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New Jersey State (DYFS) Parent/Caregiver Information Packet



Dear Parent/Caregiver:

In keeping with New Jersey's childcare center licensing requirements, we are obliged to provide you, as the parent of a child enrolled at our early childhood center, with this information statement.

The Statement highlights, among other things: Your right to visit and observe our school at any time without having to secure prior permission; the school's obligation to be licensed and to comply with licensing standards; and the obligation of all citizens to report suspected child abuse/neglect/exploitation to the State Central Registry and Child Abuse Hotline.

Please read this statement carefully and, if you have any questions, feel free to contact the school at (973) 509-4500.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eve Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eve Robinson
Executive Director

Office of Licensing

Information to Parents/Caregivers

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 10:122), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents/caregivers of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing in the Department of Human Services (DHS). In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent/caregiver's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

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Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing in the Department of Human Services. A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents/caregivers for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents/caregivers may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to:

State of New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Licensing Publication Fees
PO Box 34399
Newark, New Jersey 07189-4399.

We encourage parents/caregivers to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing standards, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing by calling toll-free 1-877-667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents/caregivers or people authorized by parent(s) to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents/caregivers are entitled to review the center's copy of the Office of Licensing's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Office's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our center must cooperate with all DHS inspections/investigations. DHS staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy available to parents/caregivers upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents/caregivers of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents/caregivers wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents/caregivers of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents/caregivers.

Our center must inform parents/caregivers in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act, P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline:

Toll-Free at: 1-877-NJABUSE (1-877-652-2873). Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting:

Community Education Office
Division of Youth and Family Services
PO Box 717
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0717.

Guidelines for Positive Discipline

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

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

We will use positive discipline by planning ahead:

- anticipating and eliminating potential problems
- having a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults
- having a well-planned daily schedule
- planning for ample elements of fun
- including some group decision-making
- providing time and space for each child to be alone
- making it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group
- providing the structure and support children need to resolve their differences
- sharing ownership and responsibility with the children, talking about our room, our materials

We will use positive discipline by intervening when necessary:

- redirecting to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior
- providing individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation
- using timeout- by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control. (A staff member is always with the child)
- diverting the child and removing from the area of conflict
- pointing out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior
- providing alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings
- offering a choice only if there are two acceptable options
- dealing with the behavior. We do not say "bad boy" or "bad girl". Instead we might say "That is not allowed here"

We will use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- responding to and reinforcing positive behavior; acknowledging or praising to let the child know we approve of what he/she is doing
- providing positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior
- using encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism
- overlooking small annoyances, and deliberately ignoring provocations
- giving hugs and caring to every child every day
- appreciating the child's point of view
- being loving, but not confusing loving with license

Policy on the Release of Children

A. Each child may be released only to the child's custodial parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the custodial parent(s), to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the custodial parent(s) cannot be reached.

A child shall not be visited by or released to a non-custodial parent unless the custodial parent specifically authorizes the center to allow such visits or release in writing. This written authorization, including name, address and telephone number shall be maintained in the file.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect and maintain a copy on file.

B. Written procedures to be followed by staff member(s) if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), as specified in (A) above, fails, to pick up a child at the time of the center's closing. The procedure shall require:

- *the child to be supervised at all times*
- *staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and*
- *an hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Division's 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.*

C. Written procedures to be followed by the staff member(s) if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), appear to be 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 of harm if released to such an individual. The procedures shall require that:

- *The child may not be released to such an impaired individual*
- *Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternate person authorized by the parent(s) and;*
- *If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, as noted in (A) above, a Staff member shall call the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child*

Medication Policy

All staff will be trained and certified in infant/child CPR and First Aid prior to beginning their work in classrooms. Staff will be required to recertify annually.

Our staff will administer medication only after receipt of written approval from the child's parent(s).

