



Neighborhood House
Nursery School
Parent/Family Handbook

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NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

The Neighborhood House Nursery School (NHNS) is operated under the auspices of the Neighborhood Association, a non-profit, community-based organization. Since 1920, the NHNS has offered an innovative pre-school program to the children of Millburn/Short Hills and the surrounding communities. Operating out of a picturesque Victorian house on Taylor Street, the NHNS helps children develop necessary social skills in a warm, nurturing atmosphere. The NHNS staff opens up the world of learning by encouraging spontaneous curiosity. We provide a wealth of “hands on”, developmentally appropriate, concrete, discovery-oriented experiences which promote each child’s endless appetite for knowledge.

We believe that each child is unique. The NHNS provides a program that contributes positively to each child’s self-image and independent growth by promoting discovery activities, experimenting with different media, and socializing with friends in a loving and creative environment. Through age- appropriate curriculum experiences, we focus on the growth of the whole child. Utilizing all stages of his/her social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, our goal is for each child to reach his/her potential in all of these areas.

Our school will seek to provide the kind of environment and varied experiences that will allow your child to:

- Make a successful break from home.
- Learn to be with other children.
- Become familiar with a group setting.
- Develop an interest and joy in learning.
- Develop security and a feeling of success.
- Develop self-expression.
- Develop self-control.
- Develop creativity.
- Develop responsibility.
- Develop independence.

Learning at any level should never be merely an accumulation of facts or skills. Instead, it must be a strengthening of the ability to think independently. Learning should be self-rewarding and fun. It should create excitement within the children, which will stay with them throughout their lives.

ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

The Neighborhood House Nursery School's philosophy, tradition of community service and outside garden involvement distinguish it from other nursery schools in the area. We provide a rich learning environment using Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is research-based and used both nationally and internationally. It has a play-based focus that matches the Neighborhood House philosophy of play as a child's "work". The authors of the curriculum, Teaching Strategies, state that "It is based on 38 objectives for development and learning that are predictive of school success and aligned with state standards." Objectives fall into nine categories: social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science/technology, social studies, and the arts.

At the heart of Creative Curriculum is the use of studies. A study is an in-depth investigation of a topic. A study begins with what children know about a topic, what they want to learn, and then moves onto a series of hands-on activities where children explore a topic first hand. The study wraps up with a summary of what was learned over a period of time. An example of a study is the "Clothes Study". This study examines different types of clothes and how they are made. Children will have a question of the day such as "What is your favorite piece of clothing?" which will help them investigate the topic further. A study can last anywhere from 4-6 weeks since it is a comprehensive look at a topic. The duration also depends on the level of interest of the children.

The Neighborhood House is committed to teaching children about the community through exploration and hands-on field trips. Children visit the Millburn Fire House, Paper Mill Playhouse, Farmer's Market, etc. The children also play "bingo" with the seniors and Millburn High School Students at the Bauer Center. The bingo program is made possible through a grant from the United Way of Northern New Jersey. It brings three generations together and provides a real-life opportunity to work on letter and number recognition skills.

Another unique aspect of Neighborhood House is our garden. The garden enables students to learn about nature through hands-on exploration. NHNS has a dedicated garden enrichment teacher that works with the children throughout the year teaching them about where food comes from and the life cycle of a plant. It's easier to learn to love fruits and vegetables when you grow them yourself.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

In early childhood education, assessment is the process of gathering information about children in order to make decisions. At NHNS, ongoing assessment is essential, as it enables teachers to gather information about each child in order to plan instruction and ensure that every child is making progress. In the beginning of the year, we will use the parent completed Ages and Stages Questionnaires (i.e. ASQ-3) to screen children for developmental delays. Individual questionnaires reflecting a child's age will be sent home for completion by the parent. The data will then be analyzed and parents contacted only if there is an area of concern.

Children will be assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD on the Creative Curriculum 38 Objectives, as mentioned in the "About Our Program" section above. This program allows for authentic, ongoing, observation-based assessments. The data collected will guide parent/teacher conferences which will be held twice a year once in January and then again in the spring. You may request to speak with a teacher at any time. The door is always open.

SCHEDULE OPTIONS

NHNS offers flexible scheduling where a child can come morning, afternoon or full day. This option is available when a child turns 3 by October 1.

The Neighborhood House is a State accredited nursery school.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Morning Session	8:30 am – 12:00 pm
Afternoon Session	1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
All Day Session	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
2 ½ Year Old Session	1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

*Note: The afternoon session is a combined age program consisting primarily of 3 and 4 year olds.

Two-and-a-Half-Year-Old Program gives the children an opportunity to experience their growing independence and understanding of separation. Play is the most natural way for children to explore and learn about their environment. Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00–3:30 p.m. Your child must turn 2 ½ by either October 1st or January 1st in order to be eligible. Note: There must be a minimum of five children in order to run a separate class. Otherwise, children will be accepted on a case by case basis into the 3-4 afternoon combined age class. Children do not need to be toilet trained for this program but should be working towards being trained.

Three-Year Old Program is made up of familiar and predictable routines. In this safe, nurturing world, children feel confident to explore independently, to discover and learn through play. Teachers act as guides, extending the child's thinking, setting reasonable limits for the child's behavior, and helping him/her develop a sense of self-discipline. Throughout the year, we introduce preschool readiness skills such as colors, shapes, number and letter recognition and spatial relationships. We offer any combination of two to five-day morning, afternoon or full day programs. Your child must turn three by October 1st in order to be eligible. Children enrolled in this program must be toilet trained.

Four-Year Old Program emphasizes a more varied curriculum where teachers facilitate activities that develop the four-year old's prereading, math and writing readiness skills ---everything they need to prepare them for kindergarten. We offer any combination of two to five-day morning, afternoon or full day options. Your child must turn four by October 1st in order to be eligible. Children enrolled in this program must be toilet trained.

