



**Sacramento Street Preschool**

**2016-2017**

**Family Handbook**

## **Statement of Purpose**

Sacramento Street Preschool values creativity, culture and community as an important part of children's lives. We strive to create an engaging and child-centered program that is safe, individualized and fun! Our curriculum is developmentally appropriate, play-based and adaptable to each child's unique social, emotional, physical and cognitive level. Our primary emphasis is on the social enrichment of children 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) and Director of Children's Programs. Sacramento Street Preschool is directly supervised by the Early Education Director and the daily staff consists of two EEC certified Co-Lead Preschool Teachers with education and experience in early childhood care. They are supported by Assistant Teachers, an Art Specialist and interns who work part-time while receiving training in education, child development, or a related field. Staff is trained in 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 5. 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 a 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 absent, please let the Lead Teachers know in advance (if possible) by email ([preschool@agassiz.org](mailto:preschool@agassiz.org)) 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 teachers' 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 difficult to join activities that have started. Our goal is to help you and your child get off to a good start each day.

## Assessment Policy and Parent Conferences

Parents/caregivers are encouraged to discuss with the Lead Teachers/Directors any issues regarding their child's experience in the program. A Parent/Caregiver-Teacher conference may be requested at any time through the Lead Teachers or Early Education Director, but one fall and one spring conference with each child's parents/caregivers is required so that current progress can be discussed. Additionally, we will invite families for a mid-year Portfolio Share to highlight strengths and set some goals.

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 Teachers, Early Education Director or Director of Children's Programs at any point throughout the year.

Assessment is an ongoing process that includes collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information about students, the classroom, and their instruction. Assessing the children in Sacramento Street Preschool helps us to provide you and their future educators with valuable information about how your child learns as well as helping us determine instructional and staff development needs. Assessments are done to monitor children's progress and any developmental issues and are completed through classroom observations, teacher ratings and portfolios. Because of our intimate, play-based setting, teachers are able to continuously observe and record children's progress and use this information to inform instruction. We don't have children perform standardized tests or task-based assessments separately from our daily interactions and activities. Instead, teachers are always gathering information that they can observe naturally through their interactions with the children during activities and in conversation.

### **Fall conferences**

In the fall, teachers will meet with each child's parents or caregivers. This conference allows for families and teachers to work together to set learning goals for each child as they exchange information regarding the classroom and home settings. Teachers get to learn more about each child's out-of-school life, family culture, values and beliefs and parents/caregivers get to learn about their child's classroom work, behaviors, play and interactions. To help this process, parents or other caregivers will be asked to fill out a survey about their child prior to the conference. Similarly, teachers will gather classroom observations and examples of the child's work. Sacramento Street Preschool will alert families when it is time to fill out the survey and set up a conference time.

### **Mid-Year Portfolio Share**

The Mid-Year Portfolio Share will be a chance for preschoolers and teachers to share their examples of each child's best work with their and families. Preschoolers will work on some special projects to save for their portfolios during the winter months and get the chance to proudly share their work.

### **Spring conferences**

In the spring, the teachers complete a more thorough written assessment of each child, which includes special interests, a developmental overview of each child and suggestions/goals for the child. The assessment has 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. Families are informed in April that they will need to sign up for a time to meet with the teachers to discuss their child's progress at home and school. For children with disabilities, meetings and progress reports shall occur once every three months or more often if needed.

Teachers reference assessments throughout the year during weekly staff meetings to help plan curriculum, monitor children's development and set learning goals. Additionally, teachers are available to meet individually with families throughout the school year per request. Families are encouraged to contact the teachers either in person, through email or by phone to discuss observations or ask questions regarding their child's development. Throughout the year, teaching staff may also send home quick notes about children's developmental milestones. The lead teachers keep notes of all assessments and meetings. This makes up the full assessment of each child and is kept as part of the child's record.

