
Red Caboose School Age Programs



Parent Handbook

Revised 2014

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Red Caboose Day Care Center Inc. is a non-profit corporation created to provide quality care for children ages 11 months through eleven years. Full and part-time care is available while parents are working or in school. We offer a diverse program that includes a toddler, pre-school, and pre-kindergarten program at our main location, 654 Williamson St. We offer a School Year Program (RC After School) for grades K-2 at Lapham Elementary School (1045 Dayton St.); at Marquette Elementary School (1501 Jenifer Street) for grades 3-5 at and a Summer Camp (Camp Caboose) for grades K-5.

Our program seeks to provide a broad cultural and socialization experience utilizing a wide variety of community resources. Red Caboose does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or national origin in either its enrollment or employment practices; we seek to reflect the cultural diversity of Madison and Dane County.

The Board of Directors is the ultimate policy-making body at Red Caboose. It is composed of parents, staff and community member. The Board receives input and recommendations from the standing and ad hoc committees. These committees include Finance; Personnel; Long Range Planning; Fundraising; Education; Health, Safety, and Nutrition; Facilities; and the School Age Program Advisory Committee. They are made up of parents and staff and are an absolutely essential part of Red Caboose's daily and long-term operation. Moreover, the School Age Program Advisory Committee has been specifically established to meet the needs of the School Age Programs.

The Board hires a Director who is responsible for the overall operation of the center, including personnel, program, finances and the physical plant. Red Caboose School Age staff are able to sit on any hiring committees. The School Age Program Director is responsible for the overall supervision and administration of RC After School and Camp Caboose. Lapham and Marquette each have a Site Supervisor who provides on-site program support and supervision.

Red Caboose is a parent and staff controlled center. We are committed to active, ongoing parent involvement, both on the structural level (policy and decision making through committees and the Board) and in the day-to-day activities within our programs. Involvement may take many forms, and may be of continuous nature, such as membership on the Board or committees, and/or of limited duration.

You are always welcome to spend time in your child's room, unexpectedly or planned, on a regular basis or occasionally. There are many instances in which your participation will be sought, for committees, various volunteering opportunities, fund-raising events, and in-services. Parent participation is a key part in the functioning of Red Caboose.

At RC After School and Camp Caboose, we provide the children with a wide variety of enjoyable educational experiences. The day is divided into periods of structured and free play; large group time and individualized activities; quiet and active play. Our major emphasis is on the social and emotional development of children. We encourage children to express their feelings and ideas, develop language, problem solving and other social skills, and grow in self-confidence and independence. Cognitive skills, fine and large motor coordination, art and music are also an important part of the curriculum.

The environment is stimulating and designed to promote creativity. Everyday activities and routines encourage the children to learn self-help skills and responsibility, and to make decisions. Field trips are an integral part of our program. Knowledge of each child's background, needs and interests helps us work more effectively with that child. In this and in all aspects of programming and the center's functioning, your input is very important.

RC After School and Camp Caboose are licensed by the State of Wisconsin and accredited by the City of Madison's Office of Community Services.

MISSION STATEMENT OF the RED CABOOSE SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM

The Red Caboose School Age Program focuses on the social emotional growth of children and the development of life skills. We strive to ensure that our program is available to all children.

GROUP SIZE AND TEACHER TO CHILD RATIOS

All of our RC After School classrooms remain under 34 children per room. There is one teacher for every 10 to 12 children enrolled in a group. The most common scenarios are either 2 teachers with 20 to 24 children or 3 teachers with 30 to 34 children. Teacher to child ratios are lower on field trips and during activities that require greater supervision.

DIVERSITY

Red Caboose supports all children and families and respects the differences among them. We are committed to serving children and families of all races, cultures, family structures and economic groups, including those who are homeless or have special needs. We believe all children benefit from diversity. We strive to help every child feel proud of his or her own family and culture and to appreciate the rich variety of families in the center and community. Teachers respond to all children's questions and interests in developmentally appropriate ways. We openly discuss diversity issues and actively support all children.

We respect family cultures and invite parents to share traditions with us (special foods, holiday celebrations, favorite music etc.). Staff and parents will plan together how best to present these traditions in the classroom. We hope to give children insight into the different family cultures of their classmates and support children from less well-represented cultural and religious backgrounds by recognizing their experiences in the classroom.

We strive to celebrate most, if not all holidays at RC After School and yet the teaching of religious doctrine is specifically excluded. Staff respond to children's questions about religious holidays factually and non-judgmentally, perhaps beginning, "Some people believe or observe...". These holiday observances are designed to give focus to the passing of the year, to celebrate particular values), and to be fun for the children and staff. Families are welcome to come to our program to help us celebrate any particular holiday and share their experiences.

Our classroom environments reflect the diversity of the world around us. Posters on the walls, books, music and songs, dolls and toys show the children many different kinds of families, cultures, races, ethnicities, and physical abilities of human beings in unbiased and non-stereotypical ways.

Our curriculum, enrollment and holiday policies are designed to encourage a wide variety of families to feel welcome at Red Caboose.

DAILY SCHEDULES OF SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

The following are samples of each type of daily schedule utilized at the Red Caboose School Age Program. Specific schedules and weekly activities are posted in each classroom to keep you informed. Signs are posted in the parent area of each classroom alerting you to the group's whereabouts if they are not in their room.

