

*Meeting House*



*Child Care Center*

*Handbook*

*2010-2011*

Dear Parent,

Welcome to Meeting House Child Care Center, where we are committed to the high-quality care and education of young children.

Please find attached a copy of the Meeting House Handbook. Please read it carefully, as it covers all of our policies and procedures. It can answer many of your questions about day-to-day activities and serve as an ongoing reference guide.

At Meeting House, we are proud of the care-giving and educational community we have created. Our teachers, for instance, are dedicated, educated, experienced, nurturing, supportive and just plain fabulous. We have very strong teacher retention; the average teacher tenure is seven years.

I encourage you to connect with the staff and families of Meeting House. There are many ways for you become involved:

- Become a Room Representative.
- Sit on the Governing Board of Directors.
- Come for lunch in your child's room.
- Share a talent with the children.
- Participate in the family events Meeting House organizes.

The Meeting House teachers and I are dedicated to keeping you informed of your child's daily activities, growth, and development. In the same spirit, please keep us informed as to events and happenings at home that may affect your child.

Meeting House traditions and policies are always open to modification and improvement. If you have ideas about ways to make things better, please bring them to Governing Board meetings, to your room meetings, to teachers, or to me. Pooling our mental resources helps create the best world for children.

We look forward to growing and learning together with you and your child through the years at Meeting House.

Sincerely,

Pam Penton  
Director

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# MEETING HOUSE CHILD CARE CENTER HANDBOOK

## Introduction

### **Mission and Philosophy**

We are committed to providing high-quality early care and education of young children, ages 2 months to 5 years. We believe that children have individual ways of learning about the world and other people; they have individual preferences for things like routine or novelty, quiet or noise, independent or sociable play. Teachers observe children (watch them, try things out, think and talk about children with their parents and other staff members) to see what kinds of experiences bring each child delight, confidence, and comfort. Teachers tailor their routine, tasks and daily activities with children's individual needs and preferences in mind. We believe our mission will be met through engaging children in developmentally appropriate activities and play.

### **Services**

Meeting House Child Care Center provides full and part-time child care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. We provide care from 7:30am to 6pm year-round, except for state and national holidays and a week at the end of the summer, usually the week before Labor Day. Parents bring their child(ren)'s lunch, bottles, and diapers; the center provides wipes and morning and afternoon snacks.

### **Enrollment**

Meeting House is a private, non-sectarian, non-profit day care center. Enrollment is open to the public; in general, children are enrolled on a first-apply, first-served basis. There is no application fee. We do not discriminate against children or their families on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnic heritage, political beliefs, gender, age, marital status, family structure, disability, sexual orientation or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law. Enrollment preference may be given to siblings, teacher's children and children that would provide age and gender balance for the classroom. Parents visit the center and meet with the director before enrolling.

### **Teacher-Child Ratios**

Infant Room: 3:7

Toddler Room: 3:9

Preschool Room: 4:20

### **Licensure and Accreditation**

Meeting House is licensed by the Massachusetts Early Education and Care (EEC). The EEC is the state regulatory agency that oversees early childhood programs. It sets safety, health, and program standards. The agency reviews our license every two years. EEC also provides certification for early childhood educators who meet education standards.

Meeting House Child Care Center has also begun the process of self-evaluation leading to application for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the professional organization of early childhood educators. It provides professional development opportunities, sets forth developmentally appropriate practices for children from birth to age eight, and accredits programs that choose to meet the high standards they set forth. You and your family can be assured that Meeting House already functions in accordance with the NAEYC criteria for high-quality early childhood programs.

### **Teacher Hiring**

Meeting House realizes how central its teachers are to its mission and philosophy. When vacancies occur on the staff, great care is taken in hiring teachers. Prospective teachers go through the following hiring procedure:

- Interview
- Classroom observations
- References
- Criminal Offense Record Information (CORI) and DSS Background Check
- Health examinations
- Training in CPR and First Aid

### **Organization**

As a non-profit organization, Meeting House is overseen by a Governing Board of Directors made up of parents and staff members. Meeting House is governed in accordance with its bylaws, a copy of which may be obtained in the office. Its organizational structure is as follows:

### **Governing Board**

The Governing Board is comprised of the elected officers (who are parent volunteers), parent representatives from each room, a teacher representative, and the director, as well as any at-large parent members. It is responsible for setting policy and overseeing Meeting House's finances and budget, as well as communicating those decisions to the community. Board Meetings are held monthly in the evenings (usually about nine times a year), except in the summer, and are open to all. New officers are elected each May at our annual meeting. Parent Room Representatives are elected in the fall from among parents in the respective rooms.

### **Child Care Director**

The director is responsible for enrollment; hiring; business management and record-keeping; development and maintenance of the early childhood education program; staff development, supervision and training; parent involvement and social services; licensing and inspections; and maintaining relationships with The First Baptist Church (landlord), the Children's Cooperative Nursery (other building tenant), and with other day care centers and professional organizations in the area. In the director's absence, the assistant director is in charge, or the most senior preschool teacher, or the most senior toddler teacher.

## **Getting Started**

### **Transitioning to Meeting House**

We suggest that you and your child spend time in their new classroom prior to the start of school. The director schedules these visits. Each child's transition is individualized. You will receive a guide with your enrollment packet with suggestions for this process. The director, parents and teachers work together to help each child make the transition successfully.

Entrance and Transition Ages:

Infant Room: 2 months -15 months

Toddler Room: 15 months - 2.9 years

Preschool Room: 2.9 years -5 years old

Children remain in classrooms from September to August and begin the transition process to the next classroom in July and August.

### **Arrivals**

Meeting House does not provide transportation. Drop-off begins at your convenience after the 7:30am opening, but if you will be arriving later than 10am, please call. When it's nice out, children may take early walks; a phone call will save you any inconvenience and help teachers plan. Parents must accompany their child(ren) to his or her classroom(s). Children may not move about the center without an adult. Teachers sign the children in and out each day to insure that there is a written record of the child's arrival and departure times. This is necessary to maintain maximum safety for your child. Please call anytime you are not bringing your child.

### **Departures**

Please arrive by 15 minutes to 6pm so you can get news of the day and pick up your child in an unhurried manner and without keeping teachers late.

### **Late/Emergency Care Fees**

Parents pay teachers directly \$1 per minute for time they arrive after 6pm. If you are late, please reach for your wallet without making teachers ask.

### **No Pick-up and No Call**

Please call if you know you are going to be late. If we have not heard from you by 6:15, we will call you. Usually this takes care of things. Every now and then, however, there are serious mix-ups about which parent is supposed to pick up a child, car trouble, or other emergencies. If we cannot reach you, we will begin calling the people on your emergency contact list and ask one of them to pick up your child. If, by 6:30, we still cannot reach you or any of the people on your list, the teacher with your child will consult the director. A governing board member may be asked to stay with your child.

