



Family Handbook



# Family Handbook

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Vision Statement

Our early childhood center is a diverse community of families and educators that inspires our children to be confident individuals, community-minded citizens, and life-long learners.

### Brief History and Description

The Children's Place at the Plaza (The Children's Place) was established in 1979 primarily to serve children of New York State employees. The Center has two locations:

- a. On the Empire State Plaza, and
- b. in the Swan Street Building.

Pierce Hall was established in 1979 as a parent cooperative, with a commitment to provide loving, nurturing, child-centered day care to a culturally and economically diverse community of families who value non-violent and non-sexist principles. Originally located at the downtown SUNY campus, the center relocated in 1996 to Madison Avenue. Pierce Hall eventually merged with The Children's Place in 2003.

Children's Corner Day Care Center was established in 1990 to provide quality child care for the employees of New York State's Education Department, Legislature and various NYS Executive agencies.

The merger of these three centers provides the opportunity for all programs to continue to grow and offer a quality early care and learning alternative. The Children's Place at the Plaza, as it is now known, looks forward to having the opportunity to be a part of your child's learning experience.

The Children's Place is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and complies with its rules and regulations. The Center is inspected on a regular basis by the Fire Department, Department of Health, OCFS, and other regulating authorities. The Center's license to operate is posted inside each location's main office.

In addition, we make an effort to implement the guidance of the State Education Department, as well as the recommendations of leading experts in early care and learning.

## **Board of Directors**

The Children's Place is a non-profit corporation, operating in accordance with a set of by-laws. The governing body is the Board of Directors. The list of current Board members is posted on the Center's website.

Parent participation on the Board and committees is essential for maintaining and developing the Center's operation. The standing committees are mandated by the by-laws. In addition, special committees are often formed to facilitate specific projects or events. If you would like more information or would like to become a member of the Board, please contact the Center Director or a board member for more information.

## **Center Philosophy**

The goal of The Children's Place is to provide a safe, stimulating, and loving atmosphere in which children can grow and learn at their own pace.

Our nurturing environment helps children learn to express themselves, develop curiosity, and become independent and self-disciplined.

We believe that *how* children learn is as important as *what* they learn.

We teach values by living them. We actively affirm each child's sense of self and unique cultural heritage, and demonstrate acceptance and respect of others.

We offer our children a multicultural, multiracial educational experience. We make every effort to use books and role models that portray men and women of all ethnic groups and in a variety of roles.

We teach consideration by being considerate of children and each other. We teach gentleness by treating the children gently. We teach respect for nature by caring for plants, flowers, and animals. We teach respect for others' property by respecting the children's property. We teach the value of love by loving the children.

We teach non-violence by offering our children problem solving strategies. Toy weapons and violent play are not permitted.

We give each child the opportunity to be a unique and special individual

## **Ages Served**

- 6 weeks to 5 years
- Kindergarteners -12 years; school-age programs

## **Hours of Operation**

- Children's Place at State Ed: 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Children's Place at the Plaza: 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

## **Admissions Requirements**

Children must be between six weeks and twelve years of age to enter the Center. They must be up to date with required vaccinations and in good health as verified by a physician's medical form and vaccination list. This form is required upon admittance and annually thereafter. Priority for admission is given

to children of New York State employees and to siblings of children currently enrolled in the Center. The Center only accepts full-time, and in certain circumstances part-time tuition payments.

Parents are encouraged to visit the Center prior to their child's enrollment and to visit the classroom with their child once or twice before starting full-time in order to facilitate the transition for the child and family, and set the stage for a enjoyable experience.

The Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

## **Parking**

Children's Place at State Ed: Parking for the purposes of dropping off and picking up children at the main Center is located at metered spots located on the west side of Hawk Street.

Children's Place at the Plaza: Parking for the purposes of dropping off and picking up is located outside the Swan Street Building. Parking is also available in the spaces labeled *twenty-minute visitor parking*. Spaces labeled *reserved* are only for New York State employees who pay for these spaces. They are not to be used at any time during the workday. In addition, families in the Crystal room may use the metered parking on Madison Avenue.

