

2026-2027 Watauga Extended Learning Center Parent Handbook



Watauga County Schools Extended Learning Centers

175 Pioneer Trail

Boone, NC 28607

For students in Grades K-6

Online registration procedures, links and forms at:
<https://www.wataugaschools.org/departments/afterschool>

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Billing/Licensing - McCormick Grubb | 828-264-7190 ext 20226 |

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Itinerant Program Coordinator -

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Green Valley Alex Fuller Program Coordinator | 828-263-1771 |

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Hardin Park and Holiday, Snow Day Program-

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Our Mission:

The mission of the Watauga County Schools Extended Learning Centers is to promote the academic mission of Watauga County Schools while providing the working parents of our community a sanctuary of safety as well as intellectual, social, emotional, and physical well-being for their children. It is the staff's intent to inspire each child to their highest potential while providing a fun and positive atmosphere.

Statement of Purpose:

The Extended Learning Centers serve elementary students enrolled in Watauga County kindergarten through sixth grade. Children attending must have attended the first day of kindergarten and be at least 5 years old. Our ultimate goal is to provide supervised after school care in a convenient location at a reasonable cost. Students are exposed to age-appropriate activities that are engaging, safe, and fun.

Selection and Training of Staff

The selection and training of staff for the after school programs follows the Watauga County Board of Education policy 7100. Among many other requirements, staff members receive federal background checks and TB checks before they are employed. In addition, they also receive ongoing professional development, including child care requirements of the North Carolina Division of Child Development.

Special Days for consideration:

The Extended Learning Centers (ELC) after school programs open at 12:00 p.m. on pre-scheduled early release days (see school calendar enclosed) at no additional cost. The ELC after school programs do not operate on holidays, teacher work days, teacher professional development days, Saturday snow make up days, remote work days and/or days when schools close or dismiss early due to inclement weather. The program will not operate on the last day of school. Children will need to enroll in the Holiday/Snow day program for days other than normal school days that childcare is offered at Hardin Park.

Registering your child:

Please note that *complete registration is required for each child before they may attend the program.* To enroll your child in the Extended Learning Center at your school, go to the Watauga County Schools webpage (<https://www.wataugaschools.org>). Once on the web page go to "Departments" and select "Afterschool". Choose your school from the left-hand column, click on "Register Now" and follow the

instructions to complete and submit the form. **YOU MUST HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS TO REGISTER.** If you do not have access to a computer or phone, call the program coordinator at your school listed on the cover of this document to make an appointment OR attend one of the predetermined registration dates posted on the web page before the beginning of school (a computer and help will be provided to register). By submitting your online registration form in Procure, you will be placed on the waitlist to be processed. You will receive email confirmation including a parent handbook and parent authorization form when a space is available.

For each program, you will receive a separate invitation from Procure (our online billing and attendance software). After accepting the invitation sent to you, you will have the ability to “switch” or choose from a dropdown box, from one school or program to another either online or on the phone app. The Holiday/Snow Day program will be separate registration. You will receive an email with instructions to complete your enrollment.

If you have not signed up with Procure before, you will receive an email invite from Procure to create your own Procure account for student information, to make changes, check your student in or out and for payment and financial information. There is also a phone app available (see page 16). If you have signed up in Procure before you will already have an account (many child care centers in our area currently use this software).

*Your registration is **not** complete by filling out the online registration form.*

Before your child may attend, the following must occur for registration to be complete:

1. Complete and submit a Procure registration form (online) **YOU MUST HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS TO REGISTER.**
2. Meet with the program coordinator for policies to be explained verbally.
3. Sign and turn in the parent authorization form to the program coordinator at your orientation meeting (normally sent by email with the parent policy information handbook).
4. Pay for the first month in advance of service.
5. Children must be legally enrolled in a Watauga County elementary school during the school year, be at least five years old, and must have attended their first day of kindergarten.
6. Pay all prior past-due balances for ELC and Holiday/ Snow Day.
7. Children who require a one-on-one nurse or professional through the school day will be considered on an individual basis prior to enrollment. The program does not have funding for these services.
8. Middle School students will be considered if their parent(s) are a bus driver and / or there is room in the program. Middle School students will also be allowed if the student has a younger sibling in the program with the understanding that all of our middle school students are to be role models and not behavior problems. Middle school students will need to sign a contract. Please reach out if there are extenuating circumstances.
9. **Please note:** In order for your child to qualify for waived fees, your child **MUST** maintain active attendance (not just enrolled) in the after school program at least 1 hour per day, 3 days per week.

Licensing regulations require that certain policies be explained directly to parents; even when the policies are also provided in writing, **registration is not complete until you meet with the program coordinator and pay in advance.**

For Registration you will need:

1. 30-45 minutes meeting with your program coordinator. Please be considerate, on time and attentive.
Parents arriving late will be scheduled for the next class.

2. Names and phone numbers of emergency contacts.
3. Names and phone numbers of everyone you will authorize to pick up your child.
4. Name and number of your private insurance policy or Medicaid, if applicable.
5. Name and phone numbers of your child's doctor, preferred hospital, and dentist.

