

**Early Learning Center  
at Deerfield Academy  
Parent Handbook**



## Contents

IMPORTANT CONTACTS .....	4
MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CURRICULUM.....	5
DAILY SCHEDULES .....	7
Toddler Daily Schedule .....	7
Preschool Daily Schedule .....	8
GOVERNANCE.....	9
Organizational Chart.....	9
ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE .....	10
Intake Procedure .....	10
Waiting List Policy .....	11
Fee Schedule .....	11
Summer Session .....	11
Spring and Summer Session Priority Registration Policy.....	12
Early Drop Off and Extended Day Fee .....	12
Late Fee .....	12
WELLNESS POLICY .....	13
When Your Child Becomes Sick.....	13
Symptoms of Infectious Disease.....	13
Medical Evaluations and Immunizations .....	14
CPR, First Aid and Transportation to the Hospital .....	15
Emergencies While on a Field Trip .....	15
Plan for Mildly Ill Children.....	16
Medication Administration.....	16
Guidelines for Readmitting: Symptom Free for 24 Hours.....	17
Plan for Infection Control .....	18
STUDENT SUSPENSION & TERMINATION POLICIES.....	20
Suspension Policy .....	20
Dismissal or Disenrollment.....	20
Child Guidance Policy.....	20

Termination Policy .....	21
PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT .....	23
NAP POLICY .....	24
CONFLICT RESOLUTION & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES.....	24
Biting Policy .....	24
EMERGENCY/CONTINGENCY PLANS .....	25
Contingency Plans for Emergency Situations.....	25
Plan for Missing Children .....	25
Snow Policy.....	25
REFERRAL PLAN FOR SOCIAL SERVICE AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES .....	26
FOOD AND NUTRITION.....	27
TOYS FROM HOME .....	29
OUTDOOR PLAY .....	29
FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION .....	29
PARENT INFORMATION, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	30
Parents' Rights .....	30
Right to Visit.....	30
Parent Input .....	30
Conferences.....	30
Progress Reports.....	30
Your Child's Records.....	30

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Early Education and Care  
Western Regional Office  
95 Liberty Street, Suite 1124, Springfield, MA 01103  
Phone: 413-788-8401

Early Learning Center Director	Lisa Buck
	Work phone: 413.774.6626
	Email: <a href="mailto:lbuck@deerfield.edu">lbuck@deerfield.edu</a>
	Fax: 413-772-1113

Finance	Holly Rondeau
	Work phone: 413.774.1494
	Email: <a href="mailto:hrondeau@deerfield.edu">hrondeau@deerfield.edu</a>

Director of Human Resources	Sara Cahillane
	413.774.1819
	<a href="mailto:scahillane@deerfield.edu">scahillane@deerfield.edu</a>

## MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CURRICULUM

### **Mission**

The mission of The Early Learning Center at Deerfield Academy (hereafter referred to as the Center) is to provide quality early education and care to the families of Deerfield Academy, Eaglebrook School, and the community. We strive to provide a warm, safe and nurturing environment that encourages independence and self-respect, as well as a sensitivity to and an awareness of others and the environment.

We are committed to building relationships of mutual trust with both parents and their children. Recognizing the parent as the child's first educator and our partner allows us as teachers to co-construct a comprehensive foundation of learning for all children.

### **Philosophy**

Our philosophy is based upon fostering children's self-confidence and helping them build a positive self-image, while encouraging the development of healthy social emotional skills. We respect each child's unique pattern of growth and development and their capacity to learn. By creating an environment that peaks children's curiosity and provides them with enriched opportunities, we hope they will develop a lifelong love for learning and a desire to take risks.

### **Program**

The Center is located on Route 5 & 10, a half mile south of Deerfield Academy. Our preschool classroom serves children 2 years 9 months to 5 years and the age range for our toddler program is from 15 months to 2 years 9 months. All teachers are certified by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and participate in ongoing professional development. There are two (2) co-teachers in each classroom, with a low teacher/child ratio.

Enrollment priority is given to Deerfield Academy employees first, Eaglebrook School families second, and additional openings will be available to the children in the surrounding community.

Hours of operation are from 8 am-4 pm Monday through Friday during the academic year (early drop off at 7:30 am and late day till 4:30 pm are available for an extra charge).

The Center is also open for eight weeks during the summer. Summer hours are 8 am-4 pm with no early or late hours.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum connects the child to the world in which they live. We bring the child's family, culture, community, and natural environment into the classroom and use it as starting point to engage children in math, science, language, literacy, motor function, and the arts.

Lessons are purposefully planned to support executive functions and enhance the child's working memory, mental flexibility, and self-control, allowing them to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behavior.

We use scaffolding as a teaching strategy to assist the learner in developing a new skill or knowledge and promote engagement, motivation, critical thinking skills, and independence.

