



**THE PLAYHOUSE PRESCHOOL**  
**PARENT HANDBOOK**  
**The Flexible, Family Preschool**



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## NOTICE OF CHANGES

This handbook may be updated periodically. Please check the website for newer versions. If there are any substantial changes in either fees or policies, you will be notified at least 30 days in advance. All changes from the previous version will be underlined.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Our mission at The Playhouse Preschool is to offer a developmentally appropriate, process-oriented program for all children ages 2 months to 7 years. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. We do not require children to be toilet trained to join our program. We accept children with developmental delays as long as we have the training and equipment to provide the best care for the child. We embrace the philosophy that young children learn best through active play and exploration in a safe, nurturing environment. Your child's cognitive, language, social/emotional, and fine and gross motor skills will emerge and grow at their own pace as s/he participates in a balance of child-directed and teacher-facilitated activities. Our teachers will provide a classroom of stimulating learning centers, small and large group activities, snack and clean-up time, toileting and hand washing assistance, diaper changes if necessary (please send a supply), outside play, and a group meeting time with songs, games, and stories.

## **PROGRAM INFORMATION/CURRICULUM**

The Playhouse Preschool Inc. is owned and operated by Ida Termini, who resides in Medway and is the on-site director and a lead teacher. Our preschool is open year round Monday through Friday, offering an a.m. and p.m. class for children 2.9 years to 5 years of age. Our toddler program is offered each morning, 9:00 to 12:00. We also offer early drop-off at 7:30 a.m. and extended days until 5:30 for all ages. Our infant program is offered Monday through Friday on a full or part time basis.

We have adopted The Creative Curriculum (TCC) for children 0 - 5. This curriculum strongly recognizes the need for attachment and nurturance in order for children to learn. Relying on child development theories and current research, our teachers can chart your child's individual goals and objectives, observe and record their behavior, and utilize this information to plan activities and complete progress reports.

Our school is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care and our teaching staff is also certified by E.E.C. Parents may contact E.E.C. for information regarding our regulatory compliance history (10 Austin Street, Worcester, MA - 508-798-5180). We recommend you visit our school during our regular hours. You may call to schedule an appointment with Ida (508-497-9140 or 508-533-4522). Should you decide to enroll your child, a non-refundable fifty dollar registration fee per family is required. Parents should register their children directly through our web site.

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

We are open 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM every week day year round. We are closed for the following Holidays:

New Year's  
President's Day  
Patriot's Day  
Memorial Day  
Fourth of July  
Labor Day  
Columbus Day  
Thanksgiving and day after  
Holiday Break

There are no make-ups for New Year's, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after and Holiday break. There are also no make-ups for February and April school vacation weeks and anytime Hopkinton schools are closed for snow.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Playhouse values open communication and a consistent connection between the child's family and our teachers, as we become partners in your child's education. We welcome your suggestions and feedback. Our goal is to get to know and care for the whole family. **Parents are welcome to visit our classroom at any time. Our door is always open.** Please walk your child into and out of school at arrival and departure times. We appreciate any information about your child as s/he arrives each day and are happy to chat about how the school day went at departure time. Parents can request a phone call or a conference any time with their child's lead teacher for more in depth questions and concerns. Conference times are available each Monday from 8:00 – 1:00. Our parents will receive a written progress report in November and April, followed by a conference if either the parents or the lead teacher requests one.

We invite our parents to spend time in our classroom during arrival time and enjoy meeting siblings and extended family. We encourage parents to share their time and talents through activities such as storytelling, cooking, music, arts and crafts, or just playing in their child's class.

## PHONE CALLS/CANCELLATIONS

Feel free to call school anytime but please remember that the answering machine is on during school hours. We'll listen to the messages periodically and return your call ASAP.

The Playhouse will make every attempt to be open during poor weather conditions even if Hopkinton schools are closed. If we cannot get teachers to school safely, we will notify you that we cannot open. No make-ups will be allowed for these days.

If conditions worsen during the day, you may receive a call to pick your child up early.

## **GUIDING BEHAVIOR**

Because our teachers are sensitive to the stages of development, they understand that the children are at school to develop many social skills such as making friends, expressing feelings, and sharing. We help the children develop self-esteem, self-control, and empathy in several ways. First, the teachers set the tone of the classroom by being positive examples of cooperative relationships. Second, through careful set-up of the inside and outside environment, the children have enough space, equipment, and teacher attention to keep them safe and diminish conflicts. Third, the children are gently and consistently reminded of the expectations of our preschool and are encouraged to express their needs and feelings in appropriate ways. Removing a child from the classroom is rare and only used if the child has not responded to repeated verbal limits and continues to harm him/herself, others, or the environment. If this becomes necessary, the teacher will accompany the child to a quiet spot to talk about what happened and help the child calm down so that s/he can return to the classroom quickly. Child will be removed for no more than one minute per year of age.

