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| Parent Handbook  AppleTree Early Care & Education |
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Appletree Early Care & Education

1147 South Walnut street

Casper Wyoming 82601

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AppleTree Early Care & Education – Parent Handbook

**Tuition**

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Director

Wendee Webb

307-262-2031

Assistant Director

Kristi Merrell

Kmerrell78@gmail.com

**Tuition**

Tuition is billed in advance of service (before the first of the month), whether or not the child is in attendance. Accounts are billed and parents are notified around the 25th of the prior month. Electronic payments are automatically withdrawn on the last working day of the month unless other arrangements have been made with the administration. Balances will not be carried from month to month. There will be no refunds of tuition and there is a 2 week notice for termination of enrollment. Tuition allows for up to 10 hours per day. Anytime beyond that will be billed at an additional rate.

**Contract Calendars**

Contract Calendars are available on the 15th of the month. They must be completed and returned BEFORE the 25th, either in person or by email. The Contract Calendar must be received by the due date to ensure continuous enrollment. Services are provided only for the times contracted, otherwise additional fees are assessed.

State Subsidy families receiving assistance are also required to pay in advance. Upon enrollment a $200 payment will be required, and every 2 weeks thereafter until the authorization is received, then the account will be adjusted, as needed. If the authorization is not received within 45 days, full tuition will be due at that time. If authorizations lapse, full tuition will be billed. It is the responsibility of the parents to know when it expires and take the necessary steps to make sure paperwork is completed and turned into DFS on time.

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| **PROGRAM** | **AGE OF CHILD** | **FULL-DAY RATE** | **PART-DAY RATE** |
| **BIRTH TO THREE**  **YEARS** | Birth to 24 Months | **($1005/mo)**  Sibling ($975/mo) | $75/ day |
|  | 24 to 36 Months | **($940/mo)**  Sibling ($910/mo) | $75/ day |
| **PRESCHOOL** | 36 to 48 Months  and fully “potty-trained” | **($880/mo)**  Sibling ($850/mo) | $60/ day |
| *AM Preschool (9-Noon M-Th)* |  |  | $430/mo |
| **ENHANCED EARLY KINDERGARTEN** | 48 Months to start of Kindergarten  and fully “potty-trained” | **($880/mo)**  Sibling ($850/mo) | $60/day |
| *AM EEK (9-Noon M-Th)* |  |  | $430/mo |
| **SCHOOL AGE**  Before School Only) | Upon start of Kindergarten thru 13 years | $40/day  Out of school days | $8/day |

**Registration fee:**             **$100 per family**

**Holding/Reservation fee (hold place 30 days or reserve an infant spot):**               **50% monthly tuition**

*All registration/reservation/holding fees are separate and* ***non-refundable.*** *Fees are NOT credited against tuition charges.  Families who reserve a place, then choose to relinquish the place within a month prior to their child starting, are responsible for payment of one full month’s tuition even though their child may not ever attend.*

**Surcharge for above the actual contracted hours per day:                 $15 per child/30 minutes** *Parents are required to call and REQUEST changes as soon as possible to ensure adequate staffing.  DFS regulation compliance is mandatory, so ATLC cannot guarantee every request can be accommodated.****If there is no call, the surcharge doubles per child.***

**Transaction fees (if tuition payments are not processed electronically: $5/transaction**

**Late pickup fees (after the Center’s closing time of 5:30 pm):**   **$5 per minute/child, using the ATLC clock.**

**Late payment fees:  \_   $5/day**

*Payments for services are made in advance. Single monthly payments are due by 6PM on the first day of every month.  Semi-monthly payers: Payments due by 6PM on the first of every month and the 16th of every month.****Late payment fees are automatically applied to the account if not made by the dates payments are due.  Enrollment may be suspended if the account is more than 5days overdue, lasting until the account is no longer in arrears.***

**Attendance**

**Drop Off and Pick Up**

Upon enrollment, you will be able to download Procare Connect (our parent communication app) and this is what you will use to check your child(ren) in and out each day. Checking in and out is required to avoid discrepancies in attendance times and billing.

Each classroom has its own entrance and you will drop off our child according to which group they are in. Doors will be locked daily between 9 – 3:30. There is a doorbell on the primary door to be used during times the doors are locked. If there is no answer, please call the main number 237-1952 or text Wendee at 262-2031.

Only authorized people will be able to pick up children, they must be 18 years or older and present a photo I.D.

**Daily Attendance**

Notify school if your child will be absent, arriving after 9 a.m., or leaving early.

Children who have been ill must be home for a FULL 24 HRS after starting on antibiotics, having diarrhea, vomiting, or having a fever (that is Tylenol and Motrin free) and show NO signs of Illness before returning to school. (See Complete Illness Policy/Quick Guide of AppleTree).

