Eliot-Pearson
Children’s School

2017-2018
Family Handbook

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ELIOT-PEARSON CHILDREN'S SCHOOL: FAMILY HANDBOOK

This Family Handbook includes our school values, essential policies, goals, other information and expectations of each staff member.

Mission Statement

The Eliot-Pearson Children's School is the laboratory-demonstration program of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. Our program serves as a model and demonstration facility, providing a training and observation site for new and experienced teachers, undergraduate and graduate students in Child Development, and a research facility for faculty and supervised students in the Department of Child Study and Human Development. Our mission is to provide high quality service to children and families; develop and disseminate new ideas in teaching and learning; be a site for teaching training and research; be a professional development hub for both in-service and pre-service teacher education; and develop collaborations and outreach with community schools and programs.

The Eliot-Pearson Children's School is based on a socio-constructivist model of teaching and learning where children are actively engaged in the learning process and with a focus on social and collaborative dimensions of learning. The Children's School is committed to providing appropriate inclusive education for all children. The school actively seeks student populations that represent a wide variety of ability, racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, family and socio-economic backgrounds. Diversity is a core value in the community and the school incorporates an anti-bias perspective in all the programs.

We create a community of learners with both children and adults. First and foremost our goal is to create a quality, nurturing experience for all children and their families. The focus is on the whole child, and to support all areas of a child's development; social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical motor, creativity and the arts. This is done through a project-based approach to learning. All of the teaching staff is engaged in ongoing professional development through the creation of professional learning communities incorporating documentation, reflective practice, and teacher inquiry. Off-site, teachers attend and present at conferences as well as visit other programs for consultation.

The purpose of the Staff Handbook is not to establish any contractual responsibility to the terms or conditions of staff employment. Teaching staff members will have a separate, written contractual agreement regarding terms of their employment with the school. Teaching staff members who have not entered into a written employment contract with EPCS remain “at-will,” indicating that the staff person or the school may terminate the relationship at any time, with two weeks’ notice.
What is a Lab School?

A laboratory or demonstration school operates in alignment with a university, college, or teacher education institution and used for the training of teachers, educational research, and professional development. A laboratory or demonstration school is an innovation hub for creativity and experimentation; application of new knowledge and research; new discoveries, problem solving; and a place to learn from challenges and mistakes. A laboratory school is a facility where teachers, students and families can come to learn about child development/education and observe children interacting with one another and with adults. It is a place to try new ideas, take risks and to grow as a learner.

As a lab school for the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development, we have multiple missions:
- Service to children and families
- A site for teacher education
- A site for experimentation, research and curriculum development
- Professional development for in-service and pre-service teachers
- Collaboration and outreach to the community
- Dissemination of ideas through presentations and publications

As a laboratory school, Eliot-Pearson Children's School (EPCS) is a site for faculty members, student research and curricular projects for the Child Study and Human Development Department, Tufts University and colleagues from other research organizations. The school is also equipped with observation booths for each classroom and visitors are welcome to observe by making an appointment in advance with the school office.

The school research coordinator and Director must approve all research projects. Research packets with all materials needed are available to request permission from the school. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Tufts is also required.

At EPCS, teacher inquiry is integral to what we do, which includes school wide inquiry (SWI) as a collaborative form of investigation into the processes of teaching and learning. SWI is a form of professional development that informs our classroom practice, and builds community through a shared focus and shared inquiry. Inquiry is based in documentation principles inspired from the collaborative action research models, the communities of practice literature, Reggio Emilia Schools, and the Making Learning Visible work of Project Zero at Harvard University.

We work collaboratively to develop a model of teacher inquiry that serves to invite and support children, teachers, parents, undergraduate and graduate students, and child study.
General Description of School Programs

Eliot-Pearson Children’s School serves as a model and demonstration facility, providing a training and observation site for new and experienced teachers and a research facility for faculty and supervised students in the Department of Child Study and Human Development. The Children's School enrolls 70 children each year in preschool, kindergarten and first/second grade.

Staffing Pattern

In each of the classroom groups there is a Head Teacher and two Teacher Assistants (TAs), who form the teaching team. In addition, there might be undergraduate or graduate student teachers and fieldworkers, who work in our classrooms on a part-time or full-time basis. The student teachers and fieldworkers are also concurrently taking classes in early childhood education with faculty from the Department of Child Study and Human Development. Their time spent in our classrooms follows the university’s academic calendar.

Preschool Classrooms
Preschool East (2.9 – 3.9 years old) Monday through Friday 8:30 am –12:30 pm
Preschool West (3.9 – 4.10 years old) Monday through Friday 8:30 am –12:30pm

Teachers make sure both children and parents feel comfortable and knowledgeable about the classroom routine, expectations, and range of activities. Children are able to explore a variety of activities and materials. They are encouraged to use tools appropriately and express their thoughts and needs to teachers and other children. The establishment of positive and enjoyable relationships with other children is stressed. Children are supported in their attempts to initiate play, cooperate with others, and negotiate conflicts successfully. Pre-literacy and math skills are fostered in classroom experiences. Emphasis is placed on communication of ideas in a group, problem-solving tasks, and individualized and collaborative learning.

Kindergarten Classroom (Must be 5 yrs. old by October 31) Monday through Friday 8:30 am-12:30 pm

First/Second Grade Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30 am-3:00 pm; Wednesday 8:30 am-12:30 pm

Both the Kindergarten and the First/Second Grade Classes seek to establish a community in which mutual respect for one another's backgrounds, experiences, ideas and concerns is a priority. The cooperative learning atmosphere will enable the children to work and play together productively. The curriculum will integrate literacy, mathematics, natural, physical and social sciences, and the arts. The rhythm of each day will include large group gatherings, small study groups, independent work periods, outdoor play, and a significant block of time during which children may pursue their own interests and develop friendships. Within the context of our developmental classrooms, each child will be encouraged to experience the joy of productivity, expressivity, mastery, friendship and enhanced self-esteem.
Curriculum Development

Curriculum in our program develops through an interactive process between the child, teacher and the environment. In each group there is a balance between teacher-planned activities and those activities that emerge from the children's interests, abilities, and needs. There is a balance between individual, small group and large group experiences. Curriculum is based on inquiry, problem solving, and discovery and application of key issues and concepts. Curriculum points to connections within and across disciplines characterized by project-based authentic learning, which allows for more in-depth study of topics. We strive to have all children's learning be integrated, active and meaningful. Our curriculum philosophy is based on a socio-constructivist model of teaching and learning where children are actively engaged in the learning process, with a focus on social and collaborative dimensions of learning. We focus on the whole child, and support all areas of a child's development; social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical motor, creativity and the arts.

Extended Day/Enrichment Program
An extended day option is offered on five afternoons Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday until 3:00 pm or 4:00 pm for children in Preschool and Kindergarten. The programs offer fun and engaging projects that include engineering and robotics, theater, music, art and Spanish language. This program provides children an opportunity to interact in a nurturing and stimulating environment. Additional outdoor time, quiet time, and activity time for free play is also provided.

School Vacation Program
*The School Vacation Program* is a weeklong enrichment program hosted at EPCS during the February vacation week. The program offers fun and engaging projects taught by experienced teachers and specialists. The projects include children in preschool through grade 2 with options for different activities in arts, movement & dance and robotics & engineering.

The program will run in half-day and whole day sessions. The morning program will run 8:30 am-12:00 pm and the afternoon program will run 1:00 – 3:00 pm. If your child is enrolled in both morning and afternoon, the program will include supervised lunch and free-play time 12:00 – 1:00 pm as well as naptime for preschool and kindergarten children. There will be 50 spaces and enrollment will be on a first come basis. Priority will be given to current families, who enroll by the deadline, before we open the program to the community.

Spanish Enrichment Program
The Spanish Enrichment Program is offered as an enrichment/extended day program for preschool, kindergarten and first/second graders once a week. First and second grade Spanish occurs Wednesday afternoons from 12:30-3:00 pm as an extended day opportunity that students must be registered for. Preschool and Kindergarten have Spanish as an enrichment activity once a week during the Extended Day Programs. The schedule includes group meetings, various Spanish language activities, outdoor play and snack time.

Summer Program
The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School Summer Program is committed to providing an anti-bias, developmentally appropriate curriculum. The program provides a safe, supportive environment in which children can enjoy the magical, carefree quality of the summer. The program staff includes teachers and students affiliated with the Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University as well as from other settings.

The program’s thematic focus is art, music and nature. Our emergent curriculum focuses on creating opportunities for children that promote scientific inquiry, cooperative problem solving and building confidence through individual and group challenges while integrating more in depth studies of these topics.
The campus includes an air-conditioned building, indoor pool, and two large play yards with water features, sand, mud, swings, tricycles, and scooters. Throughout the summer, we use Tufts University’s Hamilton Pool (located next to Eliot-Pearson Children’s School) three mornings and two afternoons each week. In addition to the program staff, we have lifeguards at the pool at all times who also engage in water play and activities with the children. Children may wear flotation devices provided by their families for recreational swimming based on their swimming abilities. Information about this program is available in March.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING
While each class at the Children’s School has its own distinction, there are at least five principles that are consistent from the youngest group of children to the oldest. These principles are most influenced by the theories of educational practice that are based on an understanding of child development.

How Children Learn
Children learn best from self-initiated activity with concrete objects. They build on previous knowledge through repeated experiences. Through social interactions with peers, children learn to collaborate, cooperate and to understand another point of view. Children who are active in their own learning process make sense of the world for themselves and construct their own ideas. By having choices and making decisions, children learn to be in control of their own learning and to be independent thinkers. Children need to be presented with a variety of materials, strategies and approaches because not every child learns the same way.

How Curriculum Develops
Curriculum in our program develops through an interactive process between the child, teacher and the environment. In each group there is a balance between teacher-planned activities and those activities that emerge from the children’s interests, abilities, and needs. There is a balance between individual, small group and large group experiences. Curriculum is based on inquiry, problem solving, and discovery and application of key issues and concepts. Curriculum points to connections within and across disciplines characterized by project-based authentic learning, which allows for more in-depth study of topics. We strive to have all children’s learning be integrated, active and meaningful. Our teachers are co-facilitators of learning. They act as mentor-companions...observing, reflecting, collaborating, adapting, intervening, scaffolding, problem-solving, and building upon each child’s questions or ideas, as well as assessing the level and interest of each child in order to make informed decisions. Assessment of learning is both a process and a tool to improve instruction and document children’s growth.

Creation of Partnerships with Family
The family is an essential part of our community and crucial to our genuine understanding and appreciation of each child. We strive to build home-school partnerships that are collaborative, trusting, and respectful. Parents and staff regularly communicate through frequent interactions, phone conversations, open houses, parent conferences, parent workshops, written reports, school gatherings, home-visits, and parent participation. Getting to know the values and cultures within families helps nurture the home-school relationship and contributes to the child’s self-esteem. Having parents participate in the goal-setting process is an important part of developing curriculum for the individual child. Each child is unique. The curriculum focuses on supporting the growth of the whole child, including social-emotional, language, cognitive, and physical development. We believe that children go through stages of development, which are marked by general characteristics, but we also recognize the range of individual and cultural variation. Yet each individual child is also a member of a community that includes the family, the classroom, the school and the world at large. Building this sense of community takes conscious planning and ongoing effort. Our goal is to make each child feel that they are a valued member of the community and to develop a sense of empathy and caring for others.
Importance of the Individual and the Community

Each child is unique. The curriculum focuses on supporting the growth of the whole child, including social-emotional, language, cognitive, and physical development. We believe that children go through stages of development, which are marked by general characteristics, but we also recognize the range of individual and cultural variation. Yet each individual child is also a member of a community that includes the family, the classroom, the school and the world at large. Building this sense of community takes conscious planning and ongoing effort. Our goal is to make each child feel a valued member of the community and to develop a sense of empathy and caring for others.

Respect and Appreciation of Differences

Our school perspective involves creating a classroom and school environment which respects and supports all dimensions of human differences, including cultural, linguistic, ability, learning style, ethnicity, family culture, gender, age, and socio-economic differences. In curriculum, using materials that support diversity and integrate similarities and differences into the daily life of the classroom attains this perspective. We also adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners, differentiating instruction for the members of the group. Activities have multiple entry points where children can be working on the same activity but with different materials, goals and objectives. The school has an anti-bias education stance.
### Eliot-Pearson Children’s School 2017-2018 Calendar

#### Fall 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 24</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Welcoming Picnic for New &amp; Returning Families 5 - 7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 28, 29, 31</td>
<td>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, &amp; Friday</td>
<td>All Staff Return for Set-Up Week and Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Parent Orientation 8:45 – 9:45 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>First Day of School/Extended Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Preschool East – Please Check Phase in Schedule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Parent Orientation (Required for All New Pre-West, K, 1st, 2nd Families)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Option #1:</strong> 8:45 – 9:45 a.m.  <strong>Option #2:</strong> 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Parent Coffee Hour w/PTAB 8:45-10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Parent Orientation (Required for All New Pre-West, K, 1st, 2nd Families)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Option #1:</strong> 8:45 – 9:45 a.m.  <strong>Option #2:</strong> 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>All School Picnic 5 - 7 p.m. (rain date Thursday, September 28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Supporting Children Supporting Families 9 – 10:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>PTAB Night - Wine &amp; Cheese Social &amp; “Life after Eliot-Pearson” 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Staff Retreat – No School for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED - Columbus Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Family Literacy Day 1 - 3 p.m. (rain date October 21)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Supporting Children Supporting Families - 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Curriculum Night - Preschool East 5:30-7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Curriculum Night - Preschool West 6:00-7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Curriculum Night - Kindergarten 6:00-7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Curriculum Night - 1st/2nd Grade 6:00-7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>PTAB Night 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. w/ Childcare Community Discussion Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED - Veterans Day Observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Child Care Evening – Parents’ Night Out 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 22-24</td>
<td>Wednesday - Friday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED – Thanksgiving Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Parent/Teacher Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Last Day of School for Students - Winter Break School Closes at 3:00 p.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All School Sing-Along at 3:00 p.m. Families Welcome!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Last Day of School for Teachers and Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Winter/Spring 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED - University Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>All Children, Teachers and Staff Return to School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Family Service Day 3:00-5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Winter Performance 2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>PTAB Night 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19-23</td>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>No School for Children - Presidents’ Day/Winter Vacation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EPCS February Enrichment Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Registrations are due Mid-January)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>NO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN - Staff Planning Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>PTAB Night 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. w/ Childcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Family Dance-TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>PTAB Night 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16-20</td>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED - Spring Vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Parent/Teacher Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No School for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field Day for Children!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>All School Picnic 5 - 7 p.m. (rain date May 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>ENTIRE SCHOOL CLOSED - Memorial Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Last Day of School for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Entire School Closes at 12:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11-12</td>
<td>Monday-Tuesday</td>
<td>Staff Meetings and Clean-Up Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18-July 26</td>
<td>Summer Program Dates</td>
<td>Space is limited…sign up!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parent Teacher Advisory Board (PTAB) Nights:

**Wednesdays:** October 4  
**Mondays:** November 6, February 12, April 9  

#### PTAB Events – Fall 2017
- **October 14** – Family Literacy Day  
- **November 17** – Parents’ Night Out/Childcare Evening

#### PTAB Events – Winter/Spring 2018
- **January 20** - Family Service Day  
- **January 28** - Winter Performance  
- **March TBD** - Family Dance
Assessment Plan

Definition and Philosophy of Assessment
At EPCS, assessment is the process of gathering evidence about children’s learning and development that is used to guide planning and instruction. Children’s assessment is an on-going process. Teachers consistently monitor, observe, and reflect on children’s development within their program. Parents are considered partners in the assessment process. Parents have opportunities for input in the goals they have for their child each year, through formal meetings, intake forms and conferences.

Developing strategies for documenting and communicating this information in a professional and thoughtful way to families, students, and other professionals is a priority. When issues regarding a child’s development are a concern to teachers, they seek the input of the Director/Admin. Team. Parents also work closely with the team and are involved in all aspects of the decision making process.

There is a difference between authentic assessment and evaluation. Authentic assessment is an ongoing process and related to the child’s learning, performance and understanding. Documentation is evidence of the child’s learning. Evaluation involves a more formal and standardized process of looking at a child’s development. Because variation in young children’s development is normal, at the Children’s School, standardized evaluations are not part of the routine assessment process. Formal evaluation is initiated when the child’s team has questions about a child’s learning. Parental permission is obtained prior to initiating formal evaluation.

What do we Assess
At the Children’s School, we have a holistic approach to assessment. We look at all areas of a child’s development: social emotional, cognitive, language, physical sensory motor, and creative expression. Eliot-Pearson Children’s School has developed our “curriculum frameworks” which are aligned with the Massachusetts Dept. of Education’s early childhood guidelines. We also look beyond individual performance and look at group functioning, documenting how the individual is a part of the group and community.

When we do Assessment

Collaboration in the Assessment Process
The assessment of each child at EPCS is a collaborative process for the teaching team, who work closely with parents, and support from the Director, Admin. Team, and consulting specialists. This process ensures that interpretations and decisions are based on multiple professional perspectives. Teaching teams are expected to communicate regularly about their assessments of each child, including taking the time to discuss and interpret findings. Teams come to agreement regarding how and when to initiate a dialogue with parents regarding areas of concern for their child. This may be during a formal scheduled conference time or at another time during the school year.

While an individual teacher often takes the lead in authoring a particular developmental assessment report (e.g. narrative/portfolio) or leading a parent conference, all team members provide input into the assessment and writing process.

Beginning of the School Year

Teachers gather information about children to facilitate transition:
Home visits and an initial family questionnaire to gather information about the child and his/her family. The responses provide teachers with important information and insights regarding individual children and their prior experiences, family culture, and learning goals, and are used to guide the planning and implementation of the curriculum.
Meetings with the children’s teachers from the previous year are conducted both formally and informally for the same purpose as above.

Procedures and routines established for children with identified special rights and needs (based on information obtained from parents/guardians/public school liaisons/specialists/Admin. Team) are reviewed and plans for implementing the IEPs are mapped out to ensure consistency of care for these children.

**Ongoing Assessment of Children’s Development:**

As the weeks progress, teachers observe and document children’s development as they engage in interactions with their peers and with materials. Teachers analyze these artifacts to identify children’s interests, gain insights into their thinking, and plan the curriculum accordingly to extend children’s learning.

As a Massachusetts private school, EPCS does not screen vision and hearing. Families need to ask their pediatrician to screen hearing and vision.

**How we do Assessments**

**Various methods of documenting development are described below:**

**Observations**
Skillful, systematic observation of children engaged in play and activities on a daily basis throughout the year is central to our work at EPCS. Observations are often intended to identify children’s questions and theories as the basis for developing curriculum investigations. Teachers record anecdotal observations of significant interactions on clipboards or post-its and then transfer them to computer files, folders or notebooks organized according to curriculum areas or individual children. Observation checklists, arranged according to typical developmental pathways, are sometimes used as a shorthand way to collect specific developmental information regarding individual children.

**Interviews**
All of the teachers interview children during the year. Children may be asked what they want to learn in school or what has been challenging for them. These products provide useful insight into how children view themselves and how this changes over time.