### **Non-Parent Pick-up**

We need to have your official permission before we can let anyone else pick up your child. One of your enrollment forms asks you to list any non-parent adult who might pick up your child. If one of these people is picking up your child, please let teachers know ahead of time. It's reassuring for us and gives teachers a chance to prepare your child to see an unusual face at pick up time. If you have to ask someone who is NOT on your official list to pick up your child, please call *and* send a note with your signature authorizing that person. Also please have that person have a picture I.D. on them to be checked by a teacher.

### **Holidays and Closings**

Meeting House is CLOSED on:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day AND the day after
- Christmas Day AND the day after
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Patriots' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

Meeting House also closes the entire week before Labor Day, unless Labor Day is late and the Newton Public Schools open before Labor Day. In that case, we close the week before schools open.

### **Snow Days, Delays & Inclement Weather**

Meeting House follows the Newton Public Schools when hazardous weather conditions develop. If Newton schools close, we close; if they delay opening one or two hours, we delay opening the same number of hours. In the event that Newton announces an early release, we follow the schedule for the preschools. Information about Newton school closings is available on local TV and radio stations and on the Internet, including on the school district's Web site:

[www.newton.k12.ma.us](http://www.newton.k12.ma.us). You can also sign-up to receive a text message to your mobile phone and email when Newton is delayed or closed at

<http://www1.whdh.com/stormforce/snowdayalerts.php>.

If a storm develops when schools are closed for vacation, a staff member or governing board member will phone you with information about a school closing. In addition, an e-mail will go out to all families, and a message will be left on the main office phone. If a storm develops during school hours and the Center needs to close early, you will be contacted by the director or a teacher. The governing board president, along with the child care director, will make decisions about school closings when Newton Public Schools are not in session, or when weather situations worsen during the day.

## Daily Schedules

Daily schedules are provided in each classroom. The flow of the day is sometimes dictated in part by unpredictable things, like the weather and the mood of the group. The overall plan in the Infant and Toddler programs comes from simple developmental influences. Children this age need some unstructured time with changes of environment small group experiences and bits of structured activities for variety. All caretaking activities need plenty of time, so children are not rushed during the eating, sleeping, and diapering parts of the day. In the Preschool, the schedule allows for free-play, small-group time, and structured activities. We have created classroom communities that promote positive relationships, where children make friends and a curriculum that supports all areas of development.

### Infant Room Schedule

Each child's sleeping and feeding habits will be respected, with individual nurturing time provided throughout the day. Young infants must be placed to sleep on their backs, unless parents sign a release. Quiet time, active time, and time outdoors is provided daily in accordance with each child's sleeping and feeding schedules. Our infants enjoy daily experiences. Playing with toys, listening to stories and books, connecting with music, creating with art and exploring sand and water

### Toddler Room Schedule

- Arrival/Free Play/Small group time
- Hand washing/Snack/Diapering
- Circle Time (movement, singing, and stories)
- Small Group Time (projects indicated on the calendar)
- Outdoor Play (playground, library, neighborhood walks)
- Inside Play/ Big Room
- Hand washing
- Lunch
- Diapering
- Books/Stories
- Nap/Quiet Time
- Quiet Activities
- Diapering
- Hand washing
- Snack
- Activity Time
- Gross Motor Time (playground, Big Room)
- Quiet Activities/ Free Play and Books
- Pick-up

## **Preschool Schedule**

- Arrival/Free Play/Table Activities
- Hand Washing
- Snack (optional)
- Bathroom Break
- Group Meeting (Circle Time), Movement, Yoga, Fantasy Trips, Big Books, songs, chants, charts, and conversation
- Small Group Time/Pre-K Component. Curriculum will cover all content areas and you will receive a calendar each month from your child's small group teacher.
- Bathroom Break
- Outdoor Play (playground, neighborhood walks, trips to the library)
- Inside Play/Big Room
- Hand Washing
- Lunch
- Nap/Quiet Time
- Quiet Activities
- Bathroom Break
- Afternoon Snack
- Activity Time/Small Group
- Outdoor play/Indoor play
- Pick-up

## **Enrichment programs**

- Music with Josh Shriber (monthly)
- Creative Movement Specialist (monthly)
- PuddleStompers/Nature Exploration Program
- Newton Librarian (Preschool)
- Curious Creatures (Preschool)
- Mass Audubon - Audubon Ark
- High Touch/High Tech Science
- Drumlin Farms
- MA DCR Forest and Parks on Wheels
- Newton Fire Department
- Tufts Traveling Treasure Trunk
- Pediatric Dentist
- Gerwick Puppets
- New England Aquarium Traveling Tide Pool

## **Picture Day**

Meeting House is currently working with a professional photographer for photo day, which is in early October. You can choose to have an individual sitting and or a sibling sitting. Classroom photos are also taken. Purchase of photos is optional.

## **Basics: Food, Naps, Diapers, Clothing**

### **Lunches**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Some children at Meeting House have LIFE-THREATENING allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, and products made from them. Therefore, food items containing or made from nuts are FORBIDDEN in the building. That means please, no peanut butter or other nut products.

Please also be conscious of seemingly innocuous foods that may contain nuts, such as some brands of “multi-grain” bread. Please look at the packaging and do not bring any foods that include nuts in the list of ingredients. Look at the *Health, Safety, and Emergencies* section later in the handbook for more details on food allergy precautions.

Parents provide a lunch each day for their child. Please send it in a labeled lunch bag with an ice pack. Milk and water will be served at lunchtime. All lunches should be ready to eat, including with fruit peeled and food cut into appropriate sizes for young children. Teachers will heat up lunches in the microwave, as needed. Children under 3 may not have popcorn, raisins, whole grapes, and chunks of meat or hot dogs larger than ¼ inch-dice. These are choking hazards and teachers will not be allowed to serve them to the child.

### **Lunch Suggestions:**

- Grilled cheese
- Turkey sandwich
- Cheese sandwich
- Tuna
- Bagel with cream cheese
- Scrambled eggs/hard-boiled eggs
- Pancakes
- Fish sticks
- Chicken nuggets
- Pizza
- Pita pocket with cream cheese & jelly
- Macaroni
- Diced tofu
- Diced fruits
- Diced vegetables

### **Snacks**

The Center provides nutritious morning and afternoon snacks for your child. Each snack consists of a carbohydrate, fruit or vegetable and a beverage (milk or water). You can find a snack menu in your child’s classroom.

The following is a list of what is served. Upon enrollment, you will complete a form letting teachers know of any dietary restrictions and/or allergies your child may have.

- English muffins
- Bagels
- Cheerios
- Kix
- Puffs (infants)
- Wagon wheels (infants)
- Graham crackers
- Cheddar goldfish crackers
- Pretzel goldfish
- Saltines
- Ritz crackers
- Fig Newtons
- Oyster crackers
- Apples
- Grapes
- Cantaloupe
- Watermelon
- Bananas
- Cucumbers
- Cream cheese
- Cheddar cheese
- American cheese
- Yogurt
- Milk, 1% - Toddlers and Preschoolers
- Whole Milk - Infant Room

### **Naptime / Rest Periods**

In accordance with the Massachusetts Office of Early Education and Care (EEC) regulations, every child must be provided a forty-five minute nap/rest time.

