

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year at Discover Preschool! We are looking forward to working with your family. To keep you informed, you are being supplied with a parent handbook. Please be sure to read it, sign the acknowledgement found on the back of this page, and return it to the director, Lindsay O'Brien, as soon as possible.

I acknowledge receipt of the Discover Preschool Family Handbook for the 2023/2024 School Year.

I have read and understand the Handbook.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form to the Director.

Discover Preschool



Family Handbook

2023/2024

HISTORY OF DISCOVER PRESCHOOL

Discover Preschool, a non-profit, non-denominational school, was established in 1959 as the West Parish Nursery School. In 1993 the school became incorporated as Discover Preschool. We are fortunate to have remained in our original site at 129 Reservation Road, on the West Parish Church grounds in Andover, Massachusetts. Discover Preschool is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to accommodate up to 37 children daily, ages 2.9 to 5 years old. Parents can contact the EEC at any time for information regarding the preschool's compliance history. The regional office responsible for Discover Preschool is located at 360 Merrimack Street, Building 9, Third Floor, Lawrence, MA 01843. The phone number for the office is 978-681-9684.

PURPOSE

Discover Preschool is committed to the following goals:

- 1) To providing a warm, stimulating environment for young children in accordance with the standards for developmentally appropriate practices set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education.
- 2) To provide an educational resource for families in the Andover and surrounding communities.

PHILOSOPHY

Discover Preschool provides a safe, nurturing environment that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families. We recognize the importance of applying knowledge of child development to program practices, while respecting and responding to the uniqueness of each child. We strive to ensure that all programs follow the Massachusetts Department of Education guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice.

The curriculum at Discover Preschool presents an integrated, process-oriented, thematic approach with the incorporation of children's literature. Activities are based on weekly/monthly themes, which combine language, math, science, music, art and cooking related experiences. The children may enjoy listening to stories through books and storytelling techniques. There are many learning opportunities and open-ended activities for the children throughout the day as they visit various interest areas.

Within an integrated model, children are provided valuable learning opportunities through learning centers in the classroom as well as outdoor experiences. Classroom learning centers may include: Library; Blocks; Art; Writing; Math & Science; Puzzles & Manipulatives; Sensory Table. The curriculum represents *process*, rather than *product*; for example, when examining materials in the science area, investigating and describing

how the leaf looks, feels, and smells is far more important than labeling *what* the leaf actually *is*. Teachers plan activities in the learning centers with a focus on the theme, so that the experiences and learning in one area reinforces and supports learning in another area; this is identified as a thematic approach. The emphasis on children's literature in the curriculum at Discover Preschool acknowledges the importance of books in the lives of children and the role of reading aloud to children in literacy development. At Discover Preschool we encourage children to be thinkers and learners by supporting children in their curiosity, discovery, and joy in the process of learning about the world around them.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Licensing Authority

Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

Northeast Regional Office

Lawrence MA 01843

978-681-9684

Preschool Advisory Board

Karen Godek, Advisory Board President

Katie Alexander, Advisory Board Treasurer

Emily Russo, Parent at Large

Liz Gostanian, Parent Board President

Alexandra Day, Parent Board Vice President

Director

Lindsay O'Brien

Teachers

Nancy Laorenza, Jen Winsor

Nicole Merenda, Amber Brand

Cecilia Miksch, Sara Roldan, Kathy Plouffe

In the event of the absence of the Director, Nancy Laorenza is Director certified and will be the designated administrator.

DISCOVER PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Children learn through play at Discover Preschool. Our day-to-day activities are aligned with the Massachusetts Standards for Preschool Curriculum. These Standards and Guidelines are expected developmental outcomes for preschool education. They tell us that teaching specific skills such as letters and numbers are very important, however teaching these skills as isolated lessons is not developmentally appropriate. This statement does not mean that children do not learn the meaning of letters and number while at Discover. Literacy and math skills are embedded throughout our activities while your child interacts with the environment, their friends and their teachers. The main goal of our preschool program is to foster social competence to assure success in future learning.