RC After School Program

Mondays

1:00-1:45 Sign-in, Free Choice, Project
1:45-2:30 Active Play, Free Choice, Project
2:30-3:00 Snack, Free Choice, Project
3:00-4:00 Active Play, Free Choice, Project
4:00-5:00 Project, Free Choice
5:00-5:45 Clean-up, Active Play, 5:00 Box
5:45 RC After School closes

Tuesdays-Fridays

2:30-3:15 Sign-in, Snack
3:15-4:00 Free Choice, Academic Time
4:00-5:00 Active Play, Free Choice, Project
5:00-5:45 Clean-up, Active Play, 5:00 Box
5:45 RC After School closes

Days of Play

Days of Play are offered when schools are closed due to in-services, conferences, or vacations. A variety of activities, field trips, and visitors are planned for the children's enjoyment. When school is not in session all day, our programs are held at Lapham Elementary only, when school is released early then Days of Play are held at both Lapham and Marquette Elementary schools. These programs require a separate enrollment and an additional fee. You can download these forms from our website: www.redcabooseeschoolage.org or obtain them at your child's after school program.

7:30	Site opens (full day)	12:00-1:00	Field Trip/Active Play, Project
7:30-8:15	Free Choice, Project	1:00-3:00	Field Trip/Free Choice, Project
8:15-8:45	Breakfast, Free Choice, Project	3:00-4:00	Field Trip/Active Play, Project
8:45-9:00	Clean-up/Group time	4:00-5:00	Snack, Free Choice, Project
9:00-10:00	Field Trip/Free Choice, Project	5:00-5:45	Clean-up, Active Play, 5:00 Box
10:00-11:30	Field Trip/Active Play, Project	5:45	Center closes
or 10:45-11:30	Early Release Day Sign-In, Free Choice		
11:30-12:00	Lunch (sent from home*)		

* We provide breakfast (Full Days only) and a p.m. snack (daily). Please send a healthy lunch (with no soda or candy included) with your child for any Early Release Day or Full Day Program. We will serve fresh fruit and milk with lunches the parents provide.

Camp Caboose Schedule

7:30 - 8:15	Arrival, Free Choice
8:15 - 8:45	Breakfast by Camp Caboose, Free Choice
8:45 - 9:30	Active Play, Free Choice
	Mondays- Monday Morning Kick Off!
9:30 - 9:45	Morning Meetings
9:45 - 11:15	Group Activities
11:15 - 12:15	Clean-up & Lunch by Camp Caboose
12:00 - 4:00	field trip for all Shooting Stars on Wednesday
12:15 - 1:00	Free Choice
1:00 - 3:30	Group activities/swimming
	Fridays- Friday Fiesta!
3:30 - 5:00	snack by Camp Caboose/free choice/outside play
5:00 - 5:30	clean-up/departure

Please Note: On field trip days, all kids must be at the program site prior to our departure time. **We are not able to delay the departure of the bus for late children!** For the Comets, Field Trips can and do happen at any day and time of the week. Please check with your child's Captain, the Camp Caboose's Parent Board or website to see when your child has a field trip.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE and

RC After School

* All of the following except for priority # 6 apply to children attending Lapham and Marquette Elementary Schools.

- 1) First priority is given to children currently enrolled in the school year programs and in Red Caboose's Grasshopper Room who will attend Lapham. These children will be enrolled in the order of the date of return of the re-registration form until the priority deadline.
- 2) If space remains available, second priority is given to siblings of currently enrolled School Age and Child Care Center children and children of Red Caboose Staff members. These children will be enrolled in order of the date of return of the registration form until the second priority deadline (kindergarten registration day.)

- 3) If space remains available, third priority is given to children currently on the Lapham or Marquette waiting lists. These children will be enrolled in order of their respective wait list as long as the registration form is returned by the second priority deadline (kindergarten registration day.)
- 4) If space remains available, fourth priority is given to children in grades K-5 whose new registration forms are returned by/on kindergarten registration day. These children will be enrolled by a lottery format for each site.
- 5) If space remains available, fifth priority is given to children whose re-registration or new registration forms are returned after the respective deadlines. These children will be enrolled in order of the date of return, based on the number of days difference between the deadline and the return date.
- 6) If space remains available, sixth priority is given to children attending schools other than Lapham or Marquette Elementary Schools. These children will be enrolled only when children in all of the above groups have been enrolled and spaces still exist and will be otherwise enrolled in order of the date of return of enrollment forms.

Days of Play

- 1) Children currently enrolled in the school year programs will be enrolled in order of the date of return of the sign-up form until the deadline or until enrollment meets the level determined by the School Age Program Director, whichever comes first.
- 2) Children not currently enrolled in the school year programs will be enrolled upon parent request if the School Age Program Director determines that there is still space available after the deadline.

Camp Caboose

- 1) First priority is given to children currently enrolled in the school year program as well as RC and Summer Program alumni. These children will be enrolled in the following order (with the date of return as the ordering factor within each category) until the priority enrollment deadline...
 - a. Children requesting full time enrollment for 6 or more weeks of the summer
 - b. Children requesting part time enrollment for 6 or more weeks of the summer
 - c. Children requesting full time enrollment for 3 to 5 weeks of the summer
 - d. Children requesting part time enrollment for 3 to 5 weeks of the summer
- 2) If space remains available after the priority deadline, second priority is given to children who are new to Red Caboose (and those listed above in priority #1 who return registration forms after the priority deadline) who are requesting schedules for 3 or more weeks of the summer. These children will be enrolled in order of the date of return, starting on the first business day after the priority deadline.
- 3) If space remains available by the end of April, third priority is given to children requesting enrollment for 1 to 2 weeks of the summer. These children will be enrolled in order of the date of return of the registration form.

