



Sacramento Street Preschool

2011-2012

Parent/Guardian Handbook

Statement of Purpose

It is the philosophy of the Sacramento Street Preschool to see each child as an individual with different social, emotional, physical and cognitive strengths and needs. It is our goal to create a developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum that engages each child. Our primary emphasis is on the social enrichment of the children, especially in preparation for future school experiences.

Administrative Organization and Staff

The Sacramento Street Preschool is administered by the Agassiz Baldwin Community (ABC), a not-for-profit community organization, and is licensed by the Massachusetts' Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

All ABC Children's Programs are supervised by ABC's Executive Director (who acts as a liaison to the Board of Directors), Director of Administration and Finance, Director of Children's Programs, and Site Directors. Daily staff of the Sacramento Street Preschool consists of a full-time Lead Teacher/Director with education and experience in early childhood care and an experienced preschool certified teacher. When needed, the program is supported by interns who work part-time while receiving training in education, child development, or a related field. Staff is trained in basic First Aid and CPR for young children.

Design and Services

The Sacramento Street Preschool serves a group of no more than twenty children per day, in the care of a minimum ratio of 1:10 teachers per children. Children range in age from 2.9 years through 6. Our diverse population is drawn from our immediate Cambridge neighborhood as well as local neighborhoods and a variety of countries, forming a rich cultural mixture. As an Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licensed program, the Preschool does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Procedures and Protocol A-Z

Absences

If you know your child is going to be away on vacation or late due to a doctor's appointment or similar event, please let the Lead Teacher/Director know in advance by email or a phone message.

Arrival

Preschool opens at 8:30am. Prior to 8:30am, teachers are meeting and setting up the classrooms. If you arrive prior to opening time, please be respectful of the teacher's preparation time and feel welcome to wait quietly in the front hallway with your child. Although we do not impose a cut off time, we encourage all children to be in the classroom by 9:00am. Children arriving later may find it harder to join activities that have started and the teacher may not be able to welcome children as s/he would like. Our goal is to help you and your child get off to a good start each day.

Assessment Policy

Assessment is an ongoing process that includes collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information about students, the classroom, and their instruction. Child assessment has value that goes well beyond measuring progress in children by evaluating programs, identifying staff development needs and planning future instruction.

Twice a year, parents are given the opportunity to meet with the lead teacher to discuss their child and his or her progress. At this time, the teachers will also prepare a written progress report to be kept in the child's confidential record. Assessments are done to monitor children's progress and any developmental issues. Assessment is completed through classroom observations, teacher ratings and portfolios. Since we are a small play-based program, teachers are continually able to observe the children and we do not use formal assessments, task-based assessments or standardized tests to assess the children. These sorts of assessment are also not applicable to this program because of the wide range of ages and developmental stages amongst our students. Instead, teachers talk and interact with the children to assess their strengths, interests and needs and to encourage their use of language to inform assessment. Teachers refer to curriculum goals and developmental expectations when interpreting assessment data.

Fall assessments

In the fall, each child is assessed through a parent-teacher conference. Prior to the conference, the teachers gather classroom observations and meet to discuss each student. This assessment focuses on the child's special interests and suggestions and goals for the child and is based on children's work, play, behaviors, and interactions to assess progress. Parents are given the same form to fill out and bring to the conference to share their opinions on their children's special interests, and suggestions and goals. A letter goes home to parents in October telling them that the conferences are coming up in November and they will need to sign up for a time to meet with the lead teacher and

discuss their child's progress both at home and at school. This conference allows for parents and teachers to work together to set learning goals for each child. It is also an opportunity for teachers to learn more about each child's out-of-school life, family culture, values and belief.

Spring assessments

In the spring, the teachers complete a more thorough written assessment of each child, which includes special interests, and a developmental overview of each child as well as suggestions and goals for the child. The assessment includes a detailed list of observations and comments on the child in the developmental areas of social/emotional, language, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive development, and health/hygiene. In each area, different skills are rated as N= Not yet rated, D=Developing, E=Established for age and S= Area of strength. These ratings are based on classroom observations as well as the portfolios of children's artwork. Prior to the parent conference, this form is completed and the teachers meet to discuss each child. Parents are informed in April that they will need to sign up for a time to meet with the lead teacher to discuss their child's progress at school. During the conference, this assessment form is shared with the parents and the parents and lead teacher have the opportunity to discuss the child's progress both at home and at school. For children with disabilities, parent-teacher meetings and progress reports shall occur once every three months.

The lead teacher will also complete The Cambridge Public Schools Kindergarten Transition Form at the end of the school year for children who will be moving on to kindergarten within the Cambridge Public School system, after first obtaining permission from the family to do so. If requested, the teacher will provide the same information for children who will be moving onto kindergarten in another school district.