A child can be enrolled in our program at any time during the school year, provided there is an opening in their age group and staffing adequate to maintain minimum ratio requirements for that group.

Our online invoicing and payment system for our after school and Holiday/Snow Day programs is Procure. The Procure system allows you to create a family account and only needs parent information once. Siblings are added to the same account. Parents with children living in more than one household must inform McCormick Grubb or Trevor Owens (contact information on cover) if they want to be billed separately. Both parents can set up separate online profiles for viewing balances and payments made. In the event program enrollment must be limited, priority will be given to the youngest students enrolled for the highest number of days per week. A week prior to the start of school, we will continue to enroll additional students by spaces still available in each group level as well as by date and time submitted on the online registration form. We will continue filling the remaining spaces we have according to the number of staff we have employed until we reach full capacity. Students must be enrolled for the same number of days each week within a calendar month. If your child attends additional days for which they are not registered, you will be billed at the rate of (\$35.00) per day unless prior approval has been granted by McCormick Grubb or Trevor Owens. If parents or guardians add or remove people or information on their registration, they need to alert their program coordinators. Registrations are printed at the center and will not have electronic updates.

Our rates are based on the 180 day school schedule and divided into 9 equal monthly payments. Parents registering in August will not receive an invoice for September, your next payment after registration is due October 1st. Parents who register for the year on or before October 1st do not pay a monthly bill in June. Parents registering children for the program who suspend their enrollment during the year will pay a prorated rate for June if the school year extends that long.

Payment Required At Registration:

Your first payment will be expected by **FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026**. Payment is required in advance of your child's first day of attendance if you enroll after **FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026**. You must have an email address in order to set up your Procure account to view your invoice and payments. Enrollment after the 15th of the month will be billed at half the normal rate except for the months of **November, December and April** which are shorter due to holidays (remember - our payments are based on the yearly total number of days and prorated monthly so days per month are not calculated). Payment can be made in person at the Watauga County Schools Central Office by cash, check, or money order or online with an electronic check. Available for your convenience through Procure you have the ability to set up an online account or download an app to view after school balances and print tax information at no charge. See the Procure insert at the back of the handbook for instructions. When paying by check, always put your phone number, child's full name, and school in the memo section so we can properly credit your account. Since accounts are set up by the child's name and student ID#, please include your child's last name on the check, particularly if it is different from your own. The **program coordinator is not allowed to take your monthly payments**. You will be billed from and may send payment to the Watauga County Schools Central Office (see address on the front of this handbook),

Payment is due in advance each month on the following **Monthly Payment Schedule:**

1st of each month- Payment is due on or before the 1st in advance for the upcoming month.

3rd of the month - A late fee applies to bills not fully paid on or before the 3rd of the month.

5th of the month - Children will be excluded from attending the program if your bill for the month is not fully paid (including any late fees) on or before the 5th.

If you cannot pay on a monthly schedule, please contact McCormick Grubb at 828-264-7190 to request an alternative payment plan.

NOTE: Late fees will be applied even if the due dates fall on weekends. Please plan ahead.

All bills will be emailed and posted on Procure to save paper and mailing costs unless other arrangements are made. Please check your “spam” folder and update your email if necessary to ensure you receive invoices. This handbook serves as notification that your regular after school payment is due at the first of every month. Therefore, it is your responsibility to keep up with payment regardless of whether you receive the bill or not. Please contact the program coordinator or billing assistant (contact information on front cover) if you do not receive your invoice in advance of the month you are paying for. Late pick up fees will be assessed at the rate of \$1.00 per minute past the closing time of 6:00 pm.

Watauga County Schools contracts with CHECKredi for the electronic collection of checks returned for insufficient funds (NSF checks). We will gladly accept your checks for payment with the understanding that you authorize us either to use information from the check to make a one-time electronic funds transfer from your account or to process the payment as a check transaction. You authorize us to collect a NSF fee through an electronic fund transfer from your account if your payment is returned unpaid. Per board policy 4600-R “All fees and fines shall be paid or waived before a student can receive report cards or certified transcripts or can be eligible for graduation.”

Costs:

AFTER SCHOOL - MONTHLY FEES PER CHILD			
# days per week	REGULAR RATE	Reduced Rate Scholarship	WCS Employee Scholarship
3 days or less	\$215.00	(must enroll for 4 days)	\$40.00
4 days	\$280.00	\$140.00	\$47.00
5 days	\$290.00	\$145.00	\$57.00

Additional FEES and Charges:

Late Payment Fee: \$10.00 first 2 times, \$15.00 thereafter

Late Pickup Charge: \$1.00 per minute past 6:00

Returned Check Fee: (charged and collected by private contractor)

Unscheduled drop in: \$35 a day

Scheduled Drop in: \$18 a day limited to 4 times a year.

