

**BEACHWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL & EARLY LEARNING CENTER
STANDARD PARENT HANDBOOK**

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BEACHWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL & EARLY LEARNING CENTER STANDARD PARENT HANDBOOK

About Our School:

MISSION STATEMENT: Our Purpose is to provide a safe, supportive, nurturing environment in which children can learn and grow in confidence and in abilities in all aspects of development: physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and creatively.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY: “We believe that learning is an active process for young children; learning through play and actual experiences designed to stimulate and sustain emerging skills. Children make choices and experience success within a carefully arranged environment that promotes exploration and cooperative play. Teachers facilitate learning and positive social interactions among children to develop the “whole child” and they individualize for the variations in development that occur in children’s learning. **Our goals for the children are:**

- to become competent in developing relationships of trust, independence, initiative and self esteem.
- to become competent in social interaction with both adults and children; functioning successfully as part of a group, learning mutual respect and cooperation.
- to become competent in the care and management of their bodies acquiring both large and small muscle skills
- to become competent in thinking for themselves, reasoning, generating ideas, approaching new intellectual changes and using language effectively
- to become competent in representing ideas and dealing through pretend play, drama, creative movement, music, art and construction; demonstrating both creativity and imagination.

ACCREDITATION: Our school is licensed by the State of New Jersey and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC is recognized as a leading force for enhancing children’s well-being and improving the quality of early childhood programs serving children birth through kindergarten. Programs accredited by NAEYC undergo a comprehensive process of internal self-study and improvement. Each NAEYC accredited program must meet all 10 of the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards which are based on the latest research on the education and development of young children. Validators verify compliance on site with the NAEYC criteria for program standards before the commission issues a decision. We first received accreditation in **1992** and have received re-Accreditation every **three** years until 2007 when the new standards were implemented. The accreditation period is now valid for 5 years and is subject to annual inspections and annual reporting requirements. For more information visit: www.rightchoiceforkids.org.

CURRICULUM: Children are actively engaged in a continuous learning process. The curriculum serves as the framework for integrating the needs, interests and learning of the whole child with a variety of **multi-sensory** activities which are guided by “key experiences” in language and literacy, mathematics and science, social-emotional development, physical development and the creative arts. Children make choices, carry out plans and recall learning in a supportive environment that promotes initiative and independence and play. Throughout the day, children participate in individual, small and large group activities. We balance curriculum between active and quiet, social and academic, indoors and outdoors. The addition of our music specialist brings the great learning potential of music to all of our children in their classrooms and their families through our **Music Together®** program, and optional Parent & Child classes. We also offer a gymnastic program on the “Fun Bus”, Yoga, Karate & other enrichment activities throughout the year.

TEACHERS: The role of teachers is to support and extend children’s learning by listening, asking open-ended questions, engaging in conversations and challenging children to explain their thinking. Our teachers have experience and credentials or degrees in early childhood education or related fields and are **continually** engaged in professional development to provide a quality program.

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP: It is important for “Teachers to work in partnership with Families”, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing, two-way communication.” Through mutual sharing, we can ensure the needs and interests of children are met. We encourage parent input and participation in classroom activities. Parents are encouraged to read to the children, share a talent, chaperone on field trips, assist with parties, do a craft with the children, demonstrate a cooking activity or assist in what ever way they choose to provide a meaningful experience for themselves and their child.

HOURS; DAYS & SESSIONS: We offer 2,3, or 5 half day (2 ½ hrs.) or school day programs (6 hrs) with extended hours* for working parents from 6:45 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. We offer a 5 day, half day Junior Kindergarten, Full day Kindergarten and a half day Enrichment Program for children who attend public school Kindergarten. Transportation is provided by the school district. Children attend the program based on a **school year calendar of 180 days** or **ELC calendar of 195 days** with an optional summer program.

Enrollment

ADMISSION PROCEDURES: Priority is given to families currently enrolled. However, children may be **admitted anytime of the year based on availability**. Open enrollment for the Fall begins in **February**. **Initial enrollment** is contingent upon receipt of a completed Application/Registration Form and the non-refundable registration fee. Upon receipt of the Application Form and Registration Fee, parents receive a packet of information and forms to be completed and returned before the child may attend our program. Confirmations are mailed confirming the program your child is enrolled in, the hours and days, and the tuition for the program, and the date the security deposit is due. **Class placement is contingent upon receipt of the Security Deposit and a meeting with parent & child**. **Continued enrollment is contingent upon the completion of all enrollment forms, adherence to the policies and procedures as outlined in the Parent Handbook including, but not limited to, the timely payment of all fees, security deposits and tuition**. The application/registration and tuition agreement are not meant to guarantee service for any duration.

An application is attached to our brochure or may be obtained from our web site: www.beachwoodnurseryschool.com
Enrollment is open to all children from 2 1/2 to 6 years for our PreSchool, Pre-K, & Kindergarten Programs. **Children must be potty trained and meet the October 1st cut off date for each age group**. Enrollment in the Infant, Toddler, or Two's program is open to ages 08 weeks to 2 1/2 years. Children should be **potty trained** to transition to a PreSchool/Pre-K Program. Enrollment is granted without regard to a parent or child's race, color, religion, national origin, creed, or gender. **We evaluate special needs children on an individual basis and will make reasonable modifications* or changes** to accommodate a child with disabilities or special needs while **ensuring** an undue burden (**expense or significant difficulty**) is not placed on the program. Children can attend our program **and** the district Pre-school Handicap program with the public school providing transportation. If you suspect a delay Parents may request an evaluation by the Child Study Team at Toms River Schools (732-505-5575) Other resources are the Special Needs Child Care Project: **(609-984-5321)** or Children's Specialized Hospital, 94 Stevens Road, Toms River **(732-914-1100)** (*A list of modifications is available on request)
For children younger than three years, parents should seek assistance through Early Intervention:888-653-4463;www.njeis.org.

ALL CHILDREN AND PARENTS must visit the school and classrooms, meet teachers and administrative staff **prior to the First Day of School, including KINDERGARTENERS**. This ensures a proper **transition** for each child and allows us to make an initial determination if we feel our program is suitable for the child and family. Parents are encouraged to attend ORIENTATION, typically held on the First Two days of the Toms River Schools' calendar or when enrollment occurs. Parents of Infants /Toddlers must meet with a caregiver to complete an Individual Personal-Care Plan prior to the first day of school.

WAIT LIST POLICY: In order to be on a wait list, parents must complete an Application/Registration Form and submit it to the office. Siblings of children currently enrolled will be considered first. These families have priority on the wait list for any age. Next, we consider application dates and the date child care is needed. Once a family has been offered an opening in the school program, it will be guaranteed only upon receipt by the school of the signed confirmation form along with the indicated security deposit and registration fee by the date indicated.

INFANT & TODDLER openings are often unpredictable. When openings occur, the first family on the wait list may not need childcare at this exact available date, but may choose to accept the opening. To secure this opening in the Infant/Toddler program, the family would be expected to begin paying tuition as of the date the infant / toddler opening occurs. This means the family would be paying tuition before actually starting the child in the program. At this point, the family is considered enrolled. After a child has medical clearance on file, the family may begin to use the program at the parents' convenience. It is our experience that families who transition into the program under these circumstances find it beneficial. The family has time to really get to know the school and routines before returning to the workplace.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY: The security deposit will be applied to the last weeks of attendance providing the family gives **four weeks written notice** of intent to withdraw. For the school year program, intent must be given by April 30th. **After April 30th,** the security deposit will be applied to June and tuition must be paid for the month of May for a child to continue attending school during May.

