

Center

HANDBOOK



2025-2026

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Terms of License

Lakes and Pines' Head Start is licensed by the State of Minnesota to provide a preschool environment for children ages 3 to 5 years old and toddler environments for children ages 16 months-36 months. Lakes and Pines' Head Start enrolls all children regardless of race, color, sex, handicap, religion, nationality, or creed. The state visits the site at least once annually for inspection and licenses are renewed each January. To report suspected licensing violations, call Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing at 651-431-6500.

License Capacity of Each Classroom

Chisago Toddler Room: 5 children

Chisago Preschool Room: 20 children

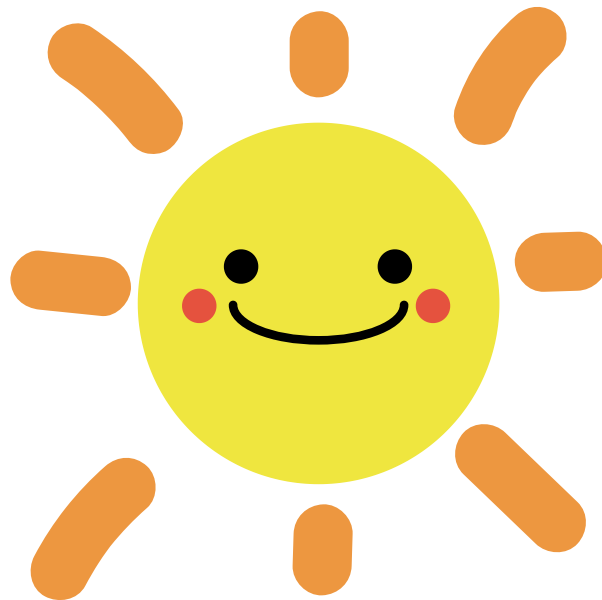
Cloquet Toddler Room: 7 children

Cloquet Preschool Room: 20 children

Mora Toddler Room: 8 children

Mora Preschool Room: 20 children

All classrooms run 8:30-3:30 Monday-Friday.



Drop Off & Pick Up Time

Drop off time is 8:30am and pick up time is 3:30pm. We cannot accept children before 8:30am. If you are unexpectedly more than one hour late to drop off your child, staff will try to contact you or your emergency contact to make sure you and your child are safe.

If you are going to be picking up your child late due to an emergency, please call us as soon as you are aware of the issue. Lakes and Pines has policies in place to make sure your child is safe. If you are late to pick up your child, staff will call you and your emergency contacts. Calls to County Social Services and/or Law Enforcement will be made if staff feel it's warranted.

When you arrive to pick up or drop off your child you will need to talk with a staff as part of the process to exchange any information. You will also be required to hold your child's hand coming from and going to the car. Multiple vehicles use the parking lots and these are busy times at the sites. To ensure your child's safety we expect compliance with these policies.

Health Services

Our program has a Health Services Coordinator and our health services are overseen by a contracted Licensed Nurse in Minnesota. Lakes and Pines also contracts with mental health consultants who may be present in classrooms from time to time.

Medical Requirements

Per state guidelines and Head Start regulations, your child must have a healthcare summary including proof of a physical exam and dental exam within the first 30 days of enrollment and an immunization record at the time of enrollment. All immunizations must be up-to-date at the time of enrollment or the first day of attendance at the site. Immunization catch up plans are accepted for children who are behind schedule.

Please update your child's physical and health records with us annually or whenever your child has an exam. Physical exams, dental exams, and hearing and vision screenings are required annually. Lakes and Pines uses Child Plus to manage child and family records. As part of the comprehensive services provided by Head Start programs, Head Start staff will follow up with you if your child is not current on health requirements (Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Screenings/Minnesota Child and Teen Checkups). Staff will help you meet these health benchmarks and can offer resources should there be any issues.

