



WELA

Parent Handbook

FAIRFAX

HOMINY

PAWHUSKA

SKIATOOK

**PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
WHILE
REVITALIZING OSAGE CULTURE AND
LANGUAGE**

2024-2025

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CONTACT INFORMATION

WELA Center Managers

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Fairfax Wrap-around 918-287-5505

Pawhuska WELA 918-287-5495
Cheyenne West, Center Manager
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Pawhuska Wrap-around 918-287-9712

Skiatook WELA 918-287-5488
Alicia Sanchez, Center Manager 918-287-5694
Arsanchez@osagenation-nsn.gov

Hominy WELA 918-287-5658
Victoria Looney, Center Manager
Victoria.looney@osagenation-nsn.gov

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact our office Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:15am-5:15pm (CST)

Osage Nation WELA Administrative Offices

183 Senior Drive
Pawhuska, Ok 74056

Tara McKinney, Director
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Office: 918-287-5322

Tiffany Martin, Education Coach
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Office: 918 287-3114

Cassidi Potts, Executive Assistant
Cassidi.potts@osagenation-nsn.gov
Office: 918-287-5262

HOURS OF OPERATION AND LOCATION

Classes are year round and on an academic calendar

Pawhuska WELA

216 W, 15th St.

Pawhuska, Ok. 74056

7:15am-5:15pm

Fairfax Wraparound

1000 W. McKinley

Fairfax, Ok 74637

7:15am-5:15pm

Hominy WELA

100 N. Price

Hominy, Ok. 74035

7:15am-5:15pm

Skiatook WELA

1801 W. Oak

Skiatook, Ok 74070

7:15am-5:15pm

Fairfax WELA

401 S. 8th

Fairfax, Ok 74637

7:15am-5:15pm

INTRODUCTION

Vision

The Osage Nation WahZhaZhe Early Learning Academy (WELA) envisions an innovative, successful school where early learning, Osage culture, and language are a priority. We are committed to the families we serve, providing support and opportunities to build a strong foundation for our students.

Mission

The WELA mission is to provide a superior education for our Osage students. WELA will support language revitalization, nation building, sovereignty, and enhance the lives of young students, their families and the community.

Academic Integrity and Accreditation

WELA sites maintain a license through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and Osage Nation Child Care and Development Services. The licenses certify the sites comply with all applicable health and safety codes and that student and staff records are up-to-date and maintained.

WELA strives to keep the parents/guardians informed of the policies and procedures followed by our staff as well as those that apply to our students and parents/guardians.

Program Goals

- Surround our students with positive role models while creating a nurturing and caring environment to develop the student as a whole.
- Maintain a highly qualified staff and a family-like atmosphere.
- Integrate Osage language and culture into each student's daily learning environment.

Creative Curriculum

WELA uses the Creative Curriculum to exceed state academic standards for each age level of the students. All lessons are adapted to fit the needs of the students in the classrooms. In addition, daily routines will include Osage language and culture.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

- Admission to WELA is based on a combination of criteria including the following
- Osage membership
- Osage preference and Native American preference
- The age of the student
- Classroom availability

All students enrolling or attending WELA must provide documentation for one of the following to receive Osage preference or Native American preference:

Osage Preference

- Osage preference shall be given to students from Osage households
- Parents/guardians must provide a copy of the Osage membership card for the student
- For infants under six (6) months of age not enrolled yet, the parent or guardian must furnish a copy of their Osage membership card
- An Osage family is a household with at least one legally enrolled member of the Osage Nation, verification for each student will be required

Native American Preference

Parents/guardians must provide a copy of the student's tribal membership card or Certified Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), or letter from the native nation stating enrollment process has begun. While the enrollment process is taking place, a copy of the parent's CDIB or Tribal Membership number will be accepted.

Waiting List

Each year there will be a waiting list for students who applied but did not meet the criteria at the time of enrollment or if the center is at full enrollment. In order for potential students to be placed on the waiting list, an application will have to be submitted to the WELA to secure an enrollment slot on the waiting list. As enrollment slots become available, WELA staff will contact and offer the open enrollment slots, according to the order of the waiting list, completed applications, and Osage preference. For families who are expecting a newborn, the baby can be placed on the waiting list with an application. When a slot becomes available, if the family is still interested in keeping the slot for the newborn baby, they will have to begin paying a monthly fee of \$200 to hold the slot until the baby is eligible to start attending at six weeks of age. Once the baby starts attending, they will be considered full time and regular rates will begin.

Enrollment

Enrollment process begins in May of each year for the upcoming school year beginning in August. Enrollment packets are available on the Osage Nation website: <https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov/what-we-do-/wahzhazhe-early-learning-academy> or at any of the WELA locations. Students attending WELA must re-enroll at your designated site each year. In order to attend, the following information for each student must be **completed and received**. Incomplete or missing documentation will cause a delay in processing enrollment.

