



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-2027



WELCOME

Dear Family,

Margaret's House @ RIT has been providing high-quality care and early childhood education to children whose parents work or study at RIT and to families in the surrounding area since 1996. Alfred Davis, RIT Vice President Emeritus, provided a substantial gift to build a new home for child care on campus in the Alexander Bell Hall. As a tribute to his beloved wife, Margaret Welcher Davis, he named the center Margaret's House.

Margaret's House strives to provide a sense of community and we are proud to be a department within the Division of Student Affairs at Rochester Institute of Technology. The children of Margaret's House are often out-and-about on the RIT campus enjoying it and taking advantage of all that it has to offer.

The foundation of our programming is based on theory and extensive research. All of our teachers, substitutes and staff members are employees of RIT and are committed to developmentally appropriate practice in the field of early childhood education. We offer bright and cheerful classrooms, a large outdoor playground, and an indoor playroom for use during inclement weather.

Thank you for choosing **Margaret's House**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Tills
Director
Margaret's House @ RIT

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

At Margaret's House, we strive to support families with young children in the RIT community so that students can study, faculty can teach, and staff can work...knowing that their children are learning and growing in a happy and safe environment. Play serves as the basis for learning and each day will include opportunities for hands-on experimentation and discovery. The staff at Margaret's House consider parents to be a child's first and most important teacher. It is for that reason that we welcome and encourage parents to visit regularly and participate as partners in the education of their children.

Mission

Margaret's House will provide high quality early childhood services for the RIT community. It will serve as a house of learning for children whose families study and work on campus. The program will collaborate with other departments to provide opportunities for students to work, observe, and interact with children, families and staff.

The year-round, campus-based program accepts children from 8 weeks of age through the preschool years. The program will be an integral part of the university, advancing RIT's image as a "family friendly" place to study and learn.

Margaret's House will be visible and accessible in its advocacy for the well-being of RIT's families with young children. The program focuses on social, emotional, cognitive and physical development with special consideration given to individual abilities and learning styles. The program will build the healthy social emotional competence of all children through the use of Pyramid Model practices and strategies.

- In alignment with our mission, from time to time we collaborate with RIT students and professors on research studies, student coursework and student observations. While many times we can inform parents in advance of these interactions, there may be instances where that is not possible. Children may have the opportunity to interact with new materials, toys, items, etc. and be observed. However, no study data or photos/videos will be collected without prior parental consent when required by the Human Subjects Research Office (HSRO) and/or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at RIT.

Certification

- Licensed by the Office of Child and Family Services
- Active participant in QUALITYstarsNY
- Member of the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers
- Accepted into the Pyramid Model implementation development program with the goal of implementation to fidelity

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, or if your involvement with Margaret's House results in an impediment/disruption to our business practices, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Questions and concerns regarding policies and procedures must be expressed directly toward management, not teaching staff.

Diversity & Anti-Bias Early Childhood Education

As early childhood educators, we feel we have the responsibility to combat racism, prejudice and intolerance through thoughtful, intentional teaching practices that promote tolerance, kindness, respect and acceptance. There is a broad range of cultural-perspectives in the materials we use to expand awareness and promote a respect for differences. Our objective is to help children recognize and feel proud of their own unique characteristics, as well as the uniqueness of others, through thoughtful discussions about similarities and differences through play.

Margaret's House values and respects the diverse languages and cultures represented within our program. We believe that greeting children and families in their home language helps foster a sense of belonging, strengthens relationships, and supports children's identity and development.

Upon enrollment, families are invited to share their preferred language(s) for communication and any important words, phrases, or greetings that are meaningful to their family. Staff strive to learn and use greetings in the home languages of the children and families enrolled in our program.

Examples of practices used at Margaret's House include:

- Greeting children and families in their home language during arrival and departure routines.
 - Examples:
 - Spanish: "¡Buenos días!" (Good morning)
 - Mandarin Chinese: "Nǐ hǎo" (Hello)
 - American Sign Language (ASL): Signing "Good Morning" or "Hello"
- Encouraging families to share culturally relevant greetings, pronunciations, and key words from their home language.
- Using RIT Access Services when needed to support meaningful communication with families who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

While staff are not fluent in every language represented in the program, we strive to create an environment where all children and families feel welcomed, respected, and included through intentional efforts to recognize their home language.

Admission & Enrollment

Enrollment forms will be emailed to **new families** when a slot becomes available. If the family chooses to enroll their child at Margaret's House, the first week's tuition is expected at that time. Enrollment forms will be emailed to **current families** early August. All forms must be completed *prior* to a child's first day of attendance.

Enrollment Agreements for **RIT Students**:

Please see the current enrollment agreement for specific dates. RIT Student families who need child care during the break between semesters will need to request additional child care services in advance and in writing. Should we be able to accommodate their request, they will be charged the same rate as the faculty, staff and community families during that time. Student families interested in summer care must be enrolled in summer session courses or enrolled in an internship or co-op to be eligible for scholarships and receive student rates. RIT student families that are interested in returning in the fall must provide notification to MH administration by **Wednesday May 5th, 2027**.

Should an RIT staff or faculty member also be an RIT student, student rates and scholarship will not apply, however they will be given the option to choose student enrollment dates.

12 Month Enrollment Agreement for **Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Community Members**

Margaret's House offers a 12 month agreement for families who need continual care throughout the year.

12 month enrolled families that are interested in returning in the fall must provide notification to Margaret's House administration by July 1st, 2026, and pre-pay the first week of tuition at the fall 2025 rates by July 15th, 2026. Placements are not guaranteed without payment.

10 Month Enrollment Agreement for **Faculty, Staff, Alumni, and Community Members**

Margaret's House offers a 10 month agreement for those who do not need care during the Margaret's House summer session. **Please note that the Margaret's House academic year and summer session dates are not necessarily the same dates as the RIT academic schedule and summer session dates.** The contracted child care dates for this option will begin on 8/24/26 and will end on 6/4/27, coinciding with our 10-month teacher contracts. Families planning to return for the following year are required to pay a holding fee equal to 2 weeks of tuition at the fall 2027 rates for the summer months. Half of the holding fee will be applied to the tuition for the first week of the fall 2027 academic year. The full amount is due between July 1st and July 15th, 2027.

Families who wish to extend their 10-month contracts through the summer must request this extension prior to June 1st, 2027.

Enrollment

We do not enroll children of faculty, staff and community families at Margaret's House for the summer session only. Only children who were enrolled during the previous spring or are signing a contract for the following academic year will be accepted into either the Infant & Toddler or the Preschool program.

Enrollment is based on openings and availability with the following *priority guidelines* in place:

- 1) Children of RIT/NTID full-time and part-time students
- 2) Siblings of children currently enrolled
- 3) Children of Staff and Faculty
- 4) Children of alumni
- 5) Children of the general community with no RIT affiliation

Withdrawal

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. When a child is withdrawn without notification, the family is required to pay for an additional 2 weeks.

Transfer of Records

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from **8:00 AM to 5:00 PM** Monday through Friday. Parents are welcome to bring their children anytime during this 9-hour time period. Extended care outside these hours will be considered for those with extenuating circumstances following a written request made to the director. Verbal requests will not be accepted or considered.

Margaret's House will be closed:

Teacher Preparation Day

- 8/21/26 (Friday)

Labor Day

- 9/7/26 (Monday)

Thanksgiving Break

- 11/25/26 at 2:00 p.m. (Wednesday)
- 11/26/26 and 11/27/26 (Thursday and Friday)

Winter Break

- 12/24/26 at 2:00 p.m. (Thursday)
- 12/25/26 through 1/1/27 (Friday - Friday)
- We re-open on Monday January 4, 2027

Professional Development Days

- 3/12/27 (Friday)
- 5/10/27 and 5/11/27 (Monday, Tuesday)

Memorial Day

- 5/31/27 (Monday)

Juneteenth

- 6/18/27 (Friday)

Fourth of July

- 7/5/27 (Monday)

Teacher Preparation Day

- 8/20/27 (Friday)

Professional Development Days

Margaret's House maintains four designated professional development days within the annual calendar and may schedule one to two additional days when operational needs require it. Families will be given as much advance notice as possible of any additional professional development days.

Charges

Families are expected to pay the **full cost of care** during **all closures** with the exception of:

Margaret's House will close at 2:00 on Thursday, December 24th, 2026 and re-open on Monday, January 4th, 2027. We offer one tuition-free week during that time for our families with 12-month and 10-month enrollment agreements.

Families will *not* be billed during the week of 12/28/26.

Part Time Families

We understand that families who have chosen a part-time attendance schedule may be interested in making one-time schedule changes under extenuating circumstances. These requests will be considered under the following conditions:

- requested a week in advance
- the week requested does not include a center closure date

We will determine if we are able to accommodate the change requested after considering all the needs in the entire center.

Please consider all of our scheduled days off (see above list) prior to choosing your contracted dates as we are unable to accommodate any changes during weeks which include a center closure.

Absence

If your child is going to be absent, or arrive after 9:30am, you must send us a message through the Brightwheel app system to let us know. Alternatively, you are welcome to call us at 585-475-5176 or send an email to both the Director (intmh@rit.edu) and the Assistant Director (gssmh@rit.edu). We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you by 9:30am, and we will not schedule staffing to accommodate their attendance for the rest of the day. You and your child may be turned away upon arrival due to ratio requirements if we have not heard from you by 9:30am. Accordingly, in order to assure staffing upon arrival and a lunch at lunchtime for your child, you must contact us before 9:30am.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

For a handy list of needed supplies, please refer to our website under the "Current Families" tab. There is an Infant/Toddler Supply List, as well as a Preschool Supply List. Please put your child's

name on **everything** that is brought from home, including the clothes they are wearing and all extra clothing. We reserve the right to label possessions that come to us without labels.

