

PARENT HANDBOOK

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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to William Penn Center Preschool & Kindergarten.

William Penn Center is a program of the Lower Bucks Community Centers, Inc. which was established in 1952. William Penn Center is a private, non-profit, educational facility dedicated to providing the highest quality in children's programs for toddlers, preschoolers, kindergartners and children with special needs.

This Parent Handbook has been designed to provide you with information regarding our school's philosophy, programs, health policies and procedures, financial obligations, rules and regulations, and any other information we feel is important for you to know.

We welcome your comments, questions, concerns, and suggestions about your child's experience at our center. We want your child's experience at William Penn Center to be happy, productive, and educational.

As our programs grow and respond to the needs of our parents, practices and policies may change. You will be notified of these changes via a two week written notice unless the change is mandated by the state or by the William Penn Center Board of Directors.

Thank you for giving William Penn Center the opportunity to serve the children in your family.

II. PHILOSOPHY & MISSION STATEMENT

PHILOSOPHY

All William Penn Center programs are guided by the principle of developmentally appropriate practice. Our staff embraces the view that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development.

Our center offers a “hands on” approach to learning. This style of early childhood education is designed to foster creativity and expanded self expression. William Penn Center teachers manifest their respect for children by encouraging them to think for themselves, make decisions, work toward their own solutions, and express their own ideas and feelings.

The William Penn Center embraces the belief that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children. Parents are encouraged to participate in a variety of center activities, including birthday and holiday celebrations, walking trips, field trips, parent-child experiential evenings, fundraising events, and social activities. Parents are welcome visitors in the classroom at all times.

MISSION STATEMENT

William Penn Center’s preschool programs are based upon the principles of developmentally appropriate practice. Our goal is to give each child a warm environment that encourages the development of socialization skills, independence, and a positive self-image. Our experienced teaching staff embraces the view that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of social, physical, and intellectual development. Teachers manifest their respect for children by encouraging them to think for themselves, to make decisions, to work towards their own solutions, and express their own ideas and feelings. We recognize and foster an active partnership between home and school.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

LICENSING

William Penn Center is fully licensed as an early childhood center by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and as a private academic school by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

TEACHING STAFF

The teachers and assistants at the William Penn Center have many years of experience. Classroom teachers are certified in early childhood education. Staff are guided by the philosophy and goals of the William Penn Center and are constantly striving to better meet the needs of our children and their families.

Staff participate in professional development opportunities which include staff meetings and special workshops. Staff not holding current criminal history and child abuse clearances must sign a disclosure statement and apply for new clearances before starting to work in our centers. All staff members receive child care First Aid certification and many receive CPR certification.

SUPPORT STAFF

The support staff is composed of the following individuals:

1. Administrator
2. Center Director
3. Director of Education
4. Business Manager/Bookkeeper
5. Program Coordinator
6. Social Worker/Family Service Coordinator
7. Special Educator Inclusive Program/Speech Therapist
8. Food Service Worker

The center's goal is to attract and retain trained and experienced professionals who are competent and committed to supporting the quality programs offered at William Penn Center.

HOURS

The William Penn Center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, throughout the year.

RATIOS

William Penn Center has a capacity of 90 total children with full-time and part-time placements available. Children are organized into groups by age and developmental abilities.

Staff-child ratios and group sizes are established according to state licensing guidelines. Minimum ratios are as follows: Young Toddlers 1:5, Older Toddlers 1:6, Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten 1:10. William Penn Center ratios, at most times, are lower than the state minimum requirements.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Lower Bucks Community Centers, Inc. has a Board of Directors made up of professionals in the Bucks County community. Some of these individuals are also parents whose children attend or have attended a William Penn Center program. The Board of Directors meets monthly to insure that all center standards, policies, procedures, and practices are carried out in the proper manner. The Board sets general policies, approves yearly budget and tuition fees, as well as acting as an advisory board. The Administrator, Director of Education, Center Director, Business Manager, and Program Coordinator also attend Board meetings and act as liaisons between the Board, staff, and families.

SCHOOL YEAR

William Penn Center's calendar year runs from September through mid June. Summer programs run from June through August. The fiscal year runs July 1st through June 30th. An annual school calendar is provided to each enrolled family.