LUNCH PROGRAM

The lunch program is offered for full day children Monday through Friday from 11:55am – 1:00pm. Children attending the morning or afternoon sessions can add a lunch day to their regular schedule on a first come-first served basis for a fee of \$10.00 *per day*. Space is limited to 16 children per day. Lunch will be billed after the fact on an actual usage basis. Please note that it is important for afternoon children to be at the school by 11:55am promptly as arriving later interrupts the lunch period flow. Parents requiring the additional hour of time on a regular basis are encouraged to incorporate the lunch program into their child's schedule at the time of enrollment, in order to guarantee a space. Please let us

know as far in advance as possible which day(s) you will need, so that we can make every effort to accommodate your child.

Parents provide a bag lunch and we provide the supervision. Please note that due to safety concerns, our staff is not permitted to microwave your child's lunch, as this process may make the food too hot to be consumed. As our limited refrigeration space is reserved for school snacks and water, we are unable to place your child's lunch in our refrigerator. To prevent spoilage, you can keep your child's lunch warm by placing food in a small thermos or cold by inserting an ice pack into your child's lunch box. Please make every effort to include inside the lunch box all the utensils that your child will need to eat his/her lunch. Many of the children need help at lunchtime. Asking a staff member to find a spoon or fork in the kitchen makes it extremely difficult to properly supervise the lunch area.

Our best advice based on years of watching young children eat, is to follow the K.I.S. Rule: Keep It Simple. A sandwich cut into quarters, a small piece of fruit, some cut up vegetables and a drink are more than enough for even the most voracious eater. For some variety, you can try a mini-yogurt, a cup of macaroni and cheese or your child's favorite pasta. Turkey breast roll-ups seem to be popular too. Crackers are great if accompanied with dip, cheese or slices of turkey.

Please do not send in any food that contains nuts or that is processed in a plant that processes nuts. We have children with life threatening allergies.

Please do not send soda, candy, chocolate or gum to school. These will be removed from the lunch box and sent home with your child at the end of the day. We would prefer that snacks like chips and cookies be reserved for afternoon treats at home.

The preschool years are a time to develop good eating habits and when food patterns are set for life. With childhood obesity on the rise nationwide, help us start your children on the road to good dietary habits by presenting them with nutritious, healthy lunch box choices.

Once that lunch is packed, please be sure that your child's name is clearly marked on the outside of the lunch box or paper bag. We often get multiples of the most popular styles of lunch boxes.

LUNCH BUNCH (PIZZA DAY)

Lunch Bunch/Pizza Day is offered twice a month and weekly in December. Children may participate in Pizza Day only if it is their regularly scheduled day to attend school. In addition, children can participate even if they do not normally stay for the lunch program. Days will alternate so that everyone will have a chance to attend. Pizza, water and dessert are provided for each child. As this is a fundraiser for the school, participation in Pizza Day is purely voluntary! Money raised goes toward the cost of Pizza Day and other events at school such as the Mother's and Father's Day Breakfasts in the spring. Children who normally stay for lunch can still bring their own lunch from home, if they choose not to participate.

A Pizza Day flyer will be sent home at the beginning of the month listing all the dates. Simply, circle the dates that you wish your child to attend and then return the flyer to the bin in the main hallway marked "Pizza Day" or give it to your child's teacher.

The cost of Pizza Day is \$5 for full day students and \$10 for non-full day students.

Note: If a child normally stays for lunch and he/she decides **not** to participate in Pizza Day but rather bring their lunch from home, then there will be a regular lunch charge of \$10.

REST TIME

Children who stay all day and have not yet turned four will be required to formally rest on individual mats provided by the school. Rest time will begin once the child finishes eating. This will give the children an opportunity to rejuvenate themselves before for the afternoon session. They are not required to sleep (although some do), but all children are expected to rest quietly on their mats. Children who are four or older will have quiet time where they can look at books. Please note: It is a State of New Jersey licensing requirement that children rest for at least ½ hour if they are in school all day and have not yet turned four.

OPTIONAL CARE

The Optional Care program is offered as a convenience to our parents. It allows parents to send their child to school on a day he/she is not normally scheduled to attend within the hours of 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at a cost of \$15/hour. It is offered on a first

come-first served basis provided that a space is available. If you are interested in this program, please contact the Executive Director as soon as possible so that your child's name can be added to our class roster for the day. Note: If you have an unexpected emergency situation, please call the school before 10:00 am to see if any spaces are available due to absenteeism.

In terms of billing, Optional Care is billed at \$15.00 for all or part of each hour you use. For example, 2 hours would be billed at \$30.00; 3 ½ hours would be billed at \$52.50.

DROP - OFF POLICY

When bringing your child to school for the morning session, for a quick "drop and go", please pull your car up between the two signs outside the school on Taylor Street. Turn off your car engine, and take your child out of the car (on the curb side, please!). A staff member will be greeting at the front door and will escort your child into appropriate classroom. If you wish to escort your child into the building, and plan to stay only a few minutes, please park your car farther up the block and walk down to the school. If you think that you will be remaining inside the classroom for more than ten minutes, please park your car in the municipal parking lot diagonally across the street from the school. We need to keep traffic in front of the school moving and the spaces directly in front of the entrance gate free for parents who wish to just drop-off and go. Please be respectful of our neighbors by not blocking their driveways, or double parking.

Taylor Street can be busy in the morning. If you park across the street, please do not let your child cross the street alone. Please do not leave children unattended in your car, (with or without the engine running); even if the doors are locked. For safety sake, please bring your baby into the school with you. Please do not drive into the driveway or attempt to park in the back parking lot as this is reserved for staff only.

The front door will be locked at 9:00 am. If you arrive after that time, please park your car in one of the aforementioned places, and walk your child to the back door. You can knock on the door, and one of the staff members will let you in.