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

## Authorized Pick-Up

If your child is going to be picked up by someone other than yourself on a regular basis, please contact Lead Teachers or Registration to have that person added as an Authorized Pick-Up Person. A note or email 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. Any person picking your child up other than primary caregivers will need to bring a photo ID. Any person that a teacher is not familiar with will be asked for an ID.

## Behavior Guidance

### The Nurtured Heart Approach

Preschool is a very different setting than most children have experienced in their lives prior to starting school. Learning to collaborate, playing with peers and following school rules are important developmental milestones of this age. Our goal is to help guide children as they learn to navigate social situations with peers and being in a classroom setting. The key word is *practice*! We are here to practice school and friendship skills and mistakes are okay. We are sensitive to the fact that preschoolers will need many reminders, lots of positive reinforcement and many chances to try again as they learn these valuable life skills. The Sacramento Street Preschool uses the **Nurtured Heart Approach** to teach about and encourage the growth of positive choices.

The **Nurtured Heart Approach** is founded on three basic principles that fit together to guide children towards making positive choices and feeling secure and great about themselves.

- **Energize the Positive!**

Children want energy and attention from adults and they will do things that get this energy and attention from teachers, parents or other important adults. They crave engaging and exciting interactions with these adults and seek ways to get these interactions. With this understanding, teachers choose to give students this high level of energy, attention and interaction when they see positive things happening in the classroom. They make a BIG deal out of all of the millions of little things that are going right at any given moment. Teachers actively look for and create successful moments for children and then explain to the child what they are doing and why it is wonderful. This not only reinforces the rules in a positive way for that child and any others who are listening, but also gives that child a whole new set of positive ways to think about themselves. When teachers give very specific, detailed and vivid praise to children, it helps children understand exactly what they have done to warrant this attention and also builds a wonderful personal understanding of their own greatness. In this way, the Nurtured Heart Approach is not just a behavior guidance tool, but has a beautifully positive impact on how children view themselves and the world around them.

- **Deflate the Negative**

Preschool is a time where children are learning about school rules and interacting with peers and they will need many, many chances to practice and try again when they make a mistake. Children learn trying things out and seeing what will happen

and testing limits. Adults should not try to squash this natural curiosity because it helps children to learn about their world through interacting with it. If children learn that when they break a rule they receive the big, interesting, engaging reaction from adults they are hoping for, they will continue to seek this out by breaking rules. With this in mind, teachers using the Nurtured Heart Approach refuse to energize the negative. They don't raise their voice or make a big deal out of mistakes or broken rules. They reserve the BIG reactions for the positive.

- **Clear Limits and Resets**

Preschoolers need very clear limits so they can feel safe, know what to expect and can focus on learning. Setting clear limits allows teachers to use the other two pieces of the Nurtured Heart Approach more effectively. With clear rules and limits in place, teachers can create opportunities of success for a child while teaching all the children about the classroom limits. If a teacher notices a child who is simply not breaking a rule, the teacher can give that child specific praise for following that rule in the moment and explaining to that child why that's such a wonderful thing. This also broadcasts to all the other children where the limit lies, and that they will receive this type of attention for following that rule. For example, if a teacher notices a child walking to the dress-up area, the teacher can say in an energetic voice, "WOW! Tom you are following the rule by using walking feet inside. You really care about keeping your friends safe at preschool. You are really caring." In this way, the Nurtured Heart Approach is constantly reinforcing limits in a positive way without spending a great deal of time on discussing the rules when things have gone wrong or making examples out of the mistakes. Rather, teachers make examples out of positive things. Preschool students are expected to make mistakes, forget the rules or test the boundaries. By using the Nurtured Heart Approach, there is space for these things and it doesn't disrupt or become the focal point for the whole day. Teachers use simple resets, redirections and breaks to remind children of the rules and help get them quickly back on track and have another chance. The focus is not on punishments or consequences but rather on giving children a chance to reset so they may rejoin the activity and try again for success. As soon as they have been "reset" the situation is forgotten and there is a chance for a fresh start. A reset may look very different for different children or different situations but the key is that it gives the child the chance to step away from what they were doing and when they are ready to rejoin they are welcomed back and the infraction is forgotten. Some resets may simply be to move to a different activity, take a quick "break" either in the classroom or another space or be redirected to a more positive choice.

