



PARENT HANDBOOK

Dear Parent,

Welcome to The Comfort Zone, care for kids who do not feel so good. This program is designed to address the childcare needs of families at Iowa State University and in the Story County community. The Comfort Zone serves as your partner to assist in balancing the demands of work or education and child rearing.

It is our goal to help your child slowly return to normal activity during a time of illness. We are the place where your child moves toward being well again.

Please use the contents of this handbook to familiarize yourself with the program. Keep in mind that pre-registration is required. Pre-registration information and paperwork can be found at our website www.universitycommunitychildcare.org under the Comfort Zone tab. If you have further questions or would like to tour our program, you can contact us at 515-294-3333 or email us at czone@iastate.edu.

Sincerely,

The Comfort Zone Staff

Philosophy & Objectives

The philosophy of the University Community Childcare Center and The Comfort Zone is to consider the total child and her/his social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth. The Center's goal is to add to and strengthen – but not replace – the care, guidance and culture provided in the home.

In keeping with this philosophy, the objectives of The Comfort Zone are as follows:

- To provide care for children with minor short term illnesses while their parents attend school or work.
- To establish a program specifically designed in program content, equipment, staffing and sanitation procedures to meet the needs of mildly-ill children.
- To provide parents with an option otherwise unavailable. The program has been designed to provide a caring, safe and friendly environment for mildly-ill children.
- To reduce the inflated incidence of illness in child care centers resulting from parents taking their children to the center regardless of cold, flu, sore throat or other illnesses.
- To assist the community in reducing employee and student absenteeism among parents of mildly-ill children.

The Comfort Zone is not designed for chronically ill children or for seriously ill children. It is for the child with a routine childhood illness, the child with a cold or flu, the child with chicken pox, the child who has no symptoms but who tests positive for the presence of disease, the child with an illness that can be treated with antibiotics. Sometimes a child is in need of a more restful day than is provided in the regular day care program. Fatigue does warrant respite and is an appropriate use of the program.

The Comfort Zone is funded by Iowa State University, ISU Government of the Student Body, Story County, United Way of Story County and City of Ames. The program is administered by University Community Childcare (UCC). UCC reserves the right to make additions, corrections or changes in policy as the need arises.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

PRE-REGISTRATION

The Comfort Zone provides care for children 6 months old to 11 years. The *Iowa Child Care Licensing Standards* requires all children be pre-registered and files be current before admission for care. The following information must be on file and up-to-date for each child prior to enrollment:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| *Background Information | *Physical Examination |
| *Medical History | *Emergency Medical Consent |
| *Immunization Record | *Photo Release |
| *Pick-up Authorization | *Excursion Permission |
| *Income information | |

Pre-registration forms may be obtained from our website at www.universitycommunitychildcare.org under the Comfort Zone tab or by calling 294-3333 or 294-9838. If this information is already on file with your regular care provider, you can have them fax a copy to 515-294-7156. A visit to The Comfort Zone prior to admission may ease the transition of your child's first stay. You are welcome any time but to assure availability of staff, an appointment is recommended.

ADMISSION

Upon arrival at The Comfort Zone you will be asked to complete an admission information form, giving individual care instructions for your child and providing a history of the current illness for the staff. The nurse will perform a screening examination on each child within one hour of admission and document the results on your child's daily record. A copy will be given to you at the time of discharge.

You will be informed of other illnesses and/or exposure to communicable diseases in The Comfort Zone: before admission if it is known or when you pick up your child if it is not. You will be asked to sign that you were informed of other illnesses to which your child may have been exposed.

- A child with a temperature at or exceeding 104.0°F will be excluded from the program.
- A child with a temperature at or exceeding 102.0°F that has lasted longer than 24 hours may need to consult with a doctor before being admitted. This will be at the nurse's discretion.
- The Comfort Zone RN may recommend the parents of a child returning to the program for a second successive day consult a doctor prior to returning to the program.
- A child with a communicable disease will be admitted as space allows.
- Children with head lice are excluded.
- Any child determined by the nurse to be too ill will not be admitted to the program.

RESERVATIONS

Care will be offered from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call ahead to make sure space is available. Enrollment is limited, therefore services will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. The nurse will make the final determination on eligibility for admission.

If your child becomes ill during the night or early morning, a message may be left at 515-294-3333. When leaving a message, state your name, phone number, time care is needed and a brief description of your child's illness. A member of The Comfort Zone staff will check messages and return your call, usually around 8:00 a.m.

PROGRAMMING

STAFFING

A registered nurse and a UCC teaching staff member will staff The Comfort Zone. The staff at The Comfort

Zone have received a minimum of seventeen hours of training which consists of four hours in infant and child CPR, four hours in pediatric first aid, one hour in infection control, six hours in caring for ill children and two hours in child abuse identification. All staff are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse.

Minimum staff ratios as required by the Department of Human Services shall be 1 adult to 4 infants and 1 adult to 5 children over the age of two. No child will be admitted to The Comfort Zone unless the nurse is in attendance. Absence of a nurse will require the closing of The Comfort Zone.

ACTIVITIES

During an illness your child may not be ready for the activity level of a regular childcare setting. A child who is ill tends to be vulnerable, physically and emotionally. The Comfort Zone is staffed and furnished with her/his comfort in mind.

The home-like atmosphere and individualized activities are designed to allow each child to participate at her/his own pace. Flexible scheduling of the day is based on individual needs. Lunch is offered over the noon hour with snacks available throughout the day. A variety of quiet activities are planned by the staff and a large selection of toys, children's books, and music are available along with a TV and DVD player with an age appropriate DVD library. You are also welcome to bring your child's favorite toy, movie, CD or book from home.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Bringing a personal belonging of your child will make him/her feel more comfortable. A special toy, a blanket, or a picture of the family will make your child's stay at The Comfort Zone more enjoyable. Your child will have an individual cubby for personal belongings, but marking the items will ensure they are returned to you.