The front door will be unlocked at 1:00 pm for the start of the afternoon session. The staff is occupied prior to 1:00 pm reorganizing the classrooms after lunch and rest time, and preparing the children for dismissal. If you arrive early, you may

stay with your child on the playground (weather permitting) or on the porch, or remain in your car until the door is opened. **Please do not drop off your child early, or leave a child unattended in an empty classroom.**

PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION

The State requires that every child have a *Pick-Up Authorization Form* on file. This is your official way of letting us know that only the people whose names appear on the form are authorized to take your child from the Neighborhood House. Even if the only authorized people are you, the form still needs to be completed. Note: Current students will not be released to another Neighborhood House parent without written permission.

Please be sure that the phone numbers on your list are correct, and still in working order. If you change jobs, move, or change phone or cell phone numbers, please be sure to give us the new address and contact numbers where you can be reached. Also, please let your contacts know that you have listed them, and tell them that, in an emergency, or in your absence, they may be contacted and asked to pick up your child from the school. Be certain that they are willing to accept this responsibility before you list them! We have had several very surprised people in the past that were unaware that they had been designated for this responsibility.

If an authorized pick-up person arrives at the school, and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other behavior-alternating substance, the staff will notify the Executive Director immediately of the situation. The Executive Director, along with the staff members on site at the time of the incident, will then determine if the driver's condition poses an imminent safety threat to the child. The decision whether or not to release the child to that individual, or to call another individual from the *Pick-Up Authorization Form*, will rest with the Executive Director, based on what is in the best, and safest interests of the child at that time.

Please keep the information on the *Pick – Up Authorization Form* accurate. Your child's health and safety may depend on it.

DISMISSAL POLICY

1. Children will be lined up in the classrooms for dismissals.
2. Park your car and walk up to the front door. One staff member will be stationed at the door; the other staff members will be inside with the children. The outside staff member will see which parents are waiting at the door. She will then go and ask the staff to bring her the children whose parents are waiting. She will then walk them down the porch stairs and hand them over to their parents.
3. This process will continue until all of the children have been dismissed. If you plan on remaining around the front of the school to visit with friends, we ask that you please park further up the street, so that we can keep the spaces directly in front of the school for those parents who wish to pick up and go. Please do not double-park your vehicle anywhere on the street; it is extremely difficult to see the children between two large double parked vans/SUVs.
4. Please be reminded that once your child has been dismissed to you, the teachers will no longer be responsible for keeping an eye on them as they play and wander around the front of the school or the side yard.
5. While the dismissal process is going on, it is extremely important that the teachers remain focused on the children at all times until they have been handed over to their parents. If you need to speak with one of the teachers, we ask that you please wait until all of the children have been dismissed. You can wait for the teacher in the front yard, or on the porch, or you can ask the teacher to call you later in the day. Please do not be offended if they tell you that they cannot speak with you right now, even if it is “just for a minute”. If you take the teacher aside while she is trying to dismiss the children, this will only delay the process for all of the other waiting parents. Your full cooperation in this matter is of the utmost importance. We want the teachers to remain focused on the children at this critical time. Once the children are dismissed, they will be able to give you their undivided attention.

DISMISSAL / PICK-UP TIMES

Promptly at the following times:

Morning session	12:00 pm
Lunch program	1:00 pm
2 ½ Year Old Program	3:30 pm
Afternoon Session	3:30 pm

LATE PICK-UP FEE

Parents are expected to pick up their children promptly at dismissal time. Please be considerate of our staff; your lateness decreases their limited lunch break, and delays their afternoon activities and obligations. Accidents, inclement weather, construction, and the occasional personal emergency can cause unexpected delays. We know that there are circumstances that might prevent you from getting to the school in a timely fashion. ***If you find yourself in one of these situations, please call 973-376-0739 and press 9 to let us know.***

Please note, if you have not called us in advance and you or a caregiver is late picking up a child, then a late fee will be assessed at the rate of \$1.00 for every minute. This fee will be due in cash when the child is picked up.

Parents who are chronically late will be required to meet with the Executive Director to set up an alternative pick-up plan. Failure to resolve this situation may result in the removal of the child from the school.

SCHOOL CLOSING POLICY

Should there be inclement weather (snow) or other disastrous conditions (flooding), the Millburn Public School district office will notify the Executive Director by telephone between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m. ***If the Millburn Public Schools are closed, we will close automatically as well.*** The Executive Director will then send out an email to the entire school prior to 6:30 am. The Public School district will often call in school closings to local radio stations. You can check their website at www.millburn.org. The school phone (i.e., 973-376-0739) will also be updated with a message after the email is sent out.

If the Millburn Public Schools have a delayed opening of any kind, we will operate on a two-hour delay (i.e., opening at 10:30 am).

If it starts to snow heavily during the course of the school day, and the Public Schools decide to send the children home with an early dismissal, we will follow suit. Parents will be notified of the specific closing time. On days when inclement weather is predicted, if you will be away from home or your office, please keep your cell phone handy --- ***and turned on!*** --- in case we need to reach you with school closing instructions.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION/MEDICAL FORM

Every child must have a completed *Emergency Evacuation/Medical Form* on file. It is your responsibility to keep the information up to date. Please be sure that the name and phone number of your child's pediatrician is current.

In case of serious accident or medical emergency, our protocol is to:

1. Call 911
2. Notify the parents
3. Consult the child's pediatrician if parents are unavailable

It is our firm hope that the authorization granted on this state mandated form will never need to be used. For the safety of the children, however, sound medical practices call for such authorization to be on file. In emergency situations, where for some reason the parent of the child cannot be contacted immediately, this form may be extremely important. The authorization granted by this form will be used only when absolutely necessary, and only after every attempt has been made to first contact the parent.

It is your responsibility to notify us of any change in the emergency contact information on file at the school. We find that doctors and hospitals refuse to give any treatment, regardless of how minor, unless they have authorization from the parents. As you know, this form would ensure us that no time would be lost in giving necessary medical treatment. Remember, parents are always called first in an emergency. If parents or the pediatrician cannot be reached, then your child will be taken to the hospital indicated on your emergency form for prompt attention.

