





# FAMILY GUIDE

2022-23 School Year

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# WELCOME

Dear Family,

Village Early Childhood Center, previously known as Norwood PreSchool, opened its doors in 2012. We have watched the program grow and flourish due to a strong collaboration with the families, teachers, and children in the program. This past June, we celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It has been such a wonderful experience knowing we have had a positive impact on the lives of the children and families who have walked through our doors over the past 10 years.

Our goal is to foster the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of each child—to prepare them not only for Kindergarten, but for all of life’s future endeavors. We strive to offer meaningful experiences through developmentally appropriate activities and interactions for children of all abilities.

Our classrooms focus on the *process* of learning versus the *product* of accomplishments. We want to encourage the natural curiosity and love of learning with which children are born. The quote, “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand” is at the core of early childhood education. Through hands-on activities and developmentally appropriate practices, children gain knowledge, but most importantly, they gain confidence. They acquire the ability to utilize varied materials, take turns, think independently, problem solve, and make choices.

Our program believes in a strong partnership between family and school. The heart of our preschool is centered around family engagement. Family involvement is a key component in a child’s success. The old adage of “it takes a village to raise a child” holds true. We believe in order for children to be successful, we as educators must work collaboratively with the families for which we provide care. Parents/guardians are a child’s first teachers and they set forth a child’s foundation in learning. We hope to work collaboratively with you and our community to provide memorable experiences. We thank you for choosing Village Early Childhood Center Education Program for your child.

Respectfully,  
Christina Guirland  
Owner/Director

Warm Regards,  
Kaity Anecchini  
Director Designee

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## ABOUT US

### *Philosophy*

In accordance with NAEYC guidelines and practices, Village Early Childhood Center believes children learn through productive play and positive interactions within their environment. By having planned activities and purposeful learning materials, children's development is enhanced. We incorporate meaningful experiences for the children and allow for learning to occur in "their world." Village Early Childhood Center implements developmentally appropriate practices to ensure that a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment is established, so that the children can develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. It is our goal to foster the children into becoming independent learners and to instill a lifelong love for learning in their hearts.

Our program supports the relationship between children, their families, and our staff members. It is designed to provide children with meaningful experiences that encourage growth in all areas of development by involving them in an environment in which they can:

- Add to their knowledge and to their physical, social, and emotional development by observing and interacting with peers, adults, and materials
- Expand and develop their literacy and communication skills
- Increase their knowledge and ability to become involved in and make sense of the world by doing, interacting, exploring and experiencing
- Increase their skills in problem solving, negotiations, social interactions and independence

Our goals are to help facilitate the development of critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and self-confident and independent children who will grow up to be caring, happy, and productive citizens.

### *Mission*

The mission of Village Early Childhood Center is to educate students socially and academically by building collaborative relationships with our students, families, and the community. We wish to empower our children with the tools they need to successfully meet the challenges of life and make positive contributions to their world.

### *Definition of Family*

In this family guide we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

### *Address and Contact Information*

Our Address is: 155 Parkway, Harrington Park, NJ 07640

School Entrance Location: 150 Harriot Avenue

The Telephone Number is: (201) 767-9909

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The Fax number is: (201) 767-9919  
Administration Email is: [DiscoverNPS@gmail.com](mailto:DiscoverNPS@gmail.com)  
Teacher Email is: [TeachKidsNPS@gmail.com](mailto:TeachKidsNPS@gmail.com)

### ***Hours of Operation***

Child care services are provided from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday.  
A late fee will be charged after contracted hours and/or 6:30 PM.

### ***Calendar***

A calendar for the academic year is developed and provided to the families of children enrolled at Village Early Childhood Center. The calendar notates school recesses, early dismissals, and family events. *\*The calendar is subject to change. Parents will be notified of changes.*

### ***Admission & Enrollment***

All admission and enrollment forms, including the universal health form and immunization record, must be completed and first month's tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$100 per child is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

A one-month, non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child enrolled. This deposit will be held without interest and will be applied toward the child's last month of attendance during the enrolled school year. In most instances, it is applied to June. For example, if you register for September 2022, the tuition deposit will be applied to June 2023.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

### ***Enrollment Application***

To enroll your child at Village Early Childhood Center, a parent or guardian must provide the completed forms located in the application packet. Your child also must have an updated immunization record and a completed universal health form. Enrollment is not complete until all the necessary paper work is finished. Your child cannot begin school until all paperwork is received.

### ***Termination of Enrollment***

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Students who are absent three consecutive weeks or more during the school year will have their enrollment terminated unless tuition fees are received. Village Early Childhood Center cannot guarantee there will be a spot for your child upon return. Should this occur, you will have to re-enroll your child with a non-refundable \$100 registration fee. He/she will be accepted based on availability of space.

### ***Inclusion***

Village Early Childhood Center believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, we encourage that services, including, but not limited to speech, play therapy, and/or occupational therapy be provided here in the least restrictive environment.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

At Village Early Childhood Center equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/guardian or provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### ***Family Activities***

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents/guardians and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

### ***Confidentiality***

All employees are required to sign a confidentiality agreement statement while employed at Village Early Childhood Center. Employees shall, to the best of their ability, ensure confidentiality and privacy in matters regarding, but not limited to: history, records, and discussions. Disclosure can be made only under specified conditions or for reasons related to law enforcement or as required by law. The removal of any record is prohibited. Staff members are disallowed from discussing any information regarding children in Village Early Childhood Center with anyone unless written consent from a parent/legal guardian is given.

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Village Early Childhood Center shall follow the guidelines for protected health information as defined by HIPAA (1996).

Official written records for each child are kept in locked files and released only to individuals working with the child, as described above, or those for whom parents/guardians sign a written release.

### ***Strengthening Families Protective Factors Survey***

This measurement assesses the perceived presence of five protective factors in caregivers of children.

