
Hartley Daycare Parent Handbook

2025-2026

Hartley Community Daycare is committed to supporting the growth and development of every child in our care. We utilize comprehensive, research-based tools to assess developmental milestones and provide inclusive practices that ensure all children, families, and staff receive the necessary resources for success.



WHO WE ARE

At Hartley Community Daycare Center (HCDC), our mission is to provide safe, affordable, and high-quality childcare that supports families in achieving their goals. We offer a comprehensive, cognitively-based program for children from two weeks to twelve years old, fostering their development in a nurturing environment.

As a program-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) center, we adhere to the highest standards by participating in the federally funded food program, complying with state licensing requirements, and following best practices. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our IQ4K rating within the state.

Our dedicated staff members are continuously enhancing their skills, completing 12 additional continuing education credits annually, and participating in the state TEACH program to pursue degrees in early childhood education. We take pride in our knowledgeable, caring, and well-trained team, who are committed to creating a safe and enriching learning environment for the children in our community.

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to provide families with a clear and comprehensive understanding of the policies and procedures that guide Hartley Community Daycare. It outlines our approach to safety, health, communication, behavior guidance, daily operations, and your child's well-being while in our care.

Inside, you'll find important information about our daily routines, arrival and pick-up procedures, guidance and discipline philosophy, emergency protocols, health and wellness policies, and the expectations we have for both staff and families. We also include details about how we foster positive child development through intentional programming, professional staff training, and family partnerships.

Our goal is to build a safe, nurturing, and collaborative environment where your child can thrive and where families feel informed, respected, and supported. This handbook serves as a go-to resource to help you understand how we operate and how we work together to provide the highest quality of care and education.



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Program Hours, Closures, and Enrollment Requirements

Hartley Community Daycare is open **Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM**. Our goal is to provide consistent, high-quality care throughout the year while also honoring the needs of our families and staff.

Holiday Closures

The center is closed on all major holidays, including:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

Families are not charged for care on days when the center is closed for a holiday.

Additional Closure Days

In addition to the above holidays, the center may close on select days before or after a major holiday, such as the day before July 4th or the day after Memorial Day. These closures are based on enrollment numbers. If fewer than 10 children are scheduled, the center may close for the day, and billing will be adjusted accordingly. Notice will be given in advance through Brightwheel.

Enrollment Paperwork Requirements

To enroll and maintain enrollment in the program, parents must provide the following required documentation:

- Current physical exam signed by the child's healthcare provider
- Iowa Certificate of Immunization signed by a healthcare official and parent, noting the complete date and source of each immunization or signed, notarized form of religious or medical exemption.
- Authorization for emergency medical and dental care
- Pick-up Permission Form, listing all approved individuals for drop-off and pick-up
- Permission Form for field trips, busing, media release, and inclusion on class lists
- Completed Registration Form with up-to-date information about the child and family

- Signed Billing Contract
- Signed Policy Contract

All forms must be completed and submitted ***prior to your child's start date***. Enrollment is not considered final until all documentation is received and reviewed. Updated forms may be requested annually or as needed to remain in compliance with Iowa DHS regulations.

Clothing and Supplies

Children at Hartley Community Daycare are encouraged to explore, play, and learn through hands-on activities—which means they will sometimes get messy! We ask that families dress children in comfortable, weather-appropriate play clothes that can withstand paint, dirt, spills, and active movement. Please avoid sending children in clothing that you would not want to be stained, damaged, or lost.

We also ask that children wear closed-toe shoes to ensure safety during outdoor play and gross motor activities.

Please provide the following items for your child:


- A full extra set of clothing, including underwear and socks, stored in a labeled gallon-size ziplock bag and kept at the center
- Seasonal outerwear, such as coats, hats, gloves, boots, and sunscreen as needed
- All clothing and personal items should be labeled with your child's name to help prevent loss or mix-ups

In the event of a toileting accident or other incident involving bodily fluids, soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed biohazard bag and sent home at pick-up. Staff will not rinse or wash soiled clothing at the center due to sanitation policies.

While we do our best to help children care for their belongings, Hartley Community Daycare is not responsible for lost, stained, or damaged clothing or personal items. Please keep all non-essential or sentimental items at home.

Medications

To ensure the health and safety of all children, Hartley Community Daycare will only administer medications that have been prescribed by a licensed healthcare provider and are necessary for the child's well-being while in care (e.g., for allergies, asthma, diabetes, etc.).



Parents/guardians must complete a Medication Authorization Form before any medication can be administered. This form must include:

- The child's name
- Name of the medication
- Dosage and time(s) to be administered
- Reason for medication
- Duration (start and end date)
- Signature of parent/guardian

All medications must be:

- In their original pharmacy-labeled container
- Clearly labeled with the child's full name
- Delivered directly to a staff member by the parent or guardian (not sent in backpacks, cubbies, or with the child)

Medications are stored securely in a designated locked area or in a refrigerated unit (if required), and are only accessible to trained staff members who have completed medication administration training. No medication—prescription or over-the-counter—will be administered without written authorization.

Children are not permitted to carry or self-administer any medication, including lip balm, lotion, sunscreen, hand sanitizer, or cough drops. These must also be given directly to a staff member by a parent and follow the same authorization process if needed during the day.