* The School Age Program Director has the ability to resolve any priority issues or conflicts and has the discretion to modify or create exceptions from the priorities as circumstances warrant. All decisions of the School Age Program Director are final.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

The School Age Program Director manages all enrollment matters. All questions or concerns should be directed to the School Age Program Director, regardless of which site a child attends. Confirmations for RC After School and Camp Caboose enrollment will be mailed out to each family as soon as it is possible to do so each year. Days of Play will be confirmed in writing with the initial enrollment and with any additional requested days a confirmation will be made via email or by phone. .

RC After School

Re-Enrollment begins 2 weeks prior to Kindergarten Registration so current families can have priority for care. Enrollment information is generally emailed, sent via USPS to those families who do not have email addresses, available at both after school programs and on our website.

For families to enroll, they need to complete and turn in all of the enrollment paperwork, a deposit for the first week and prior to the upcoming school year, all outstanding balances must be cleared or created into a payment plan that is okayed by the Billing Coordinator.

If a parent wishes to have a child drop-in for a day that is not a part of the child's regular schedule, then that parent needs to contact the School Age Program Director when planning ahead or the Site Supervisor to request last minute drop in days. Drop In Days can be requested no more than a week in advance. Regularly scheduled days cannot be switched for drop-in days.

Days of Play

At the beginning of the school year, sign-up sheets are given to all currently enrolled School Year Program families to sign up for one or more upcoming No Public School Day Programs. These forms are available throughout the year at your child's after school program, on our website or at the daycare center. Early enrollment is one month before the Day of Play or Winter/Spring Camp program. Children are enrolled in order of the date of return of the sign-up form until enrollment meets the level determined by the School Age Program Director. Families are billed for the schedule selected. In order to withdraw from these programs without a fee, a two week notice is required and must be given to the School Age Program Director.

Early Release Day Programs open at 10:45 and run until 5:45.

For Full Day Programs, are for a full day (7:30-5:45) or a half day (7:30-12:30 or 12:30-5:45) on some occasions.

Summer Camp

In early spring, Summer Program enrollment forms are distributed to all currently enrolled School Year families as well as all RC After School and Summer Camp from the previous year. Enrollment proceeds in accordance with the enrollment priorities explained on the previous page.

For families to enroll, they need to complete and turn in all of the enrollment paperwork, a deposit for the first week and prior to the upcoming school year, all outstanding balances must be cleared or created into a payment plan that is okayed by the Billing Coordinator.

Enrollment is limited to a set schedule for the weeks that the family chooses. (For example: M,T,R for 6 weeks.) While it may be possible add weeks or to switch one week for another, it will not be possible to drop individual days or weeks. (See section below on schedule changes and withdrawals.)

Waiting Lists

A waitlist is maintained for RC After School Enrollment, for Camp Caboose Enrollment and for each individual Day of Play. Wait Lists are created on a first come, first serve basis and families will be contacted as soon as a space opens up. This can be days in advance or by 10am the day that care is needed.

SCHEDULE CHANGES & WITHDRAWALS

RC After School and Days of Play

Adding Days: If space allows, the School Age Program Director may authorize adding one or more days to a permanent, part-time, weekly schedule (i.e. T,R to M-F) or enrolling a child for a Day of Play.

Dropping Days &/or Withdrawing: *Two weeks* written notice is required to withdraw, drop a previously scheduled No Public School Day or change a permanent schedule to one with fewer days. (i.e. M-F to M,W,F)

Summer Camp

Adding Days: Any days other than a child's set schedule (see enrollment procedures, Summer Camp) are only available on a drop in basis and can be scheduled up to one week in advance if space remains for the day(s.)

Switching Weeks: An entire week (of the originally chosen schedule) may be swapped for another week of the same schedule at any time if there is space available in the requested week.

Dropping Days/Weeks &/or Withdrawing: Individual days or weeks cannot be dropped. *Four weeks* written notice is required for withdrawal from the program.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Drop-off

During RC After School and on Early Release Days of Play each child walks to his or her RC After School classroom at the end of the school day and is signed in by one of the teachers in that classroom. (At Lapham Elementary Kindergarten students are escorted to their after school program by their classroom teacher.)

For Days of Play and the Camp Caboose children need to be brought to the classroom, signed in and dropped off by a parent or other designated caregiver. Signing a child in and making visual and verbal contact with a teacher are all necessary components of transferring responsibility for a child's care to the teachers at Red Caboose.

During Days of Play and Camp Caboose Days, any children authorized (via written authorization, including arrival time, from a custodial parent) to arrive at Red Caboose on their own are signed in by a teacher. When a child authorized to arrive on his or her own does not arrive by the time stated on the written authorization, a teacher will attempt to contact a parent or emergency contact to confirm that the child is safe and accounted for.

Pick-up

At the end of every program day, any child that is picked up needs to be signed out by a parent or an authorized caregiver and both visual and verbal contact with a teacher needs to be made so that both parties are clear that responsibility for the child has been transferred to the parent or caregiver. (See section below on how someone other than a custodial parent can be authorized to pick up a child.) If a child is gone but not signed out, a teacher will contact a custodial parent to confirm that the child is safe, even if that teacher or another saw a custodial parent on site.

For a child to leave Red Caboose on his or her own, a custodial parent must give written permission, including departure time.

Any time someone other than the custodial parent or guardian comes to pick up a child they must present a photo ID. Only the custodial parent or guardian can give permission for another person to pick up their child.

Pick-up Authorization

If an individual has legal custody of a child/ren, s/he may pick up the child/ren at any time.

If parents have joint legal custody, either parent may pick up the child/ren at any time.

If an individual has sole legal custody, his/her written permission is needed for anyone, including a non-custodial parent, to pick up the child/ren.

