



Sandwich Children's Center Family Handbook 2025-2026



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History

Sandwich Children's Center (SCC) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that was founded in 1985 to fill a growing need for quality childcare in Sandwich and the surrounding communities. Since its founding, SCC has been located at 54 Maple in the former Center School, surrounded by beautiful woods and trails and within walking distance of Sandwich Central School, the library, the post office, the fairgrounds, and other town businesses.

Mission

Sandwich Children's Center fosters the development of the whole child and nurtures their curiosity for learning about themselves, the natural world, and the communities around them.

Vision

To encourage the development of compassionate, curious, and resilient children who become socially responsible citizens of their communities.

Philosophy

*"We believe that nature is more than a playground. It is an endless, boundless space that encourages discovery, invites exploration, and invokes curiosity." -
Unearthing Joy*

Teaching practices in a nature-based preschool reflect established best practices in early childhood and environmental education, with an emphasis on play-based learning. In a nature preschool, teachers create a caring, stimulating, and safe environment in which every child is regarded as a valuable, unique, and capable contributor to the learning community. Teachers provide daily opportunities for extensive outdoor play and learning, during which teachers and children are co-learners. This kind of supportive environment creates conditions where children feel confident enough to take cognitive, physical, emotional, or other types of risks as they mature across all of the developmental domains and build a foundation for environmental literacy.

- Natural Start Alliance, North American Association for Environmental Education

Licensing & Accreditation

SCC is fully licensed by the state of New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services to serve children ages 18 months through 10 years.

Admissions & Enrollment

SCC has three mixed-age classrooms: Spruce (1-3 years), Maple (3-5 years), and Aspen After School (5-10 years). There are two enrollment periods, one for school-year programs (September-June) and one for summer camp programs (July-August). SCC's school year program closely follows the Interlakes School District calendar. Our summer program offers 10 weeks of camp including a full day program for school age children.

SCHOOL YEAR

Children attend 2, 3, 4, or 5 days a week

- 2 days/week: Tuesday/Thursday
- 3 days/week: Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- 4 days/week: One day off, based on availability
- 5 days/week: Monday-Friday

Full-day program hours: 8:00am-5:00pm

School age program hours: 2:35pm-5:00pm

School age students take the bus from Sandwich Central School and are dropped off at Sandwich Children's Center at 2:35pm.

Fall program hours: 8:00am-5:00pm

Summer program hours: 8:00am-4:00pm

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

1. Interested families visit SCC for a tour and meeting with the Director
2. Families complete a registration form
3. Upon acceptance, families complete enrollment forms, provide documentation of a physical, sign a contract, and pay a deposit

SCC maintains a wait list for interested families when classrooms are fully enrolled.

Tuition Policy

SCHOOL YEAR

Families sign a contract for the year and may choose to pay in full for the year or in 12 monthly installments. Families choosing to pay in 12 installments will be invoiced monthly with payment due on the first day of the month. Tuition must be paid for all contracted time regardless of attendance. Tuition refunds or credits are not given for absences and closings. If an account is overdue (28+ days) the child(ren) will be unable to attend SCC and may not return until the account is paid in full. During this time period, the child(ren)'s spot may be filled. SCC reserves the right to apply deposits to unpaid tuition bills. Tuition may be paid by check or online. Online payments incur a fee to cover the cost of this service.

Financial Support

State aid support is available through NH State Scholarship. Families can apply at www.NHEasy.gov. If families receive scholarship assistance from the state, they are required to pay the cost share determined by the state. In the event of an absence or closing, the family must pay in full for the day as required by the state. The state does not pay for missed days. DHHS may have information about tuition assistance for absences due to qualified reasons.

SCC offers financial support to families thanks to the generosity of donors and grant programs. Families apply for support at the time of application to the program. Financial support applications are reviewed and determined for enrollment periods (school year and summer camp).

DISCOUNTS

A discount is offered to families enrolling two or more children full-time (5 full days a week). A 15% discount will be applied to the tuition of the oldest child.

WITHDRAWAL

A four week written notice is required to withdraw your child from any program. Withdrawals within the contract period will result in a forfeiture of the deposit for that enrollment period. Written notification must be submitted to the director.

CANCELLATION OF ENROLLMENT

The primary goal of SCC is to provide a nurturing learning environment for children. To ensure the program is beneficial to all involved, SCC reserves the right to determine whether continued use of our services is in the best interest of all concerned. Situations that may result in canceling a child's enrollment include, but are not limited to:

- Children who have outgrown our program and need one geared for older children
- Children whose behavior is extreme and disruptive to the program or endangers the child or others
- Children who require one-to-one attention or intervention by teachers on a continuous long-term basis
- Families who fail to comply with the SCC policies as described in the Parent Handbook and enrollment contract, including failure to pay tuition and excessive late pick-ups.
- Parents whose behavior causes disruption, distress, or endangerment. An example is verbal or physical abuse, intoxication, threats toward children or adults, or boisterous actions which reflect an insensitivity to classroom conditions. Such behavior may result in termination of enrollment as well as formal action with the appropriate authorities.