There are goals for **social/emotional development that:*

- *provide each child with opportunities for success to help develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning*
- *foster each child's understanding of self as an individual and as a member of a group*
- *build trust and security*
- *foster independence and decision-making skills*
- *encourage respect for the feelings and rights of others*
- *respect cultural, family, and economic diversity, and individual differences*

There are goals for **cognitive, language and literacy development that:*

- *encourage children to think, reason, question, experiment, and problem solve through activities related to scientific and mathematical learning according to each child's developmental level*
- *stimulate language development*
- *support creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue*
- *build appreciation for the arts including art, music, dance, literature, and drama*
- *promote interaction and language use among children and between children and adults*
- *foster emergent literacy through books, materials and activities that are appropriate to the developmental level of each child*

There are goals for **physical development that:*

- *build large muscle/gross motor skills by providing time and space each day both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) for active play such as jumping, running, balancing, climbing. Creative movement activities are provided through activities such as obstacle courses or activity songs/recordings*
- *develop small muscle/fine motor skills by providing time, space, and adult guidance in activities that develop hand strength and finger coordination (e.g., picking up small objects with fingers or tools; stringing beads; using scissors/hole punchers, and sometimes just squishing play dough through their fingers)*
- *encourage and model sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.*

*(*Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences)*

There are many times throughout the school year that specific Curriculum topics may be discussed at our Parent Board Meetings. Join us and find out how we achieve these goals.

CURRICULUM PLANS

Weekly curriculum plans are located on the Curriculum Board in the hallway between our 2 classrooms. You will also find each group's daily events posted outside each classroom at the end of the day. A developmental preschool curriculum is always flexible and the children's interests and needs drive the daily activities. So, plans are, of course, subject to change.

STUDENT INTERNS

From time to time, Discover Preschool may host Student Teachers and Student Observers from Northern Essex Community College (NECCO). NECCO conducts complete background record checks for each student sent to our preschool. Student Teachers are responsible for supervised interactions with the children, leading up to the planning and implementing appropriate curriculum throughout the day (also with supervision). Student Observers (also supervised) will have no interactions with the children. They are solely responsible for observing a preschool day.

PROGRAMS

Discover Preschool operates on a *modified* Andover Public School calendar. The preschool typically opens each fall with an Open House on the Monday after Labor Day. A complete school calendar will be mailed to families in the summer prior to the school year. The *Pre-K Class* at Discover Preschool meets from 9 AM to 12:30 PM and the younger *Preschool Class* meets from 9:15 AM to 12:45 PM.

Children 2.9 years through 5 years may enroll. Currently we have a younger preschool class that meets Tuesday through Friday for children 2.9 (as of 9/1) to 4 years of age, and a Pre-K class that meets Tuesday through Friday for children 4 (as of 9/1) to 5 years of age.

All of our programs offer young children many opportunities to learn through discovery while visiting various interest areas. Caring teachers foster independence through warm and encouraging direction. Choices and independence are encouraged while the teachers serve as facilitators of the learning process. There is a careful balance of individual, small group, and large group activities. The child to staff ratio in each program is 6:1 or better.

TUITION FEES

Tuition at Discover Preschool is an annual commitment. If for any reason it is necessary to leave Discover Preschool, payment in full is expected. Registration fees, advanced tuition/registration payments and tuition payments are non-refundable. Tuition is expected in full each payment period. There are no exceptions for illness or vacation regardless of duration. No tuition credit will be given for any reason. Payment is expected in three equal payments (less deposit and registration), on June 1st, September 1st, and December 1st. Families may also choose one annual payment due June 1st for a 2% savings. Any parent having difficulty meeting their financial commitments with the school should speak with the Director. The school is willing to consider special payment plans in extenuating circumstances. All financial arrangements are confidential. See the attached Tuition Policy for this year's tuition prices.

PAYMENT POLICY

1. A tuition check must be received at the preschool by the first of every month in which a payment is due, according to the selected payment option. If tuition is not received by the expected date, a reminder will be issued. A 10% late fee will be charged to payments not received by the 7th of the month. If payment is not received by the 10th of the month it is due, the child will not be allowed to attend preschool until payment is received. The same process applies to late fees and special charges.
2. A fee of \$25 will be charged for any checks returned from the bank for any reason.

EXTENDED DAY OPTIONS

EARLY DROP OFF

Our 30 minute early drop off program is available daily, Tuesday through Friday.

STAY AND PLAY

Our afternoon program meets Tuesday through Thursday from 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM for the Pre-K Class and 12:45 PM – 2:45 PM for the Preschool Class. Stay and Play is a fun way to extend the children's day to include lunch and afternoon activities.