The cost is normally based on the 180 day school year, prorated and spread over 9 months. No refunds are made for snow days. November, December and April are considered full months regardless of days of operation. If you are enrolled by November 1st and do not withdraw, you do not pay for the month of June (snow make up days).

Since we must hire and pay staff based on enrollment, fees are charged for each month a child is registered to attend, regardless of absences. The costs of a daily snack and program supplies are included in the program fees. Donations are always welcomed.

Regardless of which type of enrollment you select, when you enroll, you are reserving staff, space and provisions for your child whether he/she attends or not. **Refunds will not be given when students are absent.**

Help with Fees for Low Income Families

Subsidies are available to eligible parents through

- *The Watauga County Department of Social Services (828-265-8100)
- Caldwell Community College (students only)
- ELC Reduced Rate is a scholarship available to low-income parents who do not qualify for child care subsidies available from the Department of Social Services. These allocations are made through established eligibility guidelines giving preference to the youngest children in need of care and children enrolled for the most number of days. County-wide there are typically 15 scholarships available for the year. This number can change at any time due to unexpected expenses or an unexpected lack of funding. Parents must apply for each child and be approved for the scholarship. Reduced rate applications are available online.

Watauga County Schools Employee Scholarship

The after school scholarship for the children of Watauga County School Employees (available only to full-time staff) is based on not hiring additional staff. In our after school program, we maintain staff to child ratios that are regulated by state licensing regulations. The current regulation is one staff employee per 14 children in any group that has a five-year-old; in all other age groups, we maintain a ratio of 19 children to one staff member. We also have a maximum number of children we can serve in each school, which is dependent on the size of the space we are able to occupy. This scholarship is eligible to:

- Any child of a Watauga County Schools full-time employee on a first come, first served basis, provided there is space in the child's group without having to hire additional personnel. If another person enrolls for the last space in a group, the space will be relinquished to the person willing to pay the full price.
- Employees who register and apply for the scholarship, agree to follow the policies of the program as set forth in the Parent Handbook.
- Space and availability for this service is not guaranteed.

Middle School Students

10. Middle School students will be considered if their parent(s) are a bus driver and there is room in the program. Middle School students will also be allowed if the student has a younger sibling in the program with the understanding that all of our middle school students are to be role models and not behavior problems. Middle school students will need to sign a contract. Please reach out if there are extenuating circumstances.

Western Youth Network (WYN) offers an alternative after school program for middle school students.

- WYN Contact Information: 828-264-5174
- WYN Website: <https://www.westernyouthnetwork.org/our-work/after-school/watauga/>

Withdrawal or to Change Days of Registration

Please email McCormick Grubb (grubbm@wataugaschools.org) with any changes to be made to your child's attendance dates. Any changes must be submitted by the 3rd of the month to avoid being charged for that month. If your child needs to withdraw from the program, please email McCormick Grubb.

School Space, Supplies, Personal Items

The school principal determines the building space and equipment that can be used at each school. Children normally have access to playgrounds, equipment, gyms and audio visual equipment when this does not conflict with school activities.

Please note that the program does not accept responsibility for any personal items that may be damaged, lost, or stolen that are brought by students. (We ask that all personal items be left at home or remain in the child's backpack during after school program hours.) **This includes any personal electronic devices. Children can only use school issued devices during after school.**

Daily Routine 2:45-6:00

A written lesson/activity plan is posted and will be followed every day. These activities will include:

1. Snack
2. Physical Activities (30-60 minutes) - outdoor play when weather permits incorporating both gross motor and "free" play.
3. Academic Time (30+ minutes) - includes time for homework to be completed.
NOTE: We can not force a child to do homework. We also can't have one staff member sit with a child daily and offer tutoring. This would be considered a supervision violation. We want to offer a daily quiet environment for the kids to have an opportunity to work on homework or work on something educational while also supervising the group.
4. Enrichment Activities (30-60 minutes) - a balance between self-directed and adult-guided.

Healthy Snacks:

Watauga County Schools are committed to serving nutritious snacks to your children. Each snack served meets guidelines approved by the Division of Child Development and the US Dept. of Agriculture to ensure your children are eating healthy. All student materials and snacks are provided by the program.

Only allow your child to bring his/her own food or drink to the program if you have completed the Nutrition Opt Out Form which you can get from the Program Coordinator.

Physical Activity:

Physical activity will occur daily as part of our overall program to nurture the whole child. We exceed daily standards set forth by the "Eat Smart Move More" guidelines established by the state of North Carolina. Child care licensing requirements mandate that we go outside every day, **even during cold weather** and hot sunny days (see weather chart attached). On rainy days we will go outside under shelter.

Be sure your child has appropriate provisions (coats, hats, gloves, etc.) for going outside each day.