ABSENTEEISM

It is not unusual for young children to get sick from time to time, especially if this is their first experience in a group setting. If your child is ill, or needs to be absent from school on a particular day, please **phone the Neighborhood House at (973) 376 – 0739 and press 9** and then leave a brief message on our voice mail. If you are running late, and know that you will be arriving after 9:00 am, please give us a call as well. Please note that this is an informational line only and you will not receive a call back. We worry about all of the children. This will let the teachers know whether or not to wait for your child before beginning the day's specially planned activities. If a child is absent for more than three consecutive days, then the Executive Director will reach out to the family to see if they need anything. This will continue daily until a family member is reached. If no one can be located, then the Executive Director will call the designated emergency contacts. **Remember: If you arrive after 9:00am, please come to the back door.**

MAKE-UP SESSIONS

If your child misses a day of school, please do not ask for a make-up session, as unfortunately, we will be unable to accommodate your request. Our classes are usually fully enrolled, and adding an additional child to a different class can put us over our state-mandated number of children allowed.

We ask your cooperation in helping to enforce the “sick policy” detailed below. Let's work together to create and maintain a healthier environment for everyone.

In case of prolonged and/or chronic illness, parents should meet with the Executive Director to determine how the individual situation will be handled.

SICKNESS / ABSENCE POLICY

In order to keep all of our children healthy and to comply with the regulations of the State of New Jersey, Division of Youth and Family Services *Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers*, we will not admit a child who has any of the illnesses or symptoms listed below unless a written medical diagnosis indicates that the child poses no health threat either to himself/herself or those enrolled here at the NHNS:

1. Severe pain or discomfort

2. Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within the last 24 hours or bloody diarrhea
3. Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within the last 24 hours
4. Elevated temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over or axillary temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over in conjunction with behavior changes
5. Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
6. Sore throat, severe coughing or sneezing or difficult rapid breathing
7. Red eyes with discharge
8. Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
9. Infected, untreated skin
10. Skin rashes with fever or behavior changes
11. Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
12. Mouth sores with drooling
13. Swelling of joints, lymph nodes
14. Stiffness of joints or neck
15. Blood in urine
16. Excessive nasal discharge, where mucus is yellow/green

Once a child is symptom free, or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to NHNS.

EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

(*Reportable to Health Department, as required by N.J. A.C. 10:122-7.10(a))

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

<u>Respiratory Illnesses</u>	<u>Gastro-Intestinal Illnesses</u>	<u>Contact Illnesses</u>
Chicken Pox	Campylobacter*	Impetigo
German Measles*	Escherichia coli*	Lice
Hemophilus	Giardia Lamblia*	Scabies
Influenzae*	Hepatitis A*	Shingles
Measles*	Salmonella*	
Meningococcus*	Shigella*	
Mumps*		
Strep Throat		
Tuberculosis*		
Whooping Cough		

If a child manifests any of the illnesses or symptoms listed above during the school day, the child will be moved to the Executive Director's office, and the parent or designated contact person will be called and asked to pick-up the child from the school. Note: The above list is subject to change. See website for current information: www.nj.gov/health/cd.

REMEMBER:

1. FOLLOW THE 24 HOUR RULE: Wait until at least 24 hours after starting antibiotics and/or 24 hours after vomiting, diarrhea, or fever subsides before sending your child back to school.
2. Please notify us immediately in writing, or by telephone, if your child develops any of the communicable diseases listed, so that we can notify the parents and post a notice with information on what precautions are to be taken under the circumstances. A doctor's note is required for readmission.
3. If your child is NOT going to attend school due to illness or vacation, please leave a message on the voice mail at **(973) 376 -0739 and press 9**.

MEDICATION POLICY

The Neighborhood House Nursery School staff *is not* permitted to administer over-the counter medications of any kind. Please do not ask the teachers to give your child cough syrups, Tylenol, non-prescription antihistamines such as Benadryl, etc. If your child is feeling a little "under the weather", please keep him/her home from school (refer to *Sickness / Absence Policy*) until feeling better.

The Neighborhood House staff *is not* permitted to administer prescription medications of any kind. If your child is recovering from an illness, and your health care professional has decided that (s)he can return to school as long as (s)he continues to take an antibiotic, please arrange the medication schedule so that doses are given before leaving and after arriving back at home. The teachers will not be able to administer the morning or afternoon dose here at school.

If your child suffers from a life-threatening illness (i.e. Juvenile Diabetes, severe allergic reaction to food or insect bite, asthma, etc.), which requires medication, please consult with the Executive Director prior to enrollment. In *some cases*, medication may be administered in a medical emergency situation (e.g., Epi Pen). The Executive Director has the discretion to review each applicant's medical history, and to determine, on a case-by-case situation, whether or not the staff has the training and expertise required to deal with your child's special medical needs. Please note: The Neighborhood House does not have a nurse on staff. It is the parents' responsibility to provide the Neighborhood House with a complete medical diagnosis, signed by the child's physician, accompanied by detailed instructions regarding emergency medical procedures.

ALLERGY POLICY

It is the parents' responsibility to notify the Neighborhood House staff, prior to enrollment, of any food allergies that the child might have. We will review our snack procedures with the parents, and the parents are required to inform the staff of which snack foods the child can eat.

The Neighborhood House is a 100% "*nut and nut by-product free*" environment. All snacks served at the school are required to be *nut and nut by-product free*. All snacks and food brought into the school for school functions (birthday celebrations, school picnics, etc.) are required to meet the *nut and nut by-product free* criteria.

Reasonable accommodation will be made to meet the child's food allergy needs, however, in extreme cases; parents will be required to provide the nursery school with specially designated snacks for their own child. These will be kept sealed and labeled in a designated area of our kitchen, to avoid possible contact with other foods served at the school.

Children with severe food allergies who are admitted to the Neighborhood House are required to provide the nursery school with an emergency response kit that includes:

- Epi Pen or inhaler in original package, with prescription on the box indicating child's name.
- Detailed emergency response procedure, including recommended doses of medications prescribed, and list of emergency contact numbers for both pediatrician and parents.