Families may reserve a slot for their child on an annual basis. Reserving a Stay and Play slot annually guarantees that slot each week at a small discount. In the event of an absence, whether due to events including sickness, vacation, snow days etc., there are no refunds or substituting days. Nor will Discover Preschool allow rollovers to following years.

Day to day drop-in slots are available as well on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays. Space is limited to eighteen children per day. In the event that you sign your child up for Stay and Play and need to cancel, a 24-hour notice is required or full payment will be expected.

Note: Discover Preschool reserves the right to cancel Stay and Play if attendance is low.

STAY AND PLAY EXTREME

Discover Preschool also offers a special Stay and Play Extreme Program on most Fridays throughout the school year. Sign-up is always done through Sign Up Genius. Again, 24-hour notice for cancellation is required or full payment will be expected.

Note: Discover Preschool reserves the right to cancel Stay and Play if attendance is low.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITY FEE

Throughout the school year there are many extra activities for the children and their families to enjoy. Some of the family events may include Fall and Spring Family Socials, V.I.P. Night (Very Important Person), and a V.I.P Valentines Tea. During the school day, the children enjoy visits from Mass Audubon, Coach Michelle, Wiggles & Giggles Music, and other available specialists. We do ask for your help to continue these programs and events by charging this annual Activity Fee.

FYI

Your annual tuition covers the day-to-day successful operation of the preschool. Your tuition payment covers expenses such as rent, insurances, teacher salaries, and daily consumable supplies such as paper, paint,

markers, glue, snack foods, etc. Special programming as the ones mentioned above are becoming increasingly more expensive to provide. Your activity fee normally determines how frequently we will be able to provide special programs and which special events we will be able to continue to run.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All Programs begin at 9 AM (Pre-K) or 9:15 AM (Preschool). Pre-K parents should park and walk their children into the classroom each morning. Younger Preschool Class parents should park and walk their children to the playground each morning. Teachers utilize the 30 minutes prior to arrival to set up their classrooms and prepare materials. If you unexpectedly arrive early at school, you and your child may play on the playground (if weather permits) or you may wait outside the classroom entrance door if your child is in the Pre-K class and the Pre-K teachers will open the classroom doors at 9:00 AM.

Late arrival can be very unsettling for young children; it is sometimes difficult for children to become involved in play situations that are already well underway. We would like to give each child the best opportunity for a positive start to the morning; please help us do this by arriving no later than 10 minutes past drop-off.

A very important role for the teachers each morning is to individually greet each child and parent. In order to adequately greet each child, it is not possible for teachers to engage in lengthy conversations or conferences at this time. There is certainly the time and need for *brief* exchanges of information at arrival but for any confidential or lengthy discussions please plan to schedule a conference with either the Teacher or Director. We do care about your concerns and prefer to give you our undivided attention at a conference.

Pick up time is 12:30 PM (Pre-K) or 12:45 PM (Preschool). Pre-K students will be dismissed at 12:30 from the playground. The Preschool teachers will dismiss from the classroom and care-givers should wait outside the classroom entrance door at this time until the teachers open it at 12:45. Again, if you arrive before this time please wait outside the classroom until the door opens.

Children will only be discharged to persons listed on their Authorization to Pick-up form, which has been completed by parents. Parents need to inform the Director in writing of any changes in authorization to pick-up.

On time pick-up is very important. Even a few minutes late can upset an anxious child or disrupt a program's schedule. A \$5 late fee will be charged for *each minute* a child stays beyond the designated pick up time.

Please notify the school by emailing the director or calling the school office in the morning if your child is going to be absent. This is required by State Law in the event of an evacuation.

PLAYGROUND

Discover Preschool shares playground and Children's Garden time with LLL Preschool. Our time for outdoor play is 9:15 AM – 10:15 AM (Preschool Class) and 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (Pre-K Class). On occasion these times may be changed. The children learn specific playground rules and these rules are enforced through teacher supervision. It is important that parents supervise their children while playing after school. We ask that the LLL families respect our times outdoors and leave the playground during our scheduled times. LLL requests that the Discover families do the same. Although it is fun to play with friends before and after school, children and their families cannot be on the playground if the teachers are conducting arrivals and dismissals.

BUILDING SECURITY AND BUILDING ACCESS

Discover Preschool is protected by a security system that requires that all entrance doors are locked at all times. Every family is normally provided with a special key fob that permits entrance to the preschool during the hours their child is in school.