## **PROGRAM**

### **Curriculum**

The Center implements The Creative Curriculum in each classroom. The Creative Curriculum is a developmentally appropriate program that promotes children's social-emotional development and learning in the core areas of literacy, math, science, and social studies. The learning objectives of this program are aligned with the New York State early learning objectives for Pre-Kindergarten. Individual goals and objectives are determined for each child based on observations by the classroom teachers. Developmental assessments are completed twice a year and parent-teacher conferences are offered at these times.

There are four age units in the center. The Infant Unit is for children from 6 weeks to 18 months old. The Toddler Unit is for children from 18 months to approximately 3 years. The preschool program serves children from 3-5 years. Each classroom is staffed by a head teacher and an assistant teacher. The School Age Program serves children ages five to twelve years and is available during most school breaks and summer. Children are transitioned into each classroom on the basis of several criteria including age, developmental skills and space availability.

Infant schedules are determined by the needs and development of the children enrolled. As The Creative Curriculum requires, each infant's routine for eating

and sleeping is determined by his/her individual needs rather than the needs of the group. This routine is the vehicle with which social-emotional development will be achieved. Infants are exposed to a variety of activities and experiences that allow them to actively explore their environment. Developmentally appropriate language is used extensively as this is essential for infants to learn about their world. All infant rooms are Freedom of Movement certified. This means that infants are free to develop naturally develop at their own pace without the use of equipment such as swings and bouncy seats.

Our toddler rooms focus on the premise that toddlers are active learners. They are constantly exploring the world around them; touching, feeling, and tasting. With this in mind we provide opportunities for child initiated activities that provide plenty of time for play and exploration. We know that toddlers at one moment "want to do it themselves" and at other moments want to be cuddled and hugged. Both are strongly encouraged.

Preschool children learn through play. Our children learn through experimentation, observation and exploration as we provide a hands-on environment. The preschool rooms are arranged into learning centers including but not limited to: dramatic play, creative art, manipulatives, blocks, library, woodworking, sand/water play and writing.

The school-aged program allows children to explore their individual interests. Each week has its own interesting and age-appropriate theme and includes local field trips and excursions.

All classrooms visit the local library, parks and museum on a regular basis. It is also important to note that all classrooms go outdoors in all types of weather (except when it is below 20 degrees or heavy rain). It is our goal to provide a well balanced program that provides opportunities for both active and quiet play and learning, as well as individual and group activities.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Parents must accompany their child into the classroom and sign the child in each day. When leaving, they must also sign them out on the appropriate form. Parents should assist their child with their outer clothing and make sure that the child is comfortably settled into the classroom and under the care of a staff member before leaving. It is highly recommended that information is shared about the night before as it may affect their child's behavior during the day.

Saying goodbye can be difficult for both the child and family. It is best to say goodbye to your child and let them know when you will be back (ex. after snack, after nap, before story-time). Children are learning to build trust and need to know you are leaving, so we ask that you never sneak out without saying goodbye. The teachers will help you with this transition and please know you can always ask for help if needed. Also, if you would like, the teachers can call you later in the day and let you know how your child is doing.

Children will only be released to individuals who have been authorized for pick up as indicated on the release form. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Custodial parents or legal guardians can make changes to this form at anytime. Staff will ask for proof of identification (picture ID only) if they do not personally know the authorized individual. Security codes are not to be given to anyone, including people who are authorized to pick up the child. Additionally parents should not open the door to anyone.

The closing times for both locations are listed below. Parents are asked to arrive prior to this time and to leave by closing time. As children who are waiting for late parents often become upset, it is best for the child if the parents arrive before closing:

- Children's Place at State Ed.: 6:00 p.m.
- Children's Place at the Plaza: 5:30 p.m.
- The Crystal Room: 5:30 p.m.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

During inclement weather, the Board of Directors will determine if the center should delay opening or close for the day. The Board will consider the status of Albany City School District and National Weather Service Advisories when making this determination.

Announcements will be made on local television and radio under closings/delays. Stations will list both locations. When the Center delays opening, we will open at 9am and breakfast will not be served, so please make sure that children eat at home. If the Center closes early due to weather, parents will be contacted by phone. Please ensure that the Center has an up-to-date phone number where you can be reached.

### **Classroom Transitions**

Children are moved from one age group to the next when they are chronologically and developmentally ready. Parents are contacted when a child is considered ready to move to discuss the transition. The child is provided opportunities to visit the new classroom and to interact with the children and staff of the new room prior to the actual move. A formal transition period of one week (unless there is the need for more time) will be planned to allow the child time to adapt to the new children, staff, and classroom. In addition, a conference may be scheduled with the parents and the involved staff.