Academic Time

Each child will be given time for academic time or homework. Our philosophy is to establish a routine regarding time for academic work. If a child doesn't have academic work, then we will encourage quiet activities such as reading, math problems, puzzles, coloring, etc. so other children working are not disturbed. We can not force a child to do homework. We also can't have one staff member sit with a child daily and offer tutoring. This would be considered a supervision violation. We want to offer daily a quiet environment for the kids to have an opportunity to do homework or work on something educational while also supervising the group

Discipline Policy and Behavior Expectations:

Children must comply with all regular school rules and with the directions of the after school staff. We seek to prevent behavior problems by keeping the program well organized, setting clear expectations,

modeling responsible and respectful behavior, offering engaging activities, meeting students' basic needs, and providing positive reinforcement for good behavior.

When disciplinary actions are necessary, we use redirection, suspension of privileges, separation from the group, notices to parents, and suspension or expulsion from the program as needed. Corporal punishment and other physical punishment (such as requiring a student to run laps or do pushups or withholding food or bathroom privileges) are prohibited. Please support staff efforts to maintain a safe, orderly program for the benefit of all students. ***A parent/guardian contacted about behavior problems is expected to cooperate with the staff in assuring the elimination of inappropriate behavior.***

The basic discipline policy includes the following action steps:

1. Talking to the child about the behavior
2. Redirecting the child to a different activity
3. Removing the child from the group or area
4. Limiting privileges
5. Initiating an age appropriate period of time-out (1 minute for every year of age)
6. A written behavior letter and consulting with a parent in person to discuss a strategy.
7. Calling the parent, a written behavior letter and sending the child home.

Discipline will be handled by the program coordinator and the group leaders. The Assistant After School Director, After School Director, Principals, Counselors, or social workers may also be contacted if needed.

A copy of a behavior letter from your program coordinator will be given to the parent or guardian detailing specific concerns as they occur and asking for help from the parent or guardian regarding how we can best address the problem to prevent repeat offenses of the same behavior.

If sustained problems arise regarding the behavior of your child and we are unable to solve the problem, we will contact you to arrange a parent/teacher conference regarding the problem. This will give you the opportunity to talk with our staff and school personnel in order to help your child. This conference can include the program coordinator, the principal, the counselor of the school or others who may experience similar behaviors during the school day. The goal is to come up with a comprehensive plan to address the issue so your child receives the same message from all figures of authority.

Suspensions

Safety and respect for all children and counselors is our top priority. Students that are a threat to other children in the program, are continually disruptive to the group, disrespectful to staff, or refuse to follow instructions can be suspended or expelled. Students are also expected to stay with the group at all times. Students who do not stay with the group can be suspended or expelled as well. Suspensions may occur after a warning letter. **An expulsion may occur after written letters or immediately if the offense is violent in nature, involves drugs, alcohol, or weapons. Physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated in our After School Programs.**

Expulsion from the Extended Learning Center program will normally result from one of the following:

1. Repeated discipline problems such as disruptive behavior, refusal to follow instructions, or speech/actions disrespectful to other students or staff.
2. A single incident involving violence, possession of a weapon, any illegal substance, or other behavior that threatens the health and well-being of other students or staff.
3. Students who do not stay with their group.
4. Excessive late pick-up of children after **6:00 p.m**
5. Failure to pay fees in a timely manner.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy:

North Carolina law requires that any person who suspects child abuse or neglect to report the case to the county department of social services. It is a required obligation with penalties for any school or child care personnel. Any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect will be coordinated with the school guidance counselor and principal as well as the Watauga County Department of Social Services.

Procedures for safe arrival and departure of children:

At the end of school each day, your child and your child's teacher should be clear whether your child is to come to after school or not. We require separate notice from the one given to the school if your child will not be in after school on a day for which they are enrolled. Please send an email, procare message, or call the Program Coordinator to let them know when your child will be sick or absent. We will check attendance promptly at 2:30 p.m. and determine that all the children enrolled are accounted for. For the safety of the children, daily arrival and departure times and the identity of the person picking up or dropping off will be recorded by staff each day as the child arrives and/or parent or authorized person picks the child up. The parent or guardian must notify staff of the specific time when they or another person they have authorized on the registration will arrive each day to pick up the child for departure, outside the facility. Students will be accompanied by staff to the predetermined pick up area at the designated time and sign the child out as they depart with the parent or other parent authorized person on the child's registration. Children are never allowed to go out to a car without an adult staff member and children will only be released to persons listed on the child's registration as authorized by the parent/guardian. Staff will request to view a driver's license to verify the identity of persons other than a known parent/guardian even if they are included on your authorized list.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to list and revise as needed, individuals who are Authorized Pickups and contact information such as phone numbers and email addresses in Procure and to inform the program coordinator of any changes when made immediately.

Once the child is signed out, the person who signed out the child is immediately fully responsible for that child and must leave the program premises promptly. **Children must never be left unattended.**

If children are not picked up by 6:30 p.m. and we have not received a call saying that an authorized person is on the way to pick up the child, we will contact the Department of Social Services and the school principal to report the situation and to request assistance.

If there are current legal documents regarding custody issues, please provide a copy to the program coordinator. We are required to release a child to his or her natural parent unless we have a legal document on file that addresses custody. We cannot deny a parent the right to pick up their child, even if we have been asked to do so without a legal document on site.