**Documentation Cycle: Evidence of Learning**
We collect a variety of documentation materials that show evidence of children’s learning. These materials may include selected digital photos, DVDs, audiotapes or video, children’s products and representations (e.g. drawings, photos of clay sculptures or block building), and transcriptions of key conversations. Often the focus is on collaborative efforts between children that provide us with insight into designing curriculum that is relevant to the children. Documentation is more than collecting “artifacts”, it includes careful analysis by the teachers in order to determine children’s questions, strengths, and challenges. Documentation (e.g. photos) is regularly shared with children to encourage self-reflection. Teachers also create panels and make portfolios available for families to review.

**Classroom Teaching Team Meetings**
Classroom teachers meet minimally weekly to discuss and analyze their ongoing documentation of children’s learning and plan future curriculum. Teachers often decide on what area of development or which children will be the focus of observation and documentation for the coming week.

**Individual Child Portfolios**
Portfolios are created for each child in the school to collect information regarding children’s development across the year. A portfolio may be organized by areas of development, learning domains, or classroom, and include representative samples of children’s work and photographic documentation of learning collected
throughout the year. In our older classrooms, children are often engaged in selecting examples of their “best work”. Portfolio entries may include written reflections by the teacher, parent and/or learner.

**Gathering Parent Input**
Parent input on their child is crucial to the assessment process. This information is gathered through both formal and informal means. Parents complete intake and goal forms for their children each year. Home visits, parent conferences, team meetings, informal discussions are all ways that parents have opportunities to provide input on their child’s development.

**Consultation Meetings**
Teachers and specialists meet at regularly scheduled times to problem solve strategies to support all children’s learning.

**Developmental Screenings and Diagnostic Testing**
Based on their ongoing informal assessments, teachers, in collaboration with families and the Admin. Team, may identify the need for more formal assessments, evaluation and testing. EPCS Staff never diagnose a developmental delay or concern, but are trained to identify indicators of developmental problems and variations from typical development. Appropriate intervention specialists from the school district, or other agencies conduct assessments and standardized testing (most often involving observation of children performing specific tasks). Results are used in conjunction with ongoing EPCS teacher and parent assessments when making decisions.

Any child, three years or older is eligible for a free early childhood screening from their public school system.

**Home-School Journals**
For families of children with special rights, notebooks or email may be used to create a dialog with families, teachers and specialists around questions, specific interventions or upcoming meetings or medical appointments.

**How we do Assessments with Children with Special Rights**
EPCS is an inclusion school giving priority admissions to children with special rights and committed to providing a quality education to all children. Being part of a community of differing abilities and needs is important to each child’s understanding of how we share both similarities and differences. As a center for research and teacher-training, EPCS views the complexity of diverse abilities in the classroom as important to our adult students’ preparation, as well as a benefit for all children and families.

Our admissions policy provides for priority admission of children with identified special rights when we have the resources deemed necessary for a successful experience. Families seeking priority admission may submit an application throughout the year, but ideally by winter, for the following fall. The Admin. Team will meet with the family to discuss the application, observe the child and review previous assessments provided by the family. The Director makes a final admissions decision. Families whose children attend EPCS, who leave the school to participate in a special program as recommended by an IEP or other plan, are not financially penalized.

EPCS focuses on “rights”, which is borrowed from the work of child development specialists and early educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy where every child is believed to have the right and capability to participate and contribute. The Admin. Team has a number of important roles: (1) supporting the families and teaching staff to access local resources; (2) establishing center policies related to special rights inclusion, such as transitions and assessment; (3) developing relationships with agencies and school districts serving children with special rights; (4) working in close collaboration with the therapists and specialists who provide treatment at EPCS or outside of the school; (5) maintaining documentation of the status of children with special rights at EPCS, including IEPs; (6) attending and participating in IEP meetings; and (7) scheduling consultation meetings for teachers with specialists.
These activities and relationships support the excellent work of our teachers who work hard to advocate for the children in their classes as members of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and other interdisciplinary teams. The role of the teacher includes observation, documentation, researching, and educating him/herself regarding strategies to assist children, families, and all members of the trans-disciplinary team (OT, PT, ST, etc.).

**Progress Reports for Diverse Learners**
Each year parent-teacher progress meetings occur in December and May. Additionally, written reports, currently the Work Sampling System, are sent to families in January and June. Individual Education Plan meetings with the child’s entire IEP team, occur at least annually, but more often twice during the school calendar year. Most cities and towns require a spring meeting to determine the need for summer services.

**Communicating Children’s Progress**
The communication of children’s progress is carried out in a number of ways including, regular contact at pick up and drop off, phone calls, email, biannual progress meetings between parents and teachers, biannual developmental narratives, child specific portfolios, documentation panels, newsletters, home-school journals, IEP meetings and opportunities to observe children from the observation booths. Two of the formal methods to communicate progress to families include:

*Progress Meetings*
Twice a year, teaching teams meet with parents to discuss assessments of their child’s learning and development and to share goals and dreams. Photos, transcripts of children’s comments, and/or portfolios are often shared at these meetings in order to structure discussion. These meetings are an opportunity to share assessments verbally and to discuss the child’s work samples. The written developmental report is finalized after the meeting. These meetings are an opportunity to gain parent input, insights and questions, and to set goals for the child’s development.

*Progress Reports (Developmental Narrative Assessments)*
Teachers are continuously observing children in their classrooms. EPCS teachers will prepare two formal assessments during the year, based on modified Work Sampling System to share with families. The reports are intended to provide information on core areas of development and learning. In the late fall and spring, teachers will use the modified WSS checklists and portfolios of samples of the child’s work to form the basis for further discussion and sharing with families. These reports are authored by one of the child’s classroom teachers but are the end result of consultation between the teaching team. Upon request and signed permission from families, the modified work sampling system checklists will be provided to transfer schools and intervention teams.

**Transition of Assessment Findings**
EPCS seeks to create greater *continuity* for children and families by encouraging the sharing of assessment information from classroom to classroom and across time. Teachers, the Director and the Admin. Team meet in early September in order to share information regarding the development of children who will be moving to a new classroom. As part of this transition process, teams review and discuss relevant developmental assessment reports, individual portfolios, curriculum documentation, classroom portfolios, and IEP/IFSP records for children transitioning to their classroom.

**Confidentiality**

*Distribution of Records*
Children’s records are confidential and may not be released to anyone other than the parents or the child’s teacher(s) without written consent of the parents. Parents may have access at reasonable times, and such access may not be delayed more than two business days after the initial request. Documentation indicating any persons to whom information has been released is contained in the students’ files. This procedure applies to the release of information to both public and private schools.
File Access
Teaching teams, consisting of Head Teacher, graduate teaching assistants, and therapists, may have access to children’s assessments and records to gain more information in order to better serve the needs of the child’s learning. Children’s files are kept in a locked file cabinet and are maintained by members of the Admin. Team. Files are logged in and out and never leave the school.

Parental Rights
The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, has developed a Parental Rights Document for licensed programs to adhere to. The following document is posted in the Reception area and included in the Family Handbook that is distributed to parents, families, and staff.

THE WORK SAMPLING SYSTEM, DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES (2004, Pearson Education, Inc.)

Below are the Work Sampling System (WSS) developmental categories that each classroom curriculum will address. Each age group has a specific developmental checklist based on these categories. The WSS checklist reflects the common experiences and expectations in classrooms structured around activities appropriate for most children of this age. The WSS checklist is used twice a year to record children’s progress. Checklists will be distributed during the fall curriculum night.

I. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
   A. Self-concept
   B. Self-control
   C. Approaches to learning
   D. Interaction with others
   E. Social problem-solving

II. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
    A. Listening
    B. Speaking
    C. Reading
    D. Writing

III. MATHEMATICAL THINKING
    A. Mathematical processes
    B. Number and operations
    C. Patterns, relationships, and functions
    D. Geometry and spatial relations
    E. Measurement
    F. Data collection and probability

IV. SCIENTIFIC THINKING
    A. Inquiry
    B. Physical science
    C. Life Science
    D. Earth science

V. SOCIAL STUDIES
    A. People, past and present
    B. Human interdependence
    C. Citizenship and government
    D. People and where they live
VI. THE ARTS
   A. Expression and representation
   B. Understanding and appreciation

VII. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH
   A. Gross Motor development
   B. Fine motor development
   C. Personal health and safety
ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

What is Anti-Bias Education (ABE)?
Anti-Bias Education is a stance that supports children, and their families, as they develop a sense of personal and group identity within a complex and multicultural society. This approach helps teach children to be proud of themselves and their families, to respect a range of human differences, to recognize unfairness and bias, and to speak up for what is right (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2010).

At Eliot-Pearson Children’s School, this means working to create an inclusive community that encourages conversations among children and adults about all types of human differences in the context of classroom life. Discussions may include topics such as: culture, race, language, physical, mental, and social-emotional abilities, learning styles, ethnicity, family structure, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, socio-economic differences, and our many ways of being. ABE supports children and adults to listen to each other with open minds, and to reserve judgment when we encounter views with which we disagree.

Parent: “Anti-Bias Education gives us tools to talk about difficult topics. It’s safe to disagree”.

Teacher: “ABE is a complicated, messy process. There is no right or wrong answer”.

Why is ABE so important?
Anti-bias teachers are committed to the principle that every child deserves to develop to their fullest potential and an ABE stance helps every child do that. ABE is important at all stages of development. Early childhood is a critical period of time as it is when children first receive and perceive messages about who they are, as well as how others see them and their families. With ABE, we work to make sure that all children see themselves and their families reflected and respected in the early childhood classroom.

Parent: “If we fail to talk about our differences, all we are left with is to make assumptions about others that are often misleading or unfair”.

Teacher: “Children need language and experiences to broaden their understanding about diversity. The more experiences they have, the more easily they can take on an anti-bias approach themselves”.

What do children learn in an ABE environment?
Children learn about similarities and differences in people and communities. They are encouraged to act in ways that reflect anti-bias values and to stand up for things they feel are unfair. ABE is integrated into the classroom activities. It is both planned curriculum within the structure of the day, as well as natural “teachable moments” based on children’s social interactions, conversations and play. Anti-bias curriculum topics come from the children, families, and teachers, as well as historical or current events. When children ask questions about differences, adults listen in order to facilitate conversations and responses.

Examples of questions and comments children ask about differences:
“What color is my skin? Why does my skin look different”?
“He’s a baby because he can’t walk”.
“Why does she wear that scarf on her head”?
“He has two mommies”.

What is the role of families in ABE?
Families can play many roles. 1) Be aware of the school’s approach to ABE and understand the ways that it may be manifested in the classroom. 2) Build relationships and engage in dialogue with teachers, staff, other families, and your own children. 3) Share your wisdom and insights about your child with the school, including information about your home culture, values, and ways of being. 4) Participate in classroom activities, school-wide activities, and adult learning groups.
Each family’s level of participation is unique and is respected. As teachers learn more about your child and family throughout the school year, they become better equipped to invite and facilitate rich discussions and learning opportunities for both the individual child and the classroom group. Families should feel empowered and valued to share ideas and perspectives - not only when concepts or topics make sense, but especially when topics are confusing or uncomfortable. Families should feel able to tell us the ways in which their family interacts with the world.

Parent: “Families do and don’t feel like they fit in for a whole range of reasons. We want to be heard, valued and included in ways that seem meaningful and valuable to us”.

**How does ABE relate to bullying?**

ABE is an example of an anti-bullying, pro-social curriculum because we are proactively teaching children how to fairly understand and respond when they encounter difference. However, we do not use the word “bullying” in early childhood because young children are not bullies; children at this age are simply learning to get along. Exploration of power and conflict are a natural part of this process.

Creating and maintaining a classroom community where everyone feels safe and respected is an essential part of the teacher’s role at every age level. During the first weeks of school, teachers develop “ground rules” or “classroom agreements” with the children. These may include words such as “We take care of each other. We don’t use words or actions that hurt others”.

Teachers lead discussions and activities that foster understanding others’ points of view and differences. Problem solving strategies are directly taught.

Where can I get more information about ABE at the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School? The Director and Head Teachers can answer questions about ABE. Families who have been at the school in past years can also serve as great resources for new families. Also, a list of anti-bias readings and resources is available at the front desk and some of these materials may be checked out from the school library.

**What are the specific goals of an Anti-Bias Education?** (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2010).

ABE Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

ABE Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

ABE Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

ABE Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

**How do teachers decide what to teach? What types of similarities and differences are discussed with the children?**

Sources of anti-bias curriculum topics can come from the children, families, teachers or historical and current events. Implementation of anti-bias curriculum takes place with a focus at three different levels: individual children and families; specific classroom topics; and school-wide themes.

Teachers, working in partnership with families, start by creating a classroom environment that represents the children and families within the classroom, as well as the diversity of people in their world. Songs and books, in languages that are spoken by families in the classroom, are often used as a starting point. Children and families also participate in learning and sharing about their own identities through activities such as making self-portraits with materials that match the colors of their skin, hair and eyes; experiencing stories about different types of families; and participating in “share days” for each child and family. Classroom materials such as books, dolls, play props, puzzles, music and images on the wall reflect people from various racial and cultural groups, gender roles and differing abilities.
In an effort to help children understand, respect and interact comfortably with people different from themselves, teachers discuss and plan activities that consider how we are alike and how we are different, including physical characteristics, gender, language, culture, religion, ability and family make-up. Teachers also make decisions on what to teach based on the interests, questions and issues that children show us through their play and conversations. For example, if children are excluding others based on gender, (“This is a game for boys only”) discussions, books and “problem stories” related to gender differences and exclusion become part of the curriculum.

School-wide themes that focus on resisting stereotyping and discriminatory behavior take place in each classroom in different ways, depending on the children’s ages and experiences. For example, stories, discussions and role-playing related to Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott lead to a beginning awareness of unfairness and power based on differences between people. The details of how this topic is addressed, however, depend on what is developmentally appropriate for each class and the individual children in it. Therefore, the specific ways in which a single school-wide theme is explored will vary greatly from preschool to 2nd grade.

How is Anti-Bias Education integrated into the school day? What is the relationship between play, academics and ABE?
Anti-Bias Education occurs through both proactive, planned curriculum as well as natural “teachable moments” that arise in children’s social interactions, conversations, and play. Teachers also carefully think about what children need in terms of individual and group development throughout the year. Balancing these aspects of curriculum development leads to activities that integrate into the classroom’s daily schedule, as well as with the social, emotional, cognitive, motor, and academic goals that we have for the children. Teachers develop activities that support many learning goals at once, such as in the following examples.

A teacher overhears children talking about their skin colors while out on the playground. Afterwards, as a literacy activity, the teacher reads a story celebrating different skin colors. During choice time, children mix their own skin colors with paint and teachers facilitate conversations about the colors with other children at the table.

In first and second grade, a teacher reads a biography of special needs activist Judy Heumann, who wasn’t allowed to enter kindergarten in the 1950s because her school wasn’t accessible. During literacy small groups, children sequenced dates from her life on a timeline, during writing they wrote about how a school would need to be designed in order for Judy to attend, and as a special project, they toured the school to see if Judy would be able to move easily through the building at EPCS.

Children find a curb cut near the handicap-accessible parking spot. Teachers encourage them to explore the space and discuss their questions and thoughts.
Is Anti-Bias Education appropriate for young children? Will my child learn or acquire biases about others?

Three aspects inform early childhood teachers’ thinking about developmental appropriateness: what we know about the individual child, the sociocultural context (such as communities, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic groups, or national context), and what researchers have learned over time about children’s development. In most cases, children in our program are exposed to diversity on a daily basis from their neighborhoods, all forms of media, and schools. From infancy on, children are constantly deriving meanings from their experiences, regardless of whether adults are supporting them in this process. Anti-bias educators believe that it is the responsibility of adults to scaffold children’s learning about diversity to ensure that the messages that children take away are positive and will help them develop into effective citizens in a diverse democracy (see ABE goals in question 7).

Some families may worry that talking about biases might foster bias in children and choose to avoid discussing the topic. However, studies show that tolerant children do not become prejudiced after talking about race, while prejudiced children show greater tolerance after such discussions. Moreover, children have trouble predicting adults’ attitudes about diversity unless adults have communicated their attitudes directly to them.

Learning is a process. As a child learns to spell the word “school”, the word may take different forms, including “s-k-l””, to “s-k-o-o-l”. These forms are important steps in the learning process. We would not discontinue writing instruction because a child temporarily uses incorrect spelling. Anti-bias learning is also a journey and a process, made even more complicated that society has yet to agree on all the “right answers” about how to be unified in diversity. It may appear that a child who has begun to spontaneously point out racial diversity is acquiring bias. Instead, if we view this behavior as a step in the process of learning to recognize and appreciate human diversity, we can take advantage of a teachable moment!

Will my child experience moments in which s/he feels included and/or excluded?

Yes. As with all explorations of the world, children bring themselves to their learning. This means that as we explore similarities and differences, children are quick to connect and compare images and words to themselves. As children are learning about who they are and then testing out and refining these ideas and perspectives, at times they may perceive their similarities as being “included” and their differences as being “excluded”. Because our society uses distinct affinity groupings to discuss cultural identities, it is easy for a child to perceive that ‘if I am a member of one group (i.e. girls) than this means that I am not a member in another group (i.e. boys)’.

As children work to understand what a particular identity means to them, they may even temporarily segregate themselves into distinct groupings. This allows them to observe and test out ideas about what it means to be a ‘boy’ or a ‘girl’. In these cases, teachers consider the careful balance between providing children space to consider and test their ideas while also asking children to expand their thinking and embrace a wider and more inclusive lens. Teachers also help children to understand the emotional impact of including and excluding, while working towards a space of respect and acceptance. They help children become better able to articulate their questions and ideas in ways that do not hurt the feelings of others.

How does the school discuss similarities and differences between families, in terms of their parenting styles, beliefs and values? Is there room for discussion when a family’s approach is different from that of the school?

Families come from diverse cultural, religious, socioeconomic, linguistic, and geographic backgrounds, and this wealth of diversity contributes to the overall health and vibrancy of a school. Every family offers expertise, resources, and opportunities to enrich all children’s learning. Within this diversity, it is inevitable that there will be varying viewpoints, cultural conflicts, and differences in values, goals for children, and expectations of schools. People will not always agree. While Anti-Bias Education does not offer simple solutions for when such conflicts or differences in expectations arise, it prepares us with the confidence that these conflicts are a healthy part of the process of learning from one another. Anti-Bias Education supports open dialogues and opportunities to engage with differences rather than ignoring or minimizing them.
Some foundational principles (or “bottom lines”) guide us in our efforts to make every family feel respected, valued, and included within the school culture. We have the four goals of Anti-Bias Education stated above; we also have the school’s published philosophy, guiding principles, and commitment to inclusion. Families are always welcome and encouraged to share their experiences, questions, and concerns with teachers and administrators. These bottom lines provide the scaffolding necessary for the school and families to approach differences with mutual respect, a spirit of generosity, and trust in the process that we are partners in working for solutions that consider the needs of individual children and families as well as the good of the community.

How is Anti-Bias Education related to special education inclusion?
Special education inclusion is the practice of educating children with physical and/or learning challenges together with typically developing peers. Special education inclusion is supported and regulated by state and federal laws. Anti-Bias Education is a voluntary approach that encompasses special education inclusion and extends it to address differences in culture, race, language, gender, economic class, and family structure. The goals of anti-bias education and special education inclusion are very similar in that they place positive value on differences and treating all people with fairness and respect.