Staff that are trained in medication administration are the only staff allowed to administer medication at Hartley Daycare.

Parents are responsible for picking up any unused medication. Expired medications will not be administered and will be returned or disposed of according to proper safety protocols.

Family Engagement

We believe that families are a child's first teacher and a vital part of our program. At Hartley Community Daycare, we foster strong partnerships with families through open communication, mutual respect, and shared goals.

We hold two formal parent-teacher conferences each year—one in the fall and one in the spring—to discuss your child's developmental progress and set individualized goals. In

addition, we are an open-door center and welcome families to visit, observe, and participate in activities throughout the year.

We strongly encourage families to bring forward any concerns, questions, or suggestions at any time. However, we maintain a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, verbal abuse, mean language, or unprofessional behavior toward our staff. All communication must remain respectful and constructive. Failure to follow this policy may result in the termination of daycare services.

Our goal is to support the growth and development of your child in partnership with you. Staff communicate daily with families through our Brightwheel communication platform, sharing updates, photos, and messages about your child's activities, meals, rest time, and overall well-being. Additionally, we conduct an annual parent satisfaction survey to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement to better serve our families.

We also invite families to become involved in our Parent Advisory Group—POD (Parents of the Daycare). POD meets monthly and is always welcoming new members. This group leads fundraising efforts and works collaboratively with the center to enhance our learning environment and community engagement.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures

At Hartley Community Daycare, maintaining a clean and safe environment is a top priority. Our staff follows strict daily cleaning schedules and sanitizing protocols to minimize the spread of illness and ensure the well-being of all children in our care. All procedures are aligned with **CFOC Standard 3.3.0.2: Cleaning and Sanitizing Toys** and Iowa DHS regulations.

Toy Cleaning Protocols:

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized are not used in our program.
- Toys mouthed by children or contaminated by bodily fluids are immediately set aside and placed in designated bins for proper cleaning.
- Staff clean and sanitize toys using one of the following methods:

1. Hand Washing Method:

- Wash toys with fragrance-free soap and water.
- Rinse thoroughly.

- Sanitize using an approved solution and allow to air dry for the manufacturer-recommended time.
Wooden toys are wiped with a soapy cloth, rinsed, sanitized, and air dried.

2. Dishwasher Method (for hard toys):

- Toys are loaded into a dedicated cycle (not with dishes/utensils).
- Must be dishwasher-safe per manufacturer's label.
- Sanitizing cycle must meet NSF/ANSI 184 standards.

3. Washing Machine Method (for soft toys):

- Machine-washable items (e.g., puppets, play clothes, stuffed animals) are washed in hot water and dried on high heat.
- These items are used by only one child at a time and laundered before reuse.

Additional Practices:

- Play food, pretend dishes, and utensils are cleaned daily and never mouthed by multiple children.
- Indoor toys are not shared between infant/toddler classrooms unless properly sanitized between use.
- Sensory items like play dough are not reused between children or classrooms unless approved and safe.

All cleaning supplies and sanitizers are used in accordance with manufacturer instructions and kept out of children's reach. Our staff is trained to maintain sanitation logs and follow protocols that meet both state and national health guidelines.

Staff Qualifications, Training, and Ratios

At Hartley Community Daycare, we believe the key to high-quality care is having well-trained, knowledgeable staff who are continually learning and growing in their professional roles.

Staff Qualifications

All staff must meet Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) minimum requirements. Each staff member must:

- Be at least 16 years old (staff under 18 are not permitted to be the sole caregiver or transport children)
- Be actively engaged in programming and child supervision

- Complete background checks, fingerprinting, and reference verification prior to working independently with children
- Receive required state and center-specific trainings before and during employment

Staff under age 18 may only work with ***school-aged children*** and must be supervised by an adult staff member. All transportation is handled by staff over 18.

Staff Training and Professional Development

To ensure the safety, development, and well-being of all children in our care, staff participate in ongoing training throughout the year. This includes:

- Two full-day in-service trainings (Fall and Spring), where the center is closed so staff can engage in hands-on workshops and sessions with certified trainers
- Monthly internal check-ins and seasonal coaching sessions
- Regular updates through the Iowa IPoWeR Training Registry to meet state training standards

Parents are notified of all in-service closure dates at least ***one month in advance*** via Brightwheel.

Required Trainings for All Staff:

- **Mandatory Reporter Training** (renewed every 5 years)
- **First Aid/CPR Certification** (renewed every 2 years)
- **Essentials Child Care Training** (12-hour state-mandated foundational course)
- **Universal Precautions**
- **Passport to Early Childhood Education**
- **Civil Rights for CACFP**
- **Food Program-Specific Training** for any staff involved in meal prep or food service

Additional Training Requirements:

Full-time staff are required to complete **6 hours of additional training** per year, focusing on child development, safety, health, or professional ethics. Topics may include trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning, or inclusive classroom practices. A list of approved training options is provided, and all credit is tracked through Iowa's IPoWeR system.

Training directly supports program planning by equipping staff with updated knowledge and tools that improve curriculum delivery, behavior guidance, and health practices. Patterns identified in staff evaluations or classroom observations often guide future training topics.