WE WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE OTHER THAN A CUSTODIAL PARENT OR GURADIAN WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE CUSTODIAL PARENT OR GUARDIAN.

Minor Pick-up

No child under 18 years old shall pick up a child enrolled at Red Caboose, unless cleared by the Site Supervisor and with a written release from the parent of the RC child who is being picked up.

Absences and Absence Without Notification

When a child will not attend Red Caboose School Age Program on a scheduled day, a parent/guardian must notify the program of the absence either in writing, by phone or by phone message by the times listed below:

After School – 1:15pm on Mon. and 2:45pm Tues. – Fri.

Camp Caboose and Days of Play– 9:00am

Days of Play Early Release Days – 9:00am

If a child has not arrived at Summer Camp or Days of Play by the times listed above and the staff have not been notified of the child's absence, staff will make efforts to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as practical but no later than 11:00am.

During the school year, if a child has not arrived from school within 15 minutes of school's dismissal, School Age Program staff will begin to make efforts to locate the child through contact with MMSD staff and calls to

parent(s)/guardian(s) and emergency contact(s). Staff will make significant efforts to account for all children within 30 minutes of school's dismissal, however if multiple children are absent without notice it may take longer.

If a school age child is authorized to walk to Camp Caboose or Days of Play by him/herself, staff will make efforts to contact the parents(s)/guardian(s) and emergency contacts within 15 minutes of the child's scheduled arrival time.

Repeated absence without notification may be grounds for disenrollment. If a child is absent without notification for two weeks and we are unable to reach a parent or guardian, we will send a certified letter; if there is no reply within one week, the child may be dis-enrolled.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Billing

Red Caboose bills in advance for the month, based on the number of Fridays in the month. The bill shows any past due balance, the tuition charged for each week, payments that have been made, and the total balance due by the end of the month. The bills are mailed or emailed to parents in the school age programs depending on what you chose.

Weekly rates are the same every week of the school year (except the full weeks without any school days during Winter Camp and Spring Camp) regardless of whether or not there are an *Day of Play*, *Early Release Days* or *Winter/Spring Camp* in a given week. Charges for Days of Play and drop-in days are additional to the weekly charges.

Parents will be billed for the days the child is scheduled, whether or not the child is in attendance. If parents wish to add any drop-in days ahead of time, they must check with the School Age Program Director or Site Supervisor. To arrange last minute drop-in days parents should contact the Site Supervisor. (See the section on enrollment procedures.) The charge for drop-in days will be added to the next month's bill.

Payment

Payment is due in advance, on Friday, for the following week. Parents may pay for more than one week in advance if they wish. If a family overpays their account, the over-payment will be credited towards the next month's bill. Any exception to the payment policy must be arranged with the Billing Coordinator.

A \$10.00 late fee will be charged on accounts that are more than two weeks overdue. Subsequently, a \$10.00 late fee may be charged weekly until the account is current. Parents are strongly encouraged to speak with the Billing Coordinator before their account becomes overdue.

The Billing Coordinator may arrange a payment plan with parents who have an outstanding balance. The Billing Coordinator will prepare the written payment plan for the parent to sign; one copy will be kept on file at Red Caboose and one copy given to the parent. The plan must include keeping up with current tuition payments as well as something toward the past due amount. With a payment plan signed and/or at the discretion of the Billing Coordinator, late fees may be waived. Parents may be asked to reduce the number of days their children are enrolled in order to make it easier for them to keep up with the payment plan.

If current parents do not cooperate in making a payment plan, or do not keep up with their payment plan, their child(ren) may be disenrolled. If a child is no longer enrolled, and the parents do not respond to communications from Red Caboose, or do not follow through on their payment plan, Red Caboose reserves the right to send the overdue account to a collection agency. Best efforts will be made to avoid this action and to resolve this issue directly with the parent.

A family withdrawing from Red Caboose will be given a final bill. If tuition is due, full payment should be made by the last day of attendance. If a family has a credit balance, they will receive a refund.

Tuition Assistance and Scholarships

The School Age Program Director and Billing Coordinator are available to give you information about tuition assistance and scholarship options for childcare.

Tuition and Fees

The Board of Directors and the Finance Committee develop a fee schedule annually to generate adequate income to operate Red Caboose. After School and Summer Program rates change in January for the year. A current fee schedule is available from the Billing Coordinator, Site Supervisor or School Age Program Director. This can also be found on our website: www.redcaboose.schoolage.org.

A \$40 registration fee is collected upon enrollment; a \$25 association membership fee is collected upon enrollment and annually thereafter, entitling each family to two half-votes at the annual meeting.

Late Fees for Late Pick Up

If a child has not been picked up at closing time, the teachers will attempt to notify parents or emergency contacts. Teachers will then fill out a late pick-up form, which the parent or other authorized caregiver must sign, stating the time the child was picked up.

A late fee will be assessed in the following increments:

\$6.00 for the first five minutes

\$6.00 for any portion of each additional five minutes will be charged for each child left after

12:30 for half-day programs

5:30 for Summer Program

5:45 for RC After School and Days of Play

These late pick-up fees will be added to the parent's bill, and consistent lateness on the part of parents (more than three times per month or six times in a year) may be grounds for dis-enrollment. Parents will receive a written warning before this action is taken.

Holidays

Red Caboose School Age Program is closed on the following holidays every year:

NEW YEAR'S DAY*, MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY, MEMORIAL DAY, GOOD FRIDAY, 4th of JULY, LABOR DAY, THANKSGIVING, THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS EVE DAY*, CHRISTMAS DAY*, NEW YEAR'S EVE DAY*

* We may be closed on a day other than the holiday depending on our access to school district buildings.