## **Core Values**

**Citizenship:** Our goal is to create a safe environment where each child feels like a valued member and is encouraged to be respectful, empathic, compassionate, and inclusive.

**Inquiry and Wonder:** Our classrooms and curriculum are intentionally designed to trigger children's curiosity and sense of wonder so they will ask questions, make discoveries, share ideas, and better understand the world around them.

**Reflection:** Reflective practices allow the child to build memory, ask questions, investigate, make considerations, problem-solve, and be mindful.

**Fun:** When children have fun, the brain responds positively, optimal activation occurs, and information is processed more efficiently. Fun invites learners to explore, keeps them curious and motivated, and increases their attention span and memory.

## **Behavioral Expectations**

We Are Kind.

We Take Care of Ourselves.

We Take Care Our School and Community.

Teaching, modeling, and reviewing the Center's behavioral expectations will encourage children to practice their self-help and adaptive skills and become social thinkers who develop a strong sense of self and community.

## DAILY SCHEDULES

### Toddler Daily Schedule

7:30	Early Arrival (Limited)
8:00	Arrival, Greet children, Choice Time
9:00	Hand Washing, Morning Snack
9:15	Story Time
9:30	Toileting/Diapering, Choice Time
9:50	Clean Up, Circle Time and Songs
10:15	Teacher Directed Lesson
10:30	Clean Up
10:45	Outside Time
11:20	Hand Washing
11:30	Early Dismissal and Lunch
12:00	Toileting, Diapering, Teeth Brushing
12:20	Stories
12:30	Dismissal/Nap/Rest Time
2:30	Quiet Activities, Manipulatives
2:45	Toileting, Diapering
3:00	Hand Washing, Snack
3:15	Story Time, Choice Time, Outside
4:00	Dismissal
4:30	Extended Day Dismissal

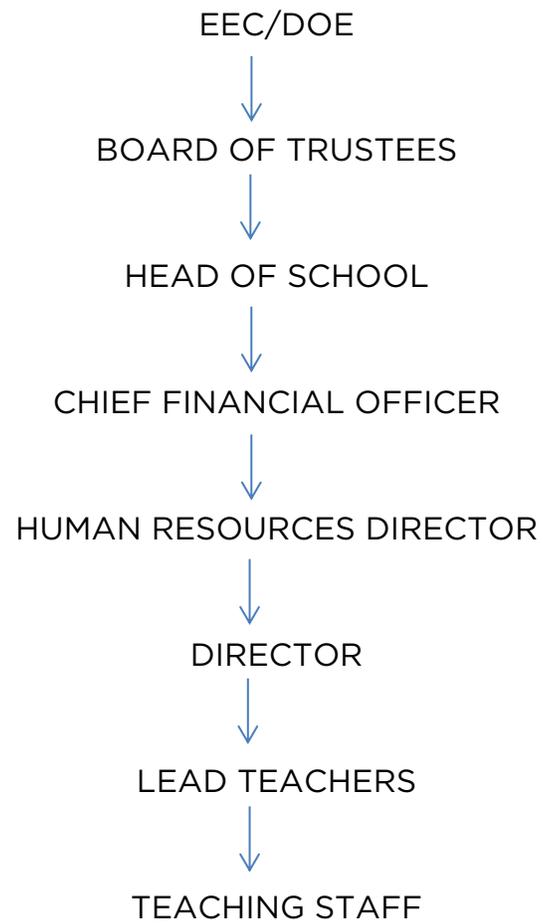
## Preschool Daily Schedule

7:30	Early Arrival
8:00	Arrival, Table Activity, Books, Puzzles, Writing Center, Sensory Table
8:40	Hand Washing, Morning Snack
9:00	Toileting/Choice Time
9:45	Morning Meeting and Yoga,
10:10	Teacher Directed Lesson
10:30	Outside Time/Early Dismissal (Weather permitting)
11:30	Hand Washing, Lunch, Toileting, Brushing Teeth, Choice Time, Dismissal
12:30	Story Time/Nap Time
2:30	Quiet Activities, Toileting, Snack
3:15	Choice Time, Outside, Dismissal
4:00	Dismissal
4:30	Extended Day Dismissal

# GOVERNANCE

## Organizational Chart

### EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE



## **ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE**

The Center does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, transgender status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, age, disability, veteran status, or any other classification protected under state or federal law. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Enrollment priority is first given to families in which one or both parents work at Deerfield Academy (DA). Once Academy families are enrolled, the next priority is given to families in which one or both parents work at Eaglebrook School (EBS). Space not committed to families from Deerfield Academy and/or Eaglebrook School is available to families from the larger community. Additionally, within these three populations, priority for enrollment may be provided to families requesting the higher number of hours of care per week, over those requesting fewer hours of care per week.