**We must have a current phone number on file in order to contact parents as needed.**

**Communication**

Communication is the most important part of the relationship between family and school family in forming a successful partnership.

*Forms of communication*

* *Notes home*
* *Procare Connect App*
* *Call*
* *Text*
* *Email*
* *Facebook (AppleTree Page or Message)*
* *In Person*
* *Team Meeting*
* Incident Reports

If an incident occurs a member of the team will fill out a yellow “incident form”. The Director, Assistant Director, or Closing Supervisor are required to sign it, and a copy will be posted in the app. If the parent would like a hard copy to go home reply “copy”, otherwise reply “ok” and it will be filed.

* Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held in January for preschool and early kindergarten students. They will be scheduled prior to Kindergarten registration.

* Pictures/Documentation

Documentation is displayed in our each classroom to make learning visible to children and families.

* Teacher Availability

The Director and Assistant Director are the primary contacts for questions or concerns. Parents are encouraged to briefly talk with teachers at drop off and pick up (as their main focus is supervision and interaction with the children.) If more time is needed, a team meeting can be arranged or contact Director or Assistant Director.

**Celebrations**

* Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time. We would love to help you celebrate your child’s special day with a treat/surprise but please no sugary treats. Children would love fruits and vegetables just as much! And kids love pencils, crayons, and erasers too! Goodness, even those party trinkets and dental floss would excite them! Get creative and have fun with it! Share something your child loves other than cupcakes!

* Holiday Celebrations

Each classroom team will do developmentally appropriate holiday activities. Classes will send out a note about activities as each holiday arrives and put out a sign-up sheet if help is needed with easy, low cost supplies or snacks.

If your family does not celebrate, please let us know so alternate accommodations can be made.

* Christmas Program

AppleTree performs an annual Christmas program including all children from birth and older. Assistance with simple costumes may need to be provided by parents.

* Graduation

Graduation for preschool and early kindergarten will be held at the end of May or early June. Part of our graduation celebration includes children wearing caps and gowns. They will be purchased and fees will be assessed in May.

* Family Involvement

Parent Involvement is very important to bridge the family/school family relationship. AppleTree has scheduled events for parent participation but parents are welcome at any time.

General Policies

* **Arrival and Pick Up**

**\*\*\*PARENTS: PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING YOUR CELL PHONE WHILE ON CAMPUS**

Use appropriate entrance, check in using app, briefly speak with teacher and transition your child and leave for the day. At pick up: gather your child’s belongings (check mailbox and/or cubby), check out on app.

\*If you need assistance, please ask a member of the team

\*\*Please remember when you are here, all our school family rules apply, which include walking feet, not leaving the building/gate without an adult, and not touching computer/accessories as these are for adult use only.

* **Meals**

NO FRESH ORANGES AS MISS WENDEE IS SEVERLY ALLERGIC (Canned Mandarin Oranges are okay)

Breakfast is served daily until 8 am. Snacks are provided 2(+) times each day. Nutritious lunches need to be provided by parents each day. All lunches should be **LABELED** and placed on the top of the coat racks in the classroom. A sharpie is available on the sign in desk for your convenience. Lunches will be taken and kept in the refrigerator until lunch time. Heat ups are acceptable.

\*A menu is posted in each room and is available upon request.

\*\*Special diets – Parents need to provide alternate milk, snacks, lunches.

\*\*\* If a child has food allergies, it will be posted in the eating area as well as the kitchen. A written plan will also be implemented.

\*\*\*Infants – Parents need to provide all breastmilk or formula. AppleTree does have limited freezer space for breastmilk storage, it needs to be labeled with child’s name and date. Parents are also to provide any cereal and food. When new foods are introduced they must be recorded (you can send a note through the app). When table foods are introduced, a menu may be used to indicate which foods the infant may try. All foods must be introduced when developmentally appropriate. Infants will start to be weaned from their bottle at 1-year-old, or as requested by the parent and confirmed by physician. The process may take up to 3 months.

* Accommodations for Breastfeeding Moms

Recognizing that some mothers wish to breastfeed on site, the Garden Room has a private, relaxing place for mom and baby.

* **Charting**

Daily charting is completed by the Garden Room and Meadow Room teams for parents to view. Please download Procare Connect for access to your child’s digital charting.

* **Diapering/Potty Training**

Diapers are to be provided by the parents. Parents will be notified when diapers are getting low and it is their responsibility to bring in diapers as they are needed. Children are changed a minimum of 4/5 times per day, so plan accordingly.

Potty training is done on an individual basis, started when the child is ready and communicates in some way. AppleTree prefers to begin with underwear covered with plastic pants and extra changes of clothes -- in our experience, this is the most effective way. Children are encouraged to “try” every 15-30 mins, using positive reinforcement. Children are never forced, as it can a negative effect in reaching this milestone.