The after school program closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick-up fees will apply at the rate of \$1.00 per minute past the closing time of 6:00 p.m.

100% Tobacco-Free Policy – Smoking and the use of any product containing, made or derived from tobacco, including but not limited to vaping, e-cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, smokeless tobacco, and hookah is not permitted on the premises of the child care facility, on vehicles used to transport children or during off-premise activities. This policy is communicated to all families, visitors, volunteers, and staff. All staff and parents of enrolled children sign an acknowledgement of this policy. Any persons found violating the policy will be asked to refrain while on child care premises or asked to leave the premises.

Health Rules for Attendance:

Children who are suspected to be sick and/or have had a fever within the past 24 hours should not attend the program. Children will be given a wellness check as they are dropped off at the program each day and monitored throughout the time in the program for symptoms of illness. If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be called using contact information provided on the registration form (remember to update contact information including phone number, address, and email address in Procure as soon as possible. Please notify the program coordinator immediately when these changes occur so he/she may print out an updated contact form which is kept in compliance with licensing requirements. This will help

in the event of an emergency and access to electronic information is limited). To insure the health of other children and staff in the program, **sick children must be picked up immediately**, please be prompt. **If children are not picked up in a timely manner, it puts other children and staff at risk to be sick. Multiple offenses may result in a suspension or expulsion.**

Children with any of the following conditions must be sent home:

- Temperature over 100.4 degrees
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has started
- 2 or more episodes of vomiting
- A red eye with white or yellow eye discharge until 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies or lice
- Chicken pox or a rash suggestive of chicken pox
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional states the child is not infectious
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Pertussis, until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment
- Hepatitis A virus infection, until one week after onset of illness or jaundice
- Sudden onset of diarrhea
- When a physician or other health professional issues a written order that the child be separated from other children.

Medication Administration:

Our staff is certified in Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, Medication Administration Basics including Epinephrine Auto Injectors, Health Emergencies and Life Threatening Allergies.

You must provide written permission to administer medication to your child. In addition, a doctor or health care professional must sign a medication permission form and create an action plan for your child in order that Watauga County Schools after school personnel may make available 1) epinephrine for severe allergic reactions, and 2) inhalants for asthma. This form is to be filled out and updated every six months. It will be kept on file-with the student's records. Please keep track of medication expiration dates as we are unable to keep your child in the program if permission or medication expires. The board of education and its employees assume no liability for complications or side effects of medication when administered in accordance with the instructions provided by the parent and health care practitioner.

Our staff is permitted to administer emergency medication only in the instance the child is not able to self-administer; please be sure your child is adequately trained to self-administer asthma inhalants and "epi-pens". All other over the counter and non-emergency medications should be administered before or after program hours. Our program personnel will NOT administer any non-emergency medications unless they have been properly trained and permission has been given by the School Nurse.

It is imperative that you record any medical conditions, health care needs, reactions and necessary responses and medications on your child's registration form and update as necessary. Please notify the program coordinator immediately of any changes so they can update their printed copies each group leader carries with them.

If your child is injured during play, we will administer first aid and call you. The program coordinator will describe the injury to you and we will give you the opportunity to make a decision regarding whether your child should be picked up or stay with us.

In case of an emergency, the staff will seek medical assistance first and call the parent immediately. Parents and their insurance carriers are responsible for the cost of such emergencies.

Insurance

We strongly encourage parents to obtain insurance coverage for their children either through the accident policy offered at the school or through a family health insurance policy. **Parents and/or their insurance carriers are responsible for all costs related to any accident or injury incurred to their children during the after school program.**

Field Trips

Children do not leave school grounds except for approved field trips. If a field trip is planned for traveling away from the center, you will be given another field trip permission form. Every child attending a field trip must have a permission slip signed by the parent or guardian. If there is a participation fee, the information will be attached to the permission form along with other specific information about the field trip. A field trip schedule will be posted at least two weeks in advance for your information. The specific location of the trip, the time and, the date of the trip, when and where the child will be picked up, the name of the person in charge, and how a parent can contact that person if necessary will be included on the posting. A list of children in attendance will also be left at the center for reference. All field trips are optional for students. Transportation for field trips is provided. Parents/Guardians, with an approved background check, are invited to accompany students if a field trip is planned.

Emergency Response Plan:

The WCS Extended Learning Centers follow the same evacuation procedures as the school they are located in for fire, lockdown and tornado procedures. These procedures are detailed in an Emergency Preparedness Plan provided to the state for access by state and local emergency personnel. In the event of an emergency, staff will have each child's emergency information and parents will be notified as soon as the situation is safe to do so. More information is available upon request.

Custodial Services:

The agreement between the School and ELC regarding custodial service is: Any shared space used by both the school and ELC is cleaned by the custodial department. Floors are mopped and bathrooms are cleaned daily by the custodian.

The ELC program staff will clean any space dedicated entirely to our after school program. Staff will clean and sanitize tables and chairs daily, other student materials will be cleaned and disinfected weekly or more often during times when illness and viruses are prevalent.