Every effort will be made to accommodate schedule requests; however, the Academy cannot guarantee care in every circumstance. The Academy reserves the right to change enrollment policies as business demands change.

All children should arrive by 9:30 am, unless you have an appointment for your child. Parents picking up children in the morning for appointments should bring children back before lunch time. Bringing them back during nap time is very disruptive for everyone. Please try to make appointments in the afternoon. Please call the school if your child is home sick or won't be coming to school on his/her scheduled day.

### **Intake Procedure**

Prior to a child's enrollment, the director will schedule an orientation visit with the parent and child. The director will share information about the center and the parent will share information about the child and his/her needs. The parent will be given a packet of forms to be completed before the child can officially start at the Center. The parent will also receive copies of the Center's handbook, including the statement of purpose, health policy and discipline policy. Both the parent and child will be given a tour of the center and spend time visiting the classroom where they will meet the child's teachers. Once the slot is available and the forms are completed, the child may be admitted to the center. A waiting list will be maintained by the director and parents will be called when a slot becomes available.

## **Waiting List Policy**

The Center serves toddlers and preschool age children, 15 months-5 years. The population comes from Deerfield Academy, Eaglebrook School, and the community at large. A waiting list is maintained with priority given to Deerfield Academy employees first, Eaglebrook School families second, and full-time schedules will be given priority over part time schedules. The priority order for our registration and waiting list will be as shown below, with #1 having the highest priority and #7 having the lowest priority:

1. All current DA families, regardless of length of day
2. All current EBS families, regardless of length of day
3. All current full day Community families, priority given to those choosing more days
4. All DA families on wait list, regardless of length of day
5. All EBS families on wait list, regardless of length of day
6. All full day Community families on wait list, priority given to those choosing more days
7. All half day Community families (both current and on wait list) priority given to those choosing more days.

## **Reserving a Spot for an Age Ineligible Child**

Parents will be given the option to pay to reserve a spot for their child who is not old enough to attend (15 months) only if it is the last slot available and they want to hold the slot for their child. The protocol for reserving a slot is the same as that of our waiting list.

## **Fee Schedule**

Academic year fees are paid on a monthly basis on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month from September-May, via check made out to Deerfield Academy and either mailed to Deerfield Academy Finance Office, P. O. Box 87, Deerfield, MA 01342, or placed in the lock box located next to the Director's office. Parents are responsible for their full fee regardless of absences and holidays. Parents are charged for three vacation weeks (two in December and one in March).

## **Summer Session**

During the summer we offer an eight-week summer session for current families. The summer session begins a week after the academic program ends. The hours are from 8 am-4 pm and priorities are given to two working parents. The summer session consists of two teachers with nine children. Space is limited. Summer fees are paid at the beginning of each week, throughout the eight-week program. (See Academic year information about mailing address and lock box.)

### **Spring and Summer Session Priority Registration Policy**

Our spring and summer sessions have a different priority list from our school year priority list. The basis for this is to cover those families in which both parents are working at those times, with DA working families taking priority. Protocol after these families will follow that of the academic year priority list, with the exception of the Waiting List. We will only go to the Waiting List for the summer session if there are still open slots after all current families' needs have been met.

### **Early Drop Off and Extended Day Fee**

There is a fee for early drop off (before 8 am) and extended day (until 4:30 pm). These spaces are limited and we will make every effort to accommodate you. Please ask for current fees.

### **Late Fee**

Center staff understand that parents' schedules can be demanding and sometimes unpredictable. However, to show respect to your Center's teachers and their length of day, please make every effort to pick your child up on time every day. If you are going to be late please call the Center @ (413) 774-6626. Except for in the case of an emergency, a late fee of \$10 will be charged (per child) if parents are late for any part of the first 10 minutes beyond their scheduled pick up time. Thereafter, an additional \$20 will be charged for every 10-minute period of lateness, e.g., 10 - 20 minutes late becomes \$30 (\$10 + \$20), 20 - 30 minutes becomes \$50 (\$10 + \$20 + \$20). The late fee for any part of a half hour beyond 30 minutes is an additional \$50.

## WELLNESS POLICY

The Academy's top priority is to provide a healthy and safe environment for your child. The following policies are in place to accomplish this:

### When Your Child Becomes Sick

Staff will take precautions when children become ill while at the Center. For the health and safety of other children and the smooth operations of the Center, parents should **not** bring children to the Center if they are symptomatic of a contagious condition. A child must be well enough to be able to participate in Center activities with **reasonable comfort, including being outside with the group during scheduled outside time**. This means that care for your child given by Center staff must be able to be provided without compromising the care of the other children. Generally, if a child's appearance or behavior is different, if they are unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, and/or difficult to awaken please keep them at home until their health has improved.

