

Small Wonder Child Care, Inc.



Parent Handbook 2026 - 2027

**Small Wonder
Preschool Center**

512 W. Broadway St.
PO Box 985
Lewistown, MT 59457
406-538-8936
swkids1st@gmail.com

“Look for the Small Wonders in Life”

Find us on the web:

www.smallwonderchildcare.org

WELCOME

Small Wonder Child Care Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) childcare center that meets both State and Federal licensing requirements for childcare facilities, staffing, food service, equipment, and curriculum. It is a carefully structured Early Childhood Education program that is carried out by well trained staff. In addition to love and personal attention provided to each child, our program includes fine and gross motor coordination and development, reading and number readiness, social development, arts, crafts, music, language development, science, self-care skills, free play, field trips, and just plain fun.

We want your child to remember his or her time here as a happy adventure, and we want you, the child's family, to feel that it has been an effective and fun learning experience.

We welcome you to Small Wonder!

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Small Wonder is based on a set of strongly held beliefs:

- To provide developmentally appropriate programs that encourage each child's sense of discovery and exploration.
- To provide an atmosphere that is safe and clean.
- To provide a physical environment that is warm and responsive by providing each child with a sense of security and belonging.
- Each child is a unique individual. To be sensitive to their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs.
- To help each child develop into a healthy, self-confident individual with respect for, and the ability to relate well with other people.
- Early learning experiences are crucial to the growth and development of young children. Learning begins at birth and we provide opportunities for children to mature and prepare for school entry when it is developmentally appropriate. We have developed a curriculum that is flexible to allow for each child's individual needs and strengths.
- Staff use positive methods of guidance with children. We establish consistent, age-appropriate limits to help children function in their world. A child's day at Small Wonder is designed to develop a sense of independence and responsibility.
- The strength of our program lies in the dedication of our caregiving staff. We support our staff with training, resources, and freedom to create a unique loving and learning experience for children. Our caregivers create a caring and nurturing atmosphere and foster each child's creativity and positive self-image.
- Parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We strive to create mutual respect between our staff and parents; a partnership for the benefit of the child. Our doors are always open to parents.

Small Wonder Child Care, Inc. is open to all children who may benefit from our program, regardless of race, religion, nationality, or creed.

Small Wonder is a childcare center which values people, the children in our care, their parents, and our employees.

PROGRAM LICENSING AND QUALITY

Small Wonder Childcare, Inc follows the **Montana Licensing Requirements for Childcare Centers**.

These requirements can be found at:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/qad/documents/LicensureBureau/ChildCare/LicensingRequirementsforChildCareCenters.pdf>

Small Wonder Childcare, Inc participates in **Montana STARS to Quality Program**. MT STARS is a voluntary quality rating and improvement system that aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals.

More information can be found at: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/STARS>

ADMINISTRATION

Small Wonder Child Care, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation organized in August of 1989. It is guided by a volunteer board of Board of Directors and managed by an Executive Director. For a complete description of the Board of Director responsibilities, duties and terms please ask for a copy of the Small Wonder Child Care, Inc. bylaws. Monthly Board of Director meetings are open to the public, email swboardofdirectors@gmail.com for a Zoom link to the meeting.

MISSION

Small Wonder Child Care Inc.'s mission is to provide a nurturing, supportive and structured learning environment that encourages the growth and development of each unique child.

VISION

Small Wonder offers a community of acceptance for all. We are dedicated to nurturing children in building a developmentally appropriate foundation in a quest for lifelong learning and exploration. We provide resources for families and children to enhance their understanding and appreciation of early childhood development.

TARGET STATEMENT

At Small Wonder Child Care, we believe in the individuality and uniqueness of each child and in fostering their very best and most positive life outcomes by providing high quality care and education.

Therefore, we provide:

1. The community with an open door, acceptance of all families, children, and community members; and
2. Families with positive, trusting, and supportive relationships; and
3. Continuing professional development training and education in the early childhood field for our teachers.

OUR CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is a child based, developmentally appropriate curriculum that balances theme based and the project approach. Our staff and children develop their monthly activities based on the theme, their questions, and interests in the theme and how these all relate to the goals we have for each individual child. Our staff is trained in child development theory and practice, and our equipment and toys are chosen to provide the best learning environment possible. Our curriculum is a balance of Creative Curriculum, FrogStreet, Reggio Emilia Philosophy, Conscious Discipline, Positive Guidance, as well as the Montana Early Learning Standards and Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Our program includes exposure to American Sign Language & Spanish language as well as curriculum-based assessment, child portfolios, and parent/teacher communication and conferences.

We realize that children need routine, and predictability balanced with flexibility and adaptability. We emphasize the process of learning rather than the product. Our program addresses the needs of the **whole** child, considering all of their developmental needs: physical, motor, social, emotional, language and cognitive. Our goal is to shape the program around the children rather than fitting the child into the program.

The curriculum throughout Small Wonder is for learning and development that is all-inclusive and centers on connections and relationships. We respond to and respect each child's needs in a warm and sensitive way that promotes attachment and focus on both education and care. We recognize that children learn best through play and exploration, and as the children are examining and exploring their environment, they may acquire some of the following skills:

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Gross Motor and Outdoor Play:

- Develops large muscle coordination.
- Increases social development and communication skills.
- Provides opportunities for sharing.
- Provides opportunities for role-play.
- Fosters safety awareness.
- Develops balance and coordination.

Language Arts:

- Increases vocabulary growth.
- Develops listening skills.
- Develops reading readiness skills.
- Develops oral language skills.
- Encourages an interest in and respect for books.
- Develops imagination.
- Increases attention span.

