



# Early Explorers Willard Community Center

## Infant & Toddler Early Childhood Parent Handbook

A guide for families whose children are enrolled in Willard Community Center's Early Childhood Programs.

### Infant & Toddlers Hours of Operation

(Open Monday- Friday 6:30 am-6:00 pm)

[www.willardcommunitycenter.org](http://www.willardcommunitycenter.org)

Located at 1245 S. Folsom Lincoln, Nebraska 68522

Telephone: 402-475-0805

Administered by the Willard Community Center Board of Directors and staff.

Adapted in 2026





### **What the Agency Does**

The Willard Community Center is a non-profit agency receiving funding from United Way, Private and Federal funding, Lincoln Littles, and Program Service Fees. Our programming emphasizes educational enrichment, school-age child care, and adult services.

### **Willard Community Center Offers**

Neighborhood-based services include licensed childcare for children aged 6 weeks to 13 years: full time infant care for 6 weeks - 18 months, toddler program for 18 months to 2 years, full-time and part-time preschool ages 3-5, before and after school care for Roper Elementary School, as well as being the lead agency for the Lakeview Community Learning Center at Lakeview Elementary, and all-day summer programming. Self-help groups, scout groups, licensed Bingo, neighborhood associations, volunteer opportunities, and services for adults and senior citizens bring all ages into the Center. Agency goals include continuing to demonstrate excellence in youth programming, identifying the needs of specific ethnic groups, and forming partnerships with other organizations.

### **Mission Statement**

We help area residents grow, connect, & contribute to our community.

### **Program Statement**

Willard Community Center's program policies are non-discriminatory regarding race, color, national origin, religion, gender, or children with disabilities or special needs. Children are served according to the Program's ability to meet their special needs. Willard Community Center is concerned with the child's strong relationship with his or her family. We encourage parents to visit our program during our hours of operation.

### **Programs Expectations**

Willard Community Center is licensed by the State of Nebraska and committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and responsive environment for infants and toddlers. Our program focuses on building strong relationships, supporting early development, and responding to each child's individual needs through consistent, caring interactions.

We provide individualized care for each child, including feeding, sleeping, and daily routines, based on parent input and the child's developmental stage.

We support children’s growth in the following areas:

- ❖ **Physical Development** – through activities that promote movement, coordination, and the development of both gross motor and fine motor skills.
- ❖ **Social Development** – through positive interactions with caregivers and peers, fostering trust, connection, and early relationship-building.
- ❖ **Emotional Development** – through responsive caregiving that supports secure attachments, emotional expression, and a sense of safety and comfort.
- ❖ **Cognitive Development** – through exploration, sensory experiences, and play that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and early learning.
- ❖ **Language & Communication Development** – through talking, reading, singing, and responsive interactions that support early language development.
- ❖ **Self-Help & Independence Skills** – through daily routines such as feeding, sleeping, and transitions, encouraging growing independence and confidence.
- ❖ **Sensory & Exploratory Learning** – through hands-on experiences that allow children to explore their environment using all five senses.

Willard’s infant and toddler program aligns with Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines and follows best practices through participation in Step Up to Quality.

### **Curriculum**

Willard Community Center utilizes Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers as the foundation for our program. This research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum focuses on building responsive relationships and supporting each child’s individual development through everyday interactions and experiences.

Curriculum is guided by observation, intentional planning, and the interests and developmental needs of each child. Teachers observe children’s play and interactions to plan meaningful experiences that support growth across all developmental areas.

Our classrooms are thoughtfully arranged to support exploration and learning, including age-appropriate interest areas such as:

- Soft spaces for movement and tummy time
- Sensory exploration materials
- Books and language-rich environments
- Music and movement experiences
- Simple cause-and-effect and problem-solving materials

Daily routines, including feeding, diapering, toilet training, and rest, are viewed as important opportunities for learning, connection, and one-on-one interaction between caregivers and children. The daily schedule is flexible and responsive, allowing infants and toddlers to follow their own rhythms while providing a balance of active play, quiet exploration, and caregiver-led interactions.

Our curriculum emphasizes an inclusive, anti-bias approach, ensuring that all children and families are respected and represented. Through diverse materials, books, and interactions, children begin to develop an awareness and appreciation of others in a supportive and welcoming environment.

### **Assessments**

Willard Community Center uses developmental screening and ongoing observation to support each child’s growth during the infant (6 weeks–18 months) and toddler (18 months–3 years) stages.

We utilize the following screening tools:

- **Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3)** to assess developmental progress in communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal-social skills.
- **Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ-SE-2)** to support monitoring of social-emotional development, behavior, and self-regulation.

Screenings are completed:

- Within the first 90 days of enrollment
- Periodically throughout enrollment, based on age intervals and developmental needs

Families are partners in this process and may be asked to complete portions of the questionnaire to provide input on their child's development.

Assessment results are used to:

- Support individualized care and planning
- Identify strengths and areas where additional support may be beneficial
- Guide classroom experiences and interactions
- Strengthen communication and partnership with families

If results indicate a potential area of concern, teaching staff will communicate with families and may provide resources, suggested activities, or referrals for further evaluation if needed. In addition to formal screenings, teaching staff conduct ongoing informal observations during daily routines and play. These observations are documented and used to plan developmentally appropriate experiences tailored to each child. Families may request information about their child's development at any time. Documentation of growth and progress is shared regularly and may be included in the child's portfolio. All assessment information is used to support each child's development and is kept confidential.

### **Calendars/Newsletters**

A monthly calendar and/or newsletter will be shared with families to provide important program information, updates, and reminders.