### Symptoms of Infectious Disease

Children who exhibit symptoms of infectious disease, such as gastrointestinal, respiratory and skin rashes, should not be present at the Center if it is determined that any of the following exist:

- respiratory symptoms including, but not limited to, difficult or rapid breathing, severe coughing, high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing, inability to lie comfortably due to continuous cough;
- fever (over 100 degrees),
- unusual lethargy,
- irritability, persistent crying;
- diarrhea;
- vomiting;
- mouth sores, unless the physician states that the child is noninfectious;
- rash with a fever or behavior change until the physician has determined that the rash is not due to a communicable disease;
- purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids) until examined by a physician and treated as required;
- tuberculosis, until the child is noninfectious;
- impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has started or all the sores are covered;
- head lice and free of all nits or scabies and free of all mites;

- strep infection, until 24 hours after medical treatment and the child has been without fever for 24 hours;
- sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present;
- hepatitis A unless treated by a physician;
- chicken pox until the last blister has healed over;
- itching that is persistent of the body or scalp;
- or other signs of serious illness.

Some illness may require that your child be evaluated by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner, and a parent provides a note that states that the child is considered to pose no health risk to the other children. The director and/or teachers will inform you when this is necessary.

**Nevertheless, the Center staff will make the final decision concerning whether a child presenting symptoms of illness should be present at the Center and among other children.**

If a child develops symptoms of an infectious disease while at the Center, or if staff feel that a child is unable to keep up with the activities of the day and it is in the best interests of the child to go home, the child will be offered his/her cot, or other comfortable spot in which to rest quietly. The child's parents will then be contacted and it is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements for the child to be picked up as soon as possible. Parents must provide the center with the names of two or more people who could assume temporary care of your child in the event that you cannot be reached and the child needs to go home. We strongly advise that you have a contingency back-up plan for days when your child cannot attend school due to illness. The Center Director will notify parents immediately in writing when a communicable disease has been introduced into the Center, according to the Center's Health Manual.

### **Medical Evaluations and Immunizations**

At the start of care each year, parents must ensure their children have satisfied the State mandated medical evaluation, and supplied completed forms, in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health requirements for immunization against polio, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, mumps, Hib and German measles. In addition, for all children aged 19 months or older, a record must be provided stating a child has either received one dose of varicella vaccine, or has already had chicken pox. Children older than nine months and under the age of four years must be screened for lead poisoning

unless the examination is objected to on religious grounds. Parents are responsible for updating their child's files for immunizations annually.

### **CPR, First Aid and Transportation to the Hospital**

In the case of an emergency or illness (such as seizure, a serious fall or serious cut), the teacher in charge will begin administration of emergency CPR or first aid while the assistant teacher or second teacher takes the other children to another area of the room. Both staff members should respond in a calm and reasonable manner.

1. Other staff will be alerted to send for assistance, be it the Program Director or another person in the center.
2. In the event a situation arises that is life threatening or the child cannot be comfortably restrained in a car, an ambulance will be called immediately. The parent will be called to meet the child and staff at the hospital. The teacher or other designated staff will go with the child in the ambulance. The child's file will be taken, including permission forms and pertinent insurance information if the center has it.
3. If the emergency is non-life threatening, then the child will remain at the center and wait for his/her parent or designated emergency person to pick him/her up.
4. If a parent comes to pick up the child and needs assistance, the teacher or Program Director may offer to accompany the parent and child.
5. When parents cannot be reached, those listed as emergency contacts will be called as a further attempt to reach the parents. In the event a parent cannot be reached immediately, a designated staff member will continue to attempt to reach the parents. If necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance and the child's whole file will be taken; including permission forms.
6. If support is needed in determining the appropriate procedure to follow, (whether an ambulance should be called or not), the program's health consultant may be called at the Deerfield Academy Health Center.
7. The program will immediately report to the Department of Early Education and Care any injury to, or illness of any child which occurs during the hours while the child is enrolled in care and which requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment.

### **Emergencies While on a Field Trip**

1. If an accident or acute illness occurs on a field trip, the lead teacher will take charge of the emergency, assess the situation, and give CPR or first aid as needed. The method, urgency and transportation for the child to receive medical

treatment will be determined by the lead teacher based on the severity of the emergency or illness. If necessary, an ambulance will be called.

2. The program director, or other designated adult, will be contacted by the lead teacher as soon as possible and informed of the nature and extent of the injury and the proposed plan of action.
3. As a preventative measure, prior to departure from the center, the Program Director and/or lead teacher will determine appropriate guidelines to be followed during the field trip to insure continuity and safety of the children including: first aid kit will be taken in all vehicles on all field trips; and emergency information, including contacts and telephone numbers, will be taken on all field trips.

