



Family Handbook

A guide to our policies, procedures, safety practices,
and partnership with families.

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Mission Statement and Goals

Postville Childcare Services, Inc. (PCCS) provides children with an inviting, stimulating environment where play, developmental growth, and social skills are encouraged.

Goals for the child:

- Develop a sense of self and increasing independence.
- Build physical strength, coordination, and motor skills.
- Establish a foundation for good health, hygiene, and safety.
- Express ideas and feelings creatively through various facets.

Goals for parents:

- Provide quality care while parents pursue work, education, or other interests.
- Provide opportunities for parents and teachers to work together in support of children.

Goals for staff:

- Work with children in a developmentally appropriate setting.
- Continue professional development.

Goals for the community:

- Help meet the need for quality early childhood education.
- Provide employment opportunities.
- Offer quality childcare for individuals interested in the area.
- Contribute to the wholesome growth and development of children.

Board of Directors

The PCCS Board of Directors consists of no fewer than five and no more than twelve volunteer voting members. The President serves as chairperson. Board members are parents and community members from Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, and/or Winneshiek counties.

Terms of elected officers

- Board members serve three-year terms.
- Officers serve one-year terms and continue until successors are elected and qualified.

Election of officers

At the first meeting of each new year, officers are elected. Those wishing to be elected notify the Nominating Committee at least two weeks before the annual meeting. Open-floor nominations are also accepted.

Responsibilities

President: exercises general authority over corporation affairs, sets agendas, presides over meetings, and appoints standing committee members.

Vice President: performs the President's duties when the President is absent.

Secretary: records meetings, prepares correspondence, and maintains permanent Board records.

Treasurer: serves as Chief Financial Officer.

Other members: support the Director, assist with public relations and policy enforcement, participate in committees, make recommendations for growth, and review/revise policies.

Regular meetings

The Board meets monthly, generally on the third Monday at 5:30 p.m.

Grievance policy

Parents should first attempt to resolve concerns with the classroom teacher and then the Director. The Director responds within five working days. If unresolved, the parent may submit the concern in writing to the Board at least one week before the next scheduled meeting. The concern will be placed on the agenda; parents may address the Board for five minutes. A special meeting may be called, and a decision will be made within 30 days.

Policy adoption and revision

New or revised policies require two readings before taking effect. Proposed policies will be posted for parents before the second reading.

Families needing assistance reading or understanding policies may request help through an on-site translator, AEA, Postville Community School, or CR&R.

General Information

Hours of Operation

PCCS is open Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Center is closed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. When a holiday falls on Saturday, the Center is closed on Friday; when it falls on Sunday, the Center is closed Monday. Parents are not charged tuition for these holidays. The center will be closed one day per year for staff professional development; notice will be given about planned closures.

PCCS follows applicable Iowa Health and Human Services child-to-staff ratio requirements. Hours may change based on the Center's ability to provide adequate adult coverage. If staffing shortages prevent the Center from meeting ratios, priority is given to:

- Children of PCCS childcare staff
- Children enrolled full time
- Children who have siblings attending the Center

In emergencies when ratios cannot be met, parents may not receive advance notice.

Closing of the Center

For hazardous weather, families should monitor the PCCS Facebook page and Brightwheel. If weather deteriorates during the day, families will be contacted for pickup, and updates will be sent on Brightwheel.

Arrival and Departure

Parents must check in with classroom teachers on arrival and contact the teacher before departure. Children must be accompanied by an adult into and out of the Center.

Children are released only to people listed on the Pick-Up Authorization form. Staff may request identification. Written permission must be provided for someone not listed. Anyone picking up a child must be at least 16 years old.

Absences

If a child is absent, families should notify PCCS by 8:00 a.m. If no notice is received, the Center may contact the family to verify attendance.

Waiting List

A waiting list is maintained on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority for siblings and full-time enrollment. A \$35 annual, non-refundable administration fee and completed enrollment forms are required to be placed on the waiting list.

Parent Participation and Visitation

Parents are encouraged to observe and participate in the classroom. Parents have access to their children and the provider caring for them during operating hours unless prohibited by court order. PCCS maintains an open-door policy. Visitors and parents should sign in and out through the office, so staff know who is in the building.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited in all program areas, child-occupied rooms, and on PCCS premises. PCCS operates on school property and follows applicable smoke-free requirements.

Volunteer Hours

Each PCCS family is required to complete 20 volunteer hours each program year. Incomplete hours are billed at \$20.00 per hour.

Each family must also complete two hours at the Big Four Fair Ice Cream Booth each year. Failure to complete those two hours results in a \$100.00 charge in addition to any \$20.00 per incomplete volunteer hour charge.