SPECIAL EVENTS

William Penn Center holds several special events throughout the school year which provide the children the opportunity to show off their classrooms and their artwork, and to engage in various activities with their parents. Some of the special events the school provides are as follows:

- *Fall Festivals*
- *Holiday Sing-Alongs*
- *Parent-Child Night*
- *Family Week Celebrations*
- *Book Fair*
- *Ice Cream Social & Art Show*

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE/PARENT AWARENESS

In accordance with applicable Federal and State civil rights laws and regulatory requirements, you and your children, as a client of this facility, have the right to:

- Be provided services at this facility and to be referred for services at other facilities without regard to your race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age, lifestyle, or sex.
- File a complaint of discrimination if you feel you have been discriminated against on the basis of your race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age, lifestyle, or sex. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with any of the following:

William Penn Center Preschool & Kindergarten
9300 New Falls Road
Fallsington, PA 19054

Department of Public Welfare/ Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Southeast Field Office
1105B State Office Building
1400 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Office Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building
150 S. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3499

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
711 State Office Building
Broad and Spring Garden Streets
Philadelphia, PA 19130

IV. PROGRAM INFORMATION

William Penn Center teachers strive to maintain a strong parent-teacher partnership through a variety of communication and reporting techniques. A newsletter and calendar will be sent home monthly to keep you informed about classroom activities, to suggest home activities that parallel your child's program, and to provide information about current and upcoming events. Formal and informal parent conferences are scheduled during the year. At formal conferences, the teachers will share a written report with you reflecting the developmental progress of your child in various areas. You are also welcome to call and schedule a phone conference or a meeting with your child's teacher at any time throughout the school year.

Classroom activities are focused around many different themes throughout the school year. Themes include: families, community helpers, animals, dinosaurs, countries, holidays, and seasons, in addition to academic themes of colors, shapes, numbers, and letters. This thematic approach enables the teacher to address the various interests of young children, while including an interactive approach to overall growth across developmental areas. Each day's plan provides for a balance of individualized, small group, and large group activities. Appropriate numbers of active and quiet activities are also provided. Teachers move among the children, facilitating their involvement with materials and activities, and encouraging positive social behaviors.

The learning environment provides a wide variety of books, posters, and other printed materials. Children are read to frequently and are encouraged to use books on their own and to select favorite stories to take home. Emergent literacy is fostered through many opportunities for telling and writing stories.

The physical settings of our classrooms are designed to offer a safe, secure, and stimulating atmosphere that invites creative learning, orderly exploration, and positive socialization.

Placement in all programs will be based upon your child's age as of September 1st. Decisions on children who live in school districts with enrollment dates later than September 1st will be made on an individual basis.

The following are descriptions of William Penn Center programs. Programs offered may vary from year to year depending upon clients needs.

TODDLER PROGRAMS

Our full day toddler program is designed for children who will be between 24 and 35 months old by September 1st of the school year. The class is staffed with a teacher and assistant teachers. Class size is limited. The overall classroom goals are:

- * To provide a secure atmosphere in which each child is able to adjust to separation from parents.
- * To provide a warm and happy environment in which each child's physical, emotional, and social needs are determined and met.
- * To provide an informal atmosphere in which each child may choose activities from a variety of age-appropriate learning areas (that the teacher prepares), such as dramatic play, puzzles, arts and crafts, etc.
- * To foster language development through the use of stories, songs, and fingerplays, and through the natural flow of language while engaged in activity.

- * To help each child develop appropriate social skills such as playing together, making friends, taking turns, and conversing with others.
- * To work along with parents to provide a positive toilet training experience.
- * To enhance each child's self-image and sense of accomplishment by encouraging independence and the development of appropriate self-help skills such as self-feeding, assisting in taking care of toileting needs, recognizing belongings, and assisting in dressing as needed.
- * To plan activities that will help each child begin to develop readiness skills and concepts in a relaxed environment.
- * To foster self-control in each child through the use of positive techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to acceptable activities, and setting clear limits.

The full day toddler program provides your child with many opportunities to socialize and form strong relationships. Snack times, lunch, and outdoor play are the less structured parts of the day that offer such opportunities. Weather permitting, children play outside daily, in the morning, and after nap time. A snack and beverage are provided in the morning and after nap. A "Snack Menu" is posted monthly. Children are to bring packed lunches from home. William Penn Center will provide the milk or juice. Special attention is given to this age group's developing tastes and abilities to eat. Parents are encouraged to leave non-nutritional foods at home.

There are scheduled diaper changes/toileting in addition to the individual child's needs being met throughout the day. "Toilet learning" will be followed through in our toddler programs when the parent indicates to the staff that there has been some degree of success at home.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Our combined part-day and full-day preschool programs are designed for children who will be three years old by September 1st of the school year. The programs are staffed with a teacher, assistant teacher, and a special needs assistant teacher. Children with special needs and Individual Educational Plans (I.E.P.'s) are often enrolled in some of our part day programs. The William Penn Center, in partnership with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, is pleased to provide an inclusive environment for all of our youngsters. We have a lot to learn from each other.

The children in these programs benefit from the wonderfully diverse skills and experiences that each child brings to school. For example, those members of the class with previous group experience help to foster feelings of security in those children who are being separated from their parents for the first time. Additionally, the social skills and sense of accomplishment of the children who are developmentally older are enhanced when they are given the opportunity to help their younger classmates.