Infants and toddlers need their own supply of diapers and wipes, a crib sheet, formula or breast milk and baby food (also see the Meals & Nutrition section).

Every child needs:

- Clothes in which to **play**. Children need to feel relaxed and comfortable in their clothes in order to participate in the program.
- For safety reasons, **only sturdy sneakers or rubber soled shoes are acceptable. Sandals and open-toed shoes are a safety hazard and are not allowed.**
- Multiple complete change of clothes (including socks) should be provided and left in the building/your child's cubby.
- Please make sure to check your child's extra clothing on a regular basis to see that these are appropriate to the current season and that they still fit your growing child. Replace clothes sent home to be laundered. Each classroom has an area set aside for extra clothes storage; please see classroom staff for assistance.
- For children over 12 months of age, a small washable blanket, for naptime, to leave at Margaret's House. We will launder nap blankets weekly. For infants under 12 months, please send in a **sleep sack** instead of a blanket, for safety. We will not swaddle infants in their cribs due to safety concerns, and we do not use bumper pads, toys, stuffed animals, blankets, pillows, weighted swaddles, weighted blankets, wedges, or infant positioners.
- Appropriate clothing for outdoor play every day. Winter clothes must include boots, mittens, warm hat, and snow pants or a snowsuit.
- A sturdy bag with the child's name clearly printed on the outside. Please help us maintain a safe environment by keeping all plastic bags (including grocery bags) out of the reach of children.

A special note about toys and other treasures from home: Please do not bring them to the center. Such items are easily broken, lost, and/or misused when brought into group settings. Assure your child our center maintains a generous supply of toys and materials. If a child brings a toy into the center, we will use our discretion to keep it in the office for a parent to pick up at the end of the day or have the child put it above his/her cubby for safe keeping. Toy guns, weapons and war play toys and figures will not be permitted in the center.

Please refrain from putting barrettes, beads, safety pins, and other small items on your child as they can present a choking hazard to children less than 3 years of age if they fall out. Children's earrings can also present a choking hazard so we ask that they be removed or are equipped with safety screw backs.

Transitions

Your child's transition to and within child care should be as positive and exciting as possible while providing a time for growth and learning. We will work with you to ensure that the smoothest possible transitions occur as new routines and new people are introduced. Margaret's House seeks to, when possible, minimize changes of teachers during the school

year so that children and families can enjoy the comfort and security of a familiar face and consistent learning environment. If a change in staff is necessary, the program will prepare the children and families by introducing new staff in a responsible manner. As part of our staffing model, RIT student classroom aide employees do change more often, and will change from semester to semester. While we strive to provide as much consistency as possible, our focus remains on maintaining consistency within one of your child's two classroom teachers.

Initial Transition from home to center

We want to make the first days at our center as easy as possible for you and your child. We know that the more familiar you are with our staff and the classroom routines, the more comfortable you will be. Therefore, we encourage you to visit the center and spend time in the classroom before your child's first day. You may want to be here to observe and/or participate in one or two activities throughout the day (snack, outside play, lunch, etc.). You are also welcome to spend time with your child on his/her first days as your schedule allows. This does **not** mean that parents are welcome for extended or all-day visits during those first days. While some parental support is helpful, extended drop-off visits inhibit children's transition to care both initially and over time. For this reason, we limit the length of time families are welcome to stay. If during your child's first few days you would like to stay in the classroom longer than 30 minutes, please discuss this with the director in advance for approval. If after your child's first week you would like to remain in the classroom longer than 10 minutes at drop-off, please discuss this with the director in advance for approval. We trust that you know your child best and you will let us know how we can help make the transition into our program as smooth as possible for your family within the guidelines we have found to be successful.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

Drop-off

Parking spaces near Rosica Hall and the parking circle in M-lot near the child care center has been designated as the Margaret's House "pick-up and drop-off area". Plan to use the designated parking spaces and **make certain that car flashers are left ON and your engine is OFF while you are in the building**. Cars should be parked in "20 Minute – Flashers On" parking spaces which are located behind Rosica Hall. Some additional spots are available along the edge of the circle, no double parking will be allowed. The remainder of M-lot is a reserved parking area on the campus which means that individuals need to pay a fee in order to park in the general spaces from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Margaret's House families are also welcome to use the 3 "Vendor Only" spots for drop-off and pick-up only. While the signage will not be changed, tickets will not be issued to Margaret's House Families in those spots. Please use your flashers while utilizing these spots.

You must park within the lined parking spaces. Please **DO NOT** park over the line taking 2 parking spots. There are few available spots and when you utilize 2 spots it violates RIT's Parking Rules & Regulations and creates challenges for other families and Parking Enforcement. Families are encouraged to have their children exit from the right side of the vehicle, so that they may walk along the sidewalk when parking within the circle. The driveway directly in front of the child care center is a fire lane and needs to remain clear for access by emergency vehicles. Public Safety and parking officers patrol the parking lot and ticket unauthorized vehicles. Families are responsible to handle any tickets they may incur directly with Parking Services.

Please hold tight to your child(ren) from your vehicle to/from the building. The area in front of our building is both a Public Space as well as a Fire Lane used by service and emergency vehicles, which means care and caution is required to maintain safety. We've seen golf carts, skateboarders, bicycles, 18 wheel trucks, maintenance vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks, catering vans, motorized scooters, electric bicycles, lost visitors in cars, and even motorized couches and chairs. All these means of transport can, and do, go very quickly past our center. Close supervision of children to maintain safety is required and it is important to look both ways before crossing the crosswalk next to our building.

In order to gain access to Margaret's House, we require that you obtain, bring and use your RIT swipe ID. If you are not a current student, faculty or staff, you will need a Margaret's House RIT ID. We have a form for you to fill out and we will take your picture right here at Margaret's House and then provide you with the ID card once it is ready. You must complete the form and have your picture taken within 2 weeks of your child's enrollment at Margaret's House.

Safety is always a priority for us and while we are happy to let parents in the building on the rare day that they forget their ID, we require all Margaret's House parents and regular visitors to obtain and use an RIT ID card to gain access to the center to better maintain safety and security at our front door. This better enables office staff to be alert and sensitive to new visitors to the center.

Should you not have your RIT ID when you arrive to the center, please ring the bell and once the doors are opened for you, please sign into the *Family and Friends ID Card* sign-in located in the lobby. Additional charges will be added to your account after 10, 20, and 30 visits without an ID according to the chart below:

10 entries without ID – \$15 fee

20 entries without ID - \$15 fee and a required meeting with the director

30 entries without ID - \$15 fee and this may result in the termination of services for your family

Once you have arrived within the center, we require that you walk in the hallways and stay in proximity to your children. It is important that children are supervised at all times, and should they turn a corner and are out of your sight, it creates a dangerous situation. Once your child is in the classroom, we teach and remind them that children are **never** allowed to open an interior or exterior door while in the center. Please reinforce this with your children and we require you to be mindful when you open any door not to allow any children out of the room they are in. Children are also not allowed to open the lobby doors to exit the building, only adults are allowed to press the button or open the door to the center. This is an important safety rule which helps support the safety measures teachers take every day to keep your children safe.

Safety is a priority for everyone visiting Margaret's House. Any child not enrolled and signed into their Margaret's House classroom must be supervised by the adult responsible for their care at all times (e.g. siblings and enrolled children not signed into their classroom). Children are not allowed in the hallways unsupervised and parents must bring them into the classroom and/or bathroom when they are dropping off or picking up.

The following is required upon arrival in the classroom:

- 1) Parents must help their child organize belongings and ensure multiple clothing changes are available in the classroom

- 2) Parents must supervise their child as they wash their hands to ensure the proper hand-washing procedure is followed.
- 3) Parents must apply sunscreen for morning outdoor activities.
- 4) Parents must sign-in their child into the Brightwheel system.

We do not provide morning snack to late arrivals, children must have arrived and be settled in the classroom by 9:15am in order to be offered morning snack.

Stroller and Car Seat Storage Policy

To maintain a safe, accessible, and developmentally appropriate environment for all children, our center does not provide daily storage for strollers or car seats. Classroom space is intentionally designed for learning and play; storing personal equipment in these areas reduces essential space for children and creates safety hazards. Likewise, storing strollers or car seats in hallways blocks walkways, poses fire safety concerns, and interferes with access to program materials and equipment.

Families should plan to take strollers and car seats with them after drop-off each day. However, we understand that there are occasional circumstances when a different caregiver is responsible for pick-up. In these limited situations, families may request temporary storage under the following conditions:

- Storage is only available when the caregiver dropping off the child is different than the caregiver picking up the child that day.
- The stroller or car seat must be brought directly to the office staff immediately after drop-off. Items cannot be left in classrooms or hallways.
- Storage will be provided only if space is available on that day.

If these conditions are met and space permits, the office will store the stroller or car seat in an appropriate location until the designated caregiver arrives for pick-up.

ARRIVAL AFTER 9:30AM: If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 AM, you must send us a message through the Brightwheel app system to let us know. Alternatively, you are welcome to call us at 585-475-5176 or send an email to both the Director (intmh@rit.edu) and the Assistant Director (gssmh@rit.edu). We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you by 9:30am, we will not schedule staffing to accommodate their attendance for the rest of the day, and you and your child may be turned away upon arrival due to ratio requirements if we have not heard from you by 9:30am. Accordingly, in order to assure staffing upon arrival and a lunch at lunchtime for your child, you must contact us before 9:30am.