If you receive a confirmation letter and choose to withdraw prior to the First Day of School, you must give us the required four weeks written notice or you will be billed for the first two weeks of school based on the schedule on your signed agreement.

After two weeks of absences without notice, a child will be dropped from our enrollment and any prepaid tuition will be forfeited.

In some situations our program may not meet the needs of the child or the parent. In this situation we reserve the right to withdraw the child and wave the policy to withhold four weeks tuition, especially in the interest of the safety of other children.

ABSENCE POLICY: **Tuition must be paid in full without deduction for absences or vacation of any duration or for any cause.** The school maintains the continuous costs of staff salary and program expenses regardless of children's absence.

Tuition:

THE SCHOOL YEAR Tuition is based on 180 days for a five day program, 105 days for a three day program and 75 days for a two day program. Tuition is divided into 10 equal payments due the First of Each Month. The first payment is a security deposit which is paid upon written acceptance into our program for Fall Enrollment or at registration if enrolling during the year. Thereafter, tuition is due within the first seven days of the month, September to May. Tuition paid after the 7th of the month is assessed a late fee from the First of the month. Children may not attend school if tuition is in arrears after the 15th of the month. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dis-enrollment from the program. Any past due balance must be paid within 30 days. If an account is referred to a collection agency for tuition in arrears, the collection agency anticipates additional costs of 40% will be added to the claim to cover collection fees and court costs. Bi-weekly payments may be arranged for monthly tuition over \$600.00 payable every two weeks September to May after a security deposit of one month's tuition is prepaid. **Tuition does not include fees for field trips, extra-curricular activities; student books, testing, etc. These fees are assessed separately. Schedule changes requiring a change in tuition will be assessed a \$10.00 administrative fee. Return Checks will be assessed a processing fee and must be replaced with cash or a money order within 7 days of notice. All future payments must be made in cash or by money order.**

THE SUMMER PROGRAM is an optional add-on to the school year calendar with separate tuition and registration fees.

OCCASIONAL EXTENDED CARE is available on a first come, first serve basis but is subject to availability and must be prearranged. The fee is based on an hourly fee or any part of the hour. Extended care before school or after school can be arranged on a permanent basis for our half day program and the flat fee will be included in the monthly tuition.

THE Early Learning Center CALENDAR is based on a 195 day calendar. The First Day & Last Day of school will usually be the same as TR Schools, but with an additional 3 weeks of days open. Parents may choose two days, three days, or five days per week for either a full day* (9 hrs) a school day (6 hrs.) or a half day. A security deposit will be due at registration then, tuition is paid monthly according to the ELC Calendar. No deduction may be made for holidays, snow days or absences as the school maintains the continuous cost of staff salary and program expenses. Holidays will usually follow the Federal Holiday Schedule and will be posted in advance of a closing. We will however, close for a week between Christmas and New Year's Day
(* A full day is considered 9 hours. Additional time over 9 hours is charged at an hourly rate)

DROP-In CARE for a child already enrolled in our program is available for **\$50.00** and must be pre-paid & pre-approved with a minimum of 24 hour notice. It is subject to availability. Parents can also pre-arrange hourly care for a doctor's appointment with advance notice based on the half day rate. The intent of the drop-in care is to provide parents the opportunity to add extra time that is not typically included.

Kindergarten children enrolled in the Public School may be pre-registered for days our facility is open and the public school is closed, including snow days on a first come, first serve basis if space is available. We will typically close the First Day of a snowstorm if Toms River Schools is closed. If a State of Emergency has **not** been declared, we will open on the second day of snow if we are plowed out and it is safe. **DELAYED OPENINGS** will begin at 9:00 AM for all sessions and NO morning child care. WOBM announces our closings or go to www.beachwoodnurseryschool.com or Ocean County Storm Watch @ WOBM

The SCHOOL-AGE SUMMER PROGRAM is for siblings of children currently enrolled or have been enrolled in our program. We will accept children up to age eight for the summer program. The enrollment policies are the same for this age group as all others. We realize school-age children are "older" and they are ready for more challenging activities, so we try hard to meet their needs. We provide a busy curriculum along with time for nourishment and rest.; a Summer **READING CAMP** and hourly **TUTORING** for **Reading** and **Math**. The ELC has a large classroom (1000 square feet) specifically designated for this age group which is set up as a classroom with specific interest areas. One of our teachers will work and plan specific activities for the group which might include: gardening, nature walks, visitors arts and crafts, board games, computer time, dramatic play, projects, science activities, reading and math activities, & field trips.

BILLING is done initially to inform parents of the monthly or weekly tuition costs. We encourage parents to keep track of their tuition costs by paying by check throughout the year. **PLEASE USE BLACK OR BLUE INK** when writing a check. You may use Electronic Funds Transfers to pay tuition also. We do not provide statements regarding your child care costs or nursery school costs for tax purposes – it is up to you to track these expenses. Please call the office for our Tax I.D. number when you are preparing your tax returns.

You will receive a bill for a returned check, stop payment or other bank related fees that are charged to us and whenever there is a permanent schedule change requiring a change in tuition. Please provide us with a two-week notice of any scheduling changes.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SCHOOL CALENDAR: Parents may choose either the Toms River Schools Calendar of 180 days observing the same holidays, vacations, and weather closings or the (ELC) Early Learning Center Calendar of 195 days.

CLOSINGS and DELAYED OPENINGS:

Should T.R. Schools Close on the 1st day of inclement weather, BNS & ELC will also close. Should T.R. Schools close on the 2nd day due to inclement weather, the BNS ½ day program will also remain closed while The Early Learning Center will open for childcare families only, weather permitting & no state of emergencies. If we have a **delayed opening**, our doors will open at 9:00 AM. **There will be no Morning Childcare.** We will not be able to accept the afternoon Kindergarten children for any delayed openings or cancelled Kindergarten public school sessions until 11:30. We will not be able to accommodate the School Age Children for any delays or cancellations. Please refer to WOBM (92.7) / www.wobm.com for information on weather related school closings. Click on News, Weather, Storm Closings, then click on the letter B for our school listing. Again please reference the above website for information. You may also reference www.beachwoodnurseryschool.com and/or our BNS Facebook Page. **There are no credits for illness, inclement weather, absences or public school make-up days. Early Dismissal due to severe weather will be no later than 3:00 p.m. with no after school child care.**

TRANSPORTATION: Parents provide their child's transportation to and from school. All motor vehicles must be equipped with age appropriate and size appropriate car seats or BOOSTER SEATS until a child is eight years old and/or meets the weight and height requirements of 80 lbs. and 48 inches tall. If you car pool with other parents, or ask someone to pick-up your child, make sure the person has the appropriate car seat or booster seat and is listed on the Identification and Release Card.

