



# **ECDC Nursery School, Inc.**

**Parent Handbook  
2008 - 2009**



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## **About Our School and Philosophy**

For those of you who are just becoming familiar with our school, we would like to provide you with some background information on our school, an understanding of the principles behind the school and the learning process we use. This handbook is re-designed annually based on parents' suggestions. Please continue to share with us any thoughts you may have for improving this handbook or should you have any questions about any school policies or programs.

### **General Information**

ECDC is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation. It is a nonsectarian organization open to all eligible children and families regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or disabilities. Its goals are to offer the highest quality early childhood education for children ages two and nine months through five and to offer parents information and support on early child development and education.

### **History and Accreditation**

The Early Child Development Council (ECDC) was formed in 1971 based on the belief that the first five years of a child's life are a crucial period of physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth. Early Child Development Council of Medfield, Inc., a parent cooperative nursery school, opened in 1972. In 1977 the Board opened a second nursery school in Sherborn. In 1988, the Medfield school moved to Walpole. The name of the corporation was changed to ECDC Nursery School, Inc. Both schools were operated by the same corporation through the 1992-1993 school year. As of July 1, 1993 the Walpole school became independently incorporated.

ECDC is currently undergoing the process for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This rigorous, voluntary process includes self-study, collecting information from parents, teachers, administrators, classroom observations, an on-site visit and an independent review.

### **Philosophy**

ECDC has always believed that each child should be treated as an individual and has the opportunity to develop at his or her own pace with our low teacher/child ratios. The classroom environment promotes our philosophy that children learn through play with many independent choices available through the day. We have many self-directed activities as well as large and small group activities. We believe that the process of learning is more important than the product. Children are encouraged and supported by our trained staff as they play and learn. Having our graduates well prepared for kindergarten is an important goal at ECDC.

## Goals and Objectives

Our classes are child centered with activities designed to meet each child's developmental needs. The goal of ECDC is to foster social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth in a nurturing and secure environment. Our program has three different cornerstones:

- **Learn Through Play:** We believe that all preschool children learn best through play. Each child is treated as an individual and has the opportunity to develop at his or her own pace. Our classroom environment reflects this philosophy with many independent choices available through the day. At ECDC, the **process** of learning is more important than the **product**.
- **Parent Involvement:** The most effective education results from a partnership between parents and teachers. For this reason, ECDC was established in 1977 in Sherborn as a parent cooperative. Parents spend time in the classroom interacting with their child and the teachers. The minimum time requirement is quite modest, between 4 and 7 times per year in the classroom as your child's "guest." There are additional opportunities for parents who are interested, and additional involvement is welcomed.
- **Qualified and Committed Staff:** Qualified, committed, caring and enthusiastic teachers are the cornerstone of an effective early education program. A certified early childhood educator directs ECDC, and all of our teachers have or are working toward early childhood certification. We support continuing early childhood education for our teachers.

## Curriculum

Our daily routine involves a wide range of activities: creative play, arts and crafts, music, science, games, blocks, books, fine-motor activities, large-motor activities and outdoor play. Children are taught various social skills (table manners, sharing, etc.) and are also encouraged to think and play together as well as independently. Each class spends a half hour each week in music class, and a half hour every other week in creative movement. Outdoor play is included each day, weather permitting.

Themes and activities are planned by the staff and posted bi-weekly on the class bulletin boards and distributed in the children's cubbies. Please read these notices promptly as they describe upcoming events and often provide specific information to help you prepare your child.

## **Teaching Staff**

Our program is run by professional staff. Each class has a minimum of two teachers. These teachers are guided by a School Director and an Assistant Director who are responsible for the quality of the program. They are both certified early childhood educators. Our teaching staff is the cornerstone of our program. As part of our accreditation process, the teachers and the program are evaluated by an independent professional. Our teachers all have or are working toward early childhood education certification, and we support continuing early childhood education for our teachers.

## **Importance of Parent Participation**

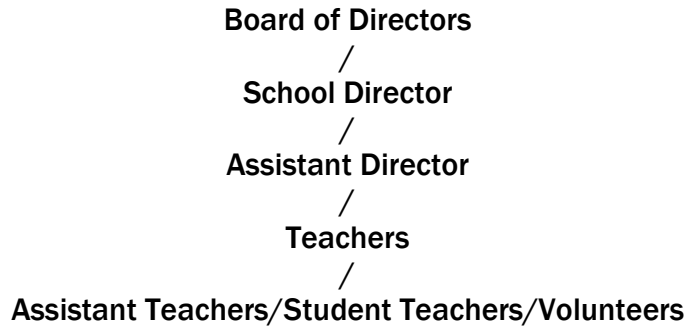
The school recognizes the importance of parent participation and welcomes your involvement at every level. Since its formation in 1971, parent participation in the classroom has been a requirement for all ECDC families. Parent participation enriches the program for all involved. Children enjoy sharing their nursery school experience with their parents, and parents have the opportunity to watch their child interact with other children and to view the ECDC program first hand.