The ***Protective Factors Survey (PFS)*** is a 20-item pencil and paper survey that takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The instrument is divided into two sections, the first is completed by program staff and the second is completed by the program participant. The participant portion of the survey contains a set of questions for capturing demographic information followed by the protective factors section—the 20 core items of the ***PFS***. In the demographic section, participants are asked to provide details about their family composition, income, and involvement in services. In the protective factors section, participants respond to a series of statements about their family, using a seven-point frequency or agreement scale. The following protective factors are covered in the survey: Family Functioning/ Resiliency (5 items), Social Support (3 items), Concrete Support (3 items) Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development (5 items), Nurturing and Attachment (4 items).

The survey is elective and anonymous. It is to be completed by newly enrolled families at time of enrollment.

### ***Parent Surveys***

Village Early Childhood Center will occasionally distribute surveys to all parents/guardians. These surveys are just one way you can tell us how we are doing. We invite your candid feedback and we will use it to help us get better at what we do. We do want you to feel free, however, to share your feedback with us at any time.

### ***Staff Qualifications***

Our teachers and caregivers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

All staff members participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

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We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by VECC.

### *Child to Staff Ratios*

Children are supervised at all times.

<b>Age</b>	<b>State Mandated Child to Staff</b>
≤ 17 months	<u>4 to 1</u>
18 months to 29 mon.	<u>6 to 1</u>
2.5 to 4 year-olds	<u>10 to 1</u>
4 to 5 year-olds	<u>12 to 1</u>

### *Communication & Family Partnership*

Communication concerning your child’s growth and progress is important. We encourage you to develop a relationship with your child’s teacher so that all concerns can be addressed. We strive to meet all your child’s physical, emotional, cognitive, and developmental needs. By having a sound family-teacher relationship, we are giving the children a strong foundation for success.

- ★ Please notify us of any changes in address, phone numbers, and pick-up authorization.
- ★ Keep us informed of any new medical issues and also, please alert your child’s teacher of any changes at home, in your child’s behavior, or any other information that you believe is pertinent.

**Tadpoles Communication Platform:** Please see “Tadpoles” section below.

**Bulletin Boards.** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, reminders, event invitations, and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, read a story, or share an area of expertise. Signing in at the office is required for the safety and protection of our children.

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**Family Night.** These nights include snacks, drinks, and fun-filled, age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child’s learning experience and connect with other families.

**Parent Workshops:** Throughout the year, parent workshops will be held at the school. A list of possible discussion topics are located at the back of the handbook.

### *Tadpoles Family Communication Platform*

Tadpoles is our communication platform for family/ teacher communication and daily student information.

#### How to access Tadpoles:

1. Download “Tadpoles Parent” from your app store
2. Create a username and password

*\*\* If you have an existing Gmail account, sign in using that email and password \*\**

#### How parents/guardians and families use Tadpoles:

- **Every morning before you drop off, click your child’s profile, click “drop off notes,” then click “health screening.” You MUST fill out the health form every morning before dropping off your child.**
- You may also send “Drop Off Notes” prior to your child being checked in for direct contact with the teacher

Information logged in Tadpoles is class specific but may include:

- Attendance
- Meals (Infants & Sprouts)
- Diaper changes (if applicable)
- Nap times (if applicable)
- If any of your child’s supplies (i.e. diapers, pullups, wipes, extra clothes) are running low

Things to note about Tadpoles:

- Daily sheets will be sent home when your child is checked out for the day (at pick up).
- “Drop off notes” cannot be answered immediately through the app. A response, if necessary, will show as a “note” on your child’s daily sheet. If your note requires immediate attention or response, please contact the office via phone or email.
- Newsletters, calendars, and class-wide emails or messages will be sent out through the Tadpoles email feature.
- The teachers will take photos and videos throughout the week but may not post the day they were taken. Their main focus throughout the day will be engaging and interacting with the children in their care.

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### *Home Language Policy*

We make every effort to communicate with children and families whose primary language is not English. Parents/guardians are asked to share words in their home language with their child's teacher to help make their child feel more comfortable in the classroom. Teachers will attempt to label some of the classroom materials in the home language of the students. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to share books or other materials in their home language with the class. Non-English speaking parents/guardians are encouraged to bring with them someone who can help interpret and translate questions, concerns, and documents.

### *Open Door Policy*

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors are kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

### *Publicity*

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

## **CURRICULA & LEARNING**

### *Learning Environment*

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

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## *Curricula & Assessment*

Village Early Childhood Center implements the Creative Curriculum®, a research and theory based educational tool that takes into account the whole child. It focuses on the four areas of child development. At the core of the Creative Curriculum® lies the belief that all children can learn and benefit from developmentally appropriate practice. By providing meaningful experiences and productive play, we are stimulating a child's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language/literacy development. Our teachers will be facilitating activities that create opportunities for your children to learn at their own rate and to develop their language skills, literacy skills, math skills, and science skills. The teachers will provide your children with a wide range of opportunities and experiences that engage the whole child and encourage them to develop a life-long love for learning. In alignment with the Creative Curriculum, Village Early Childhood Center uses Child Assessment Portfolios to track the children's progress. This assessment aligns with the objectives and preschool standards or birth to three standards. The teachers gather information about the child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for your child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

## *Developmental Screening*

To coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor your child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Within 30 days of enrollment/re-enrollment, we ask parents/guardians to complete the Ages & Stages questionnaire(ASQ), which provides reliable, accurate developmental and social emotional screening for children between birth and age 6. Drawing on parents/guardians' expert knowledge, the ASQ has been specifically designed to pinpoint developmental progress and catch delays in young children—paving the way for meaningful next steps in learning, intervention, or monitoring. Information gained through screenings and assessment will be shared by the appropriate center staff, typically the Director or lead teacher, with family members in a timely manner so that informed decisions can be made by family about appropriate programming, guidance, and support, as well as assistive services and referrals. The information will be shared with families in a positive, caring manner with the overall goal of improving the education, care, school success, and quality of life for the child. The teachers will communicate with families about their child's assessment while remaining sensitive to the family's values, culture, identity, and home language.

