



Natural Wonders
Early Learning Center

PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

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Welcome to Natural Wonders Early Learning Center

Welcome to the Natural Wonders Early Learning Center family! We are honored that you have chosen us to be a part of your child's early learning journey. We look forward to partnering with your family and creating a positive, nurturing experience for your child.

At Natural Wonders, we believe that children learn best through meaningful experiences, exploration, and play. Our program combines high-quality early childhood education with the beauty and wonder of nature, providing hands-on learning opportunities that inspire curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our goal is to provide a safe, supportive, and engaging environment where every child feels valued, respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential. We recognize that each child is unique and are committed to meeting their individual developmental, social, and emotional needs.

Strong partnerships with families are at the heart of our program. We believe open communication, mutual respect, and collaboration are essential to supporting children's success. We encourage families to stay involved, ask questions, and share in the milestones and accomplishments of their child's growth.

This Parent Handbook has been developed to provide important information about our policies, procedures, and programs. Please take time to review it carefully and keep it available for future reference. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, our administrative team is always available to assist you.

Thank you for placing your trust in Natural Wonders Early Learning Center. We are excited to learn, grow, and create lasting memories with your child.

Warm regards,

Rebecca Ward & Emily Maddox
Natural Wonders Early Learning Center

Mission Statement

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is dedicated to offering the highest quality learning and developmentally appropriate experience, while maintaining a nurturing, safe and supportive environment, through discovery and enriched opportunities.

Our program includes creative play, art, music, language, math, science, computer application and outdoor recreation. We also strive to have many special events such as guest speakers, career day, parent's day, cultural activities, community involvement, holiday celebrations and much more.

Philosophy

We believe that...

- Each child is unique and diverse with their own talents and strengths. We support and encourage diversity in all forms in our community.
- It is essential to provide a developmentally sound learning program to enhance the child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth.
- The introduction of languages and sign language is best achieved in early childhood.
- It is beneficial to provide opportunities to instill social etiquette and character development.
- We are dedicated to the care and well-being of the children with whom we are entrusted with.

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is a state licensed childcare facility that meets and exceeds the regulatory requirements established by the Virginia Department of Education, as well as the local fire and health departments.

The Daily Program

When children enter our facility, they are warmly greeted by their teacher and invited to explore a thoughtfully prepared environment filled with engaging learning activities and stimulating centers. These centers, designed to spark curiosity and foster creativity, change regularly, sometimes from week to week, day to day, and even hour to hour. Activities may include painting, working with clay or collage materials, playing musical instruments, building with blocks, reading books, engaging in imaginative play, and using play dough. We also enjoy storytime, outdoor exploration, gym games, science experiments, and so much more. Each day holds something new, exciting and meaningful.

Our classrooms offer a dynamic blend of variety and consistency. While new experiences are introduced regularly to inspire exploration, familiar elements remain to provide comfort, security and a sense of routine. Children are naturally motivated to engage because they know that there is always something interesting and developmentally appropriate available to discover.

Our dedicated teaching staff are always nearby to offer gentle guidance and support. Whether a child needs help navigating materials, resolving emotional challenges, or simply has a question, teachers are there to scaffold learning, pose thoughtful questions, and provide structure. Every interaction is tailored to meet each child's unique needs, interests, and developmental level, ensuring they feel safe, supported, and encouraged to grow.

We believe in the power of play as a vital part of early childhood development. While the environment may feel playful and relaxed, our work is grounded in intentional teaching aligned with the Virginia Early Learning & Developmental Standards. These goals guide us in fostering cognitive, emotional, social and physical growth.

Before children can engage in academic tasks like reading, they must first develop a deep understanding of the world around them. This begins through rich sensory and motor experiences, touching, smelling, hearing, seeing, and moving. These early sensory explorations help children build essential neural connections and interpret the world around them, laying the groundwork for future learning. Through dancing, crawling, jumping, imaginative role-play, and outdoor adventures, children develop strength, coordination, and a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Our program encourages children to observe, question, listen, and reflect. They gain awareness of their own emotions and learn healthy ways to express them. Children are empowered to make choices and understand the balance between freedom and responsibility, respecting others while expressing themselves authentically.