Volunteer opportunities may include fundraisers, classroom or Center projects, and special events. The value of each opportunity will be communicated before the fundraiser or event.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are their children's first teachers. Families are encouraged to communicate regularly with teachers about their child's day, growth, and development. Please inform the Center of family circumstances that may affect a child's behavior or emotional well-being.

Teachers are responsible for supervising children. If a concern requires more than a brief conversation, families should schedule a meeting with the teacher or speak with the Director.

Parent-teacher conferences are offered at least once per year for infants through school-age.

Emergency Procedures

Fire and Tornado Emergencies

PCCS practices monthly fire and tornado drills in accordance with applicable requirements. If evacuation is necessary, staff and children will walk to Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Postville. Families will be contacted using available communication methods.

Lock-Down Policy

PCCS may enter lockdown when there is a concern for the safety of children or staff, such as a community threat, prisoner at large, or threat against a child or staff member. During lockdown, doors and windows are secured, blinds are closed, and children remain inside and away from windows. Staff communicate with law enforcement as appropriate. Parents arriving during lockdown will be asked to remain outside while staff bring the child to them when it is safe to do so. Parents may not always receive advance notice of lockdown.

Access Policy

PCCS is responsible for maintaining a safe environment and supervising children and other people present at the facility.

Individuals who have not completed required record checks and received approval may not have unrestricted access to children and may not be counted in staff-to-child ratios. Such individuals must remain under direct supervision and monitoring of approved paid staff and may not assume childcare responsibilities.

Staff will approach unknown individuals on Center property to determine their purpose and will contact management when necessary. Maintenance and repair personnel will be monitored by paid staff and will not interact with children.

Enrollment

Enrollment Policies and Procedures

Families may contact PCCS by visiting, email, or phone to obtain an enrollment packet and schedule a tour/informational meeting. Enrollment is open to children when the Center can meet the child's needs. Care may be full-time, preschool only, school year only, or drop-in. Enrollment is based on the waiting list, with priority for full-time.

Required Enrollment Forms

Enrollment is contingent upon receipt of required forms, including:

- Parent Handbook acknowledgement
- Rates and Fees Contract
- Enrollment and pick-up permission forms
- Emergency Medical Consent and Information
- Physical exam/health documentation as required
- Immunization record
- CACFP application and enrollment form

Non-Discrimination

PCCS follows applicable federal and Iowa nondiscrimination requirements.

Probationary Period

Each newly enrolled child is placed in a one-month probationary period to determine whether the arrangement is appropriate for the child, teachers, and other children. PCCS may terminate care, when necessary, after reasonable efforts to address concerns, except when circumstances warrant immediate dismissal.

Age Requirements

A child must be at least two weeks old when enrolled and may not attend beyond age 12.

Administration Fee

A \$35.00 annual, non-refundable administration fee is required for each family upon registration and each September.

Tuition, Financial Arrangements and Scheduling

Tuition and Rates

Tuition is based on contracted weekly rates. Families are responsible for contracted charges unless an approved absent-day credit applies. Bills are issued at the beginning of the week, and payment is due by the end of that week. Unpaid tuition may result in loss of childcare privileges. A signed contract is required at enrollment.

Late Tuition and Payment Policy

Tuition payments are due by the designated due date listed on the family's account. A one-week grace period will be provided for late payments. If a tuition balance remains unpaid after the one-week grace period, childcare services will be paused until one of the following occurs:

- The outstanding balance is paid in full, or
- A payment plan has been established and approved with the center.

Families who anticipate difficulty making a payment by the due date are encouraged to contact the center office as soon as possible to discuss payment arrangements. The center will work with families, when possible, to establish a reasonable payment plan and prevent interruption in care.

A \$10 weekly late fee will be applied to all overdue tuition balances and will continue each week until the outstanding balance is paid in full. Late fees will continue to accrue even if childcare services are paused due to an unpaid balance.

Childcare services may resume once the agreed-upon payment arrangements have been made.

Scheduling

Children are scheduled according to their signed contract. Families should provide at least two weeks' notice for schedule changes using the Schedule Change/Vacation Form. Additional days are dependent on staffing and room ratios.

DHS/CCA Assistance

Families are responsible for charges until approval is received. Families are responsible for required copays and charges beyond authorized hours. Families must complete CCA paperwork and follow their contracted schedule. CCA does not cover administrative fees or fees from unmet volunteer hours.

Late Pick-Up and Absent Day Credits

Late Pick-Up Procedure

Children must be picked up by the center's closing time. If a parent or guardian has not contacted the center to notify staff that they will be arriving after closing, staff will contact the parent or guardian at closing time. If staff are unable to reach a parent or guardian, the emergency contacts listed in the child's file will be contacted. A \$1.00-per-minute per-child late fee applies after 5:30p.m

Absent Day Credits

Absent-day credits are issued September through September and may be used for contracted days when a child does not attend. Credits cannot be used after notice of withdrawal is given.