This communication will include:

- General classroom updates and developmental highlights
- Important dates such as closures, holidays, and special events
- Reminders for items needed (extra clothes, supplies, etc.)
- Program updates and family engagement opportunities

Because our infant and toddler program is individualized and responsive to each child's needs, daily activities and routines may vary. Rather than set themes, communication will focus on developmental experiences, classroom activities, and milestones happening within the program.

Families are encouraged to review all communications to stay informed and connected to their child's daily experiences and development.

### **Sample Daily Schedule (Infants: 6 Weeks–18 Months)**

Infants follow individualized schedules based on their developmental needs, including feeding, sleeping, and diapering routines. The following is a general outline of how the day may flow:

#### **6:30–8:30 AM**

Arrival, greeting, feeding, diapering, and free exploration  
(Individualized care routines begin)

#### **8:30–9:30 AM**

Morning nap (as needed per child's schedule)  
Quiet play and one-on-one interactions for awake infants

#### **9:30–11:00 AM**

Free play, tummy time, sensory activities, and caregiver interaction  
Feeding and diapering as needed

#### **11:00–12:00 PM**

Outdoor time (weather permitting) or indoor gross motor play  
Feeding and diapering as needed

#### **12:00–2:00 PM**

Rest time/afternoon naps (based on individual schedules)  
Quiet activities and caregiver interaction for awake infants

#### **2:00–4:00 PM**

Free play, sensory exploration, and interaction  
Feeding and diapering as needed

#### **4:00–6:00 PM**

Late afternoon play, feeding, diapering, and departures

### **Sample Daily Schedule (Toddlers: 18 Months–3 Years)**

#### **6:30–8:30 AM**

Arrival, greeting, handwashing, and free play  
(Children settle in and explore classroom materials)

#### **8:30–9:00 AM**

Morning snack

#### **9:00–9:30 AM**

Group time  
Songs, books, simple movement activities, and an introduction to the day

#### **9:30–10:30 AM**

Free play and learning centers  
Sensory play, dramatic play, blocks, art, and fine motor activities

#### **10:30–11:15 AM**

Outdoor play or large motor activities  
(Weather permitting; indoor gross motor used as needed)

#### **11:15–11:30 AM**

Transition inside, handwashing, and preparation for lunch

#### **11:30 AM–12:00 PM**

Lunch

#### **12:00–2:30 PM**

Rest time

#### **2:30–3:00 PM**

Wake up, diapering/toileting, and transition

#### **3:00–3:30 PM**

Afternoon snack

#### **3:30–4:30 PM**

Free play and small group activities  
Art, sensory play, music, and guided activities

#### **4:30–6:00 PM**

Outdoor play or indoor gross motor, departures

## **Additional Communication**

In addition to monthly calendars and newsletters, Willard Community Center uses multiple methods to communicate with families and ensure you stay informed about your child's care and daily experiences. A parent communication board is located at or near the classroom entrance and may include important announcements, reminders, and program updates. Families are encouraged to check this regularly for new information.

Daily communication is a key part of our infant and toddler program. Staff will provide updates regarding your child's day, including feeding, sleeping, diapering/toileting, and general activities. This information may be shared through written reports, a digital platform, or direct conversation at drop-off and pick-up. Important notices and updates may also be shared through email. Families who have opted in should check their email regularly for communication from staff and administration.

From time to time, written notices may be placed in your child's designated area or sent home directly to families.

Families are encouraged to communicate openly with staff and share any updates regarding their child's needs, routines, or changes at home.

## **Physical Activity & Outdoor Play**

Willard Community Center promotes daily physical activity and outdoor experiences as an essential part of healthy growth and development for infants and toddlers.

- Infants and toddlers are provided with frequent opportunities for movement throughout the day, including tummy time, crawling, walking, and active play.
- Staff actively engage with children during play, encouraging exploration, movement, and developmentally appropriate physical activity.
- Physical activity is incorporated into daily routines, transitions, and planned experiences in a way that supports each child's individual developmental stage.
- Children are never denied opportunities for active play as a form of discipline.
- Outdoor play is offered daily, weather permitting, and includes a variety of age-appropriate experiences such as:
  - Exploration of the outdoor environment
  - Sensory play
  - Gross motor activities (push toys, climbing, balancing, etc.)
  - Opportunities for both caregiver-led and child-initiated play
- Outdoor play spaces are designed to be safe and appropriate for infants and toddlers, including open areas for movement and equipment that supports early gross motor development.
- Both portable and fixed equipment are available to support a range of developmental abilities.
- To ensure safe sun exposure, sunscreen is applied as needed with parent/guardian permission.
- Screen time (including television, videos, tablets, and phones) is not used in the infant and toddler program.
- A sound machine or soft music may be used in the classroom to support a calm environment, particularly during rest times.

## **Menus**

Willard Community Center requires that families provide a daily lunch for their child. We encourage families to pack a well-balanced, nutritious meal that includes a variety of food groups in alignment with MyPlate guidelines.

Please consider the following when packing your child's lunch:

- Foods should be cut into appropriate sizes to reduce choking risk (e.g., grapes cut, no whole hot dogs, etc.)
- Limit sugary foods and beverages when possible

- Include items your child can safely and independently manage, as we support developing self-feeding skills

Willard Community Center will provide two nutritious snacks each day. Snack menus will be posted and available for families to review. If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, please notify staff. Alternative snack options will be provided as needed to ensure all children can safely participate. All meals and snacks are supervised by staff, who support children in developing healthy eating habits, self-help skills, and positive mealtime routines.

Food will be stored and handled according to health and licensing regulations. Please label all lunch containers with your child's name.

- For health and safety reasons, children are not permitted to share food with one another.