We will maintain on file a record of:

- the child's name and parental authorization
- the name of the medication
- the instructions for administering the medication, including the dosage and the frequency
- the time and by whom the medication was administered to the child and
- any adverse effect the medication may have had on the child **(we will inform parents immediately.)**

All medication will be kept in a secured area that is inaccessible to the children. Parents must send in a medicine spoon with marked amounts as we will not use an ordinary teaspoon and we will follow directions carefully when we give medication. We will not give food, juice, soda, or anything except water with the medication unless the directions call for it.

Medication will only be given according to the directions prescribed for the child's age and weight. Prescription medicine must be stored in its original container, which is labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated and direction for its administration. The prescription must be current.

Unused medication will be returned to the parent(s) at the end of each day.

We will help the children to understand that medicine is helpful and important, but it must be treated with care.

Policy on Management of Communicable Diseases

A. What is a reportable disease?

A reportable disease is an illness that the Department of Health wants to know about to keep others from catching it. If a staff member or an enrolled child has a reportable disease, the Director will call the local health department and the Bureau of Licensing by the next working day.

B. What diseases must be reported?

The following reportable diseases are commonly seen in children:

- German Measles
- Hemophilus Influenzae
- Measles
- Meningococcus
- Mumps
- Tuberculosis
- Whooping Cough
- Giardia Lamblia
- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Hepatitis A

A complete list of reportable diseases, including diseases rarely seen in children, is available at the center office.

C. What is a communicable disease?

A communicable disease is an illness that can be caught from other people.

All of the reportable diseases listed above are communicable. Other communicable diseases commonly seen in children are:

- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Impetigo
- Scabies
- Lice

We will not report the diseases on the list directly above, but staff members or children with untreated cases of these diseases will not be allowed at the center until they are no longer contagious. A doctor's note will be required for readmittance.

Removal/Exclusion Policy

By DYFS regulations, every center must provide to families the conditions under which a family/child can be removed and/or excluded from the center. Some of the conditions may involve the family itself; others pertain to the child(ren). The following is the removal/exclusion policy for Montclair Community Pre-K (MCPK).

A child(ren) can be removed and/or excluded from MCPK for the following reasons:

- Non-compliance with the health policies of the school by:
 - Not providing the required health report from the child's physician and an immunization record or immunization exemption;
 - Refusing to obtain treatment for a communicable disease;
 - Refusing to obtain treatment for other health issues deemed necessary by the school nurse.
 - Refusing to pick up a child who is being sent home ill by our nurse and/or consistently leaving a child who is ill beyond the one hour time designated for pick-up in our policy book.
- Refusal to provide working telephone numbers or a way in which to contact the family in the event of an emergency.
- A repeated disregard for the program hours by consistently picking up after scheduled time or closing.
- Threatening and/or menacing behavior by a family member towards children, administration and/or any other member of the Pre-K faculty.
- The display of inappropriate behavior and/or language by a family member in the presence of children.
- A refusal to obtain the services necessary for a child who may display cognitive and/or emotional difficulties.
- Severe emotional/behavioral difficulties displayed by the child that disrupt/impact the operation of the classroom and curriculum and/or the repeated infliction of physical harm to faculty members and/or other children.
- Non-payment of tuition as agreed upon with the financial director or a refusal to provide the necessary documentation when requesting financial aid/scholarship assistance.

In the event that the family and/or child meets the conditions under which they may be removed/excluded from the program the following procedure will be implemented:

- The family will be notified by mail and phone of concerns and invited to meet with the Pre-K staff to discuss the situation. At the meeting Pre-K staff will outline said concerns and work in collaboration with the family to help rectify the situation. If the family does not respond to three invitations to meet, they will be asked to remove the child from the school.
- If a resolution can not be agreed upon by all parties, the family will be given one month to make alternate arrangements before the child will have to be removed from the program.
- Any instance in which a child, an administrator and/or faculty member of the program is physically threatened or assaulted by a member of the family will result in immediate removal from the program.
- A child would immediately be excluded from the Pre-K program as the result of extreme behavior that causes hazardous conditions in the school to both property and people.