

**Serendipity Creek
Child Care Center**

Guidebook

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Introduction

Welcome to Serendipity Creek Childcare Center (SC)! We are happy to welcome your family into our community. This guide will provide an outline of our services and specific policies regarding your child's care with us. We hope you find it helpful! We encourage open communication, so please don't hesitate to ask any questions you might have regarding the contents of this guide or anything else related to your child's care at Serendipity Creek.

About Serendipity Creek

Serendipity Creek is a licensed childcare center for up to 65 children serving the Gray, New Gloucester, and surrounding communities. We provide childcare for children ages six weeks through fourth grade. We are on the bus route to Russell and Dunn schools. Serendipity Creek was formally known as Wilsondale Country Care.

Our hours are from 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Serendipity Creek works in partnership with the families we serve to provide high-quality childcare that is designed to provide children with a well-rounded Early Childhood experience. Serendipity Creek provides childcare services without regard to race, national origin, religion, disability, sex, or family structure. We welcome all families into our center.

The children are divided into 6 groups:

- Infants (six weeks to 12-15 months) Teacher:Child Ratio 1:4, 2:8
- Young Toddler (12-24 months) Teacher:Child Ratio 1:4, 2:8
- Middle Toddler (2-2.5 years) Teacher:Child Ratio 1:5, 2:10
- Older Toddler (3-3.5 years) Teacher:Child Ratio 1:7, 2:14
- Preschool (3-4 years) Teacher:Child Ratio 1:8, 1:10
- School-Aged (5-12 years) 1:13

Note: A child is determined ready to move when age, developmental milestones, and space availability is assessed and determined to be appropriate.

Our Philosophy and Focus

Serendipity Creek, through collaborative relationships, serves alongside families to support their children's physical, emotional, spiritual behavioral, and social needs. We believe parents know their children best and want to be active participants in their child's childcare experience.

We believe each child is uniquely and wonderfully made and each child has varying needs to allow him/her to develop to their full potential at his/her own pace. We will provide an environment where children are safe and engaged in high-quality, interactive, and innovative activities that build self-confidence, encourage inquisitiveness, and most importantly, embraces each child's distinctiveness.

We do not prescribe to any one curriculum or teaching philosophy but rather use cues from the children as well as knowledge of various teaching techniques to respond in the best way possible to children's needs, development, and interests. The center's curriculum is a flexible learning plan that allows for creativity and emerging interests but also provides a learning focus and objectives.

An Overview of the Classroom Environments

- *Infant Program:* The infant room is based in a bright, spacious room with an abundance of stimulating toys and equipment. The loving staff attends to each child's needs and also gets right down to each baby's level to interact and play. Teachers get to know and enjoy each infant's individuality. The infants nap in an adjoining crib room in accordance with their own schedules.
- *Toddler Program:* The toddler program is split into two groups. The Younger Toddler Program is based in a bright, spacious room next to the infant room. The Older Toddler Program is based in a bright, spacious room in our daylight basement with our Preschoolers. Both rooms have bathrooms to facilitate diapering and toilet training needs. The toddlers have access to large playgrounds furnished with safe, sturdy equipment. The toddler program consists of an age-appropriate mix of free play and structured activities.
- *Younger Preschool Program:* The Younger Preschool is based in a large room in the daylight basement with its own access to the outdoor play area and bathroom. The Preschool playground has a gym set, sandbox, and other developmentally appropriate equipment. This program provides a consistent, daily routine, and is more structured than the toddler program, but still offers adequate time for free play and unstructured activities.
- *Older Preschool Program:* The Older Preschool is based in a large room in our daylight basement. This age group utilizes one of the age-appropriate playgrounds on our property. The children enjoy preparing for school, while also exploring materials and equipment during free play times.
- *School-Age:* The school-aged program is based in the Gym. It is fully equipped with a basketball hoop, a Foosball table, and other engaging equipment. This space is also utilized by the younger children when the older children are at school, and when the weather conditions make it difficult to get outside.
- *Outdoor Spaces:* One of our values is to ensure the children spend time outside as much as possible. SC has a variety of spaces available for outdoor play on our property. Due to their individual schedules, it is difficult to get the infants outside as much as we would like! The children especially enjoy going for walks off the property to the local farms to see the cows and farm equipment. Classroom teachers will take the children for walks on Merrill Road (school-aged children may also take walks on Bull Run) at their discretion and with the cooperation of schedules and weather.

