

Center Policies



Updated March 17, 2023

Our Learning Environment

A Place to Grow offers a nature-based learning environment in a warm, loving, and community-focused atmosphere. Our school is nestled into a quiet cul-de-sac in a quiet neighborhood. Our location allows us the flexibility to explore the curriculum while in nature in our large back yard and neighborhood. A monthly theme-based curriculum is used to guide the daily activities throughout the center. Curriculum includes science, math, language arts, social studies, arts, music, and physical education. Learning will be accomplished through many mediums, including play, art, music, stories, and directed learning opportunities. Curriculum and learning opportunities for children are designed to meet the NH Early Learning Guidelines and the NH K-12 Curriculum Frameworks.

Handwriting Without Tears may be used with preschoolers and is an engaging multi-sensory program which teaches body awareness, letter recognition, directionality, handwriting, and numbers.

Programs can be modified to meet the needs of individual children with special needs. We will work closely with any third party, school district or agency providing services for our children to develop a program which meets their needs.

Our Families

It is the mission of A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle to provide the highest quality care possible. We are focused on providing care to infants through five years of age five days a week.

A Place to Grow welcomes our families into the center at any time, so you can share in the good things going on and be more involved in your child's activities and feel more confident in the quality of care our center provides. We welcome families to join us throughout the year during our Halloween party, Thanksgiving feast, St. Patrick's Day Dinner, Easter Egg Hunt and end of school year celebration.

Enrollment is open to all members of our community. A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle does not discriminate in any way against any individual because of such individual's religion, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or citizenship status.

Our Staff

It is the goal of A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle to hire staff whose qualifications exceed the state requirements for licensing or credentialing standards. Staff is required to attend training for infant and child CPR and first aid, as well as 18 hours of annual professional development opportunities such

as college courses, professional memberships, and regional conferences. All staff are required to undergo a state and federal criminal background check.

Tuition

Every attempt is made to ensure rates are not prohibitive for working families and maintain a tuition rate which is competitive with the surrounding market areas while ensuring viability of A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle. Tuition rates are set based on the NH Licensed Child Care Center Scholarship rates set by DHHS set each July. We reserve the right to change tuition rates at any time, but make every effort to arrange for at least 2 weeks notice before doing so. Families should anticipate a small increase (less than 5%) annually.

Our tuition is a set fee per child per month, depending on age and inclusive of holidays and vacations. Attendance for any period of time less than a month is calculated at a daily rate. In some cases, there may be additional fees for participation in optional activities. Tuition received on or after the first of the month will be assessed a late fee per day as specified on the schedule of fees. Tardiness of payment or lack of payments may result in your child being removed from our program.

Cancellation days due to inclement weather and missed school days for a child being sick or parent choice to keep them at home, etc. are not subject to reimbursement.

All families enrolled in the NH DHHS Child Care Scholarship Program will be responsible for payment for the difference of tuition between our current tuition rate and the Child Care Scholarship weekly rate. Should your child attend less than 31 hours, families are responsible for the difference in payments from the state to reach the full tuition amount. The cost share is due in advance of care each month and is due regardless of closures such as weather, holidays, or breaks. A cost share worksheet will be provided to you prior to enrollment to help clarify financial responsibilities.

Enrollment Process

A registration fee, equivalent to one month's tuition, is required (see schedule of fees) to hold a space for your child until the agreed upon start date between A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle and a family. Registration fees for families enrolled in the NH Child Care Scholarship Program are equal to the first month's estimated cost share.

Registration fees are a guarantee that you will be enrolling your child at A Place to Grow and that we will ensure availability for the agreed upon start date. All registration fees are non-refundable.