For holidays that fall during an after school week, families will be billed at their regular weekly rate.

For holidays that fall during the full weeks of Winter Break or Spring Break, families will not be billed at all.

For the 4th of July, families whose child(ren) is/are enrolled for that week, will be billed at their regular rate.

HEALTH MATTERS

Health Procedures

Each child shall be observed upon arrival by a staff person for symptoms of illness. Any evidence of unusual bruises, contusions, lacerations or burns shall be noted on the child's record and reported to the Site Supervisor.

Children may not attend when they show the following symptoms: sore throat, eye inflammation, temperature over 100 degrees, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or any illness or condition having the potential to affect the health of other persons. Red Caboose should be notified if a child contracts a communicable illness. If a child has live lice, they may be asked to leave the program.

If any of the above symptoms appear while a child is at our program, a parent will be contacted and asked to take the child home immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts listed on the child's emergency card will be called. It is the parent's responsibility to keep their cards up to date and to inform the emergency contacts of their responsibilities. Children who become ill will be provided with a blanket and isolated (within sight and hearing of a staff person) until a parent or other designated person picks them up.

Staff will take the following into consideration when deciding whether or not to contact a parent regarding a child who is feeling sick, uncomfortable, lethargic or unhappy:

-whether or not the child's illness prevents him/her from participating in routine activities

-whether or not the illness requires more care than our staff can provide without compromising the needs of other children in the group

-whether or not keeping the child on site poses an increased risk to that child, to other children or to adults, due to symptoms including but not limited to cough or mucus discharge

When a child is suspected of having a reportable communicable disease or condition, the City Public Health Department will be notified. Whenever it is determined that a child has a communicable disease or condition, the other exposed children will be watched for symptoms, and the parents of all children will be notified. A child may be readmitted without a statement from a physician after a communicable disease if the child has been absent for the period of time designated by the Department of Public Health. The Public Health Service Guidelines will be used for determining disposition of suspected or confirmed communicable diseases. Red Caboose must comply with applicable statutes and rules regarding exclusion of children.

Any child well enough to come to the program is well enough to go outside. Any exceptions to this must be cleared with a staff person from the child's classroom.

In addition, a child cannot attend Red Caboose if s/he is not in attendance at school the same day due to illness.

Accident and Injury Procedures

Superficial wounds shall be cleaned with soap and water and protected by a band-aid. Ice shall be applied to minor bumps or bruises.

A record of accident or injury shall be filled out, shown to a parent for signature, kept in the child's file and entered in the medical log. Injuries which require attention, but are clearly not life-threatening (a bad bump to the head, a cut needing stitches, etc.) will merit observation and prompt contact of a parent or emergency contact.

In case of a life-threatening accident or injury, or in the case that a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, your child will be transported by ambulance to the closest emergency room (Meriter Hospital) or to the hospital of your choice as noted on emergency card, and you will be contacted as soon as possible.

Medication Procedures

RC teachers can administer prescription or non-prescription medications only under the following conditions:

- a) A signed, dated, *Authorization to Administer Medication* form from you is on file. This medical permission slip must be filled out by you once at the beginning of each new request for the administration of prescription or non-prescription medication and it must be updated at least once a year. This form includes your child's name and birthdate, name of medication (same as on the label), dosage, time/s, and dates.
- b) Prescription medication is in the original container and labeled with your child's name, name of drug, dosage, directions for administering, date, and physician's name.
- c) Non-prescription medication is in its original container, labeled with your child's name, dosage, and directions for administering.
- d) The dosage, times, length of time the medicine is given, and age of child must comply with the instructions on the label. If there are any differences between your request and the label, we cannot give the medicine unless we have written permission from your child's doctor.
- e) "As needed" or "blanket" authorizations that exceed the length of time specified on the label are not acceptable.

Staff will enter a written report in the bound medical log every time that they administer medication.

Parents are responsible for notifying teachers, in writing, of any changes (dosage change, refills, stoppage, etc.) to daily medication. Changes may require a new medication authorization form.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Childcare workers are required by State law to report suspected or known cases of child abuse or neglect. In accordance with this requirement, any Red Caboose staff person with suspicion or knowledge of abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in Red Caboose shall take responsibility to see that it is reported. As soon as possible, he or she shall bring the matter to the attention of the Site Supervisor and/or School Age Program Director, who will assist in the document of the incident and make a report to Dane County Social Services.

After the report has been made, Red Caboose may notify the parent/s that child abuse or neglect, or suspicion thereof, has been reported to the Dane County Social Services; if so, she or he will also inform the County of said notification.

Confidentiality will be maintained in cases where Red Caboose makes a report to the County; discussion will be limited to Red Caboose employees only.

Special Needs

Red Caboose School Age Programs are committed to serving all children and, as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, will make reasonable accommodations to address the special needs of enrolled children and children who wish to enroll.

Every parent will be asked to identify their child's needs at the time of admission, and are required to inform the program if their child develops a special need after enrollment. This helps the program prepare for a successful experience for the child. Special needs may include, but are not limited to: attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity, physical handicaps, disruptive behaviors, learning disabilities, medical conditions or other health impairments.

When a special need is identified, the Site Supervisor and/or School Age Program Director will conduct an individualized assessment of the child. The individualized assessment includes scheduling a meeting between the staff and parents to discuss the extent of the child's needs, to determine whether the Program can meet the needs, and to assess the need for and availability of possible outside resources.