Parent Participation:

Before school begins parents are normally invited during the evening hours where they are able to see our space and activity centers, receive the parent handbook, have computers and help available to register online, are given contact information, and are provided answers to questions on operations, policies and resources. We will offer virtual meetings when requested. We now have communication possibilities through Procure allowing us to send photos, newsletters, and text messages as needed.

In the spring each year, we meet with parents during Kindergarten Orientation to explain our after school programs and policies, provide parent handbooks, registration forms, contact information, and answer questions for new parents that may need services for the upcoming year.

In addition, parents receive an after school newsletter quarterly and have information available at all times during the year on each school's after school webpage. If a parent has a concern or complaint, they are encouraged to call the program coordinator for a conference. A conference needs to be scheduled when after school is not in session so the program coordinator can offer his/her full attention. A conference can be scheduled by a parent or the program coordinator. Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the program to assist or simply to visit.

Special Closing Information:

The after school program does not operate on days when school is canceled or dismissed early for inclement weather. If it begins to snow or ice after the Extended Learning Center has begun and we expect conditions to continue to deteriorate, the ELC Assistant Director and program coordinator may make the decision to close the program early. If you receive a call advising of the program closing, please be prompt in picking up your child so staff can get home safely.

In addition, licensing and sanitation regulations prevent the operation of child care programs when there is no running water or electricity. In the event that we have a power outage or water failure, we may cancel the program and call you to pick up your child.

The Holiday/Snow Day Program at Hardin Park

The Holiday/Snow Day program is a separate program starting in October providing working parents full day care on teacher work days, professional development days, some remote work days, snow days, some holidays, and days when schools are closed for inclement weather. *Registration for this program will not begin until September.* Please check the website for the official date of registration. The program does not operate on days when school begins and is closed for inclement weather during the school day.

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from the program between 9:30 a.m – 6:00 p.m. Please do not bring your children before 9:30 a.m. or announced opening time as we cannot attend to them. Our staff will not be responsible for children left at the center before staff arrive and prepare for

the day. A \$1 per minute late pickup fee will be charged for picking up children after 6:00 p.m. ***If we feel it is unsafe for the staff to make it to the program, the program may be closed for the day.***

Program hours are subject to change during extremely severe weather. When the decision to close schools is made after 6:15 a.m., the time the program opens may be adjusted accordingly. These decisions are announced on the school automated phone notification with the regular school announcement, on our website at www.watauga schools.org, via e-mail (on request), on the “snowline” (828-264-0200), and on local radio stations. The program may be canceled on holidays if less than 15 children are enrolled. At least 2 weeks notice will be given if this is necessary and fees for any canceled days will be refunded in full. Please visit the Holiday/Snow Day web page on the Watauga County Schools website at www.wataugaschools.org under departments/after school/Holiday-Snow Day for specific days and complete registration information.

Understand the Weather



Wind-Chill

- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed skin will freeze in 1 minute



Heat Index

- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)												
Air Temperature		Wind Speed in mph										
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40		
40		40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27		
30		30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13		
20		20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1		
10		10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15		
0		0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29		
-10		-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43		

Comfortable for out door play

Caution

Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)												
Air Temperature (°F)		Relative Humidity (Percent)										
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
80		80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86
84		83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98
90		91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122
94		97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135	
100		109	114	118	124	129	130					
104		119	124	131	137							

Space and Equipment

There are space requirements for indoor and outdoor environments that must be measured prior to licensure. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well maintained, and developmentally appropriate. Indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

Licensed centers must also meet requirements in the following areas.

Staff Requirements

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must complete a minimum number of training hours, including ITS-SIDS training for any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. All staff who work directly with children must have CPR and First Aid training, and at least one person who completed the training must be present at all times when children are in care. One staff must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training and create the EPR plan. All staff must also undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter.

Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. The minimum staff/child ratios and group sizes for single-age groups of children in centers are shown below and must be posted in each classroom. The staff/child ratios for multi-age groupings are outlined in the child care rules and require prior approval.

Age	Teacher: Child Ratio	Max Group Size
0-12 months	1:5	10
12-24 months	1:8	12
2 to 3 years old	1:10	20
3 to 4 years old	1:15	25
4 to 5 years old	1:20	25
5 years and older	1:25	25

Additional Staff/Child Ratio Information:

Centers located in a residence that are licensed for six to twelve children may keep up to three additional school-age children, depending on the ages of the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group.

Reviewing Facility Information

From the Division's Child care Facility Search Site, the facility and visit documentation can be viewed. A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every licensed center or family child care home. These files can be viewed during business hours (8 a.m. -5 p.m.) by contacting the Division at 919-814-8300 or 1-800-959-0829 or requested via the Division's web site at www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov.

How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a licensed family child care home or child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be issued an administrative action, fined and/or may have their licenses suspended or revoked.

Administrative actions must be posted in the facility. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the requirements described in this pamphlet, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-8300 or 1-800-959-0829.