Science:

- Develops observation and discrimination skills.
- Develops a respect for the environment.
- Encourages a child's curiosity.
- Teaches problem solving skills.



Blocks and Building Materials:

- Provides practice with social skills.
- Develops gross and fine motor skills.
- Teaches mathematical concepts such as shape, size, balance and counting.
- Increases creativity and decision-making skills.
- Develops visual discrimination skills.
- Provides an opportunity for role-play.
- Develops hand-eye coordination.
- Increases communication skills and oral vocabulary.

Social Emotional/Dramatic Play:

- Provides an opportunity to role-play home, work and life experiences.
- Increases social development and communication skills.
- Provides opportunities for problem solving and creative thinking.
- Encourages children to think, reason, question and experiment.

Art:

- Provides opportunities for creativity, imagination and self-expression.
- Develops gross and fine motor skills.
- Develops color, shapes, and texture concepts.
- Provides a release of positive and negative feelings.
- Develops reading readiness skills.
- Develops pre-writing skills.
- Encourages an appreciation for the arts.

Sensorimotor Play:

- Develops sensory awareness.
- Develops concepts involving space, measurement, and volume.
- Increases fine and gross motor skills.
- Provides opportunities for problem solving and creative thinking.
- Encourages children to think, reason, question, and experiment.

Manipulative and Puzzles:

- Develops fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.
- Increases social development and communication skills.
- Fosters imagination.
- Teaches mathematical concepts such as shapes, sizes, space relationships, and counting.
- Provides opportunities for problem solving.

Music and Movement:

- Develops an awareness of different sounds and rhythms.
- Develops an appreciation for songs, vocabulary, and speech.
- Develops body awareness.
- Develops gross motor skills.

PROGRAM HOURS

Small Wonder operates from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. We close promptly at 5:30 p.m. Any child remaining at the Center after 5:30 p.m. will be charged an additional \$10.00 late fee and \$5.00 every 10 minutes thereafter. Please call us if an unavoidable condition prevents you from getting to the center on time.

Small Wonder is open year-round except for the following holidays and closures:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Labor Day | September 7, 2026 |
| • Montana Educator Conference | October 15-16, 2026 |
| • Thanksgiving Day | November 26, 2026 |
| • Day following Thanksgiving | November 27, 2026 |
| • Winter Break | December 24-25, 2026 |
| • New Year's Holiday
2027 | December 31, 2026-January 1, |
| • Memorial Day | May 31, 2027 |
| • Independence Day | July 5, 2027 |
| • Centerwide Cleaning & Training Day | August 20, 2027 |

You will receive information about any additional days of closure if a need should arise. In the rare event that Small Wonder has an unplanned closure due to unforeseen circumstances such as extreme weather, natural disasters, or other emergencies, Small Wonder will not offer tuition credits.

REGISTRATION

Families are responsible for returning all registration forms and a \$40.00 registration fee *before* your child/children's first day of attendance. Registration paperwork is due upon enrollment and annually thereafter. Childcare will not be provided until all forms and fees are collected. This includes proof of immunization.

Small Wonder reserves the right to dismiss a child from enrollment, without prejudice, if it is in the best interest of the child or of the other children attending Small Wonder.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Children cannot be accepted into Small Wonder Child Care, Inc. without current immunizations as determined by the CDC and State of Montana Guidelines. Requirements for adequate documentation include a record from any local health department, signed certificate by a health department official (including a physician or nurse). Please bring in a copy of any new immunizations your child receives to keep records current.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Please use the parking lot at the back of the building, or limit parking to 10 minutes or under on Broadway Street.. Our entry is separate from that of the church's. Please do not use the church doors for entry to Small Wonder, instead follow the sidewalk next to the cement retaining wall at the rear of the building. **Refrain from using the Griffith Construction parking lot above Small Wonder, we want to be courteous to our**

neighbors and their space.

We require that you accompany your child into the building and deliver them safely to their caregiver making verbal contact with the caregiver upon arrivals and departures.

Do not allow your child to enter the building alone. This policy is important to ensure the safety and well-being of your child. Failure to follow this policy will result in a written warning. Suspension of childcare services will follow two written warnings.

Small Wonder uses a tablet located on the wall outside the main office and between Pink and Red Rooms to check children in and out. Signing children in and out upon arrival and departure is a requirement of licensing. It increases the safety of our children as well as ensuring the accuracy of our record keeping. Each family will receive a QR code and pin number upon enrollment. In the chance of internet/Ipad failure we will have sign-in & sign-out sheets in paper form available for you to fill out. A signature is a requirement of this measure.

SMART CARE KIOSK INSTRUCTIONS

Option 1 (Touchless Sign In)

- Ensure the Kiosk has a QR code on the screen
- If no QR code is present, select the “Generate QR Code” option on the kiosk to produce a new QR code
- Open the SmartCare app on smartphone
- Select “Sign In/Out” at the bottom of the app
- Choose “Scan QR Code” on the app, just above bottom menu
- Hold the smartphone camera up to the kiosk
- Scan your child’s QR code.
- Select the child you are wishing to sign in, making sure there is a blue circle around your child’s name.
- Hit continue.

Option 2 (Smartphone QR Code)

- Ensure the Kiosk is set to “Scan QR Code”
- If Kiosk is not set to scan mode, select “Scan QR Code” on the Kiosk
- Open the SmartCare app on a smartphone
- Select “Sign In/Out” at the bottom of the app
- Choose “Generate QR Code” on the app, just above bottom menu
- Hold QR code on smartphone up to the kiosk camera for scan
- Select the child you are wishing to sign in, making sure there is a blue circle around your child’s name.
- Hit continue.