### **Plan for Mildly Ill Children**

Children who are mildly ill may remain in school if they are not contagious (refer to Plan for Infectious Disease) and they can participate in the daily program including outside time. If a child's condition worsens or if it is determined that the child poses a threat to the health of the other children, or if the child cannot be cared for by the classroom staff, the Program Director will contact the child's parent(s). The parent(s) will be asked to pick up the child. The child will be cared for in a quiet area, a classroom or in the office by a teacher, qualified staff member or by the Program Director until the parent(s) arrives to take the child home.

Any toys, blankets, or cots used by an ill child will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by other children.

### **Medication Administration**

The Center will work with parents to administer medication to children according to the following guidelines:

1. The first dosage must be administered by a parent at home in case of an allergic reaction.
2. All medication must be given to the teacher directly by the parent.
3. All medications will be stored in the kitchen out of the reach of children (in the cupboard designated by the Red Cross or on the refrigerator door shelf if refrigeration is necessary).
4. The lead teacher will be responsible for the administration of the medication. In her/his absence, the Program Director will be responsible.
5. The Center will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication (excluding topical ointments and sprays applied to normal skin), which will include the child's name, the time, and date of each administration, the dosage,

and the name of the staff person administering the medication. This completed record will become part of the child's file.

6. All unused medication will be returned to the parent.

### **Guidelines for Readmitting: Symptom Free for 24 Hours**

If your child becomes ill during the day and you are called and asked to pick them up, they may not return to school until they have been **symptom free for 24 hours**.

We encourage parents to use the guidelines below for determining if their child is healthy enough to return to school after absence due to illness. Also, please consult with the Director for more information on specific conditions, treatment, and returning to school. Some ailments have state mandated quarantines. The Center reserves the right to request a physician's written authorization for a child to re-enter the classroom after having a communicable disease.

- Chicken Pox: Exclude until all blisters have dried into scabs; about six days after rash onset.
- Cold Sores: Exclude until fever is gone and all sores are crusted over. A written diagnosis from the child's doctor on cause of the child's cold sores is required before re-admittance.
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye): Exclude until 24 hours after treatment begins.
- Diarrhea (Infectious): Generally, exclude until stool has returned to normal form. Each specific disease situation needs to be evaluated on an individual basis. Exclude until diarrhea is gone for at least 24 hours.
- Fever: Exclude until fever is gone for at least 24 hours.
- Fifth Disease: Exclude until fever is gone for 24 hours and child is well enough to participate in normal daily activities (sores may still be present).
- Giardiasis: For those with diarrhea only; exclude until the child has started treatment and diarrhea has not been present for at least 24 hours.
- Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease: Same as Fifth Disease.
- Impetigo: Exclude until sores are healed or can be covered with bandages, or until child has been treated with antibiotics for at least a full 24 hours.
- Head: Lice Exclude until first treatment has been completed and no live lice and no nits can be seen.
- Roseola: Exclude until fever is gone for at least 24 hours.

Staff will be trained in the proper administration of medication by our health consultant or one of the nurses at the Deerfield Academy Health Center to

assure safety and proper practices. In addition, staff are required to take the medication administration online training on an annual basis.

With the written permission of their child's health practitioner, parents will be allowed to train staff in the implementation of their child's individual health care plan.

### **Plan for Infection Control**

The program director shall ensure that staff and children wash their hands with liquid soap and running water using friction. Hands shall be dried with individual or disposable towels. Staff and children shall wash their hands minimally at the following times:

1. Before eating or handling food;
  - a. After toileting;
  - b. After coming into contact with bodily fluids and discharges;
  - c. After handling center animals or their equipment; and
  - d. After cleaning.

The program director or teachers shall ensure that the specific equipment, items or surfaces are washed with soap and water and disinfected with a fresh, standard bleach solution (1/4 teaspoon per 1 qt.) using the following schedule:

1. After each use:
  - a. Sinks and faucets used for hand washing after the sink is used for rinsing a toilet training chair;
  - b. Toys mouthed by children;
  - c. Mops used for cleaning bodily fluids; and
  - d. Thermometers
2. At least daily:
  - a. Toilets and toilet seats;
  - b. Sinks and sink faucets;
  - c. Drinking fountains;
  - d. Water table and water play equipment;
  - e. Play tables;
  - f. Smooth surfaced non-porous floors;
  - g. Mop used for cleaning; and
  - h. Cloth washcloths and towels.
3. At least monthly or more frequently as needed to maintain cleanliness, when wet or soiled, and before use by another child:
  - a. Cots, mats or other approved sleeping equipment;
  - b. Sheets, blankets or other coverings
  - c. Machine washable fabric toys.