The overall classroom goals of our preschool classes are:

- * To provide a secure atmosphere in which each child is able to adjust to separation from parents for class sessions.
- * To enhance each child's self-image and sense of accomplishment by encouraging independence and the development of self-help skills.
- * To provide an informal atmosphere in which each child may choose activities from a variety of age-appropriate learning areas facilitated by the teacher, such as dramatic play, blocks, and arts and crafts.
- * To help each child develop appropriate social skills such as making friends, sharing, taking turns, helping, and talking to solve problems.
- * To plan activities that will help each child begin to develop readiness skills and concepts in a relaxed environment.
- * To foster self-control in each child through the use of positive techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting to acceptable activities, and setting clear limits.

Each day's plan provides for a balance of individualized, small group, and large group activities. Appropriate numbers of active and quiet activities are also provided. Teachers move about the children, facilitating children's involvement with materials and activities and encouraging positive social behaviors.

Please note that full-day preschool enrollment is limited.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Our part-day and full-day pre-kindergarten programs are designed for 4 year olds who will be kindergarten age eligible in their local school districts by September of the following year. Class size is limited to 20 children and the programs are staffed with a teacher, assistant teacher, and may include a special needs assistant teacher. Children with special needs and Individual Educational Plans (I.E.P.s) are often enrolled in some of our part day programs. The William Penn Center, in partnership with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, is pleased to provide an inclusive environment for all of our youngsters. We have a lot to learn from each other.

The children in these programs benefit from the wonderfully diverse skills and experiences that each child brings to school. For example, those members of the class with previous preschool experience help to foster feelings of security in those children who are being separated from their parents for the first time.

The social skills and sense of accomplishment of the children who are developmentally older are enhanced when they are given the opportunity to help their younger classmates.

The overall classroom goals are:

- * To provide a secure atmosphere in which each child is able to adjust to separation from parents.
- * To continue to broaden and enhance each child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development by providing activities and experiences that are developmentally appropriate such as dramatic play, games, puzzles, and arts and crafts.
- * To enhance each child's self-image and sense of accomplishment by encouraging independence and the development of self-help skills.
- * To help each child develop appropriate social skills, such as making friends, sharing, taking turns, helping, and talking to solve problems.
- * To provide a relaxed atmosphere in which each child feels positive about school and the learning experience.
- * To plan activities and present information in a context that will build upon each child's experiences and knowledge and broaden his or her sense of awareness.
- * To foster self-control in each child through the use of positive techniques, such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to acceptable activities, and setting clear limits.

KINDERGARTEN

Our kindergarten program, when offered, is designed for children who meet the age eligibility requirements of the school district in which they reside. Minimum enrollment for William Penn Center to provide a kindergarten program is 10 children. The program is staffed with a teacher and opening and closing assistant teachers for extended care. Our kindergarten program follows the kindergarten admission cut-off dates of the school district in which a child resides.

The overall kindergarten classroom goals are:

- * To continue to broaden and enhance each child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development by providing learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate.

- * To provide a relaxed atmosphere in which each child feels positive about school and the learning experience.
- * To enhance each child's self-esteem and nurture his or her sense of accomplishment.
- * To encourage self-reliance and independence in self-directed learning experiences.
- * To plan activities and present information in a context that will build upon the child's experiences and knowledge and challenge each child to think and communicate at a higher level.
- * To foster self-control in each child through the use of positive techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to acceptable activities, and setting clear limits.
- * To provide each child with the tools necessary for a successful first grade experience.

Classroom activities are focused around a number of literature-based themes throughout the school year. Among them are "Mostly Me!", "Animals, Animals", and "Going Places". This approach enables the teacher to address the various interests of young children while including an interactive approach to overall growth across developmental areas. The kindergarten curriculum is designed for children's learning in various subject areas to occur primarily through learning centers. These centers, facilitated by the teachers, encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning and discovery. Listed below are the content areas of the kindergarten curriculum.

Language & Literacy

Children are given many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful tools of communication. Instruction in letter names, sounds, and formation are incorporated in a "Whole Language" approach using the Harcourt Brace theme-based language arts program, First Street-A Treasury of Literature. This highly motivational method is the basis upon which meaningful language activities are planned. High quality children's stories and poems, as well as nonfiction and resource materials, provide information and an appreciation of the written word. Children's dictated stories, journals, charts, labels on artwork, etc., are also ways in which print is used to express ideas and information. The use of language is extended across the curriculum through the integration of listening, speaking, writing, reading, spelling, and thinking skills into other content areas of the curriculum.

Mathematics

Our learning in mathematics is based upon “Mathematics Their Way”, an activity-centered math program in which the necessary mathematical skills of patterning, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring, comparing, and graphing are taught in a "hands-on" approach.