Option 3 (Code Entry)

- Select the circle with the keypad on the top right corner of the tablet.
- Type in your child’s 8-digit code.
- Select the child you are wishing to sign in, ensure there is a blue circle around your child’s name.
- Hit continue.

SUPPLIES

Included in your enrollment packet is a list of items recommended to bring for your child’s age group. Please

bring all items on your first day and keep updated.

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

We ask that all children come to Small Wonder dressed appropriately for the current weather. We spend time outside in all seasons, so in order for your child to take part, please make sure appropriate clothing is available. Bring items such as: boots, snow pants, mittens, hats and coats during winter months and a light jacket and appropriate shoes during spring and summer.

Please make sure we have extra clothes in case of messy activities, spills, accidents and unpredictable weather. We highly recommend three sets of clothes just in case.

****PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD IN OPEN TOED SANDALS!
THIS IS A SAFETY ISSUE. THANK YOU****

Our play area does provide some shade, but when we are playing in the sun, we will use clothing or sunscreen to protect your child from the sun's rays. Written permission is required for Small Wonder Child Care, Inc. to apply sunscreen, diaper rash cream, Chapstick, or insect repellent on your child. Please see the *Over the Counter (OTC) Medication* form.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Please label all personal items such as: coats, boots, backpacks, and extra clothing with your child's name. This will help the staff of Small Wonder and assure that all your child's personal belongings will be returned to your child's mailbox at the end of the day.

Small Wonder provides a variety of toys, puzzles, games, books and other activities and materials for your child's enjoyment. We ask that items from home are not brought in. We do not wish to have them broken or lost. If a child brings any items from home, they will be asked to place the items in their mailbox for that day. Your support of this would be greatly appreciated.

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is an infection prevention practice that must be done correctly and at the appropriate time to be effective. To meet basic hygiene and sanitation standards, all children, staff and volunteers in our program include hand washing during daily routine. Universal precautions are always used.

Parents/guardians are required to help their child wash their hands upon arrival to childcare.

Universal precautions are practices that prevent disease and infection from spreading throughout childcare facilities. These practices are always used with all children and involve hand washing, the use of latex or vinyl gloves, the disinfecting of contaminated objects and surfaces, and the disposal of trash properly.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Fees are paid monthly to maintain enrollment even in the instance of vacation, illness, or other absences. Small Wonder reserves the right to re-evaluate rates at any time. In the event of rate changes, we will provide at least one month's notice.

Small Wonder Child Care requires families to choose specific days of the week for enrollment with the 1-4 day contracts, and any additional days will be charged as an Extra Day. If your schedule is varied due to your employment schedule, Small Wonder Child Care requires a monthly schedule by the 1st of the month. If there are changes to this schedule throughout the month and attendance is requested for different days, they will be charged as an Extra Day. This includes rearranging your children's schedules for planned closure dates.

Registration Fee (due on enrollment and annually thereafter): \$40 per family

Monthly Fees:

6 Weeks-11 Months

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Friday Only	Extra Day
\$820.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,170.00	\$275.00	\$65.00

12 Months-23 Months

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Friday Only	Extra Day
\$800.00	\$970.00	\$1,130.00	\$265.00	\$60.00

Two Year Olds

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Friday Only	Extra Day
\$750.00	\$910.00	\$1,060.00	\$250.00	\$55.00

Three Year Olds

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Friday Only	Extra Day
\$730.00	\$880.00	\$1,030.00	\$243.00	\$50.00

Four to Six Year Olds

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Friday Only	Extra Day
\$660.00	\$800.00	\$930.00	\$225.00	\$50.00

Kids Club-School Year (Children kindergarten-12 years old) - PM Only

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Extra Day
\$290.00	\$350.00	\$410.00	\$25.00

*If children attend on "No School" days there will be an additional \$25 fee per day.

Kids Club-Summer (Children kindergarten-12 years old)

1-3 days	4 days	5 days	Extra Day
\$580.00	\$700.00	\$820.00	\$45.00

Kinder Prep:**In Center add-on charge:**

2 days a week	\$100 per month
3 days a week	\$150 per month

Out of Center charge:

2 days a week	\$250 per month
3 days a week	\$375 per month

Family discount with 2 or more children: 5% off total bill for 2 or more children

Late Payment Fees: \$50 if tuition not paid by the 5th of the month

Late Pickup Fees: \$10 for pickup after 5:30 PM and \$5 for every 10 minutes thereafter

After School Transportation: \$25 per month

Extra-Curricular Transportation: \$15 per month

Attendance Manual Entry Fee: (>3 per month) \$10 per occurrence over 3 times

Diaper/Wipe Service (elective)

****0-36 months, does not include pull ups****

\$40 per month for 1-3 days/week
\$45 per month for 4 days/week
\$50 per month for 5 days/week

Families who opt out of this service will be charged \$5/day for each day the child does not have diapers and/or wipes. After 3 days of reminders, Small Wonder reserves the right to automatically sign families up for this service. This is in accordance with the mission statement.

PAYMENT POLICY

The Payment Options form is completed at registration.

Changes to payment plans must be submitted in writing two weeks prior to the billing dates indicated above to ensure timely billing and payment.