### **Staff**

The Center recruits well-trained, professional staff, who desire to work with children and their families. We support employees' growth both professionally and personally. The Center provides professional development and staff trainings to maintain our high-quality environment.



Each class is directed by a Lead Teacher and a full-time Assistant Teacher. In addition, there is a floater who moves among the classrooms on a daily basis as necessary. Part-time college students studying Early Childhood Education at local colleges may also be present in the classrooms from time to time. As full-time staff departs for the day (in half-hour intervals) they are replaced by afternoon staff who continue the children's day. All teaching staff is supervised by Program or Site Directors, an Assistant Director, and the Executive Director.

The Center is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, gender, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. Staff is selected on the basis of their educational certification in early childhood education, experience with young children, personal philosophies on early childhood education and their ability to provide warm, nurturing care to children and their families.

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) requires that all head teachers must have at least an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood or a Child Development Associate credential with two years experience. All assistants must have at least a high school diploma or extensive early childhood education experience. Staff is selected not only for their Early Childhood backgrounds, but also for personal qualities that will help promote a caring environment for the children. All staff is screened through OCFS Central Registry of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

## **Staff Development**

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) requires that all directors and staff complete at least 30 hours of professional training every two years. In addition, staff are required to attend regularly scheduled meetings, periodic in-house trainings, and various professional conferences.

## **Clothing**

Please be sure that your child's clothing is comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing. Clothing should be marked with the child's name and be appropriate for messy and/or active play (paint smocks are provided).

When the weather is cold, all children should have mittens, hats and a jacket to layer over clothes. Parents must provide snow pants and boots for children to play in the snow. Remember that boots become very warm if worn all day, so please provide alternate shoes for indoors. When it rains, please provide boots and a raincoat. If your child wears dresses or jumpers with tights, please provide extra pants to cover their legs.

Sneakers must be provided for safe, active outdoor play (jelly shoes and sandals do not provide necessary protection and are discouraged). The wearing of jewelry, chains and earrings is also strongly discouraged. The Center is not responsible if any such items become lost or damaged.

Please keep a complete extra outfit in your child's cubby, including spare socks and underwear. Remember to change the extra clothes when the seasons change.

## **Meals**

Older infants, toddlers and preschoolers are served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Breakfast is intended for children who arrive before 9:00A.M. Please plan on feeding your child breakfast at home if you will be arriving later than 9:00A.M.

Meals are prepared on site and are served family style. Staff members eat with the children seated together around the table with all meal components in the center. This time is used to extend language experiences, model good manners, and create a relaxed atmosphere. Your child will be encouraged to serve him/herself and to try each food component that is being offered. Parents are always invited to join the children during lunchtime.

The Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program as administered by the Division of Nutrition of the New York State Department of Health. The menus are prepared using a four-week cycle. Be sure to check out the healthy choices posted in the main hallway and classrooms.

## **Food Policy**

Each day the Children's Place provides meals for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack that are prepared on the premises and that meet Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutritional guidelines.

CACFP guidelines ensure that infants between the ages of twelve months and eighteen months, toddlers and preschoolers receive balanced meals that include the following food components:

- Milk (whole milk for infants and toddlers, 1% milk for preschoolers)
- Fresh fruit or 100% juice and/or vegetable
- Whole grain
- Meat or meat alternative

CACFP guidelines ensure that infants between the ages of six weeks and twelve months receive balanced meals that include the following food components:

- Breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
- Fruit and/or vegetable (introduced at four months to seven months)
- Iron-fortified infant cereal or bread/cracker product (introduced at four months to seven months)
- Meat or meat alternative (introduced at eight months to twelve months)

The Center offers Parent's Choice formula to infants aged six weeks to twelve months. You may use the *Statement Regarding Child Meal Program* form in your



enrollment package to accept the Center's offer or to decline it and provide your own brand of formula/breast milk.

## **Food Allergies**

Our center has a no-nut policy to protect the safety of children with severe allergies. Parents should be mindful of this policy when bringing food into the center. Many packaged foods, such as granola bars or doughnuts, are prepared alongside products that contain nuts in processing plants and are not permitted in the center.