Parents provide a crib-sized sheet for the Toddlers and Preschoolers, as well as a small blanket. All linens must be taken home for washing on the last day of your child's week. Infant sheets are provided and laundered by Meeting House staff.

### **Diapers and Wipes**

Meeting House provides wipes. Parents supply diapers and diapering ointments that their child may need.

### **Clothing**

Children should come to school in comfortable clothing, appropriate for art, sensory, and outdoor activities. Children will get dirty and clothes will get stained. Please dress your child accordingly. Children should wear shoes with rubber soles for their own safety.

Each child should also have two changes of clothes in their basket or cubby, in case of any

mishaps that may occur during the day. Please check these items regularly for size and season.

### **Outerwear**

Children play outside daily. Please send the appropriate outerwear for the day's events.

- Raincoat and rubber boots for playing in puddles in light rain.
- Snow suits, hats, waterproof gloves, boots for playing in the snow and on cold winter days.
- Sun hats

### **Sunscreen**

Put sunscreen on your child before leaving home or, when that's not possible for some reason, before you enter your child's room in the morning. When applying, please consider what your child will be wearing when exposed (bathing suit, bare feet, etc.), not what your child is wearing when you apply it.

Bring a labeled bottle of your child's sunscreen to leave at the center in your child's cubby. Teachers can reapply sunscreen as needed.

Our health care consultant recommends sunscreen is applied at least one hour prior to going outdoors. This initial application will protect your child for three hours of exposure to the sun. Early applications should still be effective and work with our outdoor schedule. Teachers will reapply if necessary.

## Program Goals & Curriculum

**At Meeting House, teachers work towards these goals:**

- That the children **enjoy themselves**, and have the sense that they are lovely, interesting, talented, enjoyable people.
- That the children **trust themselves**, have a sense that they can meet new experiences successfully, work through frustrations toward their own goals, and get help from adults when they need it.
- That the children be able to **enjoy other children**, learn how to live and play with other children in ways that protect the peace and bring out the fun of being together.
- That the children **feel physically and emotionally safe** at child care, and have the sense that the staff will protect them and pay attention to their felt needs.

Accordingly, teachers plan exciting, enriching, stimulating, open-ended experiences for the children. They consider children's individual needs when planning activities and creating the room environment.

Each classroom develops curriculum based on the following **age-appropriate** goals:

### **Infant Room Program Goals**

- Care for each infant in a warm, affectionate way that lets each child know he/she is a special person.
- Meet each child's physical and emotional needs.
- Maintain strict sanitation procedures that are adhered to faithfully.
- Create a classroom environment that offers opportunities for exploring, learning and interacting.
- Stimulate the senses; recognize that infants learn through the use of their eyes, ears, fingers, sense of taste and smell.
- Engage in one-to-one interactions between teachers and children daily.
- Provide a variety of activities that aid in the development of cognitive, motor and language skills, as well as in an awareness of the environment.
- Encourage independence and risk-taking.
- Provide rich, accurate representation about gender, race, culture, age, and physical abilities.
- Achieve individual developmentally appropriate routines.

### **Infant Room Curriculum**

- Activities to help improve reaching and motor skills.
- Exercises and activities to strengthen arm, leg, back and neck muscles to help prepare infants to sit and crawl.
- Language and cooing games to encourage infants to make new sounds and begin social interactions.

- Songs and nursery rhymes to expose the infants to the special qualities, patterns and \\ rhythms of language
- Activities to teach specific words and names as well as imitation of simple actions/Sign language
- Opportunities to explore surroundings and to develop mobility.
- Exposure to different tactile stimuli and the differences in how objects feel.
- Activities to help the child learn to express needs and wants.

#### **Assisting with transitions from:**

- crawling to walking,
- baby cooing and signing to talking,
- drinking from a bottle to a cup,
- being fed to feeding him or herself.

#### **Toddler Room Program Goals**

##### **For Young Toddlers:**

- Provide a loving, caring, atmosphere where affection is shown to each child.
- Instill in each child a feeling of autonomy and positive self-concept.
- Provide a joyous, enthusiastic and spontaneous environment.
- Meet each child's physical needs.
- Establish the foundation of respect for equipment and space.
- Establish the foundation of respect for others, encouraging social development.
- Provide ample opportunities for the development of fine and gross motor skills.
- Use a variety of activities that encourage language, and social interactions.
- Support and encourage a child as they experiment with a variety of art materials, music, movement and dramatic play opportunities, and manipulative activities.
- Develop self-help skills in order to create independence and confidence in each child.
- Encourage sound health, safety, and nutritional practices
- Respect each child's developmental needs.

##### **Additional goals for older toddlers:**

- Become aware of the natural world and its inhabitants.
- Provide a variety of activities within a routine to encourage and support cooperative play.
- Provide exposure to the community and the outside world through experiences with people and events.
- Foster a love and enjoyment of literature through books and stories told and read by teachers and by maintaining a print-rich environment.
- Provide rich, accurate representations about gender, race, culture, age and physical abilities.

#### **Toddler Room Curriculum:**

The toddler program contains appropriate aspects of both the infant and the preschool programs, providing a gradual transition from the “me” world of an infant to the “we” world of a preschool child.

**Cognitive Development:** Increase attention span by sitting for short stories and finger plays, able to follow simple commands, identify objects and environment by name, develop ability to anticipate consequences of actions and events, make activity choices to encourage decision-making.

**Creative Arts:** A balance of quiet and active times and individual and group activities including music, art and sensory experiences such as gluing, cutting, coloring, finger painting, easel painting, playing musical instruments, singing simple songs and reciting rhymes.

**Language and word activities:** Increase expressive and receptive language through the use of reading and looking at books, finger plays, exposure to colors and shapes, identifying objects and classroom dialogue.

**Motor Development:** Increase eye-hand coordination through the use of puzzles, Legos, and building blocks. Expand the development of large motor coordination through outdoor play activities such as running, climbing, jumping, rolling and throwing.

**Self-Help Skills:** Introduce and develop simple self-help skills such as helping to clean up and put away toys and projects when finished using, put on and remove coats, unzip zippers, dry hands after washing, feed self, wipe mouth and hands, begin to verbalize toilet needs.

**Social/Emotional Development:** Shows pride in accomplishments, begins to develop a sense of respect for others and their property, initiates own play activities, begins interacting in parallel play, willingness to begin sharing with others, begins social interactions with others, develops an appreciation of group space, rather than just own space.