* **Diaper Cream and Sunscreen**

Parents must sign a permission form for the teacher to be able to apply diaper cream and sunscreen. Parents are required to provide diaper cream if their child is not yet potty trained. All parents are required to provide sunscreen for their child, as needed.

* **Medication Dispensation**

All children under the age of 3 must have a permission form filled out and signed by pharmacist or physician in order to administer any medication-- prescription or over the counter. The form must also be signed by parents. All medications must be in its original container which should include dosage amounts.

All children over the age of 3 must have a permission form signed by parents for over the counter medication and signed by a pharmacist or physician for prescription medication. All medication must be in its original container including dosage amounts.

* **Extra Clothes**

Infants and toddlers (2 years old and under) must have 2 full sets of clothes, labeled, to stay in their cubby. These clothes must be replaced when used and switched out seasonally. Preschool and early kindergarten children need to have 1 complete set of clothes (including socks and underwear) to stay in their cubby. They must be replaced when used and switched out seasonally.

* **Labeling**

Everything that comes to AppleTree **MUST** be labeled with your child’s name, whether it goes into the classroom bins or individual cubby. There is a sharpie at the sign in desk for your convenience.

* **Extras from home**

AppleTree has developmentally appropriate toy/manipulatives, books, etc., for your child to use. Parents do not need to provide these and they should be left at home or in the car. The exception to this is on special days in the classroom in which case you will receive notification. Preschool and Early Kindergarten will have show and tell on Wednesday, they may bring in something that day that is non-violent and fits in their backpack or cubby. AppleTree is not responsible for lost or broken items brought from home.

**AND PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL THEM!**

* **Confidentiality**

In order to provide the highest level of confidentiality. We do this for the protection of all children, families, and staff.

* **Nurturing Touch**

See attached form to be signed by parents at time of enrollment

* **Outside Risk-taking**

AppleTree provides climbing apparatuses and uneven play areas. Research has shown children benefit from participating in daily activities that encourage safe risk-taking behavior. Please be aware that we support and assist as needed but scrapes, bumps, and bruises are inevitable. (See incident forms)

* **Appropriate Dress**

ALL CLASSROOMS go outside daily. It is the responsibility of the parents to bring appropriate clothing/outerwear for their child daily based on Wyoming weather. There are not extra staff to stay inside with children who didn’t bring a coat. All children are expected to go outside – please plan accordingly.

* **Special Needs**

AppleTree supports and accepts children of all races, gender, and ability levels.

\*Incorporated Support Services – AppleTree encourages and actively participates in on-site or off-site therapies. There is a special area set up where therapy can be provided, free from distraction. In forming a partnership with families, our administrators may also attend IEP meetings, as needed.

\*If a child with special health care needs in enrolled, a written plan will be implemented.

* **Summer Program**

AppleTree’s summer program will commence the week after school gets out and continue until school begins. “Summer rules and responsibilities newsletter” will be available at the beginning of summer for activities and expectations.

* **Lock Down**

As a safety precaution all entrances will be locked between 9am and 3:30pm daily. You may knock or ring the doorbell to gain admittance if you are here between those hours.

AppleTree is notified by Natrona County School District when public schools in the area are in emergency lock down, AppleTree then takes extra precautions to ensure safety of all children in attendance.

* **Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures**

All children and staff practice fire drills each month. Our meeting place is at the southeast corner of the playground. We encourage all children to wear indoor shoes, as we practice all year long, even in inclement weather.

AppleTree receives notification from “Code Red”, which is any weather related emergency notifications, and extra precaution is taken.

During times of severe weather, you may be contacted, via text or phone call, to pick up your child early to provide the opportunity to travel more safely. Generally when Natrona County Schools close for a snow day, AppleTree will also close and you should receive a notification text.

* **Immunizations**

Under the Law of the State of Wyoming (W.S. 14-4-116, W.S. 35-4-101 and W.S. 21-4-309), children are required to be properly immunized against vaccine preventable disease as designated by the State Health Officer. Upon enrollment, a copy of immunization records is obtained and reviewed for compliance. Children may be conditionally enrolled for 30 calendar days to allow enough time to meet compliance. If the requirements are not met, attendance can be denied.

We do not accept child waivers of immunizations. All children enrolled must be current in their immunizations.

AppleTree retains all immunization records on site. Immunization records may be inspected by the County Health Officer. The Director is responsible for compliance of all immunization regulations.

* **Complaints and Concerns**

Any complaints and/or concerns should be immediately brought to the attention of the Director or Assistant Director via text, phone call, email, or in person.

If the concerns are not handled appropriately, the parent always has the right to contact the local licensing office or childcare licensor.