The Playhouse Preschool prohibits the following behaviors: spanking or other forms of corporal punishment of children; subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse or neglect; depriving children of meals or snacks; force feeding children; disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or on the toilet; confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in *lieu* of supervision. Any unusual or excessive practices for toileting are prohibited.

## **REFERRAL SERVICES**

If it is necessary to refer a child for mental health, social, educational, or medical services, the Playhouse director will provide a written statement to the parents indicating the reasons for the referral, summarizing the recorded teacher observations, and describing what efforts have been made to accommodate the child's needs. The Playhouse director will help the parents contact the Special Education director in their town and assist the parents in any way with observations, written progress reports, and attendance at meetings. A written record of the parental authorization, referral and conference results will be kept in your child's file.

Our referral plan proceeds as follows:

1. A member of the teaching team approaches the director with their concern.
2. Either the lead teacher or the director observes and records the child's interactions on three different occasions.
3. The results of the observations are discussed at our staff meeting.
4. The director informs the parent(s) of the issues and recommends an outside evaluation, assisting the family in making contact with the Early Intervention consultant or Special Education director and assists the parents during this process. Written parental

authorization is required for referrals to be made and information to be shared.

## HEALTH CARE POLICY

In order to protect our teachers and children from the spread of germs, we have established this policy regarding illness at The Playhouse Preschool. If your child has had any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours, please keep him or her at home:

1. persistent diarrhea
2. severe cold symptoms (mucous is green)
3. fever above 100 degrees
4. unexplained rash
5. conjunctivitis
6. vomiting
7. flu
8. head lice
9. any contagious illness
10. rapid or labored breathing

If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, we'll call you or your back-up person to pick up your child.

A phone call would be appreciated if your child will be absent from school. Your child may return to school once he or she has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication. A runny nose and slight cough is not a reason to keep your child at home. Please use your own judgment with regards to a cold. If your child has the energy to participate in all of our daily activities, then he or she is welcome at school.

Mildly ill child/Managing infectious disease - If your child becomes ill while at preschool, we will call you to make arrangements for pick-up as soon as possible. Your child will be isolated from the other children and made comfortable (pillow, blanket, books) until you or your back-up person arrives. Your child will not be released to anyone else without prior written consent from the parent(s). Please inform us if the condition is contagious so we may post it on the Parent Info Board.

Emergency numbers & Emergency plan (The Playhouse does not take field trips) - A copy of emergency phone numbers (police, fire, ambulance, poison control, health care consultant, local hospital) and the children's emergency contact information is posted next to each telephone. The lead teacher will inform parents immediately of any injury which requires emergency care beyond minor first aid and will inform parents in writing of any first aid administered to their child within 24 hours of the incident. The incident will be recorded in our Injury Log and the E.E.C. will be notified with an Incident Report. In the event of an emergency, the teacher will call 911 and then call the parents or their emergency back-up number if they

cannot be reached. A teacher will accompany the child to the nearest hospital and meet the parents there.

First aid supplies - All our teachers are certified in Infant/Child CPR yearly and First Aid every three years. Our first aid box is stored out of reach, near the refrigerator, in the snack area. The teachers inform the director if supplies are low so they can be replenished.

Allergy precautions - The director will post the list of children who have allergies and their allergens on the Parent Info Board and in the snack area. The role of each staff member and the procedure to be followed will be listed.

Injury prevention - All toxic and hazardous items are stored out of the children's reach. During daily clean-up, the teachers will check the environment for the removal and/or repair of hazards. The director will record and maintain the injury log, notifying the E.E.C. within 24 hours if a more serious injury has occurred. Documentation of the child's injury will be kept in his/her file.

Infection control - Frequent hand washing by teachers and students is a routine part of each day. The children will be reminded to wash their hands after using the bathroom, holding animals and before snack, lunch and cooking activities. The specific procedures for toileting and diaper changing will be posted. The teachers will clean the bathroom area, water table/toys, and all tables daily. Our school will be professionally cleaned and disinfected weekly.

Children with disabilities or chronic medical conditions - When a child with a disability is enrolled, the director, parents and health care professional (HCP) will form and maintain an individual health care plan. The plan will describe the condition, symptoms, medical treatment necessary in care, potential side effects and potential consequences to the child's health if treatment is not administered. The Director will meet with parents to discuss any necessary changes in the plan as well as pass the information along to the staff.

Back to sleep - Children 12 months of age or younger will be placed on their backs for sleeping unless the child's HCP orders otherwise in writing.