Staff-to-Child Ratios

We follow all staff-to-child ratios required by Iowa DHS to ensure safety and individualized attention. These ratios are maintained at all times—including meals, transitions, and outdoor play—and are adjusted as needed for mixed-age groups or off-site activities.

Age Group	Ratio
Infants (0–12 months)	1:4
Toddlers (12–24 months)	1:4
2-Year-Olds	1:7
3-Year-Olds	1:10
4-Year-Olds	1:12
School-Age	1:15

Mixed-Age Exceptions (as permitted by DHS):

- Children 4+ years may be grouped with a ratio based on the majority age
- Children 18 months–3 years may be grouped if developmentally appropriate, but if children under age 2 are present, a 1:7 ratio must be maintained
- Ratios may be slightly adjusted during opening (6–8 AM) or closing (4–6 PM) if the total group is under 7 children with no more than 4 under age 2

Field Trips & Off-Site Activities:

For any center-sponsored activity involving five or more children off-site, we provide one additional staff member above the required ratio to ensure safety.

Nap Time:

At least one staff member must be present in each room during nap/rest periods. Ratios may be reduced during this time, except in the infant room, where full ratios must be maintained at all times.

We regularly monitor and adjust staffing to meet these ratios. If staffing concerns arise, they are reported to administration and resolved immediately.

Transportation Policy

Hartley Community Daycare is committed to ensuring the safety of every child during any transportation that occurs as part of our programming. While we do not provide daily transportation to and from home, there are limited instances in which transportation may occur, such as school drop-off/pick-up in partnership with HMS Community Schools and occasional field trips.

Partnership Transportation – Grace Fellowship Van

Our program does not own or operate a vehicle for transporting children. When transportation is needed—for example, for field trips or special events—we partner with Grace Fellowship Church to use their 15-passenger van. Under Iowa Code, this vehicle is considered a school bus equivalent due to its size and purpose, which exempts it from requiring individual car seats or harnesses for children over the age of 2.

In accordance with best practices:

- If children under age 2 are transported, they will be placed in federally approved car seats installed according to manufacturer instructions.
- The van is insured through Grace Fellowship, and we maintain an additional insurance policy to cover all off-site programming and transportation activities.

Only the center director or the on-site supervisor is permitted to operate the van. These individuals:

- Hold a valid driver's license
- Do not transport children under the influence of alcohol, illegal substances, or medications that impair driving
- Are trained in proper loading, unloading, and supervision practices for children in group transport

The director's personal vehicle may be used as a backup vehicle if extra seating is needed and is also covered under our center's insurance policy.

Daily School Transportation – HMS School Bus

During the school year, HMS Community School provides transportation for enrolled children as follows:

- Morning drop-off before school
- Midday transport for 4-year-old preschool

- Afternoon pickup after school

A Hartley Community Daycare staff member is always present at the center to receive the children. The bus driver is not permitted to release a child until a staff member is visible. Staff take immediate attendance when the bus arrives. If a child expected on the bus is not present, staff call the school before the bus leaves to verify the child's location.

Hartley Community Daycare does not provide regular daily transportation beyond this school busing partnership.

Field Trips and Emergency Contact Protocol

Parents will be notified in advance of any field trip that involves transportation. A signed permission slip is required for each trip. During field trips:

- Staff carry emergency contact information for each child
- A first aid kit and cell phone are brought on all trips
- A final attendance check is conducted before leaving the center and again before returning

All children are accounted for, and all transportation safety guidelines are followed throughout the outing.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

Hartley Community Daycare is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment for all children. Our goal is to support children, families, and staff through challenges while minimizing the need for suspension or expulsion. When behavioral or developmental concerns arise, our team works collaboratively with families and professionals to ensure the best outcomes for each child.

To determine individual needs, we begin with ongoing classroom observation and developmental screening. These practices allow staff to understand the child's strengths, areas of growth, and specific needs. From the point of enrollment and throughout the child's time in care, we maintain open communication with families to gain insight into the child's background, routines, and social-emotional needs. When additional support is required, we create an Individual Support Plan (ISP) tailored to the child's unique situation.

Concerns about a child's behavior or development are documented objectively and shared with families in a timely and compassionate manner. Communication may include phone calls, Brightwheel updates, and in-person meetings. Staff provide parents with specific



observations, discuss collaborative strategies, and offer resources for home support. Families receive regular updates to track progress and outcomes.

To ensure that staff feel supported when addressing concerns, we provide access to the center director, PBIS coach, or lead teacher for consultation. Training is a core part of our culture, and our team participates in professional development that includes positive behavior interventions, trauma-informed care, and conflict resolution. Regular collaboration through team meetings ensures that staff are not alone in responding to challenging behaviors.

When behavior presents a consistent challenge, we implement modifications to the environment and routine to better support the child. We partner with outside professionals, such as AEA consultants, Early ACCESS, or therapists, to deliver individualized services. Families may be referred to additional community resources to support the child holistically.


Suspension or expulsion is only considered when all interventions have been exhausted and one of the following conditions apply: the child poses an ongoing, significant safety risk to self or others; the family does not engage in support planning or follow-through; or the child's needs exceed what can be reasonably accommodated within our program and available supports.