- Photo of the child attached to the response plan.

In case of severe allergic reaction, the NHNS staff has been trained to administer an Epi Pen, and to call, in this order:

1. 911
2. the child's parents

All food allergies will be posted in both the kitchen area, and in each classroom, so that our teaching staff will be aware of your child's special needs.

It is your responsibility to keep us up-to-date on any changes (additions and/or deletions) to the allergy list. Please be specific regarding what exactly may or may not be consumed, and what substitutes are acceptable.

MEDICAL HOME INFORMATION

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Center for Medical Home Implementation (NCMHI) want parents to know that every child is entitled to have a Medical Home. Simply put, it is not a physical place but a way that care is coordinated for every child/youth in your family. It is an approach to providing comprehensive primary care that facilitates partnership between patients, physicians, and families. The hope is that it will help make the delivery of medical care more efficient and assist families to feel more supported in the process. We encourage families to discuss the concept of a "Medical Home" with their Primary Care Physicians. For further information please see the following:
http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/downloads/pdfs/positioning_FINAL_May24.pdf

SNACKS

The Neighborhood House will provide your child with a daily nutritional morning snack, usually around **10:30 am**. For the children staying all day, or attending our afternoon program, a snack is also provided around **2:00 pm**. Snacks are planned in accordance with USDA guidelines. The guidelines suggest that snacks provided for preschoolers include a ½ ounce of a grain such as saltines and a corresponding ½ cup of a fruit, vegetable or cheese.

At this age, young children may have strong likes and dislikes towards particular foods. Although we never force a child to eat,

we do encourage them to try new things. Please let us know if your child has a strong reaction to eating a certain food item.

Each week, we will ask parents to provide the “*Healthy Snack*”. On a rotating basis, parents will be asked to contribute a healthy snack for their child’s class. This is a great opportunity to discuss with your child various types of foods, and to decide together what type of healthy snack --- fruit, vegetables and dip, cheese and crackers, etc. --- (s)he would like to bring to school. Your child will feel special for providing this snack, and serving it to the other children. Your child’s Class Parent will coordinate the snack schedule.

FAMILY STYLE DINING POLICY

The Neighborhood House Nursery School encourages a supportive mealtime environment using family style dining. Food is placed in serving baskets during snack time and beverages are placed in self-help pitchers. Children serve themselves. Staff sit with the children and model appropriate table manners as well as conduct conversations with the children. Furthermore, the staff encourages but never forces children to try new foods such as asparagus from the garden. The staff will never use food as a reward or punishment.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Children love to celebrate their birthdays in school. Please follow these simple guidelines so that each child will have an opportunity to feel special on their day.

- Birthdays will be celebrated on each child’s birthday whenever possible.
- Children who have birthdays in the summer will have the chance to celebrate their half birthday in school or at a time that is convenient for both the family and the teacher.
- Please give your child’s teacher one week’s notice prior to your child’s birthday celebration to ensure that there are no conflicts with other previously scheduled events.
- Parents may wish to send in special party paper goods to make the celebration festive. This is purely voluntary!
- Goody-bags are up to individual parental discretion, but are really unnecessary. However, should you

decide to send them in, please keep candy to a minimum, and be mindful of trinkets with small pieces that could pose a choking hazard. *Absolutely no balloons permitted!*

- Parents are invited to come to school to share the celebration with their child. To minimize disruption to the classroom routine, please consult with your child's teacher as to the best time to arrive and if they are okay if siblings come.
- Because birthdays are celebrated during snack time, please be creative when sending in treats. There's no need for giant cupcakes before lunch (most children scrape all that gooey icing off). Instead, try sending something like carrot muffins or banana bread, or a gingerbread man for each child in the class. Depending on the season, fresh fruit kabobs or vegetables with dip might be a good choice. Remember the *nut and nut by-product free* rule when selecting treats. We will provide water.
- Birthday invitations will be distributed in school only if all children in your child's class for the day you are celebrating are invited. No exceptions will be made.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS AND SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

As a non-sectarian school, we celebrate all holidays in a secular manner. We invite you to share your own holiday celebrations with us through stories, songs, foods, special holiday costumes, and other customs.

There are many special school functions held throughout the year to which you will be invited. These are listed on the annual school calendar, with pertinent details provided through separate flyers. The individual flyers will specify if the event is for the entire family, only the children attending on a specific day, or for parents only. We will also provide specific information regarding cost, if any, for the event, and whether or not food will be provided by the school or by the parents.

Our Neighborhood House PTA sponsors many of our holiday parties. We invite you to become involved in the Parent's

Association and to take an active role in planning these special events for the children and their families.

Parents are encouraged to help the teachers prepare for our holiday celebrations by helping to bake cookies, make latkes, or scatter (chocolate) eggs for our egg hunt. Classroom volunteers are always welcome. Speak with your child's teacher if you are available to help out in any way.

TOILETING POLICY

The State of New Jersey Guidelines for Toilet Training explains that according to a recent study the average age for learning to use the potty reliably for bowel and bladder is 28 months. Although it is important to remember that each child is an individual, and develops at his/her own rate, you can generally expect a child to achieve daytime control sometime between two and three years of age, and nighttime control between three and four and a half years.

We strongly encourage the children to be toilet trained, or well on the way upon enrollment as it fosters a sense of independence and well-being.

In addition, the teachers will help by frequently reminding the child to use the toilet here at school. We place a great deal of emphasis on self-help skills during this time, teaching the children how to zipper, button and snap. You can help them through this process by dressing your child in clothing that is easily removed in a hurry: elastic waist pants, and skirts or dresses that lift up are good choices. Please avoid dressing your child in body suits that snap at the crotch, overalls with buckle straps and pants with belts, as these take a long time to undo; those extra few minutes might make a difference in a successful toileting experience.