If your child has allergies please provide documentation from your family's physician. Once documentation has been provided the center may prepare meal substitutes for your child.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very special days in the life of a young child and families are certainly welcome to celebrate this special day at the Center with their child. We ask that parents please limit the celebration to cake, cupcakes, or fruit to share with friends at snack time. For such special occasions, review our food policy before making any purchases. All food must be purchased at a store or bakery and must include a complete list of ingredients. Please be advised that the Center does not allow any homemade food for special occasions, any food containing nuts, or food that does not have a list of ingredients clearly marked. Candy may not be served in the center at any time. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher if you wish to share food with other children for birthdays or holidays.

## **Naptime**

The OCFS requires that the Center provide a nap or quiet period when a child can lie down to rest (ours is approximately 1-3pm). We do our best to make naptime a relaxing time so that children may fall asleep if needed. Please know that if your child does not fall asleep, they will be given the opportunity to look at books, listen to music or play quietly. The infant room is the exception since children are on their own schedule for napping.

Each child is provided with a cot or crib. Parents are asked to provide a small blanket for their child, a sheet and a snuggly if desired. Each Friday, bedding is to be taken home for laundering and returned the following Monday.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips and walks are considered an important part of the educational program. Periodically the toddlers and preschoolers will leave the building to attend a concert at the Egg or go on another type of excursion. Please know that on any occasion that the children will travel by bus you will receive advance notice and will be asked to sign a separate permission slip. Each child must have written permission of his/her parent or guardian prior to participating

in the activity. Permission slips will clearly indicate the location, date, and method of transportation being used. No child will be allowed to attend a field trip without written permission. We also strongly encourage parents to join us to learn and have fun with the classroom and also to provide extra supervision.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES**

### **Free and Open Communication**

Our program is based on developmentally appropriate practices and continued family support & engagement that is critical to the provision of quality early care and learning. We consider parents to be valuable partners and a great resource to the Center. Families are encouraged to provide any information about their child and family to enable staff to build on their individual family experience to address both the unique needs and interests of each child.

We believe that regular communication between staff and families helps to build trust and enhance comfort levels for our families and staff. Staff members will communicate with families on a daily basis in writing and/or verbally. Other ways we share information include: bulletin boards located just inside the front entrances with information specific to the individual center as well as general community events, classroom bulletin boards, memos and daily reports. It is our desire to promote an atmosphere of open communication; please feel free to share your thoughts and concerns with us!

Be sure to visit our website at <http://childrensplaceattheplaza.org/> and sign up to receive important Center updates.

### **Parent Engagement**

Family social events are an important part of the Center. Events are held periodically in order to promote parental involvement. During these times information is freely exchanged about the Center, any upcoming events, ways that families can help the Center, parenting concerns, etc. The meetings are held at lunch time and everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

### **Conferences**

At various times throughout your children's enrollment in the center including transitions from one classroom to another and the completion of an assessment, you will have the option of attending a conference with your child's teacher. These conferences allow families the opportunity to discuss their child's development on an individual basis.

### **Open-door Policy**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit and observe their child at any time throughout the day and to join in the activities of the classroom. We believe that parent visits enhance the program by promoting communication and continuity between the Center and the home. To ensure the safety of the

children however, we do not permit other visitors such as family and friends, without prior consent from the parents concerned. If approved to visit, we will also require proper identification.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

The goal of The Children's Place is to create a safe and nurturing environment for our children.

Discipline involves guiding a child to treat themselves and others with respect. We believe that the purpose of discipline is to assist a child in developing the social skills needed to successfully function in a diverse setting. Our goal is to help children develop respect for themselves and others.

We attempt to minimize the need for discipline by listening to the children, observing behaviors and setting up activities in ways that will encourage participation and cooperation. We use consistency and positive reinforcement. Appropriate limits are set for the children and when possible the children are given the chance to make their own choices. All guidance is phrased positively and disapproval always focuses on the behavior, not the child.

Our teachers encourage and assist the children in working out problems with their peers by discussing the issue with them in appropriate language, verbalizing their feelings if possible and resolving the problem together. Children who are in the stage of developing early social skills will need more assistance than those whose skills are further developed in this area. A teacher will intervene immediately in all cases where there may be danger of a child being hurt. Where appropriate, the children involved will be offered suitable ways to handle the situation.