As a part of the individualized assessment, Red Caboose will request information about the child's special needs including, but not limited to, the child's individualized education plan (IEP). Parent cooperation in providing all pertinent information to the program is necessary for a meaningful individualized assessment.

The purpose of the individualized assessment is to explore reasonable accommodations, to determine whether the program can meet the needs of the child without fundamentally altering the program, and to determine if the child's presence poses a direct threat to the health and safety or safety of the other children or teachers.

PRIVACY MATTERS

Confidentiality

All information regarding children and families enrolled in Red Caboose will be considered confidential by the staff, including substitutes and student teachers. The staff will not discuss individual children or families with parents of other children in the center or with anyone outside the center. If the teachers want to talk with a consultant in the community about a particular child, the teachers will talk with the parent and get written permission from them first. (See consultant statement)

Consultants Statement

There are many resources available to the staff at Red Caboose in our community, including public schools, Rainbow Project, and City Day Care. If the staff in a room decides that help, advice, diagnosis, or an outside opinion is needed about an individual child, the teachers, after discussion with the Site Supervisor, the staff will talk with the parent and get the parent's written permission to call in a consultant. The consultant may then discuss the child with the teachers; observe, interview or test the child; and meet with the staff and/or parent.

The consultant may suggest strategies to use with the child at Red Caboose and home, and may suggest further evaluation of the child. A consultant's conclusions or opinions may be one factor in deciding whether Red Caboose has the necessary resources to meet the child's needs.

Access to Records and Information

In the absence of a court order or other legal document specifically prohibiting access to records, conferences, or information, the following policy will be followed by staff.

Natural parents and legal guardians, and persons authorized in writing by a natural parent or legal guardian (for example, step-parent, family friend, grandparent, etc.) shall have access, upon request, to all records and reports maintained on their child. The staff will be available for conferences with the persons mentioned above to discuss the child's adjustment to the program, growth, and development. If necessary, the staff will hold a separate conference for each parent.

The staff will be available to the persons mentioned above to discuss daily events at the program. When a child lives in two households, and both households have contact with the program, the program will routinely make available a copy of any printed material for both families.

CHILD GUIDANCE MATTERS

Behavior Management

The staff provide guidance for children's behavior, so that each child learns how to best function as an individual within a group. The basic expectations, rules, and limits are made known to the children in a clear, understandable way, and consistent follow through is provided. Directions are given in firm, positive terms.

Teachers model problem solving techniques and encourage children to talk and listen to each other, using problem solving skills as developmentally appropriate. Teachers also facilitate conflict resolution when children are not able to resolve conflicts on their own, with an eye toward teaching each child to become increasingly self-sufficient in difficult situations.

The use of "logical or natural consequences" is encouraged when discipline is necessary. Emphasis is placed on the inappropriate behavior, not the child. When a child's behavior is inappropriate, a teacher will discuss with the child the two following topics:

- 1) What needs to happen to make the current situation better? (At this point the child or the teacher may point out the natural consequences of the behavior.)
- 2) What can the child do to help prevent this situation in the future? (And what can the teachers do to help the child be more effective in these attempts?)

As the conversation concludes, the teacher will then encourage the child to take the steps laid out in topic #1 and will ensure that the child is ready to return to the group.

Teachers will discuss challenging behaviors with parents in person at pick-up time or over the phone in order to keep the parents aware of behavior patterns, to access the parents' wealth of knowledge on their children, to create as much consistency as possible between RC and home and to develop strategies to help children be more successful at Red Caboose. The teachers have the opportunity to discuss individual children and behavior problems at weekly room meetings and program staff meetings.

Persistent problems will result in disciplinary action as described in the RC Suspension Policy. (See below.)

Each child has the ability to "take a break" at program and this may be initiated by staff as a last resort in extreme situations such as when a child hurts another child, abuses materials, has excessive tantrums or is repeatedly disruptive or uncooperative. The length of a time-out is determined by the staff person giving the time-out or by the child when s/he feels that s/he is ready to return, but is not to exceed five minutes.

The staff may wish to consult a professional resource person from outside the center for additional evaluation and suggestions, with written permission from the parent (see Consultants Statement).

In accordance with State Licensing requirements, only a qualified childcare teacher may discipline children. In addition, punishment which is cruel, humiliating or frightening to a child is prohibited (spanking, hitting, shaking or any form of corporal punishment; verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about self or family; physical restraint, binding or trying to restrict movement; enclosing in confined space; withholding or forcing meals or snacks.)

Suspension

If a child creates an unsafe environment in Red Caboose's School Age Program, that child may face suspension from the program.

An unsafe environment is created through:

- 1) physical injury of another child or staff member
- 2) attempted physical harm

- 3) inappropriate sexual behavior
- 4) leaving the care of RC staff w/out permission (See Runaway Policy)
- 5) intentional destruction of property
- 6) verbal threats
- 7) verbal abuse
- 8) disruptive &/or disrespectful behavior so persistent that staff attention is taken away from the group for prolonged periods of time

A child's attempt to peacefully mend conflicts and to recognize better choices is a significant component in the overall resolution of any behavioral concern. In situations where the safety of children and staff are compromised, the following steps will be utilized. Our goal is to minimize exposure of all children at RC to a dangerous environment while giving the child in question an opportunity to reflect on his/her personal responsibilities.