### **Preschool Room Program Goals**

- Provide a loving, caring, and safe atmosphere where affection is shown to each child.
- Instill in each child a feeling of independence and self-discipline by allowing choices within limits.
- Provide a joyous, enthusiastic, creative and accepting environment in which children work and play.
- Meet each child’s physical needs while encouraging independence in self-care.
- Teach and show by example respect for equipment and space. Teach and show by example respect for others and encourage social development through a sense of caring and sensitivity toward others.
- Provide ample opportunities for the use of stimulating and age-appropriate fine motor activities.
- Provide ample opportunities to develop gross motor skills that allow children to use their bodies in active ways, both indoors and outdoors.
- Use a variety of activities that encourage language and social interactions.

- Support children as they experiment with a variety of art materials, science, music, movement, dramatic play opportunities, and manipulative activities.
- Develop self-help skills in order to create independence and confidence in each child.
- Promote curiosity and intellectual growth in each child.
- Provide a variety of activities within a routine to encourage and support cooperative play.
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.
- Provide an atmosphere where children can discover, explore, and learn independently.
- Continue to foster love and enjoyment of literature by providing a print-rich environment.
- Provide accurate representations about gender, race, culture, age and physical ability.

## Preschool Curriculum

**Dramatic Play:** Strengthens self-image, creative thinking, expressive and receptive language; enhances social development (including sharing and cooperation); improves dressing skills; builds teamwork; encourages an understanding of the family unit through role playing.

**Fine/Creative Arts:** Develops creative expression and imagination, an awareness and understanding of materials and their use, which reinforces other skills and concepts. Media used include paint, crayons, finger paint, Play Doh, clay, and other craft materials.

**Fine Motor:** Develops and strengthens eye-hand coordination and small muscle control of fingers and hands. Activities include gluing/pasting, coloring, cutting, lacing, tracing, stringing beads, introduction of correct pencil grasp and manipulation of small objects such as blocks, Legos, pegs/pegboards, puzzles and other materials.

**Gross Motor:** Activities include organized and child-directed activities indoors and outdoors that develop large-muscle skills, coordination, teamwork, following direction, group participation, directional skills. They include running, climbing, catching, throwing, hopping, sliding, swinging, jumping, and balancing.

**Introduction to Early Math Concepts:** Counting, sorting, measuring, classifying, introduction to graphing, patterning, estimating and sequencing, fractions.

**Language Arts:** Helps children appropriately communicate wants and needs, express ideas orally, tell experiences/stories in sequence, understand “positional” words (in, on, under, before, after), comprehend and experience new and old words, develop speech patterns.  
\*Includes poetry, finger plays, stories, puppets, nursery rhymes.

**Music:** Develops auditory perception; builds listening skills; develops rhythmic and coordinated movement with dancing; builds language and memory through songs, chants and jingles; improves eye-hand coordination using rhythm instruments; helps develop poise and an ability to express feelings freely.

**Personal/ Social Skills:** Separating and reuniting with parents, completing a task, working cooperatively, taking turns, sharing, dressing, resolving conflicts with language or social means, following directions, verbalizing needs, making choices.

**Reading Readiness:** Introduction to name recognition, basic shapes, colors, opposites, rhyming, positional words (over, under, forward, backward), differentiation between numbers and letters.

**Science:** Weighing, measuring, fractions, prediction, estimation, critical thinking, familiarity with natural phenomena, observation skills, development of theories, understanding cause and effect.

**Social Studies/ History:** Current events; famous people and events; traditions; other cultures; the world around them; occupations; mapping skills; knowledge of address and phone number; connections between the children, the community, and the world at large.

## Money Matters

### Tuition

Tuition is due for the month on the first of the month. Parents are not billed; please just pop a check in the director's envelope on your child's room door (or in the regular mail) by the first of the month. When paying for a full month at a time is a hardship, you can pay by the half-month on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Monthly tuition for the 2010-2011 year:

<u>ROOM</u>	<u>5 days</u>	<u>4 days</u>	<u>3 days</u>	<u>2 days</u>
Infant	\$2136	\$1957	\$1602	\$1124
Toddler	\$1912	\$1751	\$1424	\$1011
Preschool	\$1658	\$1518	\$1234	\$875

### Tuition Deposits

Every family places a deposit equal to one month's tuition when enrolling in the center. This deposit remains on file until you leave Meeting House. You have the option to donate your deposit to the center upon leaving. In February of each year, you are asked to sign a contract for the upcoming year, which runs September–August.

### Tuition Increases

About 90% of tuition money currently goes to pay salary and benefits. Since both the cost of living and of benefits increase every year, we need to increase tuition regularly as well. The Governing Board determines the upcoming year's budget and tuition increases in an open-to-all meeting early in the calendar year, usually mid-January.

## **General Information**

### **Parent Visits, Involvement, Notification of illness and injury, Communication & Celebrations**

#### **Visits**

You are always welcome here. You can visit just for fun, or anytime you feel you'd like to have a more direct sense of how things are going. Teachers appreciate knowing in advance, but it is not necessary.

#### **Focused Visits**

Sometimes parents and children enjoy visits more if parents come with a role or a project in mind. Field trips are one possibility. Parents have also come to play music for the group, or to cook a favorite family recipe. Anything you enjoy doing with your child that can accommodate several children can become something you teach to or share with your child's group. If you'd like to do something in your child's group, talk to teachers about it. They may have an idea for you or be able to explore with you ways to help your idea work in a group setting.

#### **Notification of Injury**

Parents are informed immediately of any injury which requires emergency care beyond minor first aid. Parents are informed in writing of any first aid administered to their child within 24 hours of the incident.

#### **Field Trips**

A field trip permission form comes in the fall packet of forms for you. This gives us permission for very local trips—the library, the bagel shop, the T trains, and the Newton Center playground; for infants, just a stroller ride around the block or to the shores of Crystal Lake. For these local trips toddlers ride in our big toddler cart; preschoolers walk holding loops on a rope.

For trips requiring transportation on the T, we need a specific permission from you (teachers will put a form in your mail envelope), *and we need parent volunteers*. We need more adults per child when children venture out into the wider world.

#### **Parties**

We have potluck suppers three times a year: at Halloween, in late spring, and an end-of-year barbecue. They start at the close of day care, around 6pm

#### **Fundraising Events**

The fundraising committee organizes 2-3 events per year to raise money, for program expenses, large projects and the scholarship fund. Events on the agenda may be a spaghetti dinner, silent auction or a pancake breakfast.

#### **Conferences**

In late September and early October, teachers will schedule a fall conference with you. Usually this is a 30-minute meeting aimed at teachers learning everything we need to know to provide the very best care for your child. It is also a chance for you to talk with teachers in more depth about any special thoughts you have about your child, the center, and the year ahead. Parents and

teachers can request a conference whenever they feel it is necessary.

### **Progress Reports**

In Jan/Feb and again in June teachers complete a written progress report. Infant reports are completed every 3 months. Children on an Individual Education Plan will also receive a progress report every 3 months.