First Aid Policies and Procedures

Non-Emergency Accidents:
Staff members will follow the appropriate first aid/CPR certification guidelines when responding to an accident that has occurred. All staff members are currently certified in First Aid and CPR.

Medical Emergency: In the event of a medical emergency, Lakes and Pines will call 9-1-1 and then notify the parent/guardian. In the event that a child needs to be transported via EMS, staff will inform families immediately as to where the child is going.

Sources of Emergency Medical Care

Chisago Center

Nearest Clinic: 651-257-8499

Nearest Dentist: 651-257-8499

Police Department (Non-emergency): 651-257-0622

Fire Chief (Non-emergency): 651-257-4100

Cloquet Center

Nearest Clinic: 218-879-4641

Nearest Dentist: 218-879-4641

Police Department (Non-emergency): 218-879-1247

Fire Chief (Non-emergency): 218-499-4274

Mora Center

Nearest Clinic: 320-679-1212

Nearest Dentist: 320-679-1212

Police Department (Non-emergency): 320-679-8400

Fire Chief (Non-emergency): 320-679-5837

National Poison Control Hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Children with Illness

If your child is not feeling well, or displays any of the following symptoms, keep them home. This will help mitigate the spreading of diseases, and ensure that your child is healthy enough to learn.

- Fever over 100 degrees;
- An undiagnosed rash;
- Vomiting two (2) or more times in the past 24 hours;
- Diarrhea or loose stools: three (3) or more in the past 24 hours;
- A reportable illness or condition that the commissioner of health has determined to be contagious;
- Contagious conjunctivitis or drainage from one or both eyes;
- An untreated bacterial infection.

If a child becomes ill during the course of the day, with any of the above symptoms, a staff member must isolate the child from the other children. If there is not an additional staff person in the classroom, the child will be kept in the classroom away from the other children.

Staff will notify the parent or emergency contact person and stay with the child until they can be picked up.

Children should stay home until all symptoms are gone for at least 24 hours without medication. **Lakes and Pines requires all parents to inform the center within 24 hours (unless on holiday or weekends) if the child is diagnosed by a Doctor as having a contagious reportable disease (such as lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, strep throat, COVID 19, RSV or chicken pox).** The center will inform families of any exposures to such diseases through Learning Genie without naming the affected child(ren).

IF YOUR CHILD IS PRESCRIBED AN ANTIBIOTIC THEY MUST TAKE THE PRESCRIPTION, PER THE DIRECTIONS, FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CENTER.

Ongoing emergency medications, such as epi-pens and inhalers, are kept on site or on staff (in backpack or fanny pack), out of reach of children, at all times. Other routine medications are kept on site in a locked box. Short term medications, such as antibiotics, are passed between parent/guardian and staff at the beginning and end of each day. These medications are stored in a locked box within the center.

Medication Administration Policies

Whenever a child requires prescription or non-prescription medication, a Medical Provider and the parent must fill out a written authorization form and an Individual Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP). A separate form is required for each medication. Minnesota state law requires that the medication must be in its original container which states the child's full name, prescribed dosage, medication name, date, and Medical Provider's name. The staff member who administers the medication must sign the Medication Log and list the date, time, and amount given. Medication will be stored in proper medication lock boxes. All Lakes and Pines classroom staff are trained in medication administration.

Diaper rash products, insect repellants, sunscreens, and toothpaste are an exception and need written parent approval only at time of enrollment. The Non-Prescription Medication Products Authorization Only form must be filled out in order for us to administer external products.

If a child has a known health condition prior to starting at the center, the written authorization and ICCPP, mentioned above, must be completed and signed prior to the child's first day of attendance. If a child is diagnosed while enrolled in Head Start, the written authorization and ICCPP must be completed and signed within 2 weeks of the diagnosis.