If a transition from the program is necessary, we will facilitate a supportive process. A transition meeting will be held with the family, staff, and external professionals. The child's needs will be reviewed, and a written transition plan developed. This plan may include referrals to other programs or therapeutic services, as well as recommendations for continued support. During this time, emotional support is provided to the child, family, and peers to ease the impact of change. Our team will remain in contact with the family to ensure a successful transition.

Emergency Procedures

Hartley Community Daycare maintains comprehensive emergency procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of children, staff, and families in the event of a crisis.

In the case of a fire, staff will follow posted evacuation maps to lead children safely out of the building. Fire drills are conducted monthly at varying times of the day to ensure familiarity across all routines. Attendance is taken once outside, and emergency services are contacted as needed. Staff are trained to calmly guide children to safety while maintaining supervision.



During tornadoes or severe weather, children are escorted to designated shelter areas within the building. These locations are identified on emergency maps and reviewed regularly during drills, which are conducted monthly. Attendance is taken, and children remain in the shelter until the all-clear is given. Staff use visual and verbal cues to reassure children and maintain order.

If a child is missing, an immediate headcount is conducted, and a name-to-face recognition check is performed. While one staff supervises the group, the remaining team searches the grounds and facility. The director is notified right away. If the child is not located within five minutes, 911 is called and parents are informed. All staff remain on-site and cooperate with authorities. A written incident report is completed.

In the event of a dangerous adult or intruder, staff act quickly to remove children from potential harm. Children are brought into a secure, locked area and staff call 911 immediately. The building is secured, and no one is permitted to enter or exit until law enforcement clears the situation. Emergency procedures include safe relocation practices and lockdown protocols.

If a parent or authorized pickup arrives intoxicated, staff will not physically restrain or prevent the child from being released but will call local law enforcement immediately to report the concern. The child's safety remains the priority. Staff will attempt to contact an alternate pickup person whenever possible and document the incident in detail.


Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, or chemical spills are addressed through shelter-in-place or evacuation procedures outlined in our emergency handbook. Staff will contact emergency services and the child's parents, and if necessary, transport the group to a pre-arranged off-site location such as a school or community center. Emergency contact binders and first-aid kits are always taken during evacuations.

For medical and dental emergencies, staff trained in CPR and first aid respond immediately, using the information provided on the child's emergency medical form. Parents are called without delay, and 911 is contacted when necessary. All incidents are documented, and appropriate follow-up is ensured.

These emergency procedures are practiced regularly, reviewed annually, and included in the staff training and orientation process to ensure preparedness at all times.

Supervision Policy

Hartley Community Daycare ensures that all children are actively supervised at all times. Active supervision includes staff being alert, attentive, and engaged with the children in their care, using both sight and sound at all times—never leaving children unattended or



unsupervised. Supervision is maintained during indoor and outdoor play, transitions, basic care routines (such as diapering and toileting), and any time children are away from the program (e.g., field trips or emergency evacuations).

Caregivers are trained during orientation and annually on what active supervision looks like in every environment. Training includes strategies such as zone supervision, scanning and counting, head counts, positioning for clear visibility, maintaining appropriate ratios, and responding immediately to safety risks. Substitutes and support staff receive training prior to working independently with children.

Our staff uses name-to-face recognition checks multiple times per day, particularly during transitions and headcounts. Name-to-face recognition means caregivers call out the child's name while visually matching their face to the name, ensuring an accurate count and awareness of each child's presence and well-being.


Indoors, staff position themselves in a way that allows them to view the entire room, adjusting as needed for group size and activity. Outdoors, teachers divide the space into zones, actively moving through the areas to eliminate blind spots and monitor equipment. During transitions (such as going outside or to lunch), staff lead and follow the group, performing name-to-face checks before and after the move. During naptime, staff remain in the room, keeping children within sight and sound at all times.

Water Play: Our program does not engage in any water play or water activities that involve pools, sprinklers, tubs, or wading pools. If this changes in the future, a separate water play supervision policy including touch supervision procedures will be implemented and shared with families and staff. Touch supervision requires the supervising adult to be within arm's reach of the child at all times during water play.

Bodies of Water: Our program is not located near any bodies of water such as ponds, lakes, or pools. Children do not participate in swimming or go near bodies of water while in care. If the program location or activities change to include access to bodies of water, an updated policy including enhanced ratios, direct physical contact for infants and toddlers, and touch supervision practices for preschool and school-age children will be developed and submitted to DHS and IQ4K.

Safe Sleep Policy

At Hartley Community Daycare, the safety of infants is our top priority. We follow all state licensing regulations and best practices for safe sleep environments for children under 12 months of age. All infants are always placed on their backs to sleep, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Once an infant is able to roll from back to stomach



and stomach to back on their own, they are allowed to remain in the position they assume after being placed on their back.

Infants sleep in CPSC-approved cribs with a firm mattress and a tight-fitting crib sheet. Only one infant is placed in each crib at a time. Swaddling is not allowed in our center. No blankets, pillows, bumper pads, stuffed animals, mobiles, burp cloths, or other items are permitted in cribs at any time. Pacifiers may be used with written parent permission, but must not be attached to any strings, clips, or toys. Bibs, hooded clothing, and any other potentially hazardous items are removed prior to placing an infant in the crib. Pacifier clips are not permitted at any time.