Children are given many opportunities to manipulate and explore objects and materials in order to "discover" mathematical properties. Explorations are guided by the teacher and move from simple to increasingly more complex concepts. "The goal of the math activities...is to develop understanding and insight of the patterns of mathematics through the use of concrete materials. The activities are designed to help young children see relationships and interconnections in mathematics and to enable them to deal flexibly with mathematical ideas and concepts." (From Mathematics Their Way) This method stresses real-life mathematical experiences. The concrete materials used offer the opportunity to problem-solve and explore a wide range of interrelated math concepts.

Science

Our science activities will be drawn from the MacMillan “Early Science Big Books” series. This program has been created to build upon the natural curiosity and spirit of investigation that each child brings to school. Exploratory science projects, involving topics such as "An Apple a Day", "The Mystery of Magnets", and "Squirrels All Year Long", help children to better understand the environment in which they live. Children develop the skills of making observations and predictions and verifying results. Language art skills are extended across the curriculum through the recording of observations, predictions, and verifying results by using charts and stories. Demonstrations and visits from resource people, as well as the children's sharing of their own treasures from nature, expand the children's range of scientific awareness.

Social Studies

Social Studies activities are intended to enhance self-esteem and expand upon each child's experience with the outside social world. National holidays and traditional ethnic celebrations are observed, often incorporating traditional foods, songs, costumes, and stories.

Activities are designed to encourage an appreciation of the similarities and differences among people. Historical topics and current events that are appropriate to the child's developmental level, such as the Olympics and Earth Day, are covered. Field trips may be planned to broaden the children's social living experiences to the outside world.

Fine Arts

Art and music activities relating to topics of study are integrated into the program on a daily basis. Opportunities to listen to music, to make music by singing and playing instruments, and to move to music are provided.

Art projects extend learning and develop small motor skills while providing pleasure and pride in one's work. Free exploration of a variety of art materials is available on a daily basis as well. The children's work is prominently displayed throughout the classroom. Exposure to the art and music of others fosters an appreciation for creativity.

A full day kindergarten program will provide many opportunities for your child to socialize and form strong relationships. Lunch time and outside play are less structured times of the day that offer such opportunities. You are to provide a packed lunch for your child each day and William Penn Center will supply the milk. Additionally, a morning snack is given to the children, and, for those who stay for extended care, an afternoon snack. A "Snack Menu" is posted monthly. Children are given the opportunity to play outside, weather permitting, every day after lunch. It is important for your child to wear clothing that is appropriate for the weather.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN/KINDERGARTEN ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

These programs, when offered, provide a more academic environment for children who are enrolled in a Pre-K program or Kindergarten. The programs feature the use of children's literature as the inspiration for adventures with letters and numbers and experiences in creative art and music. These programs are a natural extension for children whose parents desire greater academic challenges for them. The enrichment classes also afford the opportunity for this small group of children to enjoy lunch together each day!

SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS

The William Penn Center offers a part-day, 4 week long inclusion camp in July in partnership with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22. This camp program is called "Kids Club". Camp registration will begin in early spring. Full time enrollees will also have access to a summer program that extends until Labor Day.

V. ENROLLMENT

Prior to enrollment, a visit should be scheduled to introduce the parent and child to the school and to observe the program in which they are interested in enrolling. This is to assure that both the parent and the child are comfortable and that the program fits their needs. If, after the visit, the decision to enroll the child is made, a registration form and fee must be completed, signed and returned. Once the registration fee is paid, the child's name is then added to the class list.

When the child is registered, a package will be sent to the parent containing the following list of forms to be completed, signed, and returned, along with the appropriate escrow deposit. All forms and escrow deposit must be returned to the office prior to the child's start date.

Please note: If the administrative team and teachers of William Penn Center feel that a child's placement is inappropriate and/or the center is unable to meet the child's needs, William Penn Center will ask for withdrawal of the child with a 2 week notice. * Please refer to Discipline Policy on pages 24-25

EMERGENCY CONSENT/PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

An “Emergency Contact/Parental Consent” form must be submitted prior to any child starting in a William Penn Center program. This form is to be reviewed and updated every 6 months, or when changes occur, in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by our licensing agency.

AGREEMENT FORM

An agreement form must be submitted prior to any child being enrolled in a William Penn Center program. This form confirms that the enrolling guardian understands the philosophy, programs, and relevant financial terms. This form is to be reviewed and updated every 6 months or when changes occur in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by our licensing agency.

CHILD’S HEALTH ASSESSMENT FORM

A Child’s Health Assessment form **must** be submitted prior to any child being enrolled in a William Penn Center program. It must reflect that all immunizations are up-to-date and that the child has had annual health exams.