Additionally, if your child arrives after 9:30am, your child may have missed the opportunity to have time with the teacher to prepare for the current classroom activity, such as water or snow play. Our teachers begin their morning classroom routine after morning snack is over. As the teacher is responsible for the care of the entire classroom, you are required to provide the individual supervision and assistance needed to prepare your child to join in the current activity. You may be required to change your child into water clothes, a snow suit, simply supervise them until the class returns from a walk or provide them a diaper change/bathroom break. This applies to all persons dropping off the child. Please anticipate at least 30-60 minutes for this, as your child may need help changing clothing or waiting for the class to return from a walk.

Also, after 9:30am, the next opportunity for your child to eat is lunchtime, please make certain your child has had sufficient food before dropping them off if you arrive past 9:15am. We do not provide morning snack to late arrivals, children must have arrived and be settled in the classroom by 9:15am in order to be offered morning snack.

Make certain that a member of the staff acknowledges your child's arrival and your child's departure. Our responsibility for your child begins when they enter Margaret's House and the teacher signs them in to the classroom. For some children it is important that their parent helps them get settled into the routine or makes a special point of waving good-bye. These rituals help ease the transition from parent to caregiver. If your child needs this, please allow a few extra minutes at arrival.

If your child would like to wave to you, please do so from inside the classroom or through the classroom door window. For the safety of all children and staff, daily routine waving through the building's exterior windows is not permitted.

Arrival time is a good time for brief sharing with your child's primary caregiver and we encourage substantial but short conversations about changes and updates regarding your child and family. However, lengthy discussions may distract the caregiver from the children. Please write a note, make an appointment for a longer discussion, or ask the staff member to call you. This holds true for departure time as well.

In addition, should there be a question, concern or complaint regarding a policy or procedure, we require that families bring those to administration directly. Teachers need to maintain attention on the care and safety of the children in their classroom, and management is best able to handle issues around policy and procedures.

Pick-up

Margaret's House closes promptly at 5:00pm and the teachers who "close" are scheduled to leave at that time. **This means that families need to be ready to leave the building by 5:00 PM.** When you pick up your child, sign them out through the Brightwheel system. Make certain that a member of the staff acknowledges your child's departure.

Families picking up two children should plan additional time prior to 5:00 PM to ensure both are ready to leave on time.

NYS law requires children under the age of 6 to be secured in specially designed car seats when traveling in a motor vehicle. We expect families to follow the safe practice of placing children in the back seat and buckling up before leaving the parking lot. Remember to set a good example and always buckle up your seat belt too.

The door monitoring ID card "swipe" system automatically stops working at 5:00pm. Families no longer have access to the building and a late fee will automatically be applied to your child's account if you arrive after that time.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Listing emergency contacts on your child's Emergency Card provides us with written authorization to release your child to those persons in 2 circumstances:

1. In the case of an emergency when you are unreachable
2. In the case that you have made a plan to have that person pick-up and have communicated that to us either verbally, or in writing.

Please note: in the absence of an emergency, we are **not** able to release your child to anyone, even those on the Emergency Card, without prior verbal or written authorization. If you make an alternate plan for pick-up on a given day, please contact us, even if the pick-up person is on your Emergency Card.

If the person is **NOT** on the Emergency card, we will need your **written** authorization (email, letter) prior to releasing your child to them. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization to anyone not on the Emergency Card.

Each person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification, and we will make a photocopy of their ID on their first visit. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy and ask them to bring a photo ID each time they come to pick-up your child.

Margaret's House will need copies of any court ordered custody agreement in order to safeguard your child. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if we are not able to contact you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Publicity and Photographs

The "Permission for Photographs" statement is part of the annual Enrollment Agreement. Families can check whether or not they will allow photographs to be taken and used in our Newsletter. Regardless of this consent, photos of children will be taken and shared within the classroom daily feed via Brightwheel. Also, photos of families will be displayed throughout the center.

On occasion, personnel from RIT University Publications photograph a Margaret's House event or our participation in a campus activity. The photographs may be included in RIT News and Events, on the RIT website and/or in the local newspaper. You will be asked to sign an additional RIT Publicity Release Form before any such photograph is published.

The RIT campus is a beautiful public space. While on walks on campus, children can see and learn from a variety of sensory experiences and benefit from augmented conversation and

interesting sights. During walks, Margaret's House staff politely ask others to refrain from taking pictures of the children when possible, however there will be times that children strolling on campus are photographed and those photos may be taken and shared in various ways without our knowledge or permission.

Communication & Family Partnership

Emails are the primary mode of communication at the center-level so please make sure that we have your current email address. It is imperative that you are checking your email regularly and reading all main office correspondences as they may contain important and time-sensitive information.

Daily Communications

It's important that you keep us abreast of what happens in your child's life outside of school. The teacher will better understand what may be affecting his or her behavior or attitude and provide the necessary support that your child may need.

You will have daily contact with your child's teacher during drop-off and pick up and we encourage substantial but short conversations about changes and updates regarding your child and family. Since the teachers are devoted to caring for children at that time, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment by calling the center or emailing your child's teacher, the Director, or the Assistant Director.

In addition, should there be a question, concern or complaint regarding a policy or procedure, we require that families bring those to administration directly. Teachers need to maintain attention on the care and safety of the children in their classroom, and management is best able to handle issues around policy and procedures.

Margaret's House uses the **Brightwheel** childcare and preschool daily report app. It is easy to use and can be downloaded on mobile devices or desktop computers. The app allows our teachers to share meal information, toileting, naps, daily routines, photos, reminders, notes and more.

Teachers do their best to input this information in real time. However, their primary responsibility is always the care and safety of every child in the classroom. We expect that if a child needs attention, that data input will not be their priority, and the information will be entered into Brightwheel later in the day. Please note that teachers cannot respond to messages when children are in need of attention. Additionally, there are times when it is not possible for the teacher to input information based on factors beyond our control, eg. internet issues, illness, etc. We welcome you to contact administration with questions, concerns, or information in place of Brightwheel notifications. **You must contact the Margaret's House office directly if you have any questions that are time-sensitive.**

We strongly recommend that you check the updates on Brightwheel throughout the day, and once just before you pick-up your child. Should there be information that you would like that day which is not listed on Brightwheel at the time of pick-up, please take a moment to ask the teacher directly for that information. As noted above, if that question requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment to chat.

Upon request, you can share information with your child's teacher through a "communication notebook". This is a way for you to share details about your child's night, morning, or other important information that is happening in your lives. Please let the director know that you are interested and we will provide one.

Bulletin Boards

Every classroom has a "Parent Board" that contains the daily routine and lesson plan along with other important information such as our behavior management plan and menu. There are other bulletin boards located throughout the center that provide center news, upcoming events, staff changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, community resources, etc.

Emergency Card

There must be a current emergency card on file for each child in our care. It is imperative that there is always a way to reach you. We need to be notified of any changes in phone numbers, address, custody/living arrangements and people authorized to pick up your child. Emergency back-up people should be kept informed of procedures to be taken if we need to call them; any changes in their phone numbers or address need to be noted immediately. **There must be at least one back-up emergency contact listed for each child that is not either parent/guardian, and that contact must also be LOCAL and be able and allowed to pick up the child in an emergency.** If there are no other emergency back-up individuals listed that are not either parent/guardian, you will be required to attend a gathering meet-n-greet to get to know other families that may be possible resources for you. A review of Emergency cards will be made twice per year, and updates made as needed throughout the year.

Family Conferences

Family conference weeks are scheduled each semester. During these conferences, the teachers will meet with you to discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. Together, you can set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time.

While we strive to provide quality care and outstanding service, there may be times when you have a concern. Most issues can be resolved with a simple conversation between two parties. If your concern is not in relation to a center policy, and you feel comfortable, ask your child's teacher for a meeting to discuss your concerns. Teachers often prefer that you talk to them directly but understand if you are more comfortable speaking with the Director. If you have addressed a concern with a teacher and feel the resolution wasn't satisfactory, the Director may be able to help both parties reach an understanding.

In addition, should there be a question, concern or complaint regarding a policy or procedure, we require that families bring those to administration directly. Teachers need to maintain attention on the care and safety of the children in their classroom, and management is best able to handle issues specific to policy and procedures.

Newsletters

Newsletters are yet another avenue for communication intended to strengthen the home to school connection that will be provided periodically via email. It is imperative that you check your email regularly and read all main office correspondences as they may contain important and time-sensitive information.

Access Services

Margaret's House uses Access Services to request interpreters for formal parent-teacher conferences, family events, advisory board meetings, and other scheduled appointments when ASL interpretation is requested. Kindly let us know if this service would be helpful to you.

The staff at Margaret's House have very limited ASL skills. Many staff know just a handful of basic signs. We are grateful for our ability to request Access Service Interpretation to support school/home communication for conferences and meetings.

Family Activities

We believe that a parent is a child's first teacher and we value families as partners in the growth and development of the children in our program. We encourage parents/guardians, family members, extended family and important people in the lives of the children to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program.

Please see the MH Current Academic calendar for dates of specific family and center-wide activities.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. However, we ask that families are aware of the daily routine in their child's classroom to avoid interruptions.

The infant rooms welcome mothers to nurse and parents/guardians to feed their babies.

This "Open Door" policy does **not** mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times. Also, this policy does **not** mean that parents are welcome for extended or all-day visits. While some parental support is helpful at drop-off, extended drop-off visits inhibit children's transition to care. For this reason, we limit the length of time families are welcome to stay when dropping off their child. If you would like to remain in the classroom longer than 30 minutes at drop-off the first week and longer than 10 minutes at drop-off thereafter, please discuss this with the director in advance for approval.