## **Management and Operation of the School**

ECDC Nursery School is a non-profit parent cooperative licensed to operate a preschool by the state of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). ECDC is managed by the joint efforts and cooperation of its Board of Directors (composed of parents), a team of early childhood educators led by the School Director, and a Parent Committee. The Board of Directors transacts the general business of the school, considers all questions of policy and acts on the recommendations of the School Director, school staff, and the Parent Committee. Our Board consists of five voting members, each serving a two year term: Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Operations, and Director of Personnel.

The Parent Committee serves as a liaison between parents, teachers, and the Board of Directors. All ECDC parents are welcomed members of the Parent Committee. The Parent Committee is directed by the Parent Committee Advisors. The Parent Committee Advisors are comprised of a Chairperson, the Newsletter Editor(s), Website Editor(s), Board Secretary, Activity Leaders, and at least two Class Representatives from each class. All parents are invited and encouraged to attend the monthly meetings of the Parent Committee.

Lines of authority and supervision are outlined below.



### School Programs

ECDC Nursery School is a non-profit preschool parent cooperative that provides quality preschool education for children ages 2 years 9 months to 5. Special needs children are integrated into the program and accommodations are made, when possible, to meet their needs. ECDC offers four different programs:

- **Part Day Preschool for 3 year olds (Bears and Lambs classes):** Designed for the child who is experiencing his or her first time in a “school” environment. They are available to children beginning at 2 years, 9 months. These three day a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Monday, Wednesday, Friday) classes run from 8:45-11:30 am and consist of up to 14 children and two teachers.
- **Part Day Preschool for 4 year olds (Ladybugs and Butterflies classes):** We offer two programs for 4 year olds. Both 4 year old programs consist of more free play than the 3 year old programs. The 4 year old programs provide more advanced activities, including more emphasis on writing and letter recognition, time for individual reading, and more advanced group activities.
  - The **morning transitional program (Ladybugs)** is designed for children who have completed our 3 year old program, but will not be attending kindergarten the following year. The class meets Tuesday-Friday from 8:45 – 11:30 am. This program is smaller and more structured than the Pre-K program and consists of up to 14 children and 2 teachers.
  - The **afternoon Pre-K program (Butterflies)** is designed for children who will be entering kindergarten the following fall. The emphasis of this class is to prepare children socially, emotionally, and academically for the kindergarten environment. There is significant emphasis on independent decision making, and more free play than in the morning

transitional program. This class consists of 18-24 children and 3-4 teachers.

- **Stay and Play Program:** This three hour class is offered on Thursdays and Fridays from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm if there is sufficient enrollment. Each child may attend one day per week. The program consists of a lunch time (children bring their own lunch), free time, crafts and other indoor activities, rest time, and playground time. Parent participation is not required.
- **Summer Program for 2 years 9 months-5 Year Olds:** This playground program may be held Monday through Friday from 9 am to noon. The program generally begins at the close of the school year program in June and continues through early August. Music, stories, crafts, nature exploration, games, playtime and snack are offered. The school's indoor facilities are available for use in inclement weather. Enrollment preference is given to current ECDC students and those pre-registered for the fall. Parent participation is not required. Children must be 2.9 years old by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **General Program Information**

### **Allergies and Other Medical Concerns**

All parents of children with allergies should let the Director and their child's teachers know about all allergies and medical concerns pertaining to their child. It is required that an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) be completed prior to the start of school. This plan can be obtained from the ECDC website, or from the school Registrar. The plan provides the school with detailed information about each child's history, symptoms, methods of treatment and physician information. If medication is required, ECDC will need a signed consent form allowing teachers to administer the medicine. If an epipen is required, 2 new epipens should be provided at the start of school.

No snacks brought from home can be shared with other children in the classroom. Children with allergies are allowed to bring their own snack from home in lieu of having the ECDC snack. All parents should review the snacks provided for the year and ensure that they are safe for their child.

If your child plans to eat lunch at ECDC through the Stay and Play program, lunch bunch or on Thursdays as part of the Butterflies class, please discuss the existing protocol for keeping children with allergies safe during lunch with the School Director or the appropriate teachers.

### **Administration of Medication**

Medication, prescription or non-prescription, with the exception of topical non-prescription medication may be administered to a child only with written parental authorization and a written order of a primary care provider (for prescription medication, this includes the label on the medication bottle). The School Director and Assistant Director can administer medication.

For non-prescription medications, ECDC needs a signed written order from the primary care provider listing the medication, dosage and criteria for its administration. ECDC also needs a signed statement from the parent authorizing the school to administer the medication in accordance with the written order of the physician. Both of these statements will only be valid for one year from the date it was signed. Parents or guardians will be contacted before non-prescription medication is given.

Topical non-prescription medications such as sunscreen and petroleum jelly may be administered only with written parental authorization.

Medication will be kept in its original labeled container with the child's name, the name of the drug, the directions for its administration and storage. All medication

will be stored under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security, and safety. It will be locked in our medicine cabinet or refrigerator, if needed.

A written record of any medication administered to a child will be kept. This will include the time and date of each administration, the dosage, the name of the staff member administering the medication, and the child's name. The completed medication record will be put in the child's file. Unused medication will be returned to the parent or disposed of when no longer needed.