With an open-ended, child-centered approach, we aim to nurture each child's creativity, self-regulation, and intellectual potential, preparing them not only for school but for a lifelong love of learning.

Center Leadership & Communication Structure

At Natural Wonders, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and professionally managed environment for your child. To support this, our center follows an established structure of leadership and communication. This helps ensure smooth daily operations and makes it easy for families to know who to contact with questions or concerns.

Who's Who at Natural Wonders Early Learning Center:

- **Director- Rebecca Ward**

The Director oversees the entire program and is responsible for licensing compliance, staff supervision, curriculum development, and family engagement. If you have questions about policies, enrollment, or any significant concerns, the Director is your primary point of contact.

- **Assistant Director- Emily Maddox**

The Assistant Director works closely with the Director to support day-to-day operations, assist families, and guide staff. In the Director's absence, the Assistant Director assumes full responsibility for the center.

- **Lead Teachers**

Lead Teachers manage classroom planning and care, and serve as the main contact for day-to-day updates about your child. They guide classroom staff and ensure a positive and safe environment for learning.

- **Assistant Teachers & Aides**

These staff members support the Lead Teacher in daily routines, activities, and supervision. They play an important role in your child's care and learning experience.

- **Support Staff**

This includes floaters, kitchen, and custodial team members who help keep the center running smoothly behind the scenes.

- **GPS Board (Guardian & Parent Support)**

This is a group of guardians/ parents that meet monthly to help bring issues they may see to light and also help with special functions such as Breakfast with Santa, Trick or Treating, parades, work days, etc. We welcome all parents to attend the meetings. Notification of meeting will be sent through Lillio app.

We encourage open and respectful communication between families and our staff. If you ever have a concern, please start by speaking with your child's Lead Teacher. If the issue is not resolved or involves broader concerns, the Director or Assistant Director will be happy to assist.

Policies and Procedures

Registration:

A Registration fee of \$100 per child is due annually and is non-refundable. The annual registration fee is due at the time that registration forms are first submitted and then again on February 1st of each year.

Tuition:

Tuition is to be paid on Monday of each week. Unless prior arrangements are made, a late fee of \$25 will be enforced if payment is not received by Friday at close of business. There will be a \$25 charge for any returned checks and if more than two checks are returned, cash or cashier's check will only be accepted from that point forward.

The weekly tuition is based on a full time basis only. There are no discounts to weekly tuition rates due to child illness or center closings because of holidays or emergency weather closings.

Breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and late pick up snack are included in tuition.

Families with two or more full time children will receive a \$35 discount on the oldest child's tuition.

If an account becomes past due, child care services will be suspended until payment (including late fees) is made in full.

A tax statement of payments will be provided annually during February.

The tuition schedule is attached to the registration packet.

Subsidy Care:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center does work with the Department of Education. Family discounts do not apply to subsidy accounts. Parents are responsible for paying their copay set in place by the Department of Social Services by the end of every month. If this payment is not received at this time, care will be discontinued and Social Services will be notified of ended care due to the lack of payment.

At Natural Wonders Early Learning Center, attendance is recorded by checking your child in and out at the front desk using the 5-digit code that is emailed to you upon enrollment. Attendance is submitted to Virginia Child Care Subsidy through Kinderbridge.

Please be sure to check your child in and out each day using your assigned code. If attendance is not recorded, a \$25 administrative fee will be applied to cover the processing of paper attendance. If attendance is not approved or covered by the Department of Education, parents or guardians will be responsible for full tuition.

If you need help with the check-in process or need your code re-sent, our office staff is happy to assist you.

Drop-In Care:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center offers drop-in care on a limited basis for currently enrolled and approved families. Parents must notify Natural Wonders in advance if their child will be attending for drop-in care. All drop-in care requests are subject to classroom availability and staffing ratios.

An annual registration fee is required for all children utilizing drop-in care services. Drop-in care spots are limited and must be prearranged with the center. Natural Wonders reserves the right to refuse drop-in care services on any given day if space is unavailable or staffing requirements cannot be met.