Children attending the **Kindergarten** programs in the elementary schools are bussed to us on a five (5) day basis only. Parents must complete a **Transportation Form** for bussing to our School before the first day of school. We do have forms in the office.

PARKING: Please do not park in front of the building in the Fire Lanes. You could be ticketed by the police department. Park in designated spots and observe extreme caution when entering and leaving the parking lot. The following rules apply:

- Always hold your child's hand when going to and coming from the car. (Do not allow your child to run to the car)
- Do not leave your car running. This is an illegal and unsafe practice.
- Do not leave children of any age unattended in the car (The Office of Licensing considers this child neglect)
- Please talk with other parents within the fenced play yard and **not** in the parking lot for safety reasons
- **Children need to be buckled into an appropriate car seat or booster in the back seat before you leave. It's the Law!**

ARRIVAL: A parent or guardian must bring a child directly into the classroom and wait until a staff member **acknowledges the child's arrival.** The parent is welcome to help the child find his name tag, hang up his coat and perhaps assist with hand washing at the sink. We ask that the individual dropping off or picking up a child **sign in or out as required.** Childcare, School Day and Public School Kindergarten Children must be signed in & signed out of the building on the electronic key pad using the assigned pass code. Children arriving late or leaving early must be signed in or out on the classroom log. **Do not leave children unattended in a classroom.**

DISMISSAL: Children are dismissed individually from the classroom. Please wait outside the classroom until we can acknowledge the arrival of each parent, **thus releasing responsibility for the child back to you.** Anyone who is picking up a child and is unfamiliar to a staff member **MUST show a driver's license and be listed as an Authorized Person to Pick-Up before the child can be released.**

Anyone who does not provide identification will be turned away including a parent we are unfamiliar with. Please give the teachers in your child's classroom (and the office staff) **advance notice** if someone else is picking up your child. Send a written note telling us that someone new is picking up your child. A telephone call will only suffice in the case of an emergency (The person picking-up the child should know the 4-digit pass-code on the child's Identification and Release Information Card as an additional measure of security)

If a court order has been issued denying a parent permission to pick up the child, please bring in the original court order which we will photo-copy and return. We must have the court order before we can abide by it. Otherwise, a child may be released to either parent.

The custodial parent must authorize visits or pick-ups by the non-custodial parent on the child's questionnaire and on the Identification and Release Information form. Individuals authorized to pick-up must be at least 16 years of age. If you know you will be LATE picking up your child, please call us (732-244-1550 or 732-244-0115) so that we may reassure your child that you are coming.

IDENTIFICATION AND RELEASE INFORMATION: In accordance with our licensing regulations, we must have on file the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the individuals authorized to pick-up your child from school including custodial and non-custodial parents. **We cannot release a child to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up the child.** We must have written and/ or verbal authorization from the parent for any changes or additions. The Identification and Release card has a space for parents to enter a 4-digit pass code # for pick-up by a person not listed on the card as an additional security measure. If you car pool with other parents, please obtain additional cards to add these parents as authorized to pick up your child.

The Release form also permits us to give out phone numbers or addresses to parents of classmates for social occasions on a **request basis only** and to photograph your child engaged in regular school activities. We use these photos to document your child's participation in varied activities for portfolios. These photos are not for public display outside of school without your written permission.

Health and Safety

HEALTH RECORDS: We must have a **Universal Child Health Record** with the signature, date, and address of the examining physician completed **annually** for all children. The Immunization Record must be signed, dated and attached to the UCHR or include a Waiver of Exemption. We can provide you with a list of the required immunizations for the age of your child. Please be sure your medical insurance information is on the UCHR form or advise us if you do not have health insurance as a plan is available through the State of New Jersey. Parents will need to complete a **Special Care Plan** for children with severe allergies that may require treatment for the prevention of **anaphylaxis**; or emergency care for **Asthma , Diabetes, Seizures** and other health concerns such as **Food Allergies**. Parents need to monitor medications provided to us for expiration dates and replace medications for severe allergies or asthma inhalers annually. Snacks and food items for children with severe food allergies must be provided by the parents and replaced as needed

MEDICATION: Parents need to administer **All** medication to their children at home whenever possible. Many medications can be administered twice a day, which means it can be taken at home rather than at the school. Always check with your doctor to see if this is possible for your child's medical condition. Medication poses an extra burden on staff & having medication in the facility is a safety hazard.

MEDICATION POLICY (Abbreviated Policy)

If medicine must be administered at school, the following policy applies. The child must be in our care for four or more hours. Medication that needs to be given to a child must be in an original pharmacy container labeled with the child's first and last name, prescription #, name and strength of prescribed medication, instructions for the dose, time, method and duration of administration, prescribing physician's name, date the prescription was filled, and the expiration date of the medication. **Parents must provide the appropriate utensil for dispensing the medication. A Medication Authorization must be completed and signed by the parent.** Non-prescription medication may only be administered if we receive a signed note from the physician with the following information: the child's name, name of prescribed medication, explanation of the condition requiring the medication, the date, and dosage. The medication must be in an original manufacturer sealed container. **Please request a Health Care Provider Non-prescription Medication Form** to be completed by your Physician and the Parent. Please remember, **the first dose must be given at home** to see if the child has any type of reaction. **Refrigerated medications** must be received in a sealed, container labeled with the child's name and date to prevent accidental contamination of food in the refrigerator. The school shall have no responsibility for failure to provide the requested medication or for an adverse reaction caused by the administration of the requested medication.

Fever reducers, such as Tylenol cannot be administered by our staff and should not be given to a child for that purpose prior to attending school. The medicine will wear off and, if a child is truly sick, he or she will relapse quickly and will most likely be sent home anyway. Do not allow your child to bring cough drops to school as this is considered a choking hazard.

ILLNESS: Please keep your child at home if he or she has been ill during the night or in the morning or has active symptoms as listed below, even if he or she wants to go to school. A child will likewise be sent home from the center when exhibiting the following symptoms:

- Fever (oral temperature of 101 degrees or above) accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms
- Diarrhea-defined by watery stools that is not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet
- Vomiting (2 or more times with 24 hours)
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (lethargy; uncontrolled coughing, persistent crying, difficulty breathing; wheezing)
- Undiagnosed skin rash; skin lesions (with fever or behavior changes)
- Persistent abdominal pain, or complaints of headache or pain any where
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Reddened Eyes with crusting
- Coughing, Sore Throat & Nasal Discharge
- Swollen Lymph Nodes or Swollen Joints
- Head Lice (from the end of the day until after the first treatment)
- Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment & cessation of fever
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Any communicable illness

Staff perform a daily health check staff and may recommend that a child be sent home if he or she appears to be ill, exhibits any of the above symptoms and does not want to participate in daily activities. We will isolate the child from others and call a parent. We do record the time we called and when a parent arrived to pick-up. We are relying on parents to make good decisions regarding their child's health and not bring a child to school that has been vomiting or has had diarrhea during the night or the previous day. **Any communicable Disease must be reported to us; and a physician's note is required for a child to return to school.** We do notify parents if children are exposed to illnesses at school as soon as possible. Please help us reinforce good health habits at home by encouraging your child to wash hands frequently and practice sneezing against the arm.