Teachers reference both assessments throughout the year during weekly staff meetings to help plan curriculum, monitor children's progress and set learning goals. Additionally, teachers are available to meet individually with parents throughout the school year at the parent's request. Parents are encouraged to contact the teachers either in person, through email or by phone to discuss observations or questions regarding their child's development. Throughout the year, teaching staff will also send home quick notes to parents about their child's "developmental milestones."

The lead teacher then keeps the notes completed by the teachers, the parents and during the conference. This makes up the fall assessment of each child and is kept as part of the child's record.

In the case of parents who speak English as a second language, the school will take appropriate steps to ensure that parents fully understand the information being shared. These may involve including both parents in the conference, asking another preschool parent to serve as a translator and/or having the written assessment methods translated into the preferred language.

Behavior Guidance

It is the Preschool's goal to have a behavior guidance policy that is consistent with the everyday lives of the children in the program. We feel that children are best-served using gentle redirection and behavior modeling by teachers and staff. Teachers will encourage children to "use their words" and model polite behavior such as "can I please share that toy" and "please" and "thank you". If a conflict does arise, teachers will either redirect or ask children to use their words to find a solution. We seek a balance between fostering the growth of individual children, while ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for all. We believe it is important to maintain consistent behavioral standards that are firm, yet age-appropriate and attainable. At times, "rules" are talked about by teachers and children, thus allowing children a better understanding of these rules and giving them an opportunity—when possible—to contribute to the development of the rules. Teachers also model appropriate behavior on a daily basis and engage the children in activities and discussions to aid positive identity development and foster an inclusive classroom environment.

When the behavior of any child/ren proves disruptive to the group or detrimental to the individual, child/ren involved are encouraged to work out their difficulties with each other verbally—and with teacher intervention as necessary. Teachers might redirect the child/ren to more appropriate behaviors. In situations that involve children being teased or rejected, teachers will intervene to help the children involved or involve the group in a discussion or activity to encourage more positive play. If the child/ren are not ready to play appropriately within the group, they will take a brief break to calm down and regroup in a quiet area before they re-join the group. All of our methods are designed to promote the social growth of children and to help them to learn skills that they can carry with them into future group settings.

Neglect and abuse Policy

The EEC and NAEYC requires that all staff and parents know that our programs do not employ any severe techniques such as emotional, verbal or physical abuse, corporal punishment, ridicule or humiliation.

The following practices are strictly prohibited:

- (a) Spanking or other corporal punishment of children;
- (b) Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;
- (c) Depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence;
- (d) Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting;
- (e) Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision; and
- (f) Excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

Mandated Reporting

Sacramento Street Preschool staff is mandated under State law to report any instances of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Calendar and Closings

The Sacramento Street Preschool is a ten-month program, open from September through the following June. Our program follows the Cambridge Public Schools calendar regarding closings for state and federal holidays, vacation weeks, early release days, teacher professional days and snow cancellations/delays. School calendars are distributed to all families and available on our website.

Emergency Closing Policy

Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs operate on the Cambridge Public School (CPS) schedule. If the CPS is closed due to inclement weather, Agassiz Children's Program will also be closed. If CPS is delayed, we will also have the same delay. In cases of severe weather that hits mid-morning or afternoon, we may make the decision to close the programs early. In this case, we will notify all families immediately by phone. The program will remain open and staffed until the last child is picked up. Our goal is to protect the health and safety of all children, families and program staff.

Please check your local news listings or the Cambridge Public School website at www.cpsd.us or call the CPS weather information line at 617-349-6513.

Children's Records

As part of the intake process, all families must document the following information as found on the Sacramento Street Preschool registration form:

- Health and medical records that include a physical within the past year, current immunization records as specified by the Department of Public Health.
- Any known allergy or medical needs, special needs or anything that you would like to share with us about your child that will help them have a comfortable transition into the classroom.
- The files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. Please assist us in keeping your child's records current by updating us on any changes in your child's health or special needs throughout the school year.

Confidentiality and Access to Records

The following policies are in accordance with EEC regulations, except as noted:

- All children's records are kept privileged and confidential and stored in one central location.
- No licensee or educator may distribute or release information about a child or his/her family to any unauthorized person, or discuss with any unauthorized person information about a child or his/her family without the written consent of the child's parent.
- Contents of children's files will be available immediately to regulatory authorities or parents/guardians upon request. Upon such request for access, the child's entire

record must be made available regardless of the physical location of its parts. (per NAEYC regulation).

