Infant-Preschool Programs



Stowe Location
1056 Mountain Rd., Suite #16
Stowe, VT
Main Center (802) 253- 4321
Infant Room (802) 253-1989

Morrisville Location
46 Copley Avenue
Morrisville, VT
(802) 888-4541

WELCOME TO
Apple Tree Learning Centers
Early Education Facilities

It is our goal at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities when you leave your child with us you will feel confident and comfortable that your child is in the best possible care and under safe supervision.

Along with our commitment to your child's safety comes our firm commitment to our program and curriculum, which addresses the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child.

Nicole Walker-Director
Nicole@appletreelc.com

Sonja Raymond-Owner
Sonja@appletreelc.com

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Introduction

Thank you for taking time to review our parent handbook. We hope the following information will be helpful in answering any questions you may have about our center. Please feel free to come to us with any additional questions.

Apple Tree Learning Centers main building operates a state licensed childcare and early learning center for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children from ages seven weeks to twelve years. Our facility houses three infant programs, four toddler programs, a Bridge program (2/3 combination), three preschool programs, and two offsite after school/summer camp programs. Apple Tree Learning Centers After School/Summer Camp Program comprises seven, bright and spacious age specific classrooms and three large fenced in outdoor play areas, totaling more than 9,500 square feet. We are licensed to provide for 95 children at our main location and 26 per day in our After School Stowe Elementary School (SES) and 30 per day in our Morristown Elementary school (MES) location as well as 15 per day in our Morrisville Graded building program. With our expansion we are hoping to add 40 more students per day at our Mountain Road Location.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Pre-K at the Graded Building in Morrisville operates a state licensed child care program for preschool children 3-5 years of age. This program is designed to provide childcare that extends a child's day past 1:30 pm when the Morrisville public pre-k program ends as well as providing childcare during school day closings and vacations.

Vision Statement

The vision of Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities is that all children and families in our service area have the opportunity to grow and develop to their fullest potential. We strive to be the premier Early Education Facilities center in Stowe and Morrisville by putting the needs of our children first and working closely with parents, staff and the community to deliver nurturing, innovative and quality services. We strive to be a model of excellence in teamwork, leadership, innovation and integrity, thereby producing a sense of community. We also strive to be a leader in the field of childcare and early childhood education.

Mission Statement

The mission of Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities is to offer high quality Early Education while serving as a model for the community, state, and nation. It is our mission at Apple Tree Learning Centers when a child is left with us, a parent will feel confident and comfortable that their child is in the best possible care and supervision. Along with our commitment to a child's safety comes our firm commitment to our program and the curriculum which addresses the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child. This mission includes a strong commitment to partnering with families. We will strive to continuously improve the quality of our Early Education Facilities and related family services to the community to ensure the greatest value for its investment in children and parent development.

Values

We value our customers and co-workers and are committed to diversity in all aspects of our organization and services. We are committed to our role in cultivating a work climate promoting the respect of human dignity, civility, and appreciation of each person's differences.

ATLC promotes meaningful experiences and healthy lifestyles and recognizes the importance of a balance between leisure and work. We encourage early educators to communicate in an open, timely fashion with respect to family and personal needs. We will support the needs of our early educators through equitable, timely responses.

In the conduct of our duties and responsibilities, we admire well-informed, professional early educators and promote honest and ethical behavior in an environment that is open, cooperative, and supportive. We encourage teamwork, innovation, recognition of excellence, mutual respect, and commitment to employee participation. We support the individual growth and education of each employee at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility.

History

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility was established as a private Early Education/preschool in January, 1998. Originally named Stowe Kids Company, the name was changed in 2001 when Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility built an addition to expand its current space at 1056 Mountain Road and opened a new kindergarten program.

In 2002, Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility expanded its infant and toddler classes and initiated programs for school aged children. In 2005, Stowe Summer Camp was opened as well as partnerships with hotels to offer programming to visitors. In 2009, Apple Tree became NAEYC(National Association for the Education of Young Children)Accredited, the highest national recognition of quality given to an Early Education Facility. Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility strives to develop and introduce programs that best serve the needs of the greater Stowe community and the families who visit the area. In 2009, Apple Tree expanded capacity in our preschool program and moved the infant program to our main location and the creation of the Bridge program (older two and younger three year olds) was created.

In 2011, Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility became a Licensed Public Pre-K Partner. In 2016, Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility expanded once again and was able to move The After School Program to our main location. In 2019, Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility opened an additional After School Program at the Stowe Elementary School. In 2022, our After School Program at the Elementary School became a 5 STAR Program.

In 2023, Apple Tree Learning Centers was approached by The Lamoille South Supervisory Union's (LSSU) Superintendent and asked to be a partner. This partnership included opening an After School Program at Morrisville elementary school as well as an After School Program for Preschool in Morrisville. In 2023, Apple Tree began expanding the Mountain Road location to include 40 new students per day ranging from infants through preschool.

In 2024, this expansion was completed and a second toddler one, toddler two and a new preschool program were opened increasing capacity at our stowe location to service 136 students per day. In

2025 The Morrisville After School was granted 5 Stars and the Graded Building location was granted 3 Stars. In 2026 Apple Tree opened a third Infant Classroom in the Stowe Location.

Program Philosophy

Young children's developmental tasks are to build trust, learn social skills, develop positive self-esteem, and begin mastery of academic skills. A program providing developmentally appropriate activities, well-trained and consistent staff, and a safe and healthy learning environment best supports these tasks.

The educational philosophy of Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility is based on the belief each child is unique and deserves respect, consistency, care and attention, and to be challenged as they grow. We additionally believe:

- Children learn in different ways, at their own pace and with all of their senses. Exposing children to a variety of rich experiences and materials provides for multi-sensory and whole brain learning.
- Children do not acquire knowledge by force. They are motivated by their own desire to make sense of their world. Positive interactions with caring adults who allow ample time for children to explore, further enriches the child's daily experiences and learning.

We believe children learn through play thus we are a play-based center and have structured the environment to reflect this belief. This program is carefully planned. In fact, our center utilizes the Creative Curriculum, which is a useful tool to enhance the environment and play children experience. Play is incorporated into every learning experience. All activities are steps to growing and developing physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively (see center's curriculum statement in appendix). We also create assessment plans for each child in these areas. We observe and document children's play, work, behaviors, and interactions to assess their progress (see center's assessment plan). We use this information to plan and modify the curriculum and our teaching.

Children learn self-discipline as they learn respect for themselves**,** others and their environment. Pride in their abilities, family and culture adds to their developing self-esteem. Children need a balanced program that fosters independence, choices and challenges. They also need structure and well-defined limits in order to feel secure.

Children and Families Served

Apple Tree Learning Centers is owned by Sonja Raymond MA Ed. for use by area families, as well as families visiting Vermont through Apple Tree Discovery. Families will be served on a space available basis. The center is open to children between seven weeks through twelve years old. Children who have special needs will gladly be accepted. The Center is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, offering equal treatment and access to services without regard to sex, race, color, religious creed, national origin or ancestry in accordance with applicable regulations. For families who speak a language other than English, every effort will be made to communicate in your primary language both in writing and verbally.

Staff

Each classroom has at least one Head early educator. Our Infant and Toddler rooms each have three early educators. The Bridge room and Preschools have two or three full-time early educators depending on the number of children. Each early educator has the primary responsibility for working with their assigned group. The teaching staff provides ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care to protect the children' s well-being. In all of our programs, staff stays with their current group of children from August to August and staff does not regularly change classrooms once the new school year has begun unless emergencies arise or unforeseen circumstances are presented. When staff must change programs, parent notification is given. Depending on the age, children are made aware and discuss this change with their early educators so they are prepared.

We are proud of our highly qualified staff. At least one early educator in each room has a degree in early childhood education, a Child Development Certificate (CDA), or has completed the Apprenticeship Program. All of our staff continually participates in seminars and training to maintain and enhance their education, as well as to fulfill state requirements for licensed Early Education Facility. All staff are CPR and First Aid Certified. If the need arises, substitute early educators are available to provide coverage. Most have degrees in early childhood education, related fields, or are working to obtain a degree.

Classroom Size and Ratios

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility on the Mountain Road is licensed to accommodate 136 students. Our License at the Graded Building in Morrisville is for 20 students. Our expectation is to enroll students following current state regulations for early educator to student ratios. The majority of our programs have an extra teacher during the day, which helps bring our ratios in those programs well below state requirements. Apple Tree Learning Centers Staff will always follow at minimum the below ratios. Infants and toddlers will also always be visible by sight and sound at all times and all other ages are primarily supervised by sight and sound with brief periods where they may be supervised by sound only, when developmentally appropriate.

Number in Class	**early educator/Child Ratio**
8 Infants (7 weeks to 12+ months)	1:4
8 Toddlers (12 months to 24 months)	1:4
10 Toddlers (24 months to 36 months)	1:5
10 Bridge (2/3 years combination)	1:6
20 Preschool	1:10

The above ratios are based on licensing regulations, Apple Tree Learning Centers have an extra teacher in most programs throughout the day to ensure high quality care and education beyond what is required. Many times during the day additional staff are available to assist where needed. All classrooms must maintain a minimum of state ratios at all times, during all hours of operation including inside and outside. Teachers must place themselves in the classroom or on playgrounds so all children have an adult supervising them at all times.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Pre-K after care program located at the Graded Building in Morrisville is licensed for 20 students 3-6 years of age. This program has three teachers with no more than 20 students.

Our Programs

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities use The Creative Curriculum online program as a guide for planning and assessing the children in our care. Our programs consist of weekly activity plans as well as organized, child-centered and child-initiated curricula using thematic approach. Thematic teaching enhances learning by allowing children to make connections among various experiences during a school day. Our themes are integrated into many of our activities through art, dramatic play, snacks, songs and fingerplays.

Outdoor time/play is a very important part of our curriculum. All children have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather, air quality or environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk). When outdoor opportunities for large-motor activities are not possible because of conditions, each program will provide similar activities inside. All indoor equipment for large-motor activities meet national safety standards and is supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

Children transition from the program they are currently at the end of August each year. Each group moves up to the next classroom as a whole group. All staff remain in their assigned programs for at least one year.

Each classroom is staffed and scheduled to minimize the number of groups, teaching staff and classroom transitions experienced by an individual child during the day and program year. Teaching staff work only in the program they are assigned to unless extenuating circumstances otherwise dictate. Parents will be notified in advance and/or right away of any staff changes.

Infant Program

Apple Tree Learning Centers has 3 Infant programs. As this is probably a child's first extended experience away from home, every effort is made to make the transition a comfortable and happy one for both child and parent(s). We strive to create routines similar to home, especially feeding and napping times.

This age is a time of great discovery and exploration. In support of the developmental milestones of this age group, we provide learning tools and other materials to stimulate curiosity, which are specifically designed for infants. We combine a variety of materials with opportunities to listen to stories, poetry and music, which make the infant center a warm and fun-loving environment. Weather permitting, we also explore the outdoor environment by spending time on the recreation path, strolling, sledding and on our playground every day. This is designed to meet the developmental needs of this age group.

- **Infants in bouncy seats or swings**

No child shall spend more than 15 minutes and nor more than twice per day in a swing, bouncy seat or any other child device designed to help sit up.

Apple Tree does not allow seats with vibration or movement, the only exception is the Mamaroo, and it is only to be used for infants under 6 months of age or they are mobile, whichever comes first. Once all children reach that age, those items are put into storage.

Apple tree does not warrant or support the uses of exersaucers, walkers or any other device designed for bouncing and jumping that is restrictive.

No child is allowed to sleep in any bouncy seat, swing or car seat. If a child arrives in a car seat asleep they must be removed from the seat while the parent is still present, and can be placed in the crib. If a child falls asleep in the bouncy or swing or even on the floor while at school, they must be removed and placed in the crib.

Infant Schedule

The infant program follows an “on demand” schedule for each child. Children nap when they are tired, eat when they are hungry, etc. As a child grows and develops, their schedule changes and adaptations are made by the staff. We will try our best to accommodate a schedule parents may have for their child, however, we ask that parents understand it often differs from home to school and the child may not be able to adapt the same home to school schedule.

Toddler Program

Toddlerhood is a time when children are taking initiative, formulating and elaborating their ideas, and developing a sense of autonomy. We support toddlers at this wonderful time by encouraging an enhanced sense of self-confidence and self-esteem.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility has four Toddler programs, 2 younger Toddler Programs and 2 older Toddler Programs.

Toddlers are exposed to colors, shapes, numbers, letters, art, sensory activities, song & dance, books, puzzles and many other learning possibilities. The development of language and self-help skills are encouraged and promoted through creative and complementary opportunities. Toilet learning is a significant step for our older toddlers toward self-awareness, self-identity and self-esteem. Therefore, we work with both child and parent(s) to create a consistent and positive experience for the child during this important process. The toddler rooms are fun and inviting classrooms which offer a diversity of age specific learning tools and social opportunities for children.

Toddler Daily Schedule

(For the younger toddlers the schedule for napping and eating may vary depending on the individual children’s needs).