### **Daily Routine**

*Absence and Lateness:* Please call the school before class starts, if possible, at 508-653-9149; and leave a message on the answering machine. Please make every effort to be on time when dropping off and picking up your child. Late arrivals are disruptive to the classroom and late pickups are difficult for the teachers.

*Pick-up and Drop-off:* The Unitarian Universalist Area Church (our lessor), asks that we use the large parking lot on the right of the front of the church for both drop-off and pick-up. Please note that children are the responsibility of parents until they are released to a teacher. The ECDC staff is scheduled to care for children only during class hours as posted. We cannot accommodate early arrivals or late departures.

*Authorized Pick Up:* On a form in the enrollment package mailed in August, parents are asked to submit the names of the individuals who are authorized to pick up their children. Additional names may be added during the school year. To authorize anyone not on that list, please leave a signed note stating such at drop-off time. If there are any last minute changes in pick-up plans or if you are going to be late due to an emergency, please call. The staff will require a photograph identification for anyone authorized for pick-up who is not known to them.

### **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

If ECDC needs to evacuate the building and general premises, we will follow the following procedure:

- If the evacuation is before 11:30 AM, all students and staff will leave the building and go to the Sherborn Town Hall.
- If the evacuation is after 11:30 AM, all students and staff will leave the building and go to the Sherborn Library.

If the circumstances and time allow, there will be a message left on ECDC's answering machine and a note will be placed on the classroom and outside doors to notify parents. Each parent or contact person will be called once we are settled in at the designated location.

## **Field Trips**

ECDC requires that parents leave a car seat at school when a child under 5 is going on a field trip. ECDC has liability insurance and limited medical coverage. ECDC's insurers require ECDC to have on file a copy of the car insurance policy for each car that is used to drive on field trips. Each driver must provide copies of their license and registration and confirm that their car is currently inspected. A first aid kit and emergency numbers for the children will be provided by the school and is required in each vehicle.

Only ECDC approved snacks will be provided to children during the field trip or en route and ECDC asks that no snacks be provided by parents to protect the children with allergies from being exposed to something that could be harmful to them. ECDC encourages any parent of a child with allergies to attend all field trips with their child.

## **Holidays**

Holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day are celebrated; they provide themes for learning units, creative artwork and dramatic play. Religious holidays generally will not be used as unit themes, except for all of the December holidays, which may be used as a learning theme. However, these holidays may be observed through songs and stories. For this reason gift giving is not feasible in the classroom. Parents wishing to plan holiday parties may do so outside of school.

## **Lunch Bunch**

ECDC offers a lunch program on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays. The program begins at class dismissal, (or 11:45 for students in the afternoon), and ends at 12:15 (for the morning class) and 12:30 (for the afternoon class). Students bring their own lunch and have the opportunity to meet other children in the school and different teachers. Lunches should be clearly labeled with the student's name and the lunch's contents. Prompt payment for this service is expected, late fees will be assessed if contact has not been made with the business manager.

## **Nutritious Lunches Suggestions**

Children who stay for Lunch Bunch, Stay and Play and Butterflies lunch bring a lunch and a drink with them. ECDC provides one nutritious snacks each day. Other snacks are available for children with food allergies. Below are some suggestions for nutritious lunchbox meals:

- Leftovers, pasta, soup (Heated at home and kept warm in a thermos)
- Sandwiches: sliced meats, tuna, cheese, peanut butter and jelly
- Fresh vegetables: Carrot sticks, celery sticks, cucumber slices, etc.
- Fresh Fruit: Apple, orange, pear, banana, grapes, peach, etc.
- Dried fruit: raisins, prunes, figs, apricots, etc.

Cottage cheese or yogurt in a container, not squeeze tubes  
Granola or fruit bars, crackers  
Milk or 100% juice (kept chilled in a thermos)

We try to make meal time an enjoyable, social experience. Our staff sit and talk with the children about their day while they are eating. Preparing nutritious foods at home in amounts that your child can eat helps make lunch a pleasant interactive experience.

Please do not send gum, candy, excessive sweets, yogurt squeeze tubes or soda.

### **Snacks**

Each day the children have a nutritious snack. Sometimes the classes do their own cooking and have a special treat. Parents with dietary concerns or who have children with allergies should discuss them with their child's teachers. All parents should review the snacks provided to the children to ensure that the food is safe for their child. The school asks that no snacks from home be brought into the classroom unless a teacher specifically requests something.

We serve nutritious snacks with water or 100% juice. Samples of typical snacks we serve are: fruit, graham crackers, pretzels and crackers.

### **School Calendar**

Please mark your calendar with the dates of special events and school closings. The calendar was included in the welcome packet.

### **Starting School**

Staff is prepared to help your child feel welcome and safe in his or her new classroom. If you feel that your child may need some additional time during separation from you, please let your child's teacher know. She will provide some suggestions to make the parting easier. For most children, a brief goodbye with a reminder that you will return soon helps with separation. If your child becomes upset, his or her teacher is comfortable helping your child. She will help your child to become involved with activities until your return.

