



Family Handbook

WELCOME

Dear Family,

We are excited that you are considering our Early Education Program for your child. The beginning of wonderful Early Childhood starts in our infant room. Our Toddler room offers a nurturing environment that provides the structure that allows the students to grow and learn while feeling safe and comfortable. Our Preschool room is always preparing young minds for kindergarten which is the primary goal of the teachers as they encourage verbal skills, teach self-help skills and promote self-assurance.

No matter what classroom your child is in our program, we offer a nurturing environment that is meant to feel like home. Children spend a lot of time in their childcare program and it is essential that we become part of your family as we help raise the Next Generation of children together.

Thank you for considering Next Generation. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Best Wishes,

Sara LeBlanc

Sara LeBlanc
Owner/Business Manager

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About Us

Philosophy

Our philosophy blends a mix of teaching pedagogies. We are a blend of Reggio, Montessori, Waldorf and our own Discovery-based learning in the natural world. Through building relationships, observation, and conversation, we adjust our curriculum to meet the individual needs of each child. We offer a home-like environment for all children to thrive where they have the opportunity to discover and learn. These opportunities allow each child to build strong, positive relationships with adults and other children around him/her. We work towards developing positive self-concepts by creating an atmosphere geared to successful experiences. We like to promote children's character development by teaching and demonstrating to children the values of caring. It is our goal to provide quality, professional, nurturing childcare. We respect and recognize that there are individual differences among children. Teachers will focus on the strengths of each child while facilitating the successful development of the whole child. All children will be cared for at the fullest capacity of the caregivers. Children will be allowed to grow and explore at their own pace with the guidance of professional and compassionate caregivers.

Mission

Encouraging developmental growth in a natural environment.

Definition of Family

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

Hours of Operation

Regular operating hours are 7:30 AM-4:30 PM except for closings for various holidays, and inclement weather as described in the Family Handbook. Please consult the current calendar for the holidays. There is no reduction in tuition as a result of center closures.

The procedure to notify families should severe weather or other conditions prevent the program from opening on time or at all will be announced on the radio/TV as mentioned in the handbook. If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or someone listed in the Emergency Contact and Release, and it will be your responsibility to arrange for your child's early pick-up.

Holidays/Celebrations

In observance of various holidays, professional development days and parent-teacher conferences we will be closed on certain days. Please refer to our [Calendar](#) page on the website for all closings and events.

Admission & Enrollment

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

An enrollment fee of \$25 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable and will be used to purchase your child's required nap items. We purchase the proper fitted bedding that goes with our cots and cribs. In addition to the registration fee, we require a two week deposit for your child. Deposits are non-refundable and we require a 2-week notice if you choose to withdraw your child for any reason – including moving out of town/state or choosing to go to another preschool/daycare including an EEE program, etc. Please provide as much notification and as soon as possible to the Pedagogista if you are planning any changes. If proper notification is given you can use your deposit towards your last week of care.

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

Our process for introducing children to our program is for you and your child to come and explore our program together. A partial day or week may be best to get your child used to the transition.

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

Inclusion

Next Generation believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage the full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs. If your child has an identified special need, please let us know.

Non-Discrimination

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

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff is hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. We aim for higher qualifications. You can see staff qualifications and Bios on our website and on our meet the Staff section on the entryway bulletin board. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Teacher	At a minimum an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education- preference will be a Bachelors	2 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Child Development Associate Credential	1 year
Trainee	In a Human Services Program or other Training	0+

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training at a minimum of 15 hours of professional development a year in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

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

Child to Staff Ratios

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

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Maximum Group Size	Staff/Child Ratio
Birth – 18 months	8	1:4
18 months – 30 months	10	1:4
24 months – 36 months	10	1:5
32 months – 42 months	15	1:6
36 months – Kindergarten	20	1:10
1 st grade and up	26	1:13

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Our newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are posted on the center bulletin Boards and sent home at a minimum monthly.

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

Parent Resources We will share parent resources as we receive them. We also have various references in our main entrance for you.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children if you are not just dropping your child off. The sign-in will be with the Pedagogista.

Family Night. Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks, and fun-filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families. We will also offer families the opportunity to have a monthly date night. For an additional charge you can go out for an evening and we will provide care. This will be at the center but during our non-regulated hours.

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

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to the use of photographs.

