FOUNDATION HEALTH PARTNERS

POLICY

TITLE: The Learning Center: Outdoor Play and Learning		
Number: TLC16		**Version: 11**
Type: Administrative	**Policy Editor: Child Development Coordinator/ The Learning Center Director**	
Effective Date: 01/14/2025	**Original Date: 01/01/2017**	**Approval Date: 12/03/2024**
Facility: Fairbanks Memorial Hospital; The Learning Center		
Population (Define): All Employees		
Replaces:		
Approved by: Child Development Coordinator, The Learning Center Director		

TITLE: *The Learning Center: Outdoor Play and Learning*

I. Purpose/ Expected Outcome:

A. To provide guidelines for outdoor play and learning that is safe and healthy for all ages.

II. Definitions:

A. Supervision refers to the age appropriate monitoring of the children in attendance, the knowledge of where the children are and how many children the classroom has in attendance as corroborated by the daily sign-in sheet. Teachers should be able to articulate, at any given time, how many children are in attendance and where they are.

III. Policy:

A. Children of all ages must have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather, air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk).

B. Outdoor play areas, designed with equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate and that is located in clearly defined spaces with semiprivate areas where children can play alone or with a friend, accommodate…

1. motor experiences such as running, climbing, balancing, riding, jumping, crawling, scooting or swinging.
2. activities such as dramatic play, block building, manipulative play, or art activities.
3. exploration of the natural environment, including a variety of natural and manufactured surfaces, and areas with natural materials such as nonpoisonous plants, shrubs and trees

C. Teaching staff must arrange themselves in such a manner that children can be supported in their interactions as well as supervised by sight and sound,commonly referred to as "Zoning".

D. Teaching staff will take children outside even in weather conditions such as cold, rain, snow and heat. Parents will be expected to provide appropriate weather gear for successful outdoor play. Teaching staff will assure that children are dressed appropriately before taking them outside. Accommodations will be made to keep children safe and comfortable despite weather conditions. For example: Children should wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather. Teachers will come prepared to spend time outside bringing any necessary gear for themselves as to not limit the children's time outdoors.

E. When teachers enter or exit the outdoor play area they will communicate to their replacement as well as other teachers present, how many children they are responsible for, where they are and what the next step in the day is. Director/Site Supervisor will be responsible for routine follow up with teaching staff to determine if teaching staff continuously know how many children are in attendance.

IV. Procedure/ Interventions:

A. Children will be taken outdoors up to the following temperatures:
   1. Infants: 0 degrees
   2. Toddlers: -10 degrees
   3. Preschool: -20 degrees

B. Air Quality Mandates will be observed as follows:
   1. **Good Air Quality**: (*Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk).* **No Limit on outdoor play**
   2. **Moderate**: (*Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. For example, people who are unusually sensitive to ozone may experience respiratory symptoms).* **No limit on outdoor play**
   3. **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups**: (*Although general public is not likely to be affected at this AQI range, people with lung disease, older adults and children are at a greater risk from exposure to ozone, whereas persons with heart and lung disease, older adults and children are at greater risk from the presence of particles in the air.*) **30 minutes or less of outdoor play for infants and toddlers. Preschool children may remain outdoors longer, but change (reduction) of air quality should be watched and children should be monitored for any signs of distress, such as cough or breathing issues. Children with documented respiratory disease should remain indoors.**
   4. **Unhealthy**: (*Everyone may begin to experience some adverse health effects, and members of the sensitive groups may experience more serious effects).* **No outdoor play allowed.**
   5. **Very Unhealthy**: (*This would trigger a health alert signifying that everyone may experience more serious health effects).* **No outdoor play allowed.** Indoors: air purifiers will be placed in each classroom and running.
   6. **Hazardous**: (*This would trigger a health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected).* **No outdoor play allowed**. Indoors: air purifiers will be placed in each classroom and running.