Health and Safety

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES: We appreciate a phone call (732-244-1550)(732-244-0115) when children will be absent from school/center for any reason. If your child has a communicable illness, we need to know so we can inform other families (i.e. flu, strep, thrush, pink eye, etc.)

HANDWASHING: To help control the spread of illness, we have adopted a hand washing policy which requires all staff, volunteers, and children to wash their hands using liquid soap, running water, & rubbing vigorously for 10 seconds at the following times:

- Upon **arrival for the day**, (Parents can help) when moving from one group to another, or when coming in from outdoors.
- Before eating, preparing or serving food, handling food, or playing in water or playing with play dough
- After toileting or Diapering (The use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants)
- After wiping noses, mouths, sores, or handling bodily fluids
- After handling pets or other animals, playing in the sandbox, playing with play dough
- After handling garbage or cleaning

Adults must also wash their hands:

- Before and after feeding a child
- Before and after administering medication
- After assisting a child with toileting

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES: We take precaution to ensure your child's safety while at school/center. During normal child's play accidental injury does occur. (We are not liable for this normal consequential injury) Our staff are trained in First Aid and CPR and will immediately assess an injury and administer appropriate care. Our procedure in the event we determine medical or dental attention is necessary is to:

- Contact the Mother listed on the Medical Emergency Card; If unsuccessful, the Father is then contacted
- Contact the First Medical Emergency Contact if neither parent can be reached*
- Contact the child's physician and explain the circumstances/ or contact our physician: Dr. Santo Domingo; or our dentist: Dr. Insano to seek advice

The Director or Designee will be in charge and make decisions regarding the care of the child until a parent, guardian or emergency designee arrives. For breathing difficulties, seizure episodes, unconsciousness, or severe bleeding our policy is to immediately call 911 One of the child's teachers will accompany the child in the ambulance to Community Medical Center. **Because of this, it is essential for parent (s) to let us know the following information:**

1. **Where you can be reached while your child is in attendance at the school / center**
2. If neither parent will be available, does the Medical Emergency Contact have an authorization to seek medical care in the absence of the parent that has been signed by the parents and notarized ?

If injuries are not of a serious nature, we will apply first aid and provide parents with a written incident report at dismissal.

On occasion, a child does not tell a staff member or teacher that an injury has occurred. Please call us to inform us of such incidents as we still must log the incident in the classroom log book.

THE ACCIDENT INSURANCE POLICY we carry for all children enrolled in our program provides secondary coverage for those families that have health insurance and primary coverage for those families that do not have health insurance. Our policy is based on the total number of children enrolled. The annual cost is included in the registration fee. If you do not have insurance, please see the Director.

LOST OR MISSING CHILDREN: (Tracking) We have an action plan should a teacher report a child missing from her group. We will call 911, the Sheriff's Department for Search Dogs and parents within 15 minutes. On a field trip, staff will notify the facility management to assist in the search for a missing child. (Children wear Beachwood Nursery School shirts for easy identification on field trips) We are required by licensing to have a tracking system in place. Each time a group transitions (moves) from one classroom to another, or from inside to outside, the children are counted to ensure no one is missing or hiding. (We do ask parents to inform us if a child has previously hid from a parent or has run away from a parent or has run out of the home.)

EVACUATION: An emergency evacuation plan is posted in each classroom. Each month the children participate in a fire drill evacuation which includes testing our alarm system and smoke detectors. We also practice alternate route evacuation in case a door is blocked for some reason and evacuation to the front parking lot to prepare for evacuation by bus off-site. We have requested shelter from our Fire Department should we need to evacuate our building by walking.

Health and Safety

SUN SCREEN: When in the sun, children should wear sun-protective clothing, and applied sun protection or both. We ask parents to apply protection with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher in the warmer weather and provide us with product if their child stays all day. (Parents must sign a permission form) Combination sun protection/ insect repellent are not recommended.

INSECT REPELLENT; For health reasons, we do not use insect repellent unless directed by the local health department as necessary. If insect repellent is necessary, **deet** is a necessary ingredient to keep children safe from illness that can be transmitted by mosquitoes or ticks. Parents must sign a permission form and provide us with product containing deet. It can not be applied more than once a day and only to children 2 months or older. **We ask parents to check their children daily for ticks and more carefully in April, May and June.**

INTERGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM): We believe the least hazardous means should be used to control pests and unwanted Vegetation. Pesticides and herbicides, if used are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are **not** at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact or inhalation. Our current policy was suggested by the "**Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service**". We use products that can be applied to the exterior of the building creating a barrier preventing insect infestations within and applying product to the outside perimeter of the play yard to create a similar barrier. We do not store any product on site.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: For health reasons, our heating plants are equipped with April Air Filters and Humidifiers to limit exposure to **air pollutants** and ensure all rooms are heated, cooled, and ventilated to maintain room temperature and humidity levels. Our primary cleaning and **sanitizing** agent is bleach and water as well as Clorox Green Works Products and Steam to limit the use of **chemicals** on site. We are aware of the issue noise level has generated because of its potential effect on children and we will continue to incorporate noise control in classrooms and other environmentally healthy practices such as the use of low vapor paints.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AT THE CENTER: Once a teacher acknowledges the arrival of parent and child, she will accept the transfer of supervision of the child from the parent .Children are dismissed individually as parents arrive. The teacher will acknowledge the arrival of the parent by calling the child's name, thus transferring responsibility for the child back to the parent. Parents are responsible for the safety and well-being of their child(ren) any time in which you are together at school for programs/activities(including field trips) but our staff will step in if we feel a child's behavior is unsafe for himself or herself or for others. Please do not allow a child to run off anywhere in the school without you or run outside of the building without you. We encourage parents to hold their child's hand in the parking lot and to watch for cars backing out. (If you wish to talk to another parent outside, please do so in the fenced play yard .)

We adhere to our policy that no child will be unsupervised while attending the program. At least 2 staff members are present if more than 6 children are in attendance. Teachers will **directly supervise** infant, toddler, and preschool children by sight and sound in the classroom, during outdoor activities, while eating, at rest time and during toileting procedures as appropriate for the age and developmental needs of the child. Infant, Toddler ,and Twos' Classrooms and Playgrounds have been equipped with closed circuit video monitoring. Teachers regularly **count** children at transitions and when moving from one place to another, or from inside to outside or outside to inside. Staff continually assess the environment for opportunities to improve visibility and hearing of children's activities. **Our typical teacher-child ratio is** 1:4 for infants, 1:6 for toddlers, 1:8 for preschool, and 1:9 or 1:10 for Pre-K & Kindergarten.

SAFETY PRACTICES: HERE ARE SOME WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN;

- Keep us informed of any potentially unsafe or threatening situation that involves your family
- **Keep us informed of changes in phone numbers, addresses, employment, custody issues, etc.**
- Keep the number of people who come to drop off and pick up your child to a minimum
- **Do not hold the front door or any door open for anyone.(We are a locked facility with access by a key fob system)**
- **Do not send someone** to pick up your child who is **not** on your **authorized** to pick up list
- Have your child walk with you when entering and when exiting the building
- **Do not leave children unattended in the car.** We will arrange to have your child ready to leave if you need assistance.
- **Children should be buckled into a car seat or booster in the back seat only.**
- Drive **SLOWLY** in this parking lot and watch for wandering children. **Obey the Stop Signs on property!**
- Use caution exiting the parking lot onto **Pinewald Road** (We are in a curve)

UNDER THE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES ACT, we are mandated to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities. We are required to notify the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline* to seek assistance in caring for a child that has not been picked up within one hour of our closing time. We are also not allowed to release a child to a parent or person that appears to be physically or emotionally impaired. Staff have been instructed to call others who have been authorized to pick-up the child.(1-877-652-2873) *

General Operating Policies

LATE PICK UPS

The center/school closes promptly at 5:30 PM Please keep in mind that you must plan to leave the building by this time.