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

Regulations

We adhere and follow all regulations set forth by the State of Vermont Child Development Division and a copy of the regulations listed below for you to reference as well there is a copy at each teacher stand in each classroom at our centers and on [our website](#). We follow the guidelines for Child Development as [listed here](#) with the State of Vermont Child Development Division Should you ever have any concerns or a complaint please reach out to the Pedagogista or Owner. We take all concerns seriously and will work with families together. If you need further assistance with any complaints please reach out to the Child Care Consumer Line at 1-800-649-2642. [REGULATIONS.pdf](#)

Lead Water Testing

The Health Department, [Agency of Natural Resources](#), and the [Agency of Education](#) led a joint pilot project from November 2017 to March 2018 to gather information about lead levels in the drinking water of Vermont schools.

The State of Vermont passed a new law in 2019 that requires all schools and child care providers to test their drinking water for lead. Samples of water from every tap at our schools that is reasonably expected to be used for drinking or cooking were collected and sent to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory for analysis.

Results for Next Generation Northern Campus & Georgia's Next Generation - Updated December 16, 2019:

- **All the taps sampled had results BELOW the 4 part per billion (ppb) action level.**
- **No further action is currently necessary. The drinking water can continue to be used.**

Lead exposure poses a special risk to children because they absorb lead into their systems more easily than adults do. Lead can slow down growth, impair development and learning, and can cause behavior problems. While the major source of lead poisoning in Vermont children is paint, lead in plumbing pipes and fixtures can add to a person's overall exposure. Drinking water in schools and homes may contain lead from old pipes, plumbing fixtures (such as fountains and faucets), or the solder that joins pipe sections together.

More Information

- For questions about the water testing process, or about the law and its requirements, please dial 2-1-1.
- You can view school and child care results, remediation and any follow-up testing at leadresults.vermont.gov. (NOTE: If your child's preschool or after school program is located at a school, the results will be listed under the school's name.) For more information visit:
 - Schools: healthvermont.gov/school-drinking-water
 - Child Care Programs: healthvermont.gov/childcare-drinking-water
- If you have questions or concerns about our facility and the actions we are taking, please contact Kate Driver (kdriver@nextgenerationvt.com).

To learn more about lead hazards and lead poisoning prevention, visit healthvermont.gov/lead.

If you want to test your home drinking water for lead, contact the Health Department Laboratory to order a \$12 first draw lead test kit. Call 802-338-4736 or 800-660-9997 (toll free in Vermont).

Curricula & Learning

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Our PLAY and NATURE BASED curriculum will promote:

Our PLAY and NATURE BASED curriculum will provide:

Social and Emotional skills	Individual, Small Group, and Large Group activities
Positive self-concepts	Many opportunities for success through open-ended activities
Language and literacy	An environment of respect for individual and cultural diversity
Physical development in both indoor and outdoor setting	Opportunities for children to solve problems, initiate activities, experiment and gain mastery through learning by doing
Sound health, safety, and nutritional practices	Many opportunities to learn through their Natural environment
Creative expression and appreciation for the arts	Indoor and outdoor creative expression

Curricula & Assessment

Next Generation uses developmental checklists from the American Academy of Pediatrics and we conduct weekly observations. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are

doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best-individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom.

Developmental Screening

To coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct at a minimum of 30 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package. We have an outdoor classroom/Gazebo that allows us to get out even when it's raining. Fresh air is important!

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of childcare programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the childcare program as well as during field trips. Proper insurance according to the state licensing regulations must also be acquired.

Transitions

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

The transition from home to the center

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

The transition between learning programs

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

Transition to elementary school

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

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a video without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child with a positive experience with an increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 15 minutes per week per child.

There will be no screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

Multiculturalism

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

Celebrations

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

Rest Time/Sleep Policy

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants every

After lunch, all children less than 5 years of age, participate in quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Guidance

General Procedure

Next Generation is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

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

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Next Generation has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show

them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero-tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Pedagogista of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as it is necessary for control of the situation.

Transitions

- The program pedagogista will work with parents to create and utilize a positive transition plan when admitting a new child into Next Generation. This will involve such procedures as the exchange of pertinent information concerning the child, phased-entry to the program, and the assignment to a group of children and a staff member or team.
- The program pedagogista will create and utilize a positive transition plan with the introduction of a new staff member and will ensure that parents are notified.
- The program pedagogista and staff will ensure that a positive transition plan is created and utilized with parental knowledge and support when a child is moved from one (1) group or room to another group or room.
- Next Generation supports continuity of care and education. In the event that a child's continued enrollment is at risk, the following shall apply:
 1. The program pedagogista shall consult with the child's parent(s) and professionals, as appropriate, to develop and implement a plan to address concerns, with the goal of continuing the child's enrollment.
 2. In the event that the concerns cannot be resolved, written notice to the child's parent(s) is required with at least five (5) days' notice prior to expulsion.