An attempt at documentation of any situation determined by the administration to be causing problems may occur, and a conference may be scheduled to discuss the situation and set up a course of action with a timetable for resolution. However, an emergency situation may create the need for immediate action, with or without documentation and conference.

Schedules & Attendance

"Children, more than ever, need opportunities to be in their bodies in the world - jumping rope, bicycling, stream hopping and fort building. It's this engagement between limbs of the body and bones of the earth where true balance and centeredness emerge." -
David Sobel



ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and on-time arrival are important for children and our program. Children arriving late often have a hard time integrating into the group and late arrivals can also be disruptive to the rest of the class. **Children are not to be dropped off between the hours of 11am-2:30pm, as not to interrupt rest time.** If you have an appointment or other change in your schedule that necessitates a late arrival or early pick up, please check in with the director.

Prompt pick up is important as teachers must begin their end of day responsibilities including classroom clean up and preparation and planning. Because the impact of late pickups is very disruptive, the following policy applies. A warning will be given for the first late arrival. After that, families arriving late to pick up their child will be charged a late fee of \$10 per child. An additional fee of \$5 per child for every 5 minutes that pickup is delayed beyond fifteen minutes will be applied.

Children will only be released to people authorized on the child's registration form. If an authorized person other than a known parent/guardian is picking up, that person may be asked for legal identification. **Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 16 or to anyone not listed as an authorized pick up.** SCC reserves the right to determine that all authorized pick-up persons are acting in a responsible and safe manner.

If a child is not picked up by closing time and we have not heard from a parent/guardian, emergency contacts listed on the registration form will be contacted immediately. If authorized emergency contacts are unable to be reached and it is 30 minutes past closing, the local police will be contacted.

Please let us know if your child will be absent, late, or picked up early so that teachers can plan accordingly.

SCHEDULE

SAMPLE TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE

8:00- 8:45 : Families arrive, check in with teachers, self-directed play for children

8:45- 9:20: Morning snack

9:20-11:00: Self-directed play with emergent curriculum (indoors and outdoors)

11:30-12:00: Lunch

12:00-2:30: Rest then self-directed play

2:30-3:00: Afternoon snack

3:30-5:00: Outside play

SAMPLE PRESCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

8:00am: Arrival

9:00am: Morning meeting & snack

10:00am: Explorations outdoors. Children move freely in the space, choosing activities that interest them. This time may also include hikes, walking field trips, special visitors, games, music, yoga, and small group time.

11:45pm: Lunch time

12:00-2:30pm: Quiet/Rest time

2:30-3:00pm: Snack and pack up for end of the day

3:00-4:30pm: Outdoor play time

4:15-5:00pm: Pick up

Outdoor times may change due to weather conditions. Children will be outside every day.

SAMPLE SCHOOL AGE SCHEDULE

2:40pm: Arrival

2:50-3:15pm: Snack and self-directed play, center activities offered

3:30-5:00pm: Outdoor time and pick up

DELAYED OPENINGS & CLOSINGS

SCC does not operate when weather and driving conditions are unsafe for staff and children and their families. SCC will typically follow decisions made by Sandwich Central School/Interlakes School District with respect to weather related delays and cancellations. SCC will notify families through our text alert system and email.

Should SCC need to close for an emergency situation, SCC will notify families through the text alert system and email.

SCC will open at 10:00am in the event of a two hour delay.

SCC does not refund tuition for delays and closings.

Communication & Confidentiality

SCC teachers and staff and SCC families work together to support the children in our care. Open and regular communication is essential. The director sends a weekly email to all families with information and updates along with classroom newsletters with pictures from the week. Families are able to briefly check in with their child's teacher at drop off and pick up. Conversations that require more time and attention should be scheduled at a mutually convenient time either in person or by phone.

Access to a child's records is limited to the child's parents and/or legal guardians, the director, the child's teachers, state licensing examiners, and representatives from NH Division of Children, Youth, and Families as appropriate. Sharing

information with any other people or organizations requires the written consent of parents and guardians.

What to Wear at SCC

As a nature-based program committed to outdoor play and learning in all seasons, children of all ages spend time outside every day. Our staff are trained in nature-based education best practices and provide opportunities for children to explore our natural surroundings including the woods on site and the trails walking distance from SCC. Children engage in outdoor free play, guided activities, monthly programs with Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, and hikes.