Hours, Holidays, and Pick up:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:30pm. ***We observe and are closed for 10 holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.*** If a holiday falls on Saturday, we will observe it on Friday. Likewise, if it falls on Sunday, we will observe it on Monday.

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center will be closed for Staff Development Training on Juneteenth (June 19) and President's Day (February 12).

For the safety of your child, we ask that you carefully complete the application forms. Anyone authorized by you to pick up your child must be noted and identified to us. We will ask for identification. If a legal order involves custody of the child, please provide us with a copy of the order. If your child has not departed by 6:30pm, you will be charged an additional fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes that you are late. If your child is not picked up by 8:00pm, the Department of Social Services will be notified. If an emergency situation occurs and you are unable to pick up your child by closing, please communicate with the office staff regarding appropriate pick up or emergency contact will be notified.

Lillio (formerly Hi Mama):

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is equipped with an app-based system that allows for parents/ caregivers to communicate with the teachers/office staff and

vice versa. Parents may download an application on their smartphones that allows them to see their child's daily activities. Photos may be included in their reports. The office will set each child up in the application. From there the parents will receive an email to activate their account. If you have any problem registering your account please see the office and we will assist you with your account setup. We ask that you not repost class photos to your social media pages and that you keep information about those in the class confidential. Parents are required to confirm their child's absence through the Lillio app. This is especially important for school-age children who arrive by bus in the afternoon, so we can ensure their safety and account for all expected arrivals.

Attendance Policy:

To support a consistent routine and maintain a secure environment, Natural Wonders Early Learning Center encourages families that all children should arrive by 9:00 AM.

The front entry doors will be locked at 9:00 AM and will remain locked until 2:00 PM. Families arriving after 9:00 AM or before 2:00 PM must access the center through the office entrance.

Regular attendance is essential for your child's learning and development. If your child will be absent or arriving late, please notify us through the Lillio app as early as possible.

Emergency Closing:

We try really hard to be open so that our parents can go to work, but sometimes weather and other elements work against us. In the event that we feel the need to close the center you will receive an email through our Lillio Parent Communication System. The closure will also be posted on our Facebook page and WHSV online. If you have any questions, you can always email the director at naturalwonders.director@gmail.com or communicate with the director through Lillio.

Child Supervision, Attendance, and Safety Procedures:

At Natural Wonders, your child's safety and supervision are our top priorities. If your child arrives after scheduled activities have begun, please escort them directly to their classroom or activity area and check them in with a staff member so attendance can be updated in Lillio. For school-age children arriving from school, families are asked to mark their child's expected attendance in the Lillio app each day. If a child is expected but does not arrive, we will first send a message through the app. If no response is received within 10–15 minutes, the Director will call both the school and the parents to confirm the child's location. All communication will be documented to ensure safety.

To account for children throughout the day, staff use Lillio's virtual area tracking system and update children's locations when moving between spaces such as classrooms, the gym, cafeteria, library, or playgrounds. Children are counted before and after every transition to confirm attendance and location.

In the event of an emergency such as a missing child, illness, or injury, each classroom is equipped with an emergency button that immediately notifies management of the location. Staff remain with the children and continue supervision until management arrives and further procedures can be followed.

Families play an important role in helping us maintain safety. We ask that you use Lillio daily to update your child's attendance, notify us promptly of any schedule changes, and keep your contact information current so we can reach you quickly if needed. Together, we can ensure a safe and secure environment for every child at Natural Wonders Early Learning Center.

Arrival and Departure Policy:

For your child's safety, all children must be escorted into the building and signed in through the Lillio app each day. Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or individuals listed on the authorized pick-up form, and photo ID will be required if the individual is not familiar to staff. Authorized pick-up lists must be kept current and may be updated through Lillio or in writing.

The center closes promptly at 6:30pm. If a child is not picked up at closing, staff will first attempt to contact the parent/guardian, then call emergency contacts listed on the child's file. A late pick-up fee will apply as outlined in the Tuition and Fees Policy.