- Enrollment forms are signed by the parent/guardian
- Authorization forms signed by the parent/guardian
- Enrollment contract
- Current immunization records
- Parent/guardian contact form
- Emergency contact information
- Signed acknowledgment form for handbook signed by the parent/guardian
- Completed Child and Adult Care Food Program form
- Completed Compliance File Notification form

Accepted

- Enrollment packet and all documentation must be complete
- Parents/guardians will be required to have an orientation with the center manager or the student's teacher

Wrap-Around Program

WELA offers Wrap-Around, an extension of the day, through our after-school program for students enrolled in Pre-K through twelve (12) years old. The Pawhuska, Hominy, Fairfax, and Skiatook sites all offer the Wrap-Around Program. Wrap-Around provides a place for students to interact and socialize with peers, read and work on homework, learn the Osage language, and engage in outdoor activities. The available space at each site limits enrollment. Please see your designated center manager for enrollment applications and transportation information. Admission for the Wrap-Around program is the same for all students attending WELA.

Arrival and Dismissal Times

WELA expects students and families to be punctual and maintain a regular attendance. Classes begin promptly at 8:30 each day and the lunch count is taken in order to prepare the appropriate amount of food for the students each day. Parents/guardians should report an absence, late arrival, or early departure to the student's teachers or center manager by 8:30am. If your child is not in attendance by 8:30 a.m. WELA staff will call the parent or guardian. WELA has to maintain the correct student to teacher ratio; students should not be dropped off earlier than the designated drop off time for the student's site. Parents/guardians should park and walk their student to their designated classroom. Students have to be picked up by the designated closing time by an authorized person from the student's pick-up list. Parents/guardians must sign their student in and out each day. Parents/guardians must list all adults/ names and contact information that are allowed to pick up the students on the Student Pick Up Authorization Form, as persons permitted to drop off and pick up their student. If the authorized person is not recognized by the WELA staff, the person must present their driver's license to the staff before the student may leave the premises. WELA will keep current contact information on file to ensure the safety of each student. Also, for the safety of the students, any guardianship or court-mandated documents should be on file with the center manager. Please be mindful upon driving arrival that we have children arriving and departing throughout the day. We ask that you obey the posted speed limit. You may park your vehicle in the designated parking areas, but we ask that you turn off your vehicle.

Dismissal

The student's Student Pick-Up Authorization form has to have the individuals listed who can pick up the student. The individuals allowed to pick up the students must be 18 years of age. If anyone not on the form is to pick up the student, the parent or guardian has to notify the center prior to pick up and then the form will have to be updated in person by the parent or guardian. Any information on court orders or other areas of concern regarding the student's interaction with outside individuals will need to be provided by the parents/guardians.

Field Trips

Families will have advance notification of each field trip through teacher communication, notes sent home, or email messages. **It is not the policy of WELA staff and teachers to delay departures to accommodate late arrivals.** When traveling, students will always be in seat belts or car seats, depending on the age of the child attending the field trip. Teachers and staff will be equipped with a first aid kit, a cell phone, and parent contact information for each student. If a student arrives after their class has left the center, parents may be required to make alternate arrangements for care that day, or join the class field trip on their own.

Building Entry Access

All centers have security and access policies and procedures that are specific to the respective facility.

DHS Subsidy and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards

Department of Human Services (DHS) subsidy clients must swipe their EBT card in order to check in/check out. If a client fails to swipe the EBT card, DHS *cannot* backtrack billing beyond 10 days; therefore, the responsibility of payment will fall solely upon the parent/guardian. The center manager will set up payment arrangements when this occurs.

Late Arrival

Your student will be learning so much every single day. Therefore, it is important that they arrive on time. If you know that your child is going to be late, please contact the center by 8:30am. It is important for the center to know the student count for each day so that the appropriate teacher/student ratios are met and the correct quantity of food is prepared for meals.

Late Pick-Up

For every one (1) minute that a student remains at WELA/Wrap-around after closing, the parent/guardian will be charged \$5.00 per student, per one (1) minute. This late charge must be paid before the student is allowed to return to WELA. Five (5) minutes past closing, WELA staff will call the parent/guardian. If there is no answer, the staff will then call the first person on the Student Pick-Up Authorization Form to pick up the student. If there is still no answer, the staff will continue to contact the other individuals on the list until someone answers. WELA staff will attempt again to contact the parent/guardian at fifteen (15) minutes past the closing time. If no one has been reached at thirty (30) minutes past closing, the staff member is required to call the local police department, the Department of Human Services or the Osage Nation Social Services Department depending on the jurisdiction of the student.

If a parent/guardian had three late pick-ups within a thirty (30) day period, their student will be placed on suspension for one week. If the parent/guardian continues to be late for pick up, their student may lose their enrollment status.

ATTENDANCE and EXPULSION

WELA strives to provide Osage students with a premier education that includes Osage language revitalization, Osage culture, community and family, health, and academics. Unlike a day care facility, WELA sites are early childhood education academies that work to prepare our students for their future academic career. Regular daily attendance is imperative. Parents/guardians must notify the center manager if their student will be absent for more than ten (10) days consecutively due to a family situation such as vacations, visiting family, etc. Absences that are no call/no show for ten (10) consecutive days will result in the student being dropped from the program.