General Daily Schedule for Children

7:15-9:00 a.m.- Arrival/ Free Choice
 9:00 a.m. - Morning Snack
 9:30 a.m.- Circle Time
 10:00-11:30 a.m.- Activities/Outdoor Time 11:30
 a.m.- Lunch
 12:30-2:30- Rest Time
 3:00 p.m.- Afternoon Snack 3:30-
 p.m.- Afternoon Activities
 4:00-5:15 p.m.- Pick-Up/Free Choice

What to Bring to Serendipity Creek

Serendipity Creek provides bibs, bedding, and diaper wipes. Children will have access to drinking water throughout the day. Serendipity Creek has plenty of developmentally appropriate materials and supplies available. Toys from home are discouraged, unless for designated show-and-tell. Toys from home can be distracting, and confusing for children who may not understand how to share these things in the group environment.

Parents should provide the following:

- For infants:
 - Fully Prepared bottles, enough for a full day (plastic bottles only)
 - Bottles **must** be labeled with your baby's first and last name, the date, and contents
 - Diapers
 - Diaper cream
 - Multiple full changes of clothing
 - Baby food (sealed container if store-bought- we cannot accept already opened jars of baby food)
 - Snacks and lunch for older babies (all containers must be labeled and any homemade baby food must be dated with the day it is provided)
 - Utensils and bowls for meals and snacks
 - All bottles and food will be sent home daily.
- For older children:
 - Nutritious lunch and snacks for morning and afternoon
 - Utensils and bowls for meals and snacks
 - Spill-proof water bottle

- Disposable Diapers (for older children, please provide pull-ups with “Velcro” tabs that can be repositioned)
- Weather-appropriate outdoor gear
- At least one full change of clothing
- In the summer, we will also ask for parents to sunscreen their children prior to drop off, and provide sunscreen if they would like us to reapply it in the afternoon
- Personal items such as stuffed animals and blankets are not allowed
- Each child has a cubby to store his or her personal belongings. Your child’s teacher will inform you if your child is running low on any needed items.

About Our Staff

1. All staff at Serendipity Creek are CPR and First Aid certified. Childcare Staff are Mandated Reporters, and all staff are required to take Mandated Reporter training. Staff are trained in health and safety procedures specific to childcare.
2. All staff have a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent and experience taking care of children. All staff are required to complete at least 40 hours of continuing education annually. All staff are subject to a DHHS fingerprinting check upon hire and every two years thereafter.
3. References are contacted prior to hiring employees. Each year, an annual evaluation is completed for each staff person, outlining their strengths and goals for personal and professional growth.
4. All staff/interns/volunteers are supervised, observed, and guided daily by the Director and Assistant Director. We work as a team and are lucky to have the opportunity to learn from each other and grow as educators.

Communication

We value honest and open communication here at SC. Day-to-day questions can be addressed with your child’s teachers at drop-off or pick-up time. If time does not allow, or in the interest of confidentiality, you may also call or email the center with your questions or concerns. Larger concerns may always be communicated to the Director, Assistant Director, or Owner. We appreciate your honesty and open communication, and value any opportunity to improve the care and services we provide.

Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of the information you will exchange with your child's teacher, it is extremely important to keep sensitive information confidential. Information regarding children may not be shared with any parent other than their own. Sensitive information should not be shared in any public area of the center. Parents should bring any concerns to the correct individuals and avoid sharing information with other families at the center.

Cultural and Family Diversity Policy

SC is committed to cultural diversity approaches embedded in the education plan. The children, families, staff, and the local community represent a variety of cultural backgrounds. We strive to create a program that truly reflects this diversity. By recognizing the impact culture plays on families, staff make every effort to provide culturally responsive care and education by acknowledging human differences and the right of people to make choices about their own lifestyles.

SC recognizes the diversity of family structures and lifestyles. Our programs help children to learn that there are many different interpretations of the family, all of which are valuable and that each child belongs to a family. Additionally, we believe it is important to recognize the variety of roles of the family members in different families (e.g. Mother working, father staying at home, etc). The programs aim to allow children to appreciate these differences.

SC aims to:

- Contribute to each child's awareness of cultural and racial groups
- Positively acknowledge similarities and differences between cultural and racial groups
- Promote positive attitudes to children being part of a diverse society
- Reflect each child's racial and cultural background
- Recognize the diversity of family structures
- Serve parent provided meals and snacks. All meals and snacks are served by staff to ensure children's dietary needs are met as determined by culture, religion, or disabilities.