### **Stay and Play Program**

ECDC offers a three-hour extended day program on Thursdays and Fridays if there is sufficient enrollment. The program begins at class dismissal and ends at 2:30PM. Children bring their own lunch. A child may attend the program one day per week. If there is a waiting list for a particular day, preference will be given to the children who attend the morning class on that day. The program consists of a lunchtime, free time, crafts and other indoor activities, a rest time, and playground time. Parent participation is not required. Prompt payment for this service is expected.

This payment is considered tuition and is non-refundable unless sufficient notice is given for a child's absence or if the space can be filled by another student.

### **Opening Schedule**

Over the years we have developed an opening schedule that eases children into the regular school routine. Prior to the start of classes, teachers will try to schedule a visit to all students whose parents request a home visit. A home visit can be an invaluable aid in easing a child from home to school. The August mailing includes a home visit request form.

Before school begins, an orientation will be held for each class. This is a one-hour period when children and parents can meet each other, talk with teachers, and explore the classrooms. During the opening week of school we introduce the children to the school routine. Half of each class meets at the first-class session and the other half meets at the second-class session. The whole class meets together on the third-class session.

### **Parent Participation**

Since its formation in 1971, parent participation in the classroom has been a requirement for all ECDC families. Parent participation enriches the program for all involved. Children enjoy sharing their nursery school experience with their parents and other interested family and friends. Parents have the opportunity to watch their children interact with other children and to view the ECDC program first hand. This opportunity – to regularly have a “Special Day” for both parent and child – is often cited by ECDC parents as one of the best features of the program.

Parents are also invited to join the Parent Committee which sponsors a number of opportunities for parent involvement, including fund raising activities, student enrichment programs and school maintenance and improvement projects. The range is limited only by the imagination and inclinations of the parents!

### **“Special Day” Parent Visits**

An integral part of the ECDC program is the requirement that all parents or their representatives participate in their child's classroom experience. The day that a child's parent spends at ECDC is considered the child's special day. The sole reason you are in the classroom is to be a part of your child's preschool experience, so your focus should be on your child, not on assisting in the classroom. The frequency of participation is as follows:

- The 3's classes (Bears and Lambs): once per 12 classes, which is approximately 7 to 8 times per year.
- The 4's classes (Ladybugs and Butterflies): 4 times per year.

The August mailing includes a Volunteer Orientation Handout which will help familiarize you with your role in the classroom. Please read and sign it and return it to school before your first scheduled visit.

Once scheduled to come in, parents are responsible for finding their own replacement should the need arise. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher or your Class Representative(s) if you have any questions regarding your participation in the classroom.

**Notes on Participation in the Classroom:**

- Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
- Dress so that you will be comfortable for all activities.
- Participate in the children's activities; your child should be your #1 priority.
- Follow the direction of the teachers. Ask questions if you have any doubts.
- Be aware of what's going on in other areas of the classroom.
- Treat each child with respect. Do not discuss any child in the classroom with other parents or outside the classroom.
- Accept each child's work or efforts enthusiastically.
- Enjoy!!

**Parent Conferences**

Fall conferences for the 3 year old classes allow parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss children's adjustment to the school setting. All classes have parent/teacher conferences in the late winter or early spring and are held in lieu of a regular school session. Parents may request additional conferences. The Director will make arrangements for individual conferences at a time mutually convenient for parents and staff. Please remember that it is difficult for the teachers to talk to parents during the regular class time or during drop-off or pick-up.

**Snow Days**

ECDC will close when the Dover-Sherborn public schools are closed. Please check the Dover-Sherborn public school's website ([www.doversherborn.org](http://www.doversherborn.org)) or listen to the television news for school-closing information. If D-S public school classes are delayed one hour, morning classes at ECDC will be delayed one hour. Afternoon classes will meet. If the opening of Sherborn schools is delayed two hours, morning ECDC classes will be canceled. Afternoon classes will meet. In the event of a midday public school closing due to bad weather, afternoon classes will be canceled. In addition, the Director, in her discretion, may cancel school due to bad weather, if the Dover-Sherborn public schools are open, if she feels there is a substantial risk to the students. In that situation, school staff will telephone each family no later than 7 am that morning. If any class is canceled for more than one week, the Board of Directors will try to make up the class hours missed in excess of one week.

### **Special Days-Birthday Parties**

Ways in which birthdays will be celebrated will be determined on a class-by-class basis. The teachers will come up with creative ways to celebrate your child's special day. ECDC asks that no food, including cupcakes, be brought into the classroom. Talk to your child's teachers to determine how they have decided to celebrate birthdays. Keep in mind that children's birthdays are frequently a day when parents sign up to participate in the classroom and share the special day with their child. While it is understood that it is not always possible to invite all students in a class to a home party, please remember that great sensitivity is necessary to avoid hurting the feelings of children who are not invited.

### **Special Person's Day**

This day is celebrated at school on a Saturday morning in the fall. Each class has a one hour period where special adults who cannot participate during the regular school day can share the ECDC experience with the child.