The physician **must** address all areas on the form, even if the child is not due for certain screenings at the time of the physical. In this case, the physician may write “N/A” (non-applicable) in those areas. Children’s signed medical records will be reviewed by an appropriate staff member who will note any specific health concerns and bring them to the attention of the teaching staff. This form must be updated annually in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by our licensing agency. Immunizations records are updated with the state on a regular basis.

CHILD’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY/PROFILE

A Child’s Autobiography/Profile should be completed prior to any child being enrolled in a William Penn Center program. This form will help the teacher in getting to know the child and being able to encourage him/her to feel important and happy about coming to school.

VI. FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

FUNDING AGENCIES

William Penn Center is a United Way Agency. Scholarships based upon need are available through United Way, Apple Child Care, and William Penn Center. Further information is available through our business office.

REGISTRATION FEE/ESCROW DEPOSIT

A non-refundable registration fee and escrow deposit must be submitted prior to the child's start date of any given program. Registration fees are noted on the tuition schedule.

An escrow deposit in the amount of one week's tuition is required for all full-day children prior to enrollment. This deposit is applied to the last week of school the child attends. Nursery school enrollees are required to pay one and one half month's tuition prior to the starting in a program. This deposit is applied to the first month's tuition the child attends and the last month's tuition.

WEEKLY/MONTHLY TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition payments are to be paid in either weekly or monthly installments.

Weekly tuition (full day children) must be received on the first day of the week the child attends. If tuition is not paid by Wednesday, a late fee will be assessed. If payment in full is not received by the end of the current week, the child may not return to school until payment is made in full.

Monthly tuition (part day children) must be received by the first of each month. Payment of tuition after the fifth of the month will result in a late charge. If payment is not received by the fifteenth of the month, the child may not return to school until payment is made in full.

In the event of the withdrawal of a child, the full-day tuition payment made in advance for one week's tuition, or the part-day tuition payment made in advance for 1/2 of June is refunded only if two weeks written notice is given and the documented reason for withdrawal is the long-term illness of a child or family member, or the relocation of the family.

BANK SERVICE CHARGES

A bank service charge in the amount of \$15.00 will be assessed for any check returned to the William Penn Center by the bank for non-payment.

LATE FEES

Part Day programs end at 11:30 or 11:45 AM depending on program. For Full Day programs the center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Any parent who picks up their child after hours will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$5.00 for each additional 5 minutes. If for any reason you should have an emergency, please contact the school as soon as possible. Our closing staff members have evening obligations, as do client families. They must be allowed to leave when their work hours are over.

FAMILY DISCOUNTS

For families enrolling more than one child, a 10% discount is given to the lesser of the two program tuitions. Tuition for additional children in a family will receive a 15% discount.

TUITION ADJUSTMENTS

Full-time tuition charges are due weekly. Part-time tuition charges are due monthly. No tuition adjustments will be made for vacations, holidays, illnesses, or program cancellations due to inclement weather, utility emergencies or state/federal mandated emergencies.

Make-up days (on a day your child is not regularly enrolled) are not permitted. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

VII. GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

TRAFFIC PATTERNS (Please refer to attached part-day & full-day traffic pattern maps)

Part-day Classes:

Please enter the school grounds by the Historic Fallsington sign and follow the drive to the large sycamore tree at the bottom of the hillside driveway.

Please wait there until the teachers on the porch are ready to greet your child.

Drive up the hill to drop-off or pick-up your child.

We try very hard to keep our line moving at pick-up time, however, if time is at a premium for you, please park in the parking lot and walk up the pathway to pick up your child.

Full-Day Classes (if arriving BEFORE 8:45 A.M./if picking-up BEFORE 3:30 P.M.)

Pull up the driveway. Park your car and **turn off the engine**. Please bring your child into the classroom. Sign your child in. Please leave written messages on the clipboard.

Full-Day Classes (if arriving AFTER 8:45 A.M./if picking-up AFTER 3:30 P.M.)

Please park in the parking lot and walk your child up the walk to the full day classroom. Please sign in when you arrive and sign out when leaving. Leave any messages on the clipboard. Be sure that a teacher has acknowledged your child's arrival/departure.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

Children and adults must use seat belts every time they ride or drive in a moving vehicle.

Enter and leave the parking areas with extreme caution.

Always be on the lookout for children.

Always hold your child's hand when going to and from a car. Do not let your child run ahead of you.

When your car is parked in either the parking lot or driveway area, please make certain that your engine is not left running. An accident can happen in an instant.

On our part, we will continue to discuss car safety precautions with your children.