The toileting policy at the Neighborhood House is as follows:

Two and a half year olds: Children do not need to be toilet trained for this program, however, *if your child is not trained, then please send them in a pull-up.* Also, please provide extra pull-ups and wipes in case your child has an accident while at school. We find that most children will remain clean and dry for the duration the class.

Three year olds: We expect the three year olds to be toilet trained upon entry into this program. If your child is still not trained, this is the time to begin potty training in earnest. Encourage your

child to use the toilet at home before coming to school, and to use the toilet here at school during class.

Four year olds: Four year olds must be toilet trained in order to be eligible for this program. In extreme cases (physical delays due to illness or disability), an exception may be made with prior approval of the Executive Director. If the child has an occasional accident, the teacher will help the child change clothing.

CLOTHING- PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS

Young children do not always recognize what is theirs, particularly if the clothing is new or hasn't been worn for a while due to a change in seasonal weather. Many jackets and raincoats look alike, even to us grown-ups! A label helps us make sure that the correct garment goes home on the right child. You can help your child begin to recognize his/her own clothing by playing dressing games ("Who has on a red shirt?"), and with simple statements such as, "Today you are wearing your blue and green jacket to school."

One of the goals of early childhood programs is for children to dress themselves with minimal help. Particularly if your child is potty training, dress your child in pants with elastic waistbands that can be pulled down quickly and easily. Snaps, belt buckles, zippers and overall buckles are very difficult for young children to manipulate, especially if they are in a hurry to get to the potty in time!

We request that all children have a complete change of LABELED clothes (including socks and underwear) for the first day of school in case of spills, messy work, or "accidents". They should be placed in a clearly labeled large *Ziploc* bag. If any of the clothing is worn home, please clean and return replacements. Remember to check periodically to make sure clothing still fits, or is appropriate for the changing seasons.

Dress your child in comfortable WASHABLE clothing. Although we try to be careful and smocks are worn for messy activities, accidents sometimes do happen, and clothing may get soiled. Some young children do not like the feel of a smock over their clothing. If an outfit has sentimental value, please save it for after school and special occasions. We want the children to feel free to explore and participate in all activities without fear of becoming "dirty" or ruining their special clothing. It is also a good idea, for safety reasons, to have the **children wear closed-toe, rubber**

soled shoes, or sneakers to school. Sandals, “flip-flops”, “jellies” and dress shoes are not conducive to safe playing and climbing.

We take the children out every day as long as there is no heavy downpour and it is not too cold. We even go outside to play in the snow if it is warm enough outside. Come winter, please be sure that your child owns a pair of boots, a snow jacket, warm hat and scarf, and a pair of mittens or gloves that can be worn for outdoor play.

In boot weather, we encourage you to send in an inexpensive pair of slippers or old sneakers that can be kept in your child’s cubby or in your child’s backpack for changing into while in the classroom. Please make sure all shoes are labeled. A silver Sharpie works wonderfully on black or dark soled shoes.

HOME LANGUAGE POLICY

Given the steady increase in the number of families and children whose home language is one other than English, as well as the number of languages spoken, Neighborhood House Nursery School is responsive to serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations to ensure a high-quality program for all children and families. At NHNS, we are about the individual child and then the larger group as a whole. We work closely with families to help children transition to school. We partner with the families having parents share key phrases in their home language that will allow us to communicate better with their child. We also provide culturally diverse pictures and books in the classroom.

REGISTRATION

CURRENTLY ENROLLED FAMILIES ARE GIVEN THE COURTESY OF PRIORITY IN THE REGISTRATION PROCESS. Registration begins in December for the upcoming fall term. Neighborhood House Nursery School families currently enrolled in the school receive registration materials first, and are requested to return them promptly to the school by the designated deadline. Alumni families with age eligible children who have expressed interest in the Neighborhood House will receive materials shortly thereafter. *In order to maintain priority status, current families and alumni registration applications must be returned by the designated deadline.*

Class placement is determined by the school, with every consideration given to the family’s request. If the request cannot

be met, an alternative placement will be made, and the child will be placed on a waiting list for the desired class.

All applications must be accompanied by a non-refundable \$50 registration fee. Once your application has been received and processed, your child will be placed in an appropriate class. Next, acceptance letters will be sent out by the end of January and families will be asked to sign a tuition contract and send in a *20% non-refundable deposit by early February*. This deposit will officially secure your child's spot for the upcoming school year.

There are no refunds for families that choose to attend an alternate program.

If a suitable placement cannot be made, the child will be placed on a waiting list. Parents will be sent a *Confirmation Letter* notifying them of their status and their place on the waiting list. At this point, parents will have the option to withdraw their application. Otherwise, the child will remain on the waiting list.

TUITION AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Tuition is payable according to the following schedule:

1. Payment in full by August 1 qualifies for a 5% Early Bird Discount. Note: The 5% discount applies to the total tuition minus the 20% non-refundable deposit.
2. Payment is made on a monthly basis from August 1st through May 1st.

Registration for the up-coming school year or for summer camp will not be accepted from families whose accounts are not current.

Students are enrolled for the full academic year. In order for the school to meet its financial obligations, families are requested to make prompt payment of tuition and fees. Payments not received by the 20th day after the due date are subject to a \$50.00 late fee. Families who fall 30 days behind will be asked to remove their child from the school until all tuition and late fees have been brought up to date.

Situations do occur which make it difficult or impossible to fulfill this obligation. In consideration of these serious circumstances, families should request a confidential meeting with the Executive Director to discuss what can be done under the existing circumstances. Special payment plans, and/or scholarships are

available for qualifying families. Scholarships are made possible through a grant from the United Way of Northern New Jersey. The Neighborhood Association of Millburn Township Board of Directors reviews all requests. Awards are made based on submission of certain requested financial documentation. Please obtain a Scholarship Request Application Form from the Executive Director if you are interested in applying.

FEES

Trip fees.....as announced per class.
Special programs.....as announced per class.