Attendance

Head Start regulations require children maintain an attendance rate of 85%. If your child cannot maintain that rate of attendance the center staff will work with you to resolve any attendance barriers. If attendance becomes a chronic issue, a written attendance plan will be developed with your family. Children who attend school on a regular basis typically develop at a rate two times greater than those who have chronic absenteeism. Children are expected to attend every day they are scheduled and healthy enough to do so. In cases when the center is closed, additional makeup days may be added to the end of the year to meet program requirements.

Absences

It is the parent's responsibility to inform Lakes and Pines' center staff of any absences that will occur. Please call the center or contact the staff through Learning Genie, by 8 am if your child will not be attending that day. If the child has not arrived and there has been no contact one hour after scheduled arrival time, center staff will contact you or your emergency contact to confirm the absence.

Closures

For the health and safety of our children, families and staff, there may be occasions we have to close a classroom. This could be due to weather, illness or staff shortage. Parents will be notified as soon as possible through Learning Genie.

Community Walks

There may be times during a school day when children and staff go on a walk within the community, near the center. Permission slips are signed at the initial enrollment visit. Notice of these walks will be posted in the center on the days they are planned. Parents will also be informed through Learning Genie.



Meals/Snacks

Lakes and Pines will serve breakfast, lunch and a snack in accordance with USDA/CACFP regulations. Breakfast, lunch, and snack menus will be posted for parents to follow along. Meals will be served at approximately the following times:

Breakfast: 8:30-9:00 am

Lunch: 11:30 - 12:00 pm

Snack: 2:30-3:00 pm

All children will be offered something to eat for breakfast, even if they arrive after breakfast service is done.

Special Treats

Special treats provided by the child are an enjoyable way to celebrate, share culture, and teach about sharing. If a parent would like to celebrate an occasion by bringing treats for their child to share, the following must be met:

- Parents must plan with staff ahead of time to ensure there are no allergies that would keep a child from participating
- Staff must inform parents of the number of children the snack would be bought for so no child is left out
- All snacks must be store bought and come in original unopened packaging

Personal Belongings

We highly discourage children from bringing toys from home to the center except on sharing days. If items are brought at other times, the child will be asked that it remain in their cubby to go home at the end of the day. A child may bring a special stuffed animal or blanket for nap time.

Lakes and Pines is not responsible for lost or damaged items brought to the center by the child.

Weather Closing

In the event of severe weather, the center may close. Lakes and Pines will keep the safety of the children and staff in mind for decisions for severe weather closings, this includes late starts, early dismissals, and full day closures. Lakes and Pines staff will notify parents through Learning Genie. Be sure to notify staff if your contact information changes. Closures will also be announced on local radio stations.

Nap and Rest Policy

Children will have a rest period of approximately 30 minutes in the afternoon. They can nap longer than that if needed. As children finish resting, they will be brought into the planned activity that is currently underway in a separate area. Children will not be required to remain on a cot for longer than 30 minutes. Cots will be provided for each child in a quiet space within the site and bedding will be cleaned weekly or when soiled.

Each child will have their own cot and bedding. Children will be supervised during nap time. Upon enrollment, parents should inform staff of their child's sleeping patterns and of any concerns around sleeping.

Staff will manage children during this time based on the individual needs of the child and the child's developmental level. Cots will be on the floor, not stacked, when in use. Cots must be placed so there are clear aisles for access by adults and/or children on at least one side.

Pets

The classroom may have a fish tank with fish in it for children to learn about other living things and how to care for them.

For the health and safety of the children, Lakes and Pines has implemented a no pet policy for any additional or visiting pets. Service animals with the appropriate documentation and health records will be allowed on a case by case basis.



Custody/Court Orders

If your family has court ordered custody, visitation, orders for protection, etc., Lakes and Pines will need a copy of the document with valid dates. When needed, arrangements are made according to documentation and on a case-by-case basis. Under state statute, staff must release a child to a parent or guardian unless current documentation provides different guidance. ***Please inform us of any changes in custody as soon as possible.***

Unauthorized Persons

Your child will not be released to any unauthorized person. Proper authorities and parents will be notified if a situation arises. Please follow the policies set forth by Lakes and Pines to ensure your child's safety when arranging for another person to pick up your child. You must notify us in advance either in person or via phone and ALL new persons or a person staff doesn't recognize MUST have and present a photo ID when picking up a child. If this condition is not met, the child may not otherwise be released. The ID may be scanned and electronically saved in the child's file.