Teachers use a variety of language to support children in learning about their own and one another’s unique learning needs. Children are invited to share their strengths and expertise, as well as their challenges and skills that they are working on. Children also are exposed to the idea that “fair is not always equal”. This means that what one child may need to do her best learning may be different from what another child needs. Children learn to express their own needs as well as understand and support the needs of others. In practice this may mean that some children require specialized seating, additional sensory breaks, or distinct writing tools in order to work to their highest ability. In addition, children learn that all classmates have contributions to make to the community. These contributions are acknowledged and children are encouraged to seek one another out for their strengths and contributions.

How can I stay informed about the work my child’s class is doing in regards to Anti-Bias Education?
There are many ways to stay informed about ABE in your class. Some of them include:

- Most important: ask your child and your child’s teacher
- Read the classroom newsletter. This will give you a regular window into the ongoing anti-bias work that occurs in your child’s class. Several classrooms have explicit ABE updates in their newsletters.
- Find out about the books that teachers are using in class to address anti-bias issues. Check these books out or ask your child’s teacher if you can borrow the book from the class for a night!
- Let your child’s teacher know you are interested in observing anti-bias work. Find a time to observe during explicit anti-bias discussion.
- Volunteer in the classroom. Find out from your child’s teacher if it possible for you to take part in an ABE lesson.
How are the teachers trained to use Anti-Bias Education? How can teachers teach Anti-Bias Education in a responsive and sensitive way to children whose identities are different from their own?

The role of the teacher is to provide an equitable education to all children, and to cause children to question and challenge exclusionary and unfair practices. This means supporting a child’s identity development, pride in family and community, respect for range of human differences, ability to recognize unfairness and bias, and empowerment to speak up for what is right. Teachers do this work by not only developing curriculum, but by generating questions for themselves, their colleagues, and their students.

Teachers at Eliot-Pearson have spent many years developing their skills as anti-bias educators. Coursework, reading and ongoing discussion enable teachers to have a philosophical and theoretical understanding of Anti-Bias Education. Teachers also develop a high level of self-awareness that informs their own practice through a cycle of questioning and discussing their own perspectives, along with those of the children and families. Teachers are actively engaged in their own on-going professional development to provide them with the knowledge and support they need to be an effective anti-bias educator.
SPECIAL RIGHTS PROGRAM

The Children's School is committed to providing quality education to all children. At the heart of our philosophy is the belief that all children come to us with their particular unique needs, and within our population of children, there will be some who require more focused, consistent attention in particular areas of development.

We believe that children with special rights should not be taken out of their classroom for the delivery of their special services. Children do not need to be segregated from their friends, teachers and familiar room to get the quality of assistance they need. Rather, we believe that it is every child's right to be fully included in the classroom, and whenever possible, the approaches and strategies need to accommodate to the individual therapeutic requirements of each child. This is at the heart of developmental education.

All children have rights and are full of potential. They are competent, full of life, powerful, and not needy. Using the term “rights” over “needs” emphasizes the special qualities each child brings. While studying the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we learned about their use of the phrase “special rights” to describe children with special needs or “children with disabilities”, the term used by the MA and US Departments of Education. We are using the term “special rights” at the Children’s School, as it captures our beliefs about children with learning differences.

To the greatest extent possible we attempt to deliver the therapies in the classroom, so that the skills acquired are functional for the child instead of isolated skills that are practiced in the therapy room and nowhere else. At the Children's School it is common to observe a therapist in the classroom engaged in a highly motivating activity with a child identified with special rights as well as several of his/her classmates. This model of including the support in the classroom is a conscious departure from traditional models of mainstreaming and integration. It also requires a carefully orchestrated collaboration between all individuals involved with any given child. This teamwork approach enables us to support the full inclusion of children with special rights in the classrooms.

Occasionally, therapeutic interventions may need to occur outside the classroom. This is most often due to equipment needed for therapy (such as a swing or large therapy ball) or the need to address a sensory, motor, or specific speech or language issue in a less stimulating environment than the classroom. In some instances, a classmate of a child with special rights may be invited to participate in a given therapy session. For children without special rights, this is a voluntary opportunity to spend time with a skilled occupational, physical, or speech and language therapist and a classmate. The activities are fun and engaging and children are usually eager to participate. The sessions usually last about 30 minutes. If not in the classroom, the therapist will work in Room 118, the therapists’ office, located near the Grade 1/2 classroom, or in the Curriculum Lab.

In addition to our teaching staff we are fortunate to have a team of specialists, who collaborate with the teachers, families, and all others who may be involved in setting goals for the children identified with special rights. The Director coordinates the team of specialists that include a Special Rights Consultant, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, physical therapists, and a mental health consultant. The Director serves as liaison with public school systems that may refer children to the Children's School, and meets regularly with parents, therapists, and classroom teachers around the programming needs for the children with special rights. At times there is also a teacher of the vision impaired/orientation and mobility instructor, a behavioral specialist, and other specialists. Whenever possible, every attempt is made to coordinate with school systems to secure the services required for children and families.

Children with special rights are enrolled in all of our groups. Some students are referred to us through public school systems. Sometimes parents enter the Children's School with questions and concerns about their child's development or share the findings from an outside evaluation. Sometimes a child's teacher raises questions about the progress of a particular child. In this case teachers will bring up their questions to the Director, who will then arrange for an observation of the child in the classroom. If a decision is reached that there are concerns, which warrant further analysis, these will be shared with the child's parents. If, at any time, parents
have concerns about their child's development, they can request additional input from the Director. In the event that an outside referral is recommended or required, this will be communicated to parents.

Our commitment to children and families with special rights is an important part of our effort to serve diverse populations. It is our hope that everyone will honor the range of differences and provide equitably for all children and families. We know this is an important value to promote, and one that is essential for children to believe as our world becomes increasingly more diverse. Appreciation and respect for all people, regardless of their differences and similarities, is at the heart of our program.

As a private program, we receive no state or federal funding to support our special rights program. In the event that a child requires special services or regular monitoring, there are additional fees to cover the cost of the therapeutic services. Whenever possible, we encourage families to work with their community school system to get the special services available through the public school. If that is not possible, families will assume the cost of agreed upon services. We are not making any profit from the special rights program. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas share them with the Director.

NOTE: We are not considered a Private Special Education MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved school, because we are an inclusion setting -- not a school exclusively for children with special rights. Therefore, if you seek funding from your public school system you may run into difficulty, especially for children eligible for kindergarten or older.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FAMILIES ASK ABOUT INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL RIGHTS

What is inclusion? How is it defined at EPCS?
At the Children's School, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our efforts and beliefs. We define inclusion to mean the creation of a classroom and school community that respects and supports all dimensions of human differences, including culture, linguistic, ability, learning styles, ethnicity, family culture, religion, gender, age, and socio-economic. We do this by valuing our similarities as well as our differences. Inclusion of children with learning differences is one aspect of inclusion.

This noble goal is not always easy to put into practice in a school. It is not enough to just bring people together in the same building from different walks of life; it involves creating a community culture that supports a range of differences including different opinions, values, and perspectives. It involves listening carefully to others, learning from each other, and being able to agree to disagree in non-judgmental ways.

The purpose of this document is to address questions that families raise about inclusion of children with special rights.

What is it like to have a child attend an inclusion school?
An inclusion school can provide a safe environment where questions can be both asked and answered. Children are encouraged to take notice of their peers’ strengths and expertise and at the same time to learn that everyone is working on doing something better. It is a place where differences are normalized and families can be proud of their uniqueness. Exposure to differences and open discussion can lead to greater acceptance of the unfamiliar and build a strong community. Families are exposed to a team approach where children are at the center of the team.

In an inclusion school parents help to insure that all of the children’s needs are met, not only the needs of their own child. Families make extra efforts to learn about the unique qualities within other families at the school. There are life-long benefits for children and their families.
What types of special rights do children have at EPCS?
There are children in each classroom at the Children’s School who have both “visible and invisible” special rights. Each child with identified special rights has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) written in conjunction with the child’s school district. The IEP includes strengths, goals, and therapeutic interventions that will help the child to attain the goals. Some of the visible special rights may include cerebral palsy, blindness, hearing impairment, or Down Syndrome. Other special rights such as communication delays, behavioral or emotional needs may not be as visible to the greater community. Some children’s learning differences are identified after they enroll at the Children’s School. We work closely with families and their local public school for evaluations and services.

Why do you say “special rights” rather than special needs?
All children have rights and are full of potential. They are competent, full of life, powerful, and not needy. Using the term “rights” over “needs” emphasizes the special qualities each child brings. While studying the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we learned about their use of the phrase “special rights” to describe children with special needs or “disabilities”, the term used by the MA and US Departments of Education. We are using this term at the Children’s School, as it captures our beliefs about children with learning differences.

How many children with special rights are in any given class?
There is no designated number of children in each class with special rights. We feel there is value in all children learning together and we feel well equipped to serve children with special rights due to having many years of experience, specialists on staff, teachers who have had coursework and experience with children with special rights, and a consultant for this program. There is a Head Teacher and two Graduate Teaching Assistants in each classroom throughout the year and Tufts students during specific times. At times, a child may have an Individual Education Plan that calls for an Instructional Aide. The Instructional Aide interacts with all of the children in the class to support inclusion.

Can I find out about which children have special rights and what their differences are?
State and federal laws that protect their confidentiality protect children with special rights. Staff members discuss a child’s learning issues only with the child’s parents. Families often have strong ideas about how and when they want to share information about their child’s special rights. At times, some parents have written a letter to the other parents in their child’s classroom to give them information that will support friendships, classroom interactions and play dates outside of school. The letters may address dietary restrictions, facilitating peer interactions, safety issues and general medical information. The letters are appreciated and have been excellent resources for the school community. Other families prefer to keep information about their child private, until they are ready to share more openly with the classroom or school community. It is our policy to take the lead from families and to provide support in their decisions about disclosing individual needs. Classroom teachers and school administrators are good resources for helping to share information when families are ready to do so.

What can I do as a parent when my child asks questions about children’s differences?
Children are taught through concrete experiences coupled with emotional events. To demystify differences, provide children with simple, straightforward answers to their questions in a direct, matter-of-fact, brief manner. Listen carefully to what children are asking and what they are feeling. While it is important to not over respond, don’t ignore their questions, sidestep, change the subject or admonish the child for asking a question. Be aware that often children are asking how the difference will affect them. Feel free to discuss this with your child’s teacher.

How are children with special rights identified?
Some children enter EPCS with an IEP (Individualized Education Program), which provides them with specific therapy and/or special education services. Other children may have unidentified learning differences. Teachers work with families and the Director to decide if additional information is needed to best support children’s growth and development in a classroom environment. At times, implementing instructional support
services such as adjusting teaching methodologies or materials may be all that is necessary. At other times, requesting an evaluation through the school district or the pediatrician may be recommended. Following the evaluation process a team meeting is held which includes the family, EPCS teacher, a Special Rights Consultant, the Director, as well as those who evaluated the child.

Can I be sure that my child will receive attention from the teacher?
The teacher-student ratio allows children to receive the attention he/she needs when they need it. In addition, there are specialists such as occupational, physical and speech/language therapists who work in the classroom with children with Individual Education Plans, who have identified special rights, and their peers. All children benefit from their expertise. All children need attention at different times of the day and for different areas of the curriculum.

How can teachers meet the needs of diverse learners? How can teachers structure activities so that children with varying abilities can participate?
Teachers have extensive training and ongoing professional development. The process of meeting the needs of a wide range of learners in the classroom is called “differentiated instruction”. In this kind of classroom, learning environments are carefully and deliberately designed to address the diversity of learning styles, levels of readiness and interests within any group of children. The curriculum is varied with multiple entry points, and multiple learning materials to address a range of learners. Flexibility is a hallmark of a differentiated classroom; what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed are things that are done in different ways depending on the strengths and needs of the learner.

How does the school support subtle or invisible differences?
The adults in the classroom demonstrate that they value diversity and support children in comfortably interacting with differences, whether the differences are obvious or subtle. There are children in every classroom with invisible learning differences. Obvious differences such as a person in a wheelchair, or a person who is blind or deaf, are often easier for children to understand. They can see a child is in a wheelchair, and a simple explanation such as, “their legs do not work like yours so they use a wheelchair to move around” makes sense. Other kinds of differences such as a child with emotional or behavioral problems, or a child who has difficulty sitting still and listening to a story because they have a shorter attention span are often harder for children to understand. Teachers use simple language to explain all kinds of differences. They talk with children about what is best to support each child’s learning i.e. “Maia uses the bean bag chair so she can listen to the story better”. Or “Tom is taking a break now to calm down and will come back when he is ready to join the group”. When explanations are given in very matter of fact and natural ways, children learn to accept we all have differences and this is what we need to do. In the beginning of the year children and teachers also generate basic rules of respect together for the classroom that encompasses all kinds of differences.

Who can answer my questions about inclusion at EPCS?
Parents can raise questions with the classroom teacher, or the Director. If there does not seem to be a good time to talk when you bring your child to school, you may email, leave a note, or call and suggest some good times to talk. There are also resources available through the Parent Teacher Advisory Board (PTAB) and the Supporting Children Supporting Families group.

Where can I get more information about inclusion?
The parent resource library near the front desk is a good place to begin. There are books that are about specific diagnoses such as ADHD, Asperger’s Syndrome, cerebral palsy, language development and sensory processing disorder. Parent Teacher Advisory Board meetings often focus on inclusion. The Supporting Children Supporting Families group, meet monthly and invite participation from the EP community. Many families welcome inquiries about their child’s special rights and are wonderful resources to the school community. Families who have been at the school in previous years may also be good resources.

Louise Derman-Sparks, Maria Gutierrez and Carol Phillips, Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias. NAEYC. 1989 Copyright © 2004 by Eliot-Pearson Children’s School, Medford, MA Updated 2012
Family Involvement

The Children's School needs the involvement of every family! Your involvement contributes to the quality of our school for each child, family, and staff member. It is crucial to establishing a positive school-home partnership. The two important ways we engage families at the Children’s School is by providing supportive, ongoing communication between teachers and parents, and school events designed to inform parents as well as foster social interactions. A third, and equally important way, is to invite parents to assume various volunteer responsibilities. At the Children's School it is the expectation that each family will volunteer their time and energy in a variety of ways at the time and pace they can.

The following describes the ways and events in which the Children's School invites parent participation:

Home Visits
At the beginning of school, each teacher will arrange a home visit for each child. The purpose of the home visit is to provide an opportunity for teacher, child and parents to get to know each other in a safe setting and to help ease the transition of home to school. Some teachers may wait until school has begun to coordinate their visit.

Curriculum Night
In October there will be a Curriculum Night for each classroom. This is an opportunity for parents to visit their child's classroom and learn about the specific plans and goals of each program for the year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences
Twice a year (fall/winter and spring), teachers hold individual conferences with each child's family. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to exchange information about their children's growth and development. Twice a year parents will receive a Progress Report on their children. Parents and teachers can request more than the minimal two conferences a year as issues come up. Families may also address concerns directly to the Director or Associate Director.

Family Visits
Parents are always welcomed in classrooms; simply speak with your child's Head Teacher to coordinate your visit with the classroom schedule. We also welcome parents in our observation booths; please see the Observation, Research, and Evaluation section of this handbook for more detailed information on scheduling an observation.

Plan to Communicate with Parents Whose Primary Language is not English
The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School has open, ongoing communication with all families. The school uses a variety of communication means; face to face in person meetings, written newsletters and notices, telephone, email, websites, posters/flyers/photographs on bulletin boards, videos and other forms of documentation, home visits, etc. The school makes accommodations for families whose first language is not English or who require alternative communication methods. We obtain interpreters and/or translators to help with parent conferences and/or if written material must be translated.

Parent-Teacher Advisory Board
The purpose of this organization is to facilitate communication and discussion about school-wide issues and to provide support for the school through sponsoring various activities such as educational events, fundraising events, and social events. The Board will consist of representatives from all groups who have relationships with the school, including parents from each classroom, Head Teachers, Graduate Teaching Assistants, faculty members from the Department of Child Study and Human Development, and the director of the school. Meetings are held five times a year in the evening and are open to the entire school community.
Parent Education
The Children’s School sponsors several forums for ongoing parent education. First, in conjunction with the Department of Child Study and Human Development, the school sponsors a series of evening workshops that are open to parents and teachers from our school and in the larger outside community. In addition, there are seminars with the director of the school that are open to Children’s School parents. Topics for both these forums are on various parenting issues and topics based upon the needs of the community each year. In the past, topics included children’s art, sibling rivalry, positive ways of dealing with negative behavior, learning through play, and television myths and realities.

Since 2004, the school community has offered parent-teacher learning groups. Most recently these groups have evolved to become Community Discussion Groups. These groups are a form of parent education where interested parents and staff explore a topic of interest together. Groups meet from 3-6 times over the course of the year with two formal meetings at the school where child care is provided. Topics for discussion groups in the past year have included stress management, gender and parenting, multiracial families, media, developmental milestones and behaviors, raising boys, children’s literature, art and music.

Supporting Children Supporting Families
This group is designed to provide families with a support system within the EPCS community that addresses a variety of topics including parenting children with special rights, learning differences as well as other challenges that come with parenting. The group is open to all families within the school. Parents, their families and friends are welcome to attend the group’s meetings. The Special Rights and Parent Chairpersons facilitate the meetings. Based on the interests of the individuals, specific topics are planned and information is shared through guest speakers and parent/family experiences. In the past, topics have included advocacy, sensory processing, literacy, inclusion, and Peaceful Parenting. This group meets monthly, alternating between day and evening meetings throughout the year.

Procedures for Class Parents
Each classroom has two class parents. The class parents are the liaisons between the PTAB and their individual classroom families. Class parents are responsible for the following:

- Coordinate an informal class get together before the start of school
- Coordinate the mid-year school service day.
- Coordinate end of year class gift with the School Coordinator.
- Commit to attend a minimum of three of the five PTAB meetings (See School Calendar)
- During the school year it is important for the class parents to encourage families to attend PTAB meetings and events.
- Beyond those responsibilities, the role of each class parent depends upon the needs of each particular classroom and teacher. It is most important to check in with the Head Teacher to see what would be helpful and possible. The following are examples of what class parents may have assisted with in the past: class breakfasts, get-togethers at a local playground, Silent Auction projects, parent newsletters, and field trips. There will be a class parent orientation in the beginning of the school year

Fundraising Efforts
The Children’s School depends upon the parent community to spearhead fundraising efforts to support our Scholarship Fund. The school has an endowed scholarship fund from the University. Money raised through fundraising activities goes towards scholarship and financial assistance to families who would otherwise be unable to attend the school. Occasionally other situations arise, when fundraising efforts are directed towards more specific goals for programmatic needs. The Parent-Teacher Advisory Board coordinates fund-raising activities. Past activities have included a Fall Raffle, Family Dance/Silent Auction, Field Day, a yard sale, and a children’s concert.
We need all parents to get involved and help with fund-raising efforts. We always welcome new ideas. Please ask your class parents or the Parent Leaders of the Advisory Board for more information.