Celebrations and Family Fun Days

We encourage parents/guardians, extended family and important people in the lives of the children in our care to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer Family Fun Days each semester, participate in various community service projects, and end each academic year with Margaret's Birthday Party. This is a celebration which honors Margaret Davis, a beloved friend and benefactor who, along with her husband Al Davis, made Margaret's House Child Care Center possible. All of these events provide opportunities for families to socialize and participate in child-centered activities.

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

Birthdays are special and we try to give each birthday child recognition appropriate to their age. Teachers try to balance the natural exuberance and energy without creating an overwhelming situation in the classroom. Please consult with your child's teacher **at least 1 week in advance** if you would like to bring in special food for the simple celebration. Any food brought into the class must be commercially prepared/store bought. We try to avoid foods with high sugar content, and we need to plan carefully around food allergies that children in the group might have. Nutritious snack alternatives can include muffins, fruit, and frozen yogurt.

We encourage families to consider a gift-wrapped "Birthday Book" donation as an alternative to food for their child's birthday. During story time, the child can unwrap the book and a family member (or the teacher) can read it to the class.

We also provide a special visit from our little stuffed resident Elmo, he sings happy birthday to each child and often the classroom joins in with him.

In an effort to keep celebrations safe, please refrain from bringing balloons as they can present a choking hazard.

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Outdoor clothing must be appropriate for the weather to prevent heat exhaustion and hypothermia. Therefore, we require your child's outdoor clothing keep them cool on warm days and warm on cold days. We will not allow your child to participate in outdoor activities in clothing that may place them at risk. We will contact you to come and care for your child during classroom outdoor time if your child is not prepared to go outside with appropriate outerwear.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. For safety reasons, **only sturdy sneakers or rubber soled shoes are acceptable. Sandals and open-toed shoes are a safety hazard and are not allowed.**

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. Basic First Aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee, bump). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces significant swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Should your child get a splinter, or any other object, lodged underneath their skin, we will inform you via Brightwheel so that you may take appropriate action. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations. Our staff is trained in CPR and First Aid.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will attempt to contact you or an emergency contact.

More details regarding our plan to support your child's health can be found in our full Health Care Plan on our website under the "current families" section

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

Infant and Toddler Program

The goal of our infant and toddler program is for your baby to feel loved, cherished, and protected. The staff at Margaret's House understand that babies and toddlers need to feel safe and secure in their attachment to their caregiver before they are able to play, learn and explore the world. For this reason, we follow a Primary Caregiver and Continuity of Care model up to the age of three. We strive for children and their primary caregiver to remain together for more than one year (sometimes even two or three years) in an attempt to minimize transitions and stress in a baby's life and to allow time to build meaningful and genuine relationships. Because we reside on a college campus, this can be challenging as summer enrollment changes and some of our teachers have 10-month contracts. We do prioritize maintaining one of your child's two teachers whenever possible. However, we are committed to making responsible decisions and creating a transition plan if your child must be assigned a new primary caregiver.

Every child is unique. Family preferences and schedules are honored and respected by the staff to the best of the teacher's ability within the group setting. Development is supported through sensory stimulation, individual interaction, opportunities for supervised socialization, and an enthusiastic response to each new milestone.

Infants are provided a crib for rest time. Families are required to provide 2 sheets and teachers will wash them weekly and when soiled. Pillows are not permitted for any children ages 0-5, and blankets are not permitted for infants. We require that infants be provided with a sleep sack instead of a blanket for safety until they reach 12 months of age.

Young Infants are provided with tummy time when awake, beginning with 3-5 minutes at a time and increasing when able, at least 2 times per day, allowing them to move freely and explore their surroundings.

Toddlers are often ready for a variety of new and different experiences. They can benefit from more physical activities and more classroom space, as they have mastered walking and

continue to discover new ways to move and use their bodies. Toddlers are also recognized by their innate curiosity and need to explore new things. Our teachers provide a rich learning environment with a comprehensive, research-based curriculum.

Toddlers are offered an opportunity to nap/rest on a cot each afternoon.

Preschool Program

The preschool program at Margaret's House is built with the most current research in mind and is individualized to meet the needs of each child. Through a daily routine that is fun, engaging and meaningful, children develop curious minds and a love of learning. Our teachers lead children through "studies" which are hands-on investigations of interesting topics relevant to the lives of children that extend about 4-6 weeks each. There are activities and opportunities for creativity that build confidence and improve social skills. The children will learn through play and their active involvement and experimentation with things and people in their environment, as we cultivate their curiosity.

The scheduled daily program activities will include, but are not limited to: Circle/ "Meeting Time", Large Group, Read-a-louds, Small Group, Choice Time, Meal times, outdoor play, and rest-time.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned from the infant toddler program to the preschool program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program. The plan is reviewed by the Director or Assistant Director and shared with the families. Although the plan is detailed and specific, it is also fluid and flexible and the official date of transition may be changed if the children need more or less time for transitioning. There will be opportunities for parents/families to meet the new teachers, and discuss the curriculum and daily routine.

This transition to the preschool program is an appropriate time for children to experience a change in caregivers. Research shows that within the first three years, nurturing a positive bond with a consistent caregiver is optimal and caring relationships are at the heart of early brain development. However, once children reach the age of 3 years, they have the cognitive and emotional ability to understand changes in caregivers and benefit from that experience as a preparation for more frequent changes to come within a school setting.

Curricula & Assessment

Margaret's House uses **The Creative Curriculum®**, a comprehensive, research-based curriculum which features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical-thinking skills. We've chosen this curriculum because it focuses on the skills and knowledge that are most important for helping your child to be successful in school. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos is distinctly different from the preschool curriculum. We have expanded daily resources and discovery activities to bridge the transition from our

infant/toddler program to our preschool program. Please see our website for additional information.

Developmental Screening

Margaret's House uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) as a developmental screening tool. To coincide with our curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings and/or evaluations. Developmental screenings are conducted once per semester.

Service Plans, IEPs, and Special Recommendations

While our developmental screenings are designed to identify children who may need additional evaluation, some children enter our program with existing assessments/evaluations or receive them while enrolled. We rely on families to share any resulting recommendations with us. Our goal is to support each child's growth by providing consistent, developmentally appropriate care.

When a child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), service plan, or any professional recommendations, it is important that our team has access to this information. When we are able, we strive to provide consistency between home, services, and our classroom practices.

Families are encouraged to share any service plans or recommendations with us. In certain situations, this information is required:

- If your child has an IEP, service plan, or any professional recommendations, we respectfully ask that families provide a copy to the center.
- We **require** you to provide a copy of the plan if your child requires any modification to our standard routines, materials, or practices.
- If your child receives services within our center, we **require** that families share the child's plan so we can coordinate effectively with service providers.

Access to the plan allows us to make appropriate adjustments within the limitations of our responsibilities, and to support your child's needs with care and consistency. Our partnership with families is essential. We are committed to working collaboratively with families and service providers to support each child's unique needs.

Electronic Media

Experts say that too much screen time can have harmful effects on children. Screen time includes TV, videos, DVD's, computers, tablets, video games and handheld devices such as smart phones. During the first 2 years of life, a child's brain and body experience important growth and development, and exposure to screen time detracts from important social interactions with parents and caregivers. For these reasons, there is no screen time at the center for children under the age of 2 years old.

For children over the age of 2 years old, our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but, from time-to-time, we may use the computer for Creative Curriculum ebooks related to current investigations or as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent, non-commercial, and high-quality educational material. Our focus is

to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. In keeping with these recommendations, screen time for children over the age of 2 years old at the center will be limited to no more than 30 minutes per week in our program.

There is no screen time permitted during nap time or meal time at the center and any screen time at our center is commercial free.

We know that one way to support children's positive relationships at school include choices made at home. While your child's television, computer and tablet use at home is your choice, please consider that some of the things they see may significantly impact their behaviors here at school while they are learning how to get along with their peers. Studies show that children exposed to violence on screens gradually accept violence as a way to solve problems and imitate the violence they observe. After taking time to reflect on your child's viewing habits you may determine their use is appropriate, or perhaps you may determine that some modifications may support your child's growth and positive behavior amongst their peers. We encourage you to be discerning when choosing your child's exposure to electronic media.

Outdoor Time

The children are often provided with supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the campus 2 times per day (morning and afternoon). Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately. Outdoor clothing must be appropriate for the weather to prevent heat exhaustion and hypothermia. Therefore, we require your child's outdoor clothing keep them cool on warm days and warm on cold days. We will not allow your child to participate in outdoor activities in clothing that may place them at risk. We will contact you to come and care for your child during classroom outdoor time if your child is not prepared to go outside with appropriate outerwear.

Margaret's House has an indoor gross motor area called the Great Hall that is used during inclement weather. We take into consideration temperature, wind chill factor and level of humidity when determining if (and for how long) the children will play outdoors.

During walks on campus, Margaret's House staff politely ask others to refrain from taking pictures of the children when possible, however there will be times that children strolling on campus are photographed and those photos may be taken and shared without our knowledge or permission. RIT considers its campus a public space and welcomes all to enjoy its beauty.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and will be placed on their backs to sleep. If your child needs to be placed in any position other than on his/her back we will need written documentation from the pediatrician.

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age, participate in a quiet rest time. Children who do not fall asleep are offered opportunities for quiet activities.