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Child Development
and Early Education

Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules (Center and FCCH)

Division of Child Development
and Early Education

North Carolina Department of
Health and Human Services
333 Six Forks Road
Raleigh, NC 27609

Child Care Commission
<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/Child-Care-Commission>

Revised January 2021

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services.

What Is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis - at least once a week
- for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is done through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110.

The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

Family Child Care Homes

A family child care home is licensed to care for five or fewer preschool age children, including their own preschool children, and can include three additional school-age children. The provider's own school-age children are not counted. Family child care home operators must be 21 years old and have a high school education or its equivalent. Family child care homes will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Licenses are issued to family child care home providers who meet the following requirements:

Child Care Centers

Licensure as a center is required when six or more preschool children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose to meet the standards of the Notice of Compliance rather than the Star Rated License. Recreational programs that operate for less than four consecutive months, such as summer camps, are exempt from licensing. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a family child care home or center at any time while their child is present.
- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

The laws and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. Check the telephone

directory or talk with a child care provider to see if there is a Child Care Resource and Referral agency in your community. For more information, visit the Resources page located on the Child Care website at: <https://nochildcare.ncdhhs.gov/>. For more information on the law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 818 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829 (In State Only), or visit our homepage at: <https://nochildcare.ncdhhs.gov/>.

Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, appropriate discipline, or when a child is abandoned. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education at 818-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.** Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any maltreatment complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report the case to the county department of social services.**

Transportation

Child care centers or family child care homes providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratios must be maintained.

Record Requirements

Centers and homes must keep accurate records such as children's, staff, and program. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma policy must be developed and shared with parents of children up to five years of age.

Discipline and Behavior Management

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in the discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers and family child care homes. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

Training Requirements

Center and family child care home staff must have current CPR and First Aid certification, ITS-SIDS training (if caring for infants, 0 to 12 months), prior to caring for children and every three years thereafter. Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training is required and each facility must create an EPR plan. Center and home staff must also complete a minimum number of health and safety training as well as annual ongoing training hours.

Curriculum and Activities

Four- and five-star programs must use an approved curriculum in classrooms serving four-year-olds. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to get a quality point for the star-rated license. Activity plans and schedule must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet, and indoor and outdoor activities. A written activity plan that includes activities intended to stimulate the development domains, in accordance with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore, use materials on their own and have choices.

Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed family child care home and center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. For Centers and FCCs, meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed centers to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather permitting) for at least an hour a day for preschool children and at least thirty minutes a day for children under two. Children must have space and time provided for rest.

Two through Five Star Rated License

Centers and family child care homes that are meeting the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one-star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five-star license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet and the program standards met by the program, and one quality point option.

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background qualification is a **pre-service requirement**. All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter. This requirement includes household members who are over the age of 16 in family child care homes.

Our Online Parent Portal

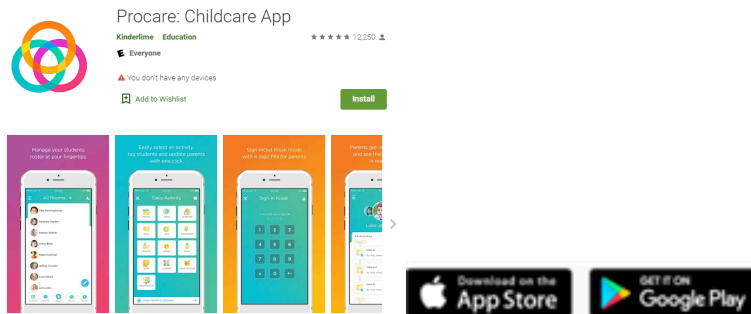
[Myprocare.com](https://myprocare.com) allows you to access your student's account, update account information, be notified when fees are due, and make payments online from anywhere using electronic checks. You can also set up automatic recurring payments so you never receive a late payment fee again.

Creating a Procure account is a requirement of enrollment in the after school program. So you must provide an up-to-date email address when registering your child.

Once your child's registration is accepted for enrollment, you will receive an emailed invitation from Procure to create your family account. Below is a list of steps you will need to follow once you receive your invitation to create your Procure account:

1. To begin, enter your primary email address (this is the email address you will use when registering your child for the after school program) and click the Secure Login button.
2. You will then be prompted to check your email for a confirmation number, which you will enter in the indicated box.
3. Choose a password and enter where indicated.
4. Confirm your password where indicated.
5. Click Submit.

Procure has an Awesome Mobile App available!



With the free Procure Mobile App, you are able to receive photos, videos, messages from your child's program coordinator, and other updates about your child's activities in the after school program. You will be able to keep track of when your child is signed into the program and signed out.

You are also able to make payments online with an electronic check, set up recurring payments, see your monthly statement, update your account information, and access your child care tax statement.

With the Mobile App you are able to sign your child in and out of the program as needed using Procure's contactless QR Code.

AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

Never receive a Late Payment Fee again!

You may contact the After School office at 828-264-7190 with any questions.