On or before the first day of school, A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle must receive a Registration and Emergency Information form and a child health form, as required by NH state law. The following forms are also needed for the first day of school:

- ✓ Registration and Emergency Contact Form (Required by NH state law and includes a medical release for emergency care)
- ✓ Child Health Form (required by NH state law and must be updated annually)
- ✓ Ages and Stages Questionnaire upon enrollment and in August.
- ✓ A Place to Grow Lotion Administration Form (required for bug spray, sunscreen, diaper rash creams or anything else applied topically on a regular basis)
- ✓ Asthma and Allergy or Seizure Action Plan (only if child has either condition)
- ✓ Parenting Plans or other legal documents which may be pertinent to court ordered care or custody of children

Trial Period

Before enrolling your child, you are welcome to shadow your child for a short period of time to ensure you and your child are comfortable with the staff and other children in the center. As the period of adjustment for your child may take some time, we have a sixty-day trial period. At any point during this time, you or A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle may request the removal of a child from our care. Families are required to follow the withdrawal policy noted below if they wish to withdraw. As we are a small center, it is essential that our children and families work well together.

Withdrawal

We request at least 2 weeks notice for any child being withdrawn from our care. Any period of time less than 2 weeks will be billed for the two weeks of care, with the exception of withdrawal prior to the start of enrollment or within the first month of care. The registration fee is inclusive of the first month's tuition and is not refundable. We request that all accounts are paid in full on the last day of care.

Any child may be withdrawn from A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle at any time, with no prior notice, should the actions of a child or parent/guardian result in conditions which are not favorable to a positive environment for our children, families, or staff. Families leaving A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle under these circumstances will not be eligible to receive a refund of services already paid for.

Hours of Operation

We are open for business Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Any child picked up or dropped off outside of these times will be subject to a late fee (see schedule of fees) payable the next business day.

The following closures for holidays and vacations are observed by A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle:

Holidays:

- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Friday before Labor Day
- Labor Day
- MLK Day (teacher in service day)
- Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- Columbus Day
- Juneteenth (only if it lands on a weekday)

Vacations:

Christmas Eve through New Year's Day
Week including Independence Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend or creates an unusual break over a week, it is at the discretion of A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle to observe an alternate day or extended vacation.

Cancellation Policy

Every effort will be made to remain open during extreme weather conditions, as Autumn Circle will still expect you to be at work despite the weather. If we decide to close, we will make a decision by 5 am. We will post the closing as a text alert on Procure.

Should the weather be bad enough that we decide to close mid-day, we will do our best to give as much notice as possible. Conditions which require us to close include concerns for safety of children and staff, power and telephone outages as required by child care licensing.

Under extreme circumstances, there may be instances when the center chooses to close for health reasons. If the center is experiencing an illness, the Director may deem it necessary to close the school so that children and staff have time to recover from the illness without re-infecting those around them. This time will also be used to fully sanitize the school to minimize any future spread of the illness.

Cancellation days and early closures are not subject to reimbursement.

Attendance

All children must be signed in and out on the daily attendance program. Anyone other than the parent or guardian of the child will be required to show a photo ID prior to us releasing the child to them. A photocopy of the ID will be made and kept on file for future reference. If someone other than the parent or guardian is going to pick up a child, written communication from the parent is requested in advance.

If a child will not be attending school for the day, please message by 8 am so we may plan our staffing and activities appropriately. The latest time you may drop a child off is 10am. Days your child does not attend due to illness or parent choice are not subject to reimbursement.

Families experiencing circumstances which legally effect pick up and drop off arrangements for children must provide court approved documentation of rights and responsibilities. It is recommended that copies of parenting plans be kept on file at A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle for reference should concerns arise about visitation or pick up.

Discipline

Pyramid Model is a developmentally appropriate behavior support system that encourages staff, children and families to develop behavioral expectations which will help them succeed in school and society. Expectations for behavior during school are included in attachment 1 (school behavior strategies). We encourage families to use a similar set of behavior expectations for their home as well.

Student behaviors resulting in a physically or emotionally unsafe environment for other students and staff will result in immediate removal for the day and an accelerated behavior management plan will need to be created to ensure the safety of others. If necessary, A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle will seek the help from outside sources to create a behavior plan. Preschool Technical Assistance Network is an example of a consultant that is available to us. The staff, parents and any outside consultants (if needed) should work together to find an appropriate solution to undesirable behaviors. If the behavior is not diminishing or resolved after a reasonable period of time while using intervention strategies, A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle reserves the right to expel the child or family from the program. Families asked to leave A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle under these circumstances will not be eligible to receive a refund of services already paid for.