Sleeping children are closely supervised at all times and in line of sight of caregivers/teachers.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. The most successful and positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of

their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

There are many steps to successful toilet learning. The first step is introducing the child to the toilet and getting them comfortable with just sitting on it. Often, our first step is to give children the choice to sit on the toilet at regular diaper changing times. Once you have experienced some success at home with toilet learning, please share your routine with us, so that we may use that information to inform our approach within the limits of our responsibilities. Children in underwear who have more than 2 accidents per day may be placed back in a diaper to assure the health and safety within the classroom setting for the rest of the day. Additionally, children without a change of clothing available within the classroom will be placed in a diaper regardless of their toilet learning stage. Please assure that your child has at least 3 changes of weather and size appropriate clothes that are easy-on and easy-off each day during toilet learning. Both elastic and velcro are helpful clothing supports; buttons and snaps prevent children from being independent within toilet learning steps and cause unnecessary frustration and delays.

As we support toilet learning at Margaret's House, please keep these parameters in mind:

- We still need diapers or pull-ups with SIDE TABS. This allows us to access and change them as quickly as possible while maintaining adequate care for the entire classroom.
- Sitting on the toilet is an option at *regular diaper changing times*, approximately every 2-3 hours. We will not place children on the toilet more often unless they express to us that they need to use the toilet **without** prompting. We will not prompt them more often than at regular diaper changing times.
- Children will be offered the option of sitting on the toilet for a maximum of 5 minutes at regular diaper changing times.

Additional information is available in the appendix within our "Toilet Learning" parent hand-out.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. We also know that children bite for a variety of reasons and it is not necessarily related to behavior problems.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective replacement behaviors. Although rare and considered a last resort, termination of enrollment may be necessary in the case of ongoing and long-term biting, or other challenging behavior. In some instances, we may need to accept that our program is not a good match for a child.

Additional information is available in the appendix within our "Challenging Behavior/Biting parent hand-out.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Margaret's House is committed to each child's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to

ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

We are proud to share that we have been accepted into the Pyramid Model implementation development program and have a goal of implementing the Pyramid Model at our program to fidelity.

The Pyramid Model is a framework for supporting the social and emotional development of our children, the foundation of what every child needs to succeed in school, in the workplace, and beyond. Simple skills such as learning how to get along with others, work as a team, be flexible, be kind, be a good friend, and be responsible are part of the first steps to success and to becoming a good citizen.

Our goal is to create an environment where every child feels good about coming to school, and to build and expand on positive relationships between children, families, and staff. We are also looking at behavioral expectations and more structured instruction in social skills.

Please review a more robust description of this program at the back of this handbook.



The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children

Additional information is available in the appendix within our “Challenging Behavior/Biting parent hand-out.

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of respect and positive guidance with children. A copy of the Behavior Management Plan is included at the end of the family handbook. Some of the behavior management methods that we will use are:

- Redirection – giving children a choice between two acceptable alternatives
- Creating a positive environment
- Clearly explaining expectations, boundaries and limits
- Anticipating conflict situations
- Modeling self-control and respect
- Recognizing children’s accomplishments
- Encouraging children to “use their words”
- Gentle restraint in a situation when a child is threatened or in danger

- Encouraging, supporting, and coaching
- Allowing for logical consequences to take place
- Making sure the children are engaged and interested in activities

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each child at **Margaret's House** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. Although rare and considered a last resort, termination of enrollment may be necessary in the case of ongoing and long-term challenging behavior. In some instances, we may need to accept that our program is not a good match for a child.

Additional information is available in the appendix within our "Challenging Behavior/Biting parent hand-out.

Physical Restraint and Physical Intervention

Physical restraint, the act of using force to extremely limit movement for a lengthy period of time, is not used or permitted for discipline. Corporal punishment is prohibited.

There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others requiring a physical intervention which may include using contact to prevent children from injuring themselves or others. A child may be protected from harm in a variety of ways, including being moved from the situation, having their path blocked, or by gently holding or rocking her or him for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, after appropriate reflection with the director and involved staff, communication will begin with the parents as an important step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

When necessary, a recommendation can be made for an outside consultant to help address a particular concern about a child. There are multiple resources within our community that we can access for support while we work with families to accommodate a child's needs. On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care.

Additional information is available in the appendix within our "Challenging Behavior/Biting parent hand-out.

TUITION AND FEES

Payment

The rate for each child is determined individually and is based on registered days attending and the family affiliation with the university. Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for absences, holidays, professional development days, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due by the end of the business day on Monday **prior to services rendered**. For more information, please see the information outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement Summary* on our website under the “current families” section, or refer to your completed enrollment agreement.

A registration form is required for each family applying to have their child attend Margaret's House. A non-refundable application fee is collected from each family at the time the form is submitted. Only one fee is necessary for each family, regardless of changes in circumstances or number of children in the family.

If two or more children from one family are enrolled at Margaret's House, a 10% discount is applied to the child care fee of the oldest child.

We are unable to refund child care payments for care/time lost due to illness, holidays, weather/maintenance closures, early closings, professional development days or other absences.

The RIT Federal Tax Identification number is 16-0743140.

Student Families

Student families' child care fees will be applied to their accounts through the RIT Student Financial Services Office at the beginning of each term, or if arranged, through a direct weekly payment. Payments made at the RIT Student Financial Services office or eServices need to be made according to their posted payment terms and schedules. www.rit.edu/eservices/

Faculty/Staff/Alumni/Community Families

Faculty, staff, alumni and community families, should make payments online at our website www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/margarethouse

RIT employee benefits may include a pre-tax child care benefit through Beneflex, or other provider. In this case, families will be required to pay the child care fees in advance and be reimbursed through the benefit system. Direct payments through a benefits credit card cannot be processed due to the payment system requirements. However, Margaret's House will do everything possible to support the reimbursement requirements of the benefits system, please contact the director with issues or concerns.

Late Payment Charges

If payment is not received by the end of business of the Monday that it is due, a \$10.00 late fee may be added to your account on Tuesday.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date. Accounts two weeks in arrears may result in immediate termination of child care services.

If payment is more than 30 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged the university fee of \$25.

Late Pick-up Fees

Margaret's House opens at 8:00 AM.

Please do not drop-off your child prior to 8:00am. Your access to the building is not activated until 8:00am.

Margaret's House closes at 5:00 PM.

Please allow enough time to **arrive, sign your child out, and leave the building** by closing time – 5:00 PM. Your access to the building is not active after 5:00pm, if you arrive past that time a late fee will be automatically applied to your account. Families picking up two children should plan additional time prior to 5:00 PM to ensure both are ready to leave on time.

Late pick-up is not a program option. Extended care will be considered for those with extenuating circumstances. All requests for such must be made in writing to the Director.

If there is an emergency causing you to be late, it is imperative that you contact the main office immediately.

The charge for late pick-up is \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes of tardiness and an additional \$15.00 for each subsequent 15 minute block of time. The fee will be automatically charged to your account. Student families who accrue a late fee are required to pay online at our website within 2 weeks. www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/margarethouse

Please note that children, and even infants, quickly learn and expect their parents will arrive to pick them up a certain time based on the context within their daily routine and even the schedule of other children in the room. We urge parents to drop-off and pick-up at consistent times each day.

Special Activity Fees

From time-to-time there may be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Margaret's House Staff Qualifications

The Director of Margaret's House is Jennifer Tills. She holds a B.A. in Sociology and an Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate certificate. Her first position at Margaret's House was as a Substitute Teacher and she accepted an Associate Teacher position shortly thereafter. She became the Staff Assistant for Margaret's House in 2018, was promoted to the Assistant Director position in 2020, and settled in her current role as the Director of Margaret's House in 2021.

Our Early Childhood Teachers have earned or are working toward degrees in education, human services, or a Child Development Associate certification and all have experience working with young children. They participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practice, behavior guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism. They attend trainings and workshops and read current literature in order to keep abreast of new developments and best practices in the field. In addition to educational and experiential qualifications, we value such qualities as a positive attitude, strength of character, flexibility, and kindness.

Each classroom has 2 Early Childhood Teachers and a team of RIT Student Classroom Aides. The classroom aides have high school diplomas, are currently RIT students, and have experience with young children. Our Classroom Aides are employees of MH. They are required to complete the same paperwork and background clearance checks as our Early Childhood Teachers. They also receive ongoing training including, but not limited to, a 3 hour orientation, an OCFS regulations training, a 5 hour online health and safety course, and hands-on training in the form of mentoring in the classroom.

When a teacher is ill or on vacation you will find one of our qualified substitutes present in your child's room or a trusted Student Classroom Aide. Although we always strive to have at least one Early Childhood Teacher or Substitute Teacher in the classroom at all times, there will be times when 2 Student Classroom Aides are in charge of a group of children for a day. There will also be periods of time throughout the day, including but not limited to lunch breaks, staff meetings, parent teacher conference days, and teacher planning times, in which our Classroom Aides may be in charge of a classroom.

Any arrangement/employment between families and our caregivers (i.e. babysitting) outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Margaret's House. The center shall remain harmless from any such arrangement.

Child to Staff Ratios

Maintaining proper child/staff ratios is absolutely mandatory. It's important that families understand that a significant change in schedule on any given day can result in ratio problems.

If your child is going to be in attendance but arrive after 9:30am, you must send us a message through the Brightwheel app system to let us know. Alternatively, you are welcome to call us at 585-475-5176 or send an email to both the Director (jntmh@rit.edu) and the Assistant Director (gssmh@rit.edu). We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you by 9:30am, and we will not schedule staffing to accommodate their attendance for the rest of the day. You may be turned away upon arrival due to ratio requirements if we have not heard from you by 9:30am. In order to assure staffing upon arrival and a lunch at lunchtime, please be in touch with us before 9:30am.