- A child's parents shall have the right to add any information relevant to the child's record.
- Unless transferred, all records will be maintained for five years, according to state regulations.
- The program maintains a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating each time a child's record has been released or reviewed.
 - Each time information is released or distributed from a child's record to someone who is not a program employee the following information must be recorded: the name, signature, and position of the person releasing or distributing the information; the date, the portions of the record which were distributed or released; the purpose of the such distribution or release; and the signature of the person to whom the information is distributed or released.
 - Such log must be made available only to the child's parent(s), to program personnel responsible for record maintenance, and to the EEC as part of it's regulatory function.
- A child's parents shall have the right to add any information relevant to the child's record.
- Unless transferred, all records will be maintained for five years, according to state regulations.
- Sacramento Street Preschool employee files are maintained by Agassiz Baldwin Community. Staff records and matters are strictly confidential.

Classroom Group Management and Oversight

Sacramento Street Preschool consists on one mixed age classroom (or group) with no more than 20 students enrolled in the program each day. The preschool teachers co-plan activities that are engaging and age appropriate for each child. During the main activity time, a small group of children will chose to begin the activity in the craft room, while the remaining children have music and movement or a related activity in the meeting room. They will then rotate to give each child a turn in both rooms when children are ready. All effort is made to provide differentiated instruction according to each child's developmental levels. The daily schedule is optimized to create smooth transitions between teaching staff and activities throughout the day. Teachers use several methods to transition between activities:

- 5 and 20-minute warnings until clean up.
- Clean up song.
- Questions and/or games that scaffold children being dismissed between activities/classrooms.

The priority of the teaching staff is the safety and well being of every child. Teaching staff maintains a 1:10 ratio at all times both inside and in the backyard. This ratio provides proper staff supervision and allows staff to create positive personal contact with each child.

Clothing

Send your child to school wearing comfortable, washable clothing. Please provide an extra set of clothes to keep at school at all times. Although your child may be toilet trained, accidents do occur. We also encourage water play and active exploration in messy art and sensory experiences, so it is important to have a dry change of clothes available. We encourage children to use smocks while painting, but due to the nature of some activities, accidents happen and they will get dirty.

Extra clothes can be stored in your child's bag on their hook. Please mark all clothing and shoes/boots that are worn or brought in with your child's name. They should have an extra set of: pants, underwear, socks and extra mittens/hat in the winter. We do have a small supply of extra school clothing in case of emergency. If your child has borrowed a school item, please wash and return it as soon as possible.

Contingency Plan

The EEC requires all childcare centers to have contingency plans in place in the event of situations such as fire; loss of water, heat or electricity; natural disaster or other situations necessitating evacuation. The Preschool staff, under the instruction of the Director, will remove children immediately from the premises at 20 Sacramento Street. Children will be allowed to gather their belongings only in situations that are not life-threatening. It will be explained to the children that they need to leave the school temporarily while a problem is fixed, and will be taken to a safe place with their teachers until they are picked up by their parents (or other persons designated by parents). Children will be walked to the Community Room (after school room) located in the basement of the Baldwin Elementary School at 28 Sacramento Street (corner of Sacramento and Oxford Streets). This room is equipped with heat/air conditioning, water, electricity and telephone. Children's emergency contact forms will be brought to the site, and parents will be called by staff and informed of the situation. Depending upon severity of the circumstances, parents may be asked to pick up children as soon as possible.

In the event that the Baldwin Elementary School site is inaccessible, the same procedures will be followed, but children will be walked by their teachers to the basement level of the Agassiz Community Room ("North Hall") at 1651 Massachusetts Avenue (corner of Mass. Ave. and Wendell St.). This site is also equipped with heat/air conditioning, water, electricity and telephone.

Parents are informed of these contingency plans only as a precautionary measure. They are designed to put you at ease that our staff will be able to keep children safe and calm in the event of unusual circumstances.

Communication

ABC staff is dedicated to being a positive influence on the development of young children. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's teachers or the Director on a regular basis to provide input or feedback about their child's preschool experience.

- Please keep in mind that mornings and pick-up are very busy time for teachers and their attention is on the children. If you have a question or concern that will affect things for your child that day, please speak with one of the teachers. However, if it's a long-term question regarding your child, curriculum or school policy, please call or set up an in person discussion.
- You may contact our Early Education Site Director or the Director of Children's Programs via email or phone if you have any questions or concerns during the day. Voicemail and email messages are checked periodically throughout the day.
- Email notices and newsletters are sent home to families frequently. Please check your email and family mailbox (located above the children's hooks) to keep informed about school events, classroom happenings and policy changes. Special notices and sign-up sheets are often placed near the sign-out sheet on the mantel, as well as on the front doors where parents will see them as they enter/exit. The Lead Teacher/Director sends a brief daily email or blog entry with the day's highlights.
- Our parent liaisons on the Agassiz Baldwin Community board of directors will attend parent meetings and are also available to speak with you upon request.
- Sacramento Street Preschool understands that every family has unique parenting philosophies, techniques and beliefs. It is our goal to honor these differences and incorporate them into the program when applicable. Teaching and administrative staff are always open to discussing different philosophies and pedagogies, and will work with families individually to reach a mutual understanding should a conflict arise.