Many topics just can't be properly discussed in the middle of a room full of children; many questions need more time and concentration than a few minutes at the beginning or end of the day allow. Please let teachers know if you'd like a chance to meet, and feel free to use the director as a consultant, too. The director can often free up meeting time more easily than teachers can. The director can observe your child and can consult with teachers.

### **Phone Conferences**

When a topic is too big for a drop-off time but a sit-down conference doesn't seem necessary, a phone call to the center may work best. Toddler and preschool teachers usually have time for a longish call during nap; infant teachers could try calling you whenever a good stretch of napping arrives. The director can be available to talk almost anytime, including from home.

### **Mailboxes**

There is an envelope with your name on it in the infant and preschool classrooms. Parents in the toddler room will use their cubby bins. During the year, you will find newsletters, Governing Board minutes, reminders, and other important notices. Please check your "mailbox" frequently.

### **Holiday Celebrations**

In general, Meeting House does not celebrate holidays, with the exception of a Thanksgiving lunch prior to the holiday itself.

### **Birthdays**

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday at the center. Due to concerns about allergens and general food safety, the Board has voted to discontinue the practice of allowing families to bring in food for the classroom to celebrate individual events (such as birthdays, Halloween, etc.). This policy does not impact MHCCC-sponsored events and our tradition of potluck dinners. The policy is focused on classroom consumption of food only. As always, we ask that the lunches you pack for your children continue to remain nut free.

There are other ways, however, to honor and celebrate your child's birthday at MH. Each of our classrooms takes special care to honor every child's birthday via birthday circles, songs and books. To learn more about the celebration styles of each room reach out to one of the teachers. Also, parents can bring in or drop off special stickers, crowns, hats, or other small items that are not choking hazards ... as a fun, yet inexpensive and non-time consuming way to honor the event. (Parent participation in the birthday celebrations is always welcome if your schedule allows.)

## Toilet Training

Toilet training is a developmental task, which occurs naturally as children grow physically, emotionally and cognitively. Each child will have her or his own timetable for readiness. Meeting House does not require preschoolers to be toilet trained. Success depends on a child's ability to understand and control the body, his/her self-help skills and a desire to be independent. Sometimes a child will show interest and then it will wane. Here are some suggestions if you feel your child is showing interest in training.

- Read books about toileting.
- Talk about family members using the toilet.
- Let them sit on the toilet/potty with their clothes on just to see how it feels.
- Have child pull down pants, and untape diaper by themselves.
- Change your child's diaper while they are standing.
- Allow them to flush the toilet.
- Before diapering, offer the opportunity to use the toilet.
- Before bath time, offer the use of the toilet.

If your child has had success and continued interest in toilet training using the criteria above and has moved on to the criteria below, your child may be ready to toilet train.

- Your child shows interest in watching others use the toilet.
- They are able to say "pee or poop" in their diaper, or ask to be changed.
- Willingness to sit and try.
- Desire to wear underpants.
- Tells an adult when they need to use the toilet.

Once toilet training has begun:

- Commit to giving your child ample opportunity to become successful.
- Expect accidents. When they occur, say, "Next time you will pee or poop in the potty," and have them help with the changing process.
- Do not give up too quickly.
- Do not switch back and forth from underwear to a diaper.
- Dress child in easy to pull up or pull down clothes.
- Have an easy-to-reach toilet or potty.
- Say it is time to use the potty. Take child.
- Let child sit trying for the duration of one or two books.
- Use verbal praise and encouraging words.
- Allow children to flush.
- Using toilet paper and washing hands should be included in the training.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

We take behavior management problems as education problems. We ask ourselves: What is this child trying to do? What are the acceptable ways of achieving the same thing? How can I teach this child the acceptable way?

We teach by example, by praising the generous and cooperative gestures children make, by encouraging children to use words to get what they want or to ask for adult help, by describing acceptable choices to children so they can choose among positives. We try to give positive directions, to say, “Do this!” instead of “No”, “Stop”, or “Don’t”. We try to create an environment that keeps behavior management problems from arising: an atmosphere of kindness towards all, having plenty of toys especially toys which can be used by several children at a time, showing consistency in respect for all children’s needs and wishes.

With infants, we settle most conflicts over toys by finding a similar toy or a good distraction; we work at teaching them how to touch gently and ways of getting a happy reaction from each other if reactions are the goal.

With toddlers, we try to identify the problem and offer a choice of acceptable solutions: “Do you need a turn? Well, Jimmy’s using that now. You could use this one, or you could wait for your turn here with me.” Sometimes we demonstrate a more acceptable response, “That made you mad! When you’re mad, you can say, ‘No! My turn!’”

With preschoolers, we encourage children to identify the problem and the solutions themselves: “You have a problem here! What’s the matter? What could we do?” We explain reasons behind adult rules and offer as much choice as possible: “Holding onto the railing keeps you safe from falling. If you don’t want to hold the rail, you can hold my hand.” We also invite preschoolers to participate in rules, policies, and procedures when appropriate. Early in the year at circle time children are asked, “What would be important things to have as rules for our room?” and their ideas are recorded. When new children or teachers join the group, we ask children to “Tell our rules.” Before walks outside we ask, “What are good rules for walks?” Preschoolers often have many of the key ideas already; we fill in as needed.

When children cannot respond to teachers’ directions and prevent other children from enjoying activities, they are directed to other activities or removed from the group to a supervised, quiet area until they are calmer and ready to play again. When a child is unable to rejoin the group, a family member will be contacted and the child may need to leave for the day.

In addition, you should know that Department of Early Education and Care specifically prohibits corporal punishment (including spanking), cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse, denial of food as a form of punishment, punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet, or forced feeding of any kind.

## **Health, Safety, and Emergencies**

### **Meeting a Child's Specific Health Needs**

We attempt to meet the needs of all our children by posting specific health-related issues or allergies in each room. We also discuss these needs regularly at team meetings. Parents should speak with teachers regularly, keeping them informed of a child's special need(s).

### **Care for Mildly Ill Children**

We know that you want to stay home with your child if he or she is obviously sick. We also know that it isn't always easy to tell, especially if your child looks OK at home in the morning. Most importantly, please communicate to your child's teachers at drop-off time if your child has taken any medication that evening or morning, has been vomiting, or has an ill sibling. Here are some general guidelines to help you make decisions.

We can provide care at Meeting House for a mildly ill child if:

- The child can participate comfortably in the group's regular activities. (If it's a day the whole group would normally go outside, this includes being able to go outside; you can understand that it is not fair to keep other small children indoors because one cannot go.)
- Teachers can care for the child without neglecting others. A child who can only stay comfortable if carried, for example, cannot remain at day care; other children need those hands, too.
- Parents are available by phone throughout the day. Bringing a child in iffy health to the center can work, but it doesn't always. As long as you are able and willing to come get your child when it doesn't work, taking the chance is fine. If you are unable to come in the middle of the day if needed, you should arrange for care at home.