We understand that there are unexpected circumstances (i.e. a meeting runs late or a project that needs to be finished) in which you will be late to pick up your child. We certainly understand but still appreciate a phone call. Families are automatically charged a late pick up fee for arrival times past 5:00pm. The charge for late pick-up is \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes of tardiness and an additional \$15.00 for each subsequent 15 minute block of time.

Children are supervised at all times. We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
≤ 18 months	<u>4 to 1</u>	<u>8</u>
18-36 months	<u>5 to 1</u>	<u>12</u>
3 year-olds	<u>7 to 1</u>	<u>18</u>
4 year-olds	<u>8 to 1</u>	<u>21</u>
5 year-olds	<u>9 to 1</u>	<u>24</u>

Non-Discrimination

At **Margaret's House** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws.

RIT Non-Discrimination Statement

RIT does not discriminate. RIT promotes and values diversity within its workforce and provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, age, marital status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status, or disability.

The Title IX Coordinator has overall responsibility for the university's institutional compliance with Title IX. Any person with a concern about the university's handling of a particular matter related to sex or gender-based discrimination or harassment should contact:

Stacy DeRooy
 Director of Title IX and Clery Compliance
 Title IX Coordinator
 171 Lomb Memorial Drive
 Rochester, NY 14623
 585-475-7158
Stacy.DeRooy@rit.edu
www.rit.edu/titleix

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Reports may be made regardless whether the person reporting is the alleged victim of any conduct that could constitute sex or gender-based discrimination or harassment. Reports may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by calling the

telephone number noted above, by electronic mail, by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by filing a [report on line](#) with RIT's Title IX Office.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is a federal agency responsible for ensuring compliance with Title IX. OCR may be contacted at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, (800) 421-3481.

Inclusion

Margaret's House believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has a special need and you would like to request additional services you may do so by completing the Margaret's House @ RIT Disability Services Request Form available on the MH website. The request and its supporting documentation will be reviewed and processed by the Disability Services Office. A Disability Service Agreement (DSA) outlining the approved adjustment(s) and/or modification(s) will be generated and provided to the requestor and the Margaret's House Director and/or Assistant Director.

The request forms and documentation MUST be sent directly to the Disability Services Office.
Phone: (585) 475-2023
28 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York 14623
Fax: (585) 475-2215
Email: dso@rit.edu

NUTRITION

Food Prepared for, or at, the Center

A nutritious lunch and two snacks are provided daily.

Please check the Daily Routine schedule posted in your child's classroom for the times. Lunch and snack menus are posted for your reference on the parent bulletin board. The regular lunch menu rotates on a six-week basis, the vegetarian and special diet menu rotate on a one-week basis. The snack menu also rotates on a one-week basis.

Please note that our snacks are intended to supplement rather than replace meals.

Snack and meal menus are created in accordance with the USDA Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Lunches are prepared off-site and delivered daily. One percent, (1%/low-fat), milk is served to children two years of age and older (unless otherwise directed by the child's health care provider), with snacks and lunches. Juice is not served to children at the center.

Water is encouraged for thirst. Safe, fresh drinking water is available for children to serve themselves throughout the day, indoors and outdoors, including during meals and snacks.

The families of infants will be asked to provide a written statement to set forth breast milk, formula, and feeding schedule instructions and will need to be updated on a monthly basis and/or if changes are made. The center will consult and work with the families of infants to

develop a plan to introduce age appropriate solid foods. The American Academy of Pediatrics currently recommends the introduction of solid foods and the encouragement of drinking out of a cup at the age of 6 months.

For more information on healthy food and beverage choices and the prevention of childhood obesity, please refer to the Margaret's House website under the "current families" section.

Food Allergies

For the protection of all of our children at Margaret's House, we **strive** to be a **NUT FREE FACILITY**. Please refrain from sending in any nuts or nut products with your child, including but not limited to peanut butter, almond butter, Nutella, any nut, or any food product with nuts in it. A lovely alternative to peanut butter is sunbutter, created from sunflower seeds. **Parents must inform the center of any known allergies.** Food allergies need to be documented by a physician. The center will need a written 'food allergy action plan' that will identify mild and severe allergic reaction symptoms, and explain when to use any medications. A written plan is essential for minimizing the potential for a life threatening reaction.

The center posts an ingredient list for foods regularly served for snack. Families may be asked to review the list to create a reference menu for their child with particular food restrictions; the menu will be posted in the child's classroom.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

Meals for children are cooked off-site and plated for each child. Meals are delivered to the classroom at the classroom's scheduled time. We encourage children to listen to their bodies for cues that they are hungry or thirsty. Children are encouraged to try a "no-thank you" helping of something new but are never coerced. Food will not be used as a threat, as a punishment, or as a reward at Margaret's House.

Creative food experiences and simple cooking activities are included in our curriculum. These activities often give children the courage to broaden their ranges of taste.

Families whose children are on special diets will need to provide a written statement regarding menu variations and may be asked to provide additional food items for their children. Information regarding children's food restrictions allergies will be posted in each classroom and the kitchen. Written instructions can be provided to families to guide the selection of foods brought from home. Families need to clearly label all food brought from home. The label needs to include the child's full name, date and type of food. All perishable foods will be refrigerated until it is time to be served. Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These include, but are not limited to, foods such as whole grapes, cherries with pits, raisins, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy. We will not offer foods/drinks that we cannot identify or those we determine would be potentially unsafe for a child.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infant Feeding forms will be completed by families and updated monthly. An updated form is required the first day of the month, before the child can be left in our care.

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s full name – FIRST AND LAST NAME - and the date the milk was expressed.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s first and last name. **All bottles of formula must be sent to the center pre-made and ready to serve.** Those bottles of pre-mixed formula will be stored in a refrigerator in the classroom until near the time it is needed, and will then be warmed in a crock pot filled with warm water in the room or in a bottle warmer. We will not mix formula at the center, with the exception of supplemental bottles at the end of the day or in extenuating circumstances.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.
- The center will consult and work with the families of infants to develop a plan to introduce age appropriate solid foods and begin to offer beverages in an appropriate cup instead of a bottle. The American Academy of Pediatrics currently recommends the introduction of solid foods and the encouragement of drinking out of a cup at the age of 6 months.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These include, but are not limited to, foods such as whole grapes, cherries with pits, raisins, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy. We will not offer foods/drinks that we cannot identify or those we determine would be potentially unsafe for a child.
- Once a child is 24 months, we will only continue to offer a child a bottle with a physician’s note.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Children will be offered drinks from an appropriate cup and beverages will no longer be warmed.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These include, but are not limited to, foods such as whole grapes, cherries with pits, raisins, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy. We will not offer foods/drinks that we cannot identify or those we determine would be potentially unsafe for a child.
- The center menu is distributed monthly, and are posted on parent boards as well as on the Margaret’s House website.

HEALTH

*Please familiarize yourself with the following information.
Our goal is for Margaret's House to be a healthy place for your children.
We need your support in following all of the policies below.*

The very best prevention for the spread of germs is frequent hand washing. We require parents to have children wash hands upon arrival and encourage parents to wash hands at departure to minimize germ transfer between home and child care. We have children wash before and after meals, after toileting, nose blowing and many other times throughout the day. You can help establish good habits by doing the same at home.

New York State mandates that outdoor play be a part of our program. At Margaret's House, a child who is well enough to be at school must be well enough to participate in outdoor activities. Please send your child with proper clothing that is appropriate for the weather that day, it is essential to your child's well-being and comfort. Outdoor clothing must be appropriate for the weather to prevent heat exhaustion and hypothermia. Therefore, we require your child's outdoor clothing keep them cool on warm days and warm on cold days. We will not allow your child to participate in outdoor activities in clothing that may place them at risk and we do not have staffing to care for your child indoors while the rest of the class is outdoors. We will contact you to come and care for your child during classroom outdoor time if your child is not prepared to go outside with appropriate outerwear.

We will post information regarding exposure to contagious illnesses in classrooms. We, at the same time, ask you to notify us if you find that your child shows signs of a communicable condition or has been diagnosed with a particular illness.

Immunizations

All children registered at Margaret's House are required by NYS Office of Children and Family Services regulations to submit a **Child in Childcare Medical Statement** form prior to their first day of attendance. The form includes immunization information required for entry into daycare. As per NYS Public Health Law (section 2164 Rules and Regulations Subpart 66 www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/schools). All children receiving primary series and boosters should be current and up to date appropriate to their age. Reminders may be sent to parents regarding what is needed to maintain compliance. Children who fall out of compliance will not be permitted to continue to attend the child care center until they receive the required immunization and/or boosters and are in compliance with NYS health laws

It is important that your child have a lead blood screening test. This can be done by your health care provider or county health department. Results of the screening should be a part of your child's health history. If you would like more information on lead poisoning and prevention, as well as how to request a lead blood screening test, please see the Margaret's House website under the "current families" section.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A Medical Statement for Children in Child Care, or acceptable complete physical, needs to be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program. Prior to enrollment, and yearly thereafter, OCFS requires that the physical form/medical statement include a statement from the child's doctor indicating, "the child is free from contagious and

communicable disease and is able to participate in child day care.” Additionally this form must have been completed within the previous 12 months. Please see the Margaret's House website under the “current families” section for additional details and for a link to the ***Child in Care Medical Form*** referred to in this section.