Time Range	Activity
7:15 - 9:00	Greeting time-arrival, welcome children and parents, children choose and explore unstructured activities, development of social skills.
9:00 – 9:30	Morning snack time- together time, work on manners and social skills, practice good nutritional habits, introduction of new foods.
9:30 –10:15	Circle time/Morning project: circle time for introduction & structured activities with stories; fingerplays,language activities and songs.

	Morning project play-based learning/art activities oriented toward weekly themes.
10:15- 10:30	Get ready for outside time- diaper changes, potty time for older toddlers.
10:30- 11:30	Outdoor time- interaction with younger and older children, play yard fun, nature walks, or outdoor projects and activities.
11:30 -12:30	Lunch- preparation and mealtime. Together time, work on manners and social skills.
12:30- 3:00	Rest time.
3:00-3:30	Afternoon snack time: Work on manners and social skills.
3:30-4:15	Free play, diaper changes, potty time for older toddlers.
4:15-5:30	Clean-up, outside time, good-byes.

Bridge Program

The Bridge Program is designed for older two and younger three-year-olds.This program focuses on the toddler curriculum the first half of the year and then switches to the preschool curriculum for the last half of the year. The Toddlers are exposed to colors, shapes, numbers, letters, art, sensory activities, song & dance, books, puzzles and many other learning possibilities. The development of language and self-help skills are encouraged and promoted through creative and complementary opportunities. Toilet learning is a significant step for our older toddlers toward self-awareness, self-identity and self-esteem. Therefore, we work with both child and parent(s) to create a consistent and positive experience for the child during this important process.

The Bridge room is a fun and inviting classroom which offers a diversity of age specific learning tools and social opportunities for children. As the curriculum progresses to the preschool schedule, they will begin to focus on emerging skills such as: number, name and letter recognition, learning shapes and colors, and specific fine motor development. This is also an important developmental social-emotional period, where parallel play turns to social play and interactions. Children of this age are beginning to understand their own feelings as well as the feelings and emotions of others. The early educators use games and activities to help the children put a name to how they are feeling, providing children with the opportunity to express themselves emotionally.

Bridge Daily Schedule (2-3 yrs.)

Time Range	Activity
7 : 1 5 - 8 : 3 0 8 : 3 0	Greeting time- arrival, welcome children and parents, children choose and explore unstructured activities; development of social skills. Early Education Facility for play Clean up Morning Circle-coming together as a group for greetings through songs and activities A.M. Snack time and scheduled bathroom Activity Early Education Facility Group story-theme related books, finger plays, puppets for storytelling. Outdoor time- playground interaction with younger/older children, gross motor activities and nature walks. Lunch Time- work on manners and social skills, and practice good nutritional habits Bathroom, quiet book time Rest time Clean up and Potty time

- 9 : 0 0 9 : 0 0 - 9 : 1 5 9 : 1 5 - 9 : 3 0 9 : 3 0 - 1 0 : 0 0 1 0 : 0 0 - 1 0 : 4 5 1 0 : 4 5 -	Group activities P.M. Snack and Clean up Group Goodbyes/Bathroom Breaks/Prepare for outside time Large Motor Movement (inside or out) Early Birds go home Greet Families and Going Home

11:00 11:00-12:00 12:00-12:30 12:30-1:00 1:00-2:30 2:30-2:45 2:45-3:00 3:00-3:30 3:30-4:00 4:00-5:00 5:00-5:30	

Preschool Program

We offer three preschool programs (One-ages 3 years, one-¾ combination and One-ages 4-5 years). The 3-year old program focuses on emerging skills such as: number, name and letter recognition,

learning shapes and colors, and specific fine motor development. This is also an important developmental social-emotional period. **It is not a prerequisite that a child is to be fully potty trained prior to transitioning into any preschool program, however it's encouraged if at all possible**.

The goal of our preschool programs is to help prepare the students for their transition to kindergarten and help them feel comfortable and confident in doing so. Particular focus is given to early literacy skills, extended fine motor development, and understanding math concepts.

Toddler rooms are spacious and bright environments with age appropriate learning tools, which make them inspiring places to learn. Our programs have a balance of creative play (child directed) and early educator created experiences. Each classroom incorporates our theme-based curriculum which focuses on: Math, Science, Literacy, Dramatic Play, Art, Music and Movement, and Sensory Development. The Creative Curriculum is also used to guide and evaluate the students and our program. Conferences are held twice a year to review each student's progress unless otherwise requested by a parent.

Preschool Daily Schedule (3 yrs.)

Time Range	Activity
7:15-8:30	Greeting time- arrival, welcome children and parents, children choose and explore unstructured activities; development of social skills.
8:30-9:15	Early Education Facility for play
9:15-9:30	Morning meeting- calendar, weather, jobs, theme discussion. Morning snack time- together time, work on manners, social skills, and practice good nutritional habits. Circle-time/Morning project- reading stories, music, movement, large group activities, literacy activities, early writing skills development, and learning/art activities based on weekly themes. Outdoor time- playground interaction with younger children, gross motor activities and nature walks. Lunch time- together time; work on manners and social skills. Rest preparation- children read books or listen to taped books. Rest time. Quiet activity time- read books, draw, or puzzles. Afternoon snack time- together time; work on manners and social skills, and practice good nutritional habits. Potty time, Get ready for outside time. Outside time, good-byes.

1:15-3:00 3:00-3:30 4:00-4:30 4:30-5:30	

Preschool Daily Schedule (4 & 5 yrs.)

Time Range	Activity

7:15- 8:30	Greeting time- arrival, welcome children and parents, children choose and explore unstructured activities, development of social skills
8:30- 9:30	Early Education Facility for play- Big blocks, construction zone
9:30- 9:40	Morning meeting- calendar, weather, jobs, theme discussion, reading stories, music, movement, large group flannel board activities
9:40- 10:10	Morning snack time, together time, work on manners, social skills, and practice good nutritional habits
10:10- 11:00	Theme project- Learning/art activities based on weekly themes
11:00- 12:00	Outdoor time- interaction with older children, play yard fun, nature walks, or outdoor projects and activities
12:00- 12:30	Lunch time - together time; work on manners and social skills, and practice good nutritional habits
12:30- 1:00	Rest preparation- children read books on their own or listen to a taped story
1:00- 2:45	Naptime - opportunity for children to listen to a story and nap or rest quietly
2:45- 3:30	Center Play- Tabletop workshops, math & science center, ABC and writing center, art center
3:30- 3:45	Afternoon snack time- together time; work on manners and social skills, and practice good nutritional habits
3:45- 4:15	Classroom clean up and end of day coming together
4:15- 5:30	Outdoor time - interaction with older children, play yard fun

Pre-K After Care Daily Schedule at Morrisville Graded Building (3, 4 & 5 yrs.)

Monday - Thursday

Time Range	Activity
1:30-2:00	Greeting and rest time/quiet time
2:00-2:30	Centers
3:00-3:30	Snack Time
3:30-4:00	Clean up and get ready for outside
4:00-5:00	Outside time/or inside centers if weather is not okay for outside

Friday

Time Range	Activity
8:00- 9:00	Greeting time- arrival, welcome children and parents, children choose and explore unstructured activities, development of social skills
8:30- 9:30	Early Education Facility for play- Big blocks, construction zone
9:30- 9:40	Morning meeting- calendar, weather, jobs, theme discussion, reading stories, music, movement, large group flannel board activities
9:40- 10:10	

10:10- 11:00	Morning snack time, together time, work on manners, social skills, and practice good nutritional habits
11:00- 12:00	Theme project- Learning/art activities based on weekly themes
12:00- 12:30	Outdoor time- interaction with older children, play yard fun, nature walks, or outdoor projects and activities
12:30- 1:00	Lunch time - together time; work on manners and social skills, and practice good nutritional habits
1:00- 2:45	Rest preparation- children read books on their own or listen to a taped story
2:45- 3:30	Naptime - opportunity for children to listen to a story and nap or rest quietly
3:30- 3:45	Center Play- Tabletop workshops, math & science center, ABC and writing center, art center
3:45- 4:15	Afternoon snack time- together time; work on manners and social skills, and practice good nutritional habits
4:15- 5:30	Classroom clean up and end of day coming together Outdoor time - interaction with older children, play yard fun

Hours of Operation

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility is open year round. A school calendar is emailed to all families and is available in the main lobby on the parent board.

Mountain Road Center: Stowe	Graded Building Pre-K: Morrisville	Apple Tree Discovery Programs: Stowe & Morrisville
MONDAY-FRIDAY 7:15 am to 5:30 pm	MONDAY-THURSDAY 1:30pm-5:30 pm FRIDAYS/SUMMER/VACATION CAMP DAYS 8-5 pm	AFTER SCHOOL MONDAY-FRIDAY 2:45 pm to 5:30 pm SUMMER/ VACATION PROGRAMS MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Holidays, School Closings

All holidays and school closings are to be paid if it falls on your contracted day. Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are closed for the following:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Close a noon Friday prior to week long closure in August
- A week in August (5 Days) (dates to be provided in our yearly calendar)
- Labor Day
- The day before Thanksgiving Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Day After Christmas

If any of the above holidays falls on a Saturday or Sunday shall be observed on the Friday before or the Monday after the Holiday. **Parents are required to pay for holidays, snow days and professional development days if they fall on your contracted days.**

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities will also be closed for:

- **Two early educator training days per year**. You will be notified in writing at least three weeks before the designated day.

- **One early educator Team Building Day** you will be notified in writing at least three weeks before the designated day. This may be a half or a full day,

- **One half day per year for Parent early educator Conferences.** The date will be listed on the yearly Calendar. We will also have parent early educator conferences in January which will be held in the evening. Dates will be on our yearly calendar.

School Closing Due To Inclement Weather:

Apple Tree will follow all of the Lamoille South cancellations, delays and early closures for severe weather. In the event Lamoille South districts close due to a weather event, Apple Tree will also be closed for the day. If the Stowe Public School closes early for weather conditions, Apple Tree will also close early and you will be notified through Brightwheel. In rare cases where Lamoille South remains open, the Director may have to make a call differing from the public school if they believe the roads are too bad or staffing becomes an issue. Please watch WCAX (Channel 3 or CBS) or listen to WDEV for school closings. The Director will message through Brightwheel for all families and staff, post on our Facebook page, and change our phone voice mail. Parents are obligated to pay for snow days if they fall on your contracted days.

Enrollment & Tuition

Introductory visits and orientation are required for each family. The enrollment process consists of returning the following items:

- Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities application
- First week's tuition, which is nonrefundable (based on current rates, will increase to new rates)
- The medical emergency form
- Child information sheet
- Immunization record * See below if your child is not fully immunized
- Acknowledgment of receipt of handbook
- Family Profile
- Signing of the Parent Agreement form and Student Contract
- Signed permission forms
- Health Insurance information
- Necessary information if the child receives special services (reports, IEP, etc.)
- Vermont Health form signed by your child's doctor

Your deposit is based on the first week you are holding. If you drop days prior to starting, you will forfeit the fee for the first week. We require three weeks notice for all other changes to avoid a fee. Deposits and Registration fees are non-refundable, however to hold your space.

All information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Director's office. A copy of this file will also be kept in the child's classroom in a locked filing cabinet. Only the Director, parents/legal guardians, child's early educator(s), and regulatory authorities, when necessary, will have access to the file.

Termination of enrollment is effective three weeks after Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility receives a written request for the withdrawal of a student. Dropping of days and changing of schedules for any reason require a three weeks' notice and are billed a $20.00 change of contract fee. All records are confidential unless otherwise required by law or state regulations.

*If your child is not fully immunized for a medical reason then you will have to fill out a medical form with your child's doctor and it must be updated yearly stating the immunizations you are not taking. If your reasons are religious then you must fill out a separate form and list of the immunizations you are opting out of, this must be filled out yearly. If you choose religious exceptions you will receive a handout including parent information on immunizations.

*If your child has an immunization exemption, either medical or religious, you will be asked to keep your child out of Early Education Facilities during the course of a disease outbreak if it's determined that your child may be at risk for getting the specific disease and transmitting it to other students. The length of time a child is excluded will vary depending on the disease, and it can range from several days to more than a month. These days are expected to be paid.

Apple Tree Learning Centers does not take responsibility for any lost or missing items. Apple Tree teachers will do all they can to relocate missing items, however payment or replacement will not occur.

Classroom Rates

Room	Daily	Weekly
Infant (Aspen & Bonsai)	$98.00	$490.00
Toddler 1 (Spruce & Maple)	$98.00	$490.00
Toddler 2 (Pine & Hemlock)	$97.00	$485.00
Bridge Program (Birch)	$97.00	$485.00
Preschool 3 & 4 (Juniper, Oak, & Willow)	$94.00	$470.00
Half Day (8:00-1) (Not available for Infants)	$60.00	$300.00
Half Day (Morrisville Pre-K)	$60.00	
Full Day (Morrisville Pre-K)	$94.00	334.00
Over Nine Hours	$13.00	$65.00

Monthly Tuition Rates

(not available for After School Programs including Acorn or families receiving CCFAP)
(Daily total multiplied by number of days per week, multiplied by 52 weeks, then divided by 12 months)

Aspen/Bonsai/Spruce/Maple

2 days per week $849.33
3 days per week $1274.00
4 days per week $1698.67
5 days per week $2123.33

Pine/Hemlock/Birch

2 days per week $840.67
3 days per week $1261.00
4 days per week $1681.33
5 days per week $2101.67

Willow/Oak/Juniper

2 days per week $814.67
3 days per week $1222.00
4 days per week $1629.33
5 days per week $2036.67

Tuition can be paid through Brightwheel only through ACH, Credit or Debit charges, no additional fees are associated with this payment method as Apple Tree Learning Centers Absorbs all processing fees. We no longer accept cash or check payments. 3% Discount for quarterly payments, must be prearranged. Monthly and quarterly payments are not accepted for families who receive CCFAP or our offsite school aged programs.