HOLIDAYS & CLOSINGS

The center will follow the calendar prepared for William Penn Center programs. Calendars vary somewhat for part-day and full-day programs.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

During weather emergencies, **NBC News - Channel 10 and WPVI News – Channel 6** will announce if William Penn Center Preschool is closed or has a delayed opening. We will make every attempt to open the center. However, if public schools, businesses, and industries are closing, then for the safety of the children and staff we will most likely close. In case of severe weather or utility emergency while we are in session, all parents will be contacted for early pick-up. If a parent cannot be reached, we will refer to the child's Emergency Contact form for releasing instructions.

Please note that a **“2 hour delay”** **pertains to full-day classes ONLY**. These programs open at 6:30 A.M. A delay means that full-day classes will start at 8:30 A.M. Delays **DO NOT affect part-day preschool programs** since these programs begin at 9:00 A.M. on a daily basis.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Health experts agree on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of groups of children spending too much time in closed indoor settings. If a child is well enough to be in the program then the child is generally assumed to be well enough to go outside. This is a licensing regulation in Pennsylvania (3270.114). Except in extreme weather, children are expected to go outside every day. The director will determine if weather conditions are acceptable for outdoor play. Please have your child dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the weather.

SICK CHILDREN

It is common for babies to have 8 -10 illnesses a year and preschoolers almost as many. It is difficult to attend to the needs of sick children in group child care settings. Parents are strongly encouraged to arrange back-up child care for the inevitable times when their child will be too ill to be at the center.

A child who has a fever (101 degrees or more), or symptoms of illness (such as diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, untreated rash, etc.), should not attend school until he or she has been well or fever-free without medication for 24 hours.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, his or her temperature will be taken. If it is 101 degrees or greater, or if symptoms of illness are evident, we will call you to pick-up your child. When we cannot reach you, we will notify your designated emergency release person and ask them to pick-up your child. We will notify parents whenever we have learned that a classmate or staff member has been diagnosed with a contagious illness.

Exclusion for Illness - (Children should not be in school if any of the following statements are relevant.)

1. The child's illness prevents the child from participating in activities that the facility routinely offers for well children.
2. The illness requires more care than the child care staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.
3. Keeping the child in care poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

Children with a diagnosed case of head lice must be treated according to our guidelines and examined by a member of our staff before being re-admitted.

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the office to let us know.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

If we have been notified that a child or staff member in the classroom has a communicable disease, you will be notified as soon as possible. We will specify the disease and the possible symptoms for which to be alert in a handout for parents. A child with a contagious illness may not return to school until we have received notification from a physician that he or she is no longer contagious. The child must be able to participate in all planned classroom activities before returning to school.

The following guidelines for exclusion from school have been provided to us by the American Academy of Pediatrics & American Public Health Association:

Temperature, oral temperature of 101 degrees or greater, rectal temperature of 102 degrees or greater, axillary (armpit) temperature of 100 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness, until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the facility.

Signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, uncontrolled coughing.

Uncontrolled diarrhea, defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper or toilet use.

Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

Mouth Sores with drooling unless the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious.

Rash with fever or behavior change until a physician has determined the illness not to be a communicable disease.

Purulent conjunctivitis, defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye, until 24 hours after treatment has begun.

Infestation (e.g., scabies, head lice), until 24 hours after treatment was begun.

Tuberculosis, until the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious.

Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment was begun.

Streptococcal pharyngitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated, and until the child has been afebrile for 24 hours.

Varicella (chicken pox), until 6 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted.

Shingles, only if the sores cannot be covered by clothing or a dressing, or until the sores have crusted.

Pertussis, which is laboratory confirmed, or suspected based on symptoms of the illness, or suspected because of cough onset within 14 days after having face-to-face contact with a laboratory-confirmed case of pertussis in a household or classroom, until 5 days of appropriate chemoprophylaxis (currently, erythromycin) has been completed.

Mumps, until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.

Hepatitis A, virus infection, until 1 week after onset of illness or until after immune serum globulin has been given to appropriate children and staff in the program, as directed by the responsible health department.

Measles, until 6 days after rash appears.

Rubella, until 6 days after rash appears.

MEDICATION POLICY

Child care centers are not required to administer medications (3270.133). William Penn Center will administer prescription medicines only if the daily dosages cannot be given at home. Prescription medications may be accepted only in an original container. Written instructions for administration must be either provided from the individual who prescribed the medicine or contained on the prescription label. The label of the medicine container shall identify the name of the medication, the dosage, and the name of the child for whom it is intended. The classroom “Medication Log” must be signed in order for us to administer medication to your child. This log is located in your child’s classroom. **NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED.**

A child care center is a place for well children to play and to learn. Nursery schools and child care centers are not equipped or staffed for the care and supervision of ill children.