Grievance Policy

While we will always strive to reach a common understanding and agreement, we understand that sometimes conflicts do arise that can be difficult to navigate. Should a conflict arise, we will make all efforts to communicate and mediate the situation through in person dialogue and conferences where all parties may find a space to voice their grievance or disagreement. If necessary, a parent representative from our Board of Directors will be asked to come in to mediate the discussion. If another professional mediator is requested, we will do our best to honor that request. The goal of the preschool is to continue the dialogue until all parties feel the conflict has been satisfactorily resolved.

Preschool Curriculum

We believe that children learn through their play and thus we provide ample opportunity throughout the day for children to engage in peer play, as well as to play on their own. Children are encouraged to make decisions regarding their play choices whenever possible. Hands on activities, self-discovery opportunities and creative work shape our curriculum. Through activities, children are exposed to art, creative movement, music, math, science, physical education and social studies. Children work individually, and in small groups to learn at their own pace, build confidence, and form positive relationships.

The curriculum at the Sacramento Street Preschool is also inspired by the Reggio-Emilia approach to early learning. This methodology is very community based where parents and teachers work together to create a curriculum that is based on the children's interests. Documentation is key; teachers listen to, reflect upon, and make note of what they observe and hear to assist them in curriculum planning. This in turn allows the adults to extend children's learning. For example if children begin talking about trains and made tickets, teachers will offer the children opportunities to extend that original idea. We may suggest to the children to rearrange the chairs to make it look like a train, or ask them what other materials a train/conductor might need. In this way, teachers strive to create an environment where children have access to materials and resources that support and expand upon their natural curiosity.

Our emergent curriculum is carefully thought out and constructed by teachers who weigh the children's interests, their developmental levels, and key curriculum concepts that we know are important for the children to learn. We often refer to the "Guidelines for Preschool Learning experiences" which is published by the Early Childhood advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education to assist us keeping current with regards to discerning specific curriculum goals for the children. Teachers write the curriculum onto a curriculum map to assure all subject areas are addressed. This map is posted weekly onto the parent communication board along with a monthly newsletter and other pertinent information.

In addition to overarching curriculum goals for the entire group, teachers and parents meet in the fall to discuss goals for each individual child. Throughout the remainder of the school year, teachers refer to and reflect upon the children's progress. This in turn assists in curriculum planning. Regardless of the theme, teachers will incorporate various tasks to support individual and classroom learning and development.

Daily schedule

Our daily activity schedule is tailored around the group's needs. Typically, the schedule follows the pattern outlined below.

- 8:30-9:00** Drop off and hand-washing
- 8:30-9:30** Free choice: includes dramatic play and various manipulatives
- 9:30-10:00** Circle time with morning songs, stories, calendar and weather discussions.
- 10:00-10:30** Clean-up and snack time
- 10:30-11:20** Arts and crafts, science, cooking (in art room) and small group activities, music and movement, puzzles, manipulatives (in meeting room)
- 11:20-12:00** Outdoor/Active Play

12:00 (Regular Day) Pick-Up

Extended Day

12:00-12:30 Bathroom/washing up/Lunch

12:30-1:45 Rest time

1:45-2:30 Play time/Getting ready to go home

2:30 (Extended Day) Parent Pick-up

Enrollment

Dependent upon parental choice and availability of space, children may be enrolled in a full-week schedule (five days), or in a part-week schedule (Tuesday/Thursday *or* Monday/ Wednesday/Friday). Drop off begins at 8:30 and for pick-up time: 12:00 *or* 2:30 PM. The preschool provides a nutritious morning snack, but children who remain at preschool until 2:30 must bring lunches from home.

Children who are enrolled in the “12:00” program may stay until 2:30 on days requested by their parents, provided that the child bring a lunch on those days. These extra hours will be billed to parents at the end of the month. Please note that the rate for extra hours attended, *but not pre-paid* is higher than the hourly rate for pre-paid time.

Departure

In consideration of children as well as of staff, it is important that parents (or persons authorized in writing by parents) be prompt in picking up children at their registered times. This is by 12:00pm for regular day and by 2:30pm for extended day. This allows our staff to clean up and check-in before going home at their regularly scheduled hours.