For children who require bottles or specialized feeding:

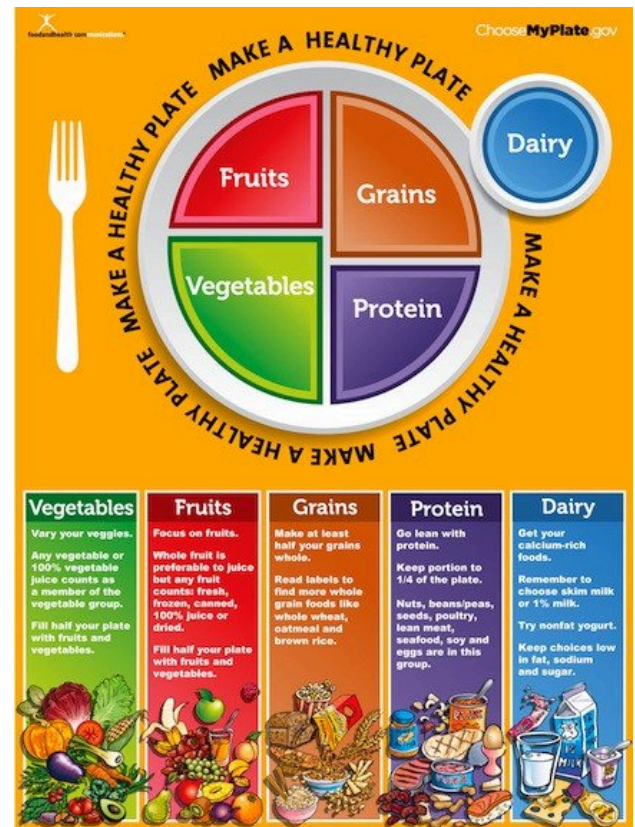
- Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and date
- Families must provide all formula, breast milk, or special dietary items
- Staff will follow the written feeding instructions provided by the parent/guardian
- Any unused milk or formula remaining after a feeding will be discarded

*Please refer to the Formula & Feeding Statement for full details and requirements.*

## **Nutrition (Toddlers)**

Willard Community Center supports healthy eating habits by providing nutritious snacks and creating a positive mealtime environment for all children.

- We offer a variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the week, including fresh, frozen, or canned options (fruit packed in water or juice, not syrup).
- We serve unflavored milk appropriate for the child's age and do not provide flavored milk.
- Drinking water is available to children throughout the day, including during outdoor play.
- 100% juice is limited and offered rarely, if at all. Sugary drinks such as soda, sports drinks, and fruit-flavored drinks are not served.
- Toddlers are encouraged to listen to their hunger and fullness cues. Children are not required to eat all foods offered.
- Staff support children in developing self-feeding skills while providing assistance as needed based on each child's developmental level.
- Teachers and staff model healthy eating habits and create a positive, pressure-free mealtime environment.
- Children are encouraged, but never forced, to try new or less familiar foods.
- Food is never used as a reward or punishment, and children are not required to remain at the table until all food is eaten.
- Classrooms support healthy habits through books, conversations, and daily routines that promote a positive relationship with food.
- Families may be provided with resources and information to support healthy eating habits at home.



## **Family Engagement**

### **Family Photo**

Willard Community Center teaching staff would appreciate you bringing a family picture to display in the classroom. This helps the children when missing home and encourages them to converse with each other about their families.

### **Classroom Opportunities**

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. There are a variety of ways you can become involved in the classroom: • Read a story to children • Share family traditions • Sing a song/ play instruments/teach a traditional dance • Help with art activities • Help with walking adventures around the school • Show children how to use tools • Support your child's learning goals at home • Share family recipes • Help with cooking activities • Eat lunch or snack with your child.

### **Language & Cultural Inclusion**

Willard Community Center values and respects the diverse languages and cultures of the families we serve. If your family's primary language is not English, our staff will make every effort to support communication and help your child feel welcomed and included.

We incorporate children's home languages into the classroom environment whenever possible. This may include greeting children in both English and their home language, using key words and phrases throughout the day, and labeling classroom materials to support language recognition. Teachers also introduce basic concepts, such as colors, days of the week, and common routines, in both English and children's home languages when appropriate.

We welcome families to share cultural traditions, language, and materials (such as books, music, or classroom items). These contributions help create an inclusive environment where all children can learn from and appreciate one another's backgrounds.

### **Interpreters**

If you have any questions and need an interpreter, please contact Willards Community Center Administration. We will do our best to accommodate your needs.

### **Family Feedback**

Willard Community Center values open communication and welcomes feedback from families. Your insights help us understand your child's experience and continuously improve the quality of our programs. We encourage families to share feedback at any time regarding their child's progress, experiences, or any suggestions for improvement. In addition, families will be invited each year to complete an anonymous survey to provide input on our program's strengths and areas for growth. Feedback from families is an essential part of our commitment to providing high-quality care and supporting the development and success of every child we serve.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Willard Community Center's teaching staff is not required to hold parent-teacher conferences. However, if Willard's teaching staff feels that your child may benefit from additional resources or help regarding learning, speech, behavior, or other issues, you may receive a request from your child's teacher to have a conference. If you feel, as the parent, that it is necessary to meet, please never hesitate to reach out to the teacher or administration.

## **Outdoor Play & Off-Site Activities**

Willard Community Center provides age-appropriate outdoor play equipment in a fenced play area located on the west side of our building. Children will have regular opportunities to engage in outdoor play in this safe and supervised environment.

At times, children may also participate in outdoor activities at Schroder Park, which is maintained by Lincoln Parks & Recreation and located near the center. Because this location is off Willard Community Center property, families are required to complete the appropriate section on their child's enrollment form granting permission for their child to participate in off-site walks and park visits. All off-site activities are supervised by staff and conducted in accordance with safety and licensing guidelines.