Attendance

Class begins promptly at 8:30am each day. It is important that your student arrive on time each day to receive the most out of the educational learning experiences. Each day your student will interact with peers to develop social and interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills. **If your student is ill or will not be at WELA, we request that you contact the center manager before 8:30am. If your child is absent and the center has not been notified by 8:30, WELA staff will call or message on Brightwheel to check on the wellbeing of the child.**

Expulsion

WELA takes the education of students very seriously. Reasons that could hinder a student's enrollment status include but are not limited to the following circumstances:

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up a student
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of student to adjust to the facility after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the student's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Extended absence of a student
- Bringing weapons to school
- If a student threatens another student or teacher
- If a student puts others in danger

BELONGINGS and ITEMS FROM HOME

All outside food and drinks, electronics, toys and personal items such as phones, tablets, laptops, jewelry, money, watches, cards, etc. must remain at home, unless otherwise stated by the teacher for a special sharing time or classroom activity. A schedule of activities is planned for each day, electronics, toys and other personal items brought from home are a distraction to this schedule. The WELA is not responsible for electronics, toys or personal items brought from home. If a student does bring outside food or drinks, electronics, toys or personal items from home, the items will be kept in the center manager's office until the end of the day when the student is picked up.

The WELA prohibits any weapons, including guns, knives, or other type of weapon (toy or real). Any student bringing any type of weapon will be sent home immediately and be subject to loss of enrollment status.

BITING

It is the policy of WELA to provide a safe learning environment to our students but also to promote healthy behaviors. For this reason, the behavior of biting is considered very seriously. WELA staff will work to eliminate this behavior among our students through communication and redirection.

Biting is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to understand and prevent. It occurs without warning, is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the parent/guardian, and the caregivers involved. For most toddlers, the biting stage will pass with age. Most times, the toddlers do this as a way to get what they want from another toddler. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. For other students, biting may become a persistent problem and could stem from reasons such as teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, a change in their environment, or protection.

No matter what the cause, biting causes ill feelings toward all involved, It does help, however to be aware of a potential problem before it happens and to have a plan of action in place.

Steps of Discipline

- WELA staff will remove the biter from the area immediately and calmly. WELA staff will tell the student that biting hurts and it is not okay to bite
- To calm the situation, the biter will be removed from the current play area and redirected into another play area. In addition, statements will be communicated to the student such as, "I know you want the truck, but we cannot bite to take the truck away"
- An accident/injury report will be completed by WELA staff and the parent/guardians of both students will be notified and given a copy of the report on the same day of the incident
- Parents will receive a notification of all incidents
- WELA will send students home if they bite twice in a day. If the first biting incident is severe, the student will be sent home at the discretion of the center manager. If the biting continues, the student will have a behavior plan created, which could include a modified school day. If the student continues to bite excessively, the WELA will make a referral to the WahZhaZhe Behavior Health Services.

For the Injured Student

- The student will be separated from the biter and comforted by the staff
- First Aid will be administered immediately, as necessary
- WELA staff will complete accident/injury report, and the parents/guardians of the biter and injured student will be notified and given a copy of the report

- Parents will receive a copy of all incidents

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Custodial and Non-Custodial Parental Rights

All parents/guardians are welcome at the WELA and the staff of the WELA will remain neutral in any custody disputes. In the event of a custody case, the WELA cannot deny a parent/guardian access to their student unless there is an active restraining order, court order, or court ordered visitation schedule on file at the center. The appropriate written instruction for who is allowed to pick up the student, such as a court order, will have to be filed with the WELA center manager. In the absence of a court order, both parents have the right to view the student's records, receive progress reports, visit the student at the WELA, and participate in parent teacher conferences. Court documents will have to be updated each year at the beginning of the school year. The documents need to clearly state the boundaries of each parent the pick-up list for the student will have to reflect the requirements of the court documents. Contact from the WELA staff to parents will be made primarily through the custodial parent.

Family Communication

Building strong partnerships between families and staff members is an important goal of WELA. Parents are the most important teacher in a student's life, and building strong, supportive, and respectful relationships are key to the success of the school and family connection. We strive to make the transition between home and school smooth and positive for the families we serve. To support this goal, WELA staff will communicate through parent interaction at drop-off and pickup, Brightwheel, email messages, and phone calls to keep parents up-to-date on events and class information for the day so parents will know daily napping, diapering, and feeding events. WELA staff will be using Brightwheel as a complete child care management software. The WELA will use it to manage attendance, billing, enrollment, learning plans, and parent communication. Parents/guardians will be given the user information for Brightwheel during the enrollment process.

Parents are encouraged to keep teachers notified if there will be a change in their student's daily routine, such as a doctor's appointment or a change in the pick-up schedule. Parents should let teachers know if their students will be leaving early so they can help prepare and have the student ready on time.

The WELA staff like to promote strong parent and teacher partnerships along with open communication. Any information concerning the students will be confidential. Parents/guardians are encouraged to let WELA staff know if the student have a change in routine at home, any major transitions or other information that would be helpful about

the student. If there is any situation or injury from home that may affect the student, please inform your student's teacher.

Daily Schedule and Reports

The WELA staff will keep parents/guardians fully informed of their student's progress, activities, achievements, challenges, and behaviors. Brightwheel is where this information will be available, you will also be able to see your child's meals for the day, diapering, and napping schedules. Any incident or accident reports involving the child will be provided to the adult picking up the child at the end of the day. These will need to be signed by both the teacher and the adult picking up the child. A copy will then be made and given to the adult.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Mandatory parent-teacher conferences are scheduled three times per year. Conference times will be made to accommodate the parent/guardian's schedule. Families are given the opportunity to discuss questions or concerns about how the assessment methods will meet their child's needs. Any parent/guardian may request a conference with a teacher anytime during the week to discuss attendance, behavior, or developmental progress and learning. Information and sign-up sheets will go home with the students the week before the conferences. Parents will be given a copy of their child's assessment at the conference.