### **Toys**

ECDC does not encourage children to bring toys or stuffed animals to school. All children will be invited to share special items from home periodically. When a toy helps to bridge the gap between home and school, it is welcome to accomplish this goal.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Behavior Management**

Behavior management will occur in a way to maximize each child's growth and development. Teachers will above all make sure that each group of children is safe. Activities will be set up to allow children to make choices, and all expectations made of children will be positive and reasonable. Children will always be given the opportunity to verbalize their feelings. ECDC teachers utilize redirection and conflict resolution for behavior management.

When an inappropriate behavior occurs in the group teachers will try redirecting the child to an alternative area of the room and be there to engage the child with a new activity or experience. Teachers will provide the child with positive reinforcement for more appropriate behaviors.

Preschoolers who have good verbal skills will be encouraged to express their feelings and wants to others. Teachers will assist in modeling and supporting preschoolers in conflict resolution or problem solving. This provides the children with opportunities to discuss the problem and come up with a variety of solutions with peers and teachers.

Corporal punishment shall not be used. No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse. No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment. No child will be forced to eat something he/she does not want to eat. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

### **Social Service Referral Policy**

All staff is responsible for informing the Director of a concern about a child in the program. The teacher will observe and record behavior documenting this concern. The Director will also observe and document those observations. The Director and teacher will meet with the parents of the child and present the documentation of the concern. The Director will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral and shall have written parental consent before any referral is made. The Director will maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and results. The parent will be informed of their rights under Chapter 766. If the child is under three years of age, the Director will recommend that the parents contact the Middlesex Early Intervention Program. If the child is three or older, the Director will recommend that they contact the Special Education Department of the school system in the town in which they reside. The Director will document, in the child's individual file, concerns and the action taken on behalf of the child. The Director will continue to inform the parents as to the progress made in the referral process. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services or is ineligible to receive services, the Director and teacher will review the child's

progress at the school every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

Please see the School Director for a list of referral resources.

### **Termination and Suspension Policy**

All efforts will be made to maintain a child's enrollment if at all possible. However, a child's enrollment will be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Failure to pay tuition or other fees owed after two written notices.
2. ECDC not able to meet the needs of the child after reasonable accommodations.
3. Parents or guardians not following the policies of ECDC after sufficient notice and opportunity to comply.
4. Inappropriate behavior which is a danger to self or others after reasonable attempts to correct the behavior have been made. ECDC has a Behavior Management Policy and a Social Services Policy which are in this Parent Handbook. If a problem arises, written notice will be sent home and a conference will be scheduled at the convenience of all parties involved.
5. Habitual lateness after closing time with two written notices sent home stating the intent to terminate.

Parents and guardians will be notified in writing of actions which are grounds for termination. All actions and communication (written, verbal, or telephone) will be documented and placed in the child's file. Parents or guardians will be offered the opportunity for a conference with the Director. At that time suspension may be considered at the discretion of the Director. Suspension will only be considered for extenuating circumstances and after a written plan of action is signed by both parents and staff. Copies of all decisions will be placed in the child's file. When ECDC initiates a termination of enrollment from school before the end of a period, families will be refunded that portion of the paid tuition that the child did not attend. Children will be prepared for leaving in as positive a way as possible. They will always have the opportunity to say good-bye to friends and staff. Referrals to other programs and services will be provided to parents.

### **Policy and Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

ECDC shall protect children from abuse and neglect while they are in the school's care. The Department of Social Services defines child abuse and neglect as follows:

**Child Abuse** - Non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker which causes or creates a substantial risk of harm or threat of harm to a child's well being.

**Child Neglect - Failure of a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or other essential care.**

**Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect to the Department of Social Services and EEC**

- 1. ECDC will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care and custody.**
- 2. All staff are mandated reporters and must report suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff will document any suspicions or signs of abuse and neglect and include the date and their signature. Any suspicions will be shared and discussed with the Director.**
- 3. All suspected cases are reported by the Director, with the reporting staff person's assistance, to the Department of Social Services immediately, with written follow-up (a 51A report) within twenty-four hours. A copy of the information sent to DSS and the school's documentation is kept in the child's file.**
- 4. If the situation is an emergency the Director will also call the Child at Risk Hotline, if the child's safety is assured the parents/guardians will be notified of the filing. If we must file a report it is always done on the behalf of the child not against the parent/ guardians or caregivers.**
- 5. Because all staff are mandated reporters one may choose to file a 51A report to DSS independent of the school's decision to file or not file. However, that person must tell the Director that a report has been filed.**
- 6. The School Director will immediately notify EEC after filing a 51A report, or learning that a 51A report has been filed, alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program or during a program related activity.**
- 7. ECDC will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents/guardians of children currently or previously enrolled in the program; providing consent for disclosure to EEC of information from, and allowing EEC to disclose information to, any person and/or agency that EEC may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and protection of children. Failure to cooperate may be grounds for suspension, revocation, or refusal to issue or renew a license.**
- 8. Any staff member of ECDC suspected of any incident of child abuse or neglect shall be immediately suspended without pay and benefits until an investigation is completed. The School Director will report these suspicions or allegations to the Department of Social Services and to EEC immediately by telephone and in writing within twenty-four hours. In accordance with EEC regulations, the center ensures that this allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member will not work directly with children until the Department of Social Services investigation is completed and for such time as EEC requires. A finding of abuse or neglect will result in immediate dismissal of the employee.**
- 9. The School Director will notify the Chairperson of the Board of Directors immediately when an abuse or neglect suspicion is reported to DSS and EEC.**
- 10. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from**

discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

## **Financial**

Our policy on tuition collection has been formulated to ensure equal treatment for all families. ECDC is a nonprofit corporation that is organized as a parent cooperative. As a member of the cooperative, it is the obligation of each family to keep financial payments current. Tuition is always prepaid before children may attend. The policy is as follows:

1. A non-refundable registration fee will be paid to enroll each child. This fee, as is tuition, is annually set by the Board of Directors. A child is **OFFICIALLY ENROLLED IN THE SCHOOL** when the registration check is deposited and clears the bank. For children enrolling after April 1, the tuition payment for the first period must be paid with the registration fee and accompany the Registration Form returned to the Registrar.
2. Tuition for all programs must be received by the due date to avoid a \$20.00 late payment fee.
3. Tuition due dates are published in the Registration Form and are posted at school and in the school newsletter.
4. Nursery school tuition is paid in three installments. Non-payment of tuition is considered **NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL**. Tuition notices are issued approximately one month prior to the final date the payment is due: these dates are: May 1, November 1 and February 1.
5. A family withdrawing a child from school before the end of a period will be refunded that portion of the tuition that the child did not attend only, **IF THE CLASS IS FULL AND WHEN THE CHILD IS REPLACED IN THE CLASS**.
6. Weather closings and holidays that fall on school days are not subject to reimbursement.
7. Payment for Stay and Play, lunch bunch and the summer program will be billed as publicized in the program announcements. Late fees will be assessed.
8. ECDC recognizes that payment problems occasionally arise. Special payment arrangements may be made by contacting the Chairperson or the Director.
9. Financial scholarships are available. Inquiries may be made of the Board of Directors Chairperson or the Director. All inquiries are strictly confidential. Interested parties must complete an application which can be obtained from the school.
10. Any charges incurred by ECDC for returned checks will be the responsibility of the family issuing the check. If a second check is returned, future payments must be made by bank check.

## **Background Record Checks**

ECDC requires all volunteers to complete and submit consent for a Background Record Check known as a BRC. BRCs are mandatory for volunteers who have the potential for unsupervised contact with children in preschools. BRC data is

confidential and ECDC is prohibited from revealing the information to anyone other than you and those individuals involved in the screening process. Only the School Director and the Assistant Director will have access to the BRC data. ECDC will be notified of all arraignments in criminal court including convictions, non-convictions and pending charges, as well as any adverse findings by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Upon receipt of this information, ECDC will meet with you to discuss the information and evaluate your ability to volunteer with the children based on the results of your BRC and other factors. If you do not hear from ECDC, you are able to volunteer in the classroom. You will only hear from ECDC if we need to set up a meeting to review the results of the BRC.

### **Grievance Procedures**

At ECDC it is our goal to keep any complaints and grievances to a minimum by addressing each situation as openly and honestly as possible from the outset among the individuals involved. Therefore, the grievance procedures that follow explain procedure by category—a complaint about a child, and a complaint about a teacher or school administrator; each category having increasing levels of formality and documentation.

At all times, please respect the individuals involved in ECDC: the children, the families, and the staff. Therefore, please discuss any concerns you may have at a pre-arranged meeting and not during regular class time or at drop-off or pick-up. In addition, please refrain from discussing issues regarding any child outside the classroom or with other parents.

### **Complaint about a Child**

Any parent wishing to lodge a complaint about a child in the school must follow the following procedure:

1. Contact the teacher of the child's class, explain the problem and ask for some resolution.
2. If the parent is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved, the parent should contact the School Director explaining the situation and ask for the School Director's intervention in achieving a satisfactory resolution within an agreed upon amount of time. Up to this point, no written documentation will be placed in a school file.
3. If the outcome is still unsatisfactory, the parent should present a written, signed complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The School Director is then obliged to present the details of the case to the Board. A special meeting of the Board will be called if necessary to resolve the issue. A quorum must be present. At this level, the complaint is considered a formal complaint and documentation will appear in the child's file.
4. If the parent is not satisfied with the Board of Directors' resolution, he or she will be given the opportunity to present their case at the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

## **Complaint about a Teacher or School Administrator**

Any parent wishing to lodge a complaint must follow the following procedure:

1. Present the complaint directly to the individual involved and attempt a mutually agreed upon resolution.
2. If the issue is not resolved, present the complaint verbally to the School Director and attempt a mutually agreed upon resolution.
3. If the issue is not resolved, the parent and the School Director will present the complaint verbally to the Director of Personnel and again attempt a mutually agreed upon resolution.
4. If the issue is not resolved, the Director of Personnel will ask the parent and the School Director to prepare written statements and will present those statements at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors. At this level the complaint will be considered a formal complaint and the Parent's statement, the School Director's response and the resolution as agreed upon by the Board of Directors will be placed in the individual's file.
5. If either party is not satisfied with the Board of Directors' resolution, he/she will be given the opportunity to present his/her case at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

## **Health**

Massachusetts State Law requires a physical examination and the completion of a school health form for each child attending preschool. Most physicians use their own form; however, health forms are available from the School Director upon request. The completed form must be returned to the school and is kept on file. No child will be admitted without a completed form. ECDC adheres to the immunization requirements of the Mass. Department of Public Health. A child must be properly vaccinated to attend classes. If a child is exempt from taking vaccinations due to medical or religious reasons, a letter must be provided by the child's health care provider.