In the event of an emergency pick-up situation—such as a parent being unexpectedly delayed, unreachable, or unable to come to the center—it is the family's responsibility to ensure an authorized emergency contact is available and prepared to pick up the child. If no parent or emergency contact can be reached within one hour of closing, the Director is required to contact local authorities or Child Protective Services for assistance. A staff member will remain with the child until the child is safely released.

Safe Sleep/ SUIDS Prevention Policy:

In the belief that proactive steps can be taken to lower the risk of SUIDS in our setting and that parents and child care professionals can work together to keep babies

safe while they sleep, Natural Wonders Early Learning Center will practice the following safe sleep policy.

- All child care staff working in the infant department, or child care staff who may potentially work in this room, will receive training on Safe Sleep.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be placed on their backs to sleep; but when babies can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they can be allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer to sleep. We will follow this recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Sleeping infants will be checked periodically by staff.
- Steps will be taken to keep babies from becoming too warm or over heated by regulating the room temperature. Room temperature will be kept between 68-72° F.
- Children in our Nursery and Infant classrooms (children under 1 year of age) will NOT be permitted to have a blanket in the crib while sleeping.
- NO pillows, comforters, bumper pads, etc. will be used in cribs.
- NO toys or stuffed animals will be used in cribs.
- Pacifiers may be used in cribs. Pacifiers can NOT be attached to any form of lanyard or stuffed animal. Please label your child's pacifier with their name using a sharpie marker.
- A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used.
- Only one infant will be in a crib at a time, unless we are evacuating infants in an emergency.
- Infants will not be left in a rocker, high chair, swing or similar item to sleep.

Medications:

At Natural Wonders Early Learning Center, the health and safety of each child is our top priority. To ensure safety and compliance with state licensing standards, Natural Wonders follows these guidelines for administering medication:

- Authorization: Parents must complete an Administration of Medication Form. Only MAT-certified staff will administer medication.
- Prescription Medications: Must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name, dosage, and instructions. Administered only as labeled.
- Over-the-Counter Medications: Must follow manufacturer's instructions for age, dosage, and duration. If the label says "consult physician," a doctor's note is required.
 - Parental authorization is valid for 10 work days and must be renewed if

needed longer.

- Long-term use requires written consent from both the parent and physician.
- Storage & Expiration: Medications are kept in a locked or secure location and checked regularly. Expired or unused medication must be picked up within 5 days or will be discarded.
- Restrictions:
 - No medications will be stored “just in case.”
- Topical Medications:
 - Sunscreen and diaper cream require a Topical Medication Form renewed every 6 months.
 - Insect repellent may only be used in wipe or lotion form—no aerosols. A topical form is also required.

We encourage medication to be given at home when possible, but MAT-certified staff are available to assist when needed.

Illness and infection Control & COVID-19 Policy:

It is inevitable that children will get sick, no matter where they are. As children begin to have contact with the world around them, they are exposed to viruses and bacteria that are foreign to their bodies. This is the way they build up their immune systems. We cannot shield a child completely from the outside world. However, we do want to protect a child from unusually high exposure to germs and viruses.

In the child care setting, children come into contact with groups of other children outside of their families; children can help spread germs rapidly. For this reason, the staff here will take constant precautions to prevent the spread of disease. They are exposed to germs which may be spread in several different ways like coughing, sneezing and runny noses. With helpful hand washing training (which we do with all age groups and employees) we can keep the spread to a minimum. You, as the parents, can help us in our efforts to keep your child healthy. We ask you to cooperate in the following:

- Please drop off and pick up your child from their classroom or area of play (gym/ outside). If you need to go to your child’s classroom and if you are feeling sick, we ask that you wash your hands and practice social distance during time of

operation. You may call the office and ask for assistance with pickup and drop offs.

- If your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases or virus, we ask that you notify us of the exposure within 24 hours.
- Your child's temperature may be taken daily and we will ask them to wash their hands upon entering the classroom. We ask that you refrain from giving fever reducing medication before attending. If your child shows any of the following symptoms, you will be called and asked to come immediately. We ask that your child not return until 24 hours have passed without symptoms or no longer contagious. Symptoms are a fever greater than 100.4, severe coughing or high pitched croupy cough, difficult or rapid breathing, yellowish skin or eyes, pink eyes, sore throat, unusual spots or rashes, infected skin patches, unusual urine or bowel movements, headaches, stiff neck and/or vomiting.
- In the event that a classroom has been exposed to a communicable illness, we will notify the parents via Lillio app. An exposure notice will also be placed outside the classroom. Tuition will not be discounted due to illness.