If child abuse or neglect is suspected, local law enforcement or Department of Family Services (DFS) should be contacted.

Inspection reports and records regarding AppleTree are maintained by DFS. Inspection reports are available for review online at https://findchildcare.org. All reports relating to child abuse or neglect investigations or complaints are confidential and unavailable for public inspection.

* **Behavior & Guidance**

AppleTree focuses first on establishing positive relationships with the children. Using Conscious Discipline, we practice prevention techniques, observation, redirection, and communication to promote positive behaviors in the classroom on a consistent and regular basis. Communication and cooperation with parents and families is VITAL to social/emotional success.

* **Suspension/Expulsion Policy**

AppleTree promotes positive social and emotional growth and includes age appropriate behavior supports.  This practice enables us to offer the most proactive and supportive environment for children.  The teachers make every effort to help children interact in a positive and safe manner.  If behaviors are a continuous concern the following guidelines will be observed

\*Share with parents behavioral concerns and what steps teachers and directors are taking to help the child be more successful

\*Share with parents in writing behavioral concerns and steps we are taking within our program to help the child.

\*Schedule a conference with parent/guardian to discuss steps implemented and local services available to develop a plan for next steps.

\*If a child needs more support than what AppleTree can provide, we will discuss with parent/guardian terms for what needs to happen for the child to continue enrollment with the proper resources and supports in place.

* . **Field Trip Policy**

It is VITAL that all children attending AppleTree listen to and follow the directions of any teacher, parent, assistant, adult, tour guide or instructor. If it is determined that a child does not listen or follow the rules, or if they exhibit inappropriate behaviors, endangering themselves or other children or damaging property, they will NOT be allowed to continue to participate in the activity. The parent will be advised of the policy and requested to explain it to the child. When a field trip is planned, the teacher will write a plan for all volunteers to know who and where to supervise. Only fully qualified staff will be responsible for the children and at no time will children be unaccompanied by any parent or staff member that is not fully qualified.

* **Animals and Pets Policy**

AppleTree’s preschool class has guinea pigs in the classroom, and has occasional visits from a emotional support dog. All of the animals must comply with Health and Sanitiation and vaccination requirements. Any animal with a history of attacking even one person or demonstrating aggressive behavior will be unable to stay or visit.

* **Firearms and Violence Prevention Policy**

AppleTree does not store any firearms on the premises. We collaborate with the community and include fire safety and our violence prevention program through the Self Help Center with Victor Orr who has been providing his program with us since 1996. Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution skills are taught to all children enrolled at the Center. Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited on AppleTree premises, except those that are with law enforcement.

No items that promote violence are allowed including, but not limited to Power Rangers, Star Wars, play swords, water pistols, toy guns and knives. Imaginary weapons, for example-laser guns, shall be put away and not used or the child will be asked to give them to the teacher or throw them in the trash.

AppleTree promotes safety, peace, tolerance and understanding as that is the optimum positive environment for learning.

Philosophy and Curriculum

**Positive Connections**

This curriculum was developed by Dianna and Wendee Webb. The goal is to lay the foundation for developing caring, responsible, well rounded children that have positive self-images. As Early childhood educators, the emphasis is on close human connections and the child’s social emotional development. The depth of the curriculum allows for development of the entire child with the following positive connection: self, parents and family, school family, nature and the world around them. Core components, including relationships, social emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, and family partnerships, developed for this program are embodied throughout every activity during the day. Day to day activities are engaging, developmentally appropriate, and meaningful to all involved and are based on each child as an individual.

**Reggio Emilia Influence**

Children must have some control over the direction of their learning.

Children must be able to learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, and observing.

Children have a relationship with other children and with material items in the world that children must be allowed to explore.

Children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

**Conscious Discipline**

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive emotional intelligence and classroom management system that integrates all domains of learning (social, emotional, physical, cultural, and cognitive) into one seamless curriculum. It evolves from constantly asking “Is there a better way,” and seeking the most current information provided by varied disciplines from neuroscience to mindfulness research to developmental psychology and beyond.

**Emergent Curriculum**

Emergent curriculum is a way of planning curriculum based on the student’s interests and passions as well as the teachers. Once the teachers see an interest “emerging” they brainstorm ways to study the topic in depth. Webbing is often used because of its playful and flexible nature. It doesn’t show everything that will be learned; it shows many things that could be learned. It’s more of a “road map” as opposed to a “specific plan.” Webbing gives you a road map full of possible journeys to explore.

**Enrichment Activities**

All classes have on site enrichment activities, including ‘Kindermusik” with VIBES. The cost for VIBES is $25/mo and will be billed accordingly. Preschool and Early Kindergarten classes have additional enrichment activities including “The Babes:Violence Prevention”, with Vic Orr from the Self Help Center.