Family Socials
Each year there will be several opportunities for families to get together through school picnics, class events, sing-alongs, meet/greet etc. These social events provide a chance for parents to meet each other, meet teachers, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and student interns in a social setting.

Other Ways to Participate
If your interests are more in the areas of working with children or making curriculum materials, we also need your help. Several teachers have expressed a need for help in making big books and games and in publishing children's books. Working in a classroom is also a possibility, helping with computers, singing, or joining the class for field trips. Whatever your particular interest we need your help and welcome whatever richness you can contribute to our school.

PARENT TEACHER ADVISORY BOARD (PTAB)

PTAB PURPOSE / FUNCTION
1. Help build effective parent/teacher/school relationships
2. Facilitate communication and discussion about policy and planning issues, which relate to the school. The board serves as an advisory service to the Director. PTAB is not a decision-making board nor is it a vehicle for handling complaints or grievances.
3. Communicate with constituent communities on issues raised in meetings.
4. Organizes activities for the school community under four categories:
   - Educational
   - Social /Community Building
   - Fund-Raising
   - Community-Service

COMPOSITION
Minutes of all meetings will be taken by members of the board, on a rotating basis, and shared with all constituencies of the school. All meetings are open to the entire Eliot-Pearson community. The PTAB will be represented by all those who have relationships with the school, including:
   - Three Parent Co-Chairs who will be responsible for coordinating with the Director of School
   - Two Parents from each class who will serve as class parents and PTAB representatives
   - Director of School
   - Three Teachers
   - Three Graduate Teaching Assistants

IMPLEMENTATION
- The PTAB will form teams as necessary to fulfill its mission. All members of the school community will be asked to serve on at least one team.
- Meetings will be open to all and will be held five times a year in the evening. Committee meetings will be held as necessary and will be organized by committee chair(s). The first part of each meeting will consist of a brief review of business, followed by a more lengthy discussion on a particular focus topic(s) related to the school.
- The Parent Co-Chairs of PTAB and the Director will establish the goals and mission for fundraising before school begins each year.
PTAB “Board” Roles
Along with the event & task co-chairs, these folks make up the leadership team of PTAB from our families.

PTAB Co-Chairs: PTAB is overseen by parent co-chairs who coordinate the various PTAB volunteers and act as liaison with EPCS administration.

Events & Tasks

Class Parents: The class parents are the liaisons between the PTAB and their individual classroom families and between the families and the teacher. Class Parents also provide teacher support as needed. Each classroom has two class parents.

Procedures for Class Parents
Class Parents are responsible for the following:
- Coordinate an informal class get together before the start of school
- Coordinate the Mid-Year School Service Day
- Coordinate end of year class gift
- Commit to attend a minimum of three of the five PTAB meetings (see school calendar)
- During the school year it is important for the Class Parents to attend the five PTAB meetings, held on Monday evenings. It is the responsibility of the Class Parents to then report back about the meeting to any of their classroom families that were unable to attend. If a class parent is unable to attend a PTAB meeting, he/she may assign a parent from the class to provide representation, and report back to families that were unable to attend.

Beyond those responsibilities, the role of each Class Parent depends upon the needs of each particular classroom and teacher. It is most important to check in with the Head Teacher to see what would be helpful and possible. The following are examples of what Class Parents may have assisted with in the past: class breakfasts, get-togethers at a local playground, Silent Auction projects, parent newsletters, and field trips.

There will be a Class Parent orientation in the beginning of the school year.

Community Discussion Groups (CDG)
EPCS Community Discussion Groups exist for conversation, learning, and fun. The purpose of the groups is to bring together adults from the EPCS community to explore a topic of mutual interest. Each group is co-facilitated by a parent and an EPCS teacher/staff/GTA that schedule and lead the meetings. Groups meet over the course of the year and vary in format and meeting times. In past years, groups have covered topics such as Children’s Relationships, Special Rights, Creativity in Children, Diversity, Balancing Family and Work, Technology and Young Children, and Healthy Living.

Topics each year are suggested by the EPCS community and selected by the PTAB co-chairs and EPCS Director. Discussion Groups can meet as often as they like and have the two dedicated PTAB Nights during November and March. Fathers and Mothers groups were initiated during the 2015-2016 school year that families very much enjoyed and appreciated.

Discussion Groups Coordinator - The Discussion Groups Coordinator selects the Group topics with the Director, acts as the liaison with the Groups, collects their notes for sharing with the community, and works with the Group co-facilitators to plan the November and March Discussion Group Nights.

Supporting Children Supporting Families (SCSF)
This group is designed to provide families with a support system within the EPCS community that addresses a variety of topics including parenting children with special rights, learning differences as well as other challenges that come with parenting. The group is open to all families within the school. Parents, their families and friends are welcome to attend the group’s meetings. The Special Rights Coordinator and Parent Chairpersons facilitate the meetings. Based on the interests of the individuals, specific topics are planned and
information is shared through guest speakers and parent/family experiences. In the past, topics have included advocacy, sensory processing, literacy, inclusion, and Peaceful Parenting. This group meets monthly, alternating between day and evening meetings throughout the year.

**Please note:** In addition to SCSF, we typically have a Discussion Group on Special Rights that meets in the evenings.

**Family Literacy, Science or Math Day**
This event is an opportunity for families and children to come together and play a variety of games, developed for a range of ages, in a cooperative, developmentally appropriate, and fun way. The Family Literacy Day team works together to set up and facilitate literacy activities for a range of ages.

**Winter Fundraising Performance**
This is a fundraising event open to the community at large, held on the Tufts campus. The Winter Performance team helps with event planning, sponsorship solicitation, event publicity, and ushering on the day of the performance.

**Family Dance**
This event is both a fundraiser for the EPCS Scholarship Fund as well as a fun-filled evening for the community. Families are encouraged to invite friends, relatives, and Children's School alumni to this wonderful event. Past features have included our Grand Raffle, Silent Auction, delicious food, face painting, kids’ crafts, and plenty of dancing!

The Family Dance team solicits sponsorship, makes food arrangements, organizes children's activities, plans music, coordinates event volunteers, and helps with event publicity and ticket sales for the school’s annual spring dance. The Family Dance team includes a committee that helps plan and solicit donations of goods and services for the raffle and silent auction. The committee also handles advertising the raffle, coordinating and cataloging donated items, and working with the school coordinator to sell raffle tickets in advance.

**Child Care Evening / Parents’ Night Out**
Families will be able to drop off their children at EPCS, head out for a few hours and know that your children are safe and happy, all for a small fee. All proceeds go to the Scholarship Fund. Graduate Teaching Assistants donate their time to provide child care for the evening.

**School Store Committee**
We have a variety of Eliot-Pearson items that we sell at different times throughout the year.

**Coffee Hour**
We hold a community coffee hour bi-monthly in the lobby of EPCS as a social gathering between parents and also to benefit the Scholarship Fund with the sale of coffee & tea. Class parents will alternate and host the coffee hour.

**EPCS Fundraising Committee**
The Fundraising Committee got a very brief start towards the goal of raising scholarship and other priority funds outside of the immediate EPCS community. If you have experience in long-range fundraising strategies, including alumni donations, or are just interested in helping EPCS expand its fundraising capacity, please join this group!

**Staff Appreciation Days**
We realize that all families want to show their gratitude and appreciation for their children's teachers. Typically there are two times each year when parents and classrooms like to come together to express their appreciation for their teachers—once at the end of the first semester, around the holidays, and the other at the end of the year. For the first semester gift, we ask parents to participate in a Mid-Year School Service Day by
donating time to clean and reorganize the classrooms. For the end of the year gift, class parents will coordinate the purchase of a classroom gift for teachers with Maria, our School Coordinator.

We also provide two teacher appreciation luncheons. The first on School Conference Day and the second at end of the year on the day after school ends in the spring. And as always, heartfelt individual notes of thanks from families and children are encouraged and deeply appreciated!

The Teacher Appreciation Committee and Class Parents will organize volunteers for the two teacher appreciation luncheons happening in December and June (parents provide homemade food for staff and teachers) and for the Mid-Year School Service Day in January.

- Lunch for Parent-Teacher Conference Day: Our first appreciation is always a big hit: parents provide homemade food for staff and teachers on conference day in December. Volunteers can sign up to bring food or drink.

- Teacher Gift Fund: Parents can give monetary donations to appreciate teaching teams that worked with their children for the year. The School Coordinator will collect all the donations for all of the classrooms. Consistent to our school values, we will ask families to put their donations in sealed envelopes upon giving it to Maria, the School Coordinator in order to keep the process anonymous. Families should feel comfortable to give what they can. The money is then divided among the teachers in each classroom. Our School Coordinator will work with Class Parents.

- Mid-Year School Service Day: This is a gift of time. We ask parents to participate in a classroom clean-up day on a Saturday in January by donating an hour or two of time. Parents do a thorough cleaning and sometimes reorganizing of the classroom based on a list of needs the teacher prepares. Often there are a few take-home tasks too. This simple action provides a great service to the teachers and is always very much appreciated!

- End-of-Year Teacher Appreciation Lunch: Like the lunch provided in December, volunteers bring homemade food for the teachers and staff to enjoy while they clean out and organize their classrooms the day after school ends. And as always, heartfelt individual notes of thanks from families and children are encouraged and deeply appreciated! Class Parents sometimes choose to coordinate an additional gift, such as something handmade by the parents or kids, and these gestures are welcomed but not required. We strongly discourage individual gifts from families, as they potentially exclude or put pressure on those members of our community who cannot afford them.

Parent Talents and Classroom Support
From time to time, our teachers enlist the help and talents of our families with classroom projects. These range from things like setting up fish tanks to giving a drawing lesson to constructing playhouses. They usually require a limited amount of time, and the help is hugely appreciated. A survey will go out in August to get information from parents.
School Policies and Procedures

Admissions Policy
The goal of the admissions process is to determine whether Eliot-Pearson Children’s School can meet a child’s needs and the family’s expectations. We make every effort to inform families about the educational philosophy of our program and about the expectation that families become involved in school-sponsored activities. We try to develop collaboration with every family in order to support the home-school-child relationship.

All admissions decisions are based on the criteria listed below:

Commitment to Diversity: The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School actively seeks a student population that represents a wide range of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. We seek and value diversity within our family population, and do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic and national origin, cultural heritage, color, political beliefs, marital status, religion, disabilities, sexual orientation, or family style in the administration of the Children’s School admissions and educational policies, financial assistance programs, or any school administered program. All benefits and privileges are available to every child and family. Appreciation and respect for all people, regardless of their differences and similarities is at the heart of our program.

Re-Enrollment: Our first obligation is to the children already enrolled in the school. Families of children currently enrolled are asked to express their preferences in January for the following year; however, due to physical space limitations in each classroom, we cannot guarantee re-enrollment from year to year. The number of openings remaining in each group will be determined from the base of returning children. A non-refundable deposit is required to hold a spot for each child.

Siblings: Whenever possible, priority is given to applicants who are siblings of children currently enrolled; however, acceptance is not guaranteed.

Special Rights: The Children’s School is committed to providing quality education for all children, and therefore, children with special rights are enrolled in all of our groups. In a model of inclusion, children who need therapy services receive them in the context of their school day whenever possible. We have a team of specialists who collaborate with teachers, families, and others who may be involved in setting goals for children with special rights. Every attempt is made to collaborate with school systems to secure the services required for children and families. The Children’s School serves a wide spectrum of learning differences and all decisions are made on an individual basis.

Tufts Faculty, Staff, and Students:
Consideration is given to families who are a part of the Tufts Community.

Class Composition: Applicants who will add to the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the school’s population are given priority whenever possible. Age and gender are considerations as they relate to the overall composition of each class.

Age Guidelines: The minimum age for enrollment is 2.9 by September 1.
General age guidelines for groups include:
- Preschool East- 2.9 to 3.9 years old
- Preschool West- 3.9 to 4.10 years old
- Kindergarten- Age 5 by October 31st
- First/Second Grade- 5.9 to 7 years old
Dates/Deadlines: While applications are accepted throughout the year, families interested in the school should submit an application in the fall, no earlier than one year in advance of the September that they want their child to begin school. A non-refundable application fee of $25 is requested to support our Scholarship Fund. Most admissions decisions are made in March, but openings occur when families move or parents change their plans.

Observations for Prospective Families: We encourage all prospective families to visit the school during the application process. Families are welcome to visit the school after Columbus Day and may observe more than one classroom, if unsure about which class to request for placement. Please call the school at least one week in advance to schedule an observation time. Due to the fact that observation booths are not sound proof, we request that parents do not bring their children at this time.

Financial Assistance: Admissions decisions are made separate and apart from financial aid decisions. Financial assistance is based on need and the availability of funds. Our policy is to support as many families as possible rather than award large grants to a few families. It is expected every family will contribute something toward their tuition. To be eligible for an EPCS Scholarship your household income must fall under the 100% Massachusetts State Median Income (100% SMI). Instructions to apply for financial aid are included with the application information and materials. The Scholarship Committee will keep all information confidential and financial aid decisions are made in the spring. There are two exceptions to the non-refundable enrollment deposit: 1) If a family pre-qualifies to receive financial aid, but does not receive the financial assistance needed for their child to attend Eliot-Pearson 2) If a special education team recommends a class placement other than EPCS after re-enrollment takes place. For more information, please see the school Director or the School Coordinator.

Final Decisions: Final admissions decisions are made by the Director after close consultation with the Scholarship Committee, School Coordinator, and Teaching Staff.

Acceptance Procedures—Once accepted, a non-refundable deposit is required and an Enrollment Contract is signed.

Policy on Attendance
Children are expected to attend school regularly and to be present for the entire program, arriving and departing promptly. We have allowed for a 15-minute arrival time, 8:30-8:45 am for all classes. Parents may drop off and say good-bye to their children during this time, and then classes can begin promptly at their scheduled time. Special consideration will be given to children who are experiencing difficulty saying good-bye. In such cases, parent(s) and teachers will work out a plan together that considers the needs of the child first.

Policy on Absences
Please notify the school office if your child is going to be absent and whether the absence is due to illness. The school sends email notices to other parents in the school community in the event of a communicable disease.

Policy on Birthday Celebrations
Birthdays are acknowledged differently in each classroom. Families can check with the Head Teacher regarding birthday celebrations in their room. We discourage families from distributing birthday invitations to private birthday parties via the school mail pouches unless the entire class is invited. Many children’s (and families’) feelings have been hurt because a child was not invited to a particular party. Please be sensitive to the feelings of others regarding parties and invitations. When bringing treats to school be sure to consider allergies in the classroom. Often non-food celebrations are planned.

Policy on Childcare
Employees and Graduate Teaching Assistants of the Children’s School may not provide childcare for, nor tutor any children who they are currently teaching. Graduate Teaching Assistants may provide childcare for
children who are not enrolled in their current classrooms. Over the years, we have found this policy helpful in maintaining positive, professional relationships between home and school. Due to licensing regulations, childcare cannot be provided inside of the EPCS school building and EPCS facilities (bathrooms, water cooler) will not available after dismissal time.

**Some ways to find a childcare provider:**
- Place an ad in the Tufts Daily. Many parents have reported great success with this method. You might even try chipping in with other parents to place an ad so you can save money and share the list of respondents. The Tufts Daily is published daily, Monday through Friday, from the beginning of September until the end of April. The Daily is located in Curtis Hall, the building on the corner of College Avenue and Boston Avenue, that also houses the Post Office and Brown and Brew. You can call the Tufts Daily at (617) 627-3090 or view their website at tuftsdaily.com.
- You can also place an online advertisement with Tufts Student Employment at http://tufts.studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com
- Ask other parents if they’d like to trade childcare duties with you. This is a double help. A parent who you know will be in charge and it will also allow your child to have a play date while you are gone!
- Ask other parents for the names of childcare providers they use. If the provider seems capable, perhaps you can suggest hiring the provider to come to either one of your homes one evening and watch both children while the adults go out. Everyone benefits: the provider is paid more, the children can play together and you and the other adults get a night out!
- Put up a poster in the school and in the Child Study and Human Development Department. Both EPCS and the Department have bulletin boards where people seeking childcare may post. All posters must be submitted to the front desk for approval and stamped with the date before posting.
- Call the Red Cross. The Red Cross offers names of people ages 11-15 that have been certified through the Red Cross childcare course for 11-15 year olds. The Boston Headquarters/Central Area Office can be reached at (617) 375-0700 or (800) 564-1234. The North Area/Melrose Area Office can be reached at (781) 665-1351.

**Communication Policy**

**Between School and Parents**
The school uses EMAIL and postings to our website for most school communication. Please be sure your current email address is registered at the front desk. A paper copy of most notices will be available by request at the front desk. This year, in order to reduce paper waste, we are fully putting our “let’s go green” initiative into effect and sending most of the welcoming packet via email. Throughout the year, we will continue to use less paper and use electronic communication whenever possible.

Eliot-Pearson Children’s School has open, ongoing communication with all families. The school uses a variety of communication means - face to face in person meetings, home visits, written newsletters and notices, telephone, email, websites, posters/flyers/photographs on bulletin boards, videos and other forms of documentation.

The school makes accommodations for families whose first language is other than English or who require alternative communication methods. We obtain interpreters or translators to help with parent conferences and/or if written material must be translated.

**Between Parents and School**
The most direct and consistent experience of the Children’s School parents is with their children’s teachers. The teachers are ready to discuss children’s progress and parental concerns with parents at times other than the beginning and the end of class periods. Teachers are happy to set up appointments or talk by telephone for this purpose. Parents may contact the School Director if they have unresolved concerns about their children.
Policy to Address Parent Concerns
The engagement of families is critical and central to children’s development and learning and our school’s philosophy. Establishing a policy and procedures to address parents’ concerns fosters positive relationships with families and strengthens home and school partnerships. This policy is consistent with the Department of Early Education and Care regulations.

Purpose
The policy for addressing parents’ concerns is intended to ensure that Eliot-Pearson has fair, consistent and responsive procedures in place to address minor to moderate conflicts as they arise. The policy is based on the school’s fundamental values which include: providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for children, building healthy and trustful relationships between children, parents and staff, and providing a safe working environment for staff where parents’ concerns are raised and addressed in a professional manner. These issues may involve children’s learning and behavior, policies and procedures, parent communication, and general administrative matters. This policy does not cover existing rights and appeal processes indicated in the family handbook.

Managing Parent/Teacher Concerns
The school will make every effort to resolve concerns raised by parents. All concerns will be noted and acted on right away by the staff person/s involved in the matter and referred as needed. If a parent raised a concern directly to administrators, the school will determine whether the concern or complaint should be managed through the teacher or staff person involved in the issue, the school administrators, or others processes led by the department. This policy requires any person raising a concern to act immediately after an issue arises, document all factual information about the concern, maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved, act in a professional manner, and be open to negotiate differences in values and perspectives.

Communicating with Parents and the School Community
Parents should raise any concerns or complaints in relation to their child’s education with their child’s teacher. Teachers will make time to address the issue at their earliest convenience within one to five school days (in person or over the phone). The teacher will discuss the matter with the parent and record the facts, action plans and timelines developed to resolve the concern. The teacher will also document the outcome if/when the concern is addressed. In the case when the concern is not resolved, the teacher or the parent may refer the issue to the Director. The Director will review the documents, listen to both parties and take responsibility for addressing the concern and following up with parents within agreed upon timelines.