12-month contract: 5 days

School-year-only contract: 4 days

Summer-only contract: 1 day

Drop-in: 0 days

Discharge and Withdrawal

Discharge may occur for unpaid tuition, incomplete enrollment paperwork, failure to follow Center policies, or when the Center cannot provide the type of care a child needs.

Families must provide written notice at least two weeks before withdrawal. Families may be billed for contracted hours when required notice is not provided.

Health Information

Accidents and Incidents

Injuries will be reported to the parent or authorized pickup person on the day of the incident. If additional medical attention is needed, the parent will be contacted first and emergency contacts will be contacted if the parent cannot be reached. A written report will be completed and retained in the children's file.

Sick Child Policy

PCCS follows current guidance from Iowa public health authorities, applicable childcare requirements, and consultation with the Center's nurse consultant and Childcare Resource and Referral.

Children should not attend when they cannot participate comfortably, require more care than staff can provide without compromising other children, or present an increased health risk. Families should notify PCCS of communicable disease exposure.

Examples of exclusion circumstances include but are not limited to fever with behavior changes or other illness symptoms, vomiting or diarrhea, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, unusual lethargy or irritability, rash with fever or behavior change, and specified communicable diseases requiring exclusion.

Children must be symptom free for 24 hours without fever reduction/ pain relief medication or have a doctors note before returning to childcare.

When a child becomes ill at PCCS, staff will contact the parent/guardian or authorized pickup person, separate the child from the group while maintaining supervision, and provide appropriate care until pickup.

Medication Administration

Medication administration is a shared responsibility of the Center, family, and health care provider.

- Medication that can be given at home will not be given at PCCS.
- The first dose of a new medication must be given at home with sufficient time to observe the child's response.
- Medication must be given to staff and stored according to Center procedures; children may not keep medication in their possession.
- Medication requires a signed authorization form.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled for the child.
- OTC medication cannot be given by PCCS staff, if a child requires OTC medication someone from outside the center must come to administer.
- Medication is administered by trained staff.
- Medication administration records are maintained in the child's file.
- Unused or expired medication will be returned to the family.
- Essential oils or homeopathic products will not be administered

Medication information will be handled confidentially.

Special Information

Field Trips

Additional adults may attend field trips to provide increased supervision. Parents will generally be notified one week in advance of field trips other than routine walks and stroller rides. Transportation arrangements and age restrictions will be communicated.

Non-Center Activities

Written parent permission is required for non-center activities. Families are responsible for transportation to and from such activities.

Child Protection and Safety

Mandatory Reporting

PCCS employees are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect as required by Iowa law.

Abuse Accusations Against Staff

PCCS will promptly investigate allegations involving staff and children and will follow all reporting and legal requirements. Staff may be placed on administrative leave during an investigation when

appropriate. Conflicts of interest will be addressed, and information will be handled as confidentially as possible.

Missing Child

If a child is missing, staff will immediately search the building and surrounding areas, determine where the child was last seen, and contact parents/guardians and 911 when necessary. Required incident reports and notifications will be completed.

Strangulation Prevention

Strings, cords, hoods, unsafe attachments, and similar hazards will be removed. Pacifiers may not be attached to clothing or cords. Staff will use lanyards with breakaway clasps. Families are asked to remove unsafe drawstrings and cords from children's clothing.

Ratios and Classroom Capacity

PCCS follows applicable Iowa child-to-staff ratio requirements.

Under 24 months: 1 caregiver for every 4 children

Age 2: 1 caregiver for every 7 children

Age 3: 1 caregiver for every 10 children

Age 4: 1 caregiver for every 12 children

Age 5+: 1 caregiver for every 15 children

Food Program, Meals and Snacks

PCCS participates in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and serves breakfast, lunch, and snacks according to applicable meal-pattern requirements.

A weekly menu is posted for families. Breakfast is served at 8:00 a.m.; lunch at 11:00 a.m.; afternoon snack is served later in the day.

Families should not send food or drink unless arrangements have been made for an allergy, medical need, or religious dietary requirement. Food allergies require appropriate documentation and diet modification information.

Special treats must be commercially packaged, sealed, and appropriate for children.

Breastfeeding Policy

PCCS provides a private and sanitary space for breastfeeding or expressing milk. Expressed milk may be stored in the Center refrigerator/freezer in clearly labeled containers. Staff follow applicable safe handling and storage guidance and support breastfeeding employees with reasonable scheduling flexibility.

Toileting and Transition to Underwear

Childcare can be a more distracting environment than home, which may sometimes result in differences in toileting progress between home and the center.

