



# The DaVinci Experience Child Care

*2024-2025 Handbook*

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## **The Davinci Experience Child Care**

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# Welcome!

Dear Families,

At the DaVinci Experience Child Care, we strive to provide a welcoming, safe, and educational space for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. To ensure the best possible care for your growing learner, partnering with you is essential. Take the time to carefully read through this handbook so we can start building this mutual understanding. Please do not hesitate with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for choosing us,

Sincerely,

Kristen Tripp

The DaVinci Experience Child Care Director

## Mission Statement

Davinci's philosophy centers around nurturing the 'whole child.' While supporting the development of their busy bodies and brains, we also foster children's caring hearts, unique personalities, various abilities and cultural contexts. Within Davinci's engaging environment and curriculum, we believe in relationship building with children and families, creating developmentally appropriate expectations, and facilitating prosocial skills. We value learning through play, peers, nature, materials, and innate curiosity as well as teachers. Expect to find a homey space with inclusive practices, anti-bias principles, and child-centered approaches.

## Partnering with Families

We want families to feel welcome at DaVinci. Before enrollment, we'd love to schedule a tour with you to answer any questions or concerns. Once you are a part of the DaVinci community, don't hesitate to become involved. Join our parent council, look for classroom activities, DaVinci events, and community resources posted on the classroom agenda and our online Brightwheel calendar. Volunteer sign ups are on our website.

DaVinci celebrates children and families of all cultures, backgrounds and needs. We are committed to supporting those that benefit from additional resources. This may include anything from providing interpretation services for multilingual families to modifying classroom environments or practices to allow for more inclusivity. Call Maine's Help Me Grow at 211 to immediately speak to someone about appropriate agencies and community organizations that may be able to help with issues concerning child development, behavioral assessment, screenings or things such as food and nutrition and dental health for children. Access Maine <https://www.accessmaine.org> at and Maine Families at <https://mainefamilies.org> are great resources as well.

**Continuous Communication:** DaVinci typically messages and or logs information and pictures through the brightwheel app. It is the primary mode of communication, though emails and calls to the director are encouraged when needed. Additionally, DaVinci sends out a weekly staff newsletter, holds a monthly parent council meeting over zoom, holds quarterly conferences, sends out an annual family survey, and is always happy to have a quick chat at pick up or drop off if it does not interfere with childcare schedule and supervision.

**Family Council:** Our family council is a group that meets once a month over zoom for 30 minutes (typically the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30). During this time, directors and or lead teachers will discuss curriculum more intricately, go over any daycare business (building updates, new program ideas, schedule changes etc.), make known volunteer opportunities, and just hear from families on any comments, concerns, or positive notes they may have.

**Observations/Assessments:** DaVinci strives to offer 1-2 observations per week and quarterly assessments for each child at the center (With the exceptions of weeks with child or teacher absences). These observations and assessments are posted through the brightwheel app for families to view.

**Conferences:** DaVinci holds three conferences per year (one conference per quarter). Our conferences include a picture slideshow, observations, artwork, and assessments at our center, and an overview of the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards( MELDs) and where your child is within those standards. When assessing children, DaVinci may use different assessment tools depending on the child and the situation. Here is a link to the different assessment tools being used: [assessment tools we use](#).

**Privacy:** These assessments are used for educational purposes for staff members, for parents to view, and for conferences. The information from observations and assessments are private and are only given to families. With the consent of families, some observations will be used as samples and examples for incoming families (with the name and personal information of the child remaining anonymous).

**Curriculum:** At DaVinci we make all our curriculums in house. After assessing the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of the children within our care, DaVinci carefully crafts curriculums that are in line with the creative curriculum, the MELD's, and our philosophies. These curriculums are noted briefly in the weekly staff newsletter, are talked about in depth at parent council meetings and conferences, and welcome letters upon enrollment each season. DaVinci brings the curriculum to life by creating custom class books, yoga sessions, song circles, art projects, sensory activities, guest speakers and visitors (depending on who is willing to volunteer their time), indoor play with toys and books reflecting the lessons, and

outdoor play. All our curriculums are stored on our DaVinci google drive folder which all staff members have access to. If parents would like to learn more or view our curriculum, they are welcome to schedule a time to go over it with the director and or lead teacher.