Any parent concern received by a staff member in relation to another staff member or an issue outside their responsibility or beyond their authority should be referred to the Director. The staff member should also advise and direct the parent/s to the appropriate administrator.

The Director will address concerns about general school-wide matters as they arise. The School Coordinator will assume responsibility in the absence of the Director. Teachers or administrators who are contacted with a concern should document the issue and follow these procedures:
• Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern
• The date and format the concern was raised (in person, phone, in writing)
• A brief description of the concern and action taken on the concern and the resulting outcome
• A timeline for resolving the concern will be sent in writing for all issues raised and brought in writing.
• Any written or verbal concern that contains inflammatory or disrespectful statements, verbal abuse, comments of a threatening nature, or intent to intimidate will be referred to the director and not be addressed, and the parent will be advised accordingly.
• In cases where parent request that their identity remain confidential, they should be told that their request will be honored but solution to the concern may be limited as a result.
• A parent may withdraw a concern at any time during the negotiation. The staff member managing the concern must notify in writing all involved parties, if a concern is withdrawn.
• The school will monitor all parent concerns to identify common or reoccurring issues requiring attention.

Confidentiality Policy: Distribution of Records
Conversations about children are held in confidence between families, teachers and administrators. Conversations are held in private locations and are respectful of the need to protect families and children’s confidentiality.

Children’s records, including assessments, are confidential and may not be released to anyone other than the parents or the child’s teacher(s) without written consent of the parents. Parents may have access at reasonable times, and such access may not be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without consent of the parents. The entire record shall contain a log indicating any persons to whom information has been released. This procedure applies to the release of information to both public and private schools.

Teaching teams, consisting of the Head Teacher, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and therapists, may have access to children’s assessments and records to gain more information in order to better serve the needs of the child’s learning. Children’s files are kept in locked file cabinets of the School Coordinator. Files are logged in and out and never leave the school.

State and federal laws protect the confidentiality of children with special rights. Staff members discuss a child’s learning issues only with the child’s parents. Families often have strong ideas about how and when they want to share information about their child’s special rights. It is our policy to take the lead from families and to provide support in their decisions about disclosing individual needs. Classroom teachers and school administrators are good resources for helping to share information when families are ready to do so.

Policy for Late Pick Up
Children need to be picked up at the specified dismissal time for the regular and extended day program. The school does not have staff available to supervise children after school. When a teacher must supervise a child until a parent arrives, it is a logistical and financial burden to the school. We ask all families to respect dismissal time and pick up in a timely fashion. The number of late pick-ups during the last school year has prompted EPCS to implement a policy if repeated lateness occurs. The Director or School Coordinator will request a meeting with parents/guardians to resolve the issue. It will then be up to the discretion of the school to take measures. This could include a direct payment to the teacher, who needs to stay late to take care of the child/ren after hours, in the amount of $5.00/child for every 15 minutes past dismissal time. Payment will be due at the time of pick up.

Procedure for Family Information Update
Please notify the School Coordinator of changes in address, telephone number, new siblings, and changes in child care arrangements, as soon as they occur. Changes in family situation, due to events such as changes in marital status, the arrival of a new baby, a family illness, or changes in childcare arrangements, often affect your child’s behavior in school. For changes in who will pick up your child from school there are forms posted in the classroom for you to sign. Please let your children’s teachers know any events of this nature.

Health Forms
The Children’s School is licensed by the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and is subject to their regulations. As a licensed childcare facility, the school is required to have on file, medical information on each child. This file includes proof of an annual physical examination, up-to-date immunizations, and a lead test with normal results (the actual date and level number of the lead test must be indicated). A lead test must be done annually through age three and, depending on residence, through the age four. Ask your child’s pediatrician to complete the Health Certificate form you received or provide a printout from your provider (additional Health Forms are available at the Front Desk). We also recommend that all children have annual hearing exams. As a private school vision and hearing screenings are not conducted. Please inform your pediatrician.

Note: A current copy of your health insurance card must be in the child’s file.
There is a deadline for providing this information to the school. If this updated information is not received, your child will not be permitted to attend school. This is a regulation set by The Department of Early of Education and Care (EEC), our state-licensing agency. We will have our license suspended if we are not in compliance; therefore if you do not have your child's health form in by the first day of school your child will not be allowed to attend our program. If you have any concerns or questions about this deadline, please contact the School Coordinator.

**Illness**

Communicable diseases are problematic for young children and for staff in school settings. Therefore:

- Please keep your child at home at the first signs of a cold, fever, or cough.
- We assume that a child who is well enough to be at school can play outside. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified in order for you to make arrangements to take your child home.
- In case of an emergency during school hours where medical advice is needed Tufts University Health Services is available for consultation.
- A detailed Health Policy is included in the Appendix, which covers policies related to specific illnesses. Be sure to read it before your child starts the school year.

**Introductory Report**

Parents of newly enrolled children need to complete an Introductory Report Form that provides teachers with helpful information about each child. For re-enrolling children, parents complete the Introductory Update Form.

**Libraries**

There are two libraries in the Children’s School:

*Teacher Library:* This library is for the sole use of the teachers. In this library are a wide variety of children’s books, which can be used in the classroom for curriculum development. Teachers borrow books at will from this location. Books are returned and re-filed by the front office staff. Books are shelved by subject and/or by author.

*Parent Library:* This library located in the front lobby is a lending library for parents and families. It has a wide variety of texts; hand-picked by the Director, and covers many relevant child-rearing subjects. Books may be signed out at the front desk and must be returned within two weeks.

**Lost and Found**

A Lost and Found box is located in each of the classrooms and in the lobby. Please check periodically for lost articles.

**Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)**

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the licensing authority for the school. A copy of the EEC Regulations is available at the front desk. A Parent Information Board, displaying Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensing required information, is located on the wall across from the kitchen.

Following, is contact information for the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC):

Department of Early Education and Care
360 Merrimack Street, Bldg 9 3rd Floor
Lawrence, MA 01843
978-681-9684
Parking Regulations, Tufts University

If you plan to park at the school to drop your child off in the morning or to pick your child up at dismissal time, you will need to purchase a parking permit. Parking at the school is limited. We encourage car-pooling as much as possible. There are two parking lots designated for parent drop off and pick up: a lot in the front of the school for approximately 11 cars, and Cousens lot across from Tufts Gymnasium (Tisch Athletic Center). Parking permits are required for all parent cars. The cost is $20 per year for one car and, $5 for each additional car. This year, Tufts will be using an online system to make parking permit payments. Detailed information on the payment process will be sent out as soon as it is available.

Only non-Tufts affiliated families can purchase these permits. If you are a Tufts employee or affiliate, you will need to purchase an Employee/other Parking Permit from Tufts. Permits are valid in the front parking lot and Cousens parking lot only. You may use the fire lanes for 15 minute drop off and pick up. Tufts Police monitor this and cars without permits or illegally parked cars may be ticketed and/or towed. If you plan on staying longer than 15 minutes for drop off or pick up, use the front lot and Cousens lot only. The back lot is reserved for Tufts employees and requires a Tufts Faculty/Staff Parking Permit.

Referral Services

In the event that teachers have concerns about a child’s progress that raise questions about any aspect of a child’s growth and development the following guidelines need to be followed:

GTA’s, fieldworkers, student teachers, and volunteers should raise questions first with the Head Teacher (either in writing or in private), always respecting the confidentiality entitled to all children and families. If Head Teachers have concerns about a child’s growth and development they should inform the Director and the Special Rights Coordinator. This can happen in writing or in weekly supervision sessions. If it is decided that instructional support strategies should be tried, parents will be informed. Instructional support strategies including adjustment of teaching methods, materials, or curriculum will be implemented to see if modifications will help the child. It may take 4-8 weeks to observe, try different adjustments, and see if they work for a child. Teachers may consult with specialists regarding modifications or strategies. Parents may bypass this instructional support/pre-referral process and request an evaluation from their school system or through their pediatrician. Because of time constraints we may recommend a referral take place sooner.

If the educational question(s) remain unresolved after instructional support strategies have been tried, a follow-up meeting with the Director, Head Teacher and/or Special Rights Coordinator will be scheduled to discuss the issue with the family and make a formal referral. Families are encouraged to observe their child in class. Following the conference, parents will receive a written summary from the school describing the major points in the meeting as well as the recommendation for a referral. Included will be a brief summary of the strategies tried and observations made. If warranted, a follow-up conference will be planned as soon as possible. Parents will be given assistance in making the referral should they choose to do so themselves and need such assistance. Parents will also be informed of the availability of services through their public school system and their rights under Special Education Regulations.

With parental permission, the evaluating agency or service provider will provide EPCS with reports and recommendations for meeting the child’s needs as well as include EPCS staff in the conference. EPCS staff will participate in the conference whenever possible. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services, we shall review progress at the school at least twice each year to determine if another referral is necessary. Written records of any referrals, including the parent conference and results, are maintained by Special Rights Coordinator. EPCS staff will participate in future meetings with the school district with family’s permission.
Referral Process

1. Family or staff member raises concerns with Head Teacher

2. Head Teacher meets with Director

3. Family members, Head Teacher, and Director meet

4. Written meeting summary shared with family

5. Introduce instructional support intervention strategies

   - Include consultative input from EPCS staff
     - Review concerns in 4-8 weeks (or less)
       - Difficulty solved
       - Initiate evaluation

   - Initiate evaluation process with school district or medical
     - Family contacts school district or pediatrician w/ EPCS support to request specific evaluations
     - Meeting is held to review results of evaluation within 45 school days
     - Evaluations take place within 30 school days (school district)
       - No findings of special education/disability
       - Team develops individual plan for services
Snow Day Policy
The Children's School occasionally needs to be closed for an entire school day or to close early in the event of severe weather conditions. As soon as a decision is made regarding the school closing, the Director will send an email to the school wide community, therefore, it is very important to check your email regularly for correspondence from EPCS. The School Coordinator will put a message on the school voice mail system and will list the school’s status on WBZ-TV. Closings & delays will scroll at the bottom of the TV screen and a full list of closings/delays will be available online at cbsboston.com. In addition, closings will be displayed on 7News’ website www.whdh.com where parents can also sign up to receive text message alerts for school closings and delays. To sign up for text message alerts go to www.whdh.com then type “School Closings” in the search bar. Next, click on the link for “Sign up for School Closing Alerts”. You will need to create an account and choose Eliot-Pearson Children’s School from the “Private Schools” list in order to receive text messages.

Termination Policy
If a child needs to be terminated from the program due to challenging behaviors, procedures to avoid termination will include the following:

- Providing an opportunity to meet with parents to discuss options other than termination
- Offering parents referrals for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services (See Referral Services)
- Pursuing options for supportive services to the program including consultation and educator training
- Developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program

If the Children’s School has gone through all of the above steps and, as a team, feel all options have been exhausted, and that the safety and health of other children are so seriously compromised, the Director will notify parents of the decision to terminate the enrollment of the child. The Director will provide written documentation to the parents with the reasons for termination, the actions taken by the center prior to termination, and referral information for other services. When any child is terminated from our program, initiated by the Children’s School or the parents, it is the school’s responsibility to prepare the child for termination from our program in a manner consistent with the child’s ability to understand. Decisions about how to best handle termination will be made in consultation with the Head Teacher, parents and Director. The school does not have a suspension policy.

Toileting Plan
- Children who are not toilet trained may attend school. We believe the toilet training process should occur at the time that is most appropriate developmentally for the child.
- All phases of toilet training occur in consultation with parents.
- Teachers will respond to parents’ wishes about reminders to children.
- Children are never punished or ridiculed for soiling or wetting clothes.
- The bathroom is available for children’s use at any time during the day.
- During outdoor time a child is allowed indoors to use the toilet, under a teacher’s supervision.
- Children are reminded to use the bathroom during the transition from outside to inside time. Teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of children, and periodically remind individual children to use the bathroom, as necessary.
- Children are reminded to flush the toilet and to wash their hands in the classroom sinks after toileting and before eating.
- Teachers are available to help children with the toileting/washing hands process as necessary.
Diapering Procedures

- Diapers shall be changed regularly when soiled or wet.
- Children shall be washed and dried with individual washing materials, such as single use disposable washcloths during each diaper change.
- Liquid soap is to be used for hand washing purposes.
- Children’s hands shall be washed thoroughly with soap and running water after the child has been changed. Staff members shall wash their hands thoroughly with soap and running water after changing each child. Individual towels shall be used to dry hands. Children and staff must wash hands after coming into contact with bodily fluids or discharges.
- The changing table or diapering surface shall be used for no other purpose.
- The changing surface shall be smooth, intact (no cracks or tears), easily cleaned, and impervious to water (waterproof). This surface should also be cushioned.
- A disposable covering shall be used on the changing surface:
  - The covering shall be large enough to adequately cover the surface.
  - The disposable covering shall be changed after each use.
- The changing surface shall be washed with soap and water and sprayed with a bleach solution. The bleach solution shall consist of ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon of water and must be made fresh daily.
- Clothing or cloth diapers soiled by feces, urine, vomitus, or blood shall be double-bagged in sealed plastic bags and stored apart from items. (This is a practical interpretation of the covered, waterproof, container required by 7.07(26)(c)(6).) Soiled disposable diapers must be placed in a waterproof container with a tight-fitting cover and a disposable plastic liner. The container must be emptied, washed, and sanitized at least daily.
- A change of clothing shall be available for each child under 2.9 years of age or not toilet trained. Extra, center-owned clothing shall be available for changing purposes in addition to clothing brought from home for children under 2.9 years of age. Center-owned clothing must be laundered after being worn by a child.
- Running water shall be adjacent to the diapering area for hand washing.
- Diapering areas and hand washing facilities shall be separate from facilities and areas used for food preparation and service.

At this time there are no children in EPCS with a request for cloth diapers, however, if this were to happen, following is our policy:

- For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer cover made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit. Solid matter will be disposed in the toilet. Used diapers will be returned to families on the same day used. Families are asked to bring several sets of absorbent cloth diapers and outer covers, as well as Ziploc plastic bags to return the diapers and covers to families in double bags. Each child’s diaper is changed when wet or soiled. Diapers are checked every two hours, and when the child awakens extra center-owned clothing shall be available for changing purposes in addition to clothing brought from home by each child. Center-owned clothing must be laundered after being worn by a child. Staff members shall also wash their hands with soap and running water after assisting the children with toileting. The diapering and hand washing facility shall be separate from the area used for food service and toileting. Running water will be adjacent to the diaper area for hand washing.

Tooth Brushing

In January 2010, EEC (Dept. of Early Education and Care) issued new regulations for childcare programs that include a requirement that educators assist children with brushing their teeth if children are in care for more than four hours or if children have a meal while in care [606 CMR 7.11(11)(d)]. This regulation is intended to:

- Help children learn about the importance of good oral health
- Provide information and resources on good oral health to child care programs and families
- Help address the high incidence of tooth decay among young children in Massachusetts, which is associated with numerous health risks.
EEE licensed programs must comply with this regulation. However, parents may choose that their child (ren) not participate in tooth brushing while present at the childcare program. (There is a specific form that needs to be completed for non-participation in the oral health program, included on the back of the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School’s Permission Form).

Transitions
The Eliot Pearson Children’s School provides many ways to support children’s transitions from their classroom to other programs. Teachers meet with receiving teachers to share information about children they have taught at the end of the school year as well as in the fall. This is always done with parent permission. Progress Reports are available to incoming teachers through the school files kept in the School Coordinator’s office. Individual Education Plans are kept by the Associate Director and shared with teachers in the class in which the child is enrolled.

Shared Classroom Activities
There are many times throughout the year that children are together on the playground or in each other’s classrooms for shared activities. One favorite activity is All School Choice in which children can have a choice time in another classroom. This allows for sibling groups and provides an opportunity for teachers to meet children who may come to their rooms in the future.

End of School Year
For many children the last week of school will be their last week at EPCS. Teachers often make a chart that shows each child’s name and what they will do over the summer and what they will do in September, so that children see there are many ways to end the school year. There are many references for help with transitions throughout the school year including our fall event Life After Eliot-Pearson. The PTAB invites alumni families to come to EPCS to share their transition experiences with current families. Topics include regarding what to look for in a school, questions to consider when observing, and thinking about the values that are most important for families when making a decision about school placement.

Transportation Policy
The school does not provide regular transportation for the children. Parents must arrange transportation for their children to and from school. Each school year, parents are asked to complete an Eliot-Pearson Children’s School Permission Form that specifies how their child will be transported to and from school each day. The school maintains lists of adults who are authorized to pick up children. Teachers must call a child’s parents if someone who is not expected arrives to pick up the child. For this reason, parents should notify their child’s teacher if someone new is coming for pick-up or if their child is going home with another child’s family. Each classroom has forms posted for this purpose. One is for a daily change in pick-up the other is for an on-going change.

Transportation for Field Trips
Parents are asked yearly if they are interested in driving for field trips for their class. The people who are interested are given a background check and fingerprinting as needed. They are required to:
1. Fill out a Background Record Check application. You may need to do a SORI/finger printing done if you will be driving children unsupervised.
2. Provide a valid driver’s license.

A list of approved parents is kept for teachers’ use. Before planning field trips, the teachers will:
1. Check the list to confirm eligible drivers.
2. Accompany parents, in their car, that wish to drive and do not have a completed background record check or are finger printed.
3. Teachers or administrators may never drive children or families.
Use of Space Policy
Physical space for meetings is very limited at the school. Priority is given to school related events. Parents may not use any space in the school or the EP Department of Child Study and Human Development without a staff member present. In rare incidences, children’s school staff members have requested to use space for their own personal use (course related project, tutoring, etc.). Requests must be made to the school director (in writing) for their approval. Tufts University does not allow the space to be used for programs that compete with already existing programs, or when school is not in session.

First Days of School: Phase-In
Preschool East at the Eliot-Pearson Children's School has a Day One Phase-In Schedule on the first day of the school year. During this time, the children come in small groups and stay for a shortened period of time.

Parents are welcome to spend part of the first few days of school nearby in the school reception area, where coffee is available. After a few weeks, most of the children have settled in and can easily let their parents leave. (See “Eliot-Pearson Children’s School Separation Guidelines” in the Appendix.)

School Arrival and Departure
The classes at the Children's School are organized so that teachers use the time immediately before school starts for team meetings and set-up of the classroom. Therefore, classroom doors are closed until teachers are ready to greet entering children at 8:30 am.

*Please make sure your child is on time to school.* Classroom activities begin promptly at 8:30 am. It can be very disruptive to both children and teachers when individual children arrive late. Parents may drop off and say good-bye to their children during this time, and then classes can begin at their scheduled time.

*At dismissal time, parental promptness is critical.* Please be on time when picking up your child. Picking up on time has been challenging in the past couple of years, especially for extended day, and teachers had to delay meetings or stay beyond their work hours. As a result, if there is a pattern of lateness (either school arrival or departure) parent(s) will be asked to meet with the Director to discuss reasons, and it will be up to the discretion of the school to take measures. For late pick-ups at dismissal time, this could include a direct payment to the teacher, who needs to stay late to take care of the child/ren after hours, in the amount of $5.00/child for every 15 minutes past dismissal time. Payment will be due at the time of pick up.