Injury Prevention Procedures & Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is committed to providing a safe environment for all children. To prevent injuries, we follow these key procedures:

- Daily Safety Checks: Staff inspect indoor and outdoor areas daily. Hazards are removed or repaired immediately. Dangerous items are securely stored.
- Safe Environment: Classrooms and play areas are equipped with age-appropriate furniture and toys. Electrical outlets are covered, and outdoor areas are fenced and cushioned.
- Active Supervision: Children are supervised at all times with appropriate staff-to-child ratios. Staff maintain clear sight lines and monitor transitions closely.
- Safe Play Practices: Children are taught safe behavior. Rough play, indoor running, and unsafe use of equipment are not allowed.
- First Aid Preparedness: Staff are CPR and first aid oriented and certified. Kits are available in all areas, and emergency contacts are kept current and accessible.
- Incident Reporting: All injuries are documented and reported to parents the same day. Reports are reviewed to improve safety practices.

- Ongoing Training: Staff receive regular training in safety, supervision, and emergency procedures.

These practices help ensure a safe, healthy environment where children can learn and grow with confidence.

Teacher/ Parent Communication:

Your child's papers and crafts will be placed in your child's assigned cubby. We ask that you take them home daily and review them with your child. If you have any concerns, comments, or suggestions; feel free to speak to your child's teacher or make an appointment and they can call you at a time that is convenient for both parties. Daily communication of events will be emailed to the parents via our parent communication system, Lillio (formerly Hi Mama), nightly. You may also download the application to your phone and make notes for the teacher. Please read more about this at www.himama.com.

Field Trip Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center does not participate in off-site field trips. Instead, we focus on enhancing our learning environment by bringing engaging, hands-on experiences directly into the center to support and enrich each child's development.

Transportation Policy:

At Natural Wonders Early Learning Center, the safety and well-being of the children in our care is our top priority. To ensure clear communication and expectations regarding transportation services, the following policy is in effect:

- Transportation to and from school for school-age children will be provided by Augusta County Public Schools. Families are responsible for making the necessary arrangements with the school district to ensure their child is registered and scheduled for transportation.
- Natural Wonders Early Learning Center does not provide any transportation services, including pick-up or drop-off for school, field trips, or other activities.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child arrives at and departs from Natural Wonders safely and on time each day, in accordance with our operating hours.

Should transportation plans change or a child is not using the county-provided bus on a particular day, it is the parent's responsibility to notify both the center and the school directly. Notification can be made via the Lillio app.

Toys:

We have found that bringing toys from home may cause conflict between children and often causes distress during the day and at pick up if the items cannot be located or become broken. Therefore, we ask that you not allow your child to bring toys or electronics of any value to school. The only exception is a teacher requested or Show and Tell item. We ask that you put your child's name on such items. Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal toys or electronics that are brought in from home.

Clothing:

Children should be dressed in washable clothing that is suitable for participation in indoor and outdoor activities. Please provide a complete change of clothing at all times for use in emergencies. All clothing and personal items must be labeled with your child's name. We are not responsible for any items not labeled. When a child is toilet training, additional sets of clothing may be requested by the teacher. Please check your child's cubby often to ensure clothing is size and climate suitable. We have limited spare clothing.

Water and Mud Play Policy:

At Natural Wonders Early Learning Center, we believe that water and mud play are valuable parts of early childhood development, promoting sensory exploration, creativity, and physical activity. To ensure that these experiences are both safe and enriching, the following guidelines are in place:

- Water Play:
 - Natural Wonders does not use wading pools under any circumstances.
 - Instead, water play activities will involve the use of splash pads, sprinklers, water tables, and supervised hose play, which are safer and allow for greater staff supervision.
 - All water play activities are conducted under direct supervision by staff at all times.