We maintain a temperature-controlled environment and staff monitor infants for signs of overheating during sleep, including flushed skin, dampness, or rapid breathing. Infants are dressed appropriately for the season, and sleep sacks may be used if they are sleeveless and not weighted.

Infants sleep in the same room as their caregivers and are under continuous sight and sound supervision. Staff conduct physical safety checks every 15 minutes, documenting that the infant is breathing comfortably, in the correct position, and free from hazards.

When an infant falls asleep in an unsafe location (e.g., car seat, swing, bouncer), staff immediately move the child to their assigned crib. If an infant arrives asleep in a car seat or other item, they are immediately transferred to a safe crib upon arrival.

Infants are not permitted to sleep in any other position without a signed waiver from the child's primary care physician. The waiver must be on official letterhead or contain a prescription, include the physician's signature, be dated, and list an expiration date.

Each crib is labeled with the infant's name and current developmental ability. Cribs are cleaned and sanitized daily, and sheets are changed whenever soiled or at least weekly. Manufacturer instructions, safety certifications, and owner's manuals for all infant sleep equipment are kept on file in the director's office and reviewed annually.

All staff working with infants receive Safe Sleep training upon hire and annually thereafter, including substitutes and floaters. The training covers AAP guidelines, Iowa HHS rules, and our program's specific policies. Policies are reviewed during orientation and monthly staff meetings to ensure understanding and compliance.

Families are provided with a copy of the Safe Sleep Policy upon enrollment, and they must sign an acknowledgment form confirming they have reviewed and understand the procedures. If the policy is updated, all families receive the revised version in writing.

Playground Equipment and Fall Surfacing Policy

At Hartley Community Daycare, we prioritize the safety, supervision, and developmental appropriateness of all outdoor play areas and equipment. All playground equipment, including large play structures, climbers, and any item requiring assembly, is installed strictly according to the manufacturer's instructions, including secure anchoring where required. Installation records and equipment manuals are kept on-site and available for review.

All staff—including lead teachers, assistants, substitutes, and floaters—receive training on outdoor supervision and playground safety during orientation and annually thereafter. Anyone who is counted in ratio and responsible for supervising children outdoors is trained to inspect equipment, monitor fall zones, manage child behavior around equipment, and respond to hazards.

Our playground uses poured rubber surfacing, a unitary material that is compliant with fall zone and impact attenuation standards outlined in Caring for Our Children Appendix Z. This surfacing is approved and installed to meet depth and safety requirements for all play equipment. Staff regularly inspect the surface for wear, cracking, or damage—especially in high-traffic areas under swings, slides, and climbers. Any concerns are reported and addressed immediately to ensure continued compliance and child safety.

A daily visual inspection of the playground is performed each morning before outdoor play begins. Staff check for broken parts, rust or peeling paint, protruding bolts or screws, sharp edges, splinters, and visible cracks. The stability of handholds and all non-anchored play equipment is assessed. Staff also inspect for hazards such as broken glass, trash, animal waste, discarded cigarettes, or stinging insect nests.

A weekly documented inspection is completed and reviewed by the director. The checklist includes:

- Missing or broken parts
- Protruding nuts and bolts
- Rust, peeling paint, or sharp edges
- Splinters or rough surfaces
- Loose or unstable handholds
- Visible cracks in structures or surfacing
- Stability of non-anchored large equipment
- General wear and tear
- Fall surface condition and coverage
- Environmental debris or hazard.

If a hazard is identified, it is reported to the director immediately. Hazardous equipment or zones are roped off or restricted from use until they are repaired or replaced. Repairs are documented, and families are notified if any major safety issue arises.

Children are taught clear playground rules such as taking turns, using equipment safely, walking near equipment, and maintaining personal space. These expectations are reviewed routinely with children and reinforced daily by staff.

Missing Child Policy

At Hartley Community Daycare, we take every precaution to ensure that no child is ever lost or unaccounted for. Staff maintain **active supervision at all times**, using name-to-face recognition during transitions and frequent headcounts throughout the day. Children are never left alone or allowed to move between spaces without an adult. Doors and gates are kept secured, and staff are trained to maintain appropriate child-to-staff ratios and visibility, especially during transitions, outdoor play, and field trips.

To prevent a child from being overlooked, we implement multiple safety procedures including:

- Performing name-to-face headcounts when children enter or exit a space.
- Assigning staff to specific supervision zones indoors and outdoors.
- Using attendance sheets to track child movements throughout the day.
- Communicating immediately when children leave with a parent, guardian, or authorized adult.

In the event a child is unaccounted for, the following steps are taken immediately:

1. The supervising staff member alerts the director and performs an immediate name-to-face check and headcount.
2. The group is secured in one location with appropriate supervision while available staff begin searching the building, classrooms, restrooms, closets, outdoor areas, and surrounding property.
3. The search is completed calmly but quickly, with staff calling the child's name and checking all possible hiding places.
4. If the child is not located within five minutes, the director contacts 911 and reports the child missing, including where they were last seen.
5. The child's parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified immediately and given details of when and where the child was last accounted for.
6. The director or designee contacts the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Child Abuse Hotline to report the incident, as required by law.