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## *Referral Policy*

Classroom teachers conduct observations of development and progress using anecdotal notes and portfolios. Observation will be conducted over a period of time. The classroom teacher will use the approved screening tool (ASQ) as completed by the parents/guardians coupled with the anecdotal notes and portfolios to complete a report of the child's progress. A copy of this report will be shared with the child's family and a copy will be placed in the child's records. If needed, referrals to community resources will be given to the family for any identified or needed services. The Director will document any referrals to outside services such as, but not limited to, the Child Study Team or Early Intervention. The Director will follow up with the family within 3 weeks to ensure they have been able to access the community resources. In the interim, the classroom teacher will continue to monitor any child with potential needs or learning difficulties. The teachers will maintain open communication with the parents/guardians and will update on the child's progress.

## *Outdoor Play*

Weather permitting, we conduct 45 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood two times a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

## *Transitions*

Your child's transition into child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. In order to help separation anxiety, we encourage parents/guardians to follow the "one hug, one kiss, one goodbye" strategy.

### *Transition from home to center*

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time, please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

### *Transition between learning programs*

Children are transitioned to the next class based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability.

## *Electronic Media Policy*

Village Early Childhood Center provides an activity-focused early learning environment. We believe children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation, and exploration. Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use, but from time-to-time, we may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All electronic media is screened prior to use and consists of non-

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violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Village Early Childhood Center follows the recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which has found that too much television viewing has been linked to poor performance in school, overweight children, and the establishment of poor dietary habits. As such, children at Village Early Childhood Center under age two will not have access to television viewing, including, but not limited to: watching videos or DVDs, playing with video games, and all other sources of electronic media.

Electronic media may be offered only as a free choice used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 60 minutes per week & no more than 30 minutes at a time per child (2 years and older).

Computer use is limited to 15 minute increments per child, except for school-age children who are completing homework, schoolwork, or supervised enrichment activities.

For children age two and older who are in care less than four hours per day, television screen time is limited 30 minutes per week.

\*\* Policy derived from: *Shaping NJ, The State Partnership for Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention* [www.shapingnj.gov](http://www.shapingnj.gov)

### ***Social Media Policy***

This social media policy applies to parents/guardians, volunteers, and visitors at Village Early Childhood Center. Staff's social media policy can be found in the Staff Handbook.

This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following technologies: social networking sites (i.e Facebook, SnapChat), blogs, discussion forums, collaborative online spaces, media sharing services (i.e. You Tube), micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter), and classroom sharing sites (i.e. Tadpoles).

*As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. We therefore require that:*

- No photographs taken within the preschool setting or at preschool special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. Parents/guardians are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken by staff for use on the Village Early Childhood Center website and in other advertising material if parental permission is given).
- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding the preschool children, staff, or preschool board business (except appropriate use for marketing and fundraising events) that could be construed to have any impact on the preschool's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or parent associated with the preschool.

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- Any comment deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to the Director and any action taken will be at their discretion.

*General guidelines for using social media:*

- Personal security settings should be managed to ensure that information is only available to those with whom you choose to share information.
- Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure and as such, if you do not wish the information to be made public, refrain from sending it through social media.

Note: Staff are prohibited from using personal phones, personal email, and personal social media to communicate with parents/guardians. All parental communication is to be done through use of school designated teacher email and phone. All communication is monitored by the Director.

### *Multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it. Our holiday celebration encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

### *Celebrations*

Everyone loves to celebrate and we are no exception! Please coordinate with your child's teacher about bringing in a special treat. As a reminder, all celebration items must be store bought and have ingredients listed. Regulations do not allow the children to eat food or desserts that have been prepared at home. *Village Early Childhood Center* strives to be a nut-free facility. We ask that you be allergy conscientious when sending in treats and ensure they are made in a nut-free facility.

### *Rest Time*

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs on firm mattresses. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times. Blankets and bumper pads are prohibited for children under the age of 12 months. Swaddling and swaddle-style blankets are disallowed.

All children under the age of five are given the opportunity to nap or rest each day. We will provide your child with a plastic mat. An alternate activity will be provided for children who have rested or slept thirty-minutes and do not appear to need any additional sleep or rest.

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- ★ For infants sleeping in cribs, please send a labeled crib sheet. For children sleeping on mats, please provide a small nap mat with attached pillow and blanket.
  - ★ All sleep/rest items will be sent home at the end of your child's school week to be washed and returned.



- ★ Sample Sleep Mat

### ***Toilet Training***

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a caregiver/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. We will assist in toilet training practices and bathroom hygiene. Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. Positive reinforcements and consistency must be continued at home. During the toilet training process, we ask that your child wear pull-ups (ones with tabs) instead of a diaper. Please keep in mind that the activity level here at the center can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the toilet, more so than at your home. It is required that parents/guardians provide the pull-ups and an extra change of clothing. During toilet training your child needs to be dressed in "user friendly" clothing as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with an elastic waist.

### **Bathroom Procedures**

- Children are to be assisted in the bathroom (wiping, ensuring cleanliness)
- Hands of children and staff are to be washed after assisting children in using the bathroom facility and/or after a diaper change

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## GUIDANCE

### *General Procedure*

Village Early Childhood Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all children have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving, help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people and property, and to begin to understand the results of their actions.

### **Discipline Policy**

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. Village Early Childhood Center believes discipline means to teach. To be well disciplined is to have learned how to live with reasonable rules the school has set for its students. We use positive disciplinary practices to provide guidance to our children. Positive discipline is the process used to teach children how to behave appropriately and manage their own behavior. Positive discipline respects the rights of the child, the group, and the teacher. The teacher facilitates the children's development of respect for self and others and encourages the children to take responsibility for their own actions. Village Early Childhood Center uses positive guidance and redirection as behavior management practices. The teachers encourage the children to make "good choices." The positive discipline methods implemented will be based on the age and developmental needs of the individual child. Teachers will guide children in developing impulse control and empathy within their relationships with peers and adults. Through the use of positive discipline, children are taught how to more effectively and appropriately deal with situations and disappointments. If a child is uncooperative, the teacher will remove them from the area of conflict. The teacher will explain why the behavior is unacceptable and redirect the child to a new activity.