Staff recognizes, appreciates, and respects the uniqueness of each member of the SC community by:

- Encouraging children to respect other cultures
- Providing children with positive experiences exploring similarities and differences
- Teaching children to live happily and co-operatively in a diverse world
- Providing activities, foods, pictures, songs and stories which are reflective of other countries and cultures
- Sharing information about different types of foods, snacks, and beverages as they are served
- Talking about their own families

Admission and Enrollment

- Upon the agreement of your child's enrollment at Serendipity Creek, we will work to schedule a
- visiting time for you and your child to visit the center prior to starting.
- SC has an open-door policy. We allow parents to visit the center at any time. We ask that you respect the children's daily schedules and understand that parents visiting unannounced or during certain times of the day can be confusing for children and disruptive to the program schedule. Please let us know if you would like to arrange a time for a visit to help in the classroom or do a special activity with your child's class.
- Sibling priority will be given to families who are currently enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. SC typically runs a waiting list, so your prompt communication regarding an addition to the family is always helpful!

Children's Files

At the start of enrollment, a file will be created for each child in our care. We require registration forms and immunization records to be updated annually. We appreciate your prompt attention to gathering and completing all the necessary paperwork for your child's file. We can provide parents and legal guardians with access to children's records if the necessity arises. Here is a list of what we require to be on file for each child:

- Registration Form
- Financial Agreement
- New Enrollment Questionnaire
- Medical History form, including record of immunizations (children who attend SC must have current immunizations). Our Vaccination Policy is included below.

Vaccination Policy

To enroll, Serendipity Creek Child Care Center requires all children to be immunized in accordance with the "Daycare Immunization Standards" that have been developed by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Serendipity Creek must have a copy of each child's current immunization records on file. If there is a medical reason for which the child has not been vaccinated according to these standards, a signed letter from the child's pediatrician will be required. No other exceptions will be made.

The Daycare Immunization Standards are as follows:

Vaccine	DTaP	HiB	Polio	MMR	Varicella	Hep B	PCV 13	Hep A	Rota- virus*
At 2 months	1st	1st	1st			1st	**1st		1st
At 4 months	2nd	2nd	2nd			2nd	2nd		2nd
At 6 months	3rd	3rd	(2)				3rd		*3rd
By 15 months	(3)	(3)	(2)	1st	1st	3rd	4th	1st	
At 18 months	4th		3rd	(1)	(1)	(3)		2nd	
By 36 months	(4)		(3)	(1)	(1)			(1)	
By 48 months	(4)		(3)	(1)	(1)			(1)	
At Age 5 K Entry	5th		4th	2nd	(1)				

- *Rotavirus is not a required vaccine to enter daycare, however is included in this table as a routinely recommended childhood vaccine
- Depending on the brand of Rotavirus vaccine given, a child may need 2 or 3 doses. Rotarix is a 2-dose series given at 2 and 4 months, RotaTeq is a 3-dose series given at 2, 4, and 6 months.
- There is no catch-up schedule for rotavirus. If none has been given by 32 weeks of age, additional doses are not recommended.

**Vaccination with PVC13 depends on the age of the child

() Indicates a vaccination is due if the child has not received one previously

DTaP: Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis Hib:

Haemophilus influenzae type B MMR: Mumps, measles,

and rubella Varicella: Chicken Pox

PVC13: Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

Tuition

- A one-week deposit is collected to secure your child/children's enrollment at SC. This deposit is non-refundable and, when given proper notice, the deposit will be applied towards the child's last week of care at SC.
- The tuition schedule is based on the child's age. There is a 10% sibling discount on the younger child's tuition.
- Tuition is due by Friday at closing preceding the upcoming week of care. Payments will be made via automatic withdrawal. Cash or Check is optional under limited circumstances. Families are responsible for a \$10 late fee if payment is not received on time. There will be a \$15.00 charge for returned check or declined automatic payments.
- Tuition may be reduced to half of the weekly fee for two weeks out of the year for vacation. Parents must give a 10 calendar day written notice of vacation weeks to Director or Owner to qualify for the reduced rate. Vacations exceeding two weeks will be paid at the full weekly fee. Vacation allowance is based on calendar year and prorated for those joining after July 1st.
- No other deductions in tuition will be made for days that children do not attend due to illness, days off, closures due to weather, lack of staffing, quarantine/isolation, State of Emergency, In-Service Days, and holidays. Planned SC closures will be communicated each quarter.
- Parents understand that they will only use SC's services for only the days and hours that have been agreed upon. Parents should notify the center of any absences or late drop-off and pick-up.
- In case of late pick up, a courteous payment will be due when a child remains at SC past normal operating hours. This payment will be \$10 for each instance plus \$5 for each additional 5-minute block beyond the initial 15-minute grace period. There will be a minimum \$15 charge for children dropped off prior to regular opening hours.
- A signed financial agreement will be given to parents upon enrollment and will be kept in the child's file.