At 5:20 PM closing staff have been instructed to call one or both parents of any children remaining at the center/school without a parent. If a child has not been picked up by 5:30 PM, a late fee of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes will be assessed. Staff have been instructed to call the persons authorized to pick-up and any other contacts until someone agrees to pick up the child. If a child remains at the center past 6:00 PM, the Director or Sponsor will be called so that closing staff may leave.

One hour after closing and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to parents or persons authorized by the parents have failed, the Director or Sponsor shall call the **24 hour child abuse hotline (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.**

A child may not be released to a parent or authorized person who appears to be Physically or Emotionally impaired to the extent, in the judgement of the staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual.

CLOTHING: Please send your child in "Play Clothes." Think of messy art materials and provide washable clothing...smock do not cover everything. Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing free from complicated fastenings, **elastic waist bands are preferred**...snaps and zippers must be in working order. Think of the play ground and provide sturdy clothing. Think of the season and provide a removable **sweater** and **hats and mittens in the winter.** **Outdoor play** is part of our daily routine so we do expect children to be dressed appropriately for the weather, including **snow boots.** **Girls** will be warmer in pants in the colder weather. **Sneakers or rubber soled shoes** are preferred over open toe sandals for **safety** reasons. PLEASE do not allow your child to put on **jelly shoes, flip flops or slip-ons in the warm weather.** Encourage independence by allowing your child to dress himself. **By age three,** most children can put on their own jackets, clothing and slip on shoes or sneakers. Children take pride in their accomplishments!

PLEASE put your child's name on the label of jackets, hats, and mittens with a ball point pen or laundry marker **Do not allow your child to wear expensive jewelry to school.** We can not be responsible for it. We keep extra clothing at school in case a child gets too wet at the water table or has a toileting accident. **Please** wash the items promptly and return them on your child's next school day. Thank You!

TOILETING: Children must be **toilet trained** to be in a Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten Program. When children are in diapers or pull-ups at school, it gives the wrong message and allows the child to be in control. Children must be in underwear. We will assist children with clothing, tell them what to do, but they will be expected to manage themselves so that they learn to be "independent" in their toilet habits. Early in the school year a toileting routine is established. Children are encouraged to toilet after snack, and more frequently for younger children. We understand accidents are a natural part of child growth. We help children into clean clothes in a calm and pleasant manner reassuring them that it is okay...If a child refuses our assistance, we will call the parent to inform them of the situation. If a child complains of a stomachache and goes to the toilet several times, we will isolate the child and call the parent for pick-up to prevent the spread of some type of stomach upset. Please send in several changes of clothes in a "backpack" if you know your child has frequent accidents.

ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME: Our school / center maintains a generous supply of toys and learning materials for children to use. Therefore, children are asked to keep toys and other personal items at home This helps us to avoid hurt feeling if an item is lost or broken. If it helps your child to take a toy or special item with them when they leave the house each day, leaving it in your car is a safe and secure place where your child can have it later. However, the final decision on this issue is left to the discretion of your child's teacher when there is separation anxiety. On occasion, children may be asked to bring an item to school to extend awareness of various concepts and to develop oral communication skills. The item will not be used during the choice time and it must be labeled with the child's name. If it is a book to share, please make sure the child's name is on the inside cover and that it can be left at school for several days. Parents will be advised when interest items can be brought to school. **Children may not bring guns, swords, war toys or super hero items to school as these items tend to promote aggressive play,**

FIELD TRIPS: The cost for renting a school bus has become prohibitive and so we have limited our trips to a Fall Trip and a Spring Trip during the week for family participation. **We will consider field trips on Saturdays if there is enough interest from our families.**

A permission form must be signed by ALL parents whether their child is participating or not and returned to school by the date requested.

Parents are advised of the date, times, destination, and costs. (Usually we get a group rate which is slightly discounted) Parents drive themselves or car pool with other parents to participate on the field trip. On the day of the field trip, **regular sessions are not held** for the field trip participants as the trip is either a half day or a school day. If a child is ill on the day of the trip, we ask parents to call at least a half hour before the departure time so that we do not wait for you as a group. In the event we can not secure enough drivers for a local trip, the field trip will be cancelled. If you car pool or drive another parent's child to a trip destination, you must comply with the following:

- The vehicle you drive has a capacity of 8 or less
 - The vehicle has a valid inspection sticker
 - The vehicle has seat belts and car seats for every child
- The Driver has a **VALID license**
The Owner had an **Insurance Card & Registration**
The school receives copies of the above

General Operating Policies

OUTDOOR PLAY: All children who are well enough to be in attendance at school will be taken outdoors for play on a daily basis. The only exceptions are rainy days, summer days when the heat index is above 95 and winter days when the temperature is below 33 degrees or there is a wind chill factor below 32 degrees. On these days, children may go outside for a brisk walk and return inside to participate in large motor activities. All children must go out at the same time to maintain our child:staff ratios. **Parents may not request for their child to stay indoors while the rest of the group is outside.**

REST-TIME: Children over three are usually in transition to not needing an afternoon nap. Licensing does require that a daily rest / sleep time be provided for ALL children over 18 months of age who attend school for four or more consecutive hours. Please do not send in sleeping bags ,pillow pets, stuffed animals or items larger than what will fit into the cubby space provided for each child **(Children under 19 months rest according to their own physical needs morning and afternoon either in a crib or on a cot.)**

We provide a mat and a quiet atmosphere for listening to music. Children use a blanket to cover up and are encouraged to rest quietly for 20-30 minutes. Children are not required to sleep, but if they fall asleep, we do not wake them unless a parent requests in **writing** that a child not sleep longer than a specific amount of time. Any special instructions should also be conveyed in writing. If your child is staying through lunch, please discuss this routine with your child so that we can avoid tears.

FOOD & NUTRITION: We serve a morning snack, an early afternoon snack and a late afternoon snack. The morning snack should not be considered a child's first meal of the day. Children need to eat breakfast at home before coming to school. Snacks should consist of at least **two items** from the basic food groups; usually a variety of whole-grain crackers, plain cookies, dry cereal such as cheerios and fruit juices: apple, white grape, cranberry, orange or fruit punch. Parents are encouraged to send in fresh fruit such as bananas, apples, grapes cut in half, or orange sections or half gallons of milk or orange juice. **Safe drinking water** will be accessible to children who can serve themselves indoors and outdoors and children will be encouraged **to drink water** over juice. **The daily snack we provide is posted in the classroom for your information.** Please keep us informed of any food allergies that develop during the school year. **Please provide snacks for your child that has a severe food allergy or has special diet requirements.**

LUNCHES: Children bring lunch from home in a lunch box with the name clearly printed on the outside of the lunch box.