If your child starts the day with a sore throat, fever, persistent cough or a severe cold, or just does not seem well, please keep him at home. These conditions are infectious. We would like to keep the ECDC environment as healthy as possible.

ECDC does not have the staff to care for a sick child. Should your child become ill during the school day, you will be called to take him home. We require that parents provide us with the names of individuals who can be contacted if the parents cannot be reached. This information is requested on the Emergency Medical Permission Form and the Field Trip Emergency card included in the enrollment package.

In case of an emergency, the staff will contact the local fire and rescue squad and then the parent. If treatment is necessary, the child will be transported to the nearest emergency room and accompanied by a staff member.

The following procedures are recommended:

- **Fever-**If a child has a fever, he should be kept home 24 hours after it has subsided.
- **Vomiting/Diarrhea-**If there is any suggestion of illness following vomiting or diarrhea, the child should remain home for at least 24 hours.
- **Communicable diseases-** Please report to the school immediately when your child has been exposed to a communicable disease so that the other parents may be notified. ECDC follows the isolation and quarantine requirements established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
  - **Head lice:** A child should be re-admitted to school only after the scalp has been treated and all nits are removed.
  - **Chicken pox:** A child should be re-admitted to school only after the rash has scabbed and no new lesions are forming (5 to 7 days from onset). Susceptible children exposed at home should be kept at home from the 14th through the 21st day after exposure.
  - **Scarlet fever and strep throat:** A child should be kept home until he's been on an antibiotic for 24 hours. Children exposed at home do not need to be isolated.
  - **Conjunctivitis:** A child should be kept home until he's been on an antibiotic for 24 hours. Conjunctivitis is extremely contagious and all family members should be careful not to expose themselves to any articles that have come in contact with the infection.

## Registering For Next Year and Summer Program

### **Waiting Lists/Registration**

Following are excerpts from the Registration Section of the ECDC Policy and Procedure Manual. A copy of this manual is kept at school for your review.

### **Waiting Lists**

- ECDC is NONDISCRIMINATORY in its Waiting List policy. Waiting Lists are used to establish an order to register for class openings.
- All families must call the Registrar to place the names of children not currently enrolled on a Waiting List for the next school year. Waiting Lists open at 8:00AM on the first day of school; this date and time will be advertised locally in early September.
- Names are accepted in the order received and entered on the appropriate list by category and class level (3's or 4's):
  1. Waiting List A-siblings of current students.
  2. Waiting List B-siblings of alumni (a previous 4's graduate.)
  3. Waiting List C-outside public.
- Waiting Lists A and B will be open through October 31. All names received after October 31 will be placed on Waiting List C.
- No child can be on a Waiting List for more than one class level.
- Names are not carried over from year to year.

### **Registration**

Children are registered in classes in this order:

1. Continuing students staying in the same age class.
2. Continuing students progressing into the next age class. Children who will not be eligible for kindergarten in their town the following year and children with a birthday of June 1<sup>st</sup> and later will have priority in registering for the AM 4's.
3. Waiting List A-siblings of current students.
4. Waiting List B-siblings of alumni (a previous 4's graduate.)
5. Waiting List C-outside public.

A registration form and fee must be delivered to the Registrar by the date in the registration letter to take advantage of priority status as described above.

### **Summer Program**

ECDC may offer a summer playground program, held on Monday through Friday mornings from 9AM to Noon. The program typically starts the week after school closes and continues through the first week of August.

The theme of the program is outdoor activities; however, the school's indoor facilities are available for use in inclement weather. Snack is provided. Enrollment preference is given to current ECDC students. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis. Parent participation is not required.

## **Parent's Rights**

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

For the 3's classes, Fall conferences will take place to allow parents to touch base with the teachers. All classes have parent/teacher conferences in the late Winter or early Spring and are in lieu of a regular school session. Parents may request additional conferences at any time. Please call the school to set up an appropriate time. It is difficult to talk to parents during regular class time or at drop-off and pick-up.

### **Parent Input**

The Board of Directors, the Parent Committee, and the School Director and teaching staff invite parents to share their thoughts and concerns about the school and its programs. We welcome comments and suggestions! On the back of this handbook, you will find contact information for the Board, the Parent Committee, the School Director and the Assistant Director.

### **Parent Visits**

Parents are welcome visitors to our classrooms. You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present.