When unsafe behavior occurs, staff will:

- 1) utilize positive behavior guidance as defined in Red Caboose policy.
* Physical restraint is not a behavior guidance strategy allowed by Red Caboose policy or state licensing.
- 2) fill out an incident form with the child and Site Supervisor
- 3) discuss the issue with the parent either over the phone or at pick-up

Depending on the severity and frequency of unsafe behavior, the Site Supervisor and/or School Age Program Director will take one or more of the following actions as necessary:

- 1) set up a formal meeting between the child, parent, teacher(s) and Site Supervisor and/or School Age Program Director to establish goals strategies and plans; this may include a referral to school personnel or other resources
- 2) decide on a suspension of at least one day, but not more than one week with reinstatement being dependent on the occurrence of a parent/guardian meeting
- 3) set a restriction on days/times the child is allowed to attend RC on a semi-permanent or permanent basis (or until further notice)
- 4) disenroll the child (See Disenrollment Policy.)

Runaway

Children shall check in with a Red Caboose teacher within 15 minutes of school's dismissal unless the child's parent has made other arrangements with Red Caboose staff. It is a child's responsibility to remain with his or her Red Caboose group at all times unless given permission to do otherwise by a teacher. When a child leaves the care of his or her teachers without permission, teachers are unable to ensure his or her safety.

Prevention

- All children will be notified of their responsibility to remain with the group at all times.
- Appropriate positive behavior guidance techniques will be utilized to encourage children to stay with their group and to discourage running away.
* Physical restraint is not a behavior guidance strategy allowed by Red Caboose policy or state licensing.

Follow-up

- If the child does not return to the group immediately, a teacher will attempt to follow the child when it is safe and possible to do so.
- If the teacher is able to remain with the child and the child has not returned to the group within approximately 5 minutes, a teacher will contact the child's parent to notify the parent of the need for immediate pick-up. The teacher will immediately report the incident to the Site Supervisor.
- If it is not safe and possible for the teacher to follow (for example, single staffing) or the child leaves the building or grounds, a teacher will take appropriate action, including contacting the child's parent and/or calling 911. The teacher will immediately report the incident to the Site Supervisor and s/he will report the incident to the School Age Program Director who will report it to State Licensing within 24 hours.

- If the group is on a field trip, 911 will be called immediately and a call to the parent will follow. The teacher will immediately report the incident to the Site Supervisor and s/he will report the incident to the School Age Program Director who will report it to State Licensing within 24 hrs.

Consequences

- Running away from the program space or group is subject to serious disciplinary action, up to and including disenrollment, as defined in the Suspension and Disenrollment policies.

Disenrollment

Red Caboose may terminate a child's enrollment in the following situations:

- Failure to pay fees or make arrangements with Billing Coordinator.
- Failure to observe rules regarding late fees or other arrival and departure rules.
- Needs of individual child cannot be served by center (see below).
- Failure to submit required child health and immunization information in a timely manner.

Red Caboose tries to meet the needs of each child enrolled in our program. However, it is sometimes necessary to disenroll a child whose needs cannot adequately be met with our available resources.

When actions outlined in the Suspension Policy have been taken and disenrollment is being considered, the teachers, in consultation with the Site Supervisor and School Age Program Director, will initiate a conference, or series of conferences with the parents. The situation will be discussed, and plans will be made for solutions, responsibilities, and follow-up. Options, which will be determined by Red Caboose in its discretion, may include: calling a consultant to observe the child at Red Caboose, behavior modification plans, co-ordination between home and Red Caboose, and scheduling changes.

Disenrollment may be necessary if the staff and/or parents believe that our program is not an optimal placement for the child. Factors to be considered in this decision may include:

- severity and frequency of problematic behavior in the classroom
- demands on staff time
- availability of resources to Red Caboose
- extent of disruption of the classroom
- possibility of danger to the child or others in the class
- ability of staff to meet child's needs
- willingness of parents to work with us, coordinate with school staff, and/or get outside help

Confidentiality among Red Caboose staff will be maintained at all times. Red Caboose staff will keep written records of meetings, etc.

Red Caboose reserves the right to disenroll a child. If the center and parent/s mutually decide that placement at Red Caboose is inappropriate, written notice of withdrawal may be waived.

Parents of children who have been disenrolled can request a meeting with the School Age Program Director to discuss conditions under which re-enrollment would be possible.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT MATTERS

Parent Orientation

Upon enrolling, an orientation will be offered by the Site Supervisor and/or School Age Program Director including a tour of the facility and an overview of Red Caboose philosophy, policies and procedures. At the beginning of each school year and summer an orientation meeting will be scheduled and publicized to parents.

Parent Area

Each classroom has an area set aside for parent information. It is particularly useful for parents to look at the weekly plans, field trip notices and daily reminders. The parent log is located in this area and is the location for parents to leave

notes for staff regarding a child's attendance, notification of variations from routine or any other message for all teachers to see. Additionally, parents will find fliers, forms and an evolving variety of other important materials to be sent home. Most important to the area is the sign in and out sheets. (See the section on attendance matters.)

Classroom Newsletters

The staff and or children in each classroom may periodically create and distribute a classroom newsletter. Any newsletters will be available in the parent area of the classroom.

Annual Meeting

The Red Caboose Annual Meeting is usually scheduled for an evening early in May. There is a delicious organization-wide dinner preceding the meeting and childcare is provided during the meeting. At this meeting, the Board of Directors is elected. If you are interested in serving on the board please contact the School Age Program Director or Executive Director for more information.

Parent Involvement Surveys

Parent involvement at Red Caboose has a long and rich history. From time to time, parents are given a survey listing different areas that parents can choose to volunteer time, services, expertise, and ideas. The staff then know who to approach for assistance in a particular arena.

RC's Board of Directors and Committees

The Board of Directors meets monthly and committees meet as needed. Board meeting notices, agendas, and minutes are posted on the parent board at each RC After School or Summer Camp program. All meetings are open to Red Caboose parents and staff.