DISCIPLINE

Behavioral Expectations

WELA teachers and staff are committed to the education that develops the whole student. We work daily to help students become increasingly more self-managing and socially responsible as independent and responsible learners. Our goal is to help each student learn how to express their feelings and emotions in a positive, acceptable way, and to enhance each student's ability to develop interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers. WELA teachers and staff model respect and strive to build positive character by targeting positive growth.

Discipline in Early Childhood

- Positive, clear, specific expectations given by teachers
- Reinforcing positive behavior when it happens through praise, high-fives, hugs, pats on the back, etc.

Misbehavior in Early Childhood

Misbehavior shall be handled by:

- Redirecting the student to an appropriate activity or area, or a positive alternative
- Using natural and logical consequences
- Helping the student talk through the situation by “using their words” to problem solve
- Allowing the student time and space to regroup, under close supervision

Serious Misbehavior Consequences

- More serious or frequent misbehavior shall be managed by:
- Spending a short time being separate from others to calm and regroup
- Explaining to the student how to cooperate in the future
- Developing a behavior chart to encourage positive behavior and choices through reinforcement
- Communicating with parents to find a solution to improving behaviors
- If the student is putting others in danger, the parents/guardians will be notified to pick up the student immediately and the student could be expelled or suspended depending on the severity of the situation
- All incidents shall be documented on an Incident/Accident Report form and placed in the student's file, parents/guardians will be notified, and a copy of the incident report will be sent home
- After three (3) incident reports, there will be a parent teacher conference with the center manager and the teacher to develop a behavioral plan for the student. The WELA staff will consult with the professionals from the WahZhaZhe Health Center

to determine if the student needs a referral for a behavioral screening. If a referral is needed, it will be given to the parent/guardian and it is then the parent/guardians' responsibility to follow up on the referral. If the parent/guardian refuses the referral for a screening and/or counseling, and incidents continue to occur, the student may be suspended or expelled from WELA

- At the discretion of the center manager, depending on the severity of an incident a parent teacher conference can be scheduled immediately

DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations in a child care setting, as well as the parents/guardians served. The WELA will conduct an individualized assessment of the particular needs of a student and their family. A conference will be conducted with the parents/guardian, the student's teacher. The center manager, and the professionals from the WahZhaZhe Health Center to identify reasonable accommodations and how to safely integrate the student into the program, given the student's capabilities, and to give the family full access to and participation in our program to the extent feasible. Any information regarding a student, a student's family, or other matters discussed with WELA staff will be held in the strictest confidence.

FEES and PAYMENT

The fees of WELA support the quality of education and learning experiences for each enrolled student.

- Payments are accepted at WELA locations and are due by the *10th of each month*.
- Payments must be received by the WELA on or before the 10th of each month. An account will be considered past due if not paid by the 10th of each month. If the account is not paid by the 10th of the month, the student cannot return until the balance is paid in full. Accounts for which no payment has been made in over thirty (30) days will be sent to the Osage Nation Attorney General for collection and the student will be dismissed. In the event that an account has to be sent to the Osage Nation Attorney General for collection, the WELA is entitled to be reimbursed by the parent/guardian for the attorney's fees and costs incurred in the collection of any unpaid balance.
- Accounts for which no payment has been made in over thirty (30) days will be sent to the Osage Nation Attorney General for collection.
- Osage Nation employees will automatically have their payments deducted by ON accounting department if the employee has children that attend WELA. These payments will be deducted 50/50 in accordance with biweekly pay schedule.

WELA Fees		
Age of Student	Daily Fee	Credit if participating in Language Class
Infant to 4 yrs. old	\$20.00	\$50.00 credit up to \$200.00 per student per month

Wrap Around Fees		
Tribal Membership / Age of Student	Daily Fee	Credit if participating in Language class
Osage / enrolled in Pre-K to 12 years old	\$10.00	\$25.00 Credit up to \$100.00 Per student per month
Non-Osage/ enrolled in Pre-K to 12 years old	\$15.00	\$25.00 Credit up to \$100.00 Per student per month

Payment Options and Aid

WELA accepts DHS Child Care Subsidy and Osage Nation Child Care Subsidy. The WELA will make every attempt to aid those students wishing to attend our sites to be able to do so by providing resources for financial assistance.

Language Class Fee Waiver

Among the goals of the Principal Chief of the Osage Nation are the expression and retention of the Osage Language and Culture. To support this goal, the WELA is offering a Language Class Fee Waiver. This applies to full-time students.

- One (1) Language Class Fee Waiver of \$50.00 per class up to a \$200.00 may be applied to each student per month
 - Participants must be the mother, father, or legal guardian of a student enrolled in WELA
 - Only one (1) Language Class Fee Waiver of up to \$200.00 may be applied to each student per month.
 - If both parents attend the same class, they will receive two (2) credits, each parent must turn in a signed Language Class Log.
 - Wrap Around will be able to receive Language class waivers in the amount of \$25.00 per class up to \$100.00 applied to each student per month.

To receive a Language Class Fee Waiver, individuals must arrive no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time to receive the instructor's signature on their Language Class Log. If the arrival time is later than fifteen (15) minutes, credit will not be received for that class to apply toward the fee waiver. Individuals leaving class fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled end time will not receive credit for that class towards the fee waiver.