Tuition and Fees

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due by 9:00 AM on the Monday for the current week, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee is due prior to enrollment.

Late Payment Charges

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

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$15 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date. Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

If payment is more than 5 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$35. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Additional charges will be incurred for each repeated late pick up.

Special Activity Fees

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

Additional Fees/ Credits

A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$25 is due one time upon enrollment. We will use these funds to purchase blankets, sheets for your child for nap time. We choose to purchase these so we can ensure they fit our cots and cribs snugly.

Credits & No Credits

- **No Credit will be given for Absences**
- **No Credit be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits for sick days.
- **No Credit be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, you are still responsible for payment if you attend that day.

Attendance & Withdrawal

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 8:45 AM, please call us. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Vacation

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

Withdrawal

A written three-week notice, 3 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in us filing in small claims court if the 3 weeks is not paid before departure.

Transfer of Records

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

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

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on local school closing lists. More information will be shared before the winter months.

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

Drop-off and Pick-up

General Procedure

We open at 7:30 am. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in and wash their hands.

Our day starts at 9:00 am and we ask that all children be in attendance by 9:00 am. We understand there will be occasional appointments that will require a later drop-off. If you do have a rare appointment then we will need to be notified in advance of the day that your child will need an alternative drop off time. If your child is not in attendance by 9:00 am then they cannot attend that day.

We close at 4:30 pm. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

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

In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court-ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Child Release

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

Personal Belongings

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated. You may leave a full package of diapers, and two bottles at the center if that helps.

- **Toddlers:** enough clean bottles for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated. You may leave a full package of diapers, and two bottles at the center if that helps.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program.
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks, and shoes.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located by the front door where you remove shoes. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center. This is for the following reasons:

- Toys from home carry different scents and germs that we want to keep out of the schools
- Toys can get lost or damaged at school
- We are working on sharing the materials at school, and sometimes with toys from home children are less likely to want to share, which ends up causing problems.

Please help us by having your child leave these special items at home

Nutrition

Foods Brought from Home for Individual Consumption

Daily meals must be provided by each family.

- Meals must be in a sealed, labeled lunchbox. If you need a lunch box they can be found locally at Walmart, Tj Maxx, LL Bean, Target, Hannaford, etc.
- We **CANNOT** heat up meals (even in the microwave!). Warm meals should be kept in a thermos.
- Lunch boxes will not be put into a fridge. Per licensing they **MUST** have 2 ice packs

- Upon arrival, you will put your child's morning and afternoon snacks in the corresponding labeled bin in your child's classroom. Snacks MUST be labeled with your child's name.

Foods Brought from Home to Share

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, do not require refrigeration and were made with freshly purchased ingredients. A list of ingredients is required, and there must be enough food for all children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.
- Please provide your child a balanced, nutritional Lunch if you choose to not have your child eat what we provide. If you need suggestions please let us know. We are happy to help!


Birthday Parties- You may provide a special treat for your child's class in celebration of his or her birthday. Please be sure to discuss this option in advance with your child's teacher and also be considerate of children who may have food allergies in the class. We respectfully ask you to honor the following recommendations for birthday parties that occur after school hours. Please do not distribute birthday invitations at school unless all of the children in your child's class are invited. Please keep in mind that it can be very painful for a child to discover that she or he is not invited to a birthday party, even if the two children do not seem to be close friends.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips (crackers) Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Whole Wheat Macaroni & Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk

Morning and Afternoon Snack Provided by Next Generation

Next Generation will provide a morning and an afternoon snack for children every day of the week. The snacks will be on the rotating schedule below. The fresh fruit and vegetables will vary based on seasonal availability. Morning and afternoon snacks will be served with milk.