Meals

As the tastes and needs of all children vary widely, we ask that parents provide all meals, snacks, and drinks their children will require during the day. A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle may provide snacks on special occasions. We ask that all meals and snacks are healthy and follow appropriate nutritional guidelines as outlined in the Wellness Policies.

If you could please pack your children's lunches in a lunch box with an ice pack to make sure their meals stay cold during the day. Please provide two cups each day, one for milk, and one for water. We will refill them as needed. Classrooms also have eating utensils and plates and bowls. Families need to provide a cup for water and a cup for milk (if they choose) each day. Use of glass, metal, and BPA free plastics are encouraged.

An Asthma and Allergy Action Plan completed by a physician must be on file for any child with food allergies. All food allergies need to be clearly communicated to the staff. Because nut allergies can be so severe in small children, we are a nut free school. We reserve the right to make designated classrooms or the entire center free of specific foods, in addition to nuts, should the enrollment of any child require us to do so as a precaution. We will provide appropriate notification to parents if this situation arises. *Food may not contain nuts or in a factory that produces nut products.*

Clothing and Footwear

Please dress your children appropriately for outdoor play in all types of weather, painting, and other potentially messy activities as outlined in the Wellness Policies.

We make every effort to ensure clothing is protected during messy activities, but are not accountable for damage to clothing. Girls in dresses will be required to wear shorts or diaper covers under dresses, as diapers may become torn or ripped during active play.

All children are required to keep at least 2 sets of comfortable weather appropriate clothing on hand at all times. A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle will provide extra clothing for the children should the need arise. We ask that our clothing be returned in a timely fashion so it is available for others.

Please be sure your child is in comfortable footwear appropriate for active play. If a child is not in appropriate footwear for an activity, the child may be restricted from participation. Flip-flops, hard soled shoes, dress shoes, open toed shoes, and open back shoes are not considered appropriate for active play. They pose safety hazards on climbing structures and tripping hazards while running.

Indoor footwear needs to be provided for each child. Slippers help to keep toes warm and also provide a layer of protection in an emergency, should we need to evacuate the building.

Personal Belongings

Please label ALL personal belongings. Each child has a personal coat hook. Please leave all belongings, including coats, shoes, and bags, in the coat room. This helps to keep the classrooms clean and dry for daily activities. Please check your child's personal paperwork folder for teacher notices and your child's projects.

Please do not bring toys or other personal belongings from home, other than those designated for nap time. This includes jewelry for girls, as items like rings and necklaces are potential choking hazards. Children feel strongly about their personal belongings and this can create conflict and sharing issues in the classroom. Items brought from home will be placed in the child's bag or paperwork folder until pick up time.

Communications

Communication within the school is primarily via application-based technologies. A monthly newsletter which highlights the monthly curriculum and school wide activities is given to all families and posted in the entryway. In addition, classroom specific events may be posted to our electronic daily slip application.

Please be sure to check personal paperwork folders in each classroom for any additional daily communication relevant to you and your child. We strongly encourage daily communication between our staff and parents. You may call the director to make an appointment for a conference for pressing matters needing to be addressed outside of daily communication.

Nap times

A Place to Grow is required by state law to provide a nap or quiet time for each child during the day. We will provide cots. Families need to provide sheets for naps. We highly recommend Urban Infant, they fit nicely over the cots. If your child has a favorite blanket or comfort object that they would like during this time, please feel free to bring them in from home. Please be sure anything brought from home is clearly labeled with the child's name. Items will be sent home on Fridays for washing and return on Monday.

Infants may be brought to an adjoining classroom for active play, if appropriate, when other infants are sleeping. An infant monitor is used when a staff member is not in the room, and a visual check on sleeping infants is conducted every 10 minutes to ensure the sleeping children are safe and comfortable as required per NH state law.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be issued twice per year or, as needed in the pre-K and K classroom, as we are tracking developmental progress and readiness for K at this time. Parent and teacher conferences will be arranged at these times to review the current skills and behaviors of your child.