Option 1: Direct debit is the preferred option. Tuition is billed on either the 5th or 20th of each month, with the option of tuition being billed in equal parts on the 5th and on the 20th. **Late fees:** A fee of \$50.00 will be assessed on the 16th day of the month. A \$35 late fee will be applied monthly until your balance is paid in full. Past due accounts, including late fees, will be turned over to a collection agency after 90 days. A credit card may be left on file as a form of secondary payment to avoid disruption in care or accumulation of late fees.

Option 2: Cash or check payment. Tuition is billed on the first of each month, and payment is due by the 5th of the month, unless enrolled in direct debit or autopay via SmartCare. Joint accounts require signatures of both individuals. **Late fees:** If there are insufficient funds at the elected debited day(s), a late fee of \$35.00 will be assessed. Childcare will be cut on the 16th day of the month and your child's enrollment spot will be offered to another child. A \$35.00 late fee will be applied monthly until your balance is paid in full. Past due accounts, including late fees, will be turned over to a collection agency after 90 days.

See “Payment Option Form”

SECURITY PROCEDURES

In order to provide a secure building and maintain safety for our children, our main entrance door is equipped with an electric strike lock and key fob reader entry system.

- All parents and guardians must use their designated key fob to enter the building.
- Your key fob will allow you access during our designated operating hours time frame which is currently 7:00 AM To 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.
- In accordance with our current policies, you must still accompany your child into the building and deliver them safely to their caregiver making verbal contact upon arrival and at departure.
- As the key fob is for the door entry only, you must also still check your child in and out using the SmartCare kiosk.
- In the event someone holds the door open for you, please still swipe your key fob as this allows us to maintain secure tracking.
- Every family will be issued two (2) key fobs per family assigned to individual guardians based on who the usual pick up and drop off adults are.
- Grandparents, babysitters, aunts, etc. who are not generally part of your child's routine will not have a key fob issued but can still pick up and drop off with your approval.
- They will need to use the Ring doorbell at our main entry door for assistance and produce a state issued ID.
- You will need to let center staff know when someone different will be picking up your child.
- In accordance with our safety policies and state regulations, no child will be released to anyone but the guardians and those people listed on their emergency contact form.
- Two (2) fobs are provided at no cost to each family.
- Families have the option to purchase one (1) additional key fob for \$20 if needed to be issued to a third routine adult caregiver.
- Your key fob is identifiable with a specific tracking. Please do not change keyfobs or give yours to anyone else.
- If any key fobs issued to your family are misplaced or lost, please let the Executive Director know immediately (within 24 hours). We will deactivate that key fob until it is found. If needed, replacement key fobs will be available for \$20 each.
- Safety is our top priority. Please be responsible with your key fob so we can ensure the safety of all children in our center.
- All key fobs must be returned on your child’s last day of care or within 1 business day following your child’s final day of attendance at Small Wonder. **Fobs not returned after care has ended will result in a \$20 charge per fob being added onto the family's final bill.**

Camera and Video Monitoring Policy

Small Wonder Child Care utilizes a video camera monitoring system throughout the facility to help support the safety and security of the children, families, and staff in our program. Cameras may be installed in classrooms, hallways, entrances, outdoor play areas, and other common areas of the center. A notice will be posted on the Small Wonder Child Care front door.

The purpose of this system is to assist administration in maintaining a safe environment, monitoring facility operations, and supporting adherence to health, safety, and supervision practices in accordance with the requirements outlined by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations. Any diapering areas or bathroom areas will be blurred or out of camera range.

Confidentiality

To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all children, families, and staff members, live camera feeds and recorded footage will **not be made accessible to parents or guardians**. Video recordings are considered confidential program records and are used solely for internal safety monitoring and, when necessary, licensing or legal purposes.

Request for Video Review

If a parent or guardian has a concern regarding an incident that may have occurred at the center, they may submit a request to administration asking that available footage be reviewed.

Upon receiving a request:

- Administration will review the relevant video recording, if footage is available.
- Parents will **not be permitted to view the video directly** in order to protect the privacy rights of other children and staff.
- If relevant information is identified in the recording, administration will provide the parent or guardian with a **summary of the findings**, including any details related to the incident.

Licensing and Regulatory Compliance

Video recordings may be reviewed by authorized representatives of the Montana Child Care Licensing Program or other regulatory agencies when necessary for licensing investigations or compliance reviews. The use, storage, and confidentiality of recordings will align with the applicable Montana child care licensing rules and regulations.

Video Storage

Recorded footage is stored securely for a limited period of time and may be deleted or overwritten as part of the system's normal operation unless it is required for an ongoing review or investigation.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The time you spend in the classroom reading or having lunch with your child is invaluable. We would also encourage parents to join us when we go on field trips or to share your talents and skills in the classroom. We always appreciate remembering us when you are recycling plastic bags, yogurt containers and any other items that appear on the wish list of the classrooms. Our parents and families are always welcome in the center.



Outdoor Health Risks

Children will not be allowed outside when the weather is too hot, too cold, or other conditions that pose a health risk as determined by local health officials or the Small Wonder administration.