We do not equate discipline with punishment. When we discipline we are trying to teach, not punish. We will not use any type of corporal punishment or speak to a child in a degrading manner. A child is never bad, his/her actions may be inappropriate, but the child is NEVER referred to as a bad boy/girl.

## **Supplies Provided By Families**

Families are required to provide diapers, wipes, diaper cream, and sunscreen for their child as needed. Each child should also bring a blanket for napping which should be laundered weekly by the parent. Additionally, toddler and preschool children brush their teeth regularly and thus a toothbrush and toothpaste is also required.

Teachers will, at times, circulate a "wish list" of various items for each classroom. Families are under no obligation to supply items from the "wish list" but donations are gratefully accepted.

## **Toys**

Please allow the children to share the wide variety of communal toys available at the center by leaving your child's personal toys home. If a child does bring in a toy from home, staff cannot be responsible for those items. A stuffed animal or book/cd from home is welcomed to help ease transition to naptime. Action figures, toy guns, swords, or weapons of any kind are not allowed at the Center. Part of the Center's philosophy is to help children be responsible for themselves, their behavior and their property. When you pick up your child, please be certain to allow them time to put away the toys or materials they are working with. This will help your child learn that returning things to their appropriate place is important.

## **Photographs and Publicity**

Upon enrolling, you will be asked to sign a permission slip to allow center staff to take pictures of your child to be used for the website, social media, and the promotion of the Center and New York State partners.

## **Rights of Non-Custodial Parents**

In the interest of the child, we will do what we can in order to provide both parents with communication about their child. We are happy to provide duplicate notices, and if requested, will set up two separate conferences.

Parents must provide a copy of any legal document regarding custody arrangements for the child. We will only be able to support what is in a court ordered document. Both parents will be allowed to visit and pick-up unless otherwise is specified in a court order.

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **Health Policies**

Health policies are established and maintained to ensure a healthy, safe environment for the children and staff. Please be aware that children who are in group settings are exposed to more illnesses. Depending on your child's immunity, he/she may also be more susceptible. To minimize exposure and the spread of illness, please respect these policies. Staff will take all precautions possible, but we count on parents to do their part. Please call the Center and advise us of any illness or absence due to illness.

## **Medical Examination and Forms**

As a licensed day care facility, the Center follows policies established by the Office of Children and Family Services and the New York State Department of Health. The Center is required to report all outbreaks of contagious illnesses to the Health Department. The Health Department, in certain instances, will make their own regulations with which the Center must comply (such as closing a room or requiring certain tests be conducted).

All parents **must** provide and annually update the Center with the following:

- A medical examination form as detailed in above (admission requirements). A completed blue card listing the work and home phone numbers of at least one other person to contact in case of an emergency and the name and phone number of each child's physician. If changes occur please let the staff/director know immediately.
- A signed medical permission form for emergency treatment to be used in the event that a parent cannot be reached.
- A list of any agent which may cause an allergic reaction in your child (i.e. bee stings or certain foods). A doctor's note for treatment will be kept in each child's file.
- If medication is necessary, it must always be available for your child at the Center.

## **Medication**

New York State Office of Children and Family Services regulations state: "Children will not be administered any medication, prescription or otherwise, except upon the written order from a physician." No exceptions will be made (Medication Consent forms are available in the office).

Medication must be in its original container including the pharmacy label, carefully labeled with the child's name, and safely and properly stored. It is best if the parent administers medication to his/her child. If this is not possible, the Center must have the written permission of the child's physician and parent on the authorized Medication Consent form. As stated above, this completed form must be on file at the Center before any medication can be administered.

## **Illness**

It is best to keep your child home when he/she is feeling ill. Please make necessary arrangements for alternate care far in advance. Please contact the Center if your child is not planning to attend due to illness.

Please also be advised that it is not uncommon for children entering a group care situation for the first time to experience a period of increased illness while they build up immunities. We ask that you be aware of this possibility and prepare for it.

Sick children and children with a temperature constituting a fever will not be accepted at the Center. Parents should advise teachers if the child "seemed off" during the night or has been exposed to a communicable disease. The family medical practitioner should be told that the child is in a childcare center to help determine when he/she may return after a communicable illness. Parents will be notified if their child is exposed to a communicable illness while at the Center.