Positive reinforcement is a key component in encouraging positive behaviors.

- ★ **Prevention is Better than Intervention:** Positive teaching techniques produce children who are well-mannered, have self-control, and are pleasant to be around.

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- ★ Children Repeat Behavior that is Reinforced: Good teachers reinforce children's appropriate behavior that we want the child to continue, rather than their inappropriate behavior.
  - ★ Children Do What They Are Taught to Do: Children are imitators; they imitate adults' actions and attitudes. Good teachers make sure they model appropriate actions and attitudes for the children.

### *Challenging Behavior*

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Village Early Childhood Center has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance policy for bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director.

### *Physical Restraint*

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

### *Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families*

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents/guardians as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- There is undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

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## ***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 we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) to prevent an expulsion from our center. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from our center.

### **CAUSES FOR IMMEDIATE EXPULSION**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to themselves or others
- Parent/guardian threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Parent/guardian exhibits verbal abuse to staff
- Any potentially dangerous behavior by a child or parent/guardian will result in immediate expulsion

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN'S ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms, including child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Verbal or physical abuse to staff

### **CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION**

- Failure for child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time (Approximately 4 to 6 weeks)
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children

*The child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child and/or family member's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time, decided by the Director, that will allow for the parent/guardian to work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.*

### **SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION**

- The parent/guardian will be informed verbally and in writing about the child and/or parent/guardian's behavior warranting an expulsion.
- 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 family member to return to the center.

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- The Director will provide the parent/guardian with an adequate time period to find alternate childcare (approximately one to two-week notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety).
  - Failure of the child and/or parent/guardian to satisfy the terms of the remedial plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

### **A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED**

If a child's parent/guardian(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 childcare arrangements unless doing so places risk to other children's welfare or safety.

### **PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION**

- Staff will:
    - Try to redirect child from negative behavior
    - Reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities, and supervision
    - always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
    - praise appropriate behaviors
    - consistently apply consequences for rules
    - document and maintain in confidentiality child's disruptive behavior
  - Child will:
    - Be given verbal warnings
    - Be given time to regain control
- *The Director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.*
- *The parent/guardian will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.*
- *If applicable, recommendations of Early Intervention Services will be given.*

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- *If applicable, recommendations of evaluation by local school district Child Study Team will be given.*

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### ***Payment***

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control, including closure due to Covid-19. Tuition agreements are to be signed each year and returned to the office with a non-refundable \$100 registration fee per child and a one-month non-refundable tuition deposit. This deposit will be held without interest and will be applied toward the child's last month of attendance during the enrolled school year. In most instances, it will be applied to June. For example, if you register for September 2022, the tuition deposit will be applied to June 2023.

All fees and payments are non-refundable. Please refer to the tuition agreement for details. If date of tuition payment falls on the weekend or during school closure, please submit payment prior. Switching or making up missed days is not permitted. However, if your child needs to attend school on a day that he/she is not scheduled for, the day can be added if there is classroom availability. Please see below for Tuition Payment Schedule.

### **Tuition Payment Schedule**

August 1<sup>st</sup> (September tuition)  
September 25<sup>th</sup> (October Tuition)  
October 25<sup>th</sup> (November Tuition)  
November 25<sup>th</sup> (December Tuition)  
December 25<sup>th</sup> (January Tuition)  
January 25<sup>th</sup> (February Tuition)  
February 25<sup>th</sup> (March Tuition)  
March 25<sup>th</sup> (April Tuition)  
April 25<sup>th</sup> (May Tuition)  
May 25<sup>th</sup> (June Tuition) Tuition Deposit typically applied

### ***Late Payment Charges***

Late payments can pose serious problems for our program. Therefore, we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. If tuition payment is not received seven days after it is due, a \$10 per day late fee will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that the late payment was not received. If your account has not been paid in full within 15 business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

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If payment is more than 60 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

### *Returned Checks*

All returned checks will be charged a fee of \$50. Two or more returned checks will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

### *Late Pick-up Fees*

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence.

#### *Extended-half Day students:*

If your child is not picked up from school at their designated pick-up time, a late fee of \$15 per hour will be applied until your child is picked up.

#### *For Full Day Students*

If a child is not picked up from school by 6:30 P.M. beginning at 6:35 P.M., a late fee of \$20 per child per 15 minutes is charged.

Late fees will be due upon arrival.

### *Special Activity Fees*

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity, or trip.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### *Absenteeism Policy*

Regular attendance in the program is very important for children to become comfortable with a regular and consistent schedule. If your child is going to be absent or arrive after their scheduled time, please alert the school. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. **Please mark your child absent by 8:00 am on the Tadpoles app if they will not be attending their scheduled day.**

If the school is not informed of your child’s absence, a phone call home will be made. If a child is absent for three or more consecutive days, Village Early Childhood Center will make every effort to contact the family.

In case of a communicable disease, it is extremely important that parents/guardians notify the Director immediately so that proper notification can be given to all families participating in the program.

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Additionally, we request that the office is notified in the instance children and/or family members are exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19.

### *Vacation*

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days. However, during the months of July and August, tuition is pro-rated based on the weeks attending.

### *Termination of Enrollment*

Students who are absent three consecutive weeks or more during the school year will have their enrollment terminated if tuition fees are not paid. Village Early Childhood Center cannot guarantee there will be a spot for your child upon return. Should this occur, you will have to re-enroll your child with a non-refundable \$100 registration fee. They will be accepted based on availability of classroom space.