## **Substitute Teacher**

Should your child's teacher be out sick or on vacation, the teacher's assistant or one of Willard's administrators will substitute in your child's classroom. Willard Community Center's staff and administration stay current with annual training, have completed all required background checks, and are certified by DHHS and Nebraska state licensing regulations to teach your children.

## **Transitioning Classrooms**

Willard Community Center's infant and toddler programs operate year-round to provide consistent care for children and families. Children transition between classrooms based on age, developmental readiness, and available space, rather than a traditional school-year schedule.

Typical transitions include:

- Infant Program (6 weeks–18 months) to Toddler Program (18 months–3 years) to Preschool (3-5 years)
- Within classrooms, children may also experience gradual changes in routines and expectations as they grow and develop

Transitions are planned thoughtfully and occur gradually to support each child's comfort and success. This may include:

- Visits to the new classroom
- Meeting new teachers
- Sharing information between teaching staff and families

Families will be notified in advance of any upcoming transition and will have the opportunity to ask questions and support their child through the process. Willard Community Center offers care throughout the year, including the summer months. Families will be informed of any required enrollment updates or paperwork needed to maintain continuous enrollment.

## **Change of Teacher**

Should Willard Community Center hire a new lead teacher for either program, there will be an open house opportunity for you and your child(ren) to 'Meet the Teacher'. The teacher hired in the lead teaching position will also have a biography available.

## **Notifying Willard Staff of Changes**

It is important to notify the teachers of any changes that may affect your child's temperament or emotional state, such as a move to a new home, a new baby, divorce, marriage, or death in the family. Also, please notify the teachers of any changes in the child's records, such as a change of address, phone number, immunizations, etc.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

Communication between home and center must be ongoing to allow us to provide the best care possible. Notes, phone calls, and daily contacts are encouraged to keep all of us attuned to what is going on in our child's life. Please take time to read any notes that we may send home with your child.

If a misunderstanding should occur, please talk first with the staff member involved, who will do his/her part to resolve any problems. If your concern remains unresolved, please contact the child care director. Conferences will be scheduled as needed, as every effort will be made to resolve your difficulty.

## **Guidance & Behavior Support**

At Willard Community Center, we view behavior in infants and toddlers as a form of communication. Our role is to respond to children with patience, consistency, and understanding while helping them learn appropriate ways to express their needs and emotions.

We use positive guidance and responsive caregiving to support children's development. This includes:

- Building strong, trusting relationships with each child
- Responding promptly to children's needs and cues
- Modeling gentle, appropriate interactions
- Using redirection and providing safe alternatives
- Supporting emerging language and communication skills

Infants and toddlers are still developing self-regulation. Behaviors such as biting, hitting, or throwing are addressed through close supervision, redirection, and teaching appropriate alternatives, rather than punishment. Children are never subjected to harsh discipline, including physical punishment, humiliation, or withholding of care. Time-out or isolation is not used. If a child needs support to calm, staff will remain nearby and provide comfort and guidance.

## **Supporting Challenging Behavior**

If a child demonstrates ongoing or challenging behaviors, Willard staff will:

- Observe and document patterns to better understand the behavior
- Work closely with families to ensure consistency between home and care
- Adjust the environment, routines, or strategies to better support the child
- Provide resources or referrals, when appropriate, including early childhood or mental health specialists

Our goal is to support each child's success through individualized care and full inclusion whenever possible.

## **Safety & Program Expectations**

The safety of all children and staff is our highest priority. If a child's behavior presents a consistent risk of harm to themselves or others, we will work collaboratively with families to develop a plan of support.

In rare situations, if a child's needs exceed what we are able to safely support within our program, alternative care arrangements may be necessary. This decision will be made thoughtfully, in partnership with the family, and after reasonable efforts to provide support and resources.

## **Policy for Child to Rejoin a Program After Expulsion Due to Inappropriate Behaviors:**

(Approved by Willard Board of Directors, March 2021)

1. If a child is removed from a program due to egregious sexual offenses or physical violence, they will not be eligible to participate in any Willard Community Center programs indefinitely.
2. If a child is removed from a program due to other disciplinary issues, the child will not be allowed to apply to be a part of any Willard Community Center programs for at least 1 year after expulsion.
3. If the family/child meets all expectations and is authorized to join a program, the child will be on a 6 month probation period.
4. In order for consideration of reinstatement, the parent will supply the Program Director or designee with the following: a letter asking for reinstatement, a written statement from a professional stating the child's progress toward rehabilitation (i.e., Psychologist, Psychiatrist, School Principal), and any information pertaining to an IEP for the child.
5. If, during the 6-month probationary period, the child exhibits behaviors that warrant expulsion, the child will be removed from the program and will not be allowed to reapply.
6. For the child to continue to be part of the Willard program, all fees associated with the child's attendance must be paid on time. If payments are not received by the due date, the probationary period will end, and the child will not be able to attend. (This also includes keeping up-to-date subsidy authorizations for families who qualify for state assistance.)

## **Policy on Violent Child Behavior & Police Involvement**

Purpose:

This policy establishes procedures for addressing instances of violent behavior by a child that pose a risk to themselves, staff, peers, or property. The goal is to ensure the safety of all individuals while providing clear guidelines on when law enforcement and parents/guardians will be contacted.

Scope:

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Willard to align with the safety protocols.