All staff should wear non-latex gloves when they come into contact with blood or body fluids. Specifically, gloves should be worn during diapering, toileting, when administering first aid for a cut, bleeding wound, or a bloody nose, or when feeding an infant breast milk. Gloves should never be reused and should be changed between children being handled. Proper disposal of infectious materials is required. Any disposable materials that contain liquid, semi-liquid, or dry, caked blood will need to be disposed of in the secured trash receptacle located in the janitor's closet and marked "Biohazardous waste." The bags should be removed and securely tied each time the receptacle is emptied. Cloth items that come into contact with blood or bodily fluids will be double bagged and sent home. Each staff member will be trained in the above Infection Control Procedures upon employment and before working with the children and then annually.

## **STUDENT SUSPENSION & TERMINATION POLICIES**

### **Suspension Policy**

A child will be suspended from the program if health records are not up to date. The child may return as soon as the health records are in compliance.

### **Dismissal or Disenrollment**

In the event a child is disruptive while attending the center, after attempts to resolve the disruption have been exhausted, the center reserves the right to dismiss the child from attending the center. In this case, first, the director will schedule a conference with the parent(s) and the child's teachers to develop a plan to correct and prevent this negative behavior. If appropriate, a list of referral services will be provided to aid the parent(s). Once the plan is agreed upon by both parties the child may return to the program. However, if the negative behavior should continue to occur, the child may be terminated from the program. Similarly, if a parent is disruptive or unwilling to comply with the policies of the Center, their child may be dismissed from attending the center. A Grievance regarding this dismissal may be filed with the Chief Financial Officer of Deerfield Academy at P. O. Box 87, Deerfield, MA 01342.

Parents are responsible for full payment of their fee while their child is suspended for any reason. Otherwise, their child's slot cannot be held for them.

### **Child Guidance Policy**

Our child guidance policy at the Center is based upon a solid understanding of a child's developmental abilities and needs and respect for each child's self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers shall provide each child with guidance that helps the child develop self-control and self-discipline, as well as a positive self-concept. Discipline and behavior guidance used by each teacher will at all times be constructive, positive and appropriate to the developmental age of each child.

The children are involved in the process of establishing rules to ensure their safety and the rights of all the children. These discussions occur at circle time and spontaneously as conflicts arise. Teachers use positive language to set limits, letting a child know what she/he can do instead of the unacceptable behavior. Teachers give choices when possible and redirect children into

appropriate activities. Children are encouraged to work on resolving their own conflicts with the support and guidance of the teachers. A teacher will intervene if a child is physically endangered by another child. The teacher first gives comfort and attention to the injured party and then helps both children talk about what happened. We ask them to express their feelings and talk about the situation with each other and the teacher. With toddlers, the teacher will verbalize and help “label” what the child is feeling, thereby teaching them to use language to express their feelings. With toddlers we use prevention, redirection, distraction, active listening and clear limit setting. Our goal for preschool children is to help the child process feelings, recognize consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes and develop self-control.

Discipline practices shall support the child’s behavior with positive guidance as well as clear limit setting that fosters the child’s own ability to be self-disciplined.

- Corporal punishment shall not be used.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment.
- No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be subjected to force-feeding.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- No child shall be confined to a swing, high chair or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision.

We believe that parents and teachers must work together to deal with persistent behavioral issues, such as biting or unusual or dangerous aggression to self or other children and teachers. If a child appears to be unusually stressed, anxious, or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors, parents will be consulted. An individual behavior plan may be developed to address the specific behavior.

### **Termination Policy**

A child’s adjustment to the classroom and the appropriateness of Deerfield’s early care and education environment for each child is our foremost concern and responsibility. If the teaching team and the director feel that the program is not meeting a child’s needs, parents will be requested to withdraw the child from the Center on a time line that is mutually agreeable. Other reasons that may result in the termination of enrollment by the Center are as follows:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Lack of cooperation from parents with program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences
- Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats by parents toward the teaching team
- Chronic failure by parents to pick up child(ren) on time
- Parents disciplining, in any way, children other than their own child(ren) while at the program
- Child exhibits special needs or needs related to a serious illness that are not possible to meet at the program. In this case, the program staff will make every effort to involve parents, and possibly other resource persons (as appropriate), in order to decide together on the best course of action for this, prior to any termination.

## PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General Law C119, Section 51A.

1. If a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child she/he must file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
2. The staff member must document her/his observations, including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior and any other pertinent information.
3. The staff member will discuss this information with the Program Director.
4. The Program Director and/or staff person will make a verbal report to DCF, to be followed by a required written report 51A within 48 hours.
5. If a staff member feels that an incident should be reported to DCF and the Program Director disagrees, the staff member will report to DCF directly.
6. All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect that are reported to DCF will be communicated to the parents by the Program Director unless DCF indicates otherwise.

The procedure for identifying and reporting child abuse/neglect while in the care of the Early Learning Center at Deerfield Academy.