Out of Contracted Hours: $16 (per occurrence/per child)

Credits: If a credit is on your account, it will only remain valid for one year from your child's last day of attendance, or date given. If you wish to have a refund for the credit you must reach out to the director or the owner and it may be issued and mailed directly to you. If your child is currently attending, it's best to apply your credit to your weekly bill until the credit is fully applied.

Rates are subject to change with notice. Rates increase yearly in August

Contract Change Fee: $20.00 per change outside of allotted contract change times.
Each family will receive one contract change per year at no cost (excluding the preschool change of contract requirements, subsidy changes or the times we process a contract change school wide). **This includes: change in hours as well as dropping or adding days onto your contract. This fee will be applied directly to your account. Dropping days or leaving Apple Tree requires a 3 week notice.**

Tuition is due regardless of attendance. If your child is out sick, out on vacation (regardless of the length of time you are out: it's a professional development day, snow day, holiday ect.) tuition is due for the days for which you are contracted. Please note the policy to cancel is 3 weeks notice. If you cancel once you have passed those times, you will still be billed for those days you are registered and for which you are contracted.

In the event of a state or nationwide pandemic and or shutdown the school will follow the Governor's Directives and send appropriate literature out to families immediately. The director will stay updated and informed and share all updates with staff and families right away. Our response will vary depending on the Governor's Directives. We will open for essential care as long as we are informed we are able. We will charge tuition based on the Governors Directives and funding opportunities available to us.

*** If a classroom or specific children in a classroom need to quarantine for any given reason (covid particularly) tuition will remain due during that time frame.** If a child contracts an illness including covid and needs to be out during the contagious and illness period, tuition is still due. Tuition is due regardless of attendance during all illnesses, including but not limited to COVID, including the need to quarantine based on guidelines by CDC, CDD, Vermont Health Department and or any policies Apple Tree has created.

Vermont State Subsidy Policy:

Each week your child attends Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities, ATLC is paid a set amount by Vermont State Subsidy. If the full amount is not collected on any given week, for any reason, you will be billed the remaining amount. It is your responsibility to make sure your balance is current.

Apple Tree is responsible for submitting your attendance to the State every two weeks, and we are reimbursed for your child's attendance for those past two weeks. If your child is absent from ATLC an entire week or any given day you are contracted for or registered for them to attend, Vermont State Subsidy will not pay unless we apply a C code. You are granted 30 “C codes” per year which are for sick and vacation days. If your state payment is less than normal due to being out of “C codes” you will be asked to reach out to your case worker to apply for more “C codes.” If more are granted than your account will remain the same, if more are denied your account will reflect the payment shortage we were paid. You are responsible for any tuition not paid through Vermont State Subsidy.

CCFAP now has a family share parents are responsible to pay. Apple Tree Learning Centers will charge the family share to each family.

Unfortunately, ATLC is not notified when your certificates expire, you are fully responsible for keeping track of your certificate start and end dates and submitting all paperwork to the Lamoille County Family Center on time. If you miss your expiration date, the State will only go back four weeks from the date you applied, so it's important to be prompt or you are at risk for jeopardizing losing several weeks of state assistance. ATLC is not notified until two weeks after your subsidy runs out, therefore once we know, you are already two weeks into the 4 weeks they will cover.

Apple Tree is only granted so many days for school closing the State will cover. These dates run July 1st through the end of June 30th. You are responsible for covering any of those days not covered through the state.

Families receiving subsidies are still required to pay all deposits and registration fees upon enrollment. We will credit back enrollment fees once we receive a subsidy certificate and any overpayments will result in a credit on your account which will be used for any additional charges you may encounter. If reimbursement is required or requested we will provide that to you in a reasonable amount of time.

Discounts

We do not provide or offer any tuition discounts. We do have limited scholarships available.

Payment Terms

- Tuition is due by Wednesday at noon or the first visit of each week for part-time students.
- Tuition is due by the first week of each month if paying on a monthly schedule (this must be pre-arranged with the Director).
- Tuition is due regardless of attendance or school closings. **We do not grant switching of days**, you may however add a day if space is available.
- A $16 late fee will be charged each week if tuition is past due. When tuition is 3 weeks past due, parents/guardians will be given notification. If no payment arrangements are made within one week of notification, the child's spot is forfeited. For balances left open for more than 30 days a 10% penalty charge will be added to your bill each month.
- A $5.00 late pick-up fee is added for every 5 minutes after 5:30pm (this fee is due that day and given directly to the early educator).
- Prices are subject to change and are reviewed annually.
- **Accounts must be current in order to register for any of our extra programs such as: Swim Lessons and or Martial Art. If your account is not current we will not accept your registration.**

What You Need To Bring

Infant

Parents must bring all beverages including formula, breast milk, baby food, cereal, lunch, snacks, and any specific instructions for feeding; at least two complete sets of clothing; a full sleeve of diapers, a full package of wipes and necessary creams.Children need outdoor gear listed in the Toddler/Bridge section below. Sunscreen will not be applied to infants under 6 months of age. Sunscreen?

* Commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups are preferred unless your child has a medical reason that does not permit their use, or your personal preference is cloth. If your child does have a documented medical reason to be using cloth diapers, or you personally desire the use of cloth, you must provide the classroom with a small hands-free diaper pail lined with a plastic bag and may be easily cleaned. This container will be sent home daily for you to disinfect and must be returned the next day your child attends.

Toddler/Bridge

Parents must provide a complete change of clothing stored in a plastic Ziploc bag or reusable bag (this will be sent home occasionally) and weather appropriate outdoor attire. In winter, all children must have snow pants, winter jacket, hat, 2 pairs of mittens, and snow boots. In summer, children must have loose fitting and breathable clothing, preferably cotton. Short sleeve shirts and shorts help children remain cool and a bathing suit for water play is recommended. Parents must provide a bottle of water resistant sunscreen, which provides UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher.

Children will need a blanket and a small pillow for rest. Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility will provide a rest mat with sheet cover (sheets are sent home on Friday for laundering). There

will be a $15.00 charge for sheet covers lost or not returned within the week. A new mat cover will be given to the student. Parents will need to bring in two morning snacks, three items for lunch and two afternoon snacks for students staying a full day. For children who attend for a half day they will only need two morning snacks and three items for lunch.

Parents must bring the items listed as well as the necessary diapers and wipes or several sets of extra clothes for children who are potty training. For children in the younger toddler room, please provide a portable crib sheet and blanket.

* Commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups are preferred unless your child has a medical reason that does not permit their use or your personal preference is cloth. If your child does have a documented medical reason to be using cloth diapers, or you personally desire the use of cloth, you must provide the classroom with a small hands-free diaper pail lined with a plastic bag and may be easily cleaned. This container will be sent home daily for you to disinfect and must be returned the next day your child attends.

Preschool

Parents must bring the items listed in the Toddler/Bridge section above including the same outdoor gear.

*** State Licensure requires all children in full-day programs have an opportunity for rest and quiet time each day. All classroom schedules have a dedicated rest time. Children are not required to sleep and will be given books, puzzles, drawing, and other quiet activities to do if they are not choosing to sleep. ***

Food

All food is brought from home in a lunch box with an ice pack. It's very important your child has two snacks for A.M. & P.M. from two different food groups. Lunch should represent three different food groups. Please make sure that each item in your child's lunch box is clearly labeled with your child's first and last initials and date. Apple Tree does have some snacks available to the children if they are still hungry once finishing their food brought from home. These snacks include cheerios, raisins, goldfish and applesauce; please let an early educator know if you do not wish for your child to consume these options. Water can be brought from home as well, but we do have water available here at the center. Unless otherwise specified by a parent/guardian and or a medical professional, children will be served water only.

We encourage healthy nutritious foods and limit treats to one per day. Treats include: gummies, doughnuts, poptarts, any chocolate flavored granola bar, cookies, brownies, rice crispy treats, etc. Please do not send candy, chocolate bars, or soda as we are unable to let your child consume these items in our classrooms. There are instances throughout the year when sharing food from home is appropriate and encouraged (holiday celebrations, birthdays, etc.). We ask all food items brought in from home to share are healthy and contain minimal sugar (muffins, bread, fruit, yogurt, etc.) and are in the original commercial package or come with a list of ingredients as we need to be sensitive to those children with food allergies. Apple Tree staff are not allowed to heat food in plastic or styrofoam containers. Staff are instructed to wash fruits and vegetables if they do not appear to be washed prior,

please take the time to wash your child's fruits and vegetables. If lunches are not stored in a refrigerator your child must have two ice packs in their lunch box.

Program Assessment

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility (main center) is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, (NAEYC). This is the highest level of national accreditation available and is renewed every 5 years with annual reviews each year. In addition, all Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities evaluate its programs annually through the State of Vermont sponsored quality rating system STARS (STEP Ahead Recognition System) as well as an internal family survey. Program quality, policies/procedures, family involvement, family satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction are the focal points of these assessments.

All findings will be shared with families and staff. The results will be used as a basis for continuing successful activities and for changing those that need improvement. The director, with the assistance of the owner, will establish goals for continuous improvement and innovation using information from the annual program evaluation. This information will also be used to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as improve operations and policies.

Parent Involvement

Creation of Partnerships with Families

The family is an essential part of our community and crucial to our genuine understanding and appreciation of each child. We strive to build home-school partnerships that are collaborative, trusting, and respectful. We always welcome parents to be an active part in their child's experience at school and their learning opportunities.

Parents and staff regularly communicate through frequent interactions, phone conversations, parent conferences, written reports, parent involvement and center gatherings. Additionally, daily communications will be provided through the Brightwheel App and are used as a tool of communication between parents and early educators. Parents can always reach out to their child's teacher and or the director through phone calls, Brightwheel messages and or emails to ask questions, raise concerns or even provide feedback on an ongoing basis. It is our goal to ensure families are comfortable and confident in their decision to attend our school, therefore we are always happy to brainstorm ideas and suggestions. We find it best to begin with the child's teacher if you have a concern. This helps build trust and connections with the teachers. If the parents are finding they need more support or the teacher is not able to answer the questions, reaching out to the director is the next step. A meeting can be scheduled to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Daily communications provide information on activities children have participated in and include reminders of items needed from home. For infants and toddlers rooms only daily communication outlines the child's sleeping, eating, and toileting patterns throughout the day. White board messages, located outside every classroom, are used to communicate activities of the day and learning objectives met by those activities.

Parents will be set up with a Brightwheel account upon enrollment. This is a critical app as it is how the classroom teachers will communicate with families each day. Parents will check their child in and out through this app, teachers will send photos, messages and ask parents questions as well as send newsletters and important information. Parents in turn can ask questions and send updates and messages as well. The messages are only between directors, parents and the child's current teachers. Billing is also completed through Brightwheel as well as school wide updates and newsletters. It's the best way to communicate with all aspects of Apple Tree. Parents have the feature to only send administration a message, this will not be seen by the child's teacher and will just be between the director, owner and the parents. This should be done if it's a more private message, or you can also email the director directly.

Getting to know the values and cultures within families helps nurture the home-school relationship and contributes to the child's self-esteem. Having parents participate in the goal-setting process is an important part of developing curriculum for each individual child. Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility will be sure all communications happen in the families preferred language and, if necessary, a translator will be found.

We love to learn from our families and have them participate when feasible and possible or if desired. Parents are encouraged to join field trips, participate in a specific lesson plan or activity, join in for school events, help plan a school event, participate in parent teacher conferences, share a hobby or talent with the class and much more. If you would like to participate in any way, please contact your child's teacher. If you have ideas or suggestions you can always connect with the teachers or the Director directly.

At Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities, we feel parents are the foundation for any quality Early Education Facilities center. We are partners in your child's overall development. It is through parents that early educators gain important information about the individual needs and accomplishments of each child. Parents will have the opportunity to attend two parent early educator conferences per year and will receive periodic reviews for their child. Parents are encouraged to participate in the program as their schedule allows. Some classrooms go on field trips and parents are always welcome to join in on the fun and be a chaperone. We also hold many family events at the school throughout the year parents are always invited to, including our famous Harvest Social in the fall.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities hold special events for families and parents such as picnics, guest speakers, CPR classes and fund-raisers for special projects. Parents should also feel free to stop by and visit anytime so you can see your child "in action" or call any time to check in on your child.

When a parent is in need of a more personal philosophical discussion regarding differences on culture, beliefs or values, each classroom welcomes discussion with parents. If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding your child's classroom at ATLC please reach out to your child's early educator first and try to resolve the issue. If the issue continues or is not resolved, reach out to the director or owner. They will negotiate difficulties and differences arising and will come up with two or more techniques for conflict resolutions to be discussed in a formal meeting.