Classroom Play Yard Times:

Little Yard:

	Morning:	Afternoon:
Pink Room	As needed/use grassy area	As needed/use grassy area
Silver Room	10:00-10:30	3:30-4:00
Red Room	10:30-11:00	4:00-4:30

Big Yard:

	Morning:	Afternoon:
Purple Room	9:45-10:15	3:30-4:00
Yellow Room	10:15-10:45	4:00-4:30
Kinder Prep	10:45-11:15	1:30-2:00
Kids Club	11:00-11:30 (summer/no school days)	4:30-5:00

**All times may vary due to different circumstances, and the teachers have the option to utilize walks, parks, the pool, etc. to gain more outdoor time throughout the day.*

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

We are ultimately concerned with your child and their activities here during the day in our care. There may be times when our attention is with your child and not on the telephone. Please feel comfortable leaving a message on our answering machine and we will return your call, if necessary, and as soon as possible. You may also call any of the classroom cell phones. Please contact the classrooms using the below phone numbers regarding any changes with scheduling, etc. **do not contact staff on their personal phones or social media accounts regarding Small Wonder.** Our staff deserve to have personal time, so please respect that and make all phone calls to the center phone or the classroom cell phones.

- Main line: 406-538-8936
- Pink Room: 406-380-2722
- Silver Room: 406-380-2709
- Red Room: 406-380-2710
- Green Room: 406-380-2842
- Purple Room: 406-380-2759
- Yellow Room: 406-380-0841
- Kinder Prep/Kids Club: 406-380-2796

SPECIAL EVENTS

A center newsletter will be emailed each month informing you about Small Wonder activities. We have special field trips, parties, and seasonal events that will be happening each month in each room. You will also receive an email newsletter from your child's classroom to keep you informed and involved. We also have a Small Wonder Website, SmartCare App, and Facebook Page which we use to keep you updated with upcoming events and plans.

NON-COMPETE POLICY

Our staff are held under a Non-Compete policy. Our staff members may not provide care for currently enrolled clients during Small Wonder open hours. Small Wonder invests significant amounts of resources into screening, training, and hiring our quality staff. Please be aware that if a currently enrolled family solicits Small Wonder staff for childcare during business hours, the family will be charged \$250.00 fee upon re-enrollment. Please do not put Small Wonder in this uncomfortable position.

PET POLICY

On occasion, children want to have their pets visit our program. The following rules apply:

- Administrative personnel and teachers must be given 48-hour notice.
- Pets requiring vaccinations must have a copy of their vaccination record on file.
- Teachers will decide how long the animal can visit.
- The visit may be denied if allergies in the classroom prohibit a safe visit.

FOOD PROGRAM

Nutrition is a major factor in the physical, social, mental and emotional development of children. Your child's time at Small Wonder offers a good opportunity to establish nutritionally sound eating habits as well as an understanding of the relationship between food, health, and growth.

Our goal is to have a positive influence in broadening children's food experiences while being conscious of young children's tastes, appetites, and food restrictions. Nutrition education is integrated into the program for children 3 years old and older through regular cooking projects and by a caregiver at each table serving meals family style. This provides an understanding of appropriate eating habits as well as an opportunity for conversation.

Small Wonder's menus are reviewed and approved by a consulting dietitian and comply with or exceed the minimum USDA Childcare Food Program requirements for meal composition and serving size. You will be asked to fill out forms for participation in this program when you enroll and each year after that. Please be as accurate as possible when completing these forms as our reimbursement is based directly on the information you provide on these forms. Every family whose child eats the meals provided by Small Wonder are required to fill the form out regardless of income level/eligibility.

Small Wonder's cooks are responsible for providing infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with a nutritious and balanced breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. A variety of high quality, wholesome, unprocessed foods that comply with or exceed USDA Childcare Food Program minimum requirements are offered. Commercially prepared food is seldom served.

Eight-week cycle menus are posted each week for the current week and the following week on the parent bulletin board just inside the front door at the facility and in each classroom.

Breakfast is served between 8:30 and 9:00 depending on the classroom, Kinder Prep morning breakfast is at 9:30. Lunch is served between 11:00 to 12:00 depending on your child's classroom schedule. Afternoon snack is at 3:00 pm for all classes except Kinder Prep which is at 2:30 pm. Our meals are prepared in a spacious and well-equipped kitchen and the children eat in their individual room or in the dining room depending on the group and the meal.

Classroom Mealtimes:

	Breakfast:	Lunch:	Location:
Pink Room	8:45 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	Classroom/On Demand
Silver Room	8:45 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	Classroom
Red Room	8:45 a.m.	11:15 a.m.	Classroom
Purple Room	9:00 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	Classroom
Yellow Room	9:00 a.m.	11:45 p.m.	Dining Room
Kinder Prep (AM)	9:30 a.m.	NA	Dining Room
Kids Club (Summer)	9:30 a.m.	12:15 p.m.	Dining Room

**All snacks are served at 3 p.m. in the individual classrooms*

SPECIAL DIET

If your child has an intolerance or allergy to a USDA Childcare Food Program required food (such as milk), a *Special Diet Statement* form is available upon request from the office. This form must be completed, signed by your child's health care provider, and submitted to the office before we can serve your child a menu substitution. You will also be required to fill out a HIPAA / PHI form and a Permission to Post form so that we may share health information with the cook and your child's caregivers.

FOOD BROUGHT FROM HOME

For very rigid and unique dietary needs or preferences, Small Wonder reserves the right to require parents to provide the food substitutes. Such food must be brought into Small Wonder in its original container, dated and labeled with the child's name, and instructions for serving.

No outside food may be accepted into the program unless it is to share with other children, such as classroom parties or birthday treats. Please bring food in commercially prepared packages that are in factory-sealed containers. For example, fruit snacks, snack size candy bars, or fruit juice boxes. **Homemade products that are made outside the center kitchen may not be served.** Please let us know ahead of time if you are planning to bring birthday treats.

MONTANA CHILD AND ADULT FOOD PROGRAM

Small Wonder Childcare Inc. participates in the Montana Child and Adult Food Program and receives reimbursements for meals meeting certain nutritional values.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.



Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Young children are just beginning to learn life's most complicated skill, getting along with others. The process of learning to get along is a lifelong skill. Teachers and parents of young children lay the foundation for the very basis of this complicated skill.

Guiding the behavior of young children is dependent on a very important element, consistency. If adults set limits and expectations for children but do not adhere to those limits and expectations the child becomes confused and is unsure of those expectations. We work together to provide consistency to all children at all levels.

We believe that knowledge of child development is essential in guiding children's behavior. A teacher cannot set expectations without knowledge of the child's capabilities. Children are new at problem solving, decision making, and self-concept. Because of this they will make mistakes as they are learning. We must allow children opportunities to practice learning these skills. Knowing child development theories and practices will assure that the teacher is aware of appropriate expectations of children's behavior. We encourage and develop our

staff's knowledge base and education in the field of early childhood development.

True guidance builds partnerships with parents, uses teamwork with other teachers, and provides a child directed and positive environment. When intervention is necessary the methods are solution-oriented and teach the children to solve the problem. When the opportunity arises for guidance, it is looked upon as a learning moment, not as discipline. Guidance is a learning process. Guidance empowers the child and accepts the child as he is, while setting expectations and limits on his behavior. We encourage children to be responsible for their own behavior through choices and problem solving.

We provide children with the understanding of fundamental elements of respect. Respect for themselves; respect for another person; and respect for property.

Below are guidelines we use at Small Wonder:

- Ensure that each child is provided with a positive role model of acceptable behavior.
- Expectations are tailored to the developmental level of children.
- Redirect children and groups away from problems and toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
- Encourage children to be responsible for their behavior through choices and problem solving.
- Protect the safety of children and teachers.
- Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

***** Small Wonder DOES NOT in any way endorse or use any form of negative discipline. Corporal punishment will not be used. *****

SLEEPING—NAPPING— QUIET TIME

Infant Safe Sleep Practices: Safe sleep and napping practices reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) as well as the spread of contagious disease.

- Back to sleep for every infant. Every infant will be placed on their backs to sleep. Infants capable of turning over (by themselves from back to front and back again) will remain in the sleeping position the infant attains.
- If a parent or guardian requests that their infant be put to sleep in a position other than their back, written medical instructions from the primary health care provider must be obtained explaining how the infant should be placed for sleeping and the reason for the positioning.
- Infants will be placed to sleep on a firm mattress covered with a well fitted sheet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.
- At the discretion of the parent and provider, a mat or cot may be used once a child turns one year of age in a safe sleeping environment. A permission form must be signed by the parent approving the sleeping arrangement.
- No toys, pillows, bumper pads, loose or heavy bedding, or sleep positioning devices will be used in cribs or playpens.
- Sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets will be used in place of loose or heavy bedding.
- Sleeping areas will be ventilated and maintained at a temperature that is comfortable for lightly clothed adults. Infants will not be dressed in more than one extra layer than what adults are wearing.
- Infant's heads will remain uncovered for sleeping. Bibs and hoods will be removed.
- Infants will not share cribs.
- Infants will not be allowed to sleep on a couch, chair, pillow, or in a car seat, swing, or bouncy chair. If an infant goes to sleep in any place other than a crib, the infant will be moved to the crib immediately.
- Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should it fall out once they have fallen asleep. Pacifiers will be cleaned and checked

regularly for tears or damage.

- Staff will supervise infants directly during sleeping times. Sleeping infants will be visually checked every 15-20 minutes. Staff will watch for rise and fall of the chest to observe breathing, checking skin color, and to look for signs of overheating and restlessness.
- Infants will have supervised tummy time to allow for the development of strong head, neck, and back muscles.

All staff working with infants have received training in approved safe sleep procedures.



All children will participate in a rest period daily.

Infants and Mobiles (6 weeks through 18 months) are offered sleep on demand. Should at any time an infant through Mobile want to rest they will be accommodated with an opportunity to sleep.

Toddlers (19 –35 months) are offered to sleep on demand as necessary. Toddlers are scheduled for a two-hour napping period. Should your child choose not to sleep or wake up earlier than two hours there will be quiet activities planned for them.

3-year-old children will be offered a two-hour napping period daily. Should your child choose not to sleep or wake up earlier than two hours, quiet activities are planned for them.

4-5-year-old children will be offered a 30-minute quiet time for everyone. For families who would like their child to nap, a two-hour nap period will be offered daily. Families who do not wish to have their 4- or 5-year-old child take a full two-hour nap will be accommodated. Those children will be provided with activities.

6-12-year-old children will be offered a 30-minute quiet time for everyone.

ORAL HEALTH

Our program believes that “baby teeth” are important for eating, for guiding the permanent teeth into place as children grow, and for self-esteem.

We practice and model good oral hygiene by doing these things:

- All staff receive education about children’s oral health, including information on identifying children who need dental care.
- Each year, children are educated about the care of their teeth in an age-appropriate manner. This may include a visit from a community helper such as a nurse, dentist, or other dental health professional.
- We plan menus around foods that are low in sugar. We include plenty of protein and calcium rich foods like milk, cheese, and eggs, and foods with vitamins C and D.
- In the Infant room, pacifiers are kept clean. Pacifiers are not allowed in the other rooms.
- In the Infant room bottles are used for feeding times while the children are being held and fed by hand from their caregiver.
- In the Mobiles room, sippy cups are used for meals and snacks while the child is being held or is seated at the dining table. **Sippy cups are not allowed in the other rooms.** It is very important to your child’s oral health that sippy cups be eliminated as they grow.