Finally, since Davinci is a non-sectarian school, we do not celebrate holidays in any religious way. Instead, we make an effort not only to include traditions from all belief systems of the families in the school, but also to foster respect for the customs of people everywhere. Families are encouraged to participate and share their traditions any time of the year.

## DaVinci's Day-to-Day

There are many aspects to the day-to-day here at DaVinci. Throughout our time with children, we work hard to create a cohesive plan incorporating the daily schedule, room design and materials, and more to create the optimal learning environment for your child. Note, you might see these things described below on a generic level, but we also work as a staff to meet the individual needs. Here are a few details.

**Schedule:** Infant schedules will be based on individual needs. Full-day toddlers and preschoolers will follow this basic schedule outlined below. DaVinci also offers half-day blocks from 7:30-12:30 and 12:30-5:30. Half dayers splitting time with Morse Street School's Pre-K program can expect flexibility with a TBD bus schedule.

<b>7:30-9:00</b>	Arrival / Outdoor Play (weather permitting)
<b>9:00-9:30</b>	Morning Meeting / Snack
<b>9:20-10:15</b>	Small Group Activities / Indoor Play
<b>10:30-10:45</b>	Circle Time
<b>10:45-11:45</b>	Outside Play
<b>11:45-12:30</b>	Lunch
<b>12:20-12:40</b>	Clean-up / Bathroom / Story
<b>12:30-2:30</b>	Rest / Quiet Time
<b>2:30-3:30</b>	Wake-up / Snack
<b>3:30-4:30</b>	Outside Play
<b>4:30-5:30</b>	Wind-down Activities / Dismissal

This is a rough outline of our schedule. However our schedule changes with the seasons and based on the individual needs of the children and the needs of each classroom. More in depth schedules will be shared with families as the seasons change.

In regards to Rest / Quiet Time, preschoolers and toddlers are encouraged to rest on a nap mat each afternoon. They are invited to bring comfort items such as stuffies, blankets and sheets. The State of Maine requires that child care centers maintain quiet time for at least an hour. However, if after a period of time a child does not fall asleep, calm activities will be provided.

**Classroom Design and Materials:** At DaVinci, all our toys and classroom layouts are intentional. We pick toys that specifically work with the unit within the current curriculum. Additionally we believe less is more. We have one toy shelf of toys that is rotated every two to three weeks (depending on unit length). Having fewer specific toys for a limited time aids in more fruitful play. Additionally, the books, dramatic play station, library, and motor movement space is also changed every 2-3 weeks (depending on the unit) to keep our space a continuous environment of discovery and excitement. Our sensory table is consistently changed on a weekly, sometime daily basis as well. Throughout each season, we take account of our floor plan and how it promoted learning for the particular children in our care and the curriculum. The floor plan is typically adjusted on a seasonal basis. Our space is customized by the children with their art work on the walls, handmade class books always accessible within our library (including a family book), visual check in and cubby labels for each child, and mirrors for children to see themselves and their peers in the classroom. Our classroom is self evaluated using the state of Maine environmental checklist at least seasonally to ensure an optimal learning environment for the specific children in our care.

**Outdoor Policy:** Though not a full outdoor program, DaVinci is a nature based program. We believe that healthy immune systems, healthy sensory development, and optimal learning happens in an outdoor learning environment. Because of this, DaVinci is committed to having outdoor play 50%-60% of the day in warmer weather months and 30%-40% of the day in colder weather months. Even during rain, snow, or windy days DaVinci will be outside as much as possible (unless the weather becomes dangerous). As such, children may not attend school without

proper attire. It is our belief that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad dress. Here is what is required if your child is attending our program during cold weather months:

1. At least one warm winter hat
2. 2 pairs of waterproof gloves
3. 2 layers of clothing under winter gear
  - a. Lightweight synthetic as first layer.
  - b. Fleece pants and zip up jacket as second layer.
  - c. Waterproof insulated jacket or insulated jacket with water proof suit to cover.
  - d. Snow suit or pant that are waterproof
  - e. Insulated boots.
  - f. A neck covering of some sort.
  - g. Additionally, multiple extra pairs of clothing, socks, and underwear for children potty training.