Childcare Center Program Plan

Classroom programming includes hands-on, teacher-directed, and child-oriented activities. Our childcare center program plan is available upon request. The plan includes age appropriate activities that meet the developmental needs of each child. Individual child Care Care Program Plans (ICCPP) are developed for children with special needs. The children's development is assessed on an ongoing basis using Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and educational goals are based on this data and parent input. Creative Curriculum is the curriculum used by Lakes and Pines classrooms. It is a research-based curriculum and it is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Children with Special Needs

Parents have the responsibility to inform the center in writing when their child has any special medical condition, needs, or allergies, so that we can provide appropriate care and support. If your child has a special need or fits one or more of the following, you will be asked to share the IFSP and/or IEP with us:

- eligible for case management through the state and has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP);
- receiving services through the local school district and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP); and/or
- determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or consulting psychologist to have a condition related to physical, social, or emotional development.

In addition, state licensing regulations require us to develop an Individualized Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP) with you that will assist us to meet your child's needs. This plan must be signed by you and your child's source of licensed health care as listed above and be reviewed annually to assure that necessary modifications are made to the plan of care. If the special need requires that our staff be trained to perform a new skill we may ask that you participate in this training with us.

Lakes & Pines Early Head Start and Head Start Behavior Guidance Policy

Lake and Pines Head Start does not permit:

- Corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to: rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, and spanking.
- Emotional abuse, which includes but is not limited to: name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- Separation of a child from the group, except for the safety of themselves or others. **
- Punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm. **
- The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

*** If a child is either separated from the group or physically held for the safety of themselves or others, the incident will be written on a Behavior Incident Report and signed by the parent/guardian.*

Expectations of the children who attend Lakes and Pines Head Start are:

Be Safe!
Keep yourself safe
Keep others safe
Keep our materials safe

Staff at Lakes and Pines use a well-planned, daily schedule that keeps children busy and knowing what to expect. Lakes and Pines staff establish relationships with the children so that the children want to join in the planned activities. These relationships may also help staff anticipate child needs and behaviors. Staff focus on “catching” children being good to give that positive reinforcement. They also focus on letting children know what they can do instead of what they cannot.

The environment in our classrooms is designed to allow maximum exploration for the children in the room. This is to maximize the yes response and to minimize the no response. Children learn the best when they feel safe and are encouraged to explore the environment.

Lakes & Pines Early Head Start and Head Start Behavior Guidance Policy

Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help children develop self-control, learn how to interact with others and assume responsibility for their actions. Some of our guidance techniques include:

- Staff and peer modeling
- Preparation for what is to come
- Positive encouragement
- Positive reinforcement
- Realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations
- Redirection
- Clear expectations
- Time to process directions
- Immediate, natural consequences
- Scheduling
- Routines
- Developmentally appropriate choices
- When children are having a problem interacting with a classmate, the educator supports them in coming up with a solution to their problem that satisfies both children.



If a child is engaging in persistent unacceptable behavior, staff will fill out a Behavior Incident Report. This report helps the Education Team to evaluate what is happening and decide what kind of support is needed in the classroom. Supports that may be included are:

- Discussion with parent/guardian for insight to the cause and what may resolve the behavior.
- Evaluation of the schedule or environment of the classroom.
- Meetings with the Education Team and staff to discuss what they have tried, have not tried and what they have seen in the classroom.
- Observations from the Education Team to try to gain insight into causes and patterns of the behavior.

Mandated Reporting:

Minnesota State Law requires Head Start staff to report all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.