EMERGENCY CARE PROCEDURES

Throughout the day staff trained in CPR and in basic emergency first aid are on duty. In the event of an accident that creates a need for medical attention, we will proceed as follows:

1. For accidents, parents receive an “Accident/Incident Report”.
2. For more serious injuries, trained staff will administer first aid and then contact parents by phone.
3. If an accident indicates immediate emergency treatment, we will call 911 for an EMS squad.
4. Physicians will limit their treatment to life saving techniques until parental permission is given for further treatment.

VIII. CLASSROOM POLICIES

SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT SHEETS AND CHILDREN’S DEPARTURE

Parents of full-time children must sign their child “in” when arriving and “out” when leaving (in the log book which is provided by the entrance door of each classroom). This process must be repeated each time a child arrives and leaves each day. Be sure that a teacher has acknowledged your child’s arrival/departure. If some other adult is to pick-up your child, please make sure that person is authorized on your emergency form. This person will need to present photo identification when picking up your child. If a change in pick-up is made over the telephone, we will call you back to verify your identity and instructions.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Please try to remember the following:

Label all clothing.

We do our best to keep track of children's clothing. However, the sheer number of garments makes this job difficult. You are more likely to have missing clothing returned if it is labeled.

Dress your child appropriately.

We believe in "messy" play. Working with water, sand, flour, paint, and other messy materials provides children with opportunities to experience all kinds of measuring, pouring, basic physics and chemistry activities, self-expression, and make believe play. Please dress your child appropriately so she/he can participate without fear of ruining good clothes. Even the use of smocks and paintshirts cannot guarantee clothes will not get messy.

We try to get every child outside everyday. Please bring outdoor clothing appropriate for the day's weather. We recommend layers of clothing which can be worn or removed to ensure your child's comfort during outdoor activities.

Please leave a pair of rubber soled shoes in your child's cubbie if she/he arrives at the center wearing boots or smooth soled dress shoes. **Flip-flops, open back foot wear, sandals, and "jellies" are dangerous, and are not allowed at the center. "Water-shoes" are recommended for outdoor water play. Sneakers and socks remain the safest footwear for active children in a child care center. Children without appropriate footwear will not be allowed on playground equipment.**

All children should have an extra set of seasonally appropriate (properly labeled) clothing stored at the center.

If your child wears diapers, be sure to provide enough for each day's needs. We suggest that you bring in a week's supply at a time.

TOYS FROM HOME

Generally, we discourage children from bringing toys from home, except for specific program purposes such as "Show and Tell". Toys from home often cause conflict and we cannot be responsible for their safekeeping. However, your child may bring a soft, cuddly toy for rest time.

REST TIME

Rest time in our full day programs is from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. Classrooms are darkened and soft music is played to encourage sleep. Staff will also move about the room “tucking in” the children and rubbing their backs when requested.

We realize that not all children go to sleep at rest time. After a period of time lying quietly, youngsters who are unable to sleep will be allowed to look at books and/or have rest time boxes that contain small toys with which they can play on their mats.

All children who are in school for a full day are required to be offered a rest time/nap. For the above reason, children will not be excused from rest time or discouraged from sleeping.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations should be arranged in advance with your child’s teacher. Please check with the teacher about appropriate foods and activities.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

In an effort to affirm each child and family at the center in their choices of cultural holiday celebrations, we encourage families to share their special rituals and traditions throughout the year. Each of us has something special to share which makes our style of celebration unique. Your child and all of the children and staff will grow and benefit from this diversity.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The William Penn Center’s philosophy of discipline focuses on communication. Consistent, clear rules are developed with the children. These rules are discussed often, in order to make sure the children understand them. The staff uses positive approaches to help children behave constructively. Among their guidance methods are redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems, encouragement of appropriate behavior, and the application of logical or natural consequences to problem situations. Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and ideas and to use words instead of physical force in solving their problems. Teachers do not force children to apologize, but they do help them to recognize another child’s feelings. In the event that a child’s response to another child becomes physical, an adult will intervene and discuss the inappropriateness of such a response.

If a problem behavior persists, the parent/guardian of a child will be contacted; they will be asked to work with the teachers and director as a team to develop, carry out, and support a plan focused on helping the child to behave more constructively.

If, despite these combined efforts, a behavioral problem continues that causes a child to be a danger to himself or others (including staff) and/or consistently requires the attention of staff beyond those assigned to the child's class, the William Penn Center reserves the right to discontinue services.

IX. FOOD PROGRAM

William Penn Center provides two snacks daily, including milk or juice. A basic "Snack Menu" will be posted in the kitchen and on a Parent Information Board in full-day classrooms. Breakfast (at no additional cost) is available to those full day children arriving before 8:00 a.m. Full day children are to bring packed lunches from home. We ask that non-nutritional foods such as candy or soda be left at home. William Penn Center provides milk to any child who does not bring a drink for lunch. Please make sure that your child's name appears on his or her lunch box. Lunches should not be stored in school bags. If a lunch item requires refrigeration, you must place that item (labeled with your child's name) in the refrigerator. There is not enough space in our refrigerator to store the entire box. **If sending a hot lunch, it must be in a preheated, non-breakable container. Microwave ovens are not used to heat lunches except in the toddler room.** Children are not forced to eat. No food will be held back as a punishment or used as a reward.