*Safety is most important at arrival and dismissal times.* We ask parents to be especially vigilant at arrival and dismissal times and while attending classroom events/socials because these are the times when accidents are most likely to occur. Please make sure the children for whom you are responsible for do not climb railings on the wheelchair ramp, run in the school lobby, go in and out of the front door (the door is very heavy), climb trees in the yard, or leave the building unattended.

Parents must notify the Head Teacher of anyone other than themselves who will be picking up their child. There are two charts, posted in each classroom, to note the name of the person picking up the child. One is for long term caregivers who will be picking up the child on a regular basis, called *School Year Approval for Pick Up* and the other is for a one-day change, called *One Time Approval for Daily Pick Up*. Parents are asked to call the front desk and inform us if you forgot to make note of a change in the person picking up your child for the day. The front desk staff will notify the teacher and make note on the *One Time Approval for Daily Pick Up* chart. If for any reason a parent or caregiver is delayed or anticipates a delay, s/he is asked to notify the school office.

Carpooling
It is advisable for children to become comfortable in school before they are carpooled. Parents are responsible for notifying their child's Head Teacher of their carpool arrangements and of any changes in them. Teachers are not authorized to dismiss children to adults who have not been identified in
advance by the child's parents. Any last minute changes in carpooling must be reported to the Staff Assistant at the Front Desk or recorded on pick up forms located in each classroom.

**Clothing**

Please dress your child in easily washable play clothes. Some of the most enjoyable school activities are also the messiest. A complete change of clothing, clearly marked with your child's name, must be kept in his or her cubby at all times. Please bring the extra set of clothes on the first day of school and check your child's cubby periodically to make sure all the essentials are there. Clearly mark all of your child's outdoor clothing including shoes and boots. The lost and found box, at the Front Desk, often contains beautiful unmarked children's clothes.

Children's School classes go outside in all weather (except heavy rain and bitter cold). If a child is not well enough to play outside then s/he should stay home. Children are not just supervised when playing outside, but **outdoor activities are planned as part of the curriculum.** Please provide your child with appropriate outdoor clothing for whatever weather is predicted on school days. Except in case of weather change, we encourage children to wear whatever clothing they wear to school for outdoor play.

**Nut-Free School Environment Policy**

The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School continues to adopt a nut free policy to protect its students. This year we have several children in the community who have potentially life threatening allergies to nuts. Even the tiniest amount can cause an anaphylactic reaction or death within minutes in an allergic child. Some children are so sensitive that even the smell of peanut butter or nuts can cause problems.

To ensure a safe environment, the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School is asking students and staff to avoid bringing nut products to school. **This includes all nuts, peanut butter and/or traces of nuts or nut oils** in lunches, snacks or school events. Please read the ingredient labels for packaged foods carefully such as oat bars, granola bars, cracker sandwiches and other prepackaged foods. If you or your child has peanut butter or any product containing nuts before school, simple hand washing with soap and warm water can eliminate any potential contamination.

**In addition, if you are bringing food to school for an event, holiday or birthday, please label and indicate all ingredients. This will make it easier for everyone to choose foods that they are able to eat. All foods must be nut free regardless.**

*Please note: This policy applies only to the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School. The entire Eliot Pearson building is not nut free - just the school.*

We appreciate your cooperation and support in this matter. While it may be challenging for some families to follow this policy, it is good for children to eat a wide variety of foods. The Tufts School of Nutrition has found through its research that healthy eating habits develop early and it is beneficial for children to be exposed to a variety of foods at an early age.

If you have any questions about this policy, please see the School Director.

**Food**

The Children's School serves healthy snacks daily, midmorning and mid-afternoon. The children all look forward to "snack time" and the social break it provides as part of their daily routine.

**All children will bring their lunch every day.** We have limited refrigeration space, so we encourage you to purchase a cold pack to be placed in the lunch box. **The following food items are suggested for a nutritious lunch: meat, poultry, fish, cheese or egg sandwich, a vegetable (e.g., carrot, celery, zucchini sticks), and 1 or 2 fruits (e.g., apple, orange, banana, peach, plum, nectarine, grapes).** Foods from home cultures, such as
sushi, curry or dumplings are also encouraged. The school will provide children with at least one snack time per half-day, and at least two per full-day. Each classroom will post both a list of nutritious snacks, which may be served and a confidential list of children’s allergies. We encourage you to read the snack list and let the Staff Assistant know if you would like to read the ingredient list for any snack product.

Teachers will follow parental or physician's orders in preparation or feeding of special diets to children and will follow the directions of the parents in regard to any food allergies of a child. No child will be denied a meal for any reason other than written medical direction. Children will be encouraged to eat a well-balanced diet, but no child shall be forced or otherwise coerced to eat against his/her will.

Cooking projects take place in all Children's School classes. Because many parents and teachers share concerns regarding the amount of sugar and salt in young children's diets, efforts are made to provide cooking experiences with reduced sugar and salt. On children's birthdays it has been customary for those parents wishing to do so to provide a small, special snack time treat. Let the teachers know in advance what the birthday snack will be. Alternative suggestions may be obtained from your child's teacher.

If your child is allergic to any food requiring a special diet, or regularly takes medication, please directly inform his or her teacher as well as indicating it on introduction report or the update report enclosed in the summer mailing.

If you are bringing food to school for an event, holiday or birthday, please label and indicate all ingredients. This will make it easier for everyone to choose foods that they are able to eat. All food or treats must be NUT FREE.

Play Dates
Many families like to have their children get together with other children outside of school for a “play date.” Some children can benefit from one-on-one time with another child outside of the “school” setting. Playing together a few times outside of school often gives the two children a level of comfort with each other that can carry over to their time in school.

Below are some tips for having successful play dates:
1. Keep first play dates short- usually the younger the children, the shorter the time. One to two hours are good for a first play date for a 3 year old.
2. Frequency of play dates: whatever works for your family. Sometimes it is important to set limits. Some children will want to have play dates every day. Too many play dates can be over-stimulating for the child and exhausting for the family. Be realistic about what works for your family.
3. The role of the parent varies during the play date. The first responsibility of the parent is to provide a safe environment/area, in which children can play together. Sometimes parents need to help facilitate the beginning play to get the children started (put out the play dough on a table with some toys and play with them for a few minutes). The goal is to allow the children opportunities to interact together without constant adult supervision, to learn to get along, and develop the skills to problem-solve social situations. Depending on the age and developmental stages of the children, adults may need to help facilitate the situation from time to time. But the rule of thumb, is to “keep out of it” if you can.
4. Some parents invite the other parent along on the play date. Other families and children are comfortable having the children go alone with another family. It is important to do what is comfortable for both families and to be able to communicate expectations, and any questions or concerns either family may have.
5. Play dates do not have to occur in the home. Meeting at a local playground for a picnic and an hour of play on the playground or a trip to the science museum can also be a unique and fun outing with another child.
6. Who to invite? Some children will know right away whom they want to invite for a play date. Sometimes the parents are friends, so the children become “play mates.” If you are not sure who would be a good play-date for your child, ask your child’s teacher. Teachers are comfortable suggesting which children may do well together outside of school because of shared interests or playing styles.
7. Be sensitive to hurt feelings: both children’s feelings and parent’s feelings. If your child is the only one who is never invited for a play date, feelings can be hurt. If this happens to you, feel free to talk to your child’s teacher. Remember you can also initiate the first play date.

8. For young children it is helpful to have a variety of play dates with different friends. Be careful of encouraging exclusivity and only having play dates with the same child.

9. Families have shared anecdotes about how they have grown through play dates. They have learned about other languages, cultures, child rearing practices and family traditions by being open to new experiences. It is always good to ask another parent about anything special you may need to know for a successful play date (allergies, health concerns, dietary restrictions, safety issues, etc.)

10. Remember to work on the transportation logistics- don’t forget to exchange car seats, if necessary.

11. Keep play dates low key and have fun!

**Holiday Policy**

In our school we acknowledge that holidays and celebrations are an important part of many lives, but in different ways for different reasons. Because we all have had our own personal holiday experiences growing up, it can often become a very emotionally charged issue. Our goal is to find a balanced approach to holidays without exaggerating the experience or ignoring it. Curriculum should not be holiday driven. Any holiday experience in the school needs to be meaningful to the children, developmentally appropriate, and foster understanding and respect for one another. We strive to recognize our similarities and celebrate our differences. Some examples may be to group holiday celebrations according to the seasons and look for parallels across cultures, set holiday activities in the context of people’s daily lives and beliefs, and connecting them to specific children, families, and staff.

We welcome families to share their special traditions with us. We also listen carefully and respond to children’s comments, questions, and feelings about holidays. Each classroom teacher will formulate more specific policies and procedures for holiday related activities and will share them with the parents of the class as each holiday season arises.

**Front Courtyard Etiquette and Safety**

The front courtyard is a wonderful place for families to congregate after school, to meet other families and let children play informally. We want all children to play safely and have a good time. The courtyard is a small space. It is also a space for children of ALL ages and sizes. Safe and fun informal play happens best when children have good supervision. Children often need help negotiating an unstructured playtime with others. For some children, the atmosphere can be overwhelming. It is important for each family to pay attention to the needs of their children and how their child is negotiating with the group. Families have different parenting styles, and this can sometimes cause some tension. It is helpful when families can discuss or share their styles and support each other. Please enjoy your time in the courtyard, but keep safety first.

**Courtyard safety rules:**

1. Play Safely. (Don’t hurt yourself, others or the environment)
   - No waving sticks
   - No throwing objects (rocks, pinecones, snow/ice balls, etc.)

2. Shared space, shared supervision.
   - If you play in the courtyard, you are accepting that other caregivers may speak to your child if they feel the situation is unsafe.
   - Our courtyard is close to the main road and driveway. Each caregiver should have a close sight supervision of their child at all times.
   - If a child is outside the fenced area, then the caregiver should be outside the fenced area. Outside this area is NOT school property.
   - Our building is a part of the larger university and people are coming and going all the time. Each parent should be aware of the whereabouts of their child at all times.
Due to Tufts University insurance regulations, tree and bush climbing in the front yard are not permitted. Rules should be reviewed each year. Having written rules should not preclude families’ desires to discuss and communicate these ideas with the community.

3. Support creative play. Some ideas to suggest to children are:
   - Digging for worms and exploring nature
   - Pretend play such as camping or taking a pretend trip
   - Group games, such as “What time is it Mr. Fox?” or Simon Says

Neighbors
The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School is a laboratory school for the Department Child Study and Human Development. We are very fortunate to be housed in the same building where college students, faculty members and other professionals work and learn because it gives all of us greater access to resources and each other. But it also means we must respect each other’s spaces.

Please supervise your children at all times, when you exit and enter the building, in the courtyard, parking lots, connector lounge or in other public areas of the building. We want to keep children safe and maintain good relations with all our “neighbors”. If you have any questions, please see one of the administrative staff.

Observation, Research and Evaluation

Observation
Children who are "old hands" at the Children's School take for granted the fact that they are being observed. The observation booths facing each classroom are often filled with quiet watchers whom the children see, occasionally recognize, and usually ignore. Any child enrolled at the Children's School must have parental permission on file for the observation.

Observation of Classes by Parents
We welcome parents' visits to the classroom at any time. The observation booths provide a unique opportunity for you to observe your child's class. While we value this opportunity, we are also aware of the tensions it can create for children and teachers. Therefore we have established the following guidelines for parental observations from the booth. We ask for your cooperation:
1. Children and teachers need "settling in" time at the beginning of the year and private time to say good-bye. Therefore, booths are not open for parental observation until October 15 and are closed as of May 30.
2. Please discuss a suitable time for observation with your child's teacher at least a day in advance and then contact the front desk personnel to schedule that observation time for you. Parents need to follow the same protocol as all observers to schedule an observation. This ensures that space is available.
3. Frequent observations are disruptive to your child, the teachers, and the class. Therefore, we recommend a few observations spread over the school year, usually prior to conferences in the fall or spring.
4. Parent observations are limited to a maximum of 45 minutes. As a lab school, the number of observations per semester will be determined based on observation related activities at the school, the specific classroom, and the needs of the children.
5. Fire code regulations require that everyone, including parents, sign in at the front desk when observing from the booth.
6. Children and/or babies are not permitted in the booths at any time.

Research
The Child Study and Human Development Department faculty and students under faculty direction engage in research at the Children's School. Research projects are often related to courses taught in personal, social, and intellectual development of young children. Projects may involve observing and recording children's classroom behavior, asking children questions regarding their notions of friendship and competence or inviting children to perform perceptual and motor tasks, in the form of games, to assess levels of development.
Studies in child rearing are another area of child development research in which interested Children's School parents may become involved. Many of these studies are undertaken in the form of surveys, which parents complete anonymously. The aggregate results of such research are available to the parents who participate.

The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Child Study and Human Development must approve all of the studies undertaken at the school. The Research Coordinator and the Director in cooperation also review them with the teachers. If the study has been approved, parents will receive a permission form allowing them the ultimate decision in terms of whether or not their child can participate in each individual study. (Children participate in no more than three studies per semester.) Children with parental permission are then invited to take part in the study. They are always free to refuse.

The Research Coordinator serves as liaison between the Children's School community (parents, teachers, and children) and those individuals interested in conducting studies at Eliot-Pearson. S/he will assign subjects to approved studies, coordinate the developmental evaluation program for CD 120 (Evaluation of the Young Child), and organize children to participate in creative movement groups. S/he will also give field workers their initial orientation to the Children's School. If parents have questions concerning the research or evaluations, the Research Coordinator will respond to those issues.

Policies Regarding Observation and Research
No licensee shall conduct research, experimentation, or unusual treatment involving children without the written consent of the affected child's parents or guardian for each occurrence. In centers where observations of children occur; observation shall mean that there is no interaction between the child and the observers and no identification of the individual child. In no case shall the licensee allow physical harm of the child to be carried out during research, experimentation, or treatment. Research and experimentation shall not mean program evaluation or data collection for purpose of documenting services of the facility, which do not identify individual children.

Safeguarding the rights and welfare of subjects at risk in activities that are not supported by grants and contracts and approved by the Tufts University Institutional Review Board is primarily the responsibility of the department. In order to provide an adequate discharge of this responsibility it is the policy of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development that no activity involving research with human subjects shall be undertaken unless the Eliot-Pearson Committee on Human Subjects has reviewed and approved such activity, in accordance with the requirements of Public Law 93-348, as implemented by part 46 of Title 45 of the code of Federal Regulations, as amended (45 CFR 46).

All faculty and students who are planning to undertake a research project, thesis or dissertation are required to submit a Request for Departmental Review of Investigation Involving Human Subjects. Exceptions to this requirement are made for those with sponsored research projects that will be submitted for review to the University Institutional Review Board. Students who are engaged in some form of research activity in order to fulfill a course requirement are not required to submit a request for review to the committees. However, individual faculty members who assign a research project are responsible for reviewing the purposes, methods, and ethical considerations for student course projects.

Evaluation
Twice a year (in the fall and summer) a course is offered in the Department of Child Study and Human Development entitled "Evaluation of The Young Child". The course instructs students in the administration of Developmental evaluations, which examine aspects of a child's growth often overlooked in regular physical examinations. Developmental evaluations assess growth in small and large muscle control, hand-eye coordination, language acquisition, and the development of reasoning, and early mathematical skills.

During the course the professor demonstrates the administration of the evaluation instruments with children from the Children's School. Then each of the students in the class is assigned a child to evaluate. Parents are invited to observe their child being evaluated in the observation room. They may be asked to participate in an
interview with the evaluator in order to answer questions about their child's development. Parental permission is required for children to participate in the evaluation program.

**Confidentiality and Distribution of Records**
Children's records are confidential and may not be released to anyone other than the parents or the child's teacher(s) without written consent of the parents. Parents may have access at reasonable times, and such access may not be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without consent of parents. The entire record shall contain a log indicating any persons to whom information has been released. This procedure applies to the release of information to both public and private schools.
Appendix A

A Brief History of the Eliot-Pearson Children’ School

In 1922, Abigail Adams Eliot established one of the first nursery schools in America. Through the encouragement of Mrs. Henry Greenleaf Pearson, a philanthropically minded Bostonian, Abigail Eliot became interested in the work of Margaret McMillan, the founder of the nursery school movement in England. In 1921, Miss Eliot worked and studied at the McMillan Nursery School in Deptford, a low-income district of London. In the McMillan Nursery School children were provided with an educational setting that emphasized good nutrition, adequate rest, open air and daily health inspections. Upon her return to Boston in 1922, Abigail Eliot became Director of the Ruggles Street Day Nursery in Roxbury. Day nurseries, such as Ruggles Street, were available to parents who worked outside the home or were incapable of providing adequate supervision of their children. The nurseries, for the most part, enrolled children of immigrant families and emphasized health, nutrition, and cleanliness. Their educational components, if existent, were meager. When Miss Eliot took over the directorship of Ruggles Street Day Nursery, she emphasized educational activities for children and encouraged parents to observe their children in the educational setting she provided. She also limited the amount of time children attended the nursery from twelve to seven hours a day.

Reflecting its change in focus, the name of the Ruggles Street Day Nursery was changed to the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center. Parents who were not in need of childcare but were interested in the educational setting of the Ruggles Street School began enrolling their children. Also, individuals interested in learning how to provide an educational program for young children came to The Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center which moved to Marlborough Street in Boston and changed its name to the Nursery Training School of Boston. Miss Eliot and the Nursery Training School of Boston played a major role in teacher training during the 1930’s when the Federal Government through the Works Progress Administration, provided funding for nursery schools across the country.

The Nursery Training School of Boston had affiliations with several local colleges, permitting students to obtain a college education while receiving teacher training. In 1951, Miss Eliot decided a more formal relationship with a university would be beneficial, and she selected Tufts University. The Corporation of the Nursery Training School voted to change the name of the center to the Eliot-Pearson School when it became one of several professional schools affiliated with Tufts University.

In 1964, the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study was developed, with the Eliot-Pearson Children's School as its laboratory/demonstration facility. The Department and the School together have developed as a center for teacher training and research on child development. Fundamental principles of Miss Eliot’s Nursery Training School continue to guide the philosophy of the Eliot-Pearson Children's School today:

- Children are persons.
- Education should always be thought of as guidance (teaching), which influences the development of persons (personalities).
- Maturation and learning must go hand in hand in the process of development.
- It is important that personalities be well balanced. Some of the balancing traits considered are security and growing independence, self-expression and self-control, awareness of self and social awareness, growth in freedom and growth in responsibility, opportunities to create and ability to conform.

Tuition, Payment, and Financial Arrangements

Eliot-Pearson Children’s School has partnered with SMART TUITION, a third party invoicing and payment service. Our partnership with SMART TUITION will allow us to offer many payment options for our school families. All EPCS families will need to register with Smart Tuition after the enrollment process is complete, as all tuition related payments are processed through them.

There is an online enrollment site created for Eliot-Pearson Children’s School’s families. Once students are enrolled at EPCS, the School Coordinator will provide families with instructions to register with Smart Tuition.