Health Care Consultant  
Caitlin Theodorou  
11 Nazneen Circle  
Hopkinton, MA 01748  
508-435-9363

Our Address  
The Playhouse Preschool  
65 South Street  
Hopkinton, MA 01748  
508-497-9140

Emergency Numbers:  
Fire, Police, Ambulance - 911  
Milford Regional Hospital - 508-473-1190  
Poison Control Center - 800-682-9211

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

The Playhouse will administer only oral and topical prescription and non-prescription medications, except for the EPI pens. The Director as well as each teacher will receive training in the administration of prescription and non-prescription medication. We require written parental and medical authorization to dispense the medicine and maintain a written record of the child, the dosage, the time,

and the method of administration. This information will be kept in the child's file as well as our injury log. We will post staff procedures in the snack area, stating who dispenses the medication and who calls 911 and then the parents. Parents are welcome to train our staff in any health care procedure with the written permission of their HCP. The teachers who administer medications will be evaluated for competency at our yearly CPR training session.

#### Medication Administration Policy:

- a) The parents must provide all medications for their child.
- b) No educator will administer the first dose of any medication except under extraordinary circumstances and with parental consent. (NO EEC regulation states that you cannot give first dose of any medication – unless you mean an epi-pen, diastat, etc., or medications used for emergency chronic conditions. Regulation 7.11(2)(i) states consent is required
- c) All prescription medications must be in original containers with the original labels. Over the counter medication must be in its original packaging.
- d) The teacher must not change the medication directions without the written consent of the licensed health care practitioner.
- e) All medications will be stored out of reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. The EPI pens will be immediately available for use.
- f) All unused, discontinued or outdated medications will be returned to the parents and documented in the child's record. When this is not possible, the medication will be destroyed by the Director, following the DPH recommendations.

## **PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The Playhouse Preschool will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care and custody. Our prevention of abuse and neglect policy is printed in our Employee Handbook and Parent Handbook. The DCF number is located next to our telephone. Everyone on our staff is a mandated reporter and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect.

The procedures for reporting include:

1. The staff member will inform The Playhouse director of the suspected abuse or neglect (suspected parent/adult or another staff member).
2. The director will immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Childcare and Family Services in Framingham; filing a 51A report.
3. The director will notify the Department of Early Education and Care after filing a 51A report or after learning that a 51A report has been filed against The Playhouse.
4. The Playhouse staff has the right to discuss their suspicions with a DCF case worker, even if a 51A has not been filed.
5. The Playhouse staff will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, providing information to the DCF and ECC as requested.

6. An allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member will not work directly with children until the ECC completes its investigation and gives permission for the employee to return.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

We do not require that your child is potty trained to enroll at the Playhouse. We will follow the parents' lead and support this process when your child is at school. Please be aware that the activity level at preschool can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at home. We also request that your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing as much as possible, avoiding onesies, overalls, and tricky buttons to support potty success. Please send in several complete changes of clothing during this period of learning. We always have extra to loan if the backpack is empty.

## **ITEMS FROM HOME**

Please send your child to school in play clothes. Please send in an extra set of clothing and diapers/pull-ups if necessary for your child. The clothing will be stored in his or her backpack and the diapers will be added to our supply next to the changing area.

A child may bring a toy from home, but should be prepared to share it or it will be stored in his/her backpack for the day. The Playhouse is not responsible for any damage done to items brought from home. Toy guns, swords, other weapons or electronic toys are not welcome at our school.

## **SNACK TIME (We are a peanut/tree nut free school)**

The Playhouse will provide snack during the morning and afternoon preschool sessions. Two choices of food are served as well as water and 100% juice. Fresh fruit and vegetables are served daily. We are a peanut/tree nut free school and routinely check labels when purchasing weekly snacks. We are sensitive to those with allergies and are willing to work with the parent so that snack time meets everyone's needs. We don't hesitate to call the parent when in doubt about an ingredient. Parents are welcome to send in special treats for birthdays and holidays. Please check the listing of class allergies on the Parent Information Board. The Playhouse Preschool does not use peanut butter during snack or art projects. Parents also need to check with their child's lead teacher before supplying a special snack.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

The Playhouse parents are responsible for driving their children to and from preschool. It is the responsibility of the parent to make carpool arrangements for their child and to inform The Playhouse in writing if another adult is picking

him/her up. This can be recorded in the Parent Notebook as you enter. Parents need to walk their children into school and escort them out of school at day's end. Please call if your child will be absent or if there will be a change in his/her arrival/departure time.

Kindergartners attending the before/after program in Hopkinton will be transported to/from the Playhouse to/from the Center School by the public school bus.

Our preschool does not take field trips.

## **TRANSITIONING STUDENTS**

As each child approaches the age to transition to the next class (infant to toddler, toddler to preschool), the lead teacher will discuss the child's readiness with the parents. Parents will be encouraged to talk about the change with their child at home in a low key manner. With the parent's permission, the child will visit the new class with his/her teacher for 2 hours per week, leading up to the date of the transition. The teacher will meet with the parents to let them know how the child is doing in the new classroom.