Once the child is found or the situation is resolved, staff complete a written incident report documenting:

- The child's name and age
- The time and place last seen
- Timeline of search efforts
- Emergency contacts notified
- Authorities involved
- Any corrective actions taken

This report is signed, dated, and filed with the director and submitted to HHS if required. A debrief is conducted with all involved staff and the child's family to evaluate the situation and prevent recurrence. Emotional support is offered to the child, staff, and families as needed.

All staff are trained on this policy during orientation and annually thereafter to ensure preparedness and compliance with child safety protocols.


Sign In/Sign Out Policy

Hartley Community Daycare uses the Brightwheel digital platform to maintain accurate attendance records and track daily drop-off and pick-up activity. Parents or authorized adults are required to sign children in and out each day using Brightwheel. The system records the time of arrival and departure, as well as the identity of the individual who drops off and picks up the child. All authorized individuals must be listed in the child's file, and any updates to this list must be submitted in writing or directly through the Brightwheel app by the custodial parent or guardian.

If someone unfamiliar arrives to pick up a child, staff will request photo identification and confirm the person's authorization in Brightwheel or via documentation provided by the family. Children will never be released to an unauthorized individual or to anyone who appears under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These safety procedures are part of staff onboarding and reviewed regularly during staff meetings.

The program maintains a visitor sign-in/sign-out log for any individual who is not a staff member or parent/guardian conducting drop-off or pick-up. The log requires the visitor's name and signature, date and time of arrival and departure, reason for visit, and contact information. Visitors must be accompanied by a staff member at all times and are not permitted to interact unsupervised with children.

In the event that a child does not arrive at their scheduled time and the parent or guardian has not contacted the center, the director or lead teacher will attempt to contact the child's primary guardian within one hour of the expected arrival time. If no response is received,



staff will follow the emergency contact list on file, proceeding to secondary contacts as needed. If the child's whereabouts remain unknown and staff are unable to reach any listed contacts, law enforcement may be contacted to ensure the child's safety.

All attendance records and communication regarding child absences are securely stored and reviewed as needed to ensure ongoing compliance with safety and reporting requirements.

Strangulation Prevention Policy

Hartley Community Daycare takes every precaution to eliminate the risk of strangulation within our program. Strings and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck are not permitted in any part of our care environment. This includes items such as ropes, drawstrings, necklaces, or any other materials that could pose a hazard.

All window blinds and draperies are cordless or equipped with tension devices or tie-downs to secure cords firmly against the wall. No looped cords are present in the facility. This is verified as part of our initial setup and through ongoing classroom safety checks.

Any dramatic play items that include straps, handles, cords, or fabric—such as ties, scarves, necklaces, and boas—are either shortened, removed, or only accessible under direct adult supervision. These items are never accessible to children under the age of three unless a teacher is actively present and supervising play.


Pacifiers are permitted only when not attached to any item, such as strings, bibs, clips, or stuffed animals, regardless of the child's age. This ensures there are no entanglement risks.

At this time, our program does not allow the use of lanyards by children for any purpose. If this policy changes in the future, only breakaway lanyards will be permitted and will be used under staff supervision. All staff lanyards are required to be the breakaway type to reduce any risk of entrapment or strangulation. Staff are trained on this policy during orientation and reminded during annual health and safety training.

These practices are reviewed during daily classroom safety inspections and reinforced regularly through team meetings and health and safety checks.

Behavior and Discipline Policy

At Hartley Community Daycare, we are committed to fostering a nurturing environment built on respect, safety, and developmentally appropriate guidance. Our program **strictly prohibits the use of corporal punishment or any form of physical discipline**. At no time will a child be spanked, hit, pinched, shaken, slapped, or subjected to physical force,



intimidation, shame, belittlement, or humiliation. This includes the use of food, bathroom access, or public embarrassment as a form of punishment.

We use developmentally appropriate behavior guidance strategies that focus on promoting self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and social problem-solving. These include:

- Positive redirection and offering choices
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Creating classroom environments that minimize conflict and overstimulation
- Providing structured routines and clear expectations
- Encouraging children to identify emotions and develop coping strategies
- Using books and storytelling to process common conflicts
- Listening with empathy and validating children's feelings
- Reinforcing positive behavior with praise and attention


Time-out is not used in our program. Instead, teachers help children work through conflicts or dysregulation by providing calm spaces, adult-guided discussions, or offering opportunities for self-reflection as developmentally appropriate.

We create and maintain positive relationships by building trust, offering consistency, and supporting children's growth with kindness and respect. Staff intentionally teach self-regulation, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills through play, modeling, and positive interactions.

All staff—including lead teachers, assistants, substitutes, and volunteers—receive training in positive behavior guidance during orientation and through ongoing professional development, including strategies from the Program-Wide PBIS model and trauma-informed care. Behavior guidance policies are reviewed with staff upon hire and at least annually, and discussed during staff meetings as needed.

When a child demonstrates challenging behavior, the following steps are taken:

1. The caregiver intervenes using the positive guidance techniques listed above.
2. If behavior escalates, the lead teacher documents the incident and consults with the director.
3. Documentation includes a brief description of the behavior, what led up to it, how staff responded, and next steps. This is recorded in our behavior incident log.
4. Parents are notified the same day, either in person at pickup or via Brightwheel, depending on severity. For ongoing concerns, a formal conference is scheduled.
5. If needed, the program collaborates with outside resources such as AEA, CCR&R, or Northwest Iowa Counseling to develop a behavior support plan.