Holidays/Closures

Serendipity Creek will be closed on the following holidays:

Observed Holidays		In-Service Dates (no kids)
• New Year's Day** • Martin Luther King Day • Patriot's Day • Memorial Day • Independence Day	• Labor Day • Indigenous People's Day • Veteran's Day • Thanksgiving Day and the day after • Christmas Day and the day after**	• February 17th, 2025 (President's Day) • May 23rd, 2025 • August 29th, 2025 • November 26th, 2025

****SCCC is closed the week between Christmas and New Years each year. Please review the SCCC Calendar each year for planning purposes****

Parents will be notified of any changes to our calendar at least 30 days in advance. No deductions of tuition will be made during Holidays. We allow 2 weeks of reduced rates for vacation per year if a 10-calendar day written notice is given to Director or Owner. These weeks can be paid at 50% of your family's normal tuition rate.

Other Closures

Serendipity Creek rarely closes due to severe weather. However, if the decision is made to close, delay opening, or close the program early, parents will be notified in the following ways:

Closure for the day	Email, text message phone call
Delay	Email, text message, phone call
Early Closure	Email, text message, phone call

No deductions from tuition will be made for severe weather.

Withdrawal from the Program

A two-week written notice is required when terminating services with Serendipity Creek. The one-week deposit may be applied to one of these two weeks.

Suspension/ Expulsion Practices

- As a private childcare center, Serendipity Creek reserves the right to make decisions for the community that may involve a request for families to find other arrangements for childcare.
- Goodness of fit: At times, the philosophies or child goals between Serendipity Creek and enrolled families may not be aligned. In the event this occurs, we will do our best to determine if they can be aligned. We do this by communicating with families and working through disagreements or problems together. If it is determined that Serendipity Creek is not the right fit for the family or child, we will request families to make other arrangements. This is in the best interest of both parties.
- Certain situations may result in immediate dismissal from the center, including, but not limited to:
 - Parents or guardians engaging in disrespectful or unsafe interactions with other families, staff members, or children
 - Parents or guardians engaging in undermining behavior
 - Continual parent/guardian disagreement or refusal to abide by Serendipity Creek Policies
 - Extreme unsafe or uncontrollable behavior exhibited by children without intervention

Philosophies of Early Childhood Education

Serendipity Creek is a place for children to learn and develop in a safe, developmentally appropriate, and enriching environment surrounded by nature and farmland. We take advantage of the opportunities provided by our generous outdoor space and quiet setting. At SC, special attention is given to each child's well-being. We value the opportunity to provide your child with a well-rounded, relaxed-yet-structured approach to early childhood. We feel that children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. We also recognize the importance of providing developmentally-focused activities that help children build on existing skills and that foster social, emotional, physical, and academic growth. We cherish the memories made and magical moments that occur daily from a child's perspective.

Curriculum

Serendipity Creek does not subscribe to any one curriculum. Rather, we borrow teaching and learning concepts from many different early childhood philosophies, enabling us to provide a well-rounded early education. The Maine Infant and Toddler Learning Guidelines and the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards serve as our overarching learning goals for children. We use these standards to form our curriculum while following the interests and skills of each child.

We recognize that all children will develop at different rates, and do not complete formal learning assessments of children. Instead, we create a learning portfolio for each child that celebrates his or her learning successes, identifies the child's strengths, and serves as a goal-setting tool for skills that may need encouragement.

English Language Learners

If an English language learner is enrolled in our program, we will offer curriculum, vocabulary, and language and literacy opportunities, including stories, songs, and fingerplays, that meet the needs of the child's language development.

Child Behavior Guidance

Here at Serendipity Creek, we celebrate each child and his or her individuality. We acknowledge children's positive behaviors and let them know when they have done well with something and share joy in their accomplishments.

Our philosophy of guidance involves redirecting and distracting children who are not meeting expectations or who are exhibiting challenging behaviors. If the child is old enough to understand, we will also use these times as a learning opportunity for children, by talking with the child about how his or her actions affect others. We encourage problem-solving, respect, and empathy for others.