If your child becomes ill, he/she will be removed from the classroom and you will be called. Please come promptly. Parents are expected to get their child within

a reasonable period of time, generally not longer than 30 minutes, following notification from the Center.

## Accidents

In the case of an accident at the Center, first aid will be administered by the Center personnel (if necessary, 911 will be called). An Accident Report will be filled out and filed by the teacher in charge at the time of the accident. The report will explain what happened, how the injury was attended to and how your child responded. A copy of the report will be placed in your child's cubby for you to sign. A copy will be kept on file and you will receive a copy to keep. In the case of a severe accident or injury, you will be contacted immediately. **Please be certain that current emergency contact numbers are on file with the Center at all times.**

## Health Guidelines

The activities at the Center are busy, and would not be enjoyed by a sick or recuperating child since provisions are not made for a modified routine. If your child cannot participate in an "active childcare day," including going outside when everyone else does, he/she should be at home. Please wait until your child has fully recuperated before returning to daycare. The Director reserves the option of requiring a written note from your physician after any illness. In order to keep illnesses at a minimum, the Center requests that any child exhibiting the conditions noted in the table below should remain home until they are no longer ill.

Illness	Symptoms/Notes
Severe Colds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With thick nasal drainage (sometimes yellow or green).</li> </ul>
Fever (Temperature of 101 degrees F or higher)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running a fever the evening before attending childcare, they should remain home.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ If temperature is "normal" only with Tylenol, your child is still contagious.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If your child runs a fever while at childcare, you will be contacted to pick him/her up from the center.</li> <li>• If your child has been sent home from childcare with a fever, he/she may not return to the Center the next day. <b>Your child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.</b></li> </ul>
Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toddlers and older children who have two diarrhea stools in 24 hours or who refuse fluids generally have infectious diarrhea and should be kept home.</li> <li>• Please do not bring your child to childcare until bowel movements are normal and fluid intake is good.</li> <li>• If diarrhea occurs at the Center two or more times, it will be cause to send your child home.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children must be diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to the Center.</li> <li>• Exclusion may include diarrhea associated with diet changes or antibiotic use.</li> </ul>
Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting once in the preceding twenty-four hours should be kept home.</li> <li>• Child should be able to tolerate a regular diet during the day.</li> <li>• If vomiting occurs at the Center, it will be cause to send your child home.</li> <li>• A child may not return to childcare for 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting.</li> </ul>
Upper Respiratory Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profuse nasal discharge, recurrent sneezing and/or cough, listlessness, fever, and inability to keep up with the day's activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Asthma related problems are excluded from this.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The above symptoms should be presumed to mean acute infectious illness; your child should be kept home.</li> </ul>
Undiagnosed Rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unless specifically diagnosed by your doctor as non-contagious, the Center will send home any child who has, or develops a rash during the day.</li> </ul>
Head lice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No-nit policy: you are encouraged to do your part at home with routine screening, early detection, accurate identification and thorough removal of lice.</li> <li>• If you suspect your child may have head lice you should keep him or her home.</li> </ul>
Bacterial infections (including strep throat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child may return to the Center after 24 hours of antibiotic therapy.</li> </ul>

## Diaper Changing and Toileting

Sanitary measures are utilized to prevent health risks to both children and staff. These include the staff's use of disposable gloves while diapering and thorough washing of hands after they have been removed. When diapering your child at the Center, we ask that you please follow the same procedures.

## Hand Washing

The first line of defense against infectious disease is proper hand washing. The staff at the Center are instructed in the techniques of proper hand washing

which helps the children learn the proper way to wash their hands as well. Hands are washed before entering the classroom, before and after meals/snacks, after every diaper change or use of the toilet, after contact with nasal/mouth secretions, and other times as deemed appropriate.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Fire Drills and Evacuation Drills**

Monthly fire drills are conducted by the NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control. In addition, emergency evacuations will be conducted at least twice a year.