### **Have-To-Stay-Home Illnesses**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires us to exclude children for some specific illness and symptoms. Most illnesses on this list are rare or nonexistent here. The full list is available in the office. We do occasionally have to exclude children for the following illnesses:

#### **Chicken pox**

Excluded until lesions are dried and crusted or for 5 days, whichever is later.

#### **Purulent conjunctivitis**

(in this kind of conjunctivitis, the white of the eye is pink or red in addition to having discharge) Excluded for 24 hours after treatment is begun.

#### **Head lice**

Excluded until nit-free.

#### **Strep throat**

Excluded for 24 hours after treatment was begun and the child has had a normal temperature for 24 hours.

**Vomiting**

Excluded for twice or more in 24 hours, unless it is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and there is no danger of dehydration.

**Diarrhea**

(More than the child's normal number of stools, with increased stool water or decreased form, that is not contained by diapers or controlled by toilet use, or stools that contain blood and/or mucus.) Excluded if it occurs twice or more in the previous 24 hours, unless the diarrhea is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

**Fever**

MA Department of Health guidelines state that because fever may be a symptom of a communicable or serious illness it is recommended that children with fevers of 102°F or higher be evaluated by their health care provider for inclusion in the program. Parents will be asked to pick up their child and to seek medical advice when a temperature reaches 101°F. For a fever less than 101°F staff will provide medication (e.g., Tylenol) one time (with parent's consent) provided there is a non-prescription medication form in your child's file. If the fever persists after 60 minutes or additional medication is needed, the parent will be called and is expected to make arrangements to have their child picked up within the hour. A child can return the next day fever-free. However, if the fever returns you will be called to pick up your child within the hour.

**Absences**

Please call the center to inform the office if your child is absent due to a contagious illness. If your child is sick, fill us in on symptoms and any pediatrician information about what is going around.

**Health News**

We will make you aware of any child with something contagious (besides the basic New England cold) by email, notes on parent information boards in your room, or notes in your mailbox. Please also let us know your own health news.

**Plan for Management of Infectious Disease**

The center will minimize the spread of infectious disease by maintaining constant high standards of cleanliness; teachers follow specific instructions for diapering and for supervising use of the toilet, which are posted in each bathroom.

The teachers wash their hands before diapering a child; if a staff member changes a soiled diaper, they wear gloves. A disposable piece of paper is put on the changing mat. The child is then changed, and the soiled diaper is placed in the pail. If the diaper has a bowel movement, it is placed in an individual plastic bag and then placed in the pail. The child is then dressed and returns to play. The staff person then washes and disinfects the changing area and washes their hands.

The teachers assist all children in hand washing regularly, before each snack, lunch, after eating, after outdoor play, before playing in the water table and at any other time needed. Furniture and

toys are washed and disinfected regularly. Each team has a daily schedule of when to wash down each piece of play equipment. Tables are washed and disinfected after eating and after activities.

Disinfected after each use:

- toilets
- diapering surface
- toys mouthed
- bibs
- thermometers

Disinfected daily:

- toilets
- sinks and faucets
- water table
- play tables
- floors

Disinfected weekly:

- sleeping equipment
- cribs
- mats
- sheets and blankets. (Parents in the toddler and preschool rooms are responsible for washing their child's sheet and blanket.)

Disinfected monthly:

- Fabric toys

Tissues are kept in each classroom within easy reach for children and teachers. Used tissues are disposed of in the trash. Teachers and children wash hands after use.

### **Medicines**

We must have your signature *and* a doctor's authorization before we can give your child medicine of any kind, prescription or non-prescription. Forms for your signature are available in your child's room.

Prescription medicines clearly have a doctor's authorization on the label, so you only need to sign a form for these when you bring them in.

Non-prescription medicines (Tylenol, Dimetapp and Sudafed) require both signatures. Since it's so inconvenient to get a doctor's signature for each time you might want to use an over-the-counter relief medicine, a non-prescription medicine form for your doctor is included in your fall packet of enrollment forms. The non-prescription medicine form allows a pediatrician to give permission for specific products and specific symptoms for up to a year. This is not blanket

permission for us: *parents are always called* before any non-prescription medicine is given, unless you have specifically talked to teachers that morning about giving medicine. Please hand all medication directly to a teacher; they will secure it in locked medicine box.

Sunscreen and diapering creams can only be applied once a parent has signed a topical medication permission form.

### **Plan for Allergic Reactions**

Enclosed in your application packet will be a guideline for handling allergic reactions to known allergens. Please make the director aware of any allergy your child may have. Your emergency plan and the allergy will be posted on the refrigerator in your child's classroom. Your pediatrician can help you design a plan appropriate for your child.

### **Plan for Food Allergies**

When a child has a serious food allergy (i.e. where the child has been prescribed an EpiPen in case of accidental exposure to the allergen) we have a strategy with three levels of safeguards:

1. Policy: In an effort to create a safe environment for all students, nuts, including peanuts, other nut products are not permitted in the facility.
2. Monitoring of all lunches: Teachers will remove any foods that have visible nuts and children are not allowed to share food.
3. Physical separation: Allergic children eat at a designated table(s) that is several feet away from the lunch tables of the non-allergic children. This safeguard serves two purposes:
  - a. Ensures that *if* a nut enters the school by mistake (e.g. a visiting relative sends in PB&J in non-allergic child's lunch because they are unaware of the nut-free policy), and *if* this nut product is not immediately intercepted by a teacher, we still have a ~5 foot distance between the nut product and the allergic children.
  - b. Reduces errors for more complex sets of food allergies. Some of our children are allergic to multiple foods (e.g. dairy, wheat, shrimp, etc). We have fewer children per teacher at the food allergy table so that the teacher can focus on each child's individual health requirements.

In addition, we ask that parents of children with food allergies bring in safe treats that we can have on hand. We can freeze cupcakes. We would use these safe treats in situations where other children in the class were getting a treat that was brought in from home or a bakery. (All treats brought in by parents are asked to be nut-free, but there is always a chance for cross-contamination when items are prepared in homes or bakeries that contain nut products.)

### **Plan for Injury Prevention**

The center is monitored daily by the director and all teachers for safety. Safety inspections include classrooms, common areas, and outside areas. The director and office support staff are responsible for maintaining an injury log. Injuries are discussed weekly by classroom teams, and monthly at teacher meetings.

### **Procedures for Emergencies**

Teachers are trained in first aid and CPR; in the normal course of events, a little first aid and TLC handles most minor injuries.

If a life-threatening emergency ever developed here, or a serious accident requiring medical attention, we would call 911. A teacher would stay with the child, administering first aid if appropriate and as instructed by medical professionals. Whenever possible, a teacher would call on another teacher for assistance. The director or person in charge is also notified as soon as possible. The child's file is retrieved and the person in charge will now take charge of the emergency, after being briefed on what happened. The parent is called and a description of the situation is communicated as well as the hospital destination by ambulance. A teacher or the director would accompany your child in the ambulance to Newton-Wellesley Hospital, or to the hospital of your choice when the commute is within reason, and stay with your child until you arrived. The staff person who witnessed the situation would write an accident report.