Watauga County Schools
Educating for Productive Citizenship & Life-Long Learning
2026-2027 School Calendar

BOE Approved
1/12/2026

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- Mandatory Work Days (5)
- Optional Work Days (10)
- Annual Leave (10)
- Holidays (10)
- Early Release Days (6)
- Remote Learning Days TBD

August
 11-14.....Mandatory Work Days
 17.....First Day of 180 Day Term

September
 7.....Labor Day Holiday
 23.....Early Release/
 Professional Development Day

October
 16.....End of First Quarter
 19.....Optional Work Day
 28-29.....Early Release/
 Parent Conferences

November
 11.....Veterans Day Holiday
 25.....Optional Work Day
 26-27.....Thanksgiving Holidays

December
 18.....Early Release/
 End of 2nd Nine Weeks/End of First
 Semester
 21-22.....Annual Leave
 23-25.....Christmas Holidays
 28-31.....Annual Leave

January
 1.....New Year's Day Holiday
 4.....Students Return
 18.....Optional Work Day/
 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February
 24.....Early Release/
 Professional Development Day

March
 19.....End of Third Quarter
 29.....Spring Holiday
 30-31.....Annual Leave

April
 1-2.....Annual Leave

May
 25.....Last Day of Fourth Quarter/
 End of Second Semester
 26.....Mandatory Work Day
 27-28.....Optional Work Days
 31.....Memorial Day Holiday

June
 1-4,7.....Optional Work Days

**The last day of the 2026-2027 school year
 will be an early release day.**

January 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Field Trip and Photo/Video/Audio Consent

Field Trip Consent

From time to time during the year we may plan field trips for children to attend. We will notify you in advance of any field trips that occur and of any additional costs associated with each field trip.

All field trips will be supervised by after school staff. All children will be expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of the program and to follow staff instructions on field trips.

If you approve of your child's participation in "off premises" field trips and/or permission to play outside fenced playground areas of the Extended Learning Center after school program, please sign below.

Child's name (please print)

(Parent Signature)

Date

Phone where I can be reached _____

Photo / Video / Audio Consent

There may be occasions when after school activities will be photographed, videotaped, or audio recorded by employees of the Watauga County Schools, the news media, and others for training or public relations purposes. With your consent, film including your child may be used in these photos/videos/audio recordings in the school system and/or after school; publications, newspaper and television stories, teacher training materials, presentations to professional and community groups, on school system web pages and social media, and for other noncommercial purposes. Any film of students for commercial purposes will be prohibited without the consent of parents.

By my signature below, I indicate that I approve or disapprove of having my child (as listed on this form above) photographed, videotaped, or audio recorded during after school activities as described above.

I approve: _____
(Parent Signature) Date

I disapprove: _____
(Parent Signature) Date

Child care application signature page

Receipt of Handbook and Emergency Authorization

By my signature below **I agree or acknowledge:**

- **In the event of an emergency** the program coordinator or other staff may authorize the physician of his/her choice to provide emergency care provided that I cannot be contacted immediately.
- the program coordinator or other after school personnel may arrange transportation as needed to the nearest hospital or evacuation site.
- The Extended Learning Center Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures including but not limited to the program discipline policy have been explained to me and I will abide by the rules and policies governing after-school care included within the handbook and support the staff in their efforts to make this program a safe and fun learning experience.
- I have either received a printed copy or have access online at <https://www.wataugaschools.org/departments/afterschool/parent-handbook-fees-tax-info-child-care-voucher-info-reduced-rate-eligibility> to the Watauga County Schools Extended Learning Center's Parent Policy and Information Handbook including discipline policy.
- Any changes of the program discipline policy will be given to me in writing 14 days prior to implementation.
- For my child to play outside fenced playground areas of the school.

In this handbook, I have been given information for the following topics:

1. How to register my child
2. Types of enrollment
3. Fees and services
4. Online billing information
5. Hours of operation
6. Procedures for safe arrival and departure of center
7. Medication policy- Sick child policy
8. 100% Tobacco-Free Policy for N.C. Child Care
9. Emergency evacuation plan
10. Discipline and behavior expectations
11. Inclement weather
12. Healthy snacks
13. Child abuse and neglect policy
14. Custodial Services
15. School Calendar
16. Summary of North Carolina Child care Law and Rules
17. Weather Chart
18. Field Trip/Photography Consent Form
19. Permission to play outside fenced playground areas of the school.

REMINDER: BY SIGNING THIS YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE NO REFUNDS FOR MISSED DAYS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR ABSENCES.

Child's Name (please print)

(Parent Signature)

(Date)

I, the Program Coordinator, will provide or arrange transportation to an appropriate medical resource or pre-determined evacuation site in the event of an emergency. In an emergency, other children in the program will be supervised by a responsible adult. I will not administer any drug or medication to the children in this program except during a life threatening emergency when a child is unable to self-administer medication as authorized by the parent and physician in the action plan on site.

(Program Coordinator Signature)

(Date)