Parents/guardians opting for the Language Class waiver must have a Language Class Fee Waiver Log signed by the authorized Osage language instructor. The log will have to be signed for each class in order for the waiver to be applied to the monthly fee for each student. Parents/guardians are responsible for submitting their signed log to their student's center manager on the first (1st) business day of the month. No late language fee waiver logs will be accepted.

The center managers will provide Language Class Fee Waiver Logs.

HEALTH and MEDICATION

When a student is absent due to illness, the parent/guardian must notify the WELA **no later than 8:30 a.m.** on the day of the absence; this will allow the WELA staff time to take any precautions necessary to protect the other students should the illness be contagious.

Fever, Diarrhea, and Vomiting

Students should only attend WELA when they are well and fever-free. Students will be sent home when their temperature is 100.4 degrees or greater, or if a student shows changes in behavior or symptoms that indicate illness, such as lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, or severe coughing. If a student has diarrhea two (2) times in a school day or runny/watery stools with increased or abnormal frequency, parents will be notified and the student should be picked up within thirty (30) minutes. Students can return in twenty-four (24) hours if they have remained free of fever (lower than 100.4 degrees), diarrhea and vomiting. When the student returns, if they continue to have symptoms, they will be sent home again and cannot return without a doctor's note. The doctor's note must include the date of the doctor visit, the dates the student should be out of class, the date the student can return, and the signature and phone number of the doctor.

Contagious Illness and Rashes

Any contagious illness, such as head lice, measles, chicken pox, fifth disease, hand, foot and mouth, yellowish skin or eyes, eye discharge that includes thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, any open sores, or any other infestation or rash must be reported to the WELA immediately. Exposure notices will be sent to parents/guardians when their student is exposed to a contagious disease. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. If a student is showing any signs of a contagious illness or rash while at school, the parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the student immediately as a precaution to the other students. The student will have to have a doctor's note in order to return to the WELA. If the student still has any type of open sores, the sores need to be fully covered with bandages.

When Possible, the sick child will be isolated from other children to help prevent spreading of the illness.

Medication

It is the preference of WELA for medicine to be dispensed at home. If necessary, WELA staff will only administer medication to a student if the parent/guardian provides WELA with a doctor's note (for over-the-counter medication) or a current prescription for the student containing dosage instructions.

Over-the counter medication must be administered to the student when the medication is provided by the parent/guardian in the original container and labeled with the student's full name. Over-the-counter medication must be accompanied by a doctor's note indicating dosage (if different from package direction) and length of time the student will need to take the medication. All medication will be inaccessible to students and locked in the main office of each site. Each dose administered is recorded on an individual medication log by staff, which will be made available to parents/guardians upon request.

The parent/guardian is required to fill out a separate form for each medication that is to be administered indicating the proper dosage and time to administer the medication. Medication is returned to the parent/guardian when it is out-of-date or if the student has withdrawn from WELA. WELA staff will only administer a nebulizer if the parent provides a prescription for the student.

The content of each child's health and safety file is confidential but is immediately available upon request to:

- Administrators and educators who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

IMMUNIZATIONS

WELA center managers will determine if the students' immunizations are up-to-date according to the requirements in the schedule of the well-child care by the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program for the State of Oklahoma. Immunization requirements incorporate the latest recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Families whose religious or personal beliefs or health restrictions conflict with the immunization requirement must obtain a certificate of exemption from the Oklahoma Department of Health prior to the student's first day of school. Forms for the certificate of exemption can be found at the following site:

https://www.ok.gov/health2//documents/IMM_scholl_ODH_216a_Certificate_of_Exemption.pdf

Without an approved exemption, parents/guardians wishing not to immunize their student will not be able to attend WELA.

In the event of an outbreak, if your child is exempt, they will be sent home based on the Certificate of Exemption from the Health Department.

INFANT and TODDLER NEEDS

WELA believes in creating nurturing and comfortable environments for the students we serve. The teachers and staff create learning environments that keep students alert and engaged throughout the day in order to allow them to take full advantage of their learning opportunities. In addition, the teachers and staff are responsible for the needs of each student and to support the development of each student.

Infant Safe Sleep

Naps are encouraged during the day to help the students recharge and refocus. The academies follow the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) guidelines and requirements for infant Safe Sleep Environments.

- Infants (0 to 11 months of age) sleep directly on a tight-fitting sheet covering the mattress
- Infants age birth through 3 months of age may be swaddled with an infant-sized, thin fabric, such as a receiving blanket, only when requested and documented by a parent, and the infant is not mobile enough to move the fabric over his or her face
- Infants (0 to 11 months of age) are placed on their backs for sleeping

MILESTONES and ASSESSMENTS

Students will have a pre-assessment when they enroll and when they enter a new age-level classroom. The students will also have a post-assessment when they reach an age for the next class or display mastery in one or higher age levels to determine if the student is ready to advance.