## **FIRE DRILLS AND EVACUATION PLANS**

The Playhouse will practice a fire drill monthly.

The children and teachers will exit (exit doors will vary) the building and walk quickly to our fenced in playground. The lead teacher will carry a cell phone to contact the fire department. They will also bring the attendance sheet to make sure all the children and teachers are accounted for.

If notified by the Police Department to evacuate the building due to a natural disaster or other emergency, your child will be bussed to the Elmwood. School gymnasium and parents will be notified to pick up their child by the director.

In the case of a power outage, loss of heat or loss of water, the director will notify each parent to pick up their child as soon as possible. Parents will be notified if this situation lasts more than 3 hours.

The school is equipped with carbon monoxide detectors.

## **MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

All information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The Playhouse will not distribute or release information in a child's file without the written consent of the child's parent(s). The child's parent(s), upon request, will have access to their child's record. Such access will not be delayed for more than 2 business

days after the initial request. The Playhouse will maintain a permanent written log in each child's file, indicating any time his or her record has been released. Having discussed a change with The Playhouse director, the child's parent(s) have the right to add information, comments and data to the file as well as request a deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record.

## **FEE SCHEDULE AND THE PLAYHOUSE TERMINATION POLICY**

Your Playhouse tuition will be split into five payments over the course of the year; April 30<sup>th</sup>, September 30<sup>th</sup>, November 30<sup>th</sup>, January 30<sup>th</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup>. Current rates are posted on our website. You will be able to check your tuition and payments through our web site at any time. Payment is due no later than 7 calendar days after the due date or a late fee (\$20) is added. Please deposit cash or checks made out to The Playhouse Preschool in the envelope provided or send by mail.

If you need to make arrangements for monthly payments, please discuss this with the Director. A \$6.00 monthly processing fee will be added to offset additional administrative costs.

Tuition for full day year round students will be paid a month in advance. For example, October tuition is due September 1<sup>st</sup>. Your tuition total will be posted to the customer portal monthly. You are entitled to 1 one week vacation per year which you do not have to pay for. Please let us know when you will be using this week before your tuition is posted.

Payment for drop-in and extended days will be required at the time of service. Please pay promptly. If you have more than \$100 outstanding for these services, your child will not be allowed to use any future services until you have paid in full.

Early pick-up, late drop-off, or absence due to illness, weather conditions, etc. does not entitle parents to a credit or a reduction of rate. A fee of ½ hour (\$5.50) will be added on to your next tuition for those arriving more than 15 minutes early or late for departure time.

If payment becomes delinquent for more than 2 weeks, your child will not be allowed to continue to come to preschool and your preschool contract will be null and void until payment is made in full or suitable arrangements are made for payment.

If your check is returned, we will notify you to ask for payment in cash plus a \$35 bank service charge. If we receive two returned checks during the school year, all remaining payments must be made in cash or by certified check.

The Playhouse is closed for 1 vacation week (Dec 24 – Jan 1) which is a paid tuition week. We are open during the February and April school vacation weeks.

## **FAMILY TERMINATION POLICY**

Possible reasons for the suspension or termination of a child from The Playhouse:

1. Parent(s) are frequently late when picking up their child.
2. The child's behavior is so disruptive to the daily functioning of the classroom; an outside evaluation is indicated to recommend appropriate program changes or another educational setting.
3. After exhausting all options, the director and parent(s) cannot reach a solution to a problem, which causes undue tension for all concerned.
4. Parent(s) repeatedly disregard our sickness policy, putting others at risk.
5. A child has a communicable disease and must follow the Board of Health guidelines regarding when s/he may return to school.
6. Tuition payments are consistently late.
7. Consistent late payment of extra fees.
8. The child has not adjusted to preschool within the 30 day trial period

If termination requires legal action on our part to collect any outstanding tuition payments, you will be responsible for any legal fees the Playhouse Preschool incurs.

There will be no refund for tuition already paid except as noted below for new students. You are paying tuition in advance, five times a year (unless you have made other arrangements). If you do not pay your current bill within 7 days of the due date, your child will not be allowed to attend school. We cannot afford for enrolled families to leave for periods during the year where we are not getting paid.

If for some reason you decide to stop bringing your child to The Playhouse Preschool, we would like as much notice as possible so we can offer that spot to someone on our waiting list. Any outstanding fees must be paid on or before your child's last day.

For full day year round students, we require a 30 day notice for termination. You are responsible to pay for the 30 days after the notice or the last day of class attended, whichever is later.

The only tuition refund will be for new students during the 30 day trial period. If either The Playhouse or the family decide during the first 30 days of classes that the child is not ready, you will only pay for actual days attended. Any overpayments will be refunded to you. If you decide to have your child not attend before school starts, you will be charged for the days your child would have attended during the first 30 days.