Please pick up your child promptly and no later than:

12:00 p.m. for regular hours.

At 12:00 p.m. the late fee policy is in effect as stated below.

2:30 p.m. for extended hours.

At 2:30 p.m. the late fee policy is in effect as stated below.

We will charge a late fee of \$10.00 for the first five minutes of a late pickup, and \$5.00 for each additional five minutes thereafter. If we have not heard from you by 15 minutes after pick-up time, your emergency contacts will be called. In any case, a late fee will be assessed without exception and you will be billed on your next invoice. After an excess of five late pick-ups, your fee will increase to double the original amount. Ten late pick-ups may result in dismissal of your child from the program.

Designated release

If your child is going to be picked up by someone other than yourself on a regular basis, please see the Lead Teacher/Director to have that person added to his or her designated release form. A note makes communication to staff more efficient. For your child's safety, the school will only release your child to people who have been designated in the authorization section of your registration, or that you have authorized on a written and signed note. Please advise any person picking your child up other than a parent to bring a photo ID. Any person that a teacher is not familiar with will be asked for an ID.

Field Trips

The preschool takes several local field trips each year to neighborhood sites and/or businesses. Field trips may include Sacramento Field, Barefoot Books (Mass Ave) and Cambridge Common Playground. All field trip transportation is in the form of walking. Because the adult/teacher to child ratio is maximized to a desired 1:3 or 1:4 we will have a chaperone sign up sheet where family members can volunteer to come with us.

Hand Washing Policy

One of our most important defenses against illness is fairly simple: frequent hand washing with liquid soap and water, and drying with disposable paper towels. Staff members and children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene will be taught proper hand washing procedures that will also be posted in every program bathroom and sink. Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing would reduce the risk of transmission of infectious disease. Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children either wash independently or with staff assistance. Please help us maintain a healthy environment by washing reminding your child to wash his or her hands upon arrival each morning.

Health and Wellness

State regulations require that documentation of a complete physical examination by your child's doctor is required within one year before entering preschool and then must be kept current yearly with documentation filed at the preschool. Since children are all on a regular yearly exam schedule, we ask that you request this documentation at each visit and provide us with a copy. You are welcome to obtain a form from the preschool to use, or to use the form provided by your pediatrician.

- **All immunizations should be up-to-date as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization Schedule and any new immunizations should be reported to the administrative office.**
- **All children under four years old are also required to have documented lead testing annually.**
- Religious and medical exemptions are allowed with written documentation by a licensed health care professional. Staff will exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

If your child has any special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (eg: asthma, hearing or vision impairment, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes), please be sure to include this information on your application so that staff is aware of any special needs.

For children with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutritional needs, please have the child's health care provider supply the preschool an individualized care plan that is prepared with family members and anyone responsible for caring for your child.

Outside playtime is built into the daily schedule. Our backyard allows for mostly tree-shaded play, however, we encourage children to come to preschool with sun protective clothing or applied skin protection as needed. Applied skin protection should be sunscreen or sun block with a UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. Teaching staff can apply sunscreen only with written permission from families.

If the use of insect repellent is recommended by public health officials, only repellents containing DEET are used at the level recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Staff will apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission.

Sacramento Street Preschool posts confidential lists (folded closed and out of reach of children) of children with food allergies in the kitchen/food preparation area as a visual reminder. Information is taken from the child's application and lists are for staff use only. Families may indicate the names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about your child by attaching a letter specifying the authorized individuals with your application or anytime throughout the school year.

Illness

Children attending the Preschool program are expected to be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. We ask that children who are not well enough to join in regular activities (including outdoor play) remain at home until recovered. This helps to lessen the spread of illness throughout the program. Teachers make it a priority to inform parents if their child appears ill, and to inform all parents in writing if a contagious illness is "going around" the program. The Preschool may request a note from the child's physician stating that the child is well enough to be re-admitted to the program.

Your child should stay home if the following conditions are present. The child should remain home until all symptoms have passed:

- Fever within the last 24 hours
- Contagious skin diseases and conjunctivitis if left untreated medically for at least 24 hours
- Episodes of nausea, vomiting or consistent diarrhea
- Upper respiratory infection with flu-like symptoms

- Sore throat
- Untreated head lice
- Child complaining of not feeling well or feeling “under the weather”

Signs or symptoms of illness that would determine that a child needs to be sent home; fever, diarrhea, vomiting, salmonella, contagious stages of, measles, mumps, chicken pox, rubella or diphtheria, untreated infectious (such as scabies or head lice) undiagnosed rash, conjunctivitis, abdominal pain, difficulty breathing, other conditions as may be determined by the Site Directors or Health Care Consultant.