Informal methods of evaluation are used more commonly in younger classrooms. Classroom teacher observations are paired with parent feedback in an effort to create a future progress plan for a young child. We respect and appreciate that each child is an individual and expectations for development vary significantly from child to child, especially at a young age. Specific developmental concerns will be addressed with families as the need arises.

Parents are encouraged to talk with your child's teacher throughout the year and may schedule a formal meeting at any time. Families are asked to complete the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire** upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year. This information helps us to better understand the academic needs of your child.

Illness

Per NH State Law, child care personnel shall observe each child each day upon arrival and throughout the day for injuries and symptoms of illness which impair or prohibit the child's participation in the regular child care activities; or require more care than child care personnel are able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the ill or injured child or the other children. Specific symptoms are detailed in the Wellness Policy for A Place to Grow.

When a child exhibits symptoms of illness, child care personnel shall contact the child's parents and inform them of the need to remove their child from the program. Children who are sent home exhibiting symptoms of illness may not return until 24 hours after the last symptom or fever are present. Children must be asymptomatic for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

A child who is sick and has seen the doctor should provide a doctor's note stating it is acceptable for them to return to school. If your child has been diagnosed with something contagious, please notify the school at once. We will notify other parents so they can be on the lookout for similar signs and symptoms and we can disinfect the center appropriately to avoid spread to other children.

Contact Information

Contact information, including address and phone numbers (home, cell, and work) must be kept up to date. Please notify center staff of any changes that need to be reflected on your enrollment forms and provide an updated emergency contact form containing the new information.

Medication

If your child must take medication during the day a medication form must be completed. Prescription medication needs to be in original packaging with pharmacy label and dosing information present. Prescription medications will also only be administered when accompanied by a written, signed order by the child's physician. This information will be kept on file at A Place to Grow. We will not administer medications such as fever reducers or cough medicine unless accompanied by medical orders.

Children with chronic medical conditions like severe allergies, seizure history, or asthma will need to provide an action plan provided by their physician that will alert A Place to Grow staff of what action to take when a child is experiencing specific symptoms. Examples of action plans are included on the A Place to Grow website and must be completed by the child's physician.

Application of sunscreen (children over 6 months), bug spray (children over 6 months), diaper rash cream, etc. are all subject to this policy. Any product our staff is requested to administer or apply to a child should be clearly labeled with the child's name and a lotion administration form signed indicating the product and instructions for use.

Confidentiality

A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle respects the right of every family and child for confidentiality. A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle provides services to families and children with many needs and requirements.

All documents pertaining to the admission, progress, health and discharge of children under their care and all facts learned about children and their families with the following exceptions:

Child care personnel shall allow the department access to all records that programs are required by department rule or state statute to keep, and to such records as necessary for the department to determine staffing patterns and staff attendance; and

Child care personnel shall release information regarding a specific child only as directed by a parent of that child, or upon receipt of a legal request (subpoena or court order) to release such information.

In addition, child care personnel shall discuss or share information regarding the admission, progress, behavior, health or discharge of a child with the child's parent(s) in a manner that protects and maintains confidentiality for both the child and the child's parent(s).

Families looking to share information such as phone numbers and emails will need to make these requests in writing via email. We suggest families send a quick email asking us to forward their contact information to a given party so

that they can make arrangements together so we are merely passing information along with your permission.

Birthday Parties

Children wishing to celebrate their birthdays with friends are welcome to bring in a healthy snack to share with their classroom. Platters of fruit, cheese and crackers, veggies and dip, and yogurts are all great examples of options for classroom snacks.

Families wishing to schedule birthday celebrations outside of school are respectfully asked to invite the entire class. Invitations may be sent in with no names and teachers will distribute. Children are very sensitive to exclusion from group celebrations and it makes for an uncomfortable classroom environment. At A Place to Grow we are all friends.

