Eliot-Pearson Children’s School

September 11, 2012

Dear Children's School Community,

What a pleasure to see all of your children come to school this week! Staff have been preparing very hard for this moment. We all await this day with mixed emotions ... anticipation, excitement, hope, joy, sadness, worry, anxiety, relief, etc. These feelings are all typical of the first days of school for children, parents and teachers.

As I start my seventeenth year as director of the school, I marvel at how fortunate we are to have such a wonderful and talented staff. Our head teaching staff and administration have a lot of experience and longevity. They are what anchor our program. This fall in addition to our graduate teaching assistants and instructional aides, we also have 10 fieldwork students in our classrooms. Some of the classrooms will have a medical fellow from Tufts Medical School. These students are in the classrooms one or two times a week for one semester. We also strive to have a very active, supported and supportive parent/family community. Our philosophy is to develop a partnership between home and school that is open, responsive and based on mutual trust and respect. We value the contribution of all families in all that you do everyday with your child (ren) and we appreciate your sharing your child (ren) with us this year.

Diversity in its multiple forms is at the heart of what we do at the school. It is part of our core mission and values. Our school philosophy involves creating a community which respects and supports all dimensions of human differences, including cultural, linguistic, ability, learning style, ethnicity, family culture, gender, age and socio-economic differences. We created an Anti-bias Education Frequently Asked Questions document last year as a school, which may be helpful to new families in understanding our philosophy (it is in the handbook and on our website). This year our professional development focus for the teaching staff will be dual language learners. At our staff retreat on Oct. 5, Professor Chip Gidney will join us to talk about bilingual learners. On October 18, from 4:00-5:30 PM there will be a talk open to the larger community by Dr. Patton Tabors, author of One Child, Two Languages. Stayed tuned for more information.

**NAEYC accreditation.** We will have a site visit this fall for the re-accreditation of our school program. The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the national organization that accredits early childhood programs. The visit will be a culmination of a two-year process that involves family, teacher and administrative staff input and documentation. We will keep you updated this fall on the visit.

**Below is a list of important announcements:**

1. **School begins at 8:30 AM for the whole school.** Each child must be signed in and signed out with the time. Teachers will sign children in as they arrive between 8:30-8:40 AM. If you arrive after that time, it will be the parent’s responsibility to sign in the child. Teachers will sign out children at the end of day. If you pick up your child outside of the normal time, please sign them out.
2. Our first community event will be the Family Picnic on the kindergarten playground on Thursday, Sept. 20, 5:00-7:00 pm, the rain date is Sept. 27. School will provide drinks and paper goods. Bring a dish to serve 6-8. (Please label your dish with ingredients). Remember, we are a nut free school.

What to bring:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your child's last name begins with</th>
<th>Please bring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-Z</td>
<td>Dessert</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-R</td>
<td>Main Dish /Side Dish</td>
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3. Reminder: Please try and join us for some of our special parent events during phase-in week. It’s a great chance to meet other families and get your questions answered.

**Special Morning Forum:** *Tips for Successful Transitions*
Wednesday, Sept.12  8:45-10:00

**Parent Orientations:**
Thursday, Sept. 13  8:45-9:45 AM
or Tuesday, Sept. 18  2:00-3:00 (repeat)

**Friends and Families of Children with Special Rights:**
Friday, Sept. 21, 8:45-10:15. Discussion: “Transitions with Complex Kids”

4. The **Parent-Teacher Advisory Board (PTAB)** is the organization that has representatives from the larger Eliot Pearson community, including teachers, graduate teaching assistants, faculty from the Department of Child Development and parents. The primary purpose of the organization is to facilitate communication and discussion about educational issues, which relate to the school. It also helps organize major school social, educational, and fund-raising activities. There are parent representatives from each classroom, but all PTAB meetings are open to everyone. Each PTAB meeting has a special focus topic. The November and March meetings will be a time for the Parent - Teacher Learning groups to meet. The first PTAB meeting is Monday, Monday, Sept. 24, 7:00-9:00 PM in the Curriculum Lab. We hope you can all join us. The main topic for this first session is “The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School: What’s New at the School: Our Philosophy and Goals” Please remember to sign up for your PTAB committee teams on the board in the front lobby. We ask that everyone join a team. Thank you!

5. **Fall Curriculum Night** is an opportunity for families to learn more about the curriculum in each classroom. *These are late nights for adults only.* This year all the classes will hold their curriculum night on Thursday, October 5, 2012, from 7:00-9:00 PM. More specific details will be forthcoming from each classroom.

6. **Safety and Respect.** Arrival and dismissal time can be especially hectic with 80 families coming and going from the school building. Please supervise your children carefully during this time, in the hallways, parking lot and front courtyard. Remember we
share this building with the larger Tufts community and college classes and meetings are
taking place. Thank you for your help with this important issue.

7. Nut-free policy: Reminder: The Eliot-Pearson Children’s School continues to adopt a
nut free policy to protect its students. This year we have several children who have
potentially life threatening allergies to nuts. To ensure a safe environment, the Eliot-
Pearson Children’s School is asking families 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 at school events. If you or your child have eaten or touched peanut
butter or any product containing nuts before school, simple hand washing with soap and
warm water can eliminate any potential contamination. We appreciate your cooperation
and support in this manner.

8. Child Pick up Sheets are posted in each classroom. Please use these to let us know
who is picking up your child on a regular or occasional basis.

9. Parking Reminders. Parking passes are available at the front desk. Parking Passes
allow you to park in the front lot and the Cousens lot only. During drop off and pick up
you may park the fire lane and roundabout for 10 minutes only. Tufts police will be
monitoring the parking lots. Vehicle owners/operators are responsible for all fines issues
to their vehicles.

10. Parent Education is a major focus for our community. This year we will continue
having both "parent forums with the director" and evening parent workshops. Parent
teacher learning groups also provide another opportunity for parents and teachers in the
community to talk about different parenting and educational issues. All families are
welcome to the Friends and Families of Children with Special Rights meetings. We also
have a Parent Resource Bookshelf in the school lobby. These books and magazines are
available for you to browse at school and are also available for a two-week home
checkout. We also welcome any donations to the bookshelf.

11. Family Picture: Each year we create a family photo bulletin board in the front lobby.
We would like each family to submit a family photo, no larger than 4 x 6” with the names
of people on the back. (This photo can include anyone who is an important part of your
child’s life including baby-sitters, nannies, grandparents, aunts, uncles, step-siblings, etc.)
This photo will not be returned. Please bring your family photo to school by September
21 and leave it at the Front Desk. We hope this bulletin board will help families get to
know each other quicker and develop more community awareness.

Once again welcome to all of you --new and returning families. I look forward to getting
to know you and your children this year. That's one of my favorite parts of this job!
Please stop by my office to introduce yourself, say “hello”, or if you have any questions.
My door is always open. I am looking forward to a stimulating and exciting year!
Sincerely,

Debbie LeeKeenan,
Director