As children spend up to 4 hours of their day outside, they can only truly learn and thrive if they stay warm and dry. If outdoor gear is forgotten at home, DaVinci has extras to provide the child. However, if this happens consistently families will not be able to drop off their child until they return with appropriate outdoor wear.

**Nutrition:** At this time, DaVinci does not offer meal plans. We do offer one snack a day and encourage families to bring in a treat of some sort on birthdays. DaVinci snacks are meant to expand children's pallets, and be a nutritious option. We do not provide snack food with the exception of crackers and goldfish. Snacks include but are not limited to:

1. Yogurt
2. Fruit
3. Veggies
4. Hummus, guacamole, or other dips
5. Crackers or pita chips
6. Cheese and deli meats
7. Homemade muffins
8. Homemade no added sugar popsicles
9. Goldfish



Each year DaVinci conducts a nutrition plan review, self assessing what our current plan is, and how we would like to improve going forward.

## Procedures and Finances:

The DaVinci Experience Child Care offers full-time and half-day child care Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. We have openings for up to four infants, ten toddlers and eight preschoolers. Quarterly enrollment spots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to siblings when possible.

**Pricing:** Our pricing per week is as follows:

**Infants— \$360**

**Infant Half Day—\$250**

**Toddlers— \$330**

**Toddler Half Day—\$220**

**Preschoolers— \$300**

**Half Day Preschoolers—\$200**

**Billing:** Families will be billed on a **monthly basis** with the Brightwheel app—our simple and secure payment process. Until all necessary forms are signed and tuition is paid, child care is not guaranteed.

**Daily Check-in and Check-out:** The Family understands and agrees to check-in and check-out their child/ren each drop-off and pick-up period. Checking in and Checking out your child/children each day helps the Center maintain professional and state standards, manage employee time, and keep track of attendance.

1. In order to check in and check out, you must first be registered on the Brightwheel app and download the app to your mobile device.
2. When you are on site to pick up and drop off, open your app, click the check-in or check-out kiosk.
3. Scan the QR code we have posted in the front entrance, on the fence entrance, and on the wall in our cubby section.
4. Once you have scanned the QR code, you will be prompted to enter your 4-digit private code.
5. If for any reason the app is not working, it is your responsibility at that moment to let a staff member know to time stamp your arrival and/or departure.

If someone not yet on a child's approved pick up list is to pick them up, written consent is necessary. This can also be done over email. In addition, a picture or copy of that adult's driver's license is required which will be confirmed upon arrival.

### **Additional Information and Fees:**

- In the event you do not check-in your child/children, you will not receive the daily log or any pictures.
- In the event of a late pick up, Family and Guardians will be granted a one-time allowance within 15 minutes. Following that instance, notification will be sent by email that there will be a charge of \$1 for every minute past the agreed upon pick up arrangement placed on the credit card or withdrawn from the bank account the Center has on file for any future late pick ups.
- Upon enrollment, there will be a full time processing fee of \$70 and a part time fee of \$50. If you forfeit your child's spot after this, there is no refund available.

**Closings and Cancellations:** DaVinci follows the RSU5 school system for vacations and weather closures. [Click here](#) for a link to the RSU5 schedule. Please note that days marked as PLD and ER days are not included in DaVinci closures. DaVinci will be closed in the summer, mirroring the RSU5 last and first day of school.

In the event of a power outage or snow storm, DaVinci will use its best judgment whether to stay open or close (often mirroring the RSU5 school system). At least two hours notice will be given (unless we have to close during the day or unforeseen events lead to last minute closures or delays) over the brightwheel app.