CLOTHING & OUTDOOR GEAR

In order for children to fully participate in our program, they must come to school in appropriate clothing and outdoor gear for each season. We believe there's no such thing as bad weather as long as you have the right clothing. Knowing how to dress for different weather conditions is part of the learning and play that happens at SCC. Children should be dressed in clothing that allows freedom of movement and is easy to put on and take off including buttons, snaps, and zippers. We ask families to practice putting on clothing and outdoor gear with their children at home so that they can be as independent as possible while at SCC. Independence not only increases confidence but also smoothes transitions, especially for bathroom breaks.

Please make sure your child wears appropriate, safe, outdoor footwear that has a sturdy sole and closed toe. Sneakers, hiking shoes, and insulated boots in winter are all excellent options. Children must have a pair of indoor shoes that stay at school in their cubby to change into when in the classroom.

We understand that quality waterproof gear is expensive. And we know that quality gear can make all the difference in allowing kids to play comfortably outside in all weather. For those families that are able to purchase personal gear for their child(ren) SCC does an annual order with Oaki who provides our families wholesale pricing. Families who would like to order outside of this opportunity can request a code for our SCC online discount. If purchasing personal gear is cost prohibitive, SCC has an outdoor gear locker with one piece rain suits, waterproof rubber boots, and wool socks that are available for children to use while at SCC.

FALL & SPRING: Spare changes of clothes to stay at SCC, waterproof rubber boots, close-toed shoes, light gloves, rain jacket, rain pants, layers for chilly days (fleece, light jacket), hat

WINTER: Spare changes of clothes to stay at SCC, insulated snow boots, warm socks (wool is best!), snow jacket and snow pants (one piece suit strongly recommended for toddlers), 2 pair of waterproof mittens, hat and neck warmer, layers

SUMMER: spare change of clothes to stay at SCC, waterproof rubber boots, closed-toe shoes, rain jacket, hat

Please label everything your child wears and brings to school.

SUNSCREEN & BUG SPRAY

During warmer months, please apply bug spray and sunscreen to your child each morning before arriving at SCC and leave a bottle of each labeled with your child's name for staff to reapply as needed. Parents or guardians must sign a release allowing SCC staff to reapply family provided sunscreen and bug spray. SCC will not provide or share children's sprays or lotions. **Please do not send aerosol sprays.**

Food at SCC

Good nutrition plays an important role in children's physical, mental, and emotional health and behavior. We encourage families to pack balanced, healthy food for lunch and two snacks each day.

- Food should be packed in insulated containers with an ice pack. **If your child prefers their food warm, please send it in a thermos.** Teachers and children eat together at the table (and outdoors when we can!) and we cannot warm up food for children or prepare hot meals.
- To increase children's awareness of food choices and promote sound nutritional habits, families are encouraged to avoid overly processed and packaged food. **Please do not send desserts and sweets including candy, cookies, pudding, sugary drinks, etc.** Appendix B includes a list of snack and lunch ideas along with information on childhood nutrition from the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **Packing lunch and snacks in simple, reusable containers children can manage themselves** will help them learn to reduce trash and to be

independent at meals. It is helpful to practice opening containers at home with your child to support their independence at school.

Outdoors at SCC

COLD WEATHER

While we go outside everyday, we recognize that there are times when the weather becomes unsafe to do so. Wind chills and temperatures below 10 degrees can pose a danger to young children. Staff will use their discretion on extremely cold days to limit time outside as appropriate.

POISON IVY, TICKS, & INSECTS

We share the natural world with lots of interesting plants and animals, including ticks, mosquitoes, and poison ivy. We teach children about poison ivy, ticks, and bees and their important roles in a healthy ecosystem. SCC staff identify poison ivy in areas on site and educate and assist children in identifying it. Staff lead children through "spot checks" for ticks before and after outdoor activities. Please do a thorough check for ticks every day at home.

Field Trips & Special Events

SCC is located within walking distance of many locations in Center Sandwich including trails and parks. Upon enrollment, parents will be asked to sign a permission form consenting to walking field trips. When a group is off-site, there will be a notice by the front door so that parents are aware of their child's location at all times.

Health & Safety

FIRST AID

While children are supervised at all times and every precaution is taken to make sure their play is safe, minor scratches, bumps, and scrapes do occur. All staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. For minor injuries, staff will clean and cover the area if necessary and send home a note. In the case of serious injury, families will be notified immediately and 911 will be called if necessary. A teacher will stay with the child until a parent/guardian is available. Another authorized person listed on

your child's emergency contact form will be contacted if the parent/guardian is unavailable.