### **Reports to Parents**

Growth and development of the children are measured in an ongoing way through staff observations, meetings and discussions with parents. At least once a year, you will either meet with your child's teacher to discuss your child's progress, or receive a written progress report of your child's activities and participation in the school. This report becomes part of your child's file. If your child has disabilities, you will receive a written progress report every three months. Parents will be contacted whenever staff has concerns about a child's progress or behavior. Close cooperation and contact with parents has been very effective in serving the needs of the children.

### **Your Child's Records and Confidentiality**

Information contained in your child's record is privileged and confidential. ECDC will not distribute or release information from your child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian. ECDC will notify the family if a child's record is subpoenaed. Upon request, you will have access to your child's record at reasonable times. In no event will such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without your consent. Upon such request for access, the child's entire record shall be made available regardless of the physical location of its parts. ECDC will provide copies of any part of the child's record to the parents or upon

written permission from the parents to designated persons. A written log is maintained of persons receiving information from the child's record. This log includes name, signature and position of the person releasing the information; the date; the portions of the record which were released; the purpose for such release, and the signature of the receiver. This log is only available to the parents and staff. ECDC will not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of your child's file.

### **Transfer of Your Child's Records**

Upon written request of the parents, ECDC will transfer the child's records to the parents or any other person the parents identify when the child leaves the program. ECDC will ask you to sign a form verifying that you have received your child's records. Otherwise ECDC will keep your child's records for at least five years.

### **Amending Your Child's Record**

You have the right to add information, comments on data, or any other relevant materials to your child's record; you also have the right to request deletion or amendments of any information contained in your child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

1. If you are of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to have a conference with the Director to make your objections known;
2. The ECDC shall, within one (1) week after the conference, give you a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decisions. If this decision is in your favor, ECDC shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

## **Responsibilities of the Program**

### **Providing Information to EEC**

ECDC must make available to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) any information required to be kept and maintained under licensing regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes children's records. Authorized employees of EEC are not to remove any identifying case materials from the school's premises and are required to maintain confidentiality of individual records.

### **Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

All school staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to the School Director, the Department of Social Services and/or the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The Policy for Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect is provided in this Handbook.

### **Notification of Injury to Your Child**

ECDC must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. ECDC must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child. Written ECDC Health Care Policies are available from the Director upon request.

### **Availability of EEC Licensing Regulations**

A copy of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensing regulations for preschool is available upon request.

## **ECDC Lending Library**

ECDC has an extensive list of parenting books that you are welcome to borrow. They are located in the teachers' office along with a sign-out sheet. A list of many of the books follows:

### **After Having a Baby**

D. Bert, K. Dusay, S. Keel, Mary Oei and J. Yanehiro

### **Infants and Mothers**

T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.

### **Your Baby and Child**

Penelope Leach

### **Welcoming Your Second Baby**

Vicki Lansky

### **Best Bets for Babies**

Brooke McKamy Beebe

### **Better Homes and Gardens: New Baby Book**

### **Siblings without Rivalry**

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

### **Parents and Kids Together**

Lisa Lyons Durkin

### **Raising a Happy Healthy Child**

Karen Olness, M.D.

### **Teach Your Baby**

Dr. Genevieve Painter

### **Dr. Mom's Parenting Guide**

Marianne Neifert, M.D.

### **Toilet Learning**

Alison Mack

### **How to Raise a Brighter Child**

Joan Beck

### **Parents: Books for Raising a Healthy Child**

Morris A. Wessel, M.D.

**The Language and Thought of the Child**

Jean Piaget

**The Hurried Child**

David Elkind

**Miseducation**

David Elkind

**Carpentry for Children**

Lester Walker

**Money Doesn't Grow on Trees: A Guide for Raising Financially Responsible Children**

Neales Godfrey and Carolina Edwards

**Solves Your Child's Sleep Problems**

Richard Ferber, M.D.

**Youth Sports Injuries**

John Duff, M.D.

**Keys to Children's Nutrition**

Carolyn E. Moore, Ph. D., R.D., Robert Schulman, M.D. and Mimi Kerr

**How to Get Your Kids to Eat... But Not Too Much**

Ellyn Satter

**How to Teach Nutrition to Kids**

Connie Liakos Evers, M.S., R.D.

**Cookbooks**

**Young Chefs Nutrition Guide and Cookbook**

Carolyn E. Moore, Ph.D., R.D., Mimi Kerr and Robert Schulman, M.D.

**The Science Chef**

Joan D'Amico and Karen Eich Drummond

**Cooking Wizardry for Kids**

Margaret Kenda and Phyllis S. Williams

**Another Little Mouth to Feed**

Florence K. Rogers

**Assorted magazines from LadyBug and Spider are also available.**

**ECDC NURSERY SCHOOL, INC.  
2008-2009**

**General Information**

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**Parent Acknowledgement**

**ECDC Nursery School, Inc. Parent Handbook  
2008-2009**

**By signing below, we acknowledge that we have read the ECDC Nursery School, Inc. Parent Handbook 2008-2009 and we will follow its provisions as they relate to our child(ren).**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature/Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature/Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return this signed form to ECDC**