**Open Communication with Licensing and Other Investigations:** At DaVinci, transparency is extremely vital to the safety of children and staff members. As such, DaVinci will always be open and honest with the state licensor regarding any complaints, allegations, or concerns. To avoid any conflicts of interest, all staff members are encouraged to report concerns to the state along with or instead of the director.

## The Rights of Children, Families, and Educators

Here at Davinci, we stress our ethical obligations to the children and families of our center as well as to each other. Please read through the following core values we adhere to:

### Rights of Children:

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

### Rights of Families:

1. A child's family or legal guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for childcare services.
2. A child's family or legal guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the department. The provider must inform them that the licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the premises.

3. Families or legal guardians must be notified by the provider within two business days of any actions taken against the provider by the department, including but not limited to decisions to issue conditional licenses, refusal to renew a license or to impose fines or other sanctions.

For more information please visit [First Focus Campaign for Children](#):

## **Employee Handbook:**

At DaVinci, we value our employees and empower them to grow their professional development and positive work life. Here is some information on our employees' qualifications, training, and vacation policies. If you are an employee looking for your job description, salary information or other details, please see your employee onboarding package.

Note: when the director is not present, the acting director will be a lead teacher of at least 21 years of age. Any employees or volunteers not yet 18-years-old will not be left unsupervised with children.

**Employee Qualifications:** DaVinci strives to hire candidates with education, experience, and enthusiasm around working with young children. Expectations include prior work in child care, high school diploma, fingerprinting and background check, CPR certification, mandated reporter certification, and three references. Without an early childhood education degree or certification, lead teachers should have a desire for continuing education.

**Professional Development:** The state mandate is that all full time daycare employees must have 30 hours of professional development a year and all part time employees must have 20 hours of professional development a year. Each season, DaVinci will close one day for professional development. Families will be given notice at least one month in advance. Employee professional development includes but is not limited to:

1. 3-4 Staff professional development days with inhouse training, team building, group training, and strategy planning.
2. Periodical MRTQ training required to maintain our current rising star standing.

3. Monthly staff observations by the director.
4. 2-3 Staff reviews with the director.
5. 1-2 Professional Development reviews with the director.
6. Weekly check-ins with teachers and directors about curriculum and student plans.
7. A minimum of 1 hour per week (during paid time) for each lead teacher and director for curriculum planning.

**Vacation Policy:** Employees follow the closings and cancellations calendar above. For those salaried, this qualifies as paid time off based on average rate and schedule. What's more, salaried staff members are entitled to five days paid vacation which may not be accumulated from year-to-year. From their start date, all salaried employees also have 3 sick days to be used for mental health or sick time off. Additional days can be accrued. The only exception is maternity leave. If a salaried employee is interested in obtaining maternity leave, it is suggested that they consult the director before becoming pregnant. They can choose to keep their medical needs or family planning confidential, but may ask the director to help them obtain and supplement the cost of a short term disability policy. This policy can then act as maternity leave.

Eligibility of vacation time is established upon completion of four working months from the date of hire. Any vacation time should be submitted for approval by the director as far in advance as possible. Summer vacation requests are due May 1st. Unless given prior approval, employees may only take one week off during the summer months, considered June 15th through September 15th. Also due to staffing, no more than one employee can take vacation at the same time. In the event of conflicting requests, eligibility will be based on a first come, first serve basis.

## **Health and Safety**

At DaVinci, health and safety are of the utmost importance to us. As such, we need to partner with families to make sure that your child(ren) are taken care of. The following speaks to procedures surrounding health and safety.

**Medication Administration:** Families can request medication forms at any time. Medications should be provided in the original container with the pharmacist or

manufacturer's label, the child's name, name of medication, and dosage instructions clearly written. Staff members will keep logs when administered.

When medication is administered by an adult staff member, it will be reported through the brightwheel app under the medication tab. All medications will be kept in a staff restricted area inaccessible to children.