Enrolling your child in the Children's School for the school year obligates you for the full year's tuition. No refunds or credits will be given for withdrawal or absences (see enrollment agreement). Please contact the School Coordinator for information regarding tuition, billing, or payment arrangements.

Delinquent Tuition: It is a policy of Tufts University not to permit students, in any of the University programs, to start the school year if there are outstanding financial obligations. Your child will not be able to attend school if your tuition account becomes delinquent. Please note, Smart Tuition charges a $40.00 late fee, directly to families’ accounts, if payments are not made or received by the scheduled due date.

Health Care Policy

Emergency Telephone Numbers:
Health Care Consultant: Dr. Margaret Higham 617-627-3350, Tufts University
Designated Adults: Teachers, directors, School Coordinator and Staff Assistant (617) 627-3434
Fire Department: 781-396-3900
Police: 781-395-1212
Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
Ambulance: 781-321-1555
Campus Police: extension 66911 (emergencies), extension 73030 (business)

Emergency Health Care Facility:
Lawrence Memorial Hospital
170 Governors Ave., Medford
781-396-9250
(Requests for different hospitals will be honored when listed on the emergency form.)

Procedures for Emergencies and Illness Including Field Trips

- Notify campus police (x66911)
- Campus police calls for ambulance
- Transport to hospital by ambulance-teacher will accompany if parent requests
- Notify parent-call from front desk
- If parent cannot be reached, notify individuals listed as emergency contacts at front desk
- Emergency contact forms located at front desk
- Teacher or administrator will take child’s emergency information file
- Notify EEC if EMT or hospitalization is required

Field Trip Procedures

Teachers take a special backpack, which includes copies of children’s emergency forms, a first aid kit and a cell phone on all off-site excursions. All children also wear a tag with the name, address and phone number of the school. In the event of an emergency during a field trip, parents will be contacted and an ambulance will be called.
Notification of Death or Serious Injury
The school will notify EEC within 24 hours following:
- The death of any child which occurs while such child is in care
- Any injury to, or illness of, any child that occurs during the hours while such child is enrolled in care and which requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment.

Procedures for Utilizing First Aid Equipment
The First Aid Kit is located on a shelf, out of children’s reach, in the reception and outside areas.
- The First Aid Manual is located in each classroom and in the reception area.
- First Aid is administered by a Head Teacher certified in First Aid, or, if a Head Teacher is not available, by an Assistant Teacher also certified in First Aid.
- All Head Teachers and administrators are certified annually in Infant/Child CPR and all staff is certified in First Aid.
- The Director and/or School Coordinator maintain the First Aid Kit.
- Each classroom is equipped with adequate first aid supplies in a backpack that contains all required emergency medications and goes with the class on any field trips away from the school.

Plan for Evacuation of Center in an Emergency
- Separate evacuation plans are posted for each classroom area.
- The Head Teacher of each class leads the children out of the building.
- The Director and School Coordinator check for stragglers and take children's emergency forms and allergy list out of the building with them. The Head Teacher takes the attendance list and checks the number of children that came to school that day, against the number of children that have been safely evacuated. The Director asks the Head Teacher, “How many children came to school today? How many children are here?” Parents are then called.
- The Director and/or Head Teachers are responsible for assuring that fire/evacuation drills are held every month.
- A logbook is kept that records the date, time, and location of the evacuation, and the effectiveness of the drills.

Plan for Meeting the Individual Needs of Mildly Ill Children
- If a child feels unwell, but is not ill enough to require automatic exclusion, we will contact the child's parents and decide together whether the child should go home or remain for the rest of the day.
- If the parent and teacher decide that the child should be removed, s/he will wait in a separate, quiet area.

Plan for Administering Medication
- Head Teachers and administrators are trained in the proper administration of medication, in accordance with EEC regulations. Each year all Head Teachers and administrative staff view the Administration of Medications Guidelines online presentation, on the EEC website, and receive a certificate.
- Prescription and non-prescription medication will be administered only with prior written permission of the child’s parent and physician. This note will be kept in the child’s file. All prescription medications must be in the original container with the original Rx label affixed.
- Even with a standing order for dispensing medicine, the school must attempt to call a parent before administering such medication.
- The medication will be in a locked drawer in the School Coordinator’s office. Emergency medications will be kept in the classroom backpack as required (the original Rx label must be affixed and the medication needs to be labeled with the child’s name, name of the drug, and directions for administration and storage) any unused medicine will be returned to the child’s parents.
- Non-prescription, topical medicine (not applied to open wounds or broken skin) and sunscreen can be administered by written permission and signature of the parent only.
• Non-prescription, topical medicine (applied to open wounds or broken skin) requires BOTH parental and physician’s written permission.
• When special plans are required (i.e. EpiPen) the protocol is part of the allergy list provided to each classroom. An administrator will review this with each teaching team.
• A list of all teachers eligible to administer medication is kept in the School Coordinator’s office. The five guidelines for Administration of Medication are posted in the School Coordinator’s office.

Administration of Medicine at School Protocol
When preparing to leave medicine at the school to be administered during the school day the following guidelines must be followed:

These are based on the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Childhood Regulations 7:11(2) 906 CMR

• A doctor’s signature is required on all medication except non-prescription, topical medication that is only applied to non-broken skin or open wounds.
• When consulting with your doctor, be sure that you get a signed note to authorize any medication. This can be a faxed note to 617-627-2630 for the School Coordinator or a hand carried note by the parent.
• Complete Medication Consent Form (available at front desk of school)
• Parent’s signature is required for all medication (including non-prescription topical medication)
• Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child’s name. Prescription medication must have the dosage, directions and the doctor’s name on the original container and the original Rx label must be affixed.
• All medications will be stored out of reach of children
• Check the expiration date even if the medication is new.
• No staff member will administer the first dose of any medication, except under extraordinary circumstances.
• All medication will be labeled with the child’s name, both on the container and the plastic bag holder. The plastic bag with the medication and signed permission slip will be kept in a locked drawer in the School Coordinator’s office. The exception to this is any medicine that is needed by a child in the event of an emergency will be kept in the classroom first aid backpack, which will accompany the child everywhere and an Individual Health Care Plan Form is completed.
• Any medication that needs to be refrigerated will be kept in a locked box in the kitchen refrigerator.
• All unused medications will be returned to the parents for disposal.
• Each time medication is administered the staff member must document on the back of the child’s medication permission slip, their name, the dosage given, the time and method of administration.

PLEASE NOTE: WE CANNOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION AT SCHOOL UNLESS THE ABOVE GUIDELINES ARE ADHERED TO ENTIRELY.

Plan for Meeting Specific Health Care Needs
• We will meet specific health care needs for all children with and without disabilities.
• Parents and pediatricians are required to complete a medical form that indicates allergies and health concerns that teachers should be aware of.
• Each classroom has a confidentially posted list of children with allergies, and/or other specific health-related procedures that need to be followed, and a list of children who have medications and where those medications are stored.
• For children with chronic problems parents and healthcare providers are required to complete an Individual Health Care Plan Form. This form will be kept with the allergy list in each classroom. The parent is required to meet with their child’s teacher and someone from the administrative staff to review and discuss training and implementation of their child’s Individual Health Care Plan.
Plan for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect
As professionals who work directly with young children we are by law required to be mandated reporters of possible child abuse or neglect. If staff members have seen any indicators—physical, behavioral, emotional—which suggest the possibility of physical or sexual abuse or neglect they will:

Document concerns and observations and speak with the director. Together, a decision will be made to do one or all of the following:

- Call our mental health consultant.
- Continue to observe and collect information.
- Make a report to Department of Child and Family Services (DCF) within 48 hours of suspected abuse as mandated by law (DCF phone 617-321-0130).
- Communicate with the family about filing a report.

If A Staff Member is Suspected of Child Abuse or Neglect
- In the event that a 51A report has been filed alleging abuse or neglect of a child at Eliot-Pearson Children’s School, the EEC, and Department of Child and Family Services will be notified immediately.
- The staff member will be removed from contact with children and given other duties until the DSS investigation is completed and for such further time as EEC requires.
- If the staff member is cleared of charges, former duties will be reinstated.
- If the staff member is found guilty of child abuse or neglect, termination procedures will result.

Injury Prevention Plan
Head Teachers and teaching assistants monitor the classrooms and playgrounds daily for the repair/removal of hazards- Director and/or School Coordinator monitor the remainder of the building.

- A central injury log is kept at the front desk and is monitored periodically to identify problem areas.
- When a child is injured parents are notified of the time and nature of the accident. Parents are notified in writing, within 24 hours of the incident, and the documentation is filed in the child’s folder.
- Parents are immediately informed of any injury, which requires emergency care beyond minor first aid.
- All toxic substances, sharp objects, poisonous plants, first aid supplies, matches and medications are kept out of the reach of children and no smoking is allowed in the building or on its grounds.
- First Aid kits with emergency lists will be taken to playground and on fieldtrips.
- Injury Reports will be filed for any injury requiring first aid.
- Eliot-Pearson very seldom has food or liquids that are hotter than 120 degrees. When there is a need, liquids and foods that are hotter than 120 degrees are kept out of the reach of children. Tufts University Facilities periodically checks the temperature of the hot water plumbed to the school.

Plan for Managing Infectious Disease
- Our Health Care Policy is developed with and approved by our health care consultant.
- For serious illnesses, we follow exclusion policies recommended by the CDC and Department of Public Health: a child who has a fever must remain at home until she/he has a normal temperature for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication).
- The school notifies all parents in the instance of any communicable diseases (chicken pox, strep throat, etc.).
- If a child in care exhibits symptoms requiring exclusion, the child's parents will be contacted and s/he will be removed from the group to wait in a separate, quiet area with a teacher or qualified staff member until a parent arrives. Every effort is made to make the child comfortable.
Plan for Infection Control

- Hand washing procedure signs are posted in all bathrooms and kitchen, and staff and children wash their hands at least at the following times: upon entering the classroom, before eating or handling food, after toileting, after coming into contact with bodily fluids, after handling animals, after water play, and after cleaning.
- The importance of hand washing is routinely discussed at staff meetings and all staff is trained in infection control techniques.
- Facilities and toys are cleaned regularly and thoroughly with soap & water and disinfectant and water solution. A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or is otherwise contaminated by body secretion is either washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized and air dried, or washed and dried in a dishwasher.
- Teachers wear disposable gloves when changing children’s diapers or when blood or other bodily fluids are present. Used gloves are thrown away in a lined, covered container and bloody clothing is sealed in a bag and returned to parents at the end of the day.
- Every evening, custodians clean and disinfect every room, floors are mopped and vacuumed, toilets, sinks, sink faucets, and all surfaces are thoroughly cleaned, and garbage is removed from the site.

Plan for When a Child Should Stay Home from School

Please let us know when and why your child is not going to come to school.

- A child should stay home until he/she feels well enough to participate in all activities, including going outside.
- Children must stay home until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Chickenpox- must remain home until all lesions are crusted over or for 6-7 days, whichever is first.
- Strep throat or scarlet fever- must have a normal temperature for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, must have been on an antibiotic for 48 hours.
- Conjunctivitis- children may return to school after treatment has begun.
- Gastroenteritis- if a child is vomiting or has diarrhea s/he must be kept home from school until s/he has no symptoms for 24 hours.
- Impetigo-child must stay out of school until s/he has no symptoms for 24 hours.
- Measles or mumps-follow the recommendations from your pediatrician.

Plan for Hand-Washing

Staff members and children are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.

- Hand washing procedure signs are posted in all bathrooms and kitchen, and staff and children wash their hands at least at the following times: before eating or handling food, after toileting, after coming into contact with bodily fluids, after handling animals, and after cleaning.
- The importance of hand washing is routinely discussed at staff meetings and all staff members are trained in infection control techniques.
- Facilities and toys are cleaned regularly and thoroughly with soap & water and disinfectant and water solution. A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or is otherwise contaminated by body secretion is either washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized and air dried, or washed and dried in a dishwasher.
- Teachers wear disposable gloves when changing children’s diapers or when blood or other bodily fluids are present. Used gloves are thrown away in a lined, covered container and bloody clothing is sealed in a bag and returned to parents at the end of the day.
- Hand sanitizer is available for adults outside each classroom.
Plan for Sanitizing Table Tops / Food Prep Areas
Sanitizing Preparation Procedure
In order to be in compliance with both National (NAEYC) and State (MA Dept of EEC) Regulations we use diluted bleach in spray bottles. Diluted bleach needs to be freshly prepared each day as it has only a 24-hour shelf-life after which it is not effective. Bleach is also weakened by heat and sunlight.

Each morning at 8:00am, according to the kitchen duty schedule, please follow these procedures:

The diluted bleach solution preparer will make a gallon of solution in the kitchen in a ratio of:
1. **One Teaspoon Concentrated Bleach to 1 Gallon of cool water freshly made EVERY DAY in the kitchen**
   (More bleach can cause skin or inhalation burns, less bleach is ineffective for disinfecting) There are disposable gloves and aprons, a safety eye guard, and a funnel for making the bleach solution.
2. **Fill all spray bottles left in the kitchen.**
3. If classroom bleach spray bottles are in the kitchen at 8:00 in the morning, the preparer will fill them. If spray bottles are brought to the kitchen when preparing snack after 8:00 am, they can be filled with the premade solution at that time.
4. **Store Bleach on top of Refrigerator**
   The straight bleach, with the measure spoon attached and the freshly made solution will be kept above the refrigerator.
5. **Store spray bottles out of reach of children**
   Classroom spray bottles must be kept on a high shelf out of reach of children. Surfaces cleaned with diluted bleach need not be rinsed, but need to air dry for at least two minutes.

Plan for Water Play Precautions
Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease.
1. Children are urged not to drink the water.
2. Communal water play is not an available activity if a child has sores on his/her hands.
3. Fresh potable water is used and the water is changed before a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity.
4. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. The table is washed, disinfected and dried.
5. Children will wash their hands before and after water play.

Plan for the Exclusion of Under Immunized Children and Staff
1. There is in Massachusetts a plan for excluding under immunized children or staff during disease outbreaks per EEC 105 MR 300.000.
2. The School Coordinator maintains a list of under immunized children.
3. The School Coordinator maintains the state regulations and policies for exclusion in a file named IMMUNIZATIONS.
4. Parents of children who are under immunized are notified and asked to take the children out of the school promptly if a vaccine preventable disease occurs.
5. This Policy is found in both the Health Care Policy and the Staff Handbook under its own heading.

Plan for Animals and Pets
1. Classroom pets or visiting animals must appear to be in good health.
2. Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a vet or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.
3. Teachers supervise all interactions with the children and instruct children on safe behavior when in proximity to animals.
4. Any child who has a known allergy is not exposed to that animal.
5. Children and staff are instructed to wash hands after handling pets.
6. Parents will be notified of introduction of pets into classroom.
7. Children will wash hands before and after handling animals.
Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Emergency Phone Numbers:

Campus Police from Tufts phone: 66911  
Medford Police         911  
Medford Fire           911  
Ambulance              781-321-1555  
Lawrence Memorial Hospital 781-396-9250  
Poison Control         800-222-1222

If a fire or other danger starts in your classroom, notify the front desk to call the Fire Department and ring alarm, located in the lobby of the school.

- Assign adults to children in greatest need
- Check room for children (office, booth, cubbies, bathroom)
- If no danger to life, close windows and doors
- Instruct observers in booths to leave through emergency exit doors
- Cell phones will be used to contact families with details of the emergency

*ALL HEAD TEACHERS MUST BRING ATTENDANCE SHEETS AND EMERGENCY BACK PACK. ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN OUTDOORS.*

Procedure for Preschool West and Extended Day:
Alert your group of children to exit through the door located next to the cubbies, proceed to the far right hand corner of the play structure, line up on the edge of the mulch, and wait there until further notice.

Procedure for Preschool East:
Alert your group of children and exit through the door located next to the cubbies, proceed to the farthest edge of the hedges in the front yard and wait there until further notice.

Procedure for Kindergarten and K-Extended Day:
Alert your group of children to exit through the door located next to the cubbies, proceed right around building to the sandpit and the tree platform at the far right corner of play yard and line up there until further notice.

Procedure for 1st/2nd Grade:
Alert your group of children to exit through the door located next to the cubbies, proceed to the tire swing area on far right side of the play yard (near the sand pit), line up on the edge of that area and wait there until further notice.

Procedures for Director, School Coordinator, Staff Assistant, & Therapists:

**Director**
Take keys, check 1st & 2nd Grade Observation Booth, staff bathrooms, kitchen and therapist’s office. Exit through 1st & 2nd Grade’s door and proceed to corner of play yard by sandpit and metal fence. Take attendance and wait until further notice.

**School Coordinator**
Take keys and copies of the children’s emergency forms. Check Preschool East/West Observation Booths, then exit outside by door next to Preschool West’s cubbies and proceed to corner of the playground.
Emergency Plan for Eliot-Pearson Children's School

Tufts University on the Medford Campus is protected by a 24 hour, 7 day a week police force. In addition to this department on campus, the University has the resources of the Medford and Somerville Police and Fire departments available to mitigate emergency situations. Tufts also has buildings and grounds staff of plumbers, electricians, and carpenters that can be called to location to make repairs in a timely fashion.

IN CASE OF A FIRE, NATURAL DISASTER, OR SITUATION NECESSITATING THE EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING: The university has a standing agreement with Joseph’s Bus of Medford to provide buses for emergency transportation of students in an emergency to a safe haven. If the children have to be moved to a different location, upon the direction of Tufts University officials, the children will be escorted as group with all staff to a nearby building. Depending on the circumstances, this could be the Gantcher Indoor Track, next door to the school or Cousens Gym also next door. Parents will be called and notified by use of cell phone of the changed location. University Police will also be on site to notify parents of the new location of the children. Cell phones will be used to contact local officials for details of the emergency.

IN CASE OF A POWER OUTAGE: If the estimated time of the power outage is to be under an hour, a stay in place protocol will be used. The building’s fire alarm system is fully compliant with the NFPA 72 for standby power. If weather conditions permit, the students could be moved to the outside play area. If the outage is going to be prolonged or conditions in the building warrant their removal, the students will be transported to the above mentioned safe havens.

IN CASE OF A LOSS OF HEAT: If the minimum temperatures for heat and hot water cannot be maintained due to mechanical failure or the effects of weather the students would be evacuated to the listed safe haven locations. If this is a mechanical problem that occurs prior to the start of the school day, school will be cancelled.

IN CASE OF A LOSS OF WATER: A temporary loss of water will be handled by bringing in bottled drinking water, non-potable water and cleaning water.

As a reminder, Eliot-Pearson Children’s School is not a stand-alone facility; the school has the full backing and support of Tufts University and its resources. If the scope of the incident is beyond the abilities of Tufts University, outside emergency agencies are contacted to assist. A listing of emergency numbers to contact parents to come and pick up their children will be transported with the children. If you have any questions regarding this plan, please contact Assistant Fire Marshal Wayne Springer, (617) 627-2745 (x7-2745 from campus)

Missing Child Protocol

The first course of action is prevention. It is important for the teachers to know where all of the children are in the classroom and on the playground at all times. If a teacher cannot find a child who came to school that day, an AMBER ALERT (missing child) will go into effect:

1. In the classroom where a child is missing, the head teacher will secure the safety of the remainder of the children in the group, by assigning one teacher to monitor that group.
2. The head teacher will then use a two-way radio or leave the classroom to notify a member of the administrative staff that a child is missing. It will be useful for the administrative staff to have a description of where the child was last seen and the clothing worn by the missing child, if possible. A photograph will be useful for the police.