Procedures:

1. Emergency Response:
  - If a child exhibits violent behavior that endangers themselves, staff, or peers, or causes significant property destruction, staff will take immediate action to ensure safety.
  - This may include evacuating the classroom or designated area to prevent harm.
2. Parent/Guardian Notification, Immediate Pick-Up, and Police Involvement:
  - Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately when their child's behavior necessitates classroom evacuation, results in the destruction of Willard or LPS property, or poses a threat to themselves or others.
  - Parents/guardians or an authorized escort must promptly pick up their child and advise Willard Community Center of the timeframe for when the escort will arrive.
    - If the authorized escort does not pick up during the timeframe, we will call a second time to confirm that an authorized escort is on their way.
    - If the authorized escort does not answer their phone or the time commitment given is not followed, we may reach out to authorities.
    - A parent will be notified before police involvement occurs.
3. Police Involvement:
  - Law enforcement will be called when:
    - A child's behavior presents an immediate and serious safety threat to themselves or others.
    - Efforts to de-escalate the situation have been unsuccessful, and additional intervention is necessary.
    - There is significant destruction of property, creating a hazardous environment.
    - The authorized escort does not arrive during the time commitment if the behavior is ongoing.

- Police involvement will be documented, and parents/guardians will be informed of any legal implications.
4. Follow-Up Procedures & Notifications
- Upon pick-up, parents/guardians may be required to attend a meeting with the administration to discuss support strategies and a re-entry plan.
  - If repeated violent incidents occur, the child may be expelled from the program.
  - Depending on the severity of the incident, expulsion may occur immediately.
    - Per the expulsion policy, a child may not reenter the program for at least a year after expulsion. Documentation from two professionals regarding the child's behavior improvement is required for a child to be readmitted.
  - Willard's Board of Directors and DHHS will be notified immediately following any incident.

**Review & Compliance:**

- This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with best practices and legal requirements.
- Staff will receive training on crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques to manage situations effectively.
- As a governance policy, any changes made will need to be board-approved.

By adhering to this policy, Willard prioritizes the safety and well-being of all students and staff while maintaining a structured and supportive learning environment.

**Inclement Weather**

- ❖ In inclement weather/natural disasters, listen to the radio or watch TV for school closing news. **WE CLOSE WHEN LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS CLOSE.** If a weather day occurs during a school break, Willard will close if parochial, Universities, or other public offices close.

**Fire/Tornado**

An emergency plan is in place, and practice drills are conducted following licensing standards. Parents are encouraged to review that information with the center staff. If the children are in their safe place during a tornado warning, Parents/caregivers need to call the site's phone number. Children may be released to parents or an authorized person, or parents can wait in our safe area until the immediate threat is gone.

**Child Care Weather Watch**

Children's time outdoors is important to their learning. All children will engage in outdoor play when the weather permits. In cold weather, please bring your children with a warm coat, hat, & gloves. On snowy days, the children will play in the snow; please bring snow boots and snow pants. During the summer months, in hot weather, please send a water bottle, so the kids have access to drinks when playing; please also provide Willard with your child's swimsuit and a towel for water play.

- GREEN:** All children will be outside.
- YELLOW:** All children will be outside; staff will pay close attention to children becoming too hot/cold and adjust time outdoors if necessary.
- RED:** All children may go outdoors for a very short time period.

**Air Quality**

If the Lincoln Weather Service has issued an air quality warning, Willard Community Center will remain open, but children will not engage in outdoor activities until the warning has cleared.

**Understand the Weather**

**Wind-Chill**

- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of frostbite
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and frostbite is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed skin will freeze in 1 minute

**Heat Index**

- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
  - 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
  - 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
  - 110° considered *dangerous*
- All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

**Child Care Weather Watch**

**Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)**

Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph									
	Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	
40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27	
30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13	
20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1	
10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15	
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29	
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43	

■ Comfortable for outdoor play    
 ■ Caution    
 ■ Danger

**Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)**

Air Temperature (F)	Relative Humidity (Percent)															
	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100			
80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	83	84	85	86	86	87			
84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	95	96	98	100			
90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132			
94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135						
100	109	114	118	124	129	130										
104	119	124	131	137												

## **Sunscreen & Bug Spray**

Willard Community Center will provide sunscreen for children over 6 months with an SPF of 30 or higher. You must indicate on the enrollment form if you want your child to use Willard's sunscreen. You may bring in another brand with a specific SPF if you choose. Willard Community Center does not provide any bug sprays. If you choose to provide bug spray for your child older than 18 months, we will make sure to label it with your child's name and keep it locked up when it is not being used.

## **Health & Safety Practices**

### **Handwashing**

Willard Community Center does its best to eliminate contagious diseases. Although illness cannot be avoided entirely, it can be minimized. Handwashing is extremely important in our daily routines. To prevent the spreading of illness, Willard's Administrators and staff require that your children wash their hands when they are dropped off in their classroom, before any other activity is performed.

### **Emotional Health**

A child's emotional needs must be met before he/she can have any positive learning experience. Therefore, we ask that all parents say goodbye positively and reassuringly. Even if the child is crying, it is better to say goodbye and walk away than to be discreet.

### **Quiet Time**

Willard Community Center is required by state licensing guidelines to provide a designated quiet time each day. Willard Community Center requires all children in the early childhood programs to rest from 1:00 PM-3:00 PM, with the uninterrupted time that is designated to help your child succeed. Children younger than 12 months will be provided with additional quiet time as needed.

### **Immunizations**

The Health and Human Services has determined that up-to-date proof of immunization is required for all children attending Willard's early childhood programs. Immunization records must be on file within the first 30 days of each new school year.

### **Toilet-Training**

Willard Community Center supports children and families through the toilet learning process in a developmentally appropriate and respectful manner. Toilet learning is a collaborative process between families and staff. When a child shows signs of readiness, staff will work with families to support consistency between home and the program.

Children are not required to be toilet-trained to participate in the toddler program. However, children must be toilet-trained before transitioning to the preschool classroom. Families will be asked to provide necessary supplies (such as diapers, pull-ups, and extra clothing) until their child is fully toilet-trained.