### **The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)**

An important part of behavior guidance in preschool is helping children to learn about, identify, express and manage their own emotions appropriately in a social setting. To support this, Sacramento Street Preschool uses many resources from the **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)**.

CSEFEL is a national resource center focused on promoting the social/emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. Preschool teachers

will use various tools with children in the preschool to help guide children through the social/emotional aspects of being in school with peers. They have many easily accessible tools that can be a great resource for parents to use in a home setting as well!

### **Neglect and Abuse Policy**

The EEC and NAEYC requires that all staff and parents know that our programs do not employ any severe behavior management 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).

### **Birthdays**

At Sacramento Street Preschool we love to celebrate birthdays and look forward to doing so with your children. There are many ways to celebrate a birthday at preschool and the teachers will always celebrate children on their birthday by singing "Happy Birthday". We want to emphasize that families are not required to provide special items for a child's birthday. Families may bring in a healthy snack to share with children or special plates or napkins to be used at snack time. Some other suggestions donating a book to the school and/or coming in to work on a birthday craft or read a story with the class. Donating a book not only allows children to share something on their birthday, but it also adds to our book collection. If you are interested in bringing in a snack, please discuss your ideas with teachers.

### **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 Baldwin 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](http://www.cpsd.us)**.

### **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 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/guardian.
- 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/guardians 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 parents/guardian, to program personnel responsible for record maintenance, and to the EEC as part of its regulatory function.
- A child's parents/guardians shall have the right to add any information relevant to the child's record.
- 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 of one mixed age classroom (or group) with no more than 20 students enrolled in the program each day. The priority of the teaching staff is the safety and well being of every child. Teaching staff maintains a minimum of 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 may get dirty or wet.

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.

## **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 Directors 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 a 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 teachers, Early Education 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 child's mailbox 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 as well as on the doors where parents will see them as they enter/exit. The Lead Teachers send a brief email updates with the day's or week's highlights.
- Parent liaisons on the Agassiz Baldwin Community Board of Directors are 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.
- There will be periodic Family Meetings throughout the school year. These meetings will be used to as a time for teachers and parents to exchange information about upcoming curriculum, events or other program happenings. Teachers are always looking for ways for parents or other caregivers to get involved and these meetings will be a great opportunity for brainstorming. If there are other things that you would like to see discussed at a meeting, please inform the Director of Early Education and Care in advance.

### **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.

## **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 (Afterschool room) located in the basement of the Baldwin Elementary School at 85 Oxford 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/contacts 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.

Families 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.

## **Curriculum**

Sacramento Street Preschool uses an Emergent Curriculum. The basis of this type of curriculum is that the teachers take observations of what natural curiosities the children have and then build curriculum around these ever evolving interests. Rather than planning a month of lessons in advance, teachers brainstorm all kinds of ways that students could explore the topic. This "curriculum web" will constantly be adapted and referred to as children explore, play and learn and their understanding and interest in the topic evolves. Children bring their natural curiosities and drive to learn, and teachers provide the structure to extend their learning through exploration, play and discovery.

Teachers will create play-based activities in the areas of numeracy, literacy, fine and gross motor skills, science and nature, cultural diversity, creative expression, musical movement and dramatic play. When planning these activities they will have learning goals in mind that are informed by developmental assessments as well as the "Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences" which is published by the Early Childhood advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education.

The preschool teachers co-plan activities that are engaging and age appropriate for each child. During the main activity time, there will be either centers set up for children to explore or teacher-led group activities. Children will be able to rotate to give each child a chance to try out a variety of activities and explore based on their own interests. Many activities will be focused around our current theme that the children are working on and some will be focused more on practicing a particular social or developmental skill. Due to the mixed age group, teachers provide differentiated instruction according to each child's developmental levels.