Caregivers are expected to remain calm, consistent, and supportive when responding to behavior. If staff feel they can no longer safely manage a child's behavior despite interventions, a parent meeting will be held, and a written action plan will be created. Families are expected to partner with staff to support implementation of this plan at home and in care.

If a child's behavior continues to pose a danger to themselves or others and all strategies have been exhausted, the director reserves the right to terminate enrollment, following appropriate documentation and communication with the family.

Behavior guidance policies are shared with families in the parent handbook, reviewed during enrollment, and updated as needed. Families are encouraged to ask questions or request support from staff at any time.

Tobacco-Free and Nicotine-Free Policy

Hartley Community Daycare is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and clean environment for all children, staff, and families. We maintain a strict no-tobacco and no-nicotine policy to reduce exposure to harmful substances and promote lifelong wellness.

The use of tobacco and nicotine products is prohibited at all times, including but not limited to:

- Inside the program facility
- On the program's grounds, including playgrounds, sidewalks, and parking lots
- In employee vehicles while parked on the premises
- In any vehicle used to transport children for program-related activities

This includes cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, vape pens, e-cigarettes, and any other tobacco or nicotine-containing product.

In addition, staff, volunteers, or any adult working in the program are prohibited from wearing clothing that smells of smoke while on duty. This is to prevent thirdhand smoke exposure and protect children with asthma, allergies, and other health concerns.

Staff are expected to model healthy behaviors for children at all times. The policy is reviewed during new employee orientation, included in the staff handbook, and posted visibly at all entrances and shared areas. Any violations of this policy by staff may result in disciplinary action. Visitors or parents who do not comply will be reminded of the center's policy and asked to take corrective action immediately.

Oral Health Policy

Hartley Community Daycare is committed to promoting strong oral health habits from an early age. As part of our enrollment process, families are asked to provide the name and contact information of the child's dentist, which is securely stored in the child's file and used in the event of a dental emergency.

Children are given opportunities to rinse their mouths with water after meals and snacks. Toothbrushes are labeled with each child's name, stored individually, and replaced every three months or sooner if needed. Toothbrushing activities are developmentally appropriate and introduced as part of our daily routines.


To support healthy habits, bottles and sippy cups are only allowed during designated mealtimes and never during rest or naptime to reduce the risk of tooth decay and choking. Our nutrition program aligns with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards, offering milk and water as primary beverages and limiting sugary snacks. We serve a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains that support oral health.

Age-appropriate oral health lessons and activities are integrated into the curriculum. Infants and toddlers enjoy songs, books, and role play about brushing teeth. Preschoolers participate in group brushing, dramatic play with dental tools, and educational visits from dental professionals when available. We also participate in the I-Smile™ program through O'Brien County Public Health, which provides on-site dental screenings and fluoride varnish applications twice a year.

In the event of a dental emergency or injury, such as a knocked-out tooth, chipped tooth, or mouth trauma:

- Staff will remain calm and administer basic first aid, such as applying clean gauze to stop bleeding or placing a cold compress to reduce swelling.
- The tooth will be preserved in milk or saline, if possible, and the child will be kept calm and supervised.
- The child's dentist and parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.
- If the dentist cannot be reached or the situation is urgent, the child will be taken to the nearest medical provider, and 911 will be called if necessary.
- A full incident report will be completed and filed.

For families who do not currently have a dental provider, Hartley Community Daycare maintains a resource list of local dentists and clinics, including those who accept Medicaid and sliding scale payment options. This list is made available to families at enrollment and upon request, and is updated annually in partnership with O'Brien County Public Health and the I-Smile™ Coordinator.



Staff receive training in oral health practices as part of their annual professional development. We work closely with families to support consistency between home and school routines.

Biting Policy

Biting is a developmentally typical but distressing behavior that can occur among infants, toddlers, and even preschoolers. At Hartley Community Daycare, we understand that biting is often a result of limited communication skills, sensory exploration, frustration, or the challenges of navigating social situations in a group care setting. Our response focuses on supporting both the child who bit and the child who was bitten, preventing future incidents, and working collaboratively with families.

When a biting incident occurs, staff respond calmly and without anger. The child who was bitten is given immediate care and comfort, and the child who bit is gently guided to understand that biting is not acceptable. Staff encourage the child to help care for the injured peer when appropriate and talk with the child about using alternative strategies, such as words or gestures, to express feelings.

Teachers assess each incident to identify triggers such as hunger, fatigue, teething, or environmental stressors. Staff document observations, examine the context, and modify routines or classroom environments as needed. Parents are included in the process to develop and monitor an individualized action plan. Collaboration with consultants, such as Hand in Hand, may be used if additional support is needed.

First aid procedures are followed for all biting incidents. For bites that do not break the skin, staff clean the area with soap and water, apply a cool compress, and notify parents. For bites that break the skin, bleeding is controlled, the wound is bandaged, and both families are advised to contact their healthcare provider. All biting incidents are documented in incident reports, which are shared with both families while maintaining confidentiality.