- Children will be required to wear appropriate water-safe clothing and footwear. Parents will be notified in advance of scheduled water play days.
- **Mud Play:**
Mud play may be included as part of sensory and outdoor learning experiences.
 - Children will be provided with opportunities to safely explore natural outdoor environments that may include mud kitchens, soil digging, and wet earth activities.
 - Parents will be asked to provide extra clothes and shoes for mud play days, and children will be cleaned up before returning indoors.
- **Hygiene & Safety:**
 - All water used in play activities will be from a clean water source and will not be reused.
 - Staff will ensure that play areas are safe, clean, and free of hazards before activities begin.
 - Children will wash hands before and after all water or mud play.

This policy is designed to support active learning while maintaining high health and safety standards. Parents will be informed of all planned water or mud play activities and are encouraged to speak with staff if they have any concerns.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy:

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, we ask that parents and guardians refrain from using cell phones during drop-off and pick-up times. These moments are important opportunities to communicate with teachers, receive updates about your child's day, and help your child transition smoothly into and out of the program.

Children are not permitted to bring or use cell phones while attending Natural Wonders Early Learning Center. If a child arrives with a cell phone, it must remain turned off and stored in their belongings throughout the day.

For school-age children, tablets and other electronic devices may be permitted at the discretion of the administration; however, use of these devices is a privilege, not a right.

Device privileges may be restricted or revoked due to misuse, inappropriate content, disruptive behavior, or failure to follow staff instructions.

Being fully present allows staff to share important information and ensures your child receives your attention during these key parts of the day. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain open communication and a safe, engaging environment for all children and families.

Natural Wonders is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices brought to the center. Families who choose to allow their school-age child to bring an electronic device do so at their own risk.

Birthdays:

We celebrate birthdays during afternoon snack time. When planning for this special day, please remember that children are small people. We prefer that you send cookies, miniature cupcakes, or a fun, nutritional snack. These are easier to handle and are welcomed by the children as a special treat. Please let the teacher know that you are planning a special treat so that they can plan accordingly. If you do not wish for your child to participate in parties for religious or cultural reasons, please let us know so we can respect your beliefs and make arrangements.

Discipline Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center will try to prevent situations that require discipline. We encourage children of comparable size and ability to work out solutions using a multitude of problem solving skills. We encourage shy children to stand up for themselves and we encourage aggressive children to verbalize their emotions. We encourage all children to use words to express their emotions and desires. We will be alert to situations and attempt to foresee and forestall trouble. We will redirect an uncooperative child to another activity. In extreme situations where a child can't be calmed or he/she is causing harm to another, they will be calmly removed to another area away from children. She/he will be spoken to calmly and respectfully in a safe environment for 2-5 minutes (time to renew feelings). Our purpose is to help the child. No child abuse or neglect will be tolerated by Natural Wonders Early Learning Center. No discipline techniques shall be harmful or hurtful towards the child.

Biting:

Biting is a natural development stage that many children go through. It is usually temporary and is a reaction to other issues such as teething, frustration, fatigue, etc.... The safety of your child is of primary concern as well as their development. We will establish a rule at our center that "we do not bite people." We will encourage the child

to use their words to signal what they are trying to say. We will maintain close supervision of those children who we know exhibit this behavior. Parent conferences may be requested to get parental input on the situation. Both parents will be notified via an incident report of the event.

Shaken Baby/ Abusive Head Trauma/ Coping with Crying Infant Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center believes that preventing, recognizing, responding to and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families. Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. In the event that signs are observed, 911 and parents will be contacted immediately. If coping with a crying infant, staff will ensure that all physical needs are being met. If no physical needs can be identified, staff will try to soothe the child through rocking, walking, singing or other soothing techniques. If staff need relief to help them calm down, office personnel will provide additional time out of the room to the staff member. Parents may be consulted on soothing measures that work for their child. Natural Wonders Early Learning Center strives to provide our staff with short breaks to help with the stresses of childcare.