Illness & Exclusion Criteria

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms while in care, this is not an all-inclusive list:

- Fever of 100°F or higher (99°F or higher under the arm, 100°F or higher by touchless forehead thermometer)
- Vomiting
 - green or bloody
 - more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Diarrhea –
 - uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet
 - stools with blood or mucus
 - more than 2 stools per day above normal for the child
- Any Unexplained Rash, regardless if it has resolved, until diagnosed, treated or confirmed harmless by a physician.
- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide
- Acute change in behavior – this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
- Mouth sores with drooling unless the child's health care provider states that the child is not infectious
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Any child determined by local health department to be contributing to the transmission of an illness during an outbreak

Children who have been ill may RETURN when:

- They have documentation from your child's medical provider saying they are free to return to group care

OR

- **They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication.**
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.
- If a child had COVID, RSV, FLU, Hand Foot Mouth disease, Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or Strep Throat, a physician's note stating that the child may return to care is required.
 - Many physicians will provide a note while the child is still experiencing the illness, allowing the return of a child to care contingent upon specific symptoms improving. i.e. "child may return once they are 24 hours fever free"
 - We recommend parents request a note at the time of the appointment, in the case that the physician is comfortable with providing it in advance.
- If applicable:
 - They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
 - They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, AND;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

**Margaret's House families are required to follow all RIT policies and procedures
Please refer to the following link for updated information regarding COVID-19**

<https://www.rit.edu/ready/>

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the offices, each classroom and the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

We do not administer medication to children at Margaret's House unless all other options are exhausted and an arrangement has been made with Margaret's House administration. We ask that parents administer medication prior to arrival or after departure from the center. If a child requires a dose during the middle of the day we ask that the parent return to the center to

administer the medication unless arrangements have been made in advance and all required paperwork has been completed.

OCFS Medication Consent Form for Prescription Medication

If extenuating circumstances leads to the determination that a child will receive medication administration at the center, parents must carefully read the following section:

Parents must provide the center with a completed OCFS written "Medication Consent Form" with instructions from a healthcare provider for prescription medications. The parent/guardian must complete a section of the form as does a child care program office representative. A "Log of Medication Administration" will then be attached and delivered to the child's classroom.

A Medication Administration Training (MAT) certified staff person will administer any needed medication and record all information by completing the log items at the time of each dosage. Parents are required to sign the log at the end of each day, acknowledging that medicines have been given.

The medication label and the doctor's written prescription *must have identical information* and include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the *original container with the potential side effects insert*. Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

Parents must inform the office that medicine is needed on any given day.

Please inform your child's caregiver when you have administered medications at home. This will help us to be alert for changes in behavior, appearance, or signs of allergic reaction. Parents will be notified by phone of any side effects and/or adverse reactions to medications.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulations state that "... medication may be administered only upon written permission of the parent or guardian and written instructions from a health care provider...the child day care center may administer over-the-counter topical ointments including sunscreen lotion and topically applied insect repellent, upon the written instructions of the parent or guardian." When we are willing and able to administer prescription and non-prescription medication to children, these additional specific procedures must be followed:

All long-term medications (more than 10 days), prescription or *non*-prescription, must be discussed and approved by the director. In the case of medication that needs to be given on an ongoing, long-term basis, the authorization and consent forms must be reauthorized at least every six months. Any changes in the original medication authorization shall require a provider to obtain new instructions written by the licensed authorized prescriber and a change in the prescription.

All medications should be handed in at the front office. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby and children should never be given even the simplest medications (Chap Stick, cough drops) to handle on their own at the center.

Medication must be in the original container, with the side effects insert, labeled with the child's complete name, the medication name, recommended dosage, time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date and, for prescription medication, the prescribers name and license number.

Non-prescription medications also require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.

Non-prescription topical ointments such as diaper cream, teething cream or insect repellent require a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months. Families are required to provide the ointments labeled with child's first and last name and sign for each ointment.

Sunscreen is recommended for protection before going outdoors. The Enrollment Agreement has a sunscreen consent section under "other agreements". This is where families will indicate whether or not they give permission for staff to reapply sunscreen before going outdoors. If your child will be using sunscreen, we request families put sunscreen on before arriving to school and our teachers will reapply in the afternoon. **Families are required to provide sunscreen labeled with child's first and last name.**

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are mandated reporters, and as such are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Child abuse and neglect can manifest itself in a variety of ways, there are many risk factors and many varied signs and symptoms. If you would like more information regarding child abuse and maltreatment, please visit [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/What-to-Know-about-Child-Abuse.aspx>

An adult who suspects child abuse or neglect can call the statewide toll free hotline at 1-800-342-3720. If you are deaf or hard of hearing please call TDD/TTY at 1-800-638-5163 or have your Video Relay System provider call 1-800-342-3720. If you feel that there is an immediate threat call 911 or the local police.

Additional information regarding prevention, identification, and reporting of Child Abuse and Maltreatment/Neglect can be found on the Margaret's House website under the "current families" section.

Regulatory Oversight

All Childcare Centers in Monroe County are overseen by the Rochester Regional Office of the New York State Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS). Information regarding the New York State Child Day Care Regulations can be found on-line at

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/regulations/> and the Rochester Regional Offices can be reached at 259 Monroe Avenue, 3rd Floor, Rochester, NY 14607, phone: 585-238-8531. The State OCFS maintains a toll-free child care complaint line during normal working hours, it is 800-732-5207.

EMERGENCIES

In an emergency or time-critical situation when the Director is not present or reachable by phone, the Assistant Director serves as the acting director. If neither the Director nor the Assistant Director is present at the time of the emergency, the Staff Assistant will work closely with the most Senior Teacher to decide on a course of action. The names of the individuals in charge is posted on the parent bulletin board in the lobby of the center.

RIT Public Safety monitors the child care center operations. Officers patrol the area and are called upon in the event of an emergency; they also inform the center of potentially dangerous situations. Public Safety informs staff, faculty, and students of emergency situations via the Campus Emergency e-mail Notification system, RITAlert (more information on RIT Alert and MH Alert systems in the "Closing Due to Extreme Weather").

The center's emergency action plan includes evacuation procedures which are practiced monthly (see "Fire Drills"). Throughout the school year 'shelter-in-place' drills and 'shelter-in-place evacuation drills' will also be performed so that children and staff can practice what they

may need to do in an actual emergency. Families will be notified in advance of these drills and need to be aware that access to the building may be restricted during these drills.

Our first evacuation sites are outside the dorm area and the playground. Primarily, our first evacuation site is at the corner of Residence Halls Fish A and Fish B&C, just SOUTH of our playground gate entrance. For longer evacuations (more than 15 minutes and/or inclement weather, dangerous conditions, etc.) we proceed to Rosica Hall, Grace Watson /bldg. 25 or NTID Student Development Center depending on the nature of the emergency or direction from Public Safety. In the event of an extended evacuation, we will contact families as quickly as possible via phone to notify them of the plan for reuniting them with their children.

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. The family and public safety will be notified immediately if a child is missing. Our teachers always carry a cell phone and have copies of the Emergency Contact forms at all times.

Fire Safety

Fire Drills will be scheduled and executed once a month at Margaret's House.

- If the fire alarm is going off upon your arrival, DO NOT enter the building. Our teachers are well versed in exiting the building as quickly as possible. While you may want to help, it is more efficient for us to follow our regular fire drill practices and it is unsafe for anyone to enter a building that is experiencing an emergency situation, whether that is a drill or an actual emergency.
- If the fire drill occurs while you are currently in the building, we ask that you immediately proceed to exit the building and meet up with your child's classroom at our evacuation site near Fish Halls A,B&C.
- If you are already in your child's classroom, we ask that you follow the directions of the teacher in the classroom, stay with your child's group and follow them to the designated meeting place.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort may accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

RIT Alert System

Margaret's House families who are RIT students, faculty or staff are required to sign up for the RIT alert system to receive notification of campus emergencies (such as closure due to inclement weather). The process for a student to sign up for these notifications is different than the process for faculty and staff, and different than the process for those with no affiliation to RIT. The directions are included in the back of the handbook.

Margaret's House families who are affiliated with RIT need to make sure that if one of the parent/guardian is not affiliated with RIT, that their cell phone number is added to the emergency text alert system.

MH Alert System

Margaret's House has established an *emergency text alert system*. Only in the case of an emergency that requires immediate notification to Margaret's House families, MH will send an emergency alert to all cell numbers entered into your Brightwheel account under Mobile Phone Number. It is solely your responsibility to enter that information upon enrollment. Margaret's House will send a *test* alert at the beginning of each semester.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

Community Resources

Everyone needs a little help sometimes

RIT, and Margaret's House, is a community that cares. We teach caring, we practice caring, and we show kindness and respect for others. By doing so we begin to teach good community values and basic social/emotional skills. Those skills help children develop into happy, productive and caring adults.

We care about you, and we are here to support you. Everyone finds themselves in need from time to time, please reach out to us if you find yourselves needing a bit of help.

Here are some community resources in the Rochester area that also want to help:

Resources relating to childcare assistance:

[Child Care Assistance Eligibility Questionnaire](#)

[Volunteers of America Children's Center](#)

[Monroe County Child Care Assistance Program](#)

[Rochester Child Care Council](#)

Resources relating to accessing nutritional foods:

[Rochester Food Pantries](#)

[The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#)

[Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)

Resources relating to safe housing:

[Preventing and Addressing Domestic Violence](#)

[Rochester City Library Resource List for Individuals at Risk of Becoming Unsheltered](#)

Resources relating to accessing clothing:

[Rochester First Clothing Pantry](#)

Resources relating to immigration services:

[City of Rochester Immigration and Refugee Services](#)

[Legal Representation for Non-Citizens](#)

[American Civil Liberties Union - Know Your Rights](#)

Finding Food:

<https://foodlinkny.org/>

Finding Clothing:

<https://211lifeline.org/categories.php?cat=Cloth>

Finding Shelter:

<https://roccitylibrary.org/services/housing-resources-in-rochester/>

Finding Mental Health Assistance:

<https://www.monroecounty.gov/mh>

Finding help for almost anything – childcare financial assistance, parenting education, in-home support, dental care, health insurance, mental health care:

<https://www.findhelp.org/>

Some of this information can also be found on our website:

<https://www.rit.edu/margarethouse/sites/rit.edu.margarethouse/files/2022-08/1%204%20Community%20Resources.pdf>

Please utilize these resources as needed and reach out to Margaret's House administration team for any related concerns or support needs.