### *Withdrawal*

When a parent/guardian chooses to terminate childcare for any reason, they will be required to submit in writing and provide a minimum of a 30-day notice for termination of services. Tuition will not be pro-rated if a parent/guardian chooses to terminate childcare services mid-month.

### *Change in Schedule Fee*

Parents/guardians who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at Village Early Childhood Center must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Monthly schedule changes are subject to a \$50 processing fee. The Director will notify the parents/guardians in writing if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be considered to be final until a new tuition agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires an additional deposit and/or registration fee, the change will also be contingent upon payment of these monies. If the requested schedule is not available, parents/guardians may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available.

### *Transfer of Records*

When transitioning to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

### *Closing Due to Extreme Weather*

Due to inclement weather, Village Early Childhood Center may be closed or have a delayed opening. A recorded message will be left on the answering machine by 5:30 A.M. Please call the school at (201) 767-9909 and listen to the message. An email alert will be sent via the Tadpoles App. If inclement weather arises during school hours, we will contact you

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immediately upon the decision to close and ask that you make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### *General Procedure*

Daily attendance is very important. Please make every effort to have your child in school on time every day so that they can get the full benefit of this learning experience.

Siblings/babysitters picking up must be of legal age.

#### **Anticipated Drop-off and Pick-up procedures:**

**At this time, parents/guardians & caregivers will be welcome into the facility for dismissal ONLY.** Parents/guardians and caregivers will be required to self-screen for temperature and Covid-19 questions prior to entering the facility. Anyone exhibiting fever or symptoms consistent with Covid-19 will not be permitted to enter the facility. Additionally, we ask that parents/guardians and caregivers limit the time they are in the facility. Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians/ Since staff are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours or dismissal. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

### **Drop-Off Procedures**

- **Infants, Sprouts, and Toddlers will use the 155 Parkway Entrance (Office Entrance) and enter directly into their classroom.** (a letter will be mailed with your child's teacher, classroom, and supply list).
- **Tykes and Pre-K 3 & 4 will use the main entrance door located at 150 Harriot Ave (Church Parking Lot Entrance)** A staff member will greet you at the door and bring your child to their designated classroom.
- Parents/guardians with children in Infants/Sprouts/Toddlers AND Tykes/PreK classes who would use different drop-off locations are to use the **155 Parkway Entrance location (Office Entrance)**. **Please bring your younger child to their designated egress door and bring your older child to the TODDLER classroom (last door).**

### **Dismissal Procedures**

- Please self-screen prior to entering the facility. Do not enter if you do not feel well or if you answer "yes" to any of the Covid-19 screening questions.
- For dismissal, parents/guardians are welcome to pick-up their children from their classroom.
- **Infants/Sprouts/Toddlers parents/guardians** may use egress door for pick-up unless their child has a sibling in the Tykes, Pre-K3 and/or Pre-K4 classes. In that instance, they may pick-up from the classroom hallway door.

**\*Procedures are subject to change; parents/guardians will be informed in writing.**

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### *Covid-19 Symptom Screening*

Daily Tadpoles health screening is **required** to be submitted BEFORE your child enters the building each morning. Please monitor your children for signs of illness every day, as you are the front line for assessing illness in your children. Children who are sick **should not** attend school. ***If your child is absent on any given day, please promptly inform VECC via email or Tadpoles note of the reason of your child's absence.***

All VECC staff and visitors will continue to self-screen upon entering the building.

### *Cell Phone Usage*

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows for quick family/teacher exchanges and morning greetings. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you not use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

### *Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up*

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent/guardian.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### *Right to Refuse Child Release*

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s)/guardian(s) appears physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk or harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

- The child may not be released to such an impaired individual

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- Staff members attempt to contact another parent/guardian or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s)/guardian(s)
  - If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, the Director or staff member shall call Department of Children & Families 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

### *What to Bring*

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, diapers/wipes/creams, 2 fitted crib sheets, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- **Sprouts:** enough cups for a day's use (if applicable), at least two changes of clothes per day, and a nap mat.
- **Toddlers/Tykes:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program, tabbed pull-ups/diapers and wipes if needed, and a nap mat.
- **Pre-K 3/Pre-K 4:** at least 2 change of clothes and a nap mat.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

### *Cubbies/ Communication Station*

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby" and slot in the communication station. Cubbies and slots are labeled with your child's name.

### *Lost & Found*

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-Found Box located at the front of the school. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### *Toys from Home*

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

## NUTRITION

### *Foods Brought from Home*

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package with a visible ingredient label (nut-free).

- Foods should be labeled with the child’s name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child’s family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children i.e. during a classroom party.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

<b>Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.</b>	
Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips (crackers) Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Whole Wheat Macaroni & Tuna Salad Apples Carrots Milk

### *Food Prepared for or at the Center*

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and New Jersey requirements for food service.

### *Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions*

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy must have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. Children requiring life-saving medication must have the medication as listed on the action plan at school at all times.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying staff of religious dietary restrictions upon the child's enrollment. We will post dietary and allergy needs in the office, the food preparation area, and the child’s designated classroom.

Food allergies and/or dietary restrictions will be shared with the kitchen staff.

### *Meal Time*

At meal time the table is set and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Everyone sits family style. Children are encouraged to serve

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themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. **Family style meals have been temporarily disallowed due to Covid-19 restrictions. Staff will serve the children.** Monthly menus are posted for viewing. A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

### *Infant Feedings*

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold their own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for the allotted time.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

### *Children 24 Months and Older*

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to eat a variety of foods.

## **HEALTH**

### *Importance of Medical Home*

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Center for Medical Home Implementation (NCMHI) want children, youth, and families across the country to know that EVERY child and youth deserves a MEDICAL HOME.