Parent Program Evaluations

A mid-year and annual evaluation of RC After School and a Summer Camp evaluation are given to each family enrolled in each respective program. Parent responses help staff identify strengths and areas in which to improve. Parent feedback is important to ensuring that the programs are meeting each parent and child's needs.

Family Night

RC After School holds a potluck each semester and Camp Caboose at the beginning of the summer. These events provide time for staff and parents to talk about the educational program and daily activities in the room, and also presents an opportunity for parent to meet one another discuss issues of interest. The children often create decorations, prepare food, lead activities or present a performance for their families.

Parent Problem Resolution

Any parent who has a complaint or grievance about a *staff person*, is encouraged to talk first with the person in question. If the problem is not resolved, that parent should then talk with the Site Supervisor. If no solution is agreed upon, the issue should be taken to the School Age Program Director.

Any parent who has a complaint about the *program* should first talk to a teacher in his or her child's room. If the problem is not resolved, the parent should then bring the issue to the Site Supervisor, then to the School Age Program Director and finally to the Director. Program policy issues may be referred to an appropriate committee (such as the School Age Parent Advisory Committee), or brought before the Board of Directors.

If you feel that there is an emergency or life-threatening situation or if all other routes have been exhausted, you may notify the State of Wisconsin Regulation and Licensing Division of Community Services, Southern Regional Office. 3601 Memorial Drive, Madison, WI 53704. 243-2400.

PROGRAM ISSUES: RC AFTER SCHOOL

Grouping of Children

There are three groups in separate spaces at Lapham, and two groups in separate spaces at Marquette. The grade levels are mixed within each group. Children are randomly assigned to a group at Lapham, and may "visit" (spending the day with) the other group at times. At Marquette, groups are created based on information available from Lapham staff regarding positive interactions and kids' needs. Group schedules and materials available for discovery and play are very similar between groups at both sites, however activities will vary between groups. The playgrounds will often be used by both groups at the same time and can be a place where children who are not in the same group can interact and build friendships.

School Closings

If Lapham/Marquette School does not open on a regular school day or closes during the school day for any reason (including snow or physical plant problems) Red Caboose will not provide care on that day.

Parents will be charged the usual rate for any child who is scheduled for a day/s that Lapham/Marquette School is unexpectedly closed.

Clothing

In order for children have the option to take part in all activities, it is important that they are appropriately dressed. Winter clothing includes a coat, hat, snow pants, boots, mittens, and a scarf. Teachers take the kids outside for fresh air and exercise every day, except in cases of severe weather.

PROGRAM ISSUES: CAMP CABOOSE

Camp Caboose is designed to meet the developmental needs of children who have completed grades K-5. Age appropriate daily activities, swimming, gymnastics, and field trips are integrated into weekly schedules.

Heat Closures

In the event that the National Weather Service issues a Heat Advisory for 2 or more consecutive weekdays, Camp Caboose will be closed on the second day and any subsequent consecutive days if air conditioned space is not available. Staff will make a significant effort to communicate any closure to all families that may be affected.

Clothing

A swimming suit and towel are necessary many days during summer months. All clothing and other belongings needs to be labeled with each child's name. Parents are welcome to send an extra change of clothing, which can be kept in your child's basket/bin.

Due to the wide variety of activities and locations experienced at Camp Caboose, all staff and children must wear shoes at all times except when swimming. Children are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes that will not limit their ability to participate in any activity. Flip flops and other unsupportive, difficult-to-keep-on shoes are discouraged.

Swimming

Swimming may occur only in the presence of a lifeguard, who shall be in addition to the Red Caboose staff/child swimming ratios. Swimming will not occur during any period in which an official warning is posted. The "buddy" system will be used at all times. Each child will have a partner and will be required to stay with that person while in the water.

POOL: Staff persons must be in the pool area (in the water or on the edge) and one staff person must be present for every 10 children.

BEACH: A staff person must be at least knee to waist deep in the water and must minimize one to one child/staff interactions so as to better monitor all swimmers.

Comets (2nd-5th graders): There must be one staff person in the water for every 10 children in the water and one staff person on the beach for every 14 children on the beach.

Shooting Stars (K-2nd graders): There must be one staff person in the water for every 8 children in the water and one staff person and one other person (e.g., a volunteer) on the beach for every 16 children on the beach.

The Child Care Food Program

Food service at Red Caboose revolves around providing healthy, nutritious meals, incorporating as many fresh, unprocessed foods as possible. Milk is available at most meals. Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and homemade entrees made "from scratch" are emphasized. Use of salt, sugars, and preservatives is minimal, and no foods containing added nitrates are served.

Red Caboose serves:

- a. RC After School: p.m. snack
 - *b. Full Day of Play: breakfast and p.m. snack (milk & fresh fruit are provided with lunch)
 - c. Camp Caboose: breakfast, lunch, p.m. snack
- *Please note on Full Day of Play Programs we ask that you send a healthy lunch (w/ no candy or soda) with your child.

Menus are posted weekly on the parent boards. If a child is a vegetarian, or has food allergies, or other dietary restrictions, the parent needs to note this on the child's health form.

Red Caboose is a participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federal program of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). The CACFP gives financial assistance to childcare throughout the state. In Wisconsin, the CACFP is administered by the Dept. of Public Instruction. Reimbursement to the center is based on a USDA Income form that must be completed yearly.

"This facility is operated in accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origins, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (800)632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339; or (800)845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Additional Policies may be found in the Red Caboose policy book. They are available upon request. State Licensing Regulations and City of Madison Accreditation Standards are available for review in the parent area of each program.