X. FAMILIES IN OUR CENTER

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS:

1. To know about all aspects of the program.
2. To know all about your child's experience in the program.
3. To feel welcome to visit or observe
4. To feel free to ask questions of staff (at times when staff are able to respond without interrupting the program).
5. An assurance that your beliefs, concerns, and values are sought out and respected.
6. An assurance of complete confidentiality on all matters involving the welfare of your child and family.

OBLIGATIONS:

1. To read this handbook and parent agreements and follow all policies and procedures.
2. To read all notices that are sent home with your child.
3. To keep all important information current - addresses, medical exams, etc. and respond to requests for information from staff.
4. To respect staff as professionals who work with you to provide quality child care.

PROGRESS REPORTS

It is important and helpful for both teachers and parents to assess the developmental progress of each child in our programs. Informal reports are prepared during the year and formal conference(s) are held in order to share samples of the child's skills and a general summary of our observation of his/her growth in social, emotional, intellectual and physical areas.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Distributed regularly are announcements containing news of upcoming events at the center, classroom monthly newsletters and calendars, and features of interest to parents. Other memos such as important reminders necessary to update our files for licensing visits (i.e. Health Appraisal, Emergency Contact Form) are also sent home with children. Please check your child's cubbie and/or school bag on a daily basis.

PARENT CONCERNS

We want to respond to any concerns you might have about your experience with the center. You may bring issues to your child's lead teacher, center director, director of education, or administrator at any time.

PARENT OBLIGATION

We expect all adults, including parents, to behave at the center in a manner consistent with its philosophy. Inside the center, we expect:

- No physical discipline of children.
- No verbal threats toward or humiliation of a child, staff member, or parent.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

William Penn Center will strictly follow mandated state regulation concerning release of children. 3270.117 (a) A child shall be released only to a child's parent or to an individual designated in writing by the enrolling parent. (b) In an emergency, a child may be released to an individual upon the oral designation of the parent, if the identity of the individual can be verified by a staff person. 3270.117a Release of Children – Statement of Policy. The facility operator shall release a child to either parent unless a court order stating otherwise has been provided to William Penn Center.

Divorced or Separated Parents

The center tries to be aware of and sensitive to the families we serve. If divorced or separated parents are sharing custody and there is some way the center can help make this easier (or avoid making the situation more difficult) let us know. Parents should know that without a legal document, we cannot presume one parent has more rights or fewer rights than the child's other parent.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Children need a safe, nurturing environment to grow and learn. They need to feel loved by their caregivers. If children's minimal needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, cleanliness, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love, and self esteem are not met, they cannot grow and learn.

Should you have difficulty in providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, you are encouraged to ask for help. William Penn Center provides Family Service Coordinators on site. They maintain regular office hours and can receive messages at any time. Our Family Service Coordinators can also guide families to needed community resources. "Parenting Workshops" are also provided on an on-going basis.

In the rare instance we find that your child's needs are consistently not being met, our staff will work with you to identify your child's needs and assist you in meeting those needs. Center staff are required by state law to report to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare any suspicion that a child has been abused or neglected or is in danger of abuse or neglect. It then becomes the role of the Department of Public Welfare to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with your family to ensure that your child's needs are met.

Perceived Impaired Ability to Drive

If a parent appears to be unable to safely assume responsibility for a child, the William Penn Center will contact an alternate release person as indicated on your child's Emergency Contact/Parent Consent Form to arrange for transportation. If we feel the child is endangered, we may call the Department of Public Welfare or the Police Department.

Car Seat/Seat-Belt Safety

Pennsylvania's "Law of Love" reads as follows:

- Effective August 21, 1993, all children from birth to age 4 must be in an approved car seat and effective February 21, 2003 children from age 4 to 8 must be secured in a seat belt system and an appropriate child booster seat.
- All drivers are responsible for securing children in an approved restraint.
- Violations of this primary law are subject to a \$100.00 fine, plus court costs, EMS, Cat Fund, and Administrative Fees.

For more information call 1-800-CARBELT.

WILLIAM PENN CENTER AIMS TO:

- Promote all aspects of development - social, emotional, perceptual, motor, language, and intellectual - in a loving, nurturing environment.
- Allow each child to develop his or her unique individual talents.
- Develop a foundation that promotes success in later schooling.
- Be free of discrimination or prejudice.
- Be a wonderful place for being a child.

Working together we can accomplish this goal!

Revised: April 2004