We are always happy to receive any feedback or suggestions and will incorporate them into the classroom to the best of our ability. Parents are asked to complete a Parent Satisfaction Survey, once per year, which allows feedback to be given on the curriculum and assessment methods, teaching staff, program administration, health, community relationships and parental communication.

Center Policies/Procedures

Arrival / Departure

Your child's early educator will sign your child in upon arrival and sign them out for departure, or you are welcome to do so through the Brightwheel app. If a person other than a parent or guardian is picking up a child, please notify the appropriate Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility, in writing. Your child will not be allowed to depart with another adult unless it's noted in writing. The individual will be asked to provide identification if we do not know them, we ask this for the safety of each child. If there are any special circumstances for special transportation needs for a child, parents will need to notify the teachers and director in writing.

Please notify us if your child is going to be absent or abnormally late. This helps to include all children in the class activities of the day. Arrival time cut off time is 10:30 a.m. Exceptions may be made for appointments, however these must be approved by the director. The director will connect with the child's early educator to ensure it's a good idea for your specific child. Please note, temporary contract changes require approval from your child's early educator. Any permanent contract changes require approval from the director.

A late fee of $5.00 per every 5 minutes will be assessed for pick-ups after 5:30 (1:00 for half day students). The fee should be given directly to the early educator who has stayed after hours as compensation for their time.

It is required all parents abide by their contracted hours, particularly for pick-up and drop-off as we staff according to these contracts. Arriving early or departing late may cause us to have ratios which violate our license and cause safety issues. As noted above please get approval from your child's early educator if you need a temporary contract change. If you require a permanent contract change, approval must be given by the director.

Part-time families may request temporary additional days as the classroom attendance allows. This request must be made through the Director and will be charged as an extra day. We do not allow switching days; you will be billed for any added days regardless of other days your child may not have attended.

Upon arrival, early educators will personally greet each child and parent and check in about the evening or see if there is anything we need to be informed about to better care for your child. If more time or a private conversation is needed or requested, the early educator will ask the director for a time coverage can be given and a time will be set up with the family. At departure, early educators will greet the family, and let them know anything they may need to know in regards to their child's day. If the child had a rough day, a call would have been given prior to pick up and a time to talk will be arranged without the child present.

Volunteer/Visitor Policy

An open door policy shall be maintained for families, staff, and the community to visit during our hours of operation. Keeping an open line of communication between the center and families ensures the best interests of the children are served, both at home and at the center. All parents are encouraged to visit, telephone, email, message through Brightwheel and send notes whenever they deem necessary. If a parent needs to discuss a problem or needs more detailed conversation, we ask that a conference time be set-up with the child's early educator or director. This will prevent staff from leaving children unattended. This includes social visits, please keep those to a minimum as the early educators must focus on the children at all times.

Volunteer opportunities are open to all and volunteers are selected in an unbiased way. Family members will be matched with opportunities that are based on special skills/interests. Opportunities are often listed in classroom monthly newsletters as well as the monthly school-wide bulletins. Please let your child's early educator or the director know of your availability.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are a special services provider and are therefore available to any specialists (e.g. speech, physical therapy, etc.) who are serving children with special needs that attend the center. Children with disabilities or special needs shall be allowed to receive therapeutic or other services within their regular classroom or an agreed upon location to maintain their sense of continuity and support their feeling of belonging to and acceptance by the group. If your child receives services you must sign a form granting permission for the special educator to take your child out of the classroom. Your child will be signed out for such services and will be signed back in upon their return to the classroom.

Information Kept in Director's Office

The Director will collect, through registration and regular quarterly updates, all necessary health and safety information regarding insurance, medical plans, medical/emergency information, and permission forms. This information will be kept confidential under lock and key in the Director's office and the child's classroom if appropriate. It will be made available to the Director and any teaching staff immediately responsible for a child, parents/legal guardians, and regulatory authorities upon request, otherwise it is always located in a locked cabinet and information is kept confidential. It is our expectation staff and other parents keep information regarding children and other family members and or staff confidential and only those that need to know are made aware. Staff sign a confidentiality policy upon hire and are made fully aware of our expectations and policies regarding such policies.

Health and Safety

We at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are concerned about the health and well-being of each of our children. There may be a time when a child is asked to remain out of school due to illness or a medical condition.

According to the Vermont State Childcare Regulations, a child will not be permitted at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities if she/he has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 101 degrees or higher (temperature will be checked several times over a short period of time before sending home to ensure the reading is accurate)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) (2 or more cases in a classroom requires full exclusion) once on drops for 24 hours the child may return and we will administer drops with Dr. note and medical form filled out by parents
- Unexplained rash (**must have Dr. note to return**)
- Diarrhea (3 or more loose bowel movements through the clothes and abnormal for the child)
- Vomiting (unless infant is known to have acid reflux and we have Dr. note indicating as such and all parties must agree it's due to the reflux)
- Lice/scabies-We have a no nit policy
- Contagious diseases or infections such as Covid, Flu, Bronchitis, Strep Throat, Measles (red or German), Chickenpox, Mumps, Bacterial Meningitis, Shingles, Giardia, Salmonella, Coxsackie (for infants and toddlers), Polio, Impetigo, Hepatitis A, Whooping cough, Pertussis, Scarlet Fever, or Roseola all are excludable and your child cannot return until on medication for 24 hours and have a doctor's note stating they can return to early education facilities. Coxsackie is full exclusion for infants and toddlers. For preschoolers, they will be excluded if they drool excessively, the sores are spreading, they have a fever, or are unable to participate
- A cough that is severe, consistent, causing rapid and or difficulty breathing, and or wheezing (if not already evaluated and treated by a Dr.). Children will be sent home to be checked out by a doctor. Once a Dr's note is provided, the child may return to school. If your child has allergies and or asthma a doctor's note must be on file to avoid your child being sent home for the cough

***Unexplained rashes must be excluded until seen by a doctor if they trigger behavior changes, fever, oozing or open wounds, bruising associated with injury, inability to participate, tender, red area of skin especially if it's increasing in size or tenderness.**

****Please note if your child is not able to participate, and it's causing hardship for the child to follow the general flow of the day and/or is compromising the staff's ability to care for other children, the child will be sent home. ****

Children or staff who are out and seen by a doctor for a contagious illness, a doctor's note should be obtained prior to returning. If a child has a doctor for a parent, notes must be written on their proper doctors note pads in order to be official and accepted.

If a child needs to be sent home due to illness, they will be supervised and comforted in a space away from other children. If a child is sent home due to an illness listed above, we require the parent or guardian sign a form stating they understand their child may not return to Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility until the following criteria have been met:

- The child must be medically improved, free of fever, vomiting, or persistent diarrhea for at least 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or similar medications
- If a child was suffering from a communicable disease and they are no longer in a contagious stage of the disease and or the guidelines presented by CDC or Vermont Department of Health. This is subject to change based on current guidance

- If the child is suffering from an undiagnosed rash, runny eye, or any other potentially communicable disease, a doctor's note should be obtained and brought to an Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility
- The child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours in the case of bacterial infections, or has been treated for and is free of an infestation of lice and nits or scabies

If a physician has ordered a special medical management procedure for a child in care, an adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever the child is present.

In the event of a state or nationwide pandemic and or shutdown the school we will follow the Governor's directives and send appropriate literature out to families immediately. The director will stay updated and informed and will share all updates with staff and families right away. Our response will vary depending upon the Governor's Directives. We will open for essential care as long as we are informed we are able. We will charge tuition based on the Governor's directives and funding opportunities available to us.

The Use of Insect Repellents/Ticks

In the event public authorities recommend the use of an insect repellent due to high risk of insect-borne disease, repellents containing DEET are to be used only on children over 2 months of age. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission. Alternatives to DEET are acceptable when written approval is provided by an individual child's physician or in cases where a public health authority recommends the use of an alternative insect repellent registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. With parent permission, teachers who feel confident will be able to remove a tick with Tweezers or a tick removal kit, parents will be notified prior to the tick removal and permission shall be given in writing. The tick will be saved in a bag for parents to bring to a medical expert if deemed necessary.

The Use of Sunscreen

Staff at Apple Tree will apply sunscreen to children 6 months and older with written consent from families. Sunscreen needs to be SPF 15 or higher. If you do not wish for your child to have sunscreen applied, you must supply a written note from the doctor and clothing covering the child's body from the sun while we are outside. We do spend a minimum of one hour outside each day, weather permitting.

Weather/Temperature Guidelines

All students are required to go outside each day, weather permitting, for at least one hour daily. This includes all age groups. All groups are required to incorporate weekly walks on the bike path, outdoor adventures and activities in their weekly curriculum.

Children's personal water bottles must be outside with you at all times in all weather conditions and for all children.

When children are not able to go outside due to weather, gross motor play must be offered for a minimum of 30 minutes for each age group.

During warm weather months- children must go outside when temperatures are 90 degrees or below each for at least one hour daily, this can be broken into half hour sessions. Any temperature above 90 with high humidity will require children to limit their time outside to no more than 30 minutes.

Water play is required on days where the temperature is 80 or above.

On warm sunny days it is important to prevent children from getting overheated.Teachers must encourage children to drink extra water and play in shaded areas.

Children over 6 months of age should always have sunscreen on with a UVB and UVA protection of SPF of 15 or higher. Sunscreen needs to be applied each time before going outside.

In cold weather, make sure children wear warm protective clothing before allowing them outdoors. No child shall go outside if the air temperature is below zero degrees Fahrenheit including wind chill.

Children under 3 years of age shall remain inside if the temperature is below 10 degrees with windchill. When outside, teachers shall monitor children to ensure they are warm and limit the exposure to high winds, and must go inside if anyone is visibly cold and uncomfortable.

Children are to have extra clothing available each day to help keep warm while outside. All clothes should be personally labeled and kept in the child's backpack and/or cubby and be seasonally appropriate. Teachers shall remind parents and notify them if they are out of what is needed to ensure safety and comfort outside.

■ Security and Building Access

All parents are given the key pad code to enter the 1056 Mountain Road building. The code changes once a year unless otherwise needed. Parents are informed of the code change and are able to give those on their child's pick up list the code. All side doors remain locked all the time and are not used by parents.Teachers may use these and must carry keys so they can get back in when needed. These precautions are for the safety of our staff and your children.

The new wing of Apple Tree does have cameras in the classrooms. Cameras will be installed in the older wing in the near future.

Access to our programs at Stowe Elementary and Morrisville Elementary as well as the Graded Building are through a buzzer notification system at the front and back doors. Parents may enter through the front door until 4pm, after that time they need to enter through the cafeteria doors.

Off-Site Activities Policy

We will take field trips throughout the year for all ages two and above. Each family will be notified about the trip three weeks in advance and all children will be transported on our bus. Each child will be required to have a signed permission slip. All children 8 and under will be in 5 point harnesses and those over 8 will be in booster seats until they meet the weight requirements per state law. For walking field trips on the bike path, the family will be asked to sign a blanket permission slip during the enrollment process.

In addition to the adult/child ratio regularly employed by the early education Facilities, an additional adult shall be added for off-site activities. In preparation of a bike path field trip/walk, all staff will have a cell phone, first aid kit, cups, water, appropriate changing items for clothes and diapers for those who need and an emergency list for their class.

Children shall be under the direct supervision of staff at all times, during the off-site activity. Children shall be accounted for before, during and after the transport and several times during that time period. Children must be counted before, during and after all transitions.

If the off-site activity requires transportation, arrangements shall conform to state laws, including seat belts and child restraints. Apple Tree Learning Centers early education Facilities has three buses that are used to transport the children off site. The following precautions shall be made:

- A pre-trip vehicle checklist will be completed before loading children into the vehicle.
- At least two staff, one of whom may be the driver, shall be in the vehicle if there are more than 6 children or licensure rations apply, and you must have a communication device in the vehicle.
- One adult will check all safety restraint devices to be sure they are used properly.
- The driver or attendant shall not leave the children unattended in the vehicle at any time while transporting children.
- Each child shall board or leave the vehicle from the curb side of the street or shall be safely escorted across the street.
- Good order shall be maintained in the vehicle.
- The driver shall check the vehicle at the completion of each trip to ensure no child is left in the vehicle and all children are picked up and dropped off at the correct locations.
- The vehicle shall be maintained in good repair.
- The number of persons in the vehicle used to transport children shall not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity.
- The vehicle and all drives shall be covered by Apple Trees liability insurance and be a designated drive or ATLC's Vehicle Insurance, as required in the Vermont State Law.
- The driver shall hold a valid, appropriate Vermont driver’s license.
- The driver or attendant shall maintain a daily attendance record before, during, and after transportation.
- The vehicle shall have evidence of a current safety inspection.
- There shall be first aid supplies in the vehicle.
- **There shall be information in the vehicle identifying the name of the Director or Owner and the name, telephone number, and address of the early education facility, for emergency situations.**
- For swimming events at least one staff member is Life Guard Certified.

■ Field Trip Policy

No classroom with children under two will take field trips. Classrooms with children over the age of two will be taking field trips throughout the year, with preschool taking them more frequently.

Classrooms with children over two yet under three may take up to 4 field trips per year.