CLOTHING

Each child should bring a minimum of two changes of clothing including underwear or diapers.

Please keep in mind that your child may need to be changed more often than usual. As a child's comfort is our number one priority, pajamas are acceptable attire at The Comfort Zone.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between the staff and parents is essential in making your child's stay at The Comfort Zone a healthy and happy one.

The information provided on the admission form will assist the staff in monitoring your child's health throughout the day. A daily record will be kept on each child admitted to The Comfort Zone. A copy of the record will be given to you when your child is discharged. The daily record will include regularly checked temperatures, heart rate, respiration, intake/output, sleeping times and general conditions during the day.

You are asked to check with the staff at The Comfort Zone at least once during your child's stay. This may be a visit or a phone call. A number where you can be reached during the day is requested in the event that consultation is required.

HEALTH POLICIES

MEDICAL ADVISOR

The Medical Advisor for The Comfort Zone is Dr. Therese Halbur, a pediatric physician at McFarland Clinic in Ames, Iowa. She is available to The Comfort Zone staff for assistance with policies/procedures and consultation as needed.

NUTRITION

Meals are provided for all children who eat table food. You may choose a regular meal or a light meal for your child. Formula and baby foods are not available. Other outside food and drink are not permitted due to the number of children in the building with a variety of allergies. Please check with the staff prior to admission to see if the available options meet your child's needs.

Each child's nutritional status will be assessed at the time of admission and arrangements will be made to assure her/his nutritional needs are met. The type of diet will be determined jointly with you and the staff at the time of admission. Fluid intake will be encouraged with a variety of fluids available for your child. Fluid intake will be recorded on the daily summary sheet. If your child is unable to retain foods or fluids, you will be notified.

INFECTION CONTROL

Infection control policies will be strictly followed. Maintaining disinfected toys and equipment and proper hand washing are part of the daily routine of care for well and ill children.

When you call prior to admission to assure space availability, you will be informed of the illnesses of the other children in The Comfort Zone for that day. Staff is continually on watch for opportunities to prevent germ sharing such as removing toys that have been in a child's mouth from the play area and monitoring toy sharing between children.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safe health care needs of your child will be met allowing you to retain primary decision making responsibility, but the health care professional on staff must respond to emergency situations. In case of emergency, The Comfort Zone staff will immediately contact 911. Staff may not transport any child in a personal vehicle.

An RN will be on premises at all times and all staff is trained in CPR and First Aid.

MEDICATIONS

According to Iowa Child Care Licensing Standards, no child can be given any medication by the center staff without a parent's written authorization. ***You must complete the medication section of the admission information form authorizing the staff to give medication to your child.*** If this is not completed, the staff will not be able to give your child any medicine without consulting you first.

All prescription medications must have the pharmacy label attached and be clearly labeled as to content, dosage and your child's name.

All over-the-counter medicines must be accompanied by the manufacturer's label. It will be necessary to get written directions from your doctor before center staff may administer over-the-counter medications.

Staff will be responsible for storing medication safely. The staff will document medication given on a daily summary sheet. A copy of this information will be sent home at the end of the day.

STAFF HEALTH POLICY

When is a staff member too sick to come to work?

1. **Fever of 101 degrees.** Body temperature needs to be below 101 degrees for 24 hours before returning to the center.
2. **Uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting, rash** due to a contagious illness. Should be symptom free 24 hours before returning to work.
3. **Contagious bacterial infections** such as strep throat, impetigo and conjunctivitis. Must be on antibiotic treatment 24 hours before returning to work.
4. **Head lice or nits** require treatment and a total removal of head lice/nits before returning to the center.

A note from a health practitioner may be required before returning to work.

FEES

Full payment of fees is due at the time of discharge. Checks should be made payable to University Community Childcare (UCC). DHS child care assistance is not accepted for Comfort Zone services. However, staff will make sure you receive a receipt of your payment to share with DHS for possible reimbursement.

The sliding fee scale is adjusted annually according to government figures. Proof of income must be provided to access rates in columns A & B of the fee scale.

The information needed includes:

1. Most recent federal income tax return or (3) consecutive months of payroll stubs
2. ISU Graduate Students with assistantships – bring award letter
3. International ISU students – bring letter stating income received from home country

LATE FEE POLICY

The Comfort Zone closes at 4:30 p.m. If it is not possible for you to pick up your child on time, please make arrangements with a friend or relative to do so and communicate the information to The Comfort Zone staff. (You must list all persons who have permission to pick up your child in her/his file.) If you do not communicate with staff at The Comfort Zone by 4:45 p.m., staff will call the ISU Police Department and have an officer wait with them for you to arrive.

A late pick-up fee will be charged if you depart after closing time. You will be charged \$1.00 per minute until you arrive and depart from the center with your child. The late fee is added to your fee for the day and is due at the time of discharge and must be paid in cash. The fee goes to the staff staying with your child.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Comfort Zone is sponsored by Iowa State University, University Community Childcare, the City of Ames, ISU Government of the Student Body, Story County and the United Way of Story County. Each of these organizations plays a key role in the operation of The Comfort Zone. Only with their support is this special child care service possible.



Policies reviewed by:

Therese Halbur MD Date: 8/31/16
Therese Halbur, MD

Penny Pepper Date: 8/31/16
Penny Pepper, Center Director