- Two fobs will be assigned to each family. These fobs will allow you to open the door to the school during the hours that your child is present. By merely scanning the fob in front of the transmitter the door will unlock for 5 seconds allowing you to enter. ENTRY WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED WITH A FOB.
- There will be a \$30 (\$15 for each fob) deposit required. Your full deposit will be returned to you when the fobs are returned to the preschool. Your deposit will not be returned if you lose or break the fob.
- Fobs will be assigned during your scheduled Open House.
- In the event that your fob is lost, you must notify the preschool at once so that the chip inside the fob can be deactivated, prohibiting use by someone else. To receive a new fob a new \$15 deposit will be required.
- Keep in mind that you must always scan your fob when you enter the building, even if you are following another family in. This will allow the system to keep track of who is entering the building.
- A doorbell has been installed. In the event that you forget your fob at home, you can ring the bell for someone to open the door.
- To ensure the security of all the church is requiring us to disallow the doors to be propped open.

TRANSPORTATION

The daily transportation to and from Discover Preschool is each family's responsibility. At the beginning of each school year, each family is required to submit a Transportation Plan Form stating the method of arrival and departure from the preschool, to the preschool office. Families are encouraged to follow the Massachusetts Child Passenger Law: children ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are eight years old or 4 feet 9 inches (57 inches) tall.

If any staff person has cause to believe that an adult who is picking up a child is not competent to drive, the staff person will follow these procedures: Notify the director of his/her concerns. If it is determined that the parent is not capable of driving, the director will offer to call a spouse, friend or neighbor, another parent or a cab/Uber to help. If the parent refuses help, the director will inform the parent that in the interest of safety, the police will be called.

EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

In the case of an emergency, every effort will be made to reach the parent, however in cases where a child's health is at risk, Discover Preschool will follow the emergency procedures for transportation outlined in the Health Care Policy, which is included in this handbook.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are recognized at school during snack time. If parents would like to send in a special snack, please make arrangements with the teachers in advance. Parents may send a special snack *any* time; but again, please make arrangements in advance with teachers. A typical birthday snack includes small **store-bought** cupcakes, popsicles, or oreos. Please check ingredients. All snacks must be nut-free *and* made in a nut-free facility. In the event of severe allergies, the teachers will give you a list of acceptable birthday snacks.

Discover Preschool respects the right of families to establish their own traditions for birthday celebrations outside of school. While these celebrations don't involve Discover Preschool, they may have an unintended, hurtful impact on some of its children and families. Parents are asked to be extremely sensitive to the issue of including some children while excluding others in the same classroom. Parties that include all the boys, all the girls, or the entire class are preferable to parties in which one or two students have been excluded. As a general rule of thumb, we respectfully but earnestly request that students invite either less than half *or* the entire group to parties.

We also ask that invitations, thank you notes, and the like NOT be distributed in school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The staff at Discover Preschool has a professional responsibility to respect the privacy of children, their families, and staff. We take this professional responsibility *very seriously*. We expect parents to understand that certain information will not be disclosed to them.

Staff will...

- 1) Never discuss a child, other than the parent's own child, with parents.
- 2) Never disclose the name of the child who has contracted a contagious illness or condition.
- 3) Never release information about children, parents, or staff without written consent.

Discover Preschool will never release a child's record without written consent of the child's parents. Also, in the unlikely event of a child's record being subpoenaed, Discover Preschool will notify the child's parents.

Parents at Discover Preschool do have access to their child's record upon written request to the Director. Discover Preschool will never delay access to a child's record more than 2 business days after receipt of a parent's request. There is no charge for any copies made of information contained in the child's record. Distribution of any child's record will be entered into a log located in the Director's cabinet in the Preschool Office. Any parent receiving any information from their child's record must sign this log confirming that they have received the requested information.

Parents of Discover Preschool children always have the right to add information to their child's record. In the event that a parent does not agree with information in their child's record, and feels that an addition will not rectify the problem, they may request a conference with the Director to make their objections known. Discover Preschool will give the parent a written decision stating the reasons for the decision in 1 week following the conference.

Parents may request in writing the transfer of the child's record to the parent or any person the parent identifies when the child is no longer attending Discover Preschool.

No child at Discover Preschool will be a subject of staff or visiting student's research projects without written consent of the child's parents.

Also, no child at Discover Preschool will be involved in unauthorized activities including, but not limited to: fundraising and publicity (photos and participation in mass media without written consent of parents).