Our evacuation procedures are as follows:

- The Children's Place at the Plaza-Main Building: We will proceed through the lobby of the Core II (DMV) building on to South Swan Street and walk to the Legislative Office Building. In the event of an emergency situation that prevents us from returning to the day care, you will be contacted to pick up your child at the LOB on the State Street Entrance. Please bring a photo ID to present to the guard for access to the LOB.
- The Children's Place at the Plaza-Crystal Room: We will exit the crystal room to the Plaza and walk to Madison Ave. We will enter the Concourse from Madison Ave. at the underpass across the street from the NYS Museum. In the event of an emergency situation that prevents us from returning to the day care, you will be contacted to pick up your child on the far end of the South Concourse.
- The Children's Place at State Ed.: The dedicated area for fire drills is the corner of Washington Avenue and N. Hawk Street. In the event of an emergency situation that prevents us from returning to the day care, you will be contacted to pick up your child at the CSEA Union Building on Washington Ave.

## **FISCAL POLICIES**

### **Pre-Enrollment Fees**

Upon acceptance, a \$25.00 non-refundable registration fee, per child, is required. This fee is not applicable to the deposit or tuition requirement.

Upon acceptance, a deposit equal to two weeks tuition will also be required. For subsidized families a deposit of one week's tuition is required. This deposit will be held interest free and will be applied to the final two weeks of the child's attendance with the required two-week notice. Please understand without the two-week notice, the deposit will be forfeited. One half of the deposit may be paid in four equal installments over the first four weeks of the child's attendance.

## **Tuition Fees/Late Fees**

Tuition is charged on Friday for the following two weeks and is due by the following Friday at the close of business. Any tuition received after Friday may be charged a late fee of \$25.00. We do not accept cash payments over \$25.00. Payments can be made by checks, money orders or automatic transfers through SEFCU.

If tuition has not been paid by the Friday of the first week of service, then child care services may be denied the following Monday. Any deposit paid will be forfeited and the Center will continue to seek payment for any outstanding fees owed.

It is preferable that tuition be paid in the form of a check. However, if you need to pay in cash, you must deliver the tuition to an office staff member and secure a signed receipt (cash payments over \$25.00 are not accepted). In the event of a billing disagreement, no credit will be provided without a signed receipt.

All tuition payments should be placed in the locked box that is attached to the office door. There are no tuition credits for vacations, illnesses or holidays.

## **Returned Checks**

A \$20.00 penalty will be charged for all returned checks. This fee will be billed at the time of the occurrence.

## **Sibling Discount**

There is a 10% reduction in tuition for families who have more than one child enrolled in the Center. The tuition reduction will be taken off the oldest child's tuition. This discount will continue as long as more than one child is enrolled at the Center.

## **Late Pick-up Fees**

If you arrive after closing time you will be charged \$1.00 for each minute that you are late. You will also be asked to sign a late pick-up form. The fee will be billed with your next tuition invoice. In the event a child is not picked up 30 minutes after closing time and no emergency contacts are available, the Center reserves the right to contact the Police Department. Closing times are as follows:

- Children's Place at the Plaza: 5:30pm
- Children's Place at State Ed.: 6:00pm

## **Fund Raising**

Several times a year the Center organizes fund raising events to support the curriculum. The Parent Committee currently raises funds to enhance the children's cultural and educational experiences. If you would like to participate in the organization of any of these events, please contact the Director or any board member.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

Withdrawal from the Center requires written notification no less than two weeks prior to the intended date of departure. This allows the Center time to fill the vacancy. Failure to submit your notice within the required amount of time will result in the loss of your two-week tuition deposit.

It is our goal to try and meet the special needs of all the children enrolled at the Center. If needed, we will conference with you, make recommendations and help you obtain outside resources. However, there are times when our program may not be the best situation for a particular child or their family. In the event that this occurs, we do reserve the right to ask you to withdraw from the Center. We will however, make every attempt to refer you and your child to a program more suited to meeting your family's particular needs.

## **DISENROLLMENT**

The Center reserves the right to disenrollment a child. Parents will be given written warning and notification prior to disenrollment when possible. Grounds for disenrollment may include, but are not limited to:

- unpaid tuition for more than two weeks
- three or more bounced checks within a six month period
- chronic lateness in picking up a child after the Center closing time
- parent behavior that is abusive (verbally and/or physically abusive) or detrimental to the program or well-being of children or staff
- after all attempts have been made to improve the situation, persistent child behavior that is abusive or detrimental to the program or well-being of other children or staff
- parent refusal to meet with staff
- the necessity of administering medical treatment for which staff is not trained
- care exceeding staffing ratio abilities

Any remaining tuition deposit, after all financial obligations are met, will be refunded. The above situations are provided for guidance only. Any circumstances which threaten the health and safety of children, parents or staff may result in immediate disenrollment.