Parents can expect open communication, resources on biting, and reassurance that staff are trained and proactive. Names of the children involved are never disclosed to protect privacy. If a pattern of biting persists, a parent meeting will be held to reassess the plan and determine next steps. Our goal is always to ensure the safety and emotional well-being of all children while guiding them toward positive behaviors.

Sick Child Policy

Hartley Community Daycare strives to maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff. We understand that it can be challenging for families to miss work due to a sick child, but keeping ill children at home is critical to preventing the spread of illness in a group setting. Families are encouraged to make alternate care arrangements in the event their child becomes ill or must be picked up early.

Children will be excluded from care if their illness prevents participation in normal activities, requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the well-being of others, or meets any of the following symptoms: fever of 100°F or higher with signs of illness, vomiting, diarrhea that cannot be contained, pink eye with discharge, strep throat or impetigo (until 24 hours after treatment), head lice (until nit-free), and chickenpox (until all lesions are dry and crusted).

If symptoms begin at the center, families will be contacted and are required to pick up their child within 1.5 hours. Children may return to the program once they are symptom-free without medication for 24 hours, or after completing 24 hours of antibiotic treatment. They must also be able to participate comfortably in all regular program activities, including outdoor play.

All illness-related absences and exclusions are handled with discretion. When a contagious illness is identified, an anonymous notice will be posted to inform other families. If a child returns too soon after illness, they may be sent home again to prevent further spread. The sick policy is reviewed during enrollment, and families are asked to sign an acknowledgment form.

HCDC Assessment and Screening Practices

2025-2026

Hartley Community Daycare is committed to supporting the growth and development of every child in our care. We utilize comprehensive, research-based tools to assess developmental milestones and provide inclusive practices that ensure all children, families, and staff receive the necessary resources for success.

Developmental Screening and Monitoring

Approved Developmental Screening Tools

Hartley Community Daycare uses the following tools to monitor children's development:

- **Initial Screening:**
We administer the **Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ)** for all children ages **0–66 months** upon enrollment. The ASQ is a valid, research-based developmental screening tool that engages parents in identifying their child's strengths and areas that may require additional support.
- **Ongoing Monthly Assessments:**
Staff conduct **monthly developmental observations and assessments** using tools aligned with the **Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS)** and the **Experience Curriculum**. These tools help monitor progress in key developmental domains and individualize learning opportunities.

Screening Schedule and Process

- **ASQ Screening:** Completed **within 60 days** of enrollment for all children under 5.5 years old.
- **Monthly Assessments:** Conducted **ongoing** throughout the year to track developmental growth and inform instructional planning.
- Families complete the ASQ screening in collaboration with staff, either online or in person.

- The ASQ includes simple, engaging questions for parents, such as “Does your baby pick up a crumb or Cheerio with the tips of his thumb and a finger?” Responses include **yes**, **sometimes**, or **not yet**.
- Scoring is completed manually or electronically and compared against standardized benchmarks to identify any developmental concerns.
- Monthly staff-led assessments are conducted through **natural observation** during play and routine activities, focusing on developmental domains such as:
 - Social-emotional
 - Physical (gross and fine motor)
 - Cognitive
 - Communication and literacy

Using Screening Results

- **Sharing Results:** Screening outcomes are reviewed with families in a timely and respectful manner.
- **Next Steps:**
 - If results indicate concerns, staff will work with families to determine appropriate referrals to Early ACCESS, AEA, or other support services.
 - Fun and engaging learning activities may be shared with families to promote continued development at home.
- **Documentation:** All results and follow-up actions are documented and stored confidentially.

Inclusive Practices

Meeting Individual Needs

Hartley Community Daycare tailors care to meet the diverse needs of children by:

- Adapting environments, routines, and instructional strategies based on each child’s strengths and areas for growth.
- Utilizing child-specific developmental plans to guide daily interactions and learning opportunities.

Specialized Training

We equip staff with the skills needed to support all families and children through:

- Ongoing training in inclusive practices, trauma-informed care, and the implementation of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Collaboration with AEA and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) to access professional development resources.

Partnering with Parents

We prioritize family involvement by:

- Maintaining regular, transparent communication about their child's progress and needs.
- Hosting meetings to discuss goals, progress, and strategies for home and daycare environments.
- Providing resources and referrals to empower families in supporting their child's growth.

Partnering with Specialists

We work closely with external specialists to ensure comprehensive care:

- Facilitating in-program observations and interventions by therapists, behavior specialists, or consultants.
- Implementing strategies recommended by specialists and ensuring follow-through within the classroom.

Care Plan Storage and Implementation

- Storage: Copies of IFSPs, IEPs, health plans, and other care documents are securely stored in the child's confidential file in the main office. Teachers are provided access to relevant sections for daily implementation.
- Implementation: Plans are regularly reviewed and integrated into the child's routine to ensure meaningful participation and developmental progress.



Parent/Staff Acknowledgment Form

I have received and reviewed the Hartley Community Daycare Center Policy Packet for **2025-2026**. I understand that these policies reflect the center's standards for supervision, safety, guidance, and health, and align with state requirements. I agree to follow the policies as outlined and understand the expectations for staff and families.

By signing below, I acknowledge receipt of this document and my responsibility to uphold these policies as a staff member or follow them as a parent/guardian.

Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name (if applicable): _____

Classroom/Program: _____