Availability of Information to the Office: Notwithstanding 102 CMR, upon the request of an employee, authorized by the Commissioner and involved in the regulatory process, the licensee shall make available to the Office any information required to be kept and maintained under 102 CMR 700 and any other

information reasonably related to the requirements of 102 CMR 700. Authorized employees of the office shall not remove identifying case material from the center's premises and shall maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Discover Preschool, a nondenominational school, follows the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education recommendations for balancing holiday celebrations.

The curriculum at Discover Preschool teaches *about* religious holidays, but the school does not *celebrate* religious holidays. Educational activities that often include parent involvement help make children aware of different religious beliefs and promote an understanding and acceptance of diversity. Holiday education focuses on origins and histories. Religious views are never promoted nor denigrated.

Discover Preschool has established many celebration traditions. Classroom lesson plans and school newsletters will keep parents informed of these exciting events.

INSURANCE

Discover Preschool carries a standard accident protection policy that covers medical expenses over \$25 and up to a maximum of \$1000. Student accident insurance is covered in your registration fee.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At Discover Preschool, staff recognizes the value and importance of parent involvement in early childhood education. We also realize the responsibility we have to provide a variety of ways for parents to be involved in our programs in order to accommodate the diverse schedules, lifestyles, and needs of our families. Your ideas, suggestions, and comments are always appreciated.

Discover Preschool has a very enthusiastic, hands-on Parent Board. The board supports the director and teachers to provide a creative stimulating atmosphere for the preschool children. Discover's Parent Board is responsible for many tasks in the daily operation of the preschool. There are many opportunities to help throughout the school year either by becoming an active member of our Parent Board or by supporting the Parent Board's efforts. All board meetings are open to all parents. A list of board members and available positions is available upon request.

FUNDRAISING

Each year the Discover Preschool Parent Board conducts fundraisers. Typically in the past, our fundraising efforts have focused on raising money through various sales, family dine-in/carry-out nights at local

restaurants, a “Sip & Shop Moms Night Out” and a children’s artwork sale in the spring. Also, the past few years we have had a very successful Silent Auction evening and plans are on tap to repeat the event.

As an alternative to the above-mentioned, other preschools in the area have given their families the option of considering direct solicitation fundraising. This would give you the opportunity to make a donation directly to the school earmarked specifically for fundraising. You may find this more convenient and a time saver, especially if you have other children doing fundraising for their schools.

Your tuition payments cover annual expenses at Discover such as salaries, rent, insurance, and basic consumable supplies. Fundraising proceeds are usually used for either a specific item such as a science table; dress up cart, new window shades, or general equipment purchases (puzzles, games, tables and chairs and various table toys). Fundraising efforts over the years have been instrumental in updating our playground to meet the new Massachusetts requirements, in funding visits from Massachusetts Audubon to enhance our science curriculum, as well as purchasing many new items for the children and teachers to use throughout the classroom.

We would appreciate any direct donation in the amount of your choice. Please be assured that participation in any of our fundraising campaigns or direct solicitation is completely optional and voluntary. We sincerely appreciate the continued support of Discover Preschool families who maintain the tradition of excellence and caring for our school community.

Please note: Discover Preschool's Advisory Board has established a policy of not allowing events where alcohol may be served unless the venue has specific alcohol liability insurance.

COMMUNICATION

Discover Preschool believes that parents, teachers, and children all play important roles in the educational process. Essential to the success of the program is open communication between parents and teachers. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children with the teachers. It is important to keep the teachers informed of changes at home or to daily routines so that we are able to provide support and encouragement.

Discover families will receive a weekly school newsletter email, a weekly pic collage email from the teachers, as well as other forms of written communication in regard to the preschool “goings on”. Each family will have a mailbox or pouch labeled with their name. Families are encouraged to check daily for written communications.

The weekly email newsletter from the Director and Parent Board will be sent to keep families up to date about school news and events. *Please contact the director right away if you are not receiving these important weekly emails.*

Many school forms are also available for downloading on the Discover Preschool website:
www.discoverpreschool.com

PARENT CONFERENCES

There are two scheduled progress reports during the school year. During the Fall and Spring, parents may sign up for an on-site conference with their child's teacher. If parents choose, they may at any time request to schedule a conference with their child's teachers. There will be three scheduled progress reports arranged for children with disabilities.

The Director serves as the school liaison for each child who is referred for additional services or has special needs. The school liaison is responsible for coordinating care in the program and with service providers, and communicating with the child's parents, service providers, and preschool staff.

