are not permitted to apply insect repellent.

### **VISITING ANIMALS**

Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into Nisse Preschool without first notifying and receiving permission from the Director. Once approved by the Director, pets and visiting animals must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal(s) is fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

### **UNRESTRICTED ACCESS**

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care **shall not** have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. **Unrestricted access** means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care.

Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Head Teacher unless he/she delegates it to the Assistant Teacher due to a conflict of interest with the person.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, go to the Director to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will call the police. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.
- Shall not be on the property of the child care center without written permission from the Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child to and from the center. The Director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their DHS licensing agent first.

### **FIRE ESCAPE PLAN**

All children and staff will proceed to the nearest exit (as shown on the fire emergency exit signs located at the entrances of the building). A designated staff person will take the enrollment sheet and parent phone numbers with them. Everyone will then meet at the house directly to the west of Nisse where a head count and safety check of all children will be completed. We will then proceed to either Dixie's Biergarten or UP Salon and Spa, and call 911.



## **TORNADO PLAN**

Children will proceed to the designated Tornado Safety Area in an orderly manner. All children and adults will sit on the floor and cover their heads with their hands. Everyone will wait in the safety area until it is announced that it is safe to come out. All parents will be called as soon as possible to inform them of their child's well-being.

## **PRESCHOOL BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES & DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Teaching staff will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking. Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems.

### *Challenging Behavior*

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children
- Modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- Helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials
- Engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group
- Encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

## **DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES**

Below are strategies Nisse staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, the children will be included in making the rules for the classroom.

- **Redirection**

- This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or is being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."
- **Logical consequences**
  - These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.
- **Participate in the solution**
  - If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please come apologize and help me make him feel better."
- **Natural consequences**
  - Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. *Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.*
- **"Take a break" or "Calm down corner/chair"**
  - In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to "take a break" or sit in the "calm down chair." This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the "calm down" chair. The use of social stories will also be used at this time. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go to the calm down chair. I will talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

- Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director. The Head Teacher will inform parents of the behaviors and strategies that have been used.
- The Director will observe the child and meet with the Head Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
- The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
- The Director, Head Teacher and Associate Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

The Discipline policy is discussed with all parents at the parent meeting at the start of every school year or when a child starts care. All staff will review this policy at the start of each year and/or whenever a staff starts a new orientation. More tenured staff will discuss and train all new staff on disciplining policies throughout the year. All staff cover discipline strategies in the essentials training and discussed as needed in weekly staff meetings. Staff are also encouraged to take classes/training on challenging behaviors.

## Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks
- Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing
- Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect
- Withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline

## **SUSPENSION & EXPULSION**

Every effort will be made to eliminate or severely limit the option of suspension and expulsion at Nisse Preschool. Likewise, every effort will be made to support the child, family, and teachers with resources to resolve inappropriate behavior. The AEA will be contacted to help come up with any modifications, services, or resources that can be used to support the child, family, and staff. Other agencies, like CCR&R, may be contacted as well for support. Some disciplinary strategies that may be implemented are redirection, logical consequences, participation in the solution, natural consequences, and taking a break. If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

- Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director. The Head Teacher will inform parents of the behaviors and strategies that have been used.
- The Director will observe the child and meet with the Head Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
- The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
- The Director, Head Teacher and Associate Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

If every effort has been made to resolve the behavior and if all parties are unable to come to an agreement on the most effective procedure for the child then a child may be considered for suspension or expelled from the program. If a child should need to leave the program the staff will provide the parents with all the documentation of the behavior and any procedures that have been attempted and/or enacted in order for the new program to have information on what behavior has been seen.

## **BITING POLICY**

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Nisse to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Stop biting. Biting hurts. Teeth are for eating." In a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.

- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

- The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - Was the space too crowded?
  - Were there too few toys?
  - Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
  - The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
  - The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways.
  - The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
  - The teacher, parent and Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
  - If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.
  - If the biting continues, a meeting will take place with the Director and parents to find the best solution for the child.

All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

### **SUPPLIES**

Parents will be provided a recommended supply list for the class their child is attending. We ask all of our families to participate and share this cost. If providing the supplies is cost prohibitive or causes a hardship, please contact the director, one of the teachers, or a board member and they will work to find alternative ways of funding those materials.

### **POSTINGS AT NISSE**

The following will be posted at all times in Nisse's building:

- Certificate of license
- Communicable disease (It will be posted and information will be sent home)
- Mandatory reporter requirements
- Notice of availability of handbook

### **MANDATORY REPORTING**

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member of Nisse Preschool is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the Iowa Department of Human Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

### **WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS**

Listen to KDEC, KRDI, and KVIK for weather related cancellations. If Decorah Community Schools:

- Cancel classes due to weather, Nisse will also be closed.
- Start one hour late; Nisse will start one hour late. (9:00 a.m.)
- Start two hours late; Nisse will start two hours late. (10:00 a.m.) On Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday, class will run until normal time. On Thursday/Friday Nisse will start at 10:00 a.m. and end at 12:00p.m. with no snack or lunch. Lunch will then be served at the start of extended care for those staying.
- Dismiss early due to weather; if students are still at Nisse, Nisse will dismiss at the same time as the Decorah Community Schools. Extended care will not be available after the Decorah Community Schools dismissal time. Nisse does not dismiss early if heat related because the building is air conditioned.

### **MAKE UP POLICY**

When the Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday class has missed four or more days or the Thursday/Friday class has missed three or more days in a given school year because of inclement weather, classes will be made up at a date determined by the Board in consultation with the teachers and notice will be given to families.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are special days for the child, and we will celebrate children's birthdays by recognizing them and singing to them. Children may bring a special treat to share with the class during snack time. Please be aware that these treats need to follow the same guidelines as snacks brought from home, as established by DHS, and must be store-bought and in their original containers. Summer birthdays will be recognized in May. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school unless you are inviting the entire class. Thank you.

### **GRADUATION**

Nisse will hold a graduation ceremony at the end of the school year for the Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday class (4 year old class) only. Children enrolled in this class will have the option to participate in the ceremony.

### **ACCESS POLICY**

It is important for Nisse Preschool to effectively communicate with the families it serves. Therefore, our program will provide reading assistance to any family or parent as needed. We will also provide an interpreter and/or translator as needed. Should Nisse Preschool not be able to directly provide these services, we will do so through utilization of our local resources including but not limited to: Decorah Community School District, Keystone AEA, and/or Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation (NEICAC).