Staff will support children by:

- Encouraging regular toileting routines
- Providing positive guidance and encouragement
- Respecting each child's individual pace and readiness

## **Medications**

The health and safety of your child are our top priorities. To maintain the highest standards, Willard Community Center follows strict guidelines for the administration of medication. Whenever possible, medication should be administered at home. If medication must be given during program hours, the following requirements must be met:

- A Medication Administration Log must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian prior to any medication being administered. Logs are available at the center.
- All medications must be in their original container and clearly labeled with the child's full name.
- Prescription medications must include a pharmacy label with the child's name, prescribing physician, dosage, and administration instructions.
- Over-the-counter medications must be in original packaging and accompanied by written parent/guardian authorization, including dosage instructions based on the child's age and weight when applicable.
- Willard Community Center does not administer over-the-counter gas drops or similar non-essential medications.
- Medication will never be added to or mixed in a child's bottle, food, or drink.
- All medications must be handed directly to staff and may not be left in a child's belongings.

Medication will only be administered by authorized staff in accordance with licensing regulations and center policies.

*Please refer to the Medication Statement for full details and additional requirements.*

## **Emergency Medicine**

To ensure the safety of all children, Willard Community Center requires that any child with a life-threatening condition (including, but not limited to, severe allergies, asthma, or seizures) have required emergency medication available while in care.

- Emergency medications (such as inhalers or epinephrine) must be provided by the parent/guardian, in original packaging, and clearly labeled.
- Medication must be on-site and readily accessible at all times while the child is in attendance.
- If a child arrives without the required emergency medication, a parent/guardian will be contacted immediately to bring the medication to the center.

If required emergency medication is not available, or if the medication has expired, Willard Community Center may be unable to safely care for the child until appropriate medication is provided.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to:

- Ensure all emergency medications are current (not expired)
- Provide replacements as needed
- Communicate any changes in the child's medical needs or care plan

Willard Community Center staff are not able to obtain medication on behalf of families. Medication will only be administered in accordance with center policy and licensing regulations.

*Please refer to the Medication Statement for full details and requirements.*

## **Illness**

To protect the health and safety of all children and staff, families are asked to keep children at home when they are showing signs of illness. Children should not attend the program if they are experiencing symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, eye

drainage, persistent cough, or other signs of a contagious illness. Children should also remain home if they are not well enough to participate comfortably in daily activities or require more care than staff can provide in a group setting.

If a child becomes ill while at the center, families will be contacted and expected to pick up their child promptly.

Children must be **fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication** before returning to care. Additional time at home may be required depending on symptoms and overall wellness. A child may also be excluded from care until a medical provider determines they are no longer contagious and are able to safely return.

Willard Community Center follows local health department guidelines regarding illness and exclusion. Please refer to the illness exclusion chart for specific requirements.

Disease/Illness	Signs/symptoms	Exclusion (how long)
Chicken pox/shingles	-Rash that turns into itchy, fluid-filled blisters -Fatigue, fever, loss of appetite, headache, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes	Yes - At least 5 days after rash begins, or until all blisters have dried
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	-Pink or red color in the white of the eye(s) -Swelling around the eye -Increased tear production -Itching, irritation, and/or burning	Yes - Must have a doctor's note and completion of 24 hours of antibiotics
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	-Sore throat, runny nose, blocked nose, sneezing, dry cough, headache, body aches altered sense of smell	Yes- Must exclude for at least 5 days
Croup	-Loud barking cough that's made worse by crying or coughing -Fever noisy or labored breathing/hoarse voice	Exclude if having trouble breathing while resting or with activity, and must be fever-free for 24 hours
Diarrhea	-Frequent loose, watery stools -Abdominal cramps/pain -lethargic	Must exclude if more than 2 abnormal watery stools in one day are present and stay excluded until no watery stools for 24 hours
Fifth Disease	-Facial rash looks as if the cheeks were slapped -Fever, fatigue, coughing, headache, itching, nausea, runny nose, or sore throat	Must exclude if fever is present. However, once rash appears, the illness is no longer contagious, so exclusion is no longer necessary
Hand, Foot, and Mouth	-Fever, sore throat, body aches, loss of appetite -Sores on the mouth, hands, and feet	Yes- Must exclude until fever-free for 24 hours, and blisters have healed or scabbed over
Head lice	-Itching, visible lice on scalp, and lice eggs (nits) on the hair shafts	Yes- Must be nit-free and live bug-free before returning
Hep A	-Yellowing skin or eyes -Loss of appetite/nausea/vomiting/stomach pain -Fever/fatigue -Diarrhea/dark colored urine	Yes- Must exclude for at least one week after the onset of illness or jaundice.

Herpes	-Tiny, fluid-filled lesions or cold sores around the affected site	Exclude if the child touches sores often or drools excessively
Impetigo	-Itchy, red sores around the nose and mouth that scab over and appear yellow/brown	Yes- Must exclude until at least 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun, and there is no discharge
Influenza A/B	-Fever/body aches/chills -Cough/sore throat -Fatigue/headache -Runny or stuffy nose	Yes- Must be fever-free for 24 hours
Measles	-Cough/sore throat -Runny nose -Inflamed eyes -Fever -Red, blotchy skin rash	Yes- Must exclude for at least 4 days after the onset of rash
Mumps	-Swollen, painful salivary glands that cause puffy cheeks and a tender, swollen jaw -Fever/headache/fatigue/loss of appetite	Yes- Must exclude for 5 days after onset of parotitis (swelling of the salivary glands are located between the ear and the jaw)
Norovirus	-Vomiting/stomach cramping/diarrhea	Yes- Must exclude for a minimum of 48 hours after symptoms resolve
Pertussis (Whooping cough)	-Runny/stuffy nose -Low-grade fever -Mild, occasional coughing -Apnea and cyanosis	Yes- Must have taken antibiotics for 5 days or have a doctors note saying the child can return
Ringworm	-Itchy skin -Ring-shaped rash	Yes- Must exclude until treatment with a prescription oral antifungal medication has begun or doctors note states the child can return
Roseola	-Fever followed by rash on trunk and neck	Yes- Must exclude until fever-free for 24 hours, even if the rash has appeared
Rubella	-Fever/headache -Sore throat -Rash that begins on the face and spreads to the rest of the body -Pink eye	Yes- Must exclude for four days after rash appears
Scabies	-Intense itching -A pimple-like rash that may affect much of the body or be limited to common sites	Yes- Must exclude but can return the day after treatment begins