SNACKS AND MEALS

Please remember to send your child to school each day with a lunch box including a nut-free snack and a filled water bottle. Per EEC regulations, please label both the outside of the lunchbox and water bottle with your child's first and last name.

Discover Preschool is a *nut free environment* and will only serve snacks and use recipes that are free of any ingredients containing any form of peanuts and tree nuts. We encourage parents to keep this in mind when sending meals or snacks. *The safety of all children is our primary concern.*

For children participating in the Stay & Play lunch program, it is the parent's responsibility to provide a simple, nutritious meal that does NOT require refrigeration or heating. While we respect the parent's privilege to send an occasional special treat, we request that you avoid sending candy, pastries, and other "junk food".

SNACK & LUNCH BOX SUGGESTIONS

1/2 sandwich

yogurt

applesauce

vegetable and dip

Ready-to-eat fruit (please peel or cut if necessary)
pretzels, chips, and/or crackers

WHAT TO BRING

All children should come to school with their own, already filled and labelled, water bottle and snack and dressed in comfortable play clothes that allow for full participation in the day's activities. Paint, sand, water, clay, markers, and glue are among the "staples" of our curriculum. Children should be dressed in clothing that enables them to move freely, including getting into the bathroom quickly and independently. Please avoid buckles, difficult buttons, and slippery shoes. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

All children should also have a ziplock bag containing a complete change of clothes to *leave at school*. You will be reminded to update what's in your child's extra clothes bag seasonally as well. We have extra clothes at Discover for emergencies but children often prefer to have their own clothes to change into when necessary.

Outdoor play is an especially important part of our daily routine. Please anticipate the need for foul weather gear - raincoats, rain pants, boots, snow pants, mittens, hats, etc., and send them in each day as the weather indicates. Please label outdoor clothes as well with your child's name.

POLICIES

CHILD GUIDANCE

Discover Preschool guides children's behavior by helping children to balance their needs with the needs of others. The techniques of child guidance used at Discover Preschool assist children in learning to manage their own behavior. Even when firmly disciplined, children are treated with respect, encouraged to feel good about themselves, and supported in becoming increasingly independent. We help children build self-control.

A variety of techniques are used at Discover Preschool to guide children's behavior. These techniques include: redirection; natural consequences; ignoring; directed consequences; problem solving; and as a last resort, taking a short break from the classroom with a teacher helping them. The staff must consider the individual circumstances and developmental level of the children involved before choosing a technique in response to inappropriate behavior. The role of the staff in guiding children's behavior is that of a facilitator and helper.

Prevention is an important factor in the effective guidance of children's behavior in group settings. Staff must examine their teaching style, carefully arrange the classroom environment to meet the needs of the group, carefully examine the daily schedule, and determine if expectations are age appropriate.

Discover Preschool will never:

- spank or use corporal punishment
- subject children to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse
- deny food as a form of punishment
- force feed children
- punish any child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet
- force a child to stay in soiled clothing
- force a child to remain on the toilet or use any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting
- punitive time-outs

Where appropriate and feasible, children shall participate in the establishment of such rules, policies and procedures.

ENROLLMENT

All registration matters are handled on a first come first served basis by the preschool's director and registrar. Admission to Discover Preschool is open to any child between the ages of 2.9 years to 5 years, regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. Enrollment into our programs is based upon the following criteria:

- Preschool Program: Children must be two years & nine months old by Sept. 1.
- Pre-K Program: Children must be four years old by Sept. 1.

Returning students are given priority for admission to Discover Preschool. Siblings of current and former students will receive priority over new families.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Registration for returning families begins during the first week of December.

Application forms are given to all current students and mailed to potential known returning siblings. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school when they would like to receive applications for siblings.

Applications from returning students and siblings are accepted via mail, email, or drop off to the Preschool Office from the date the materials are first available in December to the first Friday in January AFTER the Winter break.

Class placement will be made the first Monday following the application deadline. After all returning students have been registered, siblings of returning and former students will be enrolled in the order their registration has been received.

If there are not enough slots to accommodate all the registrations, a lottery will be instituted. If it is needed, the lottery will be performed immediately after the application deadline. If your child does not receive placement in your class of choice, your deposit will be returned.

Acceptance letters will be mailed once placements have been made. In order to be guaranteed of placement, you must return the acceptance letter by the date specified or your slot will be passed onto another child.