If a child becomes ill during the course of the day, parents (or emergency contacts) will be called immediately and will be asked to pick up the child as soon as possible. While waiting, children will be made comfortable in a quiet area, separated from other children, and allowed to rest while being supervised by a staff member. If the child is found to have a contagious disease, then until she or he is picked up, the child will be made comfortable in a location that does not expose new individuals. Children with a condition that requires treatment with antibiotics may return to the program after they have been treated for 24 hours.

Children found to have lice will be isolated from others while parents/guardians or emergency contacts are called to pick them up. Children may return to their program once they have been treated with an appropriate shampoo and there are no more lice or nits present. Dress-up clothes and other soft items will be removed from the program and laundered before being returned to the site 14 days after the last case of lice has passed.

When questions arise regarding children’s health issues, the Preschool contacts the contracted Health Care Consultant at the Cambridge Department of Public Health. It is recommended that parents contact their child’s pediatrician or health center if they have specific questions about their child’s health.

Inclusion

The facilities at Sacramento Street Preschool meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. Accessibility includes access to buildings, toilets, sinks, outdoor play space and all classroom areas. Staff will make accommodations for children with disabilities whenever possible. Children using a wheelchair may enter the building via our handicapped ramp on the right side of the building. They may depart from the center during outside pick up time via the paved walkway that runs from the backyard play space out to the street (also on the right side of the building).

Injury or Medical Emergency

All teachers are trained and certified in Infant and Child First Aid and CPR. In the event of minor accidents, a teacher will administer first aid and an injury notice will be given to the parent.

If an illness or injury requires medical attention, the parent will be contacted immediately. If the parent is unable to be reached, the designated emergency contact will

be called. Please be sure to maintain current emergency contact information on your child's forms. In an emergency situation requiring immediate medical attention, a teacher will call 911 and will go to the nearest hospital with the child. Parents will be contacted to meet at the hospital. Teachers routinely check the indoor and outdoor play spaces to make sure the spaces are safe and monitor closely children's play—especially while outdoors. We try first and foremost to avoid accident or illness, and to ensure a safe and happy experience for all.

All families must complete an emergency contact form as part of their application. If any information in this form changes throughout the year (emergency contacts, health related, etc) please inform the children's program staff in writing so that we may keep your records up to date.

Sacramento Street Preschool does not include any swimming or wading activities.

Nutrition Policy

Sacramento Street Preschool supports a healthy, nutritious lifestyle for children and staff. There are ample opportunities for indoor and outdoor physical play, including cooperative sports, traditional sports and free time at the playground or in the backyard. The Director designs the snack menu that provides a healthy balance of fruits, vegetables, grains and protein as recommended by the U.S.D.A. Child and Adult Care Food Program. Food is prepared, served and stored in accordance with these guidelines.

Lunch and Snack

- The preschool provides children with a snack each morning. Snacks are planned with attention to nutrition and appeal to children. Snack items may include crackers, cheese, fruits, vegetables, cereals, yogurt and milk. Sweetened beverages are not served. On special occasions, juice (100% all natural) may be served, but in general, water is served at each meal. Parents are asked on enrollment forms to provide information about any food allergies, sensitivities or restrictions in their child's diet.
- **Sacramento Street Preschool is a peanut and nut free zone.** Teachers, parents, babysitters and children must avoid peanuts and nuts in any products — this includes peanut oil and possible cross contamination in products such as granola bars. Good substitutions include: soy butter or sunflower butter.
- Candy and gum are not allowed at school. Please save these treats for home. Some children are not allowed to have candy or sweets. Difficult situations can arise when children bring candy and want to share it. Please help us maintain a healthy eating community.
- Children who remain at preschool for lunch are asked to bring a lunch from home. In order to ensure the safety of food brought from home, parents are required to label all lunch boxes/bags and beverages with the child's name and date.