Strep Throat	-Throat pain that comes on quickly -Painful swallowing -Red and swollen tonsils -Tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth -Fever/headache/rash	Yes- Must exclude until fever-free for 24 hours and have taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours
Unexplained rash	Any form of rash on the skin	Yes- Must exclude until seen by a doctor
Yeast infections	-Rash, white discharge, and itching on infected site	No- The spread of yeast infections is rare but a topical or oral anti-fungal medication may be needed

**Disinfecting Protocol**

If 50% of the children enrolled are absent due to a contagious disease, Willard Community Center will be closed for the next business day (24 hours) to disinfect and sanitize all toys, surfaces, appliances, restrooms, and laundry. Willard Community Center staff and administration will attempt to advise all families no later than 7 pm the evening before closing.

**Shut Down**

Willard Community Center will also close if Lincoln Public Schools shut down due to a pandemic. After that, the administration and the Board of Directors will collaborate on a plan to reopen as soon as possible. Willard Community Center reserves the right to close at any time if state regulations cannot be met due to illness or the Board of Directors' discretion on all other matters.

**Accident Reports**

Accidents or injuries that a child receives during care are reported on the accident/incident form, and every effort is made to make the parent aware of the nature and extent of the injury. Reports will be signed by a Director and filed. If a child hits their head, regardless of the severity, a parent will be notified via a phone call.

Teachers and Administration can make care-related decisions based on:

- Fever
- Open Sores
- Excessive Drooling
- Discomfort/Abnormal behavior
- Two or more loose stools

Parents/Guardians may be required to have their child looked at by a physician before returning to care at Willard Community Center.

**Emergencies**

We must have a number to reach you AT ALL TIMES. In an emergency, we will contact you immediately. If we cannot contact you, we will call the emergency numbers given on the child's registration form. If we cannot contact either parent or the emergency numbers, and immediate medical attention is necessary, 911 will be called.

## **Fire/Tornado**

An emergency plan is in place, and licensing standards require conducting practice drills. Parents are encouraged to review that information with the center staff.

## **Child Neglect/Abuse**

We are required by state regulations to report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. A child will not be released to any person suspected of being under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and proper authorities will be notified.

## **Fees and Payment Procedures**

Tuition must be paid in full and on time for a child to attend the program. Failure to maintain a current account may result in suspension of care unless prior arrangements have been made with the Director.

Payments may be made using the following methods:

- Brightwheel
- Check or money order payable to *Willard Community Center*
- Online payments through Venmo or PayPal via our website: [www.willardcommunitycenter.com](http://www.willardcommunitycenter.com)

Families are responsible for ensuring payments are submitted by the due date. Any outstanding balances may be subject to additional action, including referral to a collection agency. Childcare tuition rates are reviewed annually and may be adjusted as needed, with approval from the Board of Directors.

## **Late Payment Policy**

Willard Community Center requires that childcare tuition be paid in advance, with payment due on the first of each month prior to services being provided. Accounts that become delinquent will receive written notice. Any account remaining unpaid for more than four (4) weeks, without an approved payment arrangement, may be referred to a collection agency at the discretion of the Board of Directors. In alignment with our mission, Willard Community Center recognizes that families may experience occasional financial hardship. In limited circumstances, the Executive Director or designee may approve a temporary payment plan.

- Requests for payment arrangements must be submitted in writing and include the reason for the request and a proposed payment plan.
- Approved payment plans may not exceed a total outstanding balance of \$500 without Board of Directors approval.
- Any balances exceeding \$500 require formal approval from the Board of Directors.

The Executive Director or designee will report outstanding balances and approved payment plans to the Board of Directors regularly. Failure to remain in compliance with this policy, including approved payment plans, may result in suspension or denial of childcare services.

## **Late Pick Up Policy**

Willard Community Center closes promptly at **6:00 PM** for all programs. These hours are set in accordance with licensing requirements and are not flexible.

If a child is not picked up by closing time, late fees will apply as follows:

- **6:01 PM:** \$50.00 per child

- **6:02 PM** and beyond: \$5.00 per minute, per child

Late fees are:

- Charged per child
- Due at the time of pick-up
- Payable directly to staff via cash or Venmo
- Separate from tuition and not billed through Brightwheel

If late fees are not paid by the next business day, care may be denied until the balance is paid in full. If you anticipate being late, you must notify the program. However, notification does not waive late fees. Families receiving childcare subsidy remain responsible for all late pick-up fees.

If a child is not picked up and staff are unable to reach a parent/guardian or emergency contacts, the following steps will be taken:

- Attempts will be made to contact all authorized pick-ups and emergency contacts
- If a child remains at the center at **6:30 PM**, local authorities and Child Protective Services may be contacted

Repeated late pick-ups will result in the following:

- **Three occurrences:** Required meeting with a Director
- **Fourth occurrence:** Termination of childcare services

Families whose care has been terminated due to repeated late pick-ups may request reinstatement after one year. Reinstatement requires all outstanding balances to be paid in full and a written request submitted to the Director.