Usually a half of sandwich, fruit and milk in a thermos is enough for your preschooler. USDA recommendations for lunch include: ¾ cup milk, 1 serving of lean meat, fish or poultry or cheese or protein, 2 fruits or 2 vegetables or 1 of each, and ½ slice of whole grain bread or starch alternative. **Sample lunches:**

- Turkey & cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread with tomato & lettuce; orange wedges; milk & oatmeal cookie.
- Rice with beans (or chicken); cucumber slices & dip, apple, milk & oatmeal cookie.
- 6 oz container of yogurt with fruit; cheese & whole grain crackers; 6 oz* orange juice (*daily allowance)
- Tortilla with cheese; tomato wedges; fruit salad cup; milk
- Macaroni & cheese, banana, & milk

A thermos for milk or the small 6 oz orange juice box or 6 oz **water** is appropriate for lunch. **Do put an ice pack in the lunch box for cold foods.** Purchase a “**wide-mouth**” thermos at Target for hot foods such as spaghetti-o's or macaroni & cheese. **Please do not send gum or candy, gummy fruit items, soda or junk food items** in the lunch box as these items will be returned unopened. Foods that are not nutritious will not be served. **Please speak to the Director if you need help planning lunches!**

We do return un-eaten food so that you are aware of what your child is eating. We can not force a child to eat when he or she refuses, but will offer a snack later.(Sometimes, children do not eat very much the first few weeks of school as they get use to a new routine.)

FOOD GUIDELINES: Round firm foods that might lodge in the throat of a child less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, chunks of raw carrots, celery, hard pretzels, thickly spread peanut butter, meats larger than can be swallowed whole, or hard candy.

BIRTHDAYS: We celebrate birthdays during a group snack-time with a special treat you provide for the occasion such as: Breyer's ice-cream and ice cream cones, pudding, jello, fresh fruit such as apple wedges for dipping in yogurt, orange sections, bananas, american cheese & whole grain crackers, whole grain pretzels, Yoplait® Kids, fruit smoothies, frozen fruit pops, banana bread, home-made oatmeal cookies etc. **The emphasis is on lower sugar, healthier snacks for children instead of cupcakes or munchkins.** If parents wish to invite a few children to a birthday party for their child, please check with the office for addresses or phone numbers. There is a space on the Identification and Release Information Card for parents to indicate whether we may give out your address or phone number.

WE DO BIRTHDAY PARTIES AT SCHOOL. PLEASE SEE THE DIRECTOR TO ARRANGE A DATE & TIME

HOLIDAYS or Cultural Activities: Each classroom will post a list of items they would like for a classroom activity or celebration. It is recommended that perishable food brought from home to be shared with other children be store bought and in the original package.

General Operating Policies

SEPARATION can be stressful for parents as well as children. We are here to help in this sometimes difficult, but common developmental process. Sometimes children are upset during the first few weeks and some don't express anxiety until a few weeks later when they feel comfortable enough to do so. This is completely understandable because they are in a new environment with people they don't know yet. It takes time for children to develop bonds and relationships with the teachers and children in their room.

Please know that we will comfort and reassure your child. The teachers acknowledge and talk about feelings and we will need you to do the same. Keep in mind that children are very sensitive to the feelings of their parents, so if you don't feel good about leaving your child at our school, they won't feel good about it either. Please talk about your child's experience in a positive way.

When you leave your child, do not sneak out. Make the good-bye and hug something he or she can count on, even if it brings tears at first. When it's time for you to leave the classroom after the good-byes, make the departure definite. Linger can make a child unsure of what is expected of him or her. Develop a routine such as reading a book together, washing hands together and then saying the good-byes. Consistency is the key. Over time your child will become accustomed to this routine and learn that you always come back when you say you will (after snack, outdoor play, nap, etc.) Together, we will work through this important developmental process.

GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES are designed to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions in socially acceptable ways. It involves helping children acknowledge their emotions, control their reactions and manage their own behavior. It is setting limits, it is redirecting; it is guidance, it is teaching. Positive relationships contribute to an atmosphere of trust, protection, and mutual respect that allows children to grow in the practice of cooperation, joint problem solving and acceptable social behavior. If a child is removed from the group or an activity to gain control, it will be for a short period of time. Generally, a child having difficulty in one area will be redirected to another area to play

Young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, and consequently some aggressive behavior will occur. Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it takes time for a child to learn acceptable ways of dealing with his or her anger and/or frustration. Children learn from being exposed to a broad repertoire of possible actions and words, then from having the opportunity to try these out to see how they work. The attitudes and skills adults help children construct in the early years provide a foundation they will carry through life.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS: We will make every attempt to work with a child. However, if there are continual discipline problems with significant disruptive or aggressive behaviors, the parent(s) will be called in for a conference with the teachers and the director.

Our goal is to work together to help the child. In the classroom, the teacher, along with the director, will meet with the parent(s); strategies will be implemented in the classroom and at home for a specific length of time; and then reviewed to evaluate how successful the strategies were. Referrals and recommendations will be made to the parent which need to be acted upon; other options such as changing classrooms or reducing child care hours will be considered. It is never our goal to discontinue care, but that will be our final option if we do not feel we can meet the individual needs of a child/family or if the child's behavior is creating an unsafe environment for himself or others. Each situation is evaluated on an individual basis and the final determination regarding a child's enrollment status will be made by the director.

REFERRALS: Parents are expected to make arrangements for children who require the services of specialized staff or consultants. We can provide parents with a list of people who specialize in various aspects of early childhood education (i.e. health checks & immunizations, nutrition education, health & safety, parenting classes, subsidy programs, health insurance, speech evaluations, developmental delays, counseling, etc.) Some services and screenings are **free** or at a reduced cost. Parents are reminded to bring in Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for children that currently have IEP's through the public school **and to inform us of any diagnosed special need**. The following are guidelines for the educators and parents that indicate the need for a referral:

- Is the child's mental, emotional or physical well-being and development a concern to the parent or educator?
- Does a healthy parent-child relationship seem in jeopardy?
- Does the parent's own mental or physical health impair their ability to care for the child?
- Is the child's behavior harmful to himself or herself or to others in the classroom?
- Is the child's ability to learn, or that of his or her classmates, impaired by the behavior?
- Is the classroom's social environment frequently disrupted and/or tense due to the child's behavior?
- Have other professionals observed behaviors and expressed concerns?
- Has the situation persisted regardless of multiple strategies or attempts to cope with the problem without outside help?
- Is the child's behavior or problem significantly unusual as compared to typical developmental patterns for that age?

General Operating Policies

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 years by a parent, guardian, caretaker, someone living in the child's home, or anyone who is responsible for the child's welfare at the time of the alleged abuse. Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any neglect or exploitation by an adult is required by State Law to report the concern immediately to the State Child Abuse Hotline, toll free at 1 877- NJ ABUSE. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at: 1-609-292-0422 or by going to: www.nj.gov/dcf and selecting Publications.