At Serendipity Creek, we use positive methods of child guidance. We enforce rules clearly, consistently, and respectfully. We use the following constructive methods of guidance:

- Conflict resolution
- Encouraging language skills
- Redirecting
- Providing choices
- Using positive reinforcement
- Recognizing children's strengths
- Allowing children to take supervised breaks away from the group
- Reminding children of expectations using positive, clear language
- Teaching self-regulation
- Modeling appropriate behavior while allowing for individual differences

At times it is necessary to remove the child from the group and problem-solve on an individual basis. If the child is showing a pattern of challenging behavior, staff will bring this to the attention of the Director. We will work together to create a plan that ensures we are doing our part to support the child appropriately. If our plan

is not working, we may ask parents to come in for a meeting to discuss the behavior.

It is our goal to meet the needs of all children in the program. When possible, Serendipity Creek will make changes to the daily routine and expectations of children to better suit individual children's needs. We avoid suspension and expulsion and will work together with families to create a plan for children who are having difficulty with our programming. There may be times when the program is not the right fit for certain children, as some children require smaller group sizes or accommodations that Serendipity Creek is not able to provide.

Child Development Resources/ Specialists

All children develop at different rates and with varying interests. At Serendipity Creek, we use common assessment methods to determine where children are developmentally so that we can respond to their developmental needs with teaching practices and planned activities. We strive to accommodate all different types of learning styles and developmental needs. At times, children may need additional developmental support that Serendipity Creek does not have the expertise or resources to provide. Additionally, parents may need support or looking for information on how to best respond to their child's development. In these situations, we will communicate with families about the areas we feel need to be supported and develop a plan for attaining support. There are several resources available to the community that can be requested, including:

- Child Development Services (CDS): Developmental Screenings, Speech and Language Services, Occupational Therapy, etc. The Child Development Services system is an Intermediate Educational Unit that provides both Early Intervention (birth through two years) and Free Appropriate Public Education (for ages three through five years) under the supervision of the Maine Department of Education.
- Maine Pediatric Specialty Group: A large group of providers who work together to bring excellent specialty health care to children, including developmental-behavioral health, endocrinology & diabetes, genetics, gastroenterology, infectious disease, nephrology, pulmonology
- Maine Parent Federation: A variety of training and webinars for parents of children with disabilities or special healthcare needs, youth/young adults with disabilities, and the professionals & educators who work with them.

If you have questions about any of these resources, please contact the Director.

Health and Safety

SC is a licensed childcare facility, and as such we will abide by all the rules and regulations contained within the State of Maine Child Care Facility Licensing Rules. The full licensing rules can be accessed online at:

[10-148 Ch. 32 Child Care Facility Licensing Rule Effective 9-27-21.pdf \(maine.gov\)](https://www.maine.gov/education/childcare/10-148-Ch-32-Child-Care-Facility-Licensing-Rule-Effective-9-27-21.pdf)

Rights of Children and Parents

As defined in the Maine Child Care Facility Licensing Rule, SC requires all staff to comply with the following:

10. A . Rights for Children and Families

- 1. Children must be free from emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.*
- 2. Each child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.*
- 3. Each child has the right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.*
- 4. Each child must be provided child care services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.*
- 5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the developmentally appropriate practices by the child care facility.*
- 6. Each child has the right to the implementation of any plan or service that has been developed for that child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the child care facility.*
- 7. Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.*
- 8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to child care facility policies and practices.*

10. B. Rights of Parents and legal guardians of children receiving child care from child care facilities

- 1. A child's parent or legal guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for child care services.*
- 2. A child's parent or legal guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the Department. The child care facility must inform children's parents or legal guardians that licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the premises.*
- 3. Parents or legal guardians must be notified by the child care facility within two business days of any actions taken against the child care facility by the department, including but not limited to decisions to issue conditional licenses, refusal to renew a license, or to impose fines or other sanctions.*

Children with Special Needs

As defined in the Maine Childcare Facility Licensing Rule, SC requires all staff to comply with the following considerations for children with special needs:

2.F.7 Childcare Facility must be in compliance with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L No. 101-336, 104 Stat 328 (1990). Compliance with ADA accessibility standards includes but is not limited to the following:

- a. The childcare facility cannot require that the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of children with physical, emotional and/or mental disabilities furnish the child care facility with information pertaining to the child's disabilities, but is encouraged to ask pertinent developmental questions about all children prior to entrance, to ensure*

appropriate and successful programming.

b. A Child Care Facility must ensure that all Child Care staff members are adequately trained and/or have sufficient experience to meet the needs of all children for whom they are responsible, as the need presents.