### **Child Care Subsidy (Title Twenty)**

Willard Community Center accepts Child Care Subsidy (Title XX) through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for eligible families enrolled in our infant (6 weeks–18 months) and toddler (18 months–3 years) programs.

**Provider ID (Folsom Location): 33669472**

To ensure proper billing and uninterrupted care, the following requirements apply:

- **Authorization Required:** DHHS authorization must be received and active before your child’s first day of attendance.
- **Family Responsibility:** Any required **family fee (co-pay)** assigned by DHHS must be paid in full each month. Failure to maintain a current account may result in suspension of care unless prior arrangements have been approved.
- **Registration Fees:** Registration/enrollment fees are not covered by subsidy and are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- **Multiple Provider Arrangements:** If your Title Twenty family fee is being paid to another provider, you must submit written verification from that provider. The letter must include the monthly amount collected and be signed and dated by the provider’s director. Families are responsible for notifying Willard of any changes to this arrangement.
- **Authorization Dates:** Families are responsible for ensuring that authorization remains current. If authorization expires, families must contact their DHHS caseworker for reauthorization. Any lapse in authorization may result in private pay charges for care provided during that time.
- **Delinquent Accounts:** Accounts not kept current may be subject to additional action, including suspension of care or referral to a collection agency, in accordance with Willard Community Center policies.

### **Lincoln Littles Tuition Assistance**

Willard Community Center participates in the Lincoln Littles program to help make high-quality child care more accessible for families. If your family is not eligible for state subsidy or is experiencing financial hardship that impacts your ability to pay for care,

you may qualify for Lincoln Littles' tuition assistance. Families interested in applying for this scholarship are encouraged to contact Willard Administration for more information on eligibility requirements and the application process.

### **Arrival, Departure & Visiting Policies**

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, Willard Community Center follows established procedures for arrival, departure, and daily communication.

#### **Arrival & Departure**

- Children must be signed in and out daily using the designated attendance system (Brightwheel or attendance sheets).
- A parent/guardian or authorized adult must escort the child into the classroom and ensure staff are aware of the child's arrival before leaving.
- At pick-up, families should check in with staff so important information about the child's day can be shared.

#### **Attendance & Communication**

- If your child will be absent, please notify the program by 9:00 AM or as early as possible.
- For children with varying schedules or later arrival times, families are asked to keep staff informed to support staffing, planning, and individualized care.
- Consistent communication helps maintain routines that are especially important for infants and toddlers.

#### **Authorized Pick-Up**

- Children will only be released to a parent/guardian or individuals listed on the child's enrollment form.
- Authorized individuals may be asked to provide valid photo identification at pick-up.
- Children will not be released to anyone who appears unable to safely care for them, including individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol or displaying unsafe behavior. Staff may contact local authorities if necessary to ensure the child's safety.

#### **Late Pick-Up / Emergency Situations**

- If a child remains at the center after closing and a parent/guardian or authorized contact cannot be reached, staff will attempt to contact all emergency contacts on file.
- If no authorized adult can be reached within a reasonable timeframe, local authorities may be contacted to ensure the child's safety.

#### **Visiting**

- Families are welcome to visit the program at any time. We encourage open communication and involvement while maintaining a safe and consistent environment for all children.

### **Emergency Information Policy**

To ensure the safety and well-being of your child, Willard Community Center must be able to reach a parent/guardian or authorized individual at all times.

- Families are required to provide current contact information, including phone numbers and addresses, at enrollment.
- In addition to parent/guardian contact information, families must provide emergency contact names and phone numbers for individuals who can be reached if a parent/guardian is unavailable.
- Individuals listed as emergency contacts are not automatically authorized for pick-up. To pick up a child, they must also

be listed on the child's authorized pick-up form.

- All authorized individuals may be required to present valid photo identification prior to a child being released.
- Families are responsible for ensuring that emergency contacts are aware they have been listed and are available if needed.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify Willard immediately of any changes to contact information or emergency contacts.

Maintaining accurate and up-to-date information is essential to ensuring prompt communication in the event of illness, injury, or emergency.

### **Closure Dates**

Willard Community Center is closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following day
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend, the center may observe the holiday on the preceding Friday or following Monday.

Additional closure days may be scheduled by the Board of Directors for staff training, professional development, or based on projected attendance. Willard Community Center also observes select Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) closure days, including Teacher Plan Days, as determined annually. All scheduled closure dates will be provided to families at enrollment. Families will be notified as early as possible of any changes or additional closures.

### **Emergency Closings & Disaster Preparedness**

In the event of an emergency that may impact the health, safety, or accessibility of the center—such as loss of utilities, severe weather, gas leaks, or other unforeseen circumstances—the Program Administration has the authority to close the program.

If a closure is necessary, families will be notified as quickly as possible using available communication methods. If an emergency requires evacuation, Willard Community Center will follow established emergency procedures and relocate children and staff to a designated safe location until children are picked up.

#### **Primary Relocation Site:**

Mourning Hope Grief Center  
1311 S Folsom Street

#### **Secondary Relocation Site:**

Ray's Lawn and Homecare  
503 West J Street

Families will be notified of the relocation location and asked to pick up their child as soon as it is safe to do so.

### **Confidentiality**

Children's records are open only to authorized employees of Willard Community Center, for DHHS license inspection, for Step Up to Quality Reviews, and to the child's parents or legal guardians.

Thank you for choosing Willard Community Center for your child's Early Childhood Education experience.

**Executive Program Director, Sarah Reinke**

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**Early Childhood Director, Kaylee Ohmart**

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**School-Age Director, Caitlin Sharkey**

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**Lead Toddler Teacher,**

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