A MEDICAL HOME is not a place—it is the way care is provided to your child/youth and your family. At the core of a MEDICAL HOME is a knowledgeable, compassionate health care provider and care team chosen by a patient and their family to take care of a child/youth’s health needs. A MEDICAL HOME means that – your pediatric team knows the health history of your child/youth; Listens to your concerns and needs, as well as those of your child/youth; follows up with any other health care providers your child receives care from, when necessary; works in partnership with you to make sure that the medical and non-medical needs of your child/youth and family are met; creates a trusting, collaborative relationship with you and your child/youth; treats your child/youth with compassion and

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an understanding of their strengths; develops a care plan with you and your child/youth when needed; respects and honors your culture and traditions. You and your child/youth... are comfortable sharing concerns and questions with your pediatric team and other health care providers; routinely communicate your child/youth's needs and family priorities to your pediatric team; remember to tell your pediatric team about any care received between visits (e.g., emergency room visits, urgent care clinics).

### ***Health Immunizations***

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Every December, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Children 6 months and older must receive the flu immunization by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### ***Universal Health Record***

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before, but must be received no later than 30 days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program. Universal Health Records must be renewed yearly from the date of exam for children 2.5 years and older and every 6 months for children under 2.5 years.

### ***Dental/Oral Health Policy***

Early detection and management of oral conditions can improve a child's oral health, general health, well-being, and school readiness. The AAPD recommends your child visit a dentist upon the eruption of the first tooth, typically between 6 and 12 months of age. Village Early Childhood Center will encourage oral health by providing non-sugary drinks/snacks, ensuring bottle-fed infants are never laid to sleep with a bottle, and making drinking water available to children throughout the day. Yearly, a Parent Workshop focusing on the Importance of Dental Health will be offered.

### ***Illness***

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your

child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but they will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others
- Fever (100.4)
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet 2x or more within 24 hours
- Vomiting
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 36 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child’s physician signs a note stating that the child’s condition is not contagious, and;
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician’s note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

If a child contracts any of the following diseases, please report it to us immediately. Your child MAY NOT return to school without a doctor’s note.

<u>Respiratory Illnesses</u>	<u>Gastrointestinal Illnesses</u>	<u>Contact Illnesses</u>
Chicken Pox	Campylobacter*	Impetigo
German Measles *	Escherichia Coli*	Lice
Hemophilus Influenzae*	Giardia Lamblia*	Scabies
Measles*	Hepatitis A *	Shingles
Mumps*	Salmonella *	

Whooping Cough*	Shigella*	
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\* Reportable Diseases; as required by N.J.A.C. 10:122-7.10 (a)

### *Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases*

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group and the parents/guardians will be called to take the child home.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Diarrhea 2x or more in 24 hours
- Episodes of Vomiting
- Elevated temperature of 100.4
- Lethargy
- Severe Coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

The child may return to the center when they are symptom free for 36 hours without the aid of medication or with a health care provider's note stating the child no longer poses a serious health risk to themselves or others, unless contraindicated by local Department of health.

### **Excluded Communicable Diseases**

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that they present no danger to themselves or others.

Note: If a child has chicken pox, a note from a parent/guardian stating that all sores have dried and crusted is required.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents/guardians will be notified in writing.

### **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

Families should **not** send children to school when sick. Regardless of vaccination status, children who meet the following criteria will be excluded and **may** need a Covid-19 test to return.

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At least **two** of the following symptoms:

Fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, runny nose

**OR**

At least **one** of the following symptoms:

Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.

**Exception:**

***For students with documented chronic illness, only new symptoms, or symptoms worse than baseline, will warrant need for exclusion and/or testing.***

**Exception:**

***If your child has had no known close contact with someone positive for Covid-19 in the last 5 days, and the doctor provides an alternate diagnosis (i.e. strep throat), they DO NOT need a Covid-19 test to return. In these instances, follow the regular VECC sick policy for determining return to school.***

**Masks**

Beginning on March 7, 2022, masks will be optional for all VECC children, staff, and visitors two years of age and older. Masks may not be used on any individual under the age of two. Families that choose to have their child wear a mask are responsible for providing labeled masks each day. VECC staff will do their best to ensure that those children wear their masks consistently and effectively. Gentle reminders will be given, but no child will be forced to put on their mask. Please be aware that there are times during the school day at which masks generally will not be worn. These are during gross motor play (indoor and outdoor), while eating and drinking, and during rest time. Choosing to have your child wear a mask does not preclude them from quarantining should they be identified as a close contact. Please note, *increases of community transmission, active Covid-19 outbreaks, or the emergence of new Covid-19 variants may prompt the adoption of a mandatory mask policy for periods of time. In those instances, VECC will be in communication with local and state governing bodies to make such a determination. At that point, VECC may need to revert to a mandatory mask policy for all children, staff, and visitors 2 years of age and older. All VECC community members will be notified of such a change should it occur.*

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## Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. Children must have an allergy action plan on file and necessary medications (Benadryl, epi pen, etc.) used for treatment at the Center. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the classroom, office, and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

## Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication must meet this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. **All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles).** The physician must specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication may not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.

## Medication Administration Policies & Procedures

**PURPOSE:** *This policy was written to encourage communication between the parents/guardians, the child's healthcare provider, and the childcare provider to assure maximum safety in the giving of medication to the child who requires medication to be provided during the time the child is in childcare.*

**INTENT:** *Assuring the health and safety of all children in our Center is a team effort by the childcare provider, family, and health care provider. This is particularly true when medication is necessary to the child's participation in childcare. Therefore, an understanding of each of our responsibilities, policies, and procedures concerning medication administration is critical to meeting that goal.*