Rotating Snack Calendar

 Next Generation	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Cereal in Milk with Fresh Fruit	Fruit Bars with Fresh Fruit	Yogurt with Fresh Fruit or granola	Rice cakes with Sunbutter Or PB crackers	Cereal in milk and Fresh Fruit
Snack	Animal crackers with a Fruit or Vegetable or pb.	Pretzels with a Fruit or Vegetable (or PB) Infants: cereal	Graham Crackers and applesauce	Goldfish with a Fruit or Vegetable	Cheese stick and fresh fruit or veg

Food Prepared for or at the Center

For special occasions, snacks prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program

(<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually. If your child takes medication for an allergy, please read the Medication section. If your child has a food allergy, please leave some food items that can be stored in our freezer to be served to your child in the event of a birthday or other celebration.

Food allergies can be life-threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. Some children experience life-threatening allergies to food. Most notable are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, and wheat. Please check with your child's classroom teacher or Pedagogista if you have any questions.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to days.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after consultation with the child’s family.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

Health

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every year, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical also known as a well-child exam check-up should be received before enrollment. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child within 45 minutes if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- An illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- An illness that results in a greater need for care than we can provide.
- An illness that poses a risk of the spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever of 100.4 degrees
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all live bugs are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after the onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.

- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Here is a link to the [VT child care regulations](#) Appendix A, page 114. Appendix A is a chart that outlines various illnesses policies. Next Generation staff uses this chart to assess whether a child can remain in care or needs to go home. The chart is a great resource to determine if your child should attend school. A copy of this chart is posted on the bulletin board in each classroom, as well as the Child Care Licensing Regulations book can be found at each teacher stand.

Allergy Prevention

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

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed. The first dose of ALL prescription medications must be conducted by the parents to make sure no adverse reactions.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's parent. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received. If your child needs cough or cold medicine your child should remain home. We are only willing to administer Tylenol in the event your child had shots etc.

Non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by the parent, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

Communicable Diseases

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

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

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

Safety

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever the weather permits.

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

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Weather Guidelines for Children

Watching the weather is part of a child care provider's job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? **Clothe** children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). **Beverages** help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. **Sunscreen** may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. **Shaded** play areas protect children from the sun.

Condition GREEN - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

YOUNG CHILDREN remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.

Condition YELLOW - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play. YOUNG CHILDREN may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child. OLDER CHILDREN need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.

Condition RED - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk. INFANTS/TODDLERS should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play. YOUNG CHILDREN may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions. OLDER CHILDREN may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

Blizzard Warning: There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately.

Heat Index Warning: How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

Relative Humidity: The percent of moisture in the air.

Temperature: The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

Wind: The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

Wind Chill Warning: There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

Winter Weather Advisory: Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease. Handwashing is always enforced after leaving the sensory table.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

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

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

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

Respectful Behavior

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

Smoking

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

Prohibited Substances

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

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

Dangerous Weapons

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

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

Child Custody

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

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Emergencies

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 3 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with Fire Extinguishers that are checked annually.