## **Emergency Procedures due to Pandemic or Catastrophic Health Emergency**

*(updated June 27, 2020)*

Children's Place at the Plaza/ Children's Place at State Ed/ Crystal Room (here in after referred to as the center) will implement the Pandemic Section of the Parent Handbook under the guidance and direction of the program administration, local licensing agency, federal, state and local governmental agencies. To ensure the safety of children, families and staff, the center will monitor the situation and take into account the guidance and suggestions from the aforementioned authorities. Decisions made by the center will consider the safety of children, families and staff. Program changes may include:

### **Unplanned Center Closures**

On occasion, we may need to close due to circumstances beyond our control and without much warning. During these situations, we must strive to ensure the financial sustainability of the center, as well as work as creatively as possible to provide care and support to our families and staff.

#### **Remote Learning Opportunities During Closure (if staff remain employed):**

- Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with families and children.
- Online platforms (such as Facebook, Zoom, Google Hangouts, apps like ClassDojo and Brightwheel) will be utilized for activities, sing along and story time.
- Phone calls, emails and newsletters will be sent regularly from teachers and administrators.

#### **Changes When Program is Reopening:**

When the program reopens, all required protocol mandated by the local licensing agency, federal, state and local governmental agencies will be initiated. Some examples of practices that may be implemented are:

- Temporary reduction of program hours: hours will be based upon staff availability and parent need. Reduced hours may also be considered to provide staff with enough time for extra cleaning and program planning.
- Enhanced health screenings and temperature checks upon arrival.
- Stricter child exclusions for signs of illness.
- Limitation of family members in the building: Rest assured, you will always have access to your children, but in an effort to reduce the number of people coming into the building we have amended our drop off/pick up policy. Please note, if you do enter the building, you will be required to follow our health screening procedures, must wear a mask and follow physical distancing guidelines.
- Elimination of non-essential visitors into our building.

## Tuition Agreement Contract

### Tuition Payments Due to Catastrophic Event or Public Health Emergency (Pandemic)

**Tuition Payments:** Under normal situations, families are expected to pay tuition regardless of whether your child attends the program or not. Tuition payments secure a space for your child and allows the center to pay for expenses, which includes staff salaries and benefits. In the event that the program is closed due to a sudden catastrophic event, including but not limited to: weather-related emergencies, terrorism, or public health emergencies such as a pandemic, tuition will be expected as follows:

- For the first closure of our center due to a catastrophic event or public health emergency, families will be charged full tuition.
- For any extensions or additional closures: a reassessment of tuition billing will be conducted and communicated to families.

**Hold Policy:** If the program reopens and you are not comfortable with returning, contact the director to request your space be temporarily held. Determination is based on enrollment, staffing and current waiting lists and this may involve a monetary fee.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the tuition policies and know that I am responsible to pay tuition in accordance with your policies if a catastrophic event such as a pandemic were to occur.

The center has taken several steps to implement recommended guidance and protocols issued by local, state and federal Public Health Agencies for slowing the transmission of COVID-19. The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that the center may revise its procedures at any time based on updated recommended guidance and protocols issued by said local, state and federal Public Health and Regulatory Agencies and further agrees to comply with the center's revised procedures while utilizing the facilities and services.

The undersigned further acknowledges and agrees that, due to the nature of the facilities and services offered, social distancing of 6 feet per person among children and their caregivers in a childcare setting is not possible.

I understand that the program will be following social distancing and other procedures to ensure that children and families are coming into a safe and clean environment daily. Despite the program's heightened efforts to mitigate such dangers, exposure to COVID-19, for my child or a member of my family may happen.

I hereby release the center from any liability as a result and will not sue the center or any staff member affiliated with the program, should my child or a member of my family contract this virus.





## Agreement Form

I/We have read and understand the policies as stated in this Children's Place at the Plaza Parent Handbook. I/We understand that these policies are subject to change at any time and agree to abide by these policies. I also understand that if the policies change I will be given notification of those changes in writing.

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Parent/Guardian Signature Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature Date