Photographs

Photographs or videos of our attending children are taken and posted to our daily slip app to document their experiences at A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle. We may also use these photographs for bulletin boards, documentation of skills and growth, social media, marketing, etc. Families who do not wish for their child's photograph to be used on social media, the internet, or public forum can submit a separate letter in writing indicating as such. At no time should you feel obligated to allow us to use your child's image. We understand and respect the needs and concerns for the privacy of each family.

Families taking photographs of events at A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle may only use images of their children in a public forum. We ask parents to respect the rights for confidentiality for all of the children within our care and our staff. A Place to Grow also reserves the right to remove families from the program with no written warning if it is found that photographs containing other children or staff at A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle are made public. Families asked to leave A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle under these circumstances will not be eligible to receive a refund of services already paid for.

Families Hiring A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle Staff

We understand that our staff and families may form relationships that extend beyond the center. Please respect their obligation to fulfill their job responsibilities while on site and do not discuss personal arrangements while at A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle. A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle holds no responsibility or liability for care provided by our staff and your family outside of our business.

Document Retention Policies

We are required to retain your child's enrollment information, accident reports, and field trip authorization information according to the following

DHHS rules. Additional retention times which align with the NH DOE requirements for a longer retention period will be adopted where appropriate. In general, retention time for a child's complete file will be five years.

- **He-C 4002.04(f)** All records, whether in electronic or paper format, required by He-C 4002 O are to be maintained and available for review by the department, upon request, for one year, unless otherwise specified.
- **He-C 4002.13(b)** Daily attendance records are to be maintained and available for review by the department for 6 months including the child's name, date of birth, and classroom.
- **He-C 4002.13(ai)** Injury reports are to be maintained and available for review by the department for 3 years.
- **He-C 4002.29(e) and He-C 4002.29(g)** Field trips and water activity parental authorization form are to be maintained and available for review by the department for a period of six months.

Emergency Planning

Fire drills are conducted monthly.

A Place to Grow at Autumn Circle in cooperation with the NH Department of Safety and the Plaistow Fire Department have made the following arrangements in the case of an emergency:

Emergencies Requiring Building Evacuation

Emergencies which require us to evacuate the building children and staff will gather by the mailbox. In the event the school has been relocated, families will be notified via Procure. Please use the messaging feature of Procure first and if unavailable, please contact Destiny on her cell phone (603-974-3928). If you cannot reach Destiny, please contact A Place to Grow in Brentwood (603-679-1660). They have a copy of our procedures on file.

Emergencies Requiring Relocation Due to a Major Emergency

If we have to relocate due to a major emergency we will walk over to 5 Autumn Circle. Families will be notified via Procure. Please use the messaging feature of Procure first and if unavailable, please contact Destiny on her cell phone (603-974-3928). If you cannot reach Destiny, please contact A Place to Grow in Brentwood (603-679-1660). They have a copy of our procedures on file.

School Behavior Strategy

At A Place to Grow we use the following dialogue to help our children understand the what and why of behavior expectations. We use a positive dialogue to frame expectations and create a consistent and positive environment. For example: “We wash our hands after the bathroom to keep us safe from germs that could make us sick. “ We encourage families to adopt a similar dialogue at home as well.

	Be Safe	Be Helpful	Be Nice
Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walking Feet ● Play carefully with our toys ● Keep hands to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clean up ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share ● Use kind words like Please and Thank you ● Use inside voices ● Take turns
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash Hands ● Flush toilet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turn off lights ● Close door quietly ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go when asked ● Clean up after yourself
Tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bottoms on Chair ● Feet on floor ● Four legs of chair on floor ● Keep hands to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clean up ● Push chair in ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use inside voices ● Use kind words like Please and Thank you
Cots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep your whole body on cot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let your friends rest ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rest quietly
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay in line ● Keep hands to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Line up when ready ● Get shoes and coat on ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use quiet voices ● Touch only your own things
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep sand in the sandbox ● Up ladders, down slides ● Stay inside chains or playground unless with a teacher ● Keep hands to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clean up ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share ● Use kind words like Please and Thank you ● Take turns
Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Small bites ● Chew slowly ● Wash hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clean up ● Use listening ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk only when your mouth is empty ● Chew with your mouth closed