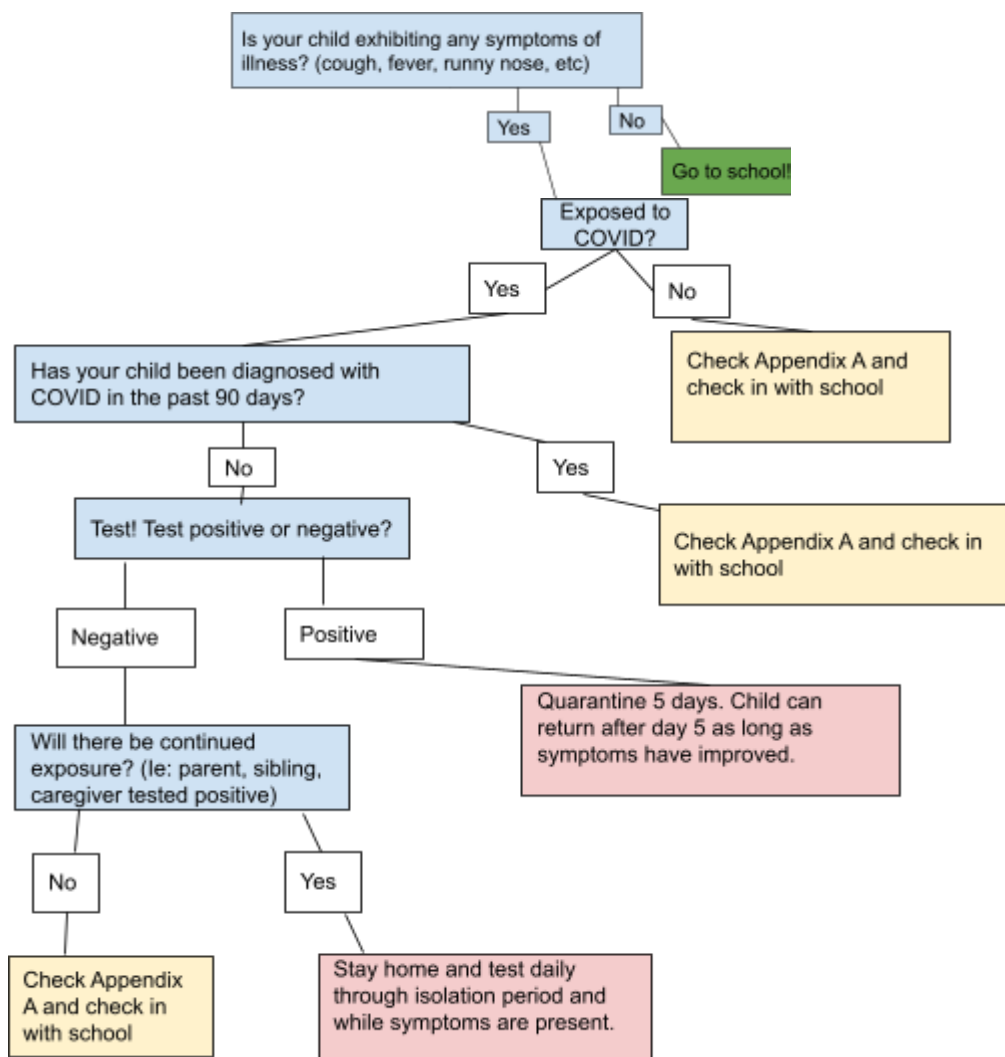
Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a basis. We conduct monthly fire drills and they are posted on the bulletin board in our entryway.

Emergency Transportation

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

Appendix A

PLEASE USE THE BELOW FLOW CHART TO DETERMINE IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO STAY HOME/WAIT FOR SYMPTOMS TO IMPROVE OR IF YOU NEED TO TEST. We follow the [VT child care regulations](#) Appendix A, page 114 to make decisions on illness while in care OR to make the decision if they can return if testing negative OR if further COVID information is presenting itself in the classroom, school or at home. Just because a child tests negative for COVID does not mean they are not contagious with another excludable illness.



Please let us know if you need testing kits for your child. We just ordered more from the State today! We anticipate we can get them out within a week or two!

The individual may return to the childcare program once symptoms are resolved, and they have been without a fever or fever reducing medicine for 24 hours (this is the current infectious disease protocol in child care licensing regulations). Preference is they have negative test results on two antigen take home tests as close to 24 hours apart as possible.

Newly Symptomatic Children:

- Depending on the situation, children under the age of two years may be sent home (we will take into consideration current COVID cases, exposures, etc). It is recommended the child undergoes COVID-19 PCR testing. Their parent or guardian should contact their medical provider or go to a state run testing site to obtain the PCR test for the child. A negative PCR test is recommended but not required.

- o If they test negative or do not test, the child may return when their symptoms have improved and in accordance with childcare licensing regulations.

- o If the child under the age of 2 has had COVID within the last 90 days, PCR testing is not recommended. Encourage family to consult with healthcare provider and return to care when symptoms are improved and in accordance with childcare licensing regulations

- If a child over the age of two years meets exclusion criteria as found in childcare licensing regulations, the program will do their best to provide rapid tests if available. Depending on symptoms, the child should wear a mask to the best of their ability while awaiting pickup from childcare. It is recommended but not required they test. They may return when their symptoms have improved and in accordance with childcare licensing regulations.

- If a child over the age of two has mild symptoms prior to arriving at care, and their family has access to a LAMP (rapid) test, they are allowed in care that day as long as they obtain a negative LAMP test result. To access LAMP testing, individuals can make an appointment at a State of Vermont testing site to obtain one LAMP test per appointment for their use at home.

Return to Childcare after COVID-19 Infection:

- Children may return to childcare after their 5 days of isolation if their symptoms have improved and they have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Return to Childcare after a non-COVID-19 Illness:

- A child may return to childcare if their symptoms have improved and in accordance with childcare licensing regulations.



Family Handbook Acknowledgement

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

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

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Next Generation Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Next Generation** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Next Generation Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date