In our program children ages three and up actively participate in tooth brushing during the day.

- To prevent infections from spreading through germs found in saliva and blood, toothbrushes are labeled with individual children’s names. Children do not share toothbrushes.
- An adult actively supervises the children’s teeth brushing.
- Children over the age of two use a pea-sized dab of fluoridated toothpaste (if toothpaste is used during brushing).

- Toothbrushes are rinsed with plain water and stored in a position to air dry (not touching each other) in a cabinet. They are sanitized once a week. Toothbrushes are not stored in the vicinity of flushing toilets.
- Toothbrushes are replaced when bristles are no longer in good condition.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Transportation is provided by Small Wonder Childcare Inc. for children ages 4+ ONLY.

The State of Montana Licensing Requirements for Childcare Centers requires that all childcare centers adhere to the following rules and regulations when transporting children. Small Wonder staff is committed to transporting children safely and within State licensing regulations.

- Provider shall obtain written consent from the parents for any transportation provided. No child will be transported unless permission has been granted on the “*Emergency Medical and Parental Consent*” form.
- The operator of the vehicle shall be at least 18 years of age and possess a valid driver’s license, have a current MVR on file, have rode and driven with an experienced van driver before driving alone, be aware of individual children’s schedules, know the first aid kit location and keep the kit updated, and be aware of registration and insurance information.
- Before transporting children in the vehicle, inspection of the overall condition using the driver checklist located on the dashboard.
- The vehicle shall be maintained regularly, the driver is responsible to report to the Executive Director any problems or needs the van has. The driver is responsible to keep the van clean inside and outside, and to keep the van filled with gas. The tank should never be lower than a quarter of a tank.
- The passenger doors on the vehicle must be locked whenever the vehicle is in motion.
- No vehicle shall begin moving until all children are seated in age and weight appropriate safety restraints, which must always remain fastened while the vehicle is in motion. Children shall not share a safety seat or restraint.
- Children under four years of age may not be transported in a vehicle which does not provide age-appropriate safety restraints or in a vehicle which cannot accommodate a car seat or booster seat that conforms with the NHTSA recommendations.
- Transportation staff will meet individual needs of each child regardless of disabilities in collaboration with school, parents, and IEP’s if applicable.
- Children shall never be left unattended in a vehicle.
- The back of pickup trucks must not be used to transport children.
- All posted speed limits must be obeyed, and the driver will follow all elementary school rules and expectations as well as our transportation policies for the safety of our children.
- The Small Wonder cell phone will accompany the driver; however, the phone must not be used while driving.
- No child will ride in the front passenger seat.

The Executive Director’s vehicle will be the alternate mode of transportation if the center’s van is broken down or in a unique situation.

SICK CHILD POLICY

Small Wonder is a well childcare facility. This means that if your child is not feeling well, for any reason, you will need to find alternate care.

Please do not bring your child if they have:

- Fever (100.4 F) and sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability or confusion. Children can return after 24 hours fever free without any fever reducing medication.
- Diarrhea (runny, watery or bloody stools). Children can return 24 hours after their last diarrhea.
- Vomiting. Children can return 24 hours after they last vomited.
- Body rash with fever
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands
- Severe coughing (child gets red or blue in the face and makes high-pitched whoop after cough)
- Eye discharge (thick mucus or pus draining from eye, conjunctivitis, or pink eye) must be diagnosed and treated for 24 hours before returning.
- Head lice. Child must be fully treated and cleared by the County Health Nurse before returning
- Impetigo. Child can return to childcare if lesions are covered and a written consent from the doctor is available.
- Chicken pox. Child must not return to the center until lesions have dried up and scabbed over. There is an incubation period of 7 to 21 days with the magic number of 14 days after a child has been in contact with an infected child before he/she will break out. If you are aware that your child has been exposed, let the center know immediately.
- Strep Throat. Must be diagnosed and treated by medication for 24 hours before returning.
- Staph Infections. Must be diagnosed by a physician and treated by medication for 24 hours before returning.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without risking the health and safety of other children.
- Positive COVID-19. Follow community health recommendations.

When your child is absent due to illness, please call Small Wonder and communicate what symptoms the child is showing, or any diagnosis. This will allow Small Wonder to reach out to the proper entities if a reportable communicable disease is suspected.

This policy benefits your child in two ways:

- First, by ensuring that your child gets adequate care. You can offer your child the most comfort when he or she is ill and make the best decisions about care, including taking him or her to the doctor if necessary.
- Second, this firm exclusion policy protects your child from contagion when another child is ill. You are ultimately responsible for determining your child's ability to actively participate in the daily activity in the center or on the playground. While we sympathize with the needs of each guardian and their child, we must provide a healthy environment for the other children in the center. A sick child often needs special, one-on-one attention. It is difficult for a caregiver to take time away from well children to devote special attention to a sick child. We appreciate your compliance with our Sick Child Policy. As always, feel free to call if you are uncertain about your child's condition. If your child is not up to par due to illness, please keep your child at home.

MEDICATION POLICY

Under the jurisdiction of the Montana Department of Justice, a law (Dane's Law) now prohibits Montana Childcare Providers, employee, owner, household member, volunteer or operator of a childcare facility to administer medication—either prescription or non-prescription to a child without the **written** consent of the child's parent. The law also prohibits the inappropriate administration of medications.