Both pre and post assessments will be administered by the WELA staff and the data obtained through the assessments will be used to guide instruction and to determine areas of mastery, as well as areas that need additional support. Early learning development is such an exciting time, and being able to support students as they develop a strong foundation for learning is the goal. The teachers understand students learn and develop at different rates, and each student will be supported at their own levels cognitively, socially, and emotionally. The WELA staff will use the assessment tools and checklists associated with Creative Curriculum as well as daily observation. All assessments will be kept in the student's files and will be available to parents/guardians. Teachers observe and assess children's play on a regular basis. This is an essential tool in planning curriculum, arranging the classroom environment, selecting activities to be offered, and providing appropriate props. Learning is not imposed on the child, rather, takes place naturally in an environment that offers choices of activities created with children's needs in mind. Early childhood curriculum arises from the children's individual and collective interests, actions, questions, and manipulations of the environment.

Class Placement

WELA strives to provide learning environments and classrooms that maximize each student's opportunities for success. Through the assessments and data gathered for each student, WELA teachers will be able to determine student placement based on the student's age, physical, emotional, cognitive, and social maturity.

Infants

Infants will have daily exposure to the Osage language and curriculum content provided through the program. Milestones for infant development will be recorded and shared with parents.

Toddlers, Three and Four Year Olds

Student assessments are based on the objectives identified through the Creative Curriculum Program. The objectives are listed below.

- Social-Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Language Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- Osage Language

Toilet Training

The WELA will support and encourage students and their families in meeting many of the milestones in the life of a young student, including toilet training. Toilet training is a huge milestone for your student and we want to make it a positive experience for all. Please tell your student's teacher when you begin toilet training so that we may assist your student by reinforcing the efforts at WELA. Please send extra clothes for occasional accidents.

WELA staff will work with parents/guardians to develop a toilet training plan for each student so that efforts at home and school align.

We strongly encourage parents/guardians who want their student enrolled or transitioned to a pre-kindergarten classroom to have their student toilet trained prior to moving forward.

LICE AT SCHOOL

The WELA staff are required to check for lice on a regular basis. If a student has nits or lice, the parent/guardian will be contacted and required to pick up the student immediately.

Parents/guardians are required to pick up the student within thirty (30) minutes of being contacted. A student may not return to WELA for a twenty-four (24) hour incubation period and until they are lice and nit free. Parents/guardians will be given information about medicated treatments and assistance from the Osage Nation Public Health Nurse (918-287-5482).

Upon returning to WELA, the student will have to pass an inspection for lice and/or nits prior to being allowed to enter his/her classroom.

If the problem persists because the parent or guardian refuses to cooperate with the prescribed treatment, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and/or Osage Nation Social Services will be notified.

All students will receive an exposure notice when a lice incident has occurred in his/her classroom.

NUTRITION

WELA will provide breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack for all enrolled students ages one (1) to twelve (12) years of age. The meals prepared are well-balanced and healthy, including portion sizes and daily nutritional needs. All of the centers follow the Osage Nation WhaZhaZhe Nutrition Management and Food Program Policies and Procedures.

Infants

Parents must provide formula, breastmilk, or baby food for infants until they are ready to eat table food. Infants will be included in the Osage prayers during mealtimes

All Other Students

Meals are served as family-style, with students learning and reciting Osage prayers. The students will eat at tables with their classmates and teachers in their classrooms.

BREASTFEEDING GUIDELINES

1. Breastfeeding mothers will be provided a place, have an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.
2. A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed milk. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their containers, clearly labeled with the name, date and time the milk was expressed.
3. Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. WELA is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening and holding off giving a bottle, if possible when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milk (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding, and bottles will never be propped.
4. Staff shall be trained in the handling of human milk. All childcare center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The center will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease control to ensure breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste. Special precautions are not required in handling human milk.
5. Storage Guidelines for Human Milk: Information regarding the storage of breastmilk can be referenced at:
http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm
http://www.aap.org/pubed/ZZZRYZIYKRD.htm?&sub_cat=1
6. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided a

flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breast milk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed to other employees for lunch and breaks.

7. Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed. The Center will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should question or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the Center.

Food Allergies

Parents/guardians who have students with food/drink allergies must provide documentation from a doctor stating what the allergy is and what can be served in place of the food/drink that causes the allergy. The WELA staff will also need instructions on what to do in case of an allergic reaction. New documentation from a doctor will be required at the beginning of each school year.

RATIOS and GROUP SIZES

The goal of WELA is to provide teacher to student interaction that best promotes learning and supports our young students. The physical size of each classroom is also a factor in determining the optimal number of students in each group setting, WELA will work to provide a higher staff/student ratio, as funds are available for each age group. At a minimum, the following teacher to student ratio is appropriate according to licensing standards of a childcare center.

Single Age Classroom	Teacher to Student Ratio	Maximum Class Size
Infants (Up to 12 months)	1:4	8
1 year olds	1:6	12
2 year olds	1:8	16
3 year olds	1:12	24
4 year olds	1:15	30
5 year olds	1:20	40

Mixed Age Classroom	Teacher to Student Ratio	Maximum Class Size
Infants, 1-year olds, and 2-year olds only	1:6 No more than two infants per teaching personnel	12
Infants and older	1:8 No more than two under 2 years of Age per teaching personnel	16
1-year old and older	1:8 No more than two 1-year olds per teaching personnel	16
2 year olds and older	1:12 No more than four 2-year olds per teaching personnel	24
3 year olds and older	1:15 No more than six 3-year olds per teaching personnel	30
4 year olds and older	1:18	36

No more than eight 4-year olds per
teaching personnel
5- year olds and older 1:20 40
***The ratio and maximum group size for the age of the youngest student in the class is
used for other mixed-age classrooms***

RIGHT TO REPORT

WELA staff is required by Osage law to report any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. Osage Nation Social Services Department (ONSS) and/or the Osage Nation Attorney General along with Oklahoma Human Services will be called to investigate the allegation(s).