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES and PROCEDURES:**

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1. Whenever possible, it is best practice that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done so that the child receives medication prior to going to childcare, and again when returning home and/or bedtime. The parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss this possibility with the child's healthcare provider.
  2. The first dose of any medication should always be given at home with sufficient time before the child returns to childcare to observe the child's response to the medication given. When the child is ill due to a communicable disease that requires medication as treatment, the healthcare provider may require that the child be on a particular medication for 24 hours before returning to childcare. This is for the protection of the child who is ill as well as the other children in childcare.
  3. Medication will only be given when ordered by the child's healthcare provider and with written consent of the child's parents/guardians. All information on the Permission Form must be completed before the medication can be given. Permission to Give Medication in Childcare form is attached to this policy. Copies of this form can be duplicated or requested from the childcare provider.
  4. "As needed" medications may be given only when the child's healthcare provider completes a Permission Form that lists specific reasons and times when such medication can be given.
  5. Medications given in the Center will be administered by a staff member designated by the Director and who has been informed of the child's health needs related to the medication and who has training in the safe administration of medication.
  6. Any prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medication brought to the Center must be specific to the child who is to receive the medication, in its original container, have a child-resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the appropriate information as follows:
    - ✓ Prescription medication must have the original pharmacist label that includes the pharmacist's phone number, the child's full name, name and phone number of the healthcare provider prescribing the medication, name and expiration of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, and dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for its administration and/or storage. It is suggested that the parents/guardians ask the pharmacist to provide the medication in two containers, one for home and one for use in childcare.

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- ✓ OTC medication must have the child's full name on the container and the manufacturer's original label with dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for administration and storage, and expiration date must be clearly visible.
  - ✓ Any OTC medication without instructions for administration specific to the age of the child receiving the medication must have a completed permission form from the healthcare provider prior to being given in the childcare center.
7. Examples of OTC medications that may be given include:
- ✓ Antihistamines
  - ✓ Decongestants
  - ✓ Non-aspirin pain relievers
  - ✓ Cough suppressants
8. All medications will be stored:
- ✓ Inaccessible to children
  - ✓ Separate from staff or household medications
  - ✓ Under proper temperature control
  - ✓ A small lock box will be used in the refrigerator to hold medications requiring refrigeration
9. For the child who receives a particular medication on a long-term daily basis, the staff will advise the parents/guardians one week prior to the medication needing to be refilled so that needed doses of medication are not missed.
10. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the parents/guardians when it is no longer needed or able to be used by the child.
11. Records of all medication given to a child are completed in ink and are signed by the staff designated to give the medication. These records are maintained in the Center.
12. Information exchanged between the parents/guardians and childcare provider about medication that a child is receiving should be shared when the child is brought to and picked-up from the Center. The parents/guardians should share with the staff any problems, observations, or suggestions that they may have in giving medication to their child at home, and likewise with the staff from the Center to the parents/guardians.

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13. Confidentiality related to medications and their administration to the child will be safeguarded by the Director and staff. Parents/guardians may request to see/review their child's medication records maintained at the Center at any time.
  14. Parents/guardians will sign all necessary medication related forms that require their signature.
  15. Parents/guardians will authorize the Director or Assistant Director to contact the pharmacist or healthcare provider for more information about the medication the child is receiving, and will also authorize the healthcare provider to speak with the Director or the Assistant Director in the event that a situation arises that requires immediate attention to the child's health and safety.
  16. Parents/guardians will read and have the opportunity to discuss the content of this policy with the Director or Assistant Director. The parents/guardians' signatures on this policy is an indication that the parents/guardians accept the guidelines and procedures listed in this policy, and will follow them to safeguard the health and safety of the child. Parents/guardians will receive an electronic copy of the Medication Administration Policy through email communication.
  17. The Director and the parent/guardian of the child will review the Medication Administration in Childcare Policy annually.

***REFERENCES:*** Information for the Medication Administration in Childcare Policy was derived from the current ***Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers in New Jersey and Caring For Our Children—The National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, second edition.***

### **Sunscreen Application**

**Parents/guardians are responsible for applying sunscreen to their child before they arrive at school.** Village Early Childhood Center staff members are not allowed to apply sunscreen to students without written parental permission. For Village Early Childhood Center staff to reapply, we request that you complete the sunscreen permission form so that your child can safely participate in all summer outdoor activities. Your signature allows a staff member to assist with applying sunscreen to bare skin surfaces including the face, tops of ears, bare shoulders, arms, legs, and feet. Sunscreen will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by a staff member will be reported promptly to the parent/guardian. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide commercial sunscreen with a minimum of SPF 30, labeled with your child's first and last name.

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## SAFETY

### *Parking Lot Safety*

Safety of the children is always a priority. Here are some safety tips to help you do your part:

- ★ **DO** hold your child's hand in the parking lot. It is unsafe for children to walk ahead of or behind an adult.
- ★ **DO** park in designated Village Early Childhood Center spots.
- ★ **DON'T** leave your car running if an adult is not behind the wheel.
- ★ **DON'T** leave children, young or old, in the car without an adult.
- ★ **DON'T** block in other parents/guardians.
- ★ **REMEMBER**, it only takes a second for an accident to occur.

### *Clothing*

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, and other sensory activities. Please remember, "Creativity is Messy," and children should arrive to school in clothing that can get dirty. The playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Your child must arrive to school dressed in weather appropriate attire. During the cold weather, children need warm coats, hats, mittens/gloves in order to enjoy the outdoors. In changeable weather, children should dress in layers. In hot weather, children are most comfortable in cool, loose-fitting clothing.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Closed-toe shoes are required at all times.

### *Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play*

Outdoor play will not occur if there is an air quality alert or if less than 32°F degrees.

### *Communal Water-Play*

Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play and outdoor water activities. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

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## *Injuries*

Safety is a major concern in child care, so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an accident report outlining the accident and course of action taken. If injury occurs above the shoulder or the injury is a bite, a parent/guardian will receive a phone call from the staff, alerting them of the injury.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance while we try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Any incident or illness which results in a child visiting the emergency room or urgent care, a call to 911, onsite medical care, or transported emergency care will be reported by Village Early Childhood Center to the Office of Licensing.