Classrooms with children three to five years of age may take field trips to local hikes, enrichment activities such as swimming, and up to 8 additional field trips per year and no more than 2 per year will be more than 45 minutes away.

Children over 5 and in our School Age programs are authorized unlimited field trips based on bus availability and scheduling and are always prioritized during vacation camps and summer weeks.

We shall not take trips to visit large animals of any kind.

Procedure for Releasing a Child from the Center

All staff are familiar with the procedures for releasing a child to a person other than the parent. In the event a person not cleared to pick up a child refuses to leave or insists on taking the child, the early educator will call the director or police, if necessary, for immediate assistance:

- Children can only be released to those people listed on the consent form in the child's file. Therefore, we ask **only staff release children.** If an adult other than those on the permission to pick-up list comes to pick up a child, and the staff have been given verbal or written permission by the parent or guardian, the third party picking up the child must present proper identification at the time of pick-up. If a parent has not given permission for someone other than themselves to pick up their child, staff will not release the child until obtaining parent/guardian permission, even if the third party is well known and has frequently picked up the child in the past.
- In case of an emergency, persons listed in the "To be called in an emergency" list can pick up a child if the center cannot reach the parent/guardian and the center calls these persons to pick up a child.
- In a non-emergency situation, persons on the "To be called in an emergency" list cannot pick up a child without written permission from the parent/guardian.
- Every child enrolled in the center must have an Emergency Information Sheet on file. It is the responsibility of the family to inform the center of any changes on this form.
- Underage siblings may not sign out a child - licensing requires the designated adult to sign each child in and out daily.*
- Policy prohibits staff from releasing a child to someone other than those designated on the emergency card/form unless the lead early educator has granted the authority to do so.
- Identification will be checked on any adult picking up a child from the center with whom staff is not familiar.
- If staff suspect a parent is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, they shall discreetly seek the assistance of the lead early educator and/or any member of the center management staff before releasing the child. Staff cannot withhold the child from leaving the center with the intoxicated parent, but can block their car in, and stall them from leaving. If the parent does leave, staff will contact police immediately with the license plate number.
- When an unauthorized person demands release of a child, staff will discreetly seek the assistance of the lead early educator or any member of the management staff before releasing the child.

If a child has not been picked up from the center after 1 hour from the center's closing time and all efforts have been made to contact the family, the Stowe Police will be notified and the child shall be released into their custody.

Note: At no time will a staff member sign-out and/or remove a child from the center unless the parent has given prior written consent.

Medication

Please notify Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities that medication needs to be given to your child before their arrival to school. The staff will provide you with a State required form that must be completed and given to the early educator with the medication. Administration of medication will be handled on an individual basis, as Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities would prefer not to be responsible for any medication. Medication will be kept in a locked container in the kitchen refrigerator if needed to be kept cold. If the medication does not need to be refrigerated, the early educators will keep it high and out of reach of children. All staff at Apple Tree are trained in Medication Administration, first aid and CPR. This includes emergency procedures such as asthma and epi pen usage. Staff are present all day and are trained in such procedures. In the event we must administer medicine, the procedure is as follows:

- **Medicine forms will need to be completed and should be given to the early educator with the medication.**
- Early educators will fill in a Medication Log to track when medication is given to your child.
- All medications will be kept in a locked box out of the reach of children.
- All medicine must be in its original bottle, labeled with the child's first and last name.
- Doctor's instructions must accompany <u>all</u> medications.
- For ongoing medication, such as epi-pens, inhalers, etc., parents are responsible for supplying updated prescriptions prior to the expiration date.
- Asthma action plans or allergy action plans must be updated every 6 months with the parents and physician.
- If Epi-pen is administered 911 will be called.

Naps and Resting

Apple Tree follows the Vermont State guidelines regarding napping and resting. In addition, children shall be supervised by sight and sound at all times. Children, regardless of age, are never napped in a separate room where they are unable to be seen and heard at all times, and infants are checked on every 5 minutes. Cribs and nap mats shall be spaced apart or if spaced closer together a stable barrier will be used. Each class shall have a map indicating where children are put down to rest. **No child will be forced to take a nap.** If a child is not sleeping, they are to be provided with books and or quiet activities while the other children rest. No child is also forced to stay awake. If a child falls asleep it tells us they are tired and need a rest. If a parent requests a child to stay awake we will do our best, however if the child falls asleep we must meet the child's needs in the moment and let them rest. We can wake them after an agreed upon time, however if after trying to wake them they fall back to sleep we must let them have another few moments of rest before insisting the stay awake. Infants are not allowed to be woken up from their nap and must be allowed to nap when tired.

We do not ascribe the "crying out" method for any period of time per state licensing. Licensing states "All children must be attended to when crying" this includes rest times. While we can rub backs while they cry and rock when feasible, the child can not be left unattended to cry it out. If a child falls asleep in our arms we must transport them right away to a crib**.**

Ratios are maintained for infants and toddler one's during rest time. All other groups are allowed to take lunch breaks and have another staff member on call within vocal distance.

Infants 12 months or younger, must be placed on backs to sleep, without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless ordered by a physician. Infants must nap in cribs with a flat surface, tightly fitted sheet and no blankets until over age one. No snuggles, soft items, hoodies, and necklaces for infants under 12 months of age are allowed during rest. Infants cannot nap in swings or car seats, bouncy seats or any other infant device. Swaddle blankets and sleep sacks may be used for infants. Children under the age of one may not rest on a mat. **If a child arrives at the program asleep or falls asleep in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant must be removed and placed in the crib as soon as feasible or noticed.**

Protecting Children from Hazards

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities follow all Vermont Licensing Regulations for protecting children and adults from environmental hazards such as lead and asbestos. In the state of Vermont there is not an air pollution health risk, so no such policy is in place, but would be written if a situation were to arise in the future. However, on occasion the staff at ATLC has made the decision to keep children inside due to news broadcasts informing us about the air being unsafe for children with asthma.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities follows all Vermont State Guidelines around protecting children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, scalding, slipping, or falling (http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/child_care_licensing).

In order to protect staff and children from harmful animals, insects, pests, and poisonous plants, Apple Tree follows several procedures. Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities follow a strict Pet Policy. When unwanted animals wander on the premises, staff notifies the Director who will assist the animal in leaving or call Animal Control if necessary. If insects or vegetation become a nuisance or harmful, the Director will use a pesticide product to rid the area of the pests. This will be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner preventing skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children and staff. If the problem persists, a professional pest control management business will be called in to remedy the problem. This will be done using the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation. Apple Tree Learning Centers has an ongoing relationship with a company for pest and insects control, Ehrlich.

While any classroom or location at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are in the process of renovation, re-carpeting, re-tiling or painting, children will not be present. All work of this nature will be done after hours when Apple Tree is closed and will be well ventilated before the children arrive.

- All floor coverings have a sticky back or are secured to keep children from tripping or falling.
- We exclude baby walkers due to potential injuries.
- Pesticides are not utilized on the premises.

Tobacco, Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Tobacco, Alcohol and Illegal Drug use by staff, parents, and visitors is not permitted anywhere inside of the building or on Apple Tree grounds. This includes e-cigarettes and vaping. Smoking, e-cigarette, or vaping is restricted only to a location not visible to the children, staff or parents and at least 100 feet away from building, playground and children.

Idling Vehicles

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities discourage idling vehicles in our parking areas except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

Reporting Abuse

If an Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities' staff members believe a child may be neglected or abused we must by law report it to the Vermont State Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services. If an early educator suspects possible abuse or neglect they need to call in a report immediately and do not need to notify the director prior to making the call. Unless we feel it puts the child in further danger of abuse, the parent should be informed a report has been made to DCF. Apple Tree staff are all Mandated Reporters and are required by law to report suspicious behaviors. If a staff member makes a report for suspicions of child abuse or neglect, they are immune from discharge, retaliation or other disciplinary actions for that reason alone, unless it's proven the report was intended to do harm.

The early educators and volunteers of ATLC are required legally and ethically to report child abuse in accordance with Vermont State Laws.

All early educators will be trained in and are responsible for knowing and understanding The Guide to Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect. A Statement of Understanding must be signed by all early educators acknowledging their understanding and responsibilities. In depth training will be provided for all staff without prior training in prevention and identification of abuse and neglect.

Protocol: Report to the Department of Children and Families within 24 hours. This phone number is posted in the kitchen next to the fish tank. The Director/Owner will assist if necessary. Before calling, staff will be prepared and have the child's file for reference.

If an employee is accused of Abuse or Neglect, the staff member will be suspended with pay while an investigation is in effect. All information regarding the case will be kept confidential between the Director/Owner and the employee. The Director/Owner will complete an investigation as well as the appropriate law enforcement. Due process will be followed. Once the investigation is complete a decision on the continued employment will be determined based on the outcome. If the employee is guilty, they will be terminated effective immediately; if they are innocent they will be able to continue employment.

Nutrition Policy

We follow the NAEYC guidelines for food safety and Vermont State Licensure requirements for nutrition and food preparation. Parents are responsible for providing all food for their children. Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility does provide water for children at all times, juice and milk are not provided. If your child is drinking milk from a bottle or cup, parents must supply it. Juice must be 100% and can not be in a bottle unless a doctor's note is provided. All families receive a welcome letter from their child's group before transitioning. In this letter is information regarding nutrition, food restrictions and limitations. We also include information regarding the labeling and dating of food. When needed, parents are reminded of our policies in person and/or in writing.

Staff will encourage and support families in the food choices they provide for their children. To help parents see the importance of nutrition, all staff are familiar with the USDA food guidelines. This information will be given to the parents/guardians when they enroll and when a child transitions to a new group. If our policy is not being followed by parents/guardians, the early educator shall remind the parent verbally and in writing. If more information is needed for the families, the staff can see the Director for additional resources.

If a parent forgets to cut food to an age appropriate size the staff will do so for the child. If a parent provides food we are unable to serve, the staff replaces the food with an option the center has on hand for emergency circumstances. Any food item whose expiration date has passed will be thrown out.

- Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities promote healthy food choices. No candy or soda is allowed at any time. Please pack only one "treat" per day for your child. Examples would include: cookies, brownies, donuts, pop tarts, pudding, gummies, etc.
- Some classrooms are nut free. Please ask your child's early educator if your child's room needs to be nut free. Please be sure your child has been exposed to peanuts and tree nuts prior to sending food items containing them with your child.
- All food brought from home must be in a lunch box, labeled with the child's first name and dated, with two ice packs if there is not an option to put it in a refrigerator. There are instances throughout the year when sharing food from home is appropriate and encouraged (holiday celebrations, birthdays, etc.). We ask all food items brought from home to share are healthy and contain minimal sugar (muffins, bread, fruit, yogurt, etc.).
- No food or medications shall be put into a child's bottle or drinking cup, unless documented and requested by a medical professional.
- At no time will teaching staff use threats or derogatory remarks nor withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.
- We will always follow special health needs for each individual child. Parents shall provide all required documentation to keep early educators educated on special needs.

Infant/Toddler and Special Needs Feeding Policy

- Infants unable to sit and or unable to hold their own bottle are always held for bottle-feeding. It's always best practice to hold a baby while feeding a bottle and we want to ensure this happens whenever feasible and possible, it's expected this occurs to the best of our ability.
- Infants shall not be fed the formula or breast milk of another child.
- No child will have bottles while in a crib or bed and do not eat from propped bottles at any time.
- No child is to carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking.

- Teaching staff offer children fluids from a cup as soon as the families and early educators decide together when a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.
- For all infants and children with disabilities who have special feeding needs, staff will keep a daily record, to provide families, documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes.
- Breast milk and formula must be tossed after one hour of being heated and or out of the refrigerator.
- Breast milk must have the child's full name written on the bag and/or bottle along with the date milk was expressed. Older bags of milk must be used first. We can only store up to two weeks worth at one time. All dated milk must be no more than two weeks old.
- Formula must arrive to us in an original container or pre-labeled bottles. Once on whole milk or any other similar product, it must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name or have the cups or bottles clearly labeled.
- Bottles and or drinking cups may not contain food and or medication unless requested by a medical professional and proper documentation is provided.
- Individual health/feeding needs will always be met. Parents shall provide all required documentation to keep early educators educated on special needs.
- When a child is ready for pureed and or solid foods, parents will try the foods at home prior to sending them to school. A child must be 6 months old prior to being sent in with pureed foods.

Water Activities Policy

We follow NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and State Guidelines with regards to water activities. Wading pools with a depth of less than 2 feet shall not require staff to have Community Water Safety training. Water activities used at ATLC include the use of water tables, wading pools, sprinklers and water spraying devices. When using the wading pools, children still in diapers must be wearing a swim diaper. Pool water must be emptied and refilled for each new group of children with fresh potable water. No children are allowed to drink the water. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate in communal water play. All staff receive a copy of our Aquatic Plan and must sign off stating they have seen and understand the policies surrounding water play.

Allergy Protocol

We have a no Seafood policy in all of our programs. All group functions will be peanut free.

When children or staff have life threatening allergies, such as peanut or tree nuts, an Individual Medical Emergency Plan must be filled out by the parents and staff, and certified by the attending physician. These must be updated every 6 months. In addition, it will be determined if it is necessary to make the room in which the staff or child resides allergen free based on the severity of the allergy and the physician's recommendation. If the room will not be allergen free, then staff will follow the protocol in the next paragraph. Epipens will need to be present and carried at all times for those with life threatening allergies, including staff and students.