Reporting Licensing Violations

As a licensed childcare facility operating in the State of Maine, SC will comply with all State of Maine Rules Child Care Facility Licensing Rules. If a parent believes a licensing rule has been violated, the parent is responsible for informing the Director immediately. The Director will inform the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services as appropriate. Parents also have the opportunity to make the report on their own by visiting the licensing website.

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/childrens-licensing-and-investigation/index.shtml>

Child Safety and Protection

- **Mandated Reporting:** All children have the right to live without the risk of abuse and neglect. This right includes people and the environment within SC, as well as outside influences impacting children. All employees of SC are mandated reporters, meaning they are required by law to cause a report to be made to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) if there is knowledge or suspicion of child abuse and neglect being committed by anyone.
- **Internal Notification Procedure:** If you have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, you must immediately notify the center Director or Owner of your concerns. The Director/Owner will then immediately report to Child Protective Intake. You may also make a report directly. If you report directly, you must also advise the Center Director. All relevant parties will be notified. Child Protective Intake Telephone Number: 1-800-452-1999.
- **Conditions That Require Internal Notification of the Owner/Director:** Any staff member who witnesses or suspects child abuse or neglect of a child enrolled at Serendipity Creek MUST notify the Director or Owner.
- **Documentation of Incident:** A detailed report will be completed to document the incident. The report must include:
 - Details of the allegation or suspicion (including date and names of individuals involved, observations or suspicions)
 - Date Child Protective Intake was notified
 - Which relevant parties were notified of the report (including whether parents/guardians were notified)
 - What information was specifically shared with parents/guardians or will be shared with parents/guardians when child protective intake has been notified.

Child Health Policy

Serendipity Creek takes the health of its children and employees seriously. For this reason, we abide by the following policies for children's health:

Children may not attend who are exhibiting the following symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

- Temperature of 100 degrees or more
- For 24 hours after the first course of prescribed antibiotics
- If a child has had a fever, the child must be fever free for 24 hours (without the use of medication) prior to returning to SC.
- If a child has been treated with an antibiotic, the child must be on the medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to the center.
- Children who are exhibiting unexplained rashes or other signs of contagious illness, such as conjunctivitis, must be seen by a physician and deemed not contagious prior to returning to the center.
- Children will be observed at their time of arrival and throughout the day for signs of illness. If the child begins to exhibit diarrhea, vomiting, a temperature above 100 degrees, or appears listless, sickly, or contagious, a parent will be called to pick the child up from the center as soon as possible.
- Staff are expected to perform a general health screening at the start of the day each day. This means talking to parents if you notice the child does not appear well. If the child did not attend the previous day, or was sent home from SC ill, staff should check in with the parent regarding the child's fever status, and whether they have had any fever-reducing medication in the past 24 hours.

*Serendipity Creek will follow additional/alternate COVID-19 Protocols as necessitated by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Current protocols will be communicated to families.

Medication Policy

Medication may be administered by our staff under the following conditions:

- The medication may not be used to reduce or control a fever of a child who is to remain at the center
- The medication must be in the original container which contains dosage information
- Staff must only give medication prescribed for the specified child
- Parents must fill out a form authorizing SC staff to administer the medication (prescription or non-prescription) each day it is to be administered. Forms for Medication Authorization can be accessed by asking the Director.
- Telephone, text, or email permission is allowed in emergencies if the facility documents the medication administration and obtains written permission from the parent or legal guardian as soon as possible.
- Medication administration must be documented each time it is given. Documentation must include the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage, date, time it was administered, and the person administering it.

All medications must be completely inaccessible to children, stored at the proper temperature, and discarded upon expiration.

Reporting Child Death and Serious Injury

- Any injury or illness which requires medical attention from physician or other medical personnel, including, but not limited to, an emergency room visit and/or hospitalization, or any illness which is a notifiable condition, as identified by the Department is to be reported to the Child Care Licensing

Specialist.

- The Serious Injury/Illness Report will be completed within 24 hours of occurrence and submitted to the Child Care Licensing Specialist.

Minor Accident/Incidents

- All SC staff hold a valid CPR and First Aid Certification
- Any accident requiring first aid, or that causes considerable upset to the child, will be recorded and shared with the child's parents and the director
- Any minor injuries, such as small cuts, scrapes, bumps, and bruises, will be cared for following First Aid procedures
- Any injuries will be documented using an accident report form. The form will be signed by parents and will be submitted to the Director to be placed in the child's file.