## *Biting Policy*

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. Biting is an impulsive behavior. Each biting incident will be handled on an individual basis taking into account the age of the child, the environment, and the suspected reason for the biting incident. If a child bites, a staff member will immediately attend to and comfort the child who was bitten and provide first aid if needed. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. The parents/guardians of both children will be notified about the incident. We will not release the identities of the children involved in the incident. The staff and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child who bites will work together to resolve the biting problem in an effort to help prevent future biting incidents.

## *Respectful Behavior*

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

## *Smoking*

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

## *Prohibited Substances*

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

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Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### *Dangerous Weapons*

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### *Child Custody*

Without a court document, all parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of a parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation. The court order will be kept on file. Village Early Childhood Center will comply with the terms of the court order. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to keep us informed of any changes in the terms of the court order. In the instance that Child Protective Services are involved, Village Early Childhood Center will abide by the written instructions of the caseworker.

### *Mandated Reporters*

By the state of New Jersey, we are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### *Fire Safety/Building Safety*

Our center is fully equipped with the following fire safety precautions: fire alarms, emergency lights, extinguishers, fire safety panel, and evacuation cribs.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a yearly basis. Fire drills and evacuation procedures are performed monthly.

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## *Emergency Preparedness*

Village Early Childhood Center has an emergency preparedness plan that provides guidelines for a wide range of unlikely emergency situations from a naturally occurring weather condition to a terrorist attack.

The types of emergencies that Village Early Childhood Center prepares for include fire and explosions, severe storms, flooding, winter storms, earthquakes, unexpected utility failures, hazardous and radioactive materials, terrorism and other potentially violent situations, medical emergencies, and family/community concerns and/or violence.

The emergency plan will be reviewed annually by the Director and updates will be made if needed. Each classroom has a copy on file.

## *Emergency Transportation*

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## *Emergency Contact Information*

Village Early Childhood Center must be able to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver at any time during the school day. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide the school with current, working phone contact information. If any information on the Emergency Contact form or the Permission to Pick Up form changes, the center must be notified immediately.

## **CENTER POLICIES**

Our center policies not included in this handbook, including those related to Covid-19, are reviewed and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the Director.

## **GENERAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND FAMILIES**

### **Child Development and Special Needs**

**Zero to Three** <https://www.zerotothree.org>

**NJ Parent Link** (provides links to various types of services)  
<http://www.nj.gov/njparentlink/>

**Moms2Moms** <http://ubhc.rutgers.edu/mom2mom/links.htm>

**Early Intervention System** (birth to 3 years) <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis/index.shtml>

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**Family Link** (birth to three years) <http://www.familylinknj.org/>

**Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)** <http://www.spanadvocacy.org>

**Autism Speaks** <https://www.autismspeaks.org>

**Parent workshops and informational articles may be found at:**

**United Way Success by 6**

[http://www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/ed\\_successby6resources.php](http://www.unitedwaynj.org/ourwork/ed_successby6resources.php)

**National Association for the Education of Young Children** <http://families.naeyc.org/>

**Oral Health**

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/ErrorPage.aspx?requestUrl=https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-%20living/oralhealth/Pages/Teething-and-Dental-Hygiene.aspx>

**Nutrition and Physical Activity**

**Let's Move** <https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>

**Eating Healthy** [www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children](http://www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children)

**My Plate** <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

**Communicable Diseases/Preventive Health Care**

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

**General Child Safety**

**Child Health** <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/default.aspx>

**Child Safety** [www.safekids.org/safetytips](http://www.safekids.org/safetytips)

**Mental Health Services**

**Directory of Bergen County Mental Health Services**

<https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/mental-health-services/about-mental-health-services>

**Perform Care** (behavioral health for children) 1-877-652-7624

<http://www.performcarenj.org/index.aspx>

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## **Substance Abuse**

Prevention is Key [www.mcpiik.org](http://www.mcpiik.org)

## **Health and Human Service Resources**

**NJ 2-1-1** is a statewide information and referral service that is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Go to [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org)

## **Bergen County Department of Human Services**

<https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/departments-and-services/human-services>

## **New Jersey Regional Crisis Hotlines**

**Contact We Care:** 24/7 Helpline 908-232-2880 Information and referrals, crisis suicidal helpline and listening service and covers Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset and Union Counties.

**Addictions Hotline of NJ:** 24 hr.: 1-800-238-2333

**Gambling:** 1-800-GAMBLER

**Parents/guardians Anonymous Helpline-Referral:** 1-800-THE-KIDS

**National Child Abuse Hotline:** 1800-422-4453

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK

**National Runaway Switchboard:** 1-800-RUNAWAY

**NJ AIDS/STD Hotline:** 24hr: 1-800-624-2377

## **Health Care:**

NJ Family Care <http://www.njfamilycare.org/default.aspx>

New Jersey State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs and Medicare Part D  
<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/pbp.html>

NJ Drug Card <https://www.newjerseydrugcard.com/index.php>

## **Housing Assistance**

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/emergency/>

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/ha.html>

## **Additional Resources**

**Child and Family Resources** <http://www.childandfamily-nj.org/>

**Devereux Center** [http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nj\\_index](http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nj_index)

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**Children's Safety Network** <http://www.childrencyetynetwork.org/>

**Family Support Organization of Bergen County for Families by Families**  
<http://fsobergen.org>

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## Family Guide Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received and reviewed the Village Early Childhood Center Family Guide. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Guide and to ask center administration for clarification of any policy, procedure, or information contained in the Village Early Childhood Center Family Guide that I do not understand.

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Recipient Signature

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Date

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Center Staff Signature

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Date



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## **FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

### **Advisors:**

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – which will include 4-5 parents/guardians and meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – each classroom will have a representative that serves as a liaison between classroom parents/guardians and teachers and help plan family events.

**Family Events:** We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Holiday Gathering
- Book Swap
- Trunk or Treat
- Family Celebrations

**Classroom Activities:** Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to class Pot Luck Meal
- Family Teacher conferences

**Family/Parent Workshops:** Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening. A calendar is posted on the community resources board with upcoming events and workshops. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Importance of Play in Child Development