With children for whom the allergy is not life threatening, we sit the child at a table with children who do not have food containing the allergen(s). We then follow normal protocol and make sure all children wash their hands and the tables have been disinfected. For a staff member with a non-life threatening allergy, we immediately wash any surface and utensils with which the allergen product has come in contact in the common areas shared by all staff. In the classroom where the early educator works, the

staff uses the above protocol for sanitation. This would be the same whether the allergy was life threatening or not.

In addition, if a child or staff member has an airborne allergy such as dust mites or components of furnishings or supplies, we will follow any logistically reasonable recommendations given by a health professional.

If other recommendations are made requiring us to take measures beyond those mentioned, we would fulfill them to the best of our logistical abilities. If we find we cannot meet all of the necessary recommendations, we will meet with the child's parents. If it is determined not following through on a recommendation will not harm the child in any way, then the child remains at our center. If it is determined the center cannot fully meet the recommendation and it would be harmful to the student, then the recommendation for alternative placement would be made (this would generally be determined during registration).

All allergies are posted in the respective rooms with parental permission, so staff is fully aware and takes necessary precautions.

Classroom Pets and Visiting Animals

Classroom pets and visiting animals must be in good health. We can not allow large animals of any sort in our programs or visit them on field trips. Cats, dogs and turtles shall have appropriate documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show the animals are fully immunized and the animal is suitable for contact with children.

Before an animal is brought into the classroom it is essential to make sure none of the children in the classroom are allergic to the potential visitor.

When an animal is in the classroom, early educators must supervise all interactions between children and animals. Please instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. When on the bike path children should not interact with any animals.

Emergencies

There are lighted emergency exits at all Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities. Each month fire drills and evacuation procedures are practiced and recorded as directed by state regulations.

In the event of an accident we will follow policy and procedure outlined below:

- For minor cuts and bruises one of the staff will administer FIRST AID.
- For a more significant injury, FIRST AID will be administered and the parents contacted to determine any additional medical treatment. If parents are unable to be reached and further emergency first aid is required, Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities staff will transport your child to Lamoille Health Partners.
- If a child has choked and the Heimlich was performed, 911 must be called while a teacher is performing the Heimlich.

- For a serious accident, Stowe Rescue/Morristown Rescue will be called to provide emergency medical care and transportation to Copley Hospital. Parents or emergency designees will be contacted immediately.

A record of accidental injury occurring at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities will be completed in Brightwheel. If Brightwheel is not working the early educator will fill out an Incident Report, have it signed by the parent, and put in the child's file.

*** A copy of our center's Emergency Response Plan is available from the Director upon request. This plan includes all policies and procedures regarding training, practice and handling of various emergency situations. ***

Weapons Policy

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are concerned with protecting the health, safety and welfare of the children in our care, early educators, and visitors. It is our goal to have the absence of threats to physical well-being and safety by individuals possessing weapons. Possession and/or use of any dangerous or deadly weapon or facsimile of any dangerous weapon, in the building or center grounds and property are strictly prohibited. It is a violation of this policy for any person to make, issue, or communicate by any means a threat of a dangerous or deadly weapon has been, or will be placed or used on school grounds or property. This policy does not apply to law enforcement officials while engaged in law enforcement duties.

If a dangerous or deadly weapon of any kind is brought into the building, the individual who brought the weapon in will be asked to leave immediately. If they refuse to leave the premises, 911 will be called. At this point, the individual will be treated as an intruder and the intruder policy in our Emergency Response Plan will be followed.

Children's Health Records

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility's main center maintains current health records for each child which includes:

- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency. This must be supplied at enrollment and will be updated annually.
- Results of health examinations, showing up-to-date immunizations. These must be supplied at enrollment and updates given to Apple Tree after any new immunization. Apple Tree will do a records check and send out a reminder every six months.
- Current emergency contact information for each child. Information is to be available during initial enrollment and will be updated annually.
- Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child. Information is to be available during initial enrollment and will be updated annually.
- Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes). Parents and physicians will be required to fill out the "Individual Emergency Care Plan" and this plan will be available at enrollment. This plan will be updated every 6 months.

- There must be supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. The “Waiver for Immunization Exemption” from the State of Vermont must be filled out prior to a child enrolling in the program and renewed annually.

  Additionally, each classroom has a file for each child in a locked cabinet

Policies Regarding Biting

The following procedure shall be followed by all staff regarding biting:

If a child has been bitten staff will:

1. Wash the wound with soap and water.
2. Apply ice.
3. If the bite breaks the skin, notify the lead early educator who will then call the parent.
4. Write an incident report.

***For Infants and Toddlers: Give attention to the bitten child. Remind the bitter biting hurts and we do not bite our friends. Give the child something to bite on like a rubber teething ring. Ask the child who has bitten to “check in” with the child they bit to see if they are o.k.

***For preschoolers: Give attention to the bitten child. Have the child who did the biting help to care for the injured child. (E.g. hold ice, comfort). Remind the child we do not bite our friends and we use words instead. In all cases, explanations will be given to the child in a language they can understand to explain why the behavior is inappropriate and to reinforce the concept though the activity is inappropriate, the child is not a “bad” child. Do not force the child who has bitten to apologize.

How will we handle the biting child?

1) We will look for the causes of the behavior and try to take a preventive approach.
2) We will shadow the biter in situations where we think the child might bite.
3) We will be consistent in our interventions, realizing it is a temporary stage of normal development.
4) We will communicate to parents about the incident. However, information about the “biter” is confidential.

Fire/Evacuation Drills

The Center has developed emergency procedures in the event of a fire. These procedures will be practiced with the children at monthly intervals in all programs. In addition, each classroom provides opportunities for practicing daily safety procedures with children such as staying clear of swings and using "walking feet" in halls and on stairs.

● Lead in Water Testing

Per State of Vermont Licensing Regulations, all center based Early Education Facilities and preschool programs are required to conduct lead testing of their water. All sinks used for drinking water will be

sampled for first draw and second draw once per year in our Mountain Road Stowe Location. All other locations are not required to complete this test as they are public buildings and must meet those set requirements.

Test results and plans for remediation, if necessary, will be communicated with all parents in a letter. If remediation is necessary, the sinks requiring remediation will not be used for drinking water and a warning sign will be posted at those sinks instructing not to use the water for drinking. Water for drinking for the classrooms affected will come from other sinks in the building that have passed the lead testing or bottled water. Once the remediation is completed and affected sinks have been retested for lead, and results show the lead levels are below the state threshold, parents will be notified in writing the sinks are safe to be used for drinking water again and the warning signs will be removed.

Meeting the Individual Service Needs for All Students

All staff at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are committed to meeting the individual cognitive, social/emotional, fine and gross motor and language developmental needs of all students in whatever way possible. The Creative Curriculum, Teaching Strategies and Seed and Sew enables staff to assess the development of each child. We use this information to adapt our curriculum and environment to meet individual needs.Occasionally, the staff may believe a professional consultation would be beneficial to the child and classroom. When this occurs, we have a wide variety of state and federal services available to help the child, families and staff. A list of area resources/services are posted in the kitchen and all families and early educators receive a copy.

As part of our commitment to having open communication with families, we first will talk with the parents or guardians in private. This generally happens in a meeting and observations surrounding the concerns are shared, then suggested next steps are discussed. After speaking with the parents/guardians, there are several steps that may be taken:

1) An informal observation by an outside source, depending on the concern in question, could be from the Lamoille Family Center, the Elementary School Special support staff or Lamoille County Mental Health. These educators are often used to help determine whether a more formal screening of the child is needed, as well as determine what additional changes can be made within the classroom environment to benefit the child/program. Before proceeding further, consent to exchange information must be obtained from the parent/guardian.

2) If it is determined a screening or diagnostic evaluation or further observations are needed, the parents are encouraged to make a referral or have the Director make the referral, upon their consent, to the appropriate agency/service. In the state of Vermont, parents/guardians must initiate the referrals and all contacts are funneled through them. Contact with the center is initiated with the parent's/guardian's permission.

3) Once the family is connected with a service, Apple Tree Learning Centers' Early Education Facilities' staff will help coordinate services necessary during the time when the child is in our care. early educators, and/or the director will participate in meetings and consultations when necessary. All IFSPs, (Individual Family Service Plan) IEPs, (Individual Education Plan) and other individualized plans for children will be addressed.

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities collaborate regularly with CIS, Early Essential Education, Family Infant Toddler Project, Head Start and all other area community agencies and services to meet family and children's needs both at home and at the center. Many of these services are available free of charge and are accessed through parent/early educator referral to specific agencies. Certain services such as counseling, therapy, 1:1 assistance in the classroom or respite for families are not free but may be paid for through insurance, grants or personal funds. These services often happen in collaboration with our programs, but are not paid for by Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities.

****Please see the Lamoille Valley Community Resource Guide given with this handbook or call 211 the Vermont Resource Information Center***

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Discipline at Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are developed with support and encouragement of positive behavior through a planned environment providing a variety of activities from which the children may choose. Methods include reinforcement such as verbal praise, smiles and pleasant attention for appropriate stated alternatives when a conflict situation occurs.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited by anyone on the premises of Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities; any use of the described practices shall be grounds for immediate dismissal of staff. All parents and staff are provided with a copy of our Child Guidance and Discipline Policy.

- No child shall be subject to physical punishment, corporal punishment, and verbal abuse or threats by either staff or parents while on center property.
- No child shall be subject to: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, pulling of arms, ears or any punishment requiring a child to remain inactive for long periods of time.
- No child or group of children shall be allowed to discipline another child.
- Unsupervised isolation of a child is never allowed.
- The withholding of food, water, a nap or rest, or bathroom facilities is never to be used as punishment for a child.
- A child is never to be physically restricted in any way unless his or her actions would bring harm to self or others.
- An adult shall never yell at a child or address a child harshly, with intimidation or ridicule.
- A child shall not be subject to psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats against, or frightening, ostracism or withholding affection.
- A child shall never be subject to coercion; rough handling, shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part, be forced to sit or lie down, or stay down except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm. A child shall never be forced to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).
- Adults are never to discuss a child's behavior with another adult in the presence of other children or other parents. Written or verbal reports to parents regarding physical conflicts or

disagreements between children shall not include the name of the child who hit, bit or pushed their child.

Apple Tree Learning Centers' Early Education Facilities staff maintain a safe, non-threatening environment. The early education facilities' staff foster creativity, encourage children to explore and allow them to make discoveries. When inappropriate behavior occurs, it is dealt with immediately. early educators individualize responses to the children's behavior in relation to the particular child and the situation. They try to identify the cause of the inappropriate behavior and recognize the repeated problem behavior may be the child's way of signaling they need help in dealing with a certain task or situation. early educators can then modify the learning environment and/or activities to help resolve the situation. We set limits and encourage self-discipline because boundaries reassure young children and because order and stability are as important to a child as freedom.

To enforce the boundaries and rules at the center, the adults use the following techniques with the children:

- Clear statement of the limit. "Blocks are for building, balls are for throwing."
- Stating expectations positively. "The blocks are for building."
- Redirection. "Let's go see what Lucy is cooking in the kitchen."
- Support problem-solving and negotiation between the children. "How could you use your words to tell Billy you would like to have a turn with that truck?"
- Logical consequences or choices. "You are having a hard time playing with the blocks without throwing: You need to make another choice; do you want to play with play dough or to paint at the easel?"
- Modeling effective ways to express feelings and emotions. "I do not like it when you grab the book from my hands. Which words can you use to let me know you need something I have?"
- With toddlers, give the appropriate script such as, "Lisa, say,may I have the book, please?"

It is sometimes appropriate to use words like "don't", "stop!", or "no!" if you must stop a behavior or action right away because:

- A child will hurt another child.
- A child will hurt themselves.
- A child will destroy property.

Then these words may be used to intervene. Otherwise, do your best to give positive redirection. You will avoid power struggles, encourage positive behaviors and have a much happier day!

Verbal Guidance for Preschool Children

Say:	**Do Not Say:**
Remember to sit down when you slide.	Don't stand up when you slide.
Sand is for digging.	Don't throw sand.
We swing with our bottom in the seat.	Don't stand in the swing.
Remember to climb down the ladder.	You'll fall if you don't watch out.
Keep the puzzle on the table.	Don't dump the puzzle pieces.

Be gentle with the book pages.	Don't tear the book.
Remember to use paper towels to wipe your hands.	Don't put your hands on anything.
Remember to be safe when you climb Down the ladder.	Be careful, you might fall.
Remember to walk *around* the swing.	Be careful. The swing might hit you.
It's time to go back inside.	Shall we go inside?
Use your "inside voice" when you're inside.	No screaming!
Let's keep the chair on the floor.	Don't lift the chair!
Let's keep our feet on the floor.	Don't climb on the table!

There are times when all of the above mentioned techniques have been used and the problem persists. We might ask a child to sit quietly by himself/herself until the child can return to play appropriately. We do not have a "time-out" place and this alone time is not seen as punishment. Rather it is seen as a time to regroup. Even as adults, we sometimes need time alone to "pull ourselves together." Children also need this, especially when they have been in a group situation most of the day.