After current and returning children and siblings are placed, we will accept “new family” applications on a first come first served basis.

Please note that the prior registration and enrollment DOES NOT guarantee registration in the program of your choice.

All application fees and pre-paid tuition payments including pre-paid Stay and Play are non-refundable.

In the event that an unusual circumstance presents itself during the enrollment process, the Director reserves the right to make a determination in keeping with the purpose and philosophy of Discover Preschool.

TRANSITIONS 704(3)

Whether entering Discover Preschool for the very first time, or moving on to a new class within the program, children and families are given the opportunity for a smooth transition.

- Each fall, prior to school opening, Discover holds an Open House for all its children and their families.
- Also, for our younger Preschool Class, the school year begins in a gentler fashion by allowing for smaller groups and a shorter day (staggered visits) at the first meeting.
 - *Notification of the above procedures is mailed to each family over the summer.*

- When children are moving on to another class or another school, children will be assisted with the change in a manner consistent with their ability to understand.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Health Care Consultant - Dr. Sarah Andrew | 1.978.988.6200 |
| Fire | 911 or 978.475.1281 |
| Police | 911 or 978-475.0411 |
| Ambulance | 911 |
| Poison Control Center | 1.800.682.9211 |
| Hospital (Lawrence General) | 1.978.683.0400 |
| Department of Children and Families | 1.978.689.2688 |

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency at Discover Preschool, the procedure is:

- 1) The nearest available teacher will stay with the child. The teacher will try to keep the child calm while administering the appropriate first aid.
- 2) The Director will call for emergency assistance.
- 3) The Director will contact the parent(s). Emergency information for each child is in all three of the red Emergency First Aid backpacks. Parents need to immediately meet the child at the hospital.
- 4) The Teacher will accompany the child to the hospital. The child's file will be taken to the hospital with the child. The Teacher will check the file for permission to treat and any special instructions or conditions.

INCIDENT REPORTS

All parents will be informed immediately of any emergency care given beyond minor first aid procedures. All parents will be informed in writing of any first aid administered within 24 hours of the incident on an injury report form; parents need to sign this form. The original form will be kept in the child's file; a copy will be given to the parent(s) and a copy will be kept in the Injury Log in the office.

FIRST AID KITS

First aid kits are located in the Office, in the teacher cabinet in the Preschool classroom, and the white cabinet over the counter in the Pre-K classroom. All staff are certified in Infant & Child First Aid and CPR. The first aid kits are maintained by the Director.

EMERGENCY PLAN FOR EVACUATION

The emergency plan for evacuation is posted by the exits in all classrooms. The Teacher leads the children out of the building. The Lead Teacher checks the area for stragglers, gathers the red Emergency backpack, a cell phone, and keys. The Lead Teacher takes responsibility for assuring that the right number of children are safely evacuated.

EVACUATION DRILLS

Evacuation drills are conducted monthly. Drills will occur on varying days so that children in all programs have the opportunity to participate in a fire drill every other month. The date, time and effectiveness of each evacuation drill will be documented by the Director.

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

At the start of the school year, cell phone information will be collected for an emergency group text system. In the event of loss of power, heat, or water during school hours to the degree that the program cannot operate safely, and within EEC regulations, the parents of the children will be notified to pick up their children. The staff will remain at the school until all the children have been picked up.

If the building must be evacuated due to fire, natural disaster or dangerous situations (bomb threat, chemical spills, gas leaks) the children will walk under the supervision of the teachers on sidewalks down Shawsheen Road to Andover High School / West Middle School to seek shelter. The Andover Police/Fire Department will be notified immediately, and their professional advice will be sought.

The Director will contact the parents on the emergency text system to come and pick up their children immediately. The Advisory Board President and the Parent Board President will also be notified and kept informed of the situation. The director will ensure that all children will have exited the building and are accounted for. At least one staff member will carry a cell phone. The director and teachers will bring all red emergency backpacks containing emergency contact information, attendance books, medications, and first aid supplies to the new location.

In the incidence of severe weather or earthquake alert, children will be moved to the inner hallway of the school. They will sit by walls, away from glass areas. The children will remain in this location until the staff is informed by Andover emergency personnel that the danger has passed.

In the event of a flood, the children will be moved to a location of safety within the West Parish Church. Parents will be notified to pick up their children. The director will contact emergency personnel of the Town of Andover for further information and instruction for evacuating the building.