The following behaviors are prohibited by all persons in our school setting: (This policy applies to parents also)

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, beating, shaking, pinching etc. intended to induce pain or fear;
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
- Abusive or profane language
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment;
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child;
- Any type of restraint that prohibits movement, except in a situation of eminent danger.

If a parent has concerns regarding **another** child's behavior, we ask that you discuss your concern with the appropriate teacher. Under NO circumstances will parents be allowed to approach a child or his or her parent in an effort to deal with a situation on their own. It is our policy that we will handle **all discipline** situations that arise with the children while they are at our school according to our stated policy and philosophy.

THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES initiative in New Jersey is a strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect by focusing on the strengths of the family. Our early childhood programs are grounded in the principles of identifying strengths and providing encouragement that creates learning. Children's experiences and social-emotional development are enhanced when teachers and families create a working relationship through communication, cooperation and collaboration. This undertaking requires a joint effort to establish a reciprocal relationship to share information and help families in their role as advocates for their children. Children are the ones that benefit most from reciprocal relationships between teachers and families by ensuring the following:

- Family members are part of the program and are welcome at all times
- Staff give genuine attention to what helps people feel comfortable, included and valued
- Daily communication is an important aspect of our program, including e-mail
- Parents are encouraged to observe their child through the viewing windows, or sit in on a session
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's development. Staff are available to parents.
- Staff make an effort to learn about each family's structure, culture, values, & incorporate this into the classroom activities and their interactions with the child and family
- Staff offer parents support in difficult times with encouragement, resources, and help in solving problems.
- Social connections are encouraged by inviting parents to participate in classroom activities, field trips, special events, music programs, art events and special outreach activities for fathers, grandparents, or other extended family members.
- Parents are informed about special guests or lectures at school or in the community that provide parenting information
- Our school has an extensive library of books /articles on topics related to child development and parenting parents may borrow as well as children's books and games.
- Parents are welcome to join our Strengthening Families Planning Meetings.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute ideas about policies, curriculum, or special events / activities they feel are important and to review current policy and procedure, curriculum, special events/activities in order to make improvements to our programs.

Parent Involvement

WE VALUE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS, as we serve as partners in the care and education of your children. We encourage you to let us know anything that might help us in our work with your child – developmental concerns or medical needs, the birth of a baby, divorce, separation, a death in the family, a new pet, a new home or moving away, etc. We have many resources to assist you and us in addressing individual needs. . .

We plan an open house for the first days of school for parents to get a feel for the daily routine in the classroom and to meet the teachers, other parents and children. At our “Back to School” **Parent Meeting** we introduce our curriculum and give parents the opportunity to ask questions regarding our policies and procedures. Parents are always welcome to visit in the classroom, participate in activities or quietly observe through the viewing windows. We do have an open door policy.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom on a regular basis if they can especially at lunch time !

Daily communication at drop-off and pick-up lets parent or teacher know how the day is progressing for the child. To keep parents abreast of learning activities in the classroom Teachers post lesson plans & other information on the classroom bulletin board. Teachers also e-mail classroom happenings in addition to the Director’s monthly newsletter informing our school community. The school web site also includes general information and links for school closings, delayed openings and early dismissals

Family social events are planned several times during the year. Two events usually incorporate songs from our Music Together® Program. We also have Parent & Child Music Together® Classes in the evening and on Saturday for families. In June, we plan a family picnic at Veterans’ Park. Parents can become involved in our **Strengthening Families Initiative** participating in activities and representing our school on the State level. We are open to **suggestions** for parent programs during the school year or activities such as scrap booking that parents might be interested in organizing once a month.(Please speak with office staff regarding this.)

CONFIDENTIALITY is an important aspect of our program. Within our school, sensitive information may only be shared with staff Who have a “need to know”, in order to appropriately plan and safely care for your child. Personal or Health Information about any child will not be disclosed without a parent’s written authorization. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, parents or children will not be shared to protect everyone’s privacy.

You may observe children at our school who have a disability or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate to you (i.e. biting, hitting, touching, name calling, inappropriate language). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Please know we are always working with individual children and families and cannot disclose this information to you. Our staff is prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. **You also are prohibited from discussing anything about another child or parent with other parents.** It is cause for the immediate dis-enrollment of your child from our program. “No one wants to be the “topic” of conversation – adult or child.”

GRIEVANCES do occur and we would like to provide parents with steps to follow to assist in resolving any complaint or problem:

- Please meet with the teacher to explain the problem or complaint you have. Together determine a time frame in which to resolve the problem/complaint and the steps necessary to resolve the problem.
- If the problem or complaint you have is with the teacher or classroom assistant teacher, please schedule an appointment with the Director. The Director or Teacher or Administrative Staff must be aware of a problem or complaint before that problem or complaint can be resolved.
- If “resolution” does not occur within the specified time frame, submit in writing to the Director a statement of the problem or complaint, the proposed solutions or steps that were recommended and what actions were or are being requested.
- Our “Executive Committee” comprised of the Director or “Head Teacher”, a classroom teacher and a parent will review the Statement submitted and determine an appropriate course of action.

PRIVACY: We are committed to protecting the privacy of Personal or Health Information that is disclosed to us and will not disclose any information without your written authorization.

Parent Involvement

ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS is the process of observing, recording and documenting what children do and how they do it as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affects the child. Assessment provides information that helps programs do the following:

- *Monitor children's development and learning over time to identify strengths & needs.*
- *Guide lesson planning and decision making about children's interests, needs, and abilities*
- *Identify children who might benefit from special services*
- *Report to and communicate with families information about individual children*
- *Know what areas of the program need improvement (based on groups of children)*

Ongoing, systematic, formal and informal assessment approaches provide information on children's experiences, learning and development. These assessments occur within the context of **reciprocal** communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. Cultural and ethnic factors are important in determining the types of activities and the materials that are interesting and familiar to a child. We engage families in the assessment process in a variety of way:

- Parents complete the Early Screening Inventory-Revised Parent Questionnaire at enrollment which includes information on the Family, Preschool/Childcare History, Medical History and the Child's Development and provides a base line.
- Parents are welcome to jot down brief descriptions of what they observe their child doing as he or she plays at home, i.e. *"James got out the nesting blocks and lined them up from smallest to largest."* Share these observation with the teacher during drop-off or pick-up time on a sticky note
- Parents are encouraged to complete and return the "Pre-Conference Letter" addressing specific concerns.
- **Parent/Teacher conferences** are held mid-year and in June upon request or at any time

We use a tool for observational assessment called **The High/Scope Child Observation Record** (COR) for ages 2 1/2 – 6 years that can be used while **children are involved in normal program activities in an early childhood setting such as ours**. Children are observed initiating and participating in a wide variety of activities and behaviors in this carefully arranged environment. Observation is specific and part of the **daily classroom routine** to create a real-life profile of each child. The COR outlines the various stages of development (COR Items) and is arranged into **six** categories: **Initiative; Social Relations; Creative Representation; Movement & Music; Language and Literacy and Mathematics and Science**. Each category, in turn, has **five developmental levels** that describe the behavior children exhibit at each level. Each child has a grid with examples of behavior observed and pages on which to record dated **anecdotal notes** in each of the six categories from the beginning of school year to the end. The six categories are arranged by age in a **check list** that indicates whether the child was assisted (emerging) or initiated the task on his / her own or the behavior was not observed at all. These are completed **three times** during the school year to track progress and to provide intervention when needed. This enables parent and teacher to see the progress each child makes in all these areas over an extended period of time and from year to year. The COR is combined with a portfolio each year; a systematic and intentional collection of significant samples of each child's work. A young child's portfolio of program experiences might include samples of the child's drawing, painting, writing, a multi-step project, photographs of block structures or dress-up, samples of dictation or journal writing, an audio recording and a self portrait from September and again in May. This is shared with parents during **conferences** as well as individual activities that may help develop a skill that is emerging, but is not mastered .