When a child's ongoing challenging behavior must be addressed the following steps must be taken:

- Assess the function of the behavior
- Talk with families about having child observed by a professional to see if an IEP is needed
- Work with families and professionals to develop an individualized plan to address the behavior
- The plan must include positive support strategies (removing materials or modifying the classroom environment that triggers challenging behaviors or creating a predictable daily schedule so children know what to do and when to do it)

Challenging behaviors include but are not limited to the following: Any behavior interfering with children's learning, development and successes at play, is harmful to the child, other children or adults, or puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure, physical aggression such as hitting, biting, shoving, whacking with toys, relational aggression, verbal bullying, tantrums, whining, testing limits, refusal to follow directions or observe classroom rules.

At no time will corporal punishment, vulgarity or verbal diminishing of a child's self-esteem be utilized as punishment.

At no time will teaching staff use threats or derogatory remarks nor withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Threshold Policy

Frequency/Type of Violence towards Others

When behaviors towards adults and classmates or themselves are of great concern and these acts of violence are extreme and not your typical pushing or shoving including but not limited to: choking, scratching, pushing down, throwing items, physical threats, derogatory language that is offensive and insulting, and repeated hitting until they physically need to be removed from the situation, etc. (We will have to follow the set of guidelines listed below). It is our goal to limit or eliminate the use of

suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures to the best of our ability. This includes in-house suspension, (visits to the Owner/Director/other classrooms, walks around the school and any other time that pulls a child out of the classroom)

A child must not have in school suspension and or be removed from the classroom setting unless all other measures have been attempted. This includes redirection, problems solving strategies, conversations, etc.

- The early educators in the classroom will make every effort to be in proximity to the child both. It is understood there are several other children in the classroom who need attention and the early educators will not be able to be with that child all of the time.

- Behaviors will need to be tracked (e.g. what was happening before, what happened during the incident as well as time of day). early educators are documenting what was going on in the classroom at the specific time the incident takes place. This will help us to assess triggers and reactions. early educators will keep track of the children involved.

- When an act of violence causes severe physical harm to another child, a teacher or themselves, including but not limited to: drawing blood, putting hands around others' necks and/or uncontrollable repeated attacks that terrify others, parents will be called to come get them. It is expected they will make arrangements to have someone there within a half hour. If necessary, until the parents arrive a third staff member will be brought in to assist in the classroom to help assure no further harm comes to others. In some cases the child may have to be removed from the group. **If a child who is in a preschool funded program is sent home a report does need to be made to the Agency of Education, which may trigger a full investigation of the entire situation including all steps made to try to allow the child to remain in our care despite behaviors.**

The following reports will be provided to parents:

- 1-3 incidents throughout the day not considered severe behavior, parents will be informed at the end of the day they had a good day. Observations will still be tracked as stated above.

- 4-6 incidents throughout the day not considered severe, parents will be informed at pick up that their day has been challenging. Parents will be provided with how early educators followed through and managed the situations. Observations will still be tracked as stated above.

- Any number of incidents above 6 not considered severe, parents will be called to come and pick them up for the remainder of the day. This is a case when they are having a really off day and are not able to regulate their body and keep themselves under control. early educators will use their best judgment on a daily basis and adapt accordingly. early educators will be respectful of the family's needs, while monitoring the safety and well-being of the children in the classroom. All incidents will be properly documented and discussed with the parents first, and possibly any special service provider to help early educators gather the data and better plan for the child's needs. If the child is in preschool and is enrolled in the public preschool funding, we will report to the Agency of Education (AOE) as requested.

It is our goal to limit suspension and exclusionary measures and only use them when the child is at serious risk of harming self or others. Suspension is used as a last resort when all other measures have been attempted. Exclusionary measures will not be considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted and there is an agreement exclusion is in the best interest of the child. Parents, early educators and the director will hold a meeting to discuss the reason behind the suspension, and/or expulsion and decide on next steps and how to move forward.

If exclusionary measures must be taken, we will offer assistance to the family in accessing any needed services and, if necessary, alternative placement. This policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

Removing a child from the classroom for any period of time is called in school suspension, and will only be used if a child is posing immediate harm to self or others and redirection has not worked. If a child requests a classroom break, this will also be an option. This will occur prior to sending a child home for the day in hopes it helps calm and redirect the behaviors.

● Expulsion Policy

It is the philosophy and belief of Apple Tree expulsion of a student is used as an absolute last resort in all situations. All expulsions require a 5 day written notice to parent/guardian. When a child is expelled from ATLC, a full copy of their file will be provided to the parent/guardian on or before the child's last day in the program. ATLC will retain documentation the file was provided to the parent/guardian. Below are the circumstances under which expulsion may be considered: please note: exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted and there is an agreement exclusion is in the best interests of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, we offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. This policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

Below are the circumstances under which expulsion may be considered:

1) **Non-payment of tuition for more than 3 weeks.** It is expected all accounts will be kept current. Billing is done weekly on Wednesdays and all late accounts will be billed and assessed a late fee. If an account is 3 weeks behind in payments, the director will send a notice with the bill notifying the parents the account is 3 weeks past due and the child's space will be canceled the following Wednesday if payment is not received for the account. The notice will encourage the parent/guardian to meet with the director to set up payment arrangements so a payment is made prior to the next Wednesday. If payment is made within the week, the space will be reinstated.

2) **Health or Safety Threat:** When a child's behavior poses a repeated health and safety threat to other children or adults at Apple Tree, expulsion will be considered only after the procedures below are followed prior to the decision to expel a child:
    a) The Threshold Policy has been used and followed by Apple Tree staff.
    b) ATLC has requested the parents make or allow us to make a referral for an evaluation. The referral must be made within one week of the request.

c) If the request has been made for a referral, the evaluation has been completed and all accommodations/services have been put into place, a 2 month trial period has passed.

d) ***Exception*** : If a child's behavior is such ATLC staff cannot keep other children or staff safe all efforts will be made to attain funding for a one-to-one- assistant through the Child Development Division Special Accommodations Grant. If funding is denied and or a one-to-one assistant cannot be hired, expulsion will be an option.

3) **Professional Conduct:** When a child's parent/guardian is rude, disrespectful and/or verbally abusive to ATLC staff, expulsion may be considered. In the event a parent/guardian is rude, disrespectful, and/or verbally abusive with a staff member at ATLC, the director will request a meeting with the parent/guardian to try and address concerns with the goal of keeping the child enrolled. If after a meeting with the parent or guardian the rude, disrespectful, and/or verbally abusive behavior continues, the child will be expelled. Additionally, if the parent refuses to meet with the director and the child and or parent is rude, disrespectful, and/or verbally abusive behavior continues, the child will be expelled after being given a 5 day notice.

Curriculum Planning

early educators coordinate an age **appropriate curriculum (**using The Creative Curriculum Online Cloud program) for each group organized around the following areas: Framework includes the goals for the knowledge and skills to be acquired by children and the plans for learning experiences through which such knowledge and skills will be achieved.

- Physical (gross and fine motor)
- Social (peer interaction, social skills and awareness)
- Emotional (self-esteem, awareness and recognition of feelings, healthy balance)
- Cognitive (comprehension, language development, problem solving, and skill acquisition)

Curriculum Planning Guidelines

While each class at ATLC Center has its own distinction, there are at least five principles are consistent from the youngest group of children to the oldest. The five principles are: assessments and observations, interests and needs, individual/small and large group activities, all areas of development and developmental appropriateness. These principles are influenced by the theories of educational practice based on an understanding of child development.

Curriculum is carried out with the belief children are learning at all times and the early educator's role is to facilitate and enrich the learning process. Play is the natural mode of learning for the young child. The child develops feelings of competence and motivation for learning when provided opportunities for play and individual choice.

- Learning occurs when the child is actively involved with the materials of the environment.
- Through careful observation of play, early educators are able to assess development and add challenges or direction as needed to further individual growth.
- The classroom environment is arranged to provide ample choices for children which encourages independent thinking and a gentle unfolding of abilities.

- The classroom curriculum should be modified to reflect the values, beliefs, and experiences of the children and families in your current classroom.
- The classroom curriculum should be modified to reflect the languages spoken by families in your classroom.
- The curriculum should be adapted to reflect child assessment results and create classroom and individualized learning.
- The curriculum should include the community.
- There will be an emphasis on using the outdoors as a second classroom with outdoor time being extended well beyond licensing requirements.

It is expected all early educators will complete weekly lesson plans to be emailed to the Curriculum Coordinator every Friday.

If ever you have a suggestion or idea about what could be added to our curriculum to help instruct the teaching of family home life, values, beliefs, cultures, experiences, or language, please see your child's early educator, the Curriculum Coordinator or the Director.

It is expected our staff will incorporate family language preferences into the curriculum. This includes the language in which the families speak as well as word preferences and terminology. Examples are preferred words for body parts, bodily functions or familial relationships.

Curriculum Planning for Infants and Toddlers

During the first two years of life, children are working on acquiring a sense of trustworthiness of oneself and others. This sense of safety and security comes from responsive and predictable care from familiar adults with whom the child is attached. In the toddler years, a strong sense of autonomy is building. This comes from being treated as an individual and being allowed opportunities for independence.

When children feel a sense of independence, power and competence, they can step out into the world and be active learners and problem solvers. Young children need a safe environment full of opportunities to explore and have fun. They need to be able to see, touch, feel and move.

The curriculum for the infants and toddlers involves everything that happens to the child throughout the day. Responsive caregiving is the key component to setting up a safe and secure environment and trusting relationships. Everything a child experiences is a learning opportunity. For example, diaper changes are perfect opportunities for learning experiences: language, singing gently to a child, showing gentle touches letting the child know this is not a hurried or rushed experience and they are valued and precious individuals, gently moving their legs in a bicycle motion or having them reach and grasp for an object. Throughout the day, early educators will take advantage of these caregiving experiences are so important in the early years of life and turn them into meaningful and positive experiences for a child's healthy development.

Along with the individual care giving moments, early educators will also plan and organize their environments to provide experiences which enhance:

- Motor development -reaching, grasping, crawling in and out, throwing and pulling.
- Cognitive development–object permanence, cause and effect experiences, language, listening and responding to sounds and voices and problem solving.

- Social development – playing among others, positive peer interactions and expressing emotions towards others.

Planning for infants and toddlers does not necessarily involve "lessons", but rather opportunities for experiences as individuals they can make the most out of for their development. Lesson plans are required to be submitted weekly through the online creative curriculum platform. When early educators organize materials for the room, they take into account children's individual differences along with their knowledge of child development. Planning is based on observations of the children using their interests, their new skills and their reactions to materials. As the children grow and change, the early educators change the classroom environment. They may put out more challenging climbing equipment or add a building area with different toys. A classroom should look very different at the end of a semester than it did at the beginning!

Assessment Plan – TS GOLD

TS Gold is an online assessment documentation system, used for all ages and it allows early educators to organize and interpret data gathered through several forms of evidence. These assessments as well as each child's "portfolio" are accessible to parents through the online system once a password has been established. Additionally, parents will be given a hard copy if it is their preference. A hard copy will also be put into each child's portfolio. They will be used at conferences to guide discussion and planning for each child with their families.

All programs complete assessments 4 times per year and offer parent early educator conferences twice per year. TS Gold is done twice per year and twice per year is a one page write up. These assessments are completed by a child's early educator using ongoing observations (during large group, small group, and on an individual basis for varying periods of time), anecdotal notes, a developmental continuum and individual child profiles (these are part of Teaching Strategies GOLD) in order to complete the Child Progress and Planning Sheet. Assessments are completed by your child's specific early educators; therefore parents are familiar with the adults who complete these assessments. Child assessments are based on the child specifically and are not generalizations. Assessments are completed using written observations, art work samples, photos and video clips and may include one child directly or a small or large group of children. Parents are always welcome to share observations with the teachers that can be added into the assessment data. Assessments are completed quarterly and only observations from each quarter are included in your current assessment. The only exception to this is for Acorn.Teaching Strategies GOLD is used in the public school in which they are attending. Teachers will be given guidance as to what goals and objectives will be measured and to the format of the narrative used for the assessments.

Conferences must be offered a minimum of 2 times per year and otherwise as requested. Parents are encouraged to raise questions or state any concerns they may have about how the assessment methods meet their child's needs. Overall discussion about the assessments and child's progressions can take place during parent/early educator conferences.

The Family Comments and Observations section and Next Steps section can be filled out with families at the conferences. All of this will be done in a manner sensitive to the family's culture, values, identity and home language. We are always open to parent perspectives and observations to be included into

goal setting and assessment data. Parents are always welcome to share information and observations with your child's teacher. This can be done through Brightwheel, verbal conversations and or sharing videos and written observations through email or uploaded directly in the TS Gold Parent portal.

Parents will be notified of conferences in writing and a sign-up sheet will be posted 3 weeks prior to conferences. Verbal information regarding a child's development and learning will occur on an ongoing basis as well as be noted on Brightwheel for infants and toddlers through age 2.

These assessments are also used for other purposes including the following:

- To communicate with outside organizations/agencies when arranging developmental screenings and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated (after parental permission in writing has been obtained).
- To improve the curriculum and adapt teaching practices for children and to make necessary changes to the environment.
- To plan for program improvement and future learning opportunities for children.
- Identifying children's interests and needs and adapting curriculum according to the needs of the classroom as a whole and each individual child.