1. It is the Early Learning Center's commitment to protect all children in their care from abuse and neglect.
2. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child will be immediately reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).
3. A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform her/him of the filed report.
4. The staff member in question will be immediately suspended from the program with pay pending the outcome of the DCF and EEC investigations.
5. If the report is screened out by DCF, the Program Director and Human Resource Director at Deerfield Academy has the option of having the staff member remain on suspension pending the EEC investigation or allowing the staff member to return to the classroom. The decision will be based on the seriousness of the allegations and the facts available.
6. If the allegation of abuse and neglect are substantiated, it will be the decision of the Program Director and Human Resource Director whether or not the staff member will be reinstated.
7. The Program Director and staff will cooperate fully with all investigations.

## **NAP POLICY**

The children will be provided with a place to sleep, rest, or engage in a quiet activity for a period of time that is appropriate to the needs of the children. The children will be provided with an individually marked cot. Parents need to provide blankets and sheets.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

The director and teaching team at the Center work to create an environment that fosters mutual respect and open direct communication and is also sensitive to others' needs. The Center is committed to responding to and resolving all parent concerns and grievances as quickly as possible.

Concerns and grievances are most effectively addressed within the Center. If a specific classroom concern arises, parents should address the issue with the appropriate teacher. We encourage parents to discuss more general center and policy concerns with the Director, who will involve teachers as needed. The Director may arrange a special conference to assist in addressing parent concerns.

If you, as a parent, have a concern or questions, we ask that you contact the director or your child's teacher immediately to address the issue to everyone's mutual satisfaction.

If, however, after speaking/meeting with the director, a parent feels their concern has not been resolved satisfactorily; parents are encouraged to speak with the Director of Human Resources, who may be reached at 413-774-1403.

### **Biting Policy**

Toddlers sometimes bite other children. Biting is considered a normal part of development. Toddlers may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child. The teachers take action to reduce the number of biting incidents, largely by trying to prevent or redirect the behavior. If a child is bitten, appropriate first aid is given and an incident report is completed. Consistent with our privacy policies, parents are not told the name of the child who bit their child. Parents of the biter are informed and parents and teachers work together in hopes of preventing further incidents of biting.

# EMERGENCY/CONTINGENCY PLANS

## Contingency Plans for Emergency Situations

1. In case of a fire, natural disaster, or situation necessitating evacuation of the building:
  - a. the director will contact Deerfield Academy Security, who will keep in touch with local police and authorities to determine whether to evacuate or shelter in place in the event of a natural disaster.
  - b. there are two escape routes in each of the two classrooms which are located on the first floor.
  - c. the children will be immediately evacuated from the building to the hard top area near the white sheds, and the director or teacher will call Deerfield Academy Security. D.A. Security will bring vans to the center so that the children can be transported to the Administration Building on campus, once evacuated the lead teacher or director will contact the fire department or appropriate authority by cell phone.
  - d. an emergency text or email will be sent from the director or teacher.
  - e. a designated teacher in each classroom will check the room for any children and take the attendance and emergency contact information before exiting the building. A head count and roll call will be done immediately after the children have safely exited the building.
2. In case of power outage, loss of heat, or loss of water occurring during the spring, summer or fall, when temperatures are moderate and no other safety issues exist, the children will remain at the center until parents are able to pick them up in a timely fashion.

### Plan for Missing Children

Teachers will report when a child is missing to the director. The director will conduct a thorough search of grounds and building before contacting family members and police. In the event of a child missing during an emergency (fire or other disaster), emergency authorities will be contacted immediately.

### Snow Policy

If a state of emergency has been issued due to inclement weather, the Center will close. We strongly urge parents to assess the weather risks before sending their child(ren) to school when the conditions are hazardous.

## REFERRAL PLAN FOR SOCIAL SERVICE AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

1. The program director and lead teacher are responsible for the implementation of this plan.
2. When a teacher has a concern about a child's social, emotional, physical development or learning abilities, the teacher will notify the director.
3. The director will gather information from the teaching staff to determine child and family needs. Together they will observe the child in various situations throughout the child's day. The director will meet with the classroom teachers to discuss observations and appropriate classroom management options. The director will decide whether further intervention is warranted and document concerns, action taken, and decisions made, to be included in the child's file.
4. Parents will be notified about concerns by the director. A meeting will be scheduled with the teacher, director and parent(s). At that meeting, the child's situation will be discussed and referral information and assistance will be provided by the director.
5. The director will document the meeting, concerns and plans for action, including follow-up procedure.
6. The director will follow up with the parents to re-evaluate the original concern and to discuss any further action if needed.

## FOOD AND NUTRITION

Parents will provide a healthy and nutritious lunch, morning snack, and afternoon snack, which include items from the four basic food groups. To promote healthy eating habits, please send foods that are low in sugar and additives. Wholesome eating habits have a positive influence on children's health and growth.