**Safe Sleep Policy:** When it comes to the safety of sleeping young children, DaVinci follows current best practices. To promote quality rest and prevent the unlikely occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the American Academy of Pediatrics currently recommends that children under 1-year-old sleep on their backs without swaddles, blankets, stuffies, or other items.

**Accidents and Injuries:** All staff are required to be CPR and first aid certified in the event of an accident. After tending to the needs of the child, the family will be contacted. Therefore, it's important that all contact information is up to date. Authorization for treatment must be signed at the time of enrollment to ensure your child receives necessary emergency treatment.

Accident reports will be written and shared with families. Serious injuries including but not limited to broken bones, burns, head trauma death must also be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services (D.H.H.S.). Finally, families are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required.

**Incidents, Suspensions, and Expulsions:** At DaVinci, we value the comfort and safety of all of our students. In the event that a child creates an unsafe environment for themselves or those around them, an incident report will be written up. This can be shared with the families and signed at pick up. In the event that similar incidents continue, we recommend scheduling a meeting to discuss ways to better meet the learner's needs. A positive behavioral support plan can be developed if necessary.

After parent involvement and two warnings, DaVinci reserves the right to suspend the child without a refund. If the behavior occurs again, the student will be expelled without a refund. Situations that could lead to suspension or expulsion could include but are not limited to: verbal disruptions, bolting, property destruction, and repetitive aggressive behaviors such as biting. Additionally, all weapons are prohibited at DaVinci.

For families looking for support for children exhibiting dangerous or concerning physical or social/emotional behaviors, [Here's a quick link to what Maine offers](#). Additional resources can also be found [here](#).

**Emergency Procedures:** DaVinci has written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies and natural disasters posted in the child care center. In the unlikely event, children will be evacuated to an emergency location, and families will be notified as soon as possible. If you would like to see the full copy of our emergency response plans, click the link to the [YIKES Plan](#).

In accordance with state law, DaVinci has one fire drill per month and two emergency evacuation drills per month. A log of the drills are kept on file for the DHHS during inspections. If any parent is interested in reviewing our fire drill policies or our logs, we are happy to share that information.

**Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect:** Child care givers are considered mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. Maine law defines this as “a threat to a child’s health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these.” Staff members with any information regarding suspected child abuse and neglect should immediately seek out the director and the director (or some named person) must make an official hotline report. Confidential reports are made to the Maine Abuse Hotline: 1-800-452-1999.

**Management of Communicable Illnesses:** The State of Maine requires that a record of current immunizations be on file within 30 days following admission. Immunization records must be certified by your child’s physician or nurse practitioner and updated yearly in accordance with the recommended schedule for routine health supervision of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Per State of Maine law, exemption from immunization requirements is limited to medical reasons. In the event of a disease outbreak as defined by CDC reporting standards, a child not immunized must be excluded from the child care in accordance with CDC guidance or until the child receives the necessary immunization or proof of immunity is on record.

For the health and safety of your child and all of the children in our child care, please do not bring your child to daycare sick. If a child becomes ill during child care hours the family will be asked to pick up their child within one hour of

being notified. If they are not available, the emergency contact person will be contacted.

After 24 hours symptom free, children can return post fever, vomiting, diarrhea. A full 24 hours after starting treatment for pink eye, scabies, head lice, impetigo, and strep throat, a child can return to DaVinci. Any vaccination requires a 24 hour recovery period. A doctor's note is required for chicken pox, pertussis, mumps, hepatitis A virus, measles, rubella, tuberculosis, RSV and other serious communicable illnesses.

All undefined rashes or bug bites will be reported to parents or guardians. All rashes or bug bites lasting more than 24 hours without clear explanation or doctor's notes will be reported to the state. There is no exception for children who are teething who are experiencing a rash or fever. In the event of a browntail moth outbreak, DaVinci will close down part or all of its outdoor areas (depending on how bad of a presence there is) while the situation is monitored and exterminated. During this time, all children experiencing a rash during the browntail moth outbreak, must stay home until the rash clears up.

Note: child care fees will remain due as normal regardless of how long your child is out sick.