- Although the preschool does not provide lunches, we are able to keep cold items refrigerated until lunch time and to heat “warm meals” in our microwave during lunch. Children are given ample time to eat their lunches, and are encouraged to eat as much as they can, but are not forced to eat if they are “full” or denied food if they are hungry. Teachers sit with the students during lunch and engage them in conversation during snack and meal times. Lunch is a peaceful time for the students to socialize in a smaller group.
- We encourage families to review the U.S.D.A. Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines posted on the parent information board. It provides a wealth of information on healthy snacks and lunch ideas. While all parents are aware of their children’s individual preferences, some suggestions for a nutritious lunch include:
 - Sandwiches or crackers, rice cakes and spreads such as tuna, cheese, soy or other butters, hummus, egg salad.
 - Hard boiled eggs (please peel), rolled meat, sushi, soup, cold pizza, noodles, mac and cheese, ravioli, pasta or rice.
 - Fruit: apples, oranges, grapes, strawberries, bananas, berries, dried fruits.
 - Veggies: carrots, celery, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, peppers with dip or cottage cheese.
 - Dessert: pudding, applesauce, fruit, granola (nut free), yogurt, cookies.
 - Drinks: milk, 100% juice, water.
- Please prepare the lunch the way your child prefers it (for example: if your child likes apples peeled, please peel them – if they do not like oatmeal bread, please do not send it). Please include a napkin, with a fork and spoon if needed.
- Birthdays: At Sacramento Street Preschool we love to celebrate birthdays and look forward to doing so with your children. Due to the fact that many children have food allergies, we would like to take the focus of the celebration away from food, in particular, sweet snacks. Instead, we make children a birthday crown to wear for the day. Some other suggestions to make the day special at school could be, bringing in special plates, napkins, or cups for snack, donating a book to the school, and/or coming in to work on a birthday craft with the class. Donating a book not only allows children to share something on their birthday, but it also adds to our book collection.

Medication

- Per EEC and NAEYC regulations, the childcare programs require parents/guardians to complete and sign an Authorization for Medication form before any medications may be given to children.

- Information on children currently taking medications must be posted and kept in the same locations as allergy lists so that all staff is aware of which children are on medication.
- Medication will be stored in its original container, labeled with the child's first and last name, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
- All medications are kept in a locked container.
- Preschool teachers trained in medication administration as required by the EEC should administer any necessary medication to children.
- Each time medication is administered, a form must be completed which includes the name of the child, name and dosage of medication, date and time of administration, and the name of the staff person who gave the child the medication.
- The label on a prescription bottle may serve as the required doctor's authorization. A doctor's written authorization is also required for non-prescription medication, and is valid for one year from the date it was signed.
- The child's record shall include instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child or provides instructions by telephone to program staff.
- Parents shall be notified when their child has received medication.
- In the case of a topical medication (including sunscreen and diaper rash ointments), a written authorization, valid for one year, may come from the parent/guardian, and may be used only for that child.
- When medication is no longer required, it will be disposed of or returned to the parents. Forms will be maintained in the child's file.

Naptime/Quiet Rest Time

- The extended day students have a nap/rest time between 1:00 – 2:00pm. The preschool provides nap mats for rest time. Families should provide a blanket and small pillow for napping. **Please bring home nap items weekly for laundering.**
- According to EEC regulations, our teacher to student ratio is 1:10. While the Preschool Teacher is supervising naptime, the Lead Teacher/Director and administrative staff will be upstairs or within a reasonable distance in case of emergency.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children's preschool experience. They are welcome to visit the program any time that their child is present. Parents are also invited to share any special skills or interests that they might have in an activity with the group. Through the "Mystery Guest" program, parents are invited to sign-up in advance to come in at a scheduled time to read a story with the children or help with some other activity. Parents are invited to be involved in planning and carrying out

special events and fundraising in the preschool. Many parents enjoy bringing a snack-time treat to preschool on their child's birthday. (Please see our policy on birthday snacks).

Parent-Teacher conferences

Parents are encouraged to discuss with the Lead Teacher/Director any issues regarding their child's experience in the program. A Parent-Teacher conference may be requested at any time through the Lead Teacher/Director, but one fall and one spring conference with each child's parent/s is required so that current progress can be discussed.

It is important that you tell us anything unusual going on at home that may be upsetting your child — such as a parent traveling, an illness in the family, a new baby coming or a death in the family — since your child's behavior at school may be affected by these changes. The more information we know, the more sensitive and supportive we can be. Feel free to communicate with the Lead Teacher/Director, Early Education Site Director or Director of Children's Programs at any point throughout the year.

Parent meetings and events

During the course of the year several family events will be scheduled. In the past, the Director has hosted morning coffees, and if parents show an interest, the preschool will host any variety of workshops on parenting and educational subjects. If you have ideas or suggestions, please let us know. Preschool will host at least two family picnics or potluck events as well, where siblings and significant elders are welcome to join us as well.

Parking

Parking is a challenge in this small residential Cambridge neighborhood. Please be respectful of our neighbors by not parking in or in front of their driveway — even for a quick drop-off. As a preschool, we have a **five-minute consideration** period for pick-up and drop-off throughout the day. If you are staying longer than five minutes, there is metered parking available along Mass. Ave. Please be aware of the street signs and know that cars may be towed promptly, especially for street cleaning.