Participation in these events is purely voluntary. However, as they are scheduled to enhance your child’s educational experiences here at the NHNS, we hope your child will be able to take advantage of the special programs that are offered from time to time. You will find that the cost is nominal in most instances.

We take several walking trips to community points of interest throughout the year. These are made with prior notice and require written permission from the parents. Parents are always welcome to walk with us. We will let you know in advance if siblings are able to participate. Trips to Taylor Park are included in the blanket permission slip, which you have already signed. *Children in the 2 ½ year old class must be accompanied by an adult on each trip.*

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENT FROM SCHOOL

If a parent feels that a child’s school placement and/or program requires a change or adjustment, the school requests that the family speak to the Executive Director. If the situation cannot be rectified appropriately and the parent decides to withdraw the child from the school, the school must be notified in writing. The parent will then be obligated to pay tuition for the length of time the child has been enrolled plus one additional month. The \$60 registration fee and the 20% non-refundable deposit will not be returned.

If the child’s physician recommends the withdrawal, then written documentation from the physician is required and a tuition credit will be considered.

Our school has many resources available to the educational staff to help us design programs to meet the needs of our children. The school reserves the right to invite professional consultants to observe the school in an effort to fully meet the needs of the

students and the school. Additionally, if warranted, the educational staff and the Executive Director may request the family to arrange for an evaluation of the child through the Special Services Department of their local school district.

FAILURE TO SEPARATE

Most children, when transitioning from a home environment into a school setting require a brief transition period. This separation from parent or caregiver may take anywhere from several days to several weeks. During this time, the child begins to build trust with teachers and establish a rapport with the other children in the class. As children and parents work through this separation period, the time it takes for children to become actively engaged in the on-going classroom activities decreases, as their comfort level in the classroom increases.

If, after six weeks, we find that a child still has difficulty separating from a parent or caregiver, the child's teacher and the Executive Director will meet with the parents to determine if the child should remain in the school. Sometimes there are circumstances that hinder the child's ability to make a successful transition. Some reasons might include unreadiness to give up a nap time, immaturity (a child might be chronologically eligible to attend school, but not emotionally ready to do so), or parents' own anxieties pertaining to sending their child off to school at a young age.

Once the underlying cause of the separation difficulty is determined, staff and parents will decide if the situation can be remedied in a reasonable amount of time, or if it would be in the child's best interests to delay entry into preschool until a later time. Parents may be given the option to temporarily withdraw the child from the school for several months, in the hopes that the situation will resolve itself in mid-year.

If the parents decide to temporarily withdraw until January, they will be asked to continue to pay their monthly tuition fee in order to hold their space until re-entry into the school. If they do not wish to continue making their monthly tuition payments, they may totally withdraw from the school, forfeiting their current space. They can then reapply at a later date, and be readmitted if the space has not been filled and/or there are other spaces still available. Parents wishing to totally withdraw from the school will

be obligated to pay tuition for time used, plus a withdrawal fee equal to an additional month's tuition.

SPECIAL SERVICES REFERRAL

NNHS is about the individual child and then the larger group as a whole. If we feel that a child is struggling, then we do not wait for formal conferences to meet with parents. Instead, we gather detailed observational data and then request a meeting with the parents. We discuss what we are seeing in the classroom and what the parents are seeing at home. If it is determined that a formal evaluation by the Child Study Team of the student's district is warranted, then we will help parents navigate the process. The parents will need to write a letter to their district's special services department highlighting their child's strengths and indicating areas of concern. NHNS will guide parents through the process and help with the transition if their child is deemed to need special services.

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child or children in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons why we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPLUSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPLUSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness of payment.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPLUSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS TO PREVENT EXPLUSION

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The Executive Director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.

SCHEDULE OF EXPLUSION

- If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center.

- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.
- Note: If the staff and Executive Director agree that the child can remain at the center if he/she has a one on one "shadow" and behaves appropriately, then the cost of the shadow will be **paid by the parents**.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED

If a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

FINAL DECISION TO EXPEL

The final decision to expel a child from the Neighborhood House remains at the discretion of the Executive Director and the Neighborhood Association of Millburn Township Board of Directors.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement in school activities is always encouraged and welcome. All parents are invited to volunteer their time, their talents, and their social skills. You are welcome to come in to read to the children at circle time, or plan a cooking or art activity related to some area of the curriculum.

One great way to get involved is to volunteer to become a class representative (i.e., 4s, 3s, 3-4s, 2½s). Class Parent responsibilities include helping the teacher organize class parties, assisting the Parent's Association with special events and acting as a bridge between parents and the school. If you are interested in becoming a class representative, please speak with the PTA President or the Executive Director.

Each month, you will receive an email that indicates that the website has been updated with the "Classroom News" from your

child's teacher. This information can be located on the school website: *neighborhoodnursery.org* under the "Current Families" tab. This document will include themes for the month, songs, projects, and literature. In addition, a school calendar will be updated monthly and is also available on the website.

Furthermore, important announcements and sign-up sheets for up-coming events will be posted on the easel outside the school and distributed to the children. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of all school activities.

We also have a "Community Handbook" that is located on our website: *neighborhoodnursery.org* under the "Current Families" tab. This guide of local resources for families was made possible by the PTA.

Parent/Teacher conferences take place twice a year. The first conference will be in early January and the second conference will be later in the spring. Conferences are optional and can be done in person or by phone. Always feel free to call if you have any questions. The Executive Director is always available to address any of your concerns regarding your child's development, or issues pertaining to the staff or school policies.

Class lists will be distributed at Back-to-School Night to parents who have paid their PTA dues. These lists can be used to organize carpools, play dates, etc. Updates to will be emailed as needed.

The Neighborhood House Nursery School has a vibrant Parent's Association that meets on a monthly basis to help organize school functions, and discuss parenting, developmental and school issues. Fundraising projects help raise much needed funds to purchase equipment or sponsor special events for the children. Participation in fundraising activities is always voluntary, but we hope you will support the school in a way that is comfortable for you. The Parent's Association is only as successful as you, the parents, make it. Officers are elected yearly, and they need your help. You can get involved by volunteering to be a class representative, or helping with one of the many activities.