## 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
- 8:30-9:15** Free Choice Play: Learning Centers
- 9:15-9:30** Circle Time
- 9:30-10:15** Maud Morgan Art and Music Specials
- 10:15-10:30** Snack and Bathrooms
- 10:45-11:20** Station Time (Learning Centers) and Story
- 11:20-12:00** Outdoor/Active Play
- 12:00** Pick-Up (Regular Day)
- Extended Day**
- 12:00-1:00** Bathroom/Lunch/Teeth Brushing
- 1:00-1:45** Rest
- 1:45-2:30** Manipulatives Play/Books/Getting ready to go home
- 2:30** Pick-up (Extended Day)

The daily schedule is optimized to create smooth transitions between activities throughout the day. Teachers use several methods to transition between activities:

- 5, 3, and 2-minute warnings until clean up.
- Clean up or other transitional songs
- Visual and auditory cues that help the children understand what is coming up next.
- Questions and/or games that scaffold children being dismissed between activities/classrooms.

## Departure

In consideration of children as well as of staff, it is important that families (or persons authorized in writing by families) 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, we will attempt to reach you and then your emergency contacts will be called if we cannot reach you. 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.

If you are running late, please call to let the teachers know.

## **Enrollment**

Dependent upon family 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 pick-up is 12:00, 1:00 or 2:30 PM, dependent on schedule. The preschool provides a nutritious morning snack, but children who remain at preschool for lunchtime must bring lunches from home.

Children who are enrolled in the Regular Day program may stay until 1:00 pm or 2:30 pm on days requested by their families, provided that the child bring a lunch on those days and there is space in the program. These extra hours will be billed to families at the end of the month. Please note that the rate for extra hours attended, is higher than the hourly rate for enrolled schedules. Please speak with the Lead Teacher to arrange add-on dates. Please contact Registration to change your regular schedule.

## **Family Involvement**

Families are encouraged to play an active role in their children's preschool experience. You are welcome to visit the program any time your child is present. Families 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, other family members or friends 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. Families are invited to be involved in planning and carrying out special events in the preschool. Many families enjoy doing something

special at preschool on their child's birthday. During Parent/Caregiver meetings, we will brainstorm ways to be involved or teachers might ask for volunteers to help with something specific.

## **Field Trips**

The preschool takes several local field trips each year to neighborhood sites and/or businesses. Field trips may include Sacramento Field 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/caregivers can volunteer to come with us or Directors will accompany the group. If the preschool takes a field trip that isn't a walking trip, there will be an additional permission.

## **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. 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 to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious disease. Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Please help us maintain a healthy environment by 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 with updated 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 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.

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 UVA and UVB 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 permission.

Sacramento Street Preschool posts confidential lists (folded closed and out of reach of children) of children with food allergies, chronic health conditions, medications or other special needs. These are stored in the kitchen/food preparation, medical supply bags and in the classroom areas as a visual reminder and quick reference for staff. 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.

### **Special Health Conditions**

If your child has any special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (eg: asthma, food allergies, hearing or vision impairment, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes), please be sure to notify Registration so that staff is made aware of any special needs. Staff may ask for a meeting to learn more about your child's health conditions so that we may keep them safe and well while at school.

An Individualized Health Care Plan will need to be completed for any child with chronic health care needs. Additionally, if your child will need any type of prescription or non-prescription medication while in the program, a Medication Consent Form must also be completed. These forms require a doctor's signature and staff will need to review the information prior to the time your child starts preschool so please request these forms in advance.

### **Medications**

- 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 child-proof container. Emergency Medications are never locked.
- Preschool teachers trained in medication administration as required by the EEC 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.
- Families 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 families. Forms will be maintained in the child's file.

## 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 families 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 conditions (such as scabies or head lice); undiagnosed rash; conjunctivitis; abdominal pain; difficulty breathing; other conditions as may be determined by the 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 (posted in the program). It is recommended that families 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**

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 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 a parent or pick-up person will sign an injury report.