We will not serve any nut products or products made with nut oils if there is a child enrolled that has an allergy. In order to protect the safety of all our children we need you to be diligent and read all labels of food you may bring in for your children. Food containing nuts or nut oils will be returned home. We have instituted this policy to ensure the safety and well-being of all our children and we appreciate your support in this endeavor. Safe alternative options are soy butter or sunflower butter. All foods for toddlers and children under three years of age should to be cut into quarters to prevent choking. Some of the foods that fall into this category include cherry tomatoes, grapes, apple slices, cheese, hot dogs, and raw carrots.

Some tips to make foods safer are:

- Cut into quarters lengthwise, then into small pieces
- Peel fruits and cut in half lengthwise
- Chop finely or into thin strips

The following is a list of items to plan your child's daily snacks/lunches. These are suggestions we've seen children eat with pleasure. We realize the list is incomplete, so if there are foods you question, just ask us.

*The following are suggestions:*

- Breads, flat breads, low-sugar cereals (an easy snack and the children love cereal), oatmeal, rice, and pasta
- Sandwiches: soy butter, sunflower butter, all-fruit jam, tuna, egg salad, turkey salad, grilled cheese, cold cuts, turkey & cranberry sauce
- Bagels, bagel pizzas, rolls, cinnamon/raisin bread, waffles/pancakes with applesauce, French toast, low-sugar homemade muffins/quick breads, crackers, pretzels, rice cakes, tortilla chips, soups, hummus
- Fish sticks, chicken nuggets, beans, eggs, or any leftover dinners
- Fresh fruits (cut and peeled if needed), applesauce, fruit salad, canned fruit in light syrup, fresh vegetables w/ dip, salad, pickles, popcorn (we cannot serve popcorn to children under 3 years of age)
- Milk, yogurt, cheese

For lunch each child begins with their main item, followed by their fruit/vegetable choice, etc. If children want milk with their lunch you can provide it daily or send in ½ gallon of milk with your child's name on it. Water is always available to drink. Please do not send juice.

**Food for Birthdays and Special Occasions**

Before sending in food for birthdays or special occasions, please check with teacher or the director about food restrictions or allergies that may existed in your child's classroom.

We thank you for your cooperation in helping us to help your children.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

It is difficult for teachers to keep track of toys brought from home, and pieces of “special, favorite” toys may get lost or broken. Children have a difficult time sharing toys from home, disrupting classroom operations. For these reasons, we ask you parents refrain from allowing children to bring toys from home. All toys and materials at The Early Learning Center have been chosen for their educational potential, durability, and safety. Children may bring in special security objects—a blanket or stuffed animals—to aid the transition from home during naptime.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Center staff will bring children outside everyday unless the weather is very severe and below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Outdoor play is considered a basic part of our program. It is our policy that if your child is not well enough to play outdoors then she/he is not well enough to attend. Fresh air and exercise are important to keep young children healthy. Children thoroughly enjoy the outdoors when dressed warmly. It is not possible for us to provide the individual 1-to-1 attention a sick child requires in order to keep him/her inside.

## **FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION**

The Early Learning Center will transport children to and from a field trip destination in vans owned and maintained by Deerfield Academy. The teachers will verify attendance against a written list at each interval (departures and arrivals) of the trip. In addition, the van will be checked thoroughly for passengers after the children leave the vehicle at the field trip destination, and upon returning to school.

Parents will be required to give written permission for their child to attend a field trip.

The director and teachers will complete the e-training, Look Before You Lock, on transportation safety annually.

## **PARENT INFORMATION, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Parents' Rights**

Parents have the right to contact EEC for information regarding our programs' regulatory compliance history. The telephone number is (413) 788-8401 and the address is 95 Liberty Street, Springfield, MA 01103. Additional Parental Rights are listed below.

### **Right to Visit**

You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is in it. Parents of children at The Early Learning Center are welcome to visit anytime their child is in attendance, whether or not their visit is planned.

### **Parent Input**

The director and teachers welcome any and all parent input. A suggestion box, located just inside the entry way is there for your use and convenience. Your suggestions and inquiries will be addressed with Human Resources if we are not able to meet your needs. Parents are always encouraged to email or call the director with concerns or questions.

### **Conferences**

You have a right to request an individual conference with the program's staff at any time.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports and parent/teacher conferences will be done in December and May.

### **Your Child's Records**

Information contained in your child's record is privileged and confidential. The center's staff may not distribute or release information in your child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for your child without written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

The only persons permitted to see your child's record will be the director, the classroom teacher, the parent or legal guardian, and state licensing examiner. Information will not be given to others without a parent's or legal guardian's written consent. It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the program. This is to safeguard each family's privacy data.