All Neighborhood House families are invited to participate in the numerous and varied family activities sponsored by both the staff and Parent's Association: The annual Meet and Greet Event, Fall Pizza Night, Back-to-School Night, holiday parties, Paper Mill Playhouse shows, and the spring social are some of the wonderful events you can look forward to during the year ahead. There is

always something interesting and exciting going on for your family to enjoy.

Early Childhood Education is a joint venture---parents and teachers working together for the benefit of the child. Help us educate your child. Get involved. Grab a piece of the “pie” --- become a Partner in Education.

COMMUNICATION/NOTIFICATION POLICY

NHNS will notify parents of upcoming events or important information using various methods. There will be a weekly communication board (i.e. easel) that indicates important items for the current week and what is coming up the following week. In addition, there is a calendar available on the school website (*neighborhoodhousenursery.org*) which can be accessed from a laptop or mobile phone. Finally, there will be school wide emails sent from the director and the PTA. Note: Communication about children will take place in person or via the phone but not in email unless it is logistical in nature.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Practice Statement

Neighborhood House Nursery School aims to ensure that our school, children, staff and families are not compromised on any form of social networking or related websites. However, we acknowledge that social media can play an important role in maintaining communication with families and the local community in today’s current climate. At this time, Neighborhood House will only use Facebook.

Procedures

A Neighborhood House Nursery School Facebook page (‘our page’) is being implemented as an additional means of communication between the school and our children’s families. The following conditions are in place to ensure the privacy, dignity and rights of the school, children, staff and families:

- All users (all people accessing our page) interacting with the Neighborhood House Nursery School Facebook page, by either liking or commenting on posts, must do so using a

Facebook account that clearly identifies them by their real name.

- Children's pictures may appear on our page only with parental authorized consent on file.
- Photos of children will not be uploaded onto our page if we do not have the parental authorized consent on file.
- While using our page, users are expected to ensure that they:
 - ❖ Respect the rights and confidentiality of others;
 - ❖ Do not impersonate or falsely represent another person;
 - ❖ Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others;
 - ❖ Do not make defamatory comments;
 - ❖ Do not use offensive or threatening language, or express personal animosity towards each other or members of the Neighborhood House Nursery School;
 - ❖ Do not post content that is hateful, threatening, inappropriate or incites violence against others;
 - ❖ Do not harm the reputation and good standing of Neighborhood House Nursery School or those within its community.
- Users who are deemed to be using our page inappropriately, particularly in the above-mentioned ways, will be blocked from the site by administrators.
- Administrators will be named on our page, and will consist of the school director and/or staff and select members of the PTA under the direct supervision of the director. These members may be changed as needed by the school director.
- Our page must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns; however, our page may be used to thank local businesses for their support of the school.

Breach of this Policy

Any concerns or suspicions over the breach of this policy should be brought to the immediate attention of the school director either via email, telephone or conversation in person, and not be addressed on the site. Such concerns or suspicions will be dealt with at the discretion of the school.

Persons Responsible

The director and/or staff and select PTA members under the direct supervision of the director shall act as Facebook administrators. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring correct and appropriate use of the social media site by its members and local community through their role as administrators.
- Updating information to communicate to families.

DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We believe that children between the ages of 2 ½ and 5 learn their social skills and develop emotional maturity through practice in the school setting. We ask, and expect children to “*use their words*” in managing a social situation. Hitting or any kind of physical assault from children is not acceptable. Whenever possible, a staff member will try to anticipate a potential problem, and re-direct the child’s behavior *before* a problem occurs. On occasions when children use physical force against each other, we remove the child from the group. This usually means asking the child to sit on a chair apart from the school group, but within view of a staff member. We ask the child to think about what (s)he has done, and we talk about other ways to handle the situation. We tell the child that (s)he may leave the chair when (s)he is ready to rejoin the group.

We believe that young children can be guided toward acceptable behavior through positive methods of control. The primary method used by our staff is the use of a series of questions, whereby the children are asked to think about their behavior, remember the rules of the school, and then adjust their behavior accordingly. Typical questions are: “How should you be sitting?”, “How do we move in the classroom?”, “Where should your feet/hands be?” The goal is to help the children learn and internalize the safety rules so that they will develop self-control.

At no time will any staff member hit, pinch or squeeze a child, or use any form of corporal punishment. Nor will any staff member tease, ridicule, or belittle a child. Children will not be disciplined for failing to eat or sleep, or for soiling themselves. Under no circumstances will children be deprived of snack or lunch as a punishment for misbehavior. A core part of our curriculum is understanding the ways children think and act, and treating them with dignity and respect. All children are recognized as individuals

and an attempt is made to always meet their individual learning needs.

We hope our children will learn to accept responsibility for themselves as an individual, and as members of a group (their class). We teach the children to respect themselves, each other, and our school. Only when we work together will we work well.

GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

We can use positive discipline by planning ahead:

- Anticipate and eliminate potential problems.
- Have a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults.
- Have a well-planned daily schedule.
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor.
- Include some group decision-making.
- Provide time and space for each child to be alone.
- Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group.
- Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences.
- Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about *our* room, *our* toys.

We can use positive discipline by intervening when necessary:

- Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior.
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.
- Use time out – by removing a child for a few minutes from the area of activity so that he/she may gain self control. (One minute for each year of the child's age is a good rule of thumb).
- Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict.

- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings.
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don't say "bad boy" or "bad girl." Instead you might say "That is not allowed here."

We can use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- Catch the child being good. Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is going.
- Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior.
- Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.
- Overlook small annoyances, and deliberately ignore provocations.
- Give hugs and caring to every child every day.
- Appreciate the child's point of view.

Positive discipline takes time, patience, repetition, and the willingness to change the way we deal with children. But it's worth it, because positive discipline works.