Food Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center provides breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and late pick up snack. All meals are well balanced and based on the guidelines established through USDA. Meals are planned a week at a time and menus are available to parents upon request. Menus will be posted in the Lillio application. Any allergies or intolerances to foods must be noted on the child's file and we will do our best to accommodate your child. Allergies to dairy or other foods will require a doctor's note documenting the allergy for USDA and Licensing. We will provide formula and baby food to infants that wish to use them.

Emergency or Disaster Plan:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center shall post emergency telephone numbers by all phones. Fire drills will be conducted once a month. This is so the children feel at ease should the need for this arise. If we have to evacuate our school because of a natural disaster our alternative location will be the Verona Fire Department. We will notify all parents immediately through our Lillio communication application or by phone

if this should occur and children should be picked up promptly at the disclosed location. In case of an extreme emergency, 911 personnel will help transport the children and staff to a secure location and we will notify you immediately. In the event of a lockdown, we will not be allowed to let anyone in or out of the building until law enforcement has cleared us to do so. We will keep you updated on our status through Lillio emails and phone calls as soon as we are able to do so safely.

Playground Safety Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center believes outdoor play and learning is essential to a child's development. Gross and fine motor skills can be improved through challenging one's skills on a safe playground with proper supervision. Children are encouraged to explore their natural surroundings and enjoy experiences in nature. Teachers are expected to encourage, supervise and educate children about nature and play in the playground area as the children utilize their imaginations and developmental skills.

A daily inspection of the playground shall be conducted by a staff member before use by the children to ensure the absence of any debris or safety concerns. If any maintenance is required, the Director/Office Staff must be notified immediately so that the needed repairs can be addressed. The Daily Air Quality will be checked for safe levels.

Head counts will be taken by the staff members upon arrival to the playground area and again upon departure of the playground area. Children will not be allowed in any area they cannot be observed in while outside. The staff will circulate around the playground area, observing and engaging the children.

Grouping & Consistent Care Policy:

Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is a licensed child care facility. In order to ensure that we stay in compliance with the state regulations, we must institute grouping and consistent care policy. The following will be followed to the best of our abilities:

Group sizes will be limited to a maximum of 12 children ages birth to 24 months and a maximum of 30 children ages 2 to 6 years of age during required operational times.

Group sizes are important because it increases opportunity for staff to become familiar with the behavior patterns, issues and concerns of the individual child.

Children should have consistent caregivers in order to build a sense of security and trust. Consistent care in early childhood professionals helps nurture dependable relationships and help children build secure attachments. We strive to provide consistency in who is providing care to the children whenever physically possible. In the event that a staff member is ill or off during normal scheduled hours, we have encouraged all of our staff to be familiar with all of our children, especially staff members who float from room to

room during breaks and relief. The goal is for the children to have a limited number of caregivers during the course of the day.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect:

The staff at Natural Wonders Early Learning Center is required by the state of Virginia to report any and all instances of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. When a staff member has the information or the evidence of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, the director is informed and Child Protective Services will be notified and will determine what action will be taken.

Custodial Rights:

The custodial parent has the right to be permitted in the center as required by 63.2-1813 of the Code of Virginia. If a custody order or other legal documents have been issued, it is the parent/ guardian's responsibility to update the office with the necessary documents and the office will make changes to the enrollment information.

Withdrawal Notice and Termination:

A two week written notice must be given prior to withdrawal of your child. Parents are financially responsible for all unpaid fees incurred up to and including the week of withdrawal. If a situation arises and your child's services are terminated by the center, then immediate withdrawal will not require notice. Natural Wonders Early Learning Center has the sole discretion to terminate a child's services at any time they deem necessary.

At Natural Wonders Early Learning Center, we are committed to providing a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children, families, and staff. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family structure, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

We believe that diversity enriches the learning environment and helps children develop a sense of understanding, empathy, and respect for others. All children and families are treated with dignity and fairness, and we actively work to create a culture where everyone feels valued and supported.

Any concerns related to discrimination or bias will be taken seriously and addressed promptly in accordance with our policies and values.

Welcome to Natural Wonders Early Learning Center. We look forward to working with your family. If you have any questions/concerns, please feel free to email us at naturalwonders.director@gmail.com or contact office staff through the Lillio application.