- Osage Nation Social Services Department: 918-287-5335
- Osage Nation Child Care Hotline: 918-287-5696
- Oklahoma Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: 800-522-3511

A copy of the report shall immediately be sent to the Osage Nation Social Services Department, Osage Nation Child Care Compliance Officer, Oklahoma Human services, as well as to the Osage Nation Attorney general and/or Osage Nation Police Department.

WELA center manager is responsible for creating and disseminating the reports to all agencies named above.

Grievance

If the claim of child abuse and/or neglect is made against WELA or one of its staff members, parents/guardians should report the child abuse and neglect to Osage Nation Social Services Department (ONSS), and the Oklahoma Department of Human services (DHS), and the Osage Nation Child Care Compliance Officer.

- Complaints shall be in writing using the approved form
- Center Manager shall schedule and mediate a meeting between staff and parent/guardian
- If a resolution cannot be reached, center manager will forward the original complaint as well as a narrative of his/her attempt to resolve the conflict through mediation to the WELA director. The director shall make the final decision regarding resolution.

Grievance forms are available at each WELA site and on the Osage Nation website.

Policy Regarding the Procedure for Filing a formal Parent Concern

WELA respects and appreciates input from all of our constituents. In the event that a grievance or concern should arise, it is the position of WELA to ensure that the proper methods of communication are used in the hope that a better understanding can be achieved. Following the proper chain of command is crucial to ensure efficient resolution of concerns and grievances. The first step in addressing a concern or grievance is to request a formal meeting with the center manager. In this instance a private meeting will be held. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to WELA and all necessary steps will be taken to uphold this standard. Staff will use reflective listening and problem-solving skills to achieve the desired result for the constituent. Staff will be given an opportunity to thoroughly explain any reasoning behind their position and will ensure the constituent's understanding and satisfaction with the reasoning. This sharing of information can usually be used to resolve any grievances or concerns. Should the grievance or concern not be resolved to the satisfaction of the constituent, a request may be made by the constituent to meet with the WELA director. WELA encourages open communication and practices an open-door policy to encourage the sharing of feelings and concerns. In these types of meetings privacy and confidentiality shall be maintained at all times by all parties involved. Should a constituent believe an issue has not been addressed to their satisfaction and wish to file a formal, written complaint, it may be submitted in writing to the WELA director or to Osage Nation Constituents Services. WELA values the input of our constituents. It is our goal to provide and maintain a high standard of quality care and customer service.

SUPPLIES

Individual Supplies

WELA provides developmentally appropriate classrooms and environments that promotes the success of each student. In our endeavors to keep students comfortable, healthy and calm during the transition between home and pre-school, parents/guardians are responsible for supplying necessary items for their student. Staff members will keep an open line of communication between the parent/guardian if their student needs any of the following supplies.

- Bottles
- Formula/breastmilk
- Baby food
- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- Bibs
- Complete change of clothing

WELA will maintain a supply of emergency diapers and wipes; however, if a student used any emergency supplies, the student's parent/guardian will be responsible for replacement of those supplies.

Extra Clothes

Parents/guardians should send their students to WELA in comfortable, washable and weather appropriate play clothes. All students need an extra set of clothes to be kept at WELA with each item labeled with the student's name. Please provide extra of the following items.

- Socks
- Underwear
- Shirt
- Pants
- If possible, an extra pair of shoes

Parents are encouraged to check their student's cubby periodically to ensure their student's clothes fit and are weather appropriate.

TOBACCO FREE/DRUG FREE ZONE

The Drug Free Policy for the staff of the WELA supersedes the Drug Free Policy contained within the Osage Nation Employee Handbook. When it comes to the care and education of our Osage Youth, drug/alcohol use cannot, and will not, be tolerated.

WELA staff are expected to report for work and remain at work in a condition, which enables them to perform their duties and tasks free from the effects of drugs or alcohol.

The following are prohibited and will result in termination from WELA:

- Possession of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Use of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Sale of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Purchase of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Misusing prescription drugs on the Osage Nation's premises or in the conduct of related work off-site

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to enforce this Drug Free Workplace Policy. Failure to enforce this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees suspected of being impaired or under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be escorted from the work site to a safe and secure area by the center manager. The supervisor shall immediately document the incident and initiate Reasonable Suspicion Testing.

TRANSPORTATION

Each vehicle used for providing transportation services shall be insured and equipped with all of the following

- Communication system to call for assistance in case of emergency
- Safety equipment for use in an emergency, including a charged fire extinguisher properly mounted near the driver's seat and a sign indicating its location
- First aid kit and a sign indicating the location of such equipment
- Seat belt cutter for use in an emergency evacuation and a sign indicating its location

WELA staff will only provide transportation services in WELA buses or allowable alternate vehicles. All vehicles are equipped for height-and-weight appropriate safety restraint systems and have reverse beepers.

For each transportation vehicle there is at least one bus monitor on board at all times. If necessary, an additional monitor will be added, for example, if needed to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

When transportation is provided, drivers and monitors will use sign-in sheets to track children as they board the bus and leave the bus each time. The drivers and monitors will perform checks, headcounts, and seat inspections at each stop and at the beginning and end of each trip.