3. The first administrator notified will note the time of the reported missing child, contact all other administrative staff in the building and begin the search. The administrators will generally follow their instructions for a fire drill in searching for the child:
   - The Director will check the Grade 1-2 booth and classroom; the hall bathrooms, kitchen, and therapists’ office, and then search the kindergarten and preschool playgrounds and sheds. Double-checking locked gates.
   - The School Coordinator/Staff Assistant will check Preschool East and West booths and classrooms then enter the preschool playground through the Preschool West classroom. If there is front desk coverage, the school coordinator/staff assistant will then search both playgrounds and sheds with the director. If there is no other front desk coverage the school coordinator/staff assistant will remain at the front desk after checking the classrooms.
   - The Associate Director will check the library, the kindergarten classroom, observation area and cubbies, and proceed outside to check the front yard and the front and rear parking lots.
   - If any of the above is absent, a classroom teacher will be assigned to take that role by the director, associate director or school coordinator/staff assistant (in this order). Additionally, the head teacher from the group missing a child should be searching and another teacher should be assigned to that group.
   - The director or designated director, in her absence, will call 911 if the search exceeds 5 minutes or there is suspected foul play.
   - Other classroom teachers, who can leave their classrooms to assist in the search, are asked to search the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development.

4. When the child is found the family needs to be notified and an incident report signed by the family needs to be filed with Department of Early Education and Care with a copy in the child’s folder.
Background Record Check (BRC)

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 15D, §§ 7 and 8, EEC has launched the fingerprinting system to complete background record checks on persons who work at EEC licensed, approved, or funded programs. The Full Fingerprinting Launch for Background Record Checks are processed on all candidates for employment and/or individuals who may have unsupervised contact with children. Everyone who currently needs a CORI, DCF, and SORI Background Record Check (BRC) will need a fingerprint check as long as he/she will have unsupervised contact. These individuals include:

- New employees, volunteers or interns beginning work on or after September 1, 2013.
- Individuals hired on or after September 1, 2013 to provide transportation services to EEC licensed and/or funded programs with the potential for unsupervised contact with children.
- Individuals employed or licensed on or after September 1, 2013 for any of the following categories must complete a fingerprint check as soon as the process becomes available:
  - Current employees, volunteers, interns, licensees, reviewers, family members/people regularly on the premises, and individuals providing transportation services including EEC licensed and/or funded programs must complete a fingerprint check.

To ensure an orderly rollout of the fingerprinting process, EEC will send notification letters on a rolling basis throughout the months of June and July to individuals who requested a background record check on or after September 1, 2013. For employees, volunteers, and interns who work for center-based, residential, or placement programs, the notification letter will be sent directly to their employer. This letter will inform the individual to register for fingerprinting at a MorphoTrust USA enrollment center. Please do not attempt to register for fingerprinting prior to receiving your notification letter. Please keep a copy of the notification letter, as it will also serve as proof that a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check has been completed on the individual. If you have any questions about the fingerprinting launch, please contact the Background Record Check Unit at (617) 988-7801 or via e-mail at EECFingerprint@state.ma.us.

Plan for Discipline

The plan for discipline at the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School is in accordance with the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). At all times, discipline procedures will be used which maximize growth and development, protect each group and the individuals within the group, set reasonable and positive expectations, offer choices, provide an opportunity for children to verbalize their feelings, and encourage self-control through understanding. As often as possible, children will participate in the development of rules. Our teachers:

- Are responsive to children’s individual needs and support the development of self-esteem, self-expression, autonomy, social competence, and school readiness.
- Are nurturing and responsive to children
- Support children in the development of self-esteem, independence, and self-regulation
- Support children in the development of social competence
- Provide guidance to children in a positive and consistent way based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of children
- Have a method of communicating effectively with each child.
- Direct child guidance to the goal of maximizing the growth and development of children and protecting the group and the individuals within it.

In all cases, discipline will be consistent with the developmental and emotional needs of the child. The following guidelines will be used:

- If a child is attempting to injure another child or him/herself, the teacher will enforce the termination of the behavior if necessary by removing the child from the activity, removing the activity from the child, or in extreme cases, holding the child so no injury will occur.
- In other cases where discipline is deemed necessary, the teacher will first talk to the child and, if necessary, with warning, ask the child to play in another activity area and, if the child refuses, remove the child to another area.
In all cases, explanation will be given to the child in language he or she can understand to explain why the behavior is inappropriate and to reinforce the concept that, even if the activity is inappropriate, the child is not a “bad child.”

Specifically, the following rules for discipline will be followed:
- Corporal punishment shall not be used, including spanking.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment.
- No child shall be denied food or force fed as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

Separation Guide Introduction
Many of us have very powerful, vivid memories connected with our school experiences. School was a major influence in our lives. Outside of our families, it was our major opportunity to socialize, develop and emerge as thinking, feeling people.

Now, as parents, you have considered school for your child. In choosing our pre-school, you want to extend to your child the chance to have contact with peers in an environment which is specifically designed to meet your child's needs.

Whatever your reasons for sending your child to school, it is time to consider the first major issue which will affect both you and your child -- that of separation.

School as a Novel Place
Before children enter school, the majority of their time has been spent with family or familiar caretakers. Your child has formed very close bonds with you. You are all-important in your child's eyes. Your child looks to you for both sustenance and support. Although coming to school may be an exciting time for children, it is also a new experience full of unknowns. School is a novel place -- full of new people, new materials and new rules. Beyond this, school may be the very first experience some children have in leaving their parents and becoming a member of a group other than family.

The First Days of School
The teachers at the Children's School have thought carefully about helping your child make a smooth transition from home to school. The Phase-In plan was developed to introduce your child to school with fewer children and for a shorter period of time. Teachers recognize that there are many individual styles of entering new situations. For the first few days, you can expect the curriculum within the room to be very simple. At this time, the emphasis for teachers is to acquaint children with the environment and with the school routine.

Saying Good-Bye
Although you may be very excited about your child's first school experience, you may also be very surprised at your reaction(s) when it is actually time to say good-bye. Separation from your child (even if it is positive) may arouse a whole range of intense feelings. Leaving your child at school with unfamiliar teachers and children is a major event. It signifies that your child is really growing up and that school will be playing an important role in your child's life.

What Separation Will Mean for Your Child
The first days, weeks or months may be a difficult time for your child. School affords children the opportunity to explore his/her autonomy in a safe, monitored environment. The key, however, is that you will not be there to pick your child up after the bumps and the spills. Potentially, this is unsettling for your child until s/he trusts the teachers. We recognize that you, the parents, play the central role in your child's life and we are prepared to help children when they tell us that only mommies put their coats on! It is important to remember
that your child is flexible and adaptable. No matter what your child's initial reaction to school may be, s/he will settle into the routine over time.

**Some Examples of Reactions**

Separation is an issue for every child, and each child will react differently to saying good-bye. Nonetheless, some patterns of behavior are common. In isolation, the following descriptions of typical reactions may sound alarming; however, reactions such as these are actually positive evidence that children are working through their feelings about separation.

**Sadness**

When your child sees you leave, it is often perceived as a loss: "You’re leaving" versus "You’re leaving but you’re coming back to get me at the end of the day." Your child may react to your leave-taking by looking sad or crying. Complaints about being sick, tired or not wanting to stay in school are often heard. These behaviors often make it very difficult for parents to leave with a clear conscience. Although your child may be sad, there will come a time when you will need to leave the room. Teachers can help if your child shows strong feelings when you are saying good-bye. (A later section deals with teacher behavior in more detail.)

**Fear**

Some children become afraid when they are not in familiar surroundings, especially when they are alone. When a child first enters school, s/he may be unsure if s/he will be kept safe by teachers. Sometimes children test teachers by taking more risks than they ordinarily would. Teachers address this issue directly with children, by assuring them that they will be kept safe.

**Anger**

Although this may seem to be a puzzling reaction to separation, some children react by being angry when they are "left" at school. They may refuse to participate in activities or refuse to be helped by teachers. More curiously, when you arrive at school to pick your child up, you may be surprised to find that your supposedly unwilling child refuses to leave school. Your child will make you wait, just as you made your child wait at school!

**Other reactions**—Some children come to school in body, but not in spirit. Your child may be quiet, observant or reluctant to get involved with activities, although at home, s/he may be very energetic and verbal. Often it takes time for children to realize that school is a safe, predictable place.

However, what about the child who cheerfully says good-bye each day without looking back? If your child does not show signs of working out separation in school, you may see changes in your child's behavior at home. Alterations in well-established sleeping, eating or toileting routines may be disrupted. Sometimes these changes are a result of your child's dealing with his/her feelings around separation. Home may be the safest place for your child to express him/herself.

**Parental Reactions**

When we talk about separation, we often emphasize children's experiences. However, it is also vital to examine your feelings. Many parents feel very sad, guilty or unsure about how their child will adapt to school. Recognizing your feelings is an important part of your child's successful school adjustment.

When parents unwittingly convey ambivalent or tentative feelings about school to their children, school may seem a less happy and secure place. When parents find it difficult to leave, it is even harder for children to want to stay at school.
What You Can Do to Help

1. Prepare your child for the first visit to school. Younger children have not developed a sense of time, so preparation very close to the actual event will be most meaningful. If possible, be specific about what your child will be able to do at school. If you know the teachers’ names, share them with your child. Also, your genuine enthusiasm and approval of school will be contagious!

2. Answer all questions honestly that the child may pose about school and give your child an understanding about what to expect—when will your child go to school. Who will take of your child, when will your child be picked up, what will your child do at school—paint, read books, play with blocks, sand table, water table, puzzles, go on the playground, etc.

3. Try and establish a normal routine atmosphere at home the first few days the child attends school.

4. If your child has a “transitional object” (blanket, stuffed toy, etc.) encourage your child to bring it to school to keep in the cubby, to be “visited” periodically as needed.

5. You can also send in a small photo of the child’s family/friends to keep at school in the cubby, if this would be helpful.

6. Don’t re-engage your child. During the first days, weeks or even months, you may need to be available in or near the classroom if your child needs the security of your presence. However, when you are in the room, bring a book or project so that your child will be able to explore the room without your assistance. Teachers will be more specific about telling you where to sit or when to leave. If you talk and play with your child, then it will be more difficult for him/her to become involved in school activities.

7. When you are ready to depart, give your child a warning, (“I’ll be leaving in a few minutes”) and a stated time of return (“I’ll be back to get you after you have lunch.”)

8. Never try to sneak out of the classroom while your child is busy playing in the classroom. ALWAYS SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR CHILD BEFORE YOU LEAVE. This is crucial in establishing a bond of trust between the parent, teacher, and child.

9. Consistency is important when you say good-bye. If you say you will leave in two minutes, then leave. It may be painful to see your child cry, but teachers will be there to comfort your child.

10. If your child begins to cry or complain of not feeling well, parents should try to smile, reassure the child you’ll see them in a few hours, and wave good-bye. Most likely once the moment of separation actually occurs the child recovers quickly—usually by the time the parent has turned the corner!

11. Don’t push for exuberance on the child’s part about the new experience—as it is natural for him/her not to be ecstatic about leaving a comfortable and safe situation at home.

12. Don’t assume that all anxiety is the child’s. It is very common for parents also to feel anxiety over “separation”. Please share these feelings with a partner and/or a friend—not the child.

13. Occasionally, a child has prolonged difficulty with separation. When this is the case, special plans are developed. It is very important for parents to participate in this process! If the plan is confusing or uncomfortable to you, please share this with teachers. When parents and teachers work together, the results are often quicker and more satisfying for everyone.

14. Remember, separation is a gradual and very normal process for everyone to go through. Some adjustments take longer than others, but everyone does adjust.

15. Sharing information with teachers is helpful particularly if there are changes in your child’s behavior after s/he has started school. Changes in the home may also influence your child’s reaction to school. This information will help the teacher to know your child better.

How Teachers Help with Separation in the Classroom

1. Each room is designed with a combination of quiet areas and more active areas. For the younger children, there is a dramatic play area, complete with dolls and telephones so that the children can phone home! Book corners have pillows where children can sit for some special time with teachers. Books are an integral part of the classroom. Several favorites are chosen with the children’s interests in mind. Here are some books, which either deal with separation or are comforting to children: Goodnight Moon and The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown, Are You My Mother? by P.D. Eastman, and Will I Have a Friend? by Miriam Cohen.

2. When a child is sad or frightened, teachers spend time on a one-to-one basis. Teachers may choose to do a child's favorite activity with him/her or suggest soothing activities such as play dough or water play.
3. Children often talk to teachers about their parents and families. Teachers help greatly by acknowledging feelings and by encouraging children to express their feelings. Teachers also help children remember that parents will come to get them at the end of the day.

**How Do You Know When Your Child Has Made the Adjustment to School?**

When children feel safe and confident about coming to school they will participate enthusiastically in activities. It is normal for this process to take anywhere from one day to several months. Teachers try to develop solid relationships with all the children so that each child can come to the teacher for support and comfort.

**Recurrences--Separation as a Continuing Process**

Surprise! Many months after school has begun, you bring your child to school, and s/he begins to cry and refuses to let you leave. It comes as a surprise because your child has been going to school eagerly and expressing how much s/he loves it. Don't worry. Separation is a continuing process. It is not a task, which is mastered and finished for a lifetime. Whether your child is a toddler or in kindergarten, it is difficult to say good-bye. At these times, reassurance and understanding is needed. Separation feelings are not imagined. Teachers will be there to help you re-negotiate a good-bye to your child.

**Conclusion**

After reading this guide, we hope that many of your questions about separation will be answered and that your awareness of the complexity of this issue will be heightened. During the year, teachers will be available to answer questions or to talk with you about the separation experience. Both your feelings and your child's feelings are real and very important. There is one final thing to remember: separation is a process, not an event. It takes time, patience and effort to get through some hard goodbyes. Good luck!

Some children’s books recommended to help separation anxiety regarding beginning school:

- Miriam Cohen, Will I have a Friend?
- Charlotte Steiner, I’d Rather Stay With You
- Gunilla Wolde, Betsy’s First Day at Nursery School
- Ann Rockwell, The Nursery School
- Patricia Reif, The First Day of School
- Tani Yashima, Umbrella
- M. Kantrowiz, Willy Bear
- E.G. Hurd, Come With Me to Nursery School
- M.W. Brown, The Runaway Bunny
- J. Burningham, The School
- J. Burningham, The Blanket

*Original Guidelines written by:* Dena Cherenson Children's School, December, 1982  
*Adapted By:* LeeKeenan Children’s School, August, 1996

**Family Involvement Information- EEC (2010)**

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of family childcare, small group and school age and large group and school age child care. These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00, establish standards for operation of family child care, small group and school age and large group and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (program owner) in regard to their work with families. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities are identified below.
Family Involvement
The following 606 CMR 7.08 requirements apply to all programs, including family childcare, small group and school age and large group and school age childcare. Additional requirements for family childcare are found at 606 CMR 7.08(9). Additional requirements for small group and school age and large group and school age child care are found at 606 CMR 7.08(10). The licensee must support and encourage a partnership with and the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children.

Parent Communication The licensee must develop a mechanism for and encourage ongoing communication with parents, and must be able to communicate effectively with families whose primary language is not English or who require alternative methods.

Parent Input The licensee must have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of program policies, which may include, but need not be limited to a suggestion box and individual or group parent meetings.

Parent Visits The licensee must permit and encourage unannounced visits by parents to the program and/or to their child’s room at any time while their child is present.

Enrollment Meeting The licensee must provide an opportunity for and encourage parents to meet with the administrator or his/her designee prior to admitting a child to the program.

- The licensee must offer children and parents an orientation to the program.
- The licensee must provide an opportunity for parent(s) and children to visit the program and meet educators before the child is enrolled.
- The licensee must seek information about each child’s and family’s interests and needs.
- To support transitions and coordinate with services offered by other providers, the educators must request that parents share with them
- Information about other therapeutic, educational, social and support services received by the child.
- Children younger than school age, educators must discuss each child’s developmental history with his or her parents at the time of enrollment. The developmental history must be updated annually and maintained in the child’s record.
- Written Information for Parents. The licensee must provide the following information to families in writing prior to enrollment of their child: notification that parents are welcome to visit the program unannounced at any time while their child is present; and that input from and communication with parents is encouraged;
- The frequency of children’s progress reports;
- The program’s policy regarding administration of medication;
- The procedures for meeting potential emergencies;
- The transportation plan;
- A program calendar noting closed days and hours of operation;
- The program’s fee schedule, including any fees for late payment, late pick-up, field trips, special materials, etc.;
- The program’s plan to provide positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development;
- The program’s criteria for excluding children from care due to serious illnesses, contagious diseases and reportable diseases in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health; information regarding SIDS risk reduction practices, including the practice of sleeping infants on their backs;
- The procedures relating to children’s records; notice that child educators are mandated reporters and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families;
- Notice that the program is licensed by EEC, including the telephone number and address of the EEC regional office responsible for the program;
- A statement that parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program’s regulatory compliance history.
• Parent Conferences. The licensee must make educators available for individual conferences with parents at parental request.

Notifications to Parents

The licensee must inform parents:
• Immediately of any injury, which requires any medical care beyond minor first aid or of any emergency administration of non-prescription medication;
• Immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving their children while in the care and custody of the licensee;
• Prior to or as soon as possible following any change in educators; at the end of the day regarding any minor first aid administered; in writing within 48 hours of any incident;
• Whenever special problems and significant developments arise;
• Whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program;
• In writing seven days prior to the implementation of any change in program policy or procedures;
• Prior to the introduction of any pets into the program;
• Of the use of any herbicides or pesticides, prior to their use whenever possible; and whenever the program deviates from the planned menu.
• Additional Requirements for Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care.

The licensee must provide the following information to parents in
• Writing prior to enrollment:
  • The program’s written statement of purpose including and, where applicable, information on the administrative organization of the program
  • The suspension and termination policy
### 2017-2018 Classroom Schedules and Tuition Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First/Second Grade</td>
<td>M,T,Th,F W</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>$13,677</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8:30-12:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12:30-3:00</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Days</td>
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<td>2 Days</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>$11,532</td>
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<td>$17,535</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$15,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$14,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$12,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool East-Morning Only (2.9 years-3.9 years)</td>
<td>M-F</td>
<td>8:30-12:30</td>
<td>$8,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Days</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>$15,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Days</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>$13,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Days</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>$12,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>$11,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool East with Extended Days 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM</td>
<td>5 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$17,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$15,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$14,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$12,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool East with Extended Days 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM</td>
<td>5 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$17,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$15,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$14,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>8:30-4:00</td>
<td>$12,261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Therapeutic Services for Speech and Language, Occupational, and Physical Therapy are integrated into the classroom. Occasionally, children are seen individually outside of the classroom. There are additional fees for therapy services. Rates are available upon request.

All students have lunch brought from home.

Grades 1 and 2 are dismissed at 12:30 on Wednesdays if not enrolled in Spanish.