V. Procedural Documentation:

A. N/A

VI. Additional Information:

A. Check air quality at http://dec.alaska.gov/Applications/Air/airtoolsweb/Aq/

VII. References:

A. NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria

VIII. Other Related Policies/ Procedures:

A. Policy TLC01 – The Learning Center: Basic Care Item Application
B. Policy TLC20 – The Learning Center: Teacher/ Child Ratio, Classroom Assignment and Supervision Requirements

IX. Keywords and Keyword Phrases:

A. N/A

X. Appendix:

A. N/A

TITLE: The Learning Center: Teacher/ Child Ratio, Classroom Assignment and Supervision Requirements		
Number: TLC20		**Version: 10**
Type: Administrative	**Policy Editor: Child Development Coordinator/ The Learning Center Director**	
Effective Date: 09/12/2024	**Original Date: 01/01/2017**	**Approval Date: 08/29/2024**
Facility: Fairbanks Memorial Hospital; The Learning Center		
Population (Define): All Employees		
Replaces:		
Approved by: Child Development Coordinator, The Learning Center Director		

TITLE: *The Learning Center: Teacher/ Child Ratio, Classroom Assignment and Supervision Requirements*

I. Purpose/ Expected Outcome:

A. To define the developmentally appropriate ratio guidelines that must be maintained to meet National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation guidelines.
B. To support the idea that children know and become familiar with those caring for them and experience a stable learning environment through continuity of care.
C. To establish supervision expectations for each age group.

II. Definitions:

A. Developmentally Appropriate: based on what we know about the development and learning of children within a given age range, while also considering each child's individual abilities and needs, and his or her cultural background.
B. Developmentally appropriate teacher/child ratios and group sizes to best facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive learning and activity among children.
C. NAEYC is the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
D. Teacher to child ratio is the minimum number of teachers required for the number of children in care.
E. Supervision refers to the age appropriate monitoring of the children in attendance, the knowledge of where the children are and how many children the classroom has in attendance as corroborated by the Bright Wheel attendance. Teachers should be able to articulate, at any given time, how many children are in attendance and where they are.

III. Policy:

A. Each class is assigned teaching staff who have primary responsibility for working with that group of children. These teaching staff provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being.
B. Classes of children may be limited to one age or may include multiple ages. (A class or classroom consists of the children who are assigned to a teacher or a team of teaching staff for most of the day and who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space that prevents intermingling of children from different classes within a larger room or area.)
C. NAEYC accreditation mandated ratios, as outlined below, will be maintained for each age group at all times.

D. When teachers enter or exit the outdoor play area they will communicate to their replacement as well as other teachers present, how many children they are responsible for, where they are and what the next step in the day is. Director/Supervisors/Coordinators will be responsible for routine follow up with teaching staff to determine if teaching staff continually know how many children are in attendance.

E. To support routine confirmation of children in a teachers care the following tools are to be utilized by all TLC staff; communicating the number of children in ones care when entering or leaving a classroom, counting children before leaving/after reaching any destination outside the classroom, classroom white board to visually track the number/names of children coming/going, and requiring the use of the "name-to-face" tool to mark children as "away" and "here" when leaving the buildings and when they return.

IV. Procedure/ Interventions:

Supervision:

A. Infant/ Toddlers Teaching staff who are responsible for the care of the children enrolled in an infant/toddler room need to be able to see and hear all infants and toddlers at all times. All infants and toddlers should be easily seen (if not in the direct line of sight, then by looking up or slightly adjusting one's position) by at least one member of the teaching staff. Teaching staff do not need to be directly looking at each child at all times to meet the requirement for sight supervision.

B. Preschool Teaching staff supervise children primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (e.g., those who can use the toilet independently, who are in another area of the classroom/outdoor classroom, or who are napping). Preschool children (defined as children enrolled in a class of children ages 30 months to 5 years) may be out of sight and sound for a maximum of one minute. It is permissible for staff members to supervise preschool children by sound only for up to five minutes only before regaining both sight and sound observation. (e.g. A teacher can be with a small group on the opposite side of a classroom while a child plays in a center on the other end of the room.). Children of any age are not permitted to be in a separate location from the teaching staff. For example: If a teacher is outside, a child may not be permitted to go inside without a teacher, regardless of age.