WELA CLOSINGS

It is the policy of WELA to work with parents and guardians to ensure that our students are safe while in our care, both inside and outside of the classroom. For this reason, the Osage Nation will close WELA sites when driving conditions are unsafe. If the weather deteriorates after students arrive at WELA, parents will be notified to pick up their students. If the Osage Nation closes, all WELA sites will also close.

Parents and families are asked to subscribe to Osage Alerts to receive notices of WELA closings. This system will send notification by phone call, email or text message if the Osage nation is closing some of its sites due to hazardous conditions.

Other factors out of our control that may cause WELA to close at a moment's notice, include, but are not limited to severe weather, utility problems, construction, widespread illness, etc.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

All emergency policies, procedures, and plans are located at the facility to which they apply. These are available for inspection by the public at each location.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received and read the Parent Handbook and will adhere to the policies set forth in the Parent Handbook.

I have had the opportunity to clarify any questions concerning the expectations and services described in this handbook.

I understand that the WELA Parent Handbook is not a contract and the policies contained herein may be changed without notice at the sole discretion of WELA, and the WELA retains the right to interpret and apply the stated policies, as it deems appropriate.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please sign and return to Center Manager

CONSENT FORM AND RELEASE FOR MINOR CHILDREN OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND/OR VIDEO

I am the parent/guardian of _____
(print full name of child) ("My Child"). I hereby grant the Osage Nation ("Nation"), and its agents the right and permission to use photographic portraits, pictures, digital images, or videotapes of My Child, or in which My Child may be included in whole or part, or reproductions thereof in color or otherwise for any lawful purpose, including but not limited to: use in any Nation news release, publication, education material, or on the Nation's websites, without payment or any other consideration. All negatives, prints, and digital reproductions shall be the property of the Nation.

I agree that My Child's name and identity may/may not **(circle one)** be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s).

I hereby release, discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Nation and its agents from all claims, demands, and causes of action that I or My Child have or may have by reason of this authorization or use of My Child's photographic portraits, pictures, digital images or videotapes, including any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of said images or videotapes, or in processing tending towards the completion of the finished product, including publication on the internet, in brochures, or any other advertisements or promotional materials. This authorization is continuous and may only be withdrawn by my specific rescission of this authorization.

I hereby waive the right to inspect and/or approve the finished product or the copy that may be used in connection therewith, wherein My Child's likeness appears, or the use to which it may be applied.

*** THIS IS A RELEASE OF LEGAL RIGHTS. READ IT CAREFULLY AND BE CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND IT BEFORE SIGNING ***

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE BOXES BELOW THEN SIGN YOUR NAME(S):

CONSENT: I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of the above named child and do hereby give my consent to the foregoing on behalf of My Child.

NON-CONSENT: I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of the above named child and do not hereby give my consent to the foregoing on behalf of My Child.

I represent that I am the parent or guardian of the minor listed below and that I have the full legal capacity to sign this Release.

(Child's Name) (Date of Birth)

(Parent/Guardian's Printed Name) (Primary Phone Number)

(Parent/Guardian's Signature) (Date)

Ms./Mr. _____,

As you are aware, WELA accepts DHS subsidy in the form of a card swipe to remit payment during the days your child/ren attend(s) our facilities.

As of today, _____, you agree that any DHS subsidy swipes that are not swiped on the day that your child/ren attend(s) or are not backswiped within the ten (10) day grace period that DHS allows, you will assume the financial responsibility to remit payment to the facility at the time invoices are due per the policy of WELA.

Should payment not be received, whether by DHS subsidy swipes or by parent payment, your child/ren will not be allowed to return until payment has been made in full.

By signing this, I understand that I am responsible for payment of any missed swipes.

Parent Signature

Date

Center Manager Signature

Date

Hello! My name is Victoria Paz, and I am the WELA Play therapist at Osage Nation Counseling Center (ONCC). My role is to work with the WELA centers to support the mental wellbeing and functionality of students through educational resources and therapeutic services as well as provide therapeutic services to other Native children ages 0-12 in the community.

I am originally from Cache, Oklahoma and I'm an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation. Before coming to ONCC, I received my Bachelors of Arts in Social Work at the University of Oklahoma and my Masters in Social Work at the University of Denver. In March 2024, I passed the clinical exam to obtain my License in Clinical Social Work (LCSW). I have also received training in dyadic treatment, Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and the Let's Connect Family Therapy model. I am currently seeking involvement in a local play therapy training cohort and other upcoming trainings to continue developing in my skills to provide services to young children and families.

I've always had a passion to work with children and I have experience in providing family therapy, individual therapy, and mental health consultation with early learning programs (ages 0-5) with both Native and non-Native peoples. Part of my role as the WELA Play Therapist is to support teachers and WELA centers in address general needs, such as exploring and discussing ways to improve the classroom environment. While the other part of my role is to work with children and families who are interested in therapeutic services to address a wide variety of issues, which can include trauma, anxiety, behavioral problems, and adjustment issues.

If you have any questions about my role or about therapeutic services provided by Osage Nation Health System, please reach out to my email at Victoria.Paz@osagehealth.org. I look forward to working with teachers and serving as additional support for WELA students. ʘra!