Accident and Emergency Procedures

- In the event of an emergency, Gray Fire and Rescue will be called for emergency response services. (9-1-1)
- SC staff are trained in First Aid and CPR and will use their training to assist the injured person/child in the meantime prior to the arrival of the Emergency Response Personnel
- Serendipity Creek has an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) located in the office which contains emergency-specific procedures. Staff will be trained in these procedures upon hire and twice per year. The EPP will be reviewed annually. Types of specific emergency responses include: Evacuation, Shelter-In-Place, and Relocation, among others
- Parents will be notified via phone call in case of a center emergency
- A handout will be distributed upon enrollment which includes an overview of our Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Our off-site relocation address is 103 Merrill Road, Gray
- Routine Fire Drills are performed monthly and include at least 2 means of exit

Allergies, Health Conditions, and Dietary Restrictions for Children

- Each child's file will contain information regarding allergies, health conditions, and dietary restrictions, and if necessary, an allergy action plan.
- SC will maintain a list of center-wide allergies, health conditions, and dietary restrictions, which will summarize the proper action plan for each. The list will be included on each classroom clipboard and posted in each classroom and in common areas. Staff are required to review the list and be prepared to follow any protocol involving any child, center-wide.

Authorization for Pick-Up/ Release of Children

- Parents are required to inform the SC Owner/Director and staff if any person other than a parent or authorized pick up person will be picking up their child from SC. For example, an out-of- town relative is visiting, or a family friend is helping due to mom and dad's work schedule.
- Parents must provide a written, signed note containing the person's name, contact information, and the

effective date. SC staff must require the person to present a valid photo ID showing their identity upon pick up.

- Any person who will be picking up a child from SC must have a car seat properly installed in their vehicle and show sound judgment. Serendipity Creek staff will alert the Director or parents with any concerns regarding the pick-up person. Serendipity Creek staff are not responsible for ensuring children are properly buckled into their car seats or installing car seats.
- **If for any reason our staff are not absolutely confident of who the person picking up is, we will check the person's ID.**

Smoke-Free Policy

- Serendipity Creek is dedicated to providing its children, staff, parents and visitors with a safe and healthy smoke-free environment.
- SC recognizes that secondhand and third-hand smoke are detrimental to the health and safety of everyone, particularly infants and children. For this reason, SC is a 100% smoke-free facility. Tobacco smoke is defined as the smoking of cigarettes, cigars, and all electronic smoking devices (such as electronic cigarettes and personal vaporizers).

This policy prohibits smoking:

- Within all enclosed areas of the facility.
- On all facility grounds, including playgrounds and parking lots, including personal vehicles parked on SC property.
- To reduce exposure to the contaminants in third-hand smoke, employees will:
 - Leave the SC property before smoking
 - Wear coverage over their clothing and hair (coat, hat, etc) while smoking.
 - Thoroughly wash hands before returning to work.
 - All staff and visitors are required to comply with SC's 100% smoke-free policy.

Hand Washing

- Staff and children are expected to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water upon arrival to the center, before and after preparing food, before and after meals/snacks, before preparing bottles, after using the restroom, after diapering, after touching bodily fluids including wiping noses, and after returning from breaks.
- Staff are expected to support children in the same hand washing guidelines, ensuring children are following the proper hand washing routine.

Food/Drink Preparation

- Teachers are responsible for serving snacks and meals to their group of children.
- Teachers will wash their hands prior to preparing food and after preparing food.
- Food preparation areas will be kept clean and organized.
- Food servings that have already been served to one child may not be re-served to another.
- Lunches may be heated in the microwave in glass or paper containers (no plastic). If a heat-up is sent in a plastic container, we will remove it to a paper plate or glass bowl for heating.
- No previously opened baby food jars may be accepted. Open jars will be disposed of or returned to the parent the same day they are opened.
- Jars that are opened at Serendipity Creek will be labeled with the date opened and should be disposed of at the end of the day or returned to the parent the same day they are opened. All containers of homemade baby food must be labeled with the date received by the facility.
- All food will be sent home at the end of each day.

Bottle Feeding:

SC will follow CDC guidelines and State of Maine Licensing Rules regarding the preparation and storage of bottles.