To respect the privacy of children and families, names of other children involved in any injuries will not be disclosed.

MEDICATIONS

Any prescription medication must be accompanied by an authorization form. These are available from the office. Medications must be in the original container with the child's name, date, and dosage instructions. Medication must be given to the teacher to be stored properly and securely. A blanket authorization may be given for any medications that are for allergy emergencies or an on-going condition. The medication and authorization must be updated as needed or every 6 months.

Due to the possibility of an allergic reaction, we will not administer the first dose of any medication. Non-prescription medications will not be administered unless accompanied by written instructions from a healthcare professional.

SICK POLICY

The SCC Sick Policy is written and updated by the Health Committee and covers a range of common illnesses and scenarios. The policy is included with this handbook and shared on our website.

FIRE DRILLS

SCC is required by the state to conduct monthly fire drills. If a drill includes activation of the alarm system, parents will be notified to facilitate any conversations that may come up at home.

EVACUATIONS

SCC has an Emergency Preparedness Plan available to review by request. This includes an evacuation process. The short-term evacuation site at our two local churches, the church on Church St. and the one on Main. The long term evacuation site is Sandwich Central School. In the event of an emergency that requires a town wide evacuation, the evacuation site is the Bearcamp Center for Sustainability located at 1164 Bunker Hill Road in Tamworth. In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, families will be notified through our text and call alert system with a notice including the pick up location.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All staff at SCC are required by NH state law to report any suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of children to the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth, and Families. SCC staff receive training on identifying potential abuse or neglect and consult with DCYF as needed. Records of reporting are confidential.

All forms of physical abuse, psychological abuse, and coercion are prohibited at all times and in all circumstances. Examples include:

- Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time
- Shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection.
- Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up)

Parking & Car Safety

Please do not leave any child unattended in a vehicle while picking up or dropping off.

New Hampshire state law requires that you turn off your ignition and take your keys out of your vehicle when you enter the building. In addition to being illegal, it is unsafe to leave a running vehicle unattended in close proximity to children. It is also unhealthy for children to breathe car exhaust while walking near parked vehicles.

NH RSA 265:72:I. No person driving or in charge of a vehicle shall permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key and effectively setting the brake thereon and, when standing upon any grade, turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the way, unless such vehicle has been started by remote control car starter. II. No person shall start a vehicle by remote control unless the doors of the vehicle are locked; the doors shall remain locked until the operator arrives at the vehicle.

The New Hampshire Child Passenger Safety Law requires that ALL CHILDREN under the age of 18 riding in a motor vehicle must be restrained and properly fastened in a safety build. Children under the age of 6 years and/or under the height of 55 inches, must be restrained and properly secured in an approved child passenger safety seat.

Safe School Notice

Sandwich Children's Center is a drug and weapon free safe school zone. We do not permit open and/or concealed carry of firearms on the premises. Firearms may not be stored, carried, or kept in the building or on the grounds, including in vehicles parked in our parking lot.

Sandwich Children's Center reserves the right to change policies as needed. Families will be notified in writing of any changes.

Appendix B: Nutrition Resources from the American Academy of Pediatrics

Fresh fruits

- Apples, bananas, peaches, nectarines, pears (thinly sliced for safety)
- Cherries, grapes, plums (sliced or smushed and pitted)
- Orange or grapefruit sections (cut into pieces)
- Strawberries

Dried fruits

- Apples, apricots, peaches, pears (cut up)
- Dates, prunes (pitted, cut up)
- Raisins or cranberries

Vegetables

- Carrots, green beans (well cooked, diced)
- Steamed cauliflower, broccoli
- Yams or sweet potatoes (cooked and diced)
- Peas (mashed for safety; a child can inhale whole peas)
- Steamed, pureed spinach or greens
- Avocado slices or small cubes

Dairy products

- Cheese (grated or diced)
- Cottage cheese
- Yogurt, fresh or frozen
- Milk, including non-dairy milk alternatives

Breads and cereals

- Whole wheat bread
- Whole grain tortilla, pita, or bagels cut into small pieces
- Crackers (graham, whole grain)
- Whole grain dry cereals
- Rice cakes (for older toddlers)

Lean proteins

- **Fish** (canned tuna, salmon, sardines, whitefish)
- **Peanut** butter or other nut butters (smooth, spread thinly on whole grain bread or crackers)
- Edamame beans or chickpeas (steamed or mashed) or hummus spreads
- Cooked tofu cubes or tofu dip
- Hard boiled eggs

Additional information can be found at:

<https://healthychildren.org/english/healthy-living/nutrition/pages/default.aspx>

Please feel free to contact Katie at director@sandwichchildrenscenter.org with any further questions! We are so glad to have your family joining our SCC community.