APPENDIX: Transitional Topic Family Handouts

Families have thoughtful questions about how we approach certain developmental moments; times when children are learning new skills, navigating big feelings, or practicing independence. These moments can feel challenging, and they often come with strong emotions, differing parenting styles, and a wide range of expectations.

Our Transitional Topic Family Handouts are designed to support families at these times. These handouts are educational resources that help families understand the developmental principles guiding our decisions. They explain some of the *why* behind our approach while sharing the limits of what we can safely and appropriately support in a busy classroom community.

Families can review them at any time, especially during moments when your child is entering a new developmental stage or when you want to better understand our approach.

We hope this collection becomes a helpful resource, one you can return to whenever your child enters a new developmental chapter or whenever you want to better understand the “why” behind our approach as we partner with you around your child’s care.

Transitional Topics:

Getting Ready for Kindergarten	https://tinyurl.com/KindReadySkills
Safe Sleep for Infants	https://tinyurl.com/safesleepinfant
Lunch and Transitioning to Table Foods	https://tinyurl.com/LunchTableFoods
Crib to Cot	https://tinyurl.com/CribToCot
Toilet Learning	https://tinyurl.com/ToiletLearn
Social Emotional Learning	https://tinyurl.com/SELPyramid
Challenging Behaviors	https://tinyurl.com/ChallengingBehaviorBiting
Classroom Transitions	https://tinyurl.com/ClassrmTransitions
Dealing with Change	https://tinyurl.com/DealingWChange
All About Preschool Routines	https://tinyurl.com/Pre-schoolRoutines
Creative Curriculum in Preschool	https://tinyurl.com/CreativeCurric
Just Before Kindergarten	https://tinyurl.com/JustBeforeKindergarten
Parenting Styles, a reflection	https://tinyurl.com/ParentingStyleReflection



RIT ID Applicant Information

For Margaret's House families without a current RIT ID

Please fill out this form and submit it to the office, we'll take it from there.

Legal First Name: _____

Legal Last Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Home Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Have you had any previous affiliations with RIT, or were known by any other name at RIT? Yes / No

(If Applicable) Other Name: _____

We will need to take your picture here at Margaret's House for your ID. This will take less than 5 minutes, so please stop into the office when you would like to get this done.

OCFS- 6018 (3/2015)

NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
PLAN FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT
Child Day Care Programs

Provider/Director Name: Jennifer Tills Facility ID Number: 43327
Program Name: Margaret's House @ RIT Date: 08 / 31 / 2021

This form may be used to meet the regulatory requirement to submit to the Office a written plan for behavior management. You can choose to use this form to meet this requirement, or submit an acceptable alternative.

Valuable information is available from your local child care resource and referral agency and other resources. Information is also available on the agency website: ocfs.ny.gov.

The program is responsible for educating all staff on this plan upon employment and as needed. The program must supply copies of this plan to all staff and parents of children enrolled in the program.

- A child may only be disciplined by the director, group teacher, assistant teacher, provider, substitute, and/or assistant.
- The program must apply all rules consistently and appropriately to the ages of the children and their developmental level and abilities.
- Any discipline used will relate to the child's actions and be handled without prolonged delay.
- A child may be separated briefly from the group, but, only long enough to gain self-control and must be in view of, supervised and supported by a director, group teacher, assistant teacher, provider, substitute, and/or assistant.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- No child can be isolated in an adjacent room, hallway, closet, darkened area, play area of any other area where a child cannot be seen, or supervised.
- Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as punishment is prohibited.
- Methods of interaction that punish, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited.
- Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is absolutely prohibited. Any child care program must not tolerate or in any manner condone an act of abuse or neglect of a child by an employee, volunteer, any person under the programs control.
- Physical restraint is prohibited.

By submitting this form, our program chooses to implement and follow this plan for behavior management, and will attach any additional information as needed.

The following acceptable child guidance techniques will be used (check all that apply):

- ☒ Redirect. In a conflict, give an alternate toy or activity to one of the children competing for the toy. Have multiples of popular toys.
- ☒ Focus on "Do" rather than "Don't." For example, "We walk inside" instead of "Stop running inside."
- ☒ Offer choices: "You can either sit on the rug or at the table for story time."
- ☒ Encourage children to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example, suggest using the phrase, "I was playing with that toy."
- ☒ Praise positive behavior: "Thank you for using your words."
- ☒ Model desired behaviors in order for the children to learn by example.
- ☒ Arrange the program space to positively impact children's behavior. For example, avoid large open spaces that might encourage children to run indoors.
- ☒ Listen to the children and respond to their needs proactively to achieve their goals. Keeping the children engaged with activities helps prevent conflict.
- ☒ For preschool and school age children, involve the children in the development of the classroom rules and consequences.
- ☐ Other (please describe)

If applicable, please attach any additional information regarding your behavior management plan.

RIT ALERT INFORMATION

This information can be found at: <https://www.rit.edu/emergency-information/rit-alert>

FUTURE STUDENTS

CURRENT STUDENTS

PARENTS

FACULTY AND STAFF

ALUMNI

PARTNERS

REQUEST INFO

VISIT

APPLY

GIVE

RIT

Rochester Institute of Technology

News

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Research ▾

RIT Life ▾

Athletics

Q

RIT Alert

RIT / Emergency Information / RIT Alert

Overview

How Does RIT Alert Work

What Happens After an Alert

Update Contact Information for

RIT Alert is used to immediately notify the campus community upon the confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students, faculty, and staff occurring on or near campus. This includes but is not limited to closures due to extreme weather, hazardous materials incidents, or an armed intruder.



FAMILY HANDBOOK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

*EACH PARENT MUST INITIAL
ON THE BLANK LINE*

I understand that Margaret's House is open from **8:00am to 5:00pm**, and I am expected to arrive for pick-up with enough time to gather my child's belongings, sign my child out, and exit the building by 5:00pm. I understand that parents no longer have swipe access to the building at 5:01, and should I enter the building after that time a late fee will be automatically added to my account.

PARENT/GUARDIAN (1) _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN (2) _____

I understand that Margaret's House is a place of mutual respect. Margaret's House will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, or if your involvement with Margaret's House results in an impediment/disruption to our business practices, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior, and/or to remove your children from our care.

PARENT/GUARDIAN (1) _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN (2) _____

I understand that it is my responsibility to go directly to management with questions I may have regarding policies and procedures.

PARENT/GUARDIAN (1) _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN (2) _____

I understand that if my child has not arrived by 9:30am and I have not contacted Margaret's House, my child may be turned away upon arrival as there may not be staffing available to care for them for the remainder of the day. I also understand that my child must have arrived and be settled in the classroom by 9:15am in order to be offered morning snack.

PARENT/GUARDIAN (1) _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN (2) _____

Enrollment Agreement Choice: _____ **12 month** _____ **10 month** _____ **Student** (only RIT students qualify)

I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Margaret's House Family Handbook. I understand that in the event of an emergency that requires immediate notification, MH will send an emergency text alert to the cell phone number provided in my Brightwheel account under "Mobile Phone Number". I understand that it is my responsibility to enter that information into Brightwheel upon enrollment. I also understand that planned closures, deadlines, and events will be communicated through center wide emails and it is my responsibility to monitor my email closely for these updates.

Parent/Guardian (1) name, please print

Parent/Guardian (2) name, please print

Parent/Guardian (1) signature

Parent/Guardian (2) signature

Date

Date

CHILD'S NAME

CHILD'S DOB



Research¹ has shown that the skills your child needs to be successful in the future are social and emotional skills!

The more socially skilled children are, the more likely they are to succeed in school. Because this is so important for your child, we are using the Pyramid Model in our program.



What is the Pyramid Model?

The Pyramid Model is a framework for supporting the social and emotional development of our children. The goal of the Pyramid Model is to create an environment where every child feels good about coming to school. This is accomplished by designing classrooms that promote engagement in learning and by building positive relationships among children, families, and staff. In our use of the Pyramid Model, our classroom staff will work together to ensure that all children understand behavior expectations, receive instruction in social skills, and those who are struggling receive individual support.

The Pyramid Model illustrates that the foundation for helping children develop social and emotional skills is nurturing and responsive relationships and high quality environments. The middle of the Pyramid, teaching of social and emotional skills, is provided to all children with some children receiving additional teaching and support. The top of the Pyramid shows that a few children will need the foundation, the middle AND individualized intervention to address challenging behavior.

To use the Pyramid Model, our program established a leadership team that will provide ongoing support to our staff and families. Our leadership team looks forward to sharing some of the important work we are doing, including teaching program-wide expectations, partnering with families, training staff in teaching strategies, providing classroom coaching to help teachers implement, and using data for decision-making. Stay tuned for ongoing updates about the Pyramid Model in our program!

¹ Jones, D. E., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105, 2283-2290.

What is gained by using the Pyramid Model?

FAMILIES

- Receive information on how to help promote children's social and emotional skills
- Team with teachers to help children grow and learn
- Receive support for preventing and addressing behavior problems

TEACHERS

- Are effective in helping children learn social and emotional skills
- Strengthen classroom management skills
- Have information and resources to support families

CHILDREN

- Increase their social and emotional skills
- Improve in their readiness for kindergarten



National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations

ChallengingBehavior.org