- Bottles will be sent into the center already prepared. All bottles will be sent home at the end of the day each day.
- Formula and breast milk must be labeled with the child's name, dated, stored in the refrigerator and discarded in accordance with the table below:

Type of Breast Milk	Countertop	Refrigerator	Freezer
	77 degrees F or colder (room temperature)	40 degrees F	0 degrees F or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 days	Within 6 months is best, up to 12 months is acceptable
Thawed, Previously frozen	1-2 Hours	Up to 1 Day	Do not refreeze human milk after it has been thawed
Leftover from a feeding	Use within 2 hours Formula use within 1 hour		

- Formula must be made from commercially prepared products. Homemade formula solutions are not allowed.
- Permanent markers are to be used to label bottles that may have come into the center unmarked.
- Staff must check the refrigerator and ensure all bottles are labeled at the beginning of the day.
- SC will use a bottle warmer to heat any bottles. Bottles may not be kept in the bottle warmer longer than 5 minutes.
- The bottle must be shaken (formula) or swirled (breast milk), and tested on a gloved wrist prior to serving.
- Infants must be held for bottle feeding.
- “Propping” bottles is not permissible. Staff must hold infants who are not independently bottle-feeding in their arms for feeding.
- Children who are independently bottle-feeding must be in a seated position within reach of a child care staff member.
- After bottle feeding, infants who are unable to sit up unassisted will be burped prior to being put down.
- All babies’ gums/teeth will be wiped with a cloth after bottle feedings.

Safe Sleep Policy

The employees at SC will follow safe sleep recommendations for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), other sleep-related infant death, and the spread of contagious diseases.

- Infants will always be put to sleep on their backs in an approved bassinet, crib, or play yard until 1 year of age.
- Infants will be placed on a firm crib mattress, with a fitted crib sheet, in a crib that meets the Consumer Product Safety Commission safety standards.
- No toys, mobiles, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, positioning devices, or extra bedding will be in the crib or draped over the side of the crib.
- Sleeping areas will be ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Infants will not be dressed in more than one layer than an adult.
- Cribs will be spaced at least 2 feet apart.

- If additional warmth is needed, a one-piece blanket sleeper (sleep sack) may be used.
- The infant's head will remain uncovered for sleep. Bibs and garments with ties or hoods will be removed.
- Infants will be actively observed by sight and sound. Staff will do a periodic visual check of the crib room when there are sleeping babies and will use the audio/video baby monitor.
- Infants will not be allowed to sleep on a sofa/couch, chair cushion, bed, pillow, or in a car seat, stroller, swing, or bouncy chair. If an infant falls asleep any place other than a crib, the infant will be moved to a crib right away.
- An infant who arrives asleep in a car seat will be moved to a crib.
- Cribs may only be used by one child at a time. The sheet will be removed and replaced prior to another child using the crib.
- Infants may be offered a pacifier for sleep, if provided by parent.
- Pacifiers will not be attached by a string to the infant's clothing.
- When able to roll back and forth from back to front, the infant will be put to sleep on his back and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Swaddling of infants and toddlers is prohibited.
- Our childcare program is a smoke-free environment.
- Our childcare program supports breastfeeding.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time."

Diapering

- Diapers will be checked and changed routinely, after morning snack, before lunch, before nap, after nap, and late afternoon, or any time as needed.
- The general diapering schedule is every 1.5 to 2 hours when children are awake.
- Children will be changed as soon as he or she is found to be wet or soiled.
- Staff will assist children in washing their own hands after diaper changes.

Toilet Training

Parents who are ready to start toilet training their children should inform the SC staff. We will work together as a team to help support the child in the toilet training process. Some things that can be indicators that a child is ready to toilet train include:

- Communicating to adults that he or she has a wet or soiled diaper
- The child's diaper stays dry for an hour or more
- The child is able to ask for help and may ask for a diaper change
- The child can pull down/pull up pants or clothing by themselves
- The child shows interest in the toilet and is willing to sit on the toilet
- The child understands what is expected and what the toilet is for.

Toilet training can be stressful for children if they are not invested in the process. It is our job to encourage them gently, and praise children for successes. We do not shame children for having accidents, talk negatively about diapering, or place children back in diapers after they have switched to underwear, unless the parent and staff agree upon pull-ups for rest times. If the child is showing a disinterest or opposition to toilet training, this will be discussed with the parent prior to making any decisions regarding the toilet training process. Routines are very helpful with toilet training: a designated toilet time between activities and prior to transitions can be helpful. Some children benefit more from setting a timer for set intervals.

Designated Health Care Consultant

SC has a designated healthcare consultant with whom we work closely to determine best practices in the areas of Health and Safety. The Health Care Consultant Agreement is updated annually.

Staff Who Care for Enrolled Children Outside of Work

Serendipity Creek does not legislate, condone, or censure private childcare that staff may provide to families outside of their normal working hours for SC. SC takes no responsibility or liability for actions or arrangements made by staff or families of SC that are not a part of our contracted services. This care is not a part of the SC program, and as such will not be discussed or arranged during the staff's working hours. All arrangements for such care are private and will be treated as such.