If an illness or injury requires medical attention, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. If the parent/guardian is unable to be reached, the designated emergency contact will be called. Please be sure to maintain current emergency contact information. In an emergency situation requiring immediate medical attention, a teacher will call 911 and will go to the nearest hospital with the child. Parents/guardians will be contacted to meet at the hospital.

All families must complete an emergency contact form as part of their enrollment. If any information in 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.

## Naptime/Quiet Rest Time

- The extended day children have a nap/rest time between 1:00 – 2:00pm. The preschool provides nap cots. 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. If there are 10 or fewer students, one Lead Teacher will supervise naptime, the other Lead Teacher and administrative staff will be upstairs or within a reasonable distance in case of emergency.

## Nutrition Policy

Sacramento Street Preschool supports a healthy, nutritious lifestyle for children and staff. There is lots of indoor and outdoor physical play, including cooperative sports, traditional sports and free time at the playground or in the backyard. The teachers design a 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. Water is served with each meal. When registering your child, we request information about any food allergies, sensitivities or restrictions in your child's diet. Please inform us of any changes.
- **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.
- 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 we are able to heat up lunches when necessary, we encourage parents to send heated food in a thermos so that teachers can focus on the children and not microwaving. Children are given plenty of time to eat their lunches at a leisurely rate. They are encouraged to eat until they are full, but are not forced to finish their lunches or snacks nor are they 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 pack “growing food” that can be eaten in any order. For reference, consider reviewing the USDA Child and Adult Care Food

Program guidelines posted on the Family Information Board and available on the USDA website. It provides a wealth of information on healthy snacks and lunch ideas.

## 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 an unofficial **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. Street cleaning occurs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday (on the odd number side) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday (on the even number side) on Sacramento Street in 2016.

## 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 Preschool Staff Team (Teachers, Early Education Director, Director of Children's Programs). The staff will further observe the behavior, and a conference will take place between the Lead Teachers, Early Education Director and the parents/caregivers. Parents/caregivers will be advised as to the nature of the concerns, and appropriate steps will follow. Depending on the circumstances, 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/guardians and outside 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/guardians 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 family in the referral process and shall have written parent/guardian consent prior to making a referral. (Often, families are encouraged to make the first contact with the recommended agency). Families are encouraged to approach the Teachers or Directors 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 family 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 5), with early registration available for returning families. Parents, other caregivers 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/guardians must fully complete the registration and submit the Permissions and Developmental History form. 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. You must notify Registration of any schedule changes by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the prior month or the change will not be reflected in your monthly billing. All schedule change requests are subject to approval by Registration. Enrollment Change Request forms are available online or upon request.

All Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs accept vouchers through Child Care Choices of Boston. A small amount of scholarship assistance is available for those qualifying financially. Parents who might find it necessary to establish a payment plan should contact Registration. 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 Registration at [registration@agassiz.org](mailto:registration@agassiz.org). Preschool teachers cannot accept checks and are not equipped to handle billing/registration inquiries. For scholarship information, please contact the Director of Children's Programs or visit the scholarships page at [www.agassiz.org](http://www.agassiz.org).

For more information, please see our Tuition Policy available on our website.

## 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. 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 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 a parent or caregiver in the classroom bathroom can also be extremely beneficial. If necessary, please provide pull-ups or diapers for your child while they are going through the toilet training process. 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.

## **Weather**

We go outside almost every day so it is essential that you send your child with the appropriate clothing for the weather (rain gear, snow gear, cool clothes in the heat, sneakers, etc.). When cold weather begins please make sure you send your child with a coat, hat, mittens, boots and snow pants so they can take full advantage of playing in the snow. **If your child wears snow boots to school, please send sneakers or slippers that can be worn indoors.** If there is inclement weather or if air quality or environmental safety conditions pose a health risk, 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.

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