- Small Wonder will not administer prescription or non-prescription medications without written consent. Please allow yourself the extra time needed to fill out consent forms.
- Parents are required to complete all the details in the medication folder located in the office and to inform the room caregivers about the medications to be given.
- All medications must be in their original container with the name of the child for which the medication was originally prescribed clearly visible. Medication that does not bear the child's name, show clearly its date of issue, dosage to be given, and frequency of dosage prescribed will not be administered.
- Prescribed medications need to be brought in their original container that has the doctor's prescription.
- Staff are required to follow all label instructions. This may require a doctor's note to give medication to children under the age of two. Please check all labels and bring in appropriate doctor notes.
- Samples must be accompanied by a doctor's written prescription.
- Medications are to be given only to the child indicated on the label (twins and siblings cannot share.)
- Parent/Guardian is to give as many doses as possible at home.
- Medications are administered in the office by a lead caregiver and recorded on the *medication log*. Because this is a legal document, both the caregiver and a witness will initial and sign the *medication log* that is used to document that medication has been given to a child.
- **All medications must be placed in a high locked cabinet or locked box in the refrigerator, NOT IN THE CHILD'S BAG OR BOX where other children can reach them. Please give medications to a Small Wonder employee.**
- Out of date medications will not be administered at either center and will be properly disposed of.
- Parents of children with asthma are required to complete a *Plan of Action/Emergency* form at enrollment, which is to be reviewed frequently or if any changes in treatment occur. Where medication for the treatment of long-term conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy is required, either intermittently or on a continuous basis, the parents must provide a **written** Permission to Administer note stating the prescribed period of time from your family doctor.
- If your child requires an EpiPen, a *Plan of Action/Emergency* form and a written Permission to Administer note must be completed by you and your family doctor before it can be administered. Please remember the Epi-Pen must be replaced each year.
- Parents must inform staff if the child has been administered ANY medication during the night, or before arriving in the morning.
- Herbal preparations cannot be administered in childcare.

MINOR MEDICAL CARE/ILLNESS

If your child should become injured or seriously ill while in the care of Small Wonder, he/she will receive immediate emergency care. You will be notified at the time of the emergency by the child's primary caregiver. If you cannot be reached, then the number on your *Emergency Contact* Form will be contacted.

In the event emergency services are required a primary caregiver will call 911. In the event a child ingests any poisonous or toxic substances the primary caregiver will immediately call the Poison Control number 1-800-222-1222.

If your child should require minor medical attention from the staff while attending the center, an *Accident/Incident* form will be completed. Our staff have been trained in Emergency First Aid and CPR as is required by the State of Montana.

INSURANCE

Each child is covered by an accident policy. This policy covers your child while they are in our care and is supplemental to your own personal policy.

SAFETY

NO child will be released to anyone, but the guardians and those people listed on the *Emergency Contact* Form. If there are any custody disputes or people who may **not** pick up your child, let us know in writing. Custody disputes require the court order of protection or parenting plan to be on file. We will not release a child to **a minor** without special prior arrangements. Please keep in mind that we place the safety of each child first. IF an intoxicated or incapacitated person should come to the center, we will not release the child. *Please never put us in this uncomfortable position.*

Small Wonder respects the parental rights to make clear and distinct arrangements between themselves in the event of separation, legal separation, or divorce and remains completely neutral in all such affairs. Small Wonder will abide by any legal documentation (required for enrollment) to provide specific arrangements, needs or allowances for said individual and will agree to ANY plan or arrangement that DOES NOT conflict with our program policies or cause interruption in our daily lives. Small Wonder reserves the right to absolve itself from any mediation between opposed, yet responsible parties.

Our staff is concerned with the safety of your child. We teach children how to use toys and equipment safely, how to cross streets, safety on stairs and in halls, and how to respond if approached by a stranger. Our rules are based on good safety practices. Your support of this expected behavior will reinforce your child's learning.

In case of emergency, we will use the information provided by you on the ***Emergency Contact Form***. Children will not be released to an unauthorized person. Please notify us if there are any changes in the authorized person(s) who will be picking up your child.

In the event a child ingests any poisonous or toxic substances the caregivers will immediately call the Poison Control Number 1-800-222-1222.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Small Wonder believes that every family has a voice and a right to clarification of center policies and procedures and to be treated with respect.

Anytime a parent has a question or concern about program operations he/she will first discuss the question with the supervising teacher or Executive Director. At this time, the parent has the right to voice her/his concerns about the policy. The Executive Director will do her part to explain the reasoning behind the policy in question. If possible, the Executive Director will work towards a compromise concerning the parents' views. If at the end

of the discussion the parent is still unsatisfied with the results, he/she can put his/her concerns in writing that would then be presented to Small Wonder's Board of Directors. The Executive Director will meet with the parents as long as the conversation stays mutually respectful. If at any time, the Executive Director or the parent feels threatened or distressed the two parties may decide that a cooling-off period is necessary and another meeting time will be decided upon, perhaps with a board member in attendance.

Should the safety of other children or staff be at risk, the Executive Director has the right to dismiss a family from Small Wonder's care at any time.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD).

Small Wonder Childcare Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SERVING YOU

We welcome suggestions from the parents, and we sincerely want to serve you and your child in the very best way possible. Your cooperation and your friendship are important to us. Any problems that arise become smaller when we can discuss them with you in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. A child's world should be full of caring and supportive adults that are striving to make the child's world a place of adventure, exploration, and security. We know that the education, happiness, and future of your child concerns us both. Caring together will make all of us more effective in meeting the needs of your child.

Small Wonder Child Care, Inc. Executive Director,

Lacey Gloyne