In case of emergency while on a field trip, procedures are the same. However, if additional teachers are needed, they would be sent to support the group's return to school.

### **Procedures for Using and Maintaining First Aid Equipment**

All teachers are required to have verification of first aid training that must be updated every three years. In this training we are instructed how to use the first aid equipment. The equipment is maintained by regular inspections. First aid supplies are located in travel packs in each classroom. Extra supplies are located in the office on the top middle shelf on the front window wall. All teachers are also certified in CPR.

### **Procedures for Evacuation of Center in Case of Emergency**

Instructions for evacuation are posted at each exit. We practice our evacuation procedures monthly, and the dates are recorded in the fire drill log.

### **Meeting House Emergency Situation Plans**

In the unlikely event of an emergency situation at Meeting House, we have established the following contingency plans:

In the case of a fire, natural disaster, or situation necessitating evacuation of the building:

1. We will follow emergency evacuation plans and leave the building.
2. We will walk to Grafton House (abutting our parking lot) at 1301 Centre Street, (617) 964-6860.
3. We will take Field Trip Kits including first aid supplies and emergency contact phone lists. All parents will be called immediately.

In the event staff and children are required to leave the immediate area due to a non-confined Environmental Emergency (chemical spills, flood waters, etc.) both children and staff will be transported by walking, strollers, wagons or emergency vehicles, to the following: Mason Rice Elementary, 149 Pleasant Street, Newton Center or Newton North High School, 360 Lowell Street, Newtonville or Newton South High School, 140 Brandeis Road, Newton Center. Both high schools are Red Cross designated Centers. Meeting House is also listed in the Newton Special Population Database. Children will be cared for while parents/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements are made for their pick-up. At all times during the crisis teachers will remain with and care for the children. Teachers will maintain accurate attendance sheets and bring any necessary medication/supplies and emergency records. Parents will be notified of the situation and where to pick-up children as soon as possible.

### **Power outage or loss of heat**

- If the duration of the outage (according to NSTAR Outage Reporting Services at 1-800-592-2000) is likely to be less than two hours, the center will remain open.
- If the outage is likely to be greater than two hours (according to NSTAR), or if we determine that we will not be able to maintain room temperature at 65 degrees at 0 degrees Fahrenheit outside, we will cancel day care and call parents immediately.

### **Loss of water**

If the center experiences a loss of water, it is likely to be a problem that cannot be readily fixed, and the center will be unable to satisfactorily meet requirements for toileting, flushing of toilets, diapering, and hand washing. We will therefore cancel day care and contact parents immediately.

### **Emergency care of children if confined to building**

- All parents will be notified by phone. Until such time as all parents or emergency contact people can arrive, children will be engaged in appropriate activities.
- Extra supplies, such as gallons of water and snack food are located in the director's office in the basement.
- Extra clothing for children is located in the director's office in the basement.

At all times, the health and safety of the children will be the primary consideration. Until such time as parents or emergency contact people arrive, children will remain in the care of the center staff.

### **Oral Health/Tooth Brushing**

In January 2010, EEC issued new regulations for child care 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 regarding 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.

EEC licensed programs must comply with this regulation. If you do not want your child to brush his or her teeth at Meeting House, please fill out the Oral Health Non-Participation Form in the enrollment packet. A separate form must be filled out for each child in care and must be renewed annually.

All toddlers and preschoolers will need to bring in a toothbrush and their own labeled tube of tooth paste. Tooth paste will be stored out of reach of the children and tooth brushes will be kept in the children's lunch boxes.

## **Referrals for Specialized Services**

Like you, teachers watch children for signs of health and happiness every day. If they become concerned about a child's health or happiness, they check in with you first: Could your child be especially tired? Have an ear infection? Be worried about something special? Anything new going on? And you, we hope, will ask us similar questions if your child seems under par at home. If whatever-it-is does not seem to improve fairly quickly, you or teachers may ask the director to spend some time with the group observing the child more closely, looking for clues, and then meet with the director to brainstorm ideas for things to try.

If our efforts to improve health and happiness don't seem to be working or, sometimes, if we just find ourselves wondering "Should we be worried about this?" over any aspect of a child's growth, we call the Newton Early Childhood Office or the Brookline-Newton Early Childhood Collaborative. The city of Newton offers free, on-site consultation to the staff of child care centers for any developmental concern.

If a more formal assessment is recommended, the director meets with parents to discuss the next steps. Further assessment is usually free, covered by Chapter 766 for children 3 or older and by Early Intervention Programs for younger children. Assessment can often be arranged at the center. Information contained in your child's file is confidential. Should your child's record be subpoenaed, we would notify you immediately. Your written permission for any formal observation or assessment is required. We'll keep a record of observations and recommendations, and, as with anything in your child's file, you can have copies, add information, request deletion or amendment of information, add comments, etc. Transfer of records when a child is no longer in care is permitted upon parent's written request.

Children and families can often benefit from various kinds of extra expertise. Below is a list of experts, which is also kept in the office. You are welcome to it anytime. If you encounter a good resource for families you'd like to add to the list, even if it's just that you think your pediatrician is especially wonderful, please let the director know.

### **Referral Resources**

#### **Early Childhood Specialist**

- Newton Early Childhood Office, (617) 552-7709
- Riverside Early Intervention (0-3 years old) (781) 449-1884
- Brookline-Newton Early Childhood Collaborative (617) 552-7397
- Newton-Brookline Early Childhood Early Interventions, 3-5 (617) 552-7379

#### **Social Work**

- Newton Wellesley Psychotherapy Associate: (617) 964-2622

### **Occupational Therapy**

- OTA-Watertown: (617) 923-4410

### **Dental**

- Beth Israel Dental Practice: (617) 667-3301

### **Vision and Hearing**

- Mass. Eye and Ear: (617) 523-7900

### **Speech**

- Riverside Early Intervention (781) 449-1884

### **Dermatology**

- Newton-Wellesley Pediatrics (617) 965-6700

### **Pediatrics**

- Newton-Wellesley Pediatrics (617) 965-6700

### **Physical and Social Development**

- (617) 969-2200

## **Families' Rights**

### **EEC Required Information for Parents**

As a licensed group child care facility, we are required by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to inform our parents of the following regulations from 102 CMR 7.00:

### **Parent Involvement**

#### **7.05 (12) Parent Visits**

The licensee shall permit unannounced visits by parents to the center and their child's room, while their child is present.

#### **7.05 (13) Parent Input**

The licensee shall have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of the center policy and programs. The licensee shall provide an explanation to the parent(s) when a parent makes suggestions as to the program or policy of a center and the suggestions are not adopted by the licensee responding in writing.