C. Teaching staff may never leave children in the care of someone other than Learning Center teachers or management.

D. Ratio/ Group Size (all ages)

Teacher-Child Ratios within Class Size												
		Class Size(2)										
Age Category	**Age Range**(1)	**6**	**8**	**10**	**12**	**14**	**16**	**18**	**20**	**22**	**24**	**30**
Infant	Birth-15 mos.	1:3	1:4									
Toddler/ Two	12-28 mos.	1:3	1:4	1:4 (3)	1:4							
	21-36 mos.		1:4	1:5	1:6							
Preschool	30-48 mos.				1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9				
	4-5 years						1:8	1:9	1:10			
	5 years-K						1:8	1:9	1:10			

1 These age ranges purposefully overlap. If a class includes children whose ages range beyond the overlapping portion of two age categories, then the class is a mixed-age class. For mixed-age classes, universal criteria and criteria relevant to the age categories for that class apply.
2 Class sizes as stated are ceilings, regardless of the number of staff.
3 Class size of 10 is permissible for this age range, but an additional adult is required to stay within the best practice ratio.

E. Mixed Age Classrooms
For infant/toddler mixed-age classes, the ratio and class size for the youngest age range present applies.

- For toddler/preschool mixed-age classes: When more than four children between the ages of 30 months and 36 months are present, the ratio and class size for the youngest age range present applies. When fewer than four children between the ages of 30 months and 36 months are present, the ratio and class size for the predominate age range present applies.
- For all other mixed-age combinations, the ratio and class size for the youngest age range present applies. The ratio remains in compliance when a staff member leaves the class without being replaced by a substitute for no more than five minutes (e.g., to get craft supplies, talk in the hall to a parent, go to the bathroom). If teaching staff are absent for more than five minutes but less than 20 minutes (e.g., to take children to the bathroom, to administer first aid, to take a personal break), the ratio remains in compliance when another adult who is not part of the teaching staff substitutes for the staff member. Substitutes can only be another Learning Center staff member.

F. Special Events/ Nap time
Special Events (Observation Only): During special events (such as puppet shows, assemblies, graduation), if children remain with their own classes (i.e., they are not intermingling with others) and if the teaching team that is responsible for the class remains with the class, rate as if the class is not intermingling. If the class being observed is intermingling with one or more other classes during the special event, then rate as a single combined class.
Nap Time: When two or more adults must be present during nap time, at least one of the adults present must be a teacher or assistant teacher–teacher aide (for example, a class of five to eight infants would require at least two people, one of whom is a teacher or assistant teacher–teacher aide, to be present to meet the ratio). Additional adults may be staff members or other adults who function in a different role.

G. Missing Child

- If a child has been identified as missing. Do the following:
- Search the immediate vicinity without leaving other children at risk.
- Call 911. The following information should be conveyed: Child's name, gender, age, hair and eye color, what they were wearing, the area you are in, what happened.
- Follow the instructions of the emergency personnel.
- Call the parents to inform them of the situation.

Within 24 hours complete:

- State of Alaska Injury/Illness/Incident/ Form) and submit to Child Care Licensing.

Within 72 hours complete:

- NAEYC 72-Hour Notification Form and submit to NAEYC.

H. In the event of a mass casualty or emergency crisis event, ratios can be exceeded to accommodate children for emergency recall staff at FMH/TVC/DC as well as emergency personnel from the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the City of Fairbanks.

V. Procedural Documentation:

Mass Casualty

A. In the event of a mass casualty or emergency crisis event, follow Foundation Health Mass Casualty Protocol. Access Emergency Protocol for you site. Complete all needed documentation.
B. Inform State of Alaska Child Care licensing of the protocol variation in ratios.

Missing Child

Within 24 hours complete:

- State of Alaska Injury/Illness/Incident/ Form) and submit to Child Care Licensing.

Within 72 hours complete:

- NAEYC 72-Hour Notification Form and submit to NAEYC.

VI. Additional Information:

A. See NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria for additional information.

VII. References:

A. NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria 3.C.02, 03, 04, 10.B.11, 10.B.12,

VIII. Other Related Policies/ Procedures:

A. N/A

IX. Keywords and Keyword Phrases:

A. N/A

X. Appendix:

A. N/A