Referral for Services

In the event that any staff member has reason to believe that any aspect of a child's development (physical, social, emotional or educational) requires additional services, that teacher will share these concerns with the Lead Teacher/Director. The staff will further observe the behavior, and a conference will take place between the Teacher-Director and the parents. Parents will be advised as to the nature of the concerns, and appropriate steps will follow: a plan may be worked out for the child within the classroom, or a referral to a suitable, helpful resource agency will be made. Preschool staff will work in a team with parents and resource staff in order to address the situation and to monitor progress. Any child or family who requires services is entitled to receive them from their city of residence, at no cost to the family.

As per State regulations, the Preschool shall provide to parents a written statement of the reason for recommending a referral, a summary of program observations, and efforts the program has made to accommodate the child's needs. Before sharing information about a child with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs, staff obtain written consent from the family. The Preschool shall help the parents in the referral process and shall have written parental consent prior to making a referral. (Often, parents are encouraged to make the first contact with the recommended agency). Parents are encouraged to approach the Teacher-Director with any concerns that they might have about any aspect of their child's development. Names and telephone numbers of resource agencies are made available to any parent who requests them. The program will maintain written records of all referrals and the results.

Occasionally, a child's behavior—if continually detrimental to that child, to another child or children, or to the program—might result in a brief suspension. In rare instances, it is found that a family and the program are not well matched, and it might be necessary for a child to leave the program. These instances are unusual, and generally not necessary when all parties work together.

Registration and Fees

Registration is open to all children (2.9 to pre-K age), with preference given to returning children and their siblings. Parents and children are strongly encouraged to visit the Program and meet the staff prior to enrollment. Upon registration, application forms and a *non-refundable* deposit of one month's tuition are required. (There is no application fee). Parents must fill out a set of forms required by the state licensing agency, the Massachusetts Early Education and Care department. Registration is complete only after all forms (including a health form signed by a physician with current and up-to-date immunizations) are received by the Preschool, along with the non-refundable deposit.

The non-refundable deposit is used as tuition for the month of June. If the child leaves the program before June, the deposit will not be refunded or applied to any other month. Tuition is due monthly, and is to be paid no later than the first day of each month. The tuition fee is the same each month, regardless of school closings or children's absences. All Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs accept payment vouchers. A small amount of scholarship assistance is available for those qualifying financially. Our Billing Office is willing and able to help any parents who might find it necessary to establish a payment plan. We are unable to continue enrollment in cases where tuition bills have not been paid *or* a payment plan has not been arranged.

For billing questions, please email our bookkeeper at bookkeeping@agassiz.org. Preschool teachers cannot accept checks and are not equipped to handle billing/registration inquiries.

Student teachers and interns

Sacramento Street Preschool often hosts local work-study or student interns who are working towards a degree in early education or a related field. Often these students are

studying at Lesley University or other local colleges. Please help us to make them feel welcome as they begin their journey as new teachers in the field.

Toileting and diapering Policy

At Sacramento Street Preschool, children are free to use the bathroom whenever they need to. Throughout the day, teachers will remind children to use the bathroom in a positive and helpful way. Children routinely go to the bathroom during the morning, before nap and before going to the playground. All accidents are handled in a way that does not embarrass or shame the child.

We realize that toilet training is a difficult process for all involved. Children can be very cautious when starting to use the toilet, but with a lot of support and encouragement this can happen easier than you might think. It is especially helpful for the children to be in a large group and go through the process together. We understand that there will be a lot of practicing and reminding the first few weeks, but this will also eventually bring much self-confidence and a sense of achievement for all of our students. Practicing with mom or dad in the classroom bathroom can also be extremely beneficial. A few reminders to help make this process easier for all involved:

- 1) Elastic waist pants are the easiest to pull up and down independently.
- 2) Overalls and belts on pants are quite challenging for children to manipulate.
- 3) Please send at least one set of extra clothes for accidents (which includes an extra pair of shoes and socks).

Thank you very much and we look forward to assisting your children in accomplishing this developmental milestone. Please feel free to come to us with any questions or concerns.

Winter weather

When cold weather begins please dress your child appropriately. We go outside almost every day and it is essential that your children have hats, mittens, and snow pants so they can take full advantage of playing in the snow. Winter boots are just as important as snow pants for warmth and dryness. **If your child wears snow boots to school, please send sneakers or slippers that can be worn indoors.** It is difficult for teachers to bring out a group of children when one child does not have appropriate clothing. Please give us your support in this very important matter. If there is inclement weather: rain, sleet or dangerously cold temperatures, staff may make the decision to stay inside. Children will be offered the opportunity for indoor play and appropriate indoor physical activity such as dance and/or movement games. Likewise, staff may chose to have children stay inside if air quality or environmental safety conditions pose a health risk.

It is our goal that all members of the program—family members, children and staff—have a pleasant and fulfilling experience at the Sacramento Street Preschool.