#### **7.05 (14) Report to Parents**

The licensee shall, periodically, but at least every six months, prepare a written progress report to the participation of each child in the center's program. This report shall be maintained in the child's records. The licensee shall provide a copy of each report to the parent(s) or meet with them at least every six months to discuss their child's activities and participation in the center. In addition:

- (a) for infants and children with disabilities, the licensee shall complete a written progress report of the child's development every three months, and provide it to the parent(s).
- (b) the licensee shall bring special problems or significant developments, particularly as they regard infants, to the parent's attention as soon as they arise.

### **Records and Confidentiality**

#### **7.05 (19) Confidentiality and Distribution of Records**

Information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. The licensee shall not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly to implementing the program for the child without written consent of the child's parent(s). The licensee shall notify the parent(s) if a child's record is subpoenaed.

The child's parent(s) shall upon request, have access to his child's record at reasonable times. In no event shall such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without consent of the child's parent(s). Upon such request for access, the child's entire record, regardless of the physical location of its part, shall be made available. The licensee shall establish procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of such information; and shall maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating and persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released. Each person disseminating or releasing information contained in a child's record, in whole or in part, shall upon each instance of dissemination or release,

enter into a log the following: his name, signature, position, the date, the portions of the record which were disseminated or released, the purpose of such dissemination or release, and the signature of the person to whom the information is disseminated or released. Such a log shall be available only to the child's parent(s) and center personnel responsible for record maintenance.

#### **7.05 (20) Charge for copies**

The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in the child's record.

#### **7.05 (21) Amending the Child's Record**

- (a) A child's parents(s) shall have the right to add, deletion or amendment of any information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record;
- (b) A child's parent(s) shall have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:
  - 1) if such parent(s) is of the opinion that adding information is sufficient to explain, clarify, or correct objectionable material in the child's record, he shall have the right to have a conference with the licensee to make his objections known;
  - 2) the licensee shall, within one week after the conference, render to such parent(s) a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the parent(s), he shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

#### **7.05 (22) Transfer of Records**

Upon written request of the parent(s), the licensee shall transfer the child's record to the parent(s), or any other person the parent(s) identifies, when the child is no longer in care.

#### **7.05 (23)**

The licensee shall notify the parent(s) in writing of the provisions of 7.05 (19) through 7.05 (24) at the time of the child's admission to the center and thereafter, in writing, at least once a year.

#### **7.05 (24) Availability of the information to the Office**

Notwithstanding 102 CMR 7.05 (19), upon request of an employee authorized by the Commissioner and involved in the regulatory process, the licensee shall make available to the Office any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirement of these regulation. Authorized employees of the Office shall not remove identifying case material from the center's premises and shall the confidentiality of the individual records.

#### **7.07 (6) Meeting with Parents**

The licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee shall meet with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the center.

- (a) At the meeting, the licensee shall provide to the parent(s) the center's written statements of purpose, services, procedures for parent conferences, visits and input to the center policy; procedures relating to children's record; and procedures for providing emergency health care.

(b) The licensee shall provide the opportunity parent(s) to visit the center's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child.

In addition, Section 7.03 (23) requires all licensees to have a copy of the regulations on the premises of the center and the regulations shall be made available to any person upon request.

## **Special Policies**

### **Research policy**

From time to time, local psychologists or educators and their students request permission to conduct research at Meeting House. Before seeking parents' permission, the director reviews the request and consults teachers: Would the project be interesting to children? Would it disrupt the regular activities much? If staff members agree that the project will be a "plus" overall, then a description of the research project and a permission form is put in your mail envelope. You should always feel free to say "no."

### **Suspension and Termination Policy**

A child's enrollment at Meeting House may be suspended or terminated for nonpayment of fees, or for disruptive or dangerous behavior towards other children or staff by a child or by parents. The director, in consultation with the Governing Board, is responsible for deciding whether suspension or termination is necessary.

### **Non-payment of Fees**

Before suspending or terminating enrollment for non-payment of fees, the director will notify the family, and meet with them if possible to establish a schedule of payments in writing. Failure to respond to notification may result in suspension if payments are more than two weeks overdue; failure to respond to notification may result in termination if payments are more than three weeks overdue. Failure to meet the schedule of payments agreed on in a meeting with the director will result in termination.

### **Disruptive or dangerous behavior by a child**

Before suspending or terminating enrollment for disruptive or dangerous behavior towards other children or staff by a child, the staff at Meeting House would normally follow the steps outlined in the referral policy section of this handbook. These steps would normally allow 3 months between seeking permission for staff consultation and a follow-up meeting with parents. Failure to respond to notification may result in suspension after two weeks. Failure to cooperate with a referral plan constitutes grounds for termination.

### **Disruptive or dangerous behavior by a parent; extremely disruptive or dangerous behavior by a child**

In the case of disruptive or dangerous behavior toward other children or staff by a parent or in the case of extremely disruptive or dangerous behavior by a child, the center reserves the right to suspend admittance immediately until further steps can be taken.

### **Termination procedure**

Should termination become necessary for any reason, parents will be notified of the reasons for termination in writing, and in person when possible. A copy of the termination letter will be kept in the child's record. The director will inform parents of the availability of information and referral for other services through the Child Care Resource Center and the Newton Early Childhood Office. Enrollment will be terminated not less than two weeks after written notification.

When enrollment is terminated for any reason, the child will be prepared for leaving in a manner

consistent with the child's ability to understand. For toddlers and preschoolers, this will usually involve a good-bye party and several conversations about leaving with the child. Teachers will explain the departure to other children in a positive and respectful way; for example "He will be going to a new school that can help him more." If a child's departure is too sudden for good-bye parties and conversations, one of the child's teachers will write a note of good-bye addressed to the child.

## **Policy for Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

Staff members report suspicion of child abuse or neglect by any adult to the director. Teachers may review, alone or with the director, the typical signs of abuse and neglect given in the Health In Day Care notebook on the office bookshelf. The director or teacher may also call the Newton Abuse number (617) 965-2607, the Department of Social Services Arlington Office (781) 643-4737, or the 24-hour Child at Risk Hotline (800) 792-5200, describe the concerning signs and discuss the reporting decision before giving names. The director will report suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

If an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a staff member, or against another adult while a child is in the care of the center or during a program-related activity, the director will file a 51A report with the Department of Social Services and notify the Office of Child Care Services. The director will notify the Office for Child Care Services immediately after learning that a 51A report has been filed by another person.

The director will cooperate fully in all investigations of abuse and neglect. If the Office of Child Care Services seeks information from current parents or previously enrolled parents or any specific agency about a staff person, the director will identify such resources for the investigation, provide consent for disclosure, and allow the Office to disclose information to any person or agency deemed necessary for prompt investigation.

If an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a staff member, that staff member will not work directly with children until the Department of Social Services investigation is completed, and for any further time the Office for Child Care Services may require.

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