To help maintain sanitary conditions and support a successful transition, if PCCS staff determine that a child is not yet ready to transition from diapers to underwear while at the center, the child will be required to have one full week with no wet or soiled diapers before transitioning to underwear at school.

When a family feels their child is ready to begin the transition to underwear, they should communicate this with both the office staff and the child's classroom teachers so that the center and family can work together to support the transition.

PCCS recognizes that children develop toileting skills at different rates and will work with families to make the transition as consistent and successful as possible.

During toilet learning, families should provide easy-to-remove clothing. Overall, one-piece outfits, belts, suspenders, and clothing that requires removing the top are not appropriate.

Outdoor Play, Water Play and Clothing

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, children play outdoors daily, preferably at least 30 minutes twice each day. PCCS considers temperature, wind chill, heat index, and other conditions when determining whether outdoor play is safe.

Water Play

Water tables, tubs, sprinklers, and similar activities require constant and active supervision. Infants and toddlers participating in water activities require heightened supervision and appropriate touch supervision.

Clothing and Attire

Children should arrive dressed for active, messy play. Seasonally appropriate clothing and rubber-soled shoes. Flip-flops and heels may cause an increased tripping hazard.

Children should have two labeled changes of clothing available at the Center. Winter clothing should include snow pants, boots, mittens, and hats when appropriate. Scarves are prohibited.

Curriculum and Program Information

Curriculum

Teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities. Activities balance quiet and active experiences as well as indoor and outdoor learning. Posted Schedules and lesson plans are posted outside each classroom.

What Not to Bring

Items brought from home may be lost, stolen, or broken. Children are encouraged to leave unneeded personal belongings at home. Children should not bring money, gum, videos, candy, food, or toys that encourage violent play. Items brought from home may be collected and returned to the family.

Active Supervision

PCCS uses active supervision to support safety and learning. Staff are expected to:

- Provide a safe environment.
- Position themselves so they can clearly see children.
- Scan and count children consistently.
- Anticipate children's behavior based on developmental needs.
- Engage children and redirect when needed.
- Staff remain with infants/children during diapering and toileting routines. Children are supervised during meals, play, transitions, naps, and outdoor activities. Off-campus trips require appropriate ratios and additional supervision.

Teachers receive active supervision training and ongoing coaching through staff meetings and professional development.

Safe Sleep

PCCS follows safe sleep practices consistent with current national and applicable state guidance.

- Infants are placed on their backs for sleep unless an appropriate medical waiver is on file.
- Infants sleep in approved cribs with firm mattresses and fitted sheets.
- No loose objects are placed in an infant's crib, except a pacifier when appropriate.
- Infants are not swaddled.
- Safe sleep clothing such as sleep sacks may be used.
- Staff must be able to see and hear sleeping infants.
- Infants who fall asleep in swings, car seats, or other equipment are moved to an approved sleep surface immediately.
- Cribs and cots are cleaned, and linens are laundered according to Center procedures.

Playground Safety

Teachers receive playground safety training. Equipment and fall-surfacing areas are inspected routinely for hazards, damage, debris, animal waste, sharp edges, loose parts, and other safety concerns. Unsafe equipment is removed from use until corrective action is completed. Required inspections and documentation are maintained.

Discipline and Behavior

PCCS uses positive guidance, preventative discipline, conflict resolution, and developmentally appropriate behavior supports.

Staff may redirect children, provide choices, establish clear expectations, and use natural or logical consequences. In extreme situations, a child may briefly separate from the group in a calm-down area while remaining within visual supervision. Children return to the group when ready and are re-engaged in a positive activity.

Corporal punishment, physical abuse, humiliation, frightening punishment, threats, verbal abuse, and derogatory comments are prohibited. Food and rest may not be withheld as punishment. Physical restraint is not used unless necessary to protect the immediate safety of the child or others.

Ongoing behavior concerns will be addressed collaboratively with families. PCCS may consult Keystone AEA or other appropriate resources. Staff are trained in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the Pyramid Model.

Parent Handbook Statement

This Parent Handbook is intended to provide families with an overview of Postville Childcare Services, Inc. policies, procedures, expectations, and programming information. Policies may be revised as needed to comply with applicable laws, regulations, licensing requirements, and Board decisions.

Families are responsible for reading the handbook and asking the Director for clarification when needed. Updated policies will be communicated through appropriate Center communication channels.

Please sign and return this page to the business office along with your enrollment paperwork.

I, _____, have read and fully understand the Postville Childcare Services, Inc. Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures stated. I understand that failure to abide by the policies and procedures stated in the handbook could result in a termination of care for my child(ren).

Signed _____ Date: _____