All staff must be trained in the Creative Curriculum through Teaching Strategies prior to writing student assessments. As part of the orientation process, new staff receive initial training by the curriculum coordinator on the curriculum system and then are asked to complete further training.

All child portfolios will be kept in a locked file box in each classroom and kept confidential. Formal assessments (norm-referenced and standardized tests) are used in situations requiring comparisons to norms for the purposes of identifying children with potential delays or special needs. Staff work to achieve consensus with families and agencies about assessment methods to meet the child's needs. These are done by trained professionals from outside agencies as recommended by the child's team.

Setting up the Environment

The physical environment of the center has been set up to enhance our program goals and philosophy.

It offers:

- Challenges, choices and encourages children's independence.
- Activities to encourage and support cooperative play with peers and adults.
- Opportunities for children to take risks in a safe nurturing environment.
- Experiences enabling children to be "messy". Getting involved in play activities without concern for clothing or appearance is an important aspect of a child's learning.
- Interactions with the environment children learn about the physical properties of the real world. (It is also how they test ideas, sort out feelings and learn competency).

It is our expectation all classrooms will have the room set up and ready for students upon arrival with centers set up for play. Students who arrive for the early shift may be asked to help choose play centers to put out for their peers.

Transition Plan

It is our goal to make every child's transition into our Early Education Facilities or into another program as smooth and stress-free as possible. Prior to a student starting at the facility, the Director will arrange for an initial visit where the family receives a tour of the facility, introductions to appropriate early educators and a registration package. Once a start date has been established, the parent and appropriate early educators arrange for 1-2 visits designed to familiarize the family and student with the environment, the early educators, routines and peers. During these visits, parents and early educators spend time getting to know one another, the program and building the foundation for a relationship, which will enable them to work together as an effective team. On your child's last visit, you will be provided with the opportunity, if ratios allow, to leave your child for a solo visit of 3-4 hours. This will give the educators a chance to form a bond with your child and give your child a chance to familiarize themselves in their new environment.

Students transitioning between classrooms have a different transition process. The Director/Owner chooses a date in which all children will transition from their current classroom into their new classroom. This date is chosen based on when public school starts back for the new school year in the fall. The current classroom early educators fill out an early educator's Student Transition sheet. If needed, early educators from the current classroom may have a conference with the new early educators to discuss the individual needs of the child transitioning. Parents will be asked to complete and update several documents for their child's file including a new Family Profile. Parents will also be given a welcome letter from the new classroom.

In the Infant Program, parents are welcome to contact the early educators in the Toddler One Group to set up some visitation dates. In the older classrooms, parents are welcome to visit with their children. If the parents are unable to go with a child, an early educator will often go with a child to help the child feel secure and safe. The amount of visits and length of time the transition takes is up to the child and their individual needs. Teachers will take the group of children for tours and visits in their new rooms prior to the transition date. The children's new teachers will come into the classroom and visit the children who will be in their upcoming classroom a few times prior to the transition. These moments will help the children become familiar with the new classroom and the new teachers.

We will also host a parent transition evening. This is a child free event, as it's a time for parents to come and learn about the new classroom, meet other families and be able to ask any questions they have about the new classroom. These dates are always on our school wide calendar.

Students transitioning from Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facility Preschool 4/5 classroom to an elementary school will begin their transitions in May. The early educators will start discussing the transition, doing activities to promote a smooth transition (i.e. reading books). The Kindergarten early educator from receiving schools will be asked to come for a visit to give children the opportunity to meet the early educator, get an overview of what kindergarten is going to be like and have the opportunity to ask questions. After the visit is completed, a field trip to the Stowe Elementary or Morrisville Elementary School may be arranged. We take the children to the elementary school where they stay for an hour or so. They are incorporated into the routine and have another question/answer period with the early educator immediately following. Any children not attending the Stowe Elementary School may get opportunities to visit the school they are attending. This is not done through Apple Tree, but is discussed with the early educator and parents. Visits at the receiving school

are arranged and handled by the parents. When we have several children from another town, we will visit town's school.

** If your child is attending the Apple Tree Morrisville Pre-K program, the transition will happen through the Morrisville Public School Pre-K Program and AppleTree staff will collaborate with their staff around this transition.

Note:

- When there are a significant number of students from a receiving school other than Stowe Elementary, we will have that school's kindergarten early educator come to visit Apple Tree and follow up with a separate field trip to the school.

- When necessary we will be part of a "transition team" for students with special needs. This may involve meetings with school personnel and special service educators, extra visits to the school, etc.

- The Stowe Elementary teacher meets with the Preschool 4 early educators at the beginning of the year to talk about what skills they will be focusing on and kindergarten expectations. This helps our staff to better prepare children for kindergarten.

- Due to confidentiality, Apple Tree only shares necessary information regarding assessments, reports, meetings, etc. with the receiving school when it is requested, and only after written permission has been obtained from the parents or guardians. Any student who is registered through Act 166 has already granted permission.

- In addition to the transition activities that ATLC provides, the receiving schools plan other activities such as screenings, parent information nights, ice cream socials, etc.

● Toilet Training Policy

Toilet training is an important step in a child's development. Toilet training takes time, understanding, and patience. It is common to feel a little nervous or anxious about starting toilet training, including early educators, parents and children. The more at ease we are in the process, the more comfortable the child will feel and the easier the process will become.

Toilet training can provide a child with feelings of achievement and self-control, and give them added strength and pride. Each step taken toward the goal of becoming trained paves the way for the next step of the child's development.

Each child is an individual and develops at their own rate as there is no set age at which toilet training should start. The right time depends on the physical and emotional readiness of each child. It is important for the child to be ready before training begins. This is usually between the ages of two and three years and sometimes later, or even earlier. If training is started before the child is ready, training will be more difficult and take longer.

We are only able to allow so many accidents per day per child, before we will put a child back in a diaper/pull-up, as it becomes a health concern and or an emotional shame or embarrassment for your child, and both are not something we are able to let continue multiple times per day. It is unfair to your child when they have multiple accidents in front of their peers throughout the day, they can become quiet, unengaged, fearful and begin to shy away from others, and sometimes the other children will do the same to those having the accidents. Both situations can cause distress for the children and we must protect each child's emotional well being throughout the toilet training process.

We do not have a set amount of accidents allowed, as it varies per case. For newly trained students, our gauge is any more than 3 accidents, pee or bowel movements in a given day tells us that they need a break for the day and we may have to put them in a pull up or a diaper. When bowel movements leak out of underwear all over the floor, it becomes a health, sanitation and safety concern for the other children, and is not something we can allow. If a child has been trained for a long time and begins to have accidents, we will start by looking at the whole picture, brainstorming with parents and try to figure out why it's happening. In certain situations, a child may need to be sent home if parents do not desire a diaper/pullup and too many accidents are occurring.

A child must be able to control the muscles and regulate the bowel and bladder to be toilet trained. Knowing how to get to the toilet and undress quickly is also important. You can help avoid mishaps by avoiding overalls and onesies for any child who is in the process of toilet training. A child must be emotionally ready. They need to be willing and cooperative, not fighting or showing signs of fear. If a child protests vigorously while training, it may be best to wait for a while. At school we are not able to force them to sit on the toilet, therefore we will have to wait until they show signs of being ready and are willing to be cooperative. Please keep in mind a child may show signs in one location of being ready and not in another, meaning they may choose the toilet at school and not at home, and vice versa. We will follow your child's lead in all cases when going through this process.

It may be best to delay toilet training if a child is experiencing stress such as a family move, a new baby in the family, a major illness or a big change in a child's routine (such as starting a new school or even transitioning to a new room within the same school). Do not be surprised if a child regresses slightly during a major transition. We will work with you and your child during this time and be as understanding and supportive as possible. This is one thing a child has full control over and we are not able to take the control away from them, we must work with them not against them. We need to build trust with them. Sometimes when a child is transitioning they become too shy and fearful to ask to use the toilet, and/or do not show the new early educators any signs they need to go, or they go much more frequently than normal, therefore accidents occur. Some children are particular about where they use the toilet, therefore a new school toilet may not work for them right away. Each child is unique and will respond differently to all of these scenarios. We will work with each of you to ensure we are meeting your child's needs at the moment. We ask that we all remain calm and patient during this process and follow the lead of each child individually.

The following signs may indicate a child is ready to begin training:

- The child remains dry at least two hours at a time during the day or is dry after naps.
- Bowel movements become regular and predictable.
- Facial expressions, posture or words reveal a bowel movement or urination is about to occur.

- The child can follow simple verbal instructions.
- The child seems uncomfortable with soiled diapers and informs us and or asks to be changed.
- The child asks to use the toilet.
- The child has some basic self help skills such as pulling up and down pants.

When a child shows signs of readiness and the parents are ready to begin toilet training at home, the parent and early educators will discuss plans to begin toilet training. Communication between staff and family is very important during this time. Parents and educators need to discuss what words will be used to describe body parts, urine and bowel movements, what type of training pants the child will wear and the routine at home and childcare for taking the child to the toilet. **Students must wear underwear, diapers or pull ups at all times while at school just in case of an accident, this ensures the health and safety of all students.** When accidents happen without proper undergarments, the bowel movements are not as easily contained and can cause health and sanitary concerns. We also require underwear due to the risk of exposure of private parts. Children find that type of situation funny at times, while others are humiliated and embarrassed. It's our job to protect children both physically and emotionally and having them properly covered helps ensure their privates are not exposed unnecessarily.

early educators are not allowed to wash any article of clothing with bodily fluids on it. They must put it in a plastic bag as is and label it for parents to understand what is inside the bag. We are not allowed to empty BM's into the toilet, we must send home the items as is. If you wish for us to toss any undergarments away and not send them home, please advise your child's early educator to avoid those being sent home.

We are not able to do the following:

- Allow a child to be without undergarments
- Allow a child to run around naked
- Allow a child to pee and or have a BM outside to assist with toilet training
- Force a child to sit on the toilet

Objectives of Successful Toilet Training:

- Keep the child comfortable.
- Give the child a sense of pride and accomplishment.
- Health and safety of all children.

■ Procedures for Toilet Training

- When parents and staff agree to begin toilet training, the child will be taken to the toilet at frequent intervals with an agreed upon time frame meeting the needs of the child.
- The child is allowed to sit as long as he/she is willing. At any sign of distress the process will be stopped.
- The child is never punished or embarrassed for having accidents.
- If the child has soiled or wet clothing, normal diapering procedures are used to the point of storage of soiled pants/underwear.
- Toilet training seats will be disinfected after each use with sanitation spray in the spray. (This is per Vermont State Regulations). We do not use child size toilet chairs, we only use seats that rest on a regular sized toilet.

- Children's hands will be washed with soap and water.
- early educators will wash their own hands thoroughly.
- Bathroom sinks, toilets and floors must be cleaned and sanitized daily.

Children will be offered frequent opportunities for toileting, particularly after meals and before sleep periods.

Preschool

The majority of children in this group are expected to go to the toilet when they feel the need, but occasionally children will have to be reminded. Rather than lining everyone up at once every time, children are often reminded while washing up for snack times, lunch, rest time, etc. to use the toilets. We encourage children to take responsibility for themselves; parents can aid this by dressing children in pants with elastic tops or other easily managed clothing. Hand washing is a consistent part of the toilet routine and the hand washing procedure is followed. Please let your early educators know if your child needs a pull up for rest time or field trips.

Mishaps

Mishaps do occur; parents can assist staff by providing extra clothing for their child. When children have a mishap, we change them without shame or disgust. An accident happens when children have not yet acquired complete control, are new to the center, are overly fatigued, are not well, and/or are deeply engaged in an activity or do not want to stop to go to the bathroom. All of these types of accidents are normal. If a child is having accidents and they seem out of the norm, the early educators will reach out and discuss any potential concerns with parents. Many children are humiliated by wet or soiled underwear! The staff is sensitive to this and helps change the child in a quiet place.

Additional Information

Apple Tree Learning Centers Early Education Facilities are committed to providing an environment in which a child feels love and security. We also seek the essential needs of good nutrition, shelter, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline and feelings of importance are met to allow a child to flourish. Should you have any difficulty providing for your child's emotional or physical needs or the stress is more than you can handle, community based help is available Parent Assistance Line: 1-800-727-3687
Parents Anonymous: 1-800-544-5030
Lamoille Family Center: 1-802-888-5229
Dial 211 which is the Vermont State Health Line which has specific resources for each county through the united way.

If you would like access to the After School or Center Based Early Education Facilities and Preschool Programs Licensing regulations and other information about child development go to:

- After School Regulations- our MES and SES locations follow the After School Regulations
- Center Based Regulations Our Preschool in Morrisville and all programs at our Mountain Road in Stowe facility follow Center based regulations

If you need a printed copy of the regulations or/and any guidance on how to look up and search a specific regulation, do not hesitate to reach out to the owner or director.

If you would like to make a report on a potential violation, file a complaint or have any direct questions or concerns about our program and or any other child care facility, you can contact the following:
Phone number is: **1-800-649-2642**
https://dcf.vermont.gov/