The developmental summaries are not a formal screening tool, but it does provide parents with valuable information about a child's overall growth and development. The information we gather can include indicators that a child's development is not within the normal range for his/her age, so we then make referrals for parents to seek more in-depth evaluations for language/speech, social/emotional, physical or cognitive development. Parents need to be assured that we won't discuss their child's development or progress with others unless authorized in writing to do so. Only the parents and our professional staff have access to children's records on a need to know basis.

We do Developmental Screenings administered individually as a first step in identifying a child who may have a developmental delay. We also have a Learning Disabilities Consultant Teacher and a Speech Pathologist who can do in-house evaluations for a fee. When a parent has a concern about a child's development, the parent may submit a written request for an evaluation to their local district's child study team. The written request (referral) must be submitted to the appropriate school official. This may be the principal of the neighborhood school, the director of special education, or the child study team coordinator for the district in which the child resides. Parents may contact the Regional Early Intervention Collaborative-REIC at (888)653-4463 or www.njeis.org for any concerns regarding the development of a child from birth to three years old.

Parent Involvement

PARENT CONFERENCES are held mid-year, in June upon request, or at any time. At 3 month intervals parents receive a check list that reflects child development covered by High Scope's *Child Observation Record* for children 2 1/2 years through 6 years. Important Developmental Milestones are recorded for children Two and under. At parent conferences teachers discuss gross & fine motor skills, Communication, speech, language, sensory, social & emotional development, cognitive, adaptive & self help skills. We do expect all parents to sign up for a conference at the designated time. A parent conference may also be held whenever, a parent, teacher, or director feels it is necessary. Failure to meet with the teacher regarding a child's well-being could result in expulsion.

PARENT CONCERNS: We are a community of children, parents and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind and understanding. It is to be expected that from time to time, people will experience some concerns or difficulties. We, as a staff, will make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally mis-communicate. When these mistakes occur, we want you to tell us. Our goal is to offer your family the best care and educational services possible. In order to meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions, your concerns and your surveys. When you have a concern, please remember...

- Teachers want parents to feel satisfied with the care their child is receiving.
- Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible. Please ask your child's teacher first about any concern.
- Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, the director will need to talk with the teacher directly about your concern and deal with the issue in a straightforward manner so the teacher can improve her performance and correct any mistakes.
- Be assured that teachers do not hold a grudge against your child after you have expressed a concern. We would not hire anyone who would react in such an inappropriate manner. Actually, expressing a concern will encourage your child's teacher to be more conscientious about your issue and try to improve.....
- Consider the "once is OK rule." With minor issues, allow staff to make a mistake once or twice, but when it becomes a pattern, it is definitely time to bring it to their attention.
- Don't allow concerns to build up. Share them with teachers as they occur. It is disturbing to find out later that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.
- Sometimes we cannot make changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we always want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

TRANSITIONS: Whenever a child transitions to a new classroom during the school year, the parent is always included in the decision and the transition process takes place over time to allow the child to adjust to the new classroom.

- Teachers collaborate & share information as well as observe each others' classrooms
- The current classroom teacher accompanies the child into the new classroom for several visits the first week
- The second week the child visits the new classroom for several visits without the current classroom teacher
- The parent should meet the new teachers and become familiar with the routine in the new classroom
- The child should begin the third week in the new classroom if the child is now comfortable with the new group.

PARENT VISITS are welcome at any time, but keep in mind that it may be difficult for a young child to cope with separating from a parent for a second time during the day. Children typically assume they will be picked up from school anytime they see their parent. It is difficult for them to understand that, although you are leaving, they are expected to stay.

CHANGES IN CHILDREN'S RECORDS: Please tell your child's teacher immediately **if you change your home number, your cell phone number, or your work number.** We need to be able to call you in an emergency. Please tell us if you are planning on moving or have moved from the address we have on file in the office. Please let us know of any employment changes, or people authorized to pick-up your child from school or in an emergency. Let us know if your child has developed a new allergy. We will give you a new yellow Identification and Release Information Card to complete to either add or change information. This card goes with us on field trips or when we evacuate the building for fire drills. We hope that parents will always make sure the classroom teacher has the most up to date information, **INCLUDING E-MAILS.**

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WHAT WE EXPECT OF PARENTS:

- **Read** the bulletin boards, notices and newsletters that are sent home. Important information is shared with you on a regular basis, but you must make the effort to read it. (**Check your child's backpack and lunch box daily**)
- **Give** your child time to adjust to nursery school or child care before leaving him or her here. Parents can help set a positive tone for the rest of the day by taking a few minutes in the morning to greet the teachers and help involve your child in an activity.
- **Value** staff members and show them common courtesy. Teachers are more than just babysitters. We employ teachers who have a degree in education or a related field and a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education in early childhood. In addition, Teachers are trained in recognizing and reporting Child Abuse, First Aid and Pediatric CPR every year.
- **Focus** on your child when you pick him or her up. Take time to greet staff and your child and see if there is anything the teacher wishes to communicate before you leave.
- **Pay** your tuition or child care fees on time. We are providing a valuable service and deserve prompt payment. Your teachers deserve a salary much higher than what can be paid from parent tuition. Don't put the director in the position of begging you for payment or terminating your services.
- **Be respectful and support center policies.** If we ask that you don't bring in toys, please don't allow your child to do this. It is impossible to enforce all policies at all times, but know that disregard for a policy causes a problem.
- **Make** sure your children follow center rules. Do not allow them to run away from you, leave the building without you or climb on furniture, etc. Your child's safety and well-being is our primary concern.
- **Make** sure your child is wearing appropriate clothing and shoes. Children will get messy playing on the playground or painting at the easel. It is not realistic to send children in good clothing and expect teachers to keep them clean. Make sure clothing has simple fastenings, snaps and zippers should be in working order. Sneakers or rubber soled shoes are preferred over open toe sandals for safety reasons.
- **Keep** a sick child home. The state mandates health regulations to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses. These rules also keep your child from being infected by others as well. Make sure you have back-up child care when your child is ill.
- **Address** concerns in a respectful way and to the appropriate person. Seek to resolve your problem with the appropriate staff member.
- **Try** to minimize your child's time in child care. Most children have had a full day after 8 hours and need to re-fuel emotionally by spending time with their family.
- **Communicate** with teachers about what's going on at home.
- **Make** sure children get a good night's rest so they are ready for a busy day.
- **Pick** children up before closing time and call if you are held up in traffic or running late.
- **Please** pack your child a nutritious lunch. We will be happy to assist you with menus that meet USDA requirements for good nutrition.