If another form of an emergency situation should occur i.e. police or fire dept. activity in our immediate area, the children will be kept indoors, the facility doors will remain locked, and the children's day will continue in normal fashion. The director will remain updated via the Church office and/or Public Service officials. This scenario will remain in effect until the Public Service Departments deem the situation safe. Preschool families will be notified ASAP via the emergency text system, email updates, paper notices, or directly from the preschool staff.

If the Andover Public Schools release students due to a severe snowstorm, Discover Preschool will attempt to reach parents to pick up their child. The staff will remain at the school until all children have departed.

In case of a power outage, loss of heat, gas leak, or loss of water prior to school hours, Discover Preschool will be closed. Parents will be notified ASAP via the emergency text system, if possible.

IN THE EVENT OF A LOST CHILD:

In the unlikely event of a child going missing while at Discover Preschool the following procedure will be implemented immediately.

A staff member will notify the Director, while other staff continues searching.

All staff present will be informed and an immediate thorough search of the Discover Preschool facility will be made followed by a search of the surrounding areas, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.

This search will be conducted by as many staff people that are available.

The Director will carry out a second search of the area.

If the child has still not been accounted for the Director will contact the police.

The Director will also contact the parents of the missing child.

During this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintains as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children at Discover.

The Director will meet the police and the parent.

The Director will then await instructions from the police.

Any incidents will be recorded in writing on an incident report form.

EEC will be contacted and informed of any incidents.

SHELTER IN PLACE

In the event of a potential threat from an intruder inside or outside the program, the children and staff's safety within the facility, until police or other emergency responders can respond, is of the utmost importance.

Discover Preschool will begin the following "Shelter in Place" procedures:

- The Preschool Director or Lead Teacher will call the authorities and then will announce sheltering in place using a password decided upon by all of the staff. All students and teachers will huddle together where the classrooms meet.
- The teachers will ensure all lights are turned off and the window shades are drawn.
- Teachers will keep the attendance books and red emergency backpacks in their possession. Children will be counted before, during, and after the event.
- Medical and food supplies are available in both the classroom and preschool office.
- The children will be directed to sit on the floor and remain quiet, out of sight lines from the door.
- A cellular telephone and land-line, or other means of communicating within and outside of the facility, will be available at all times to contact the authorities.

If a more secure space is needed, all children and staff will move to the preschool office. The door will be locked and the children will be moved as far into the room as possible, out of the door's sight line, and sit quietly on the floor.

Once the authorities have given us the all clear, we will return to our classrooms. Children will be released to parents under the guidance and supervision of the authorities.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Your child's health is very important to us. The following guidelines are necessary to insure the health of all children and staff at Discover Preschool.

Keep your child home if he or she:

- has a fever (higher than 100.0 oral) or has had one within a 24 hour period before school.
- has vomited within a 24 hour period before school.
- has had diarrhea within a 24 hour period before school.
- has a contagious illness or condition.
- has a chronic cough and/or runny nose.
- has thick mucous or pus draining from the eye or nose.
- has a sore throat and or swollen glands.
- has an undiagnosed or contagious skin rash.
- is unusually tired, pale, irritable - does not seem to feel well.
- has been diagnosed with head lice.

Children should also be kept at home if they have received an initial dose of anti-allergy medicine such as Benadryl to relieve symptoms of a possible allergic reaction (including a rash or hives) regardless of its severity.

Your Child may return to school when:

- symptoms have disappeared for more than 24 hours

- OR -

- a physician has certified in writing that the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent or they are no longer a health threat to other children, staff, and parents at Discover Preschool.
- has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- in the case of strep - has been on antibiotics for 36 hours.
- in the case of chicken pox - it has been 1 week after the spots have appeared or when all the lesions are crusted over and very dry.
- in the case of conjunctivitis - has been on antibiotic (ointment) for 24 hours.
- in the case of head lice children may return to school 24 hours after treatment and with verification by their physician that she/he is nit free.
- In the case of Coronavirus – contact director immediately and Discover Preschool will follow recommendations from the Board of Health and Department of Early Education & Care.

If your child develops any signs or symptoms of illness during the school day, we will call you.

We will isolate and keep your child comfortable in either the classroom or office; we expect that you will make arrangements for your child to be taken home.

Parents are asked to notify the Director within 24 hours if their child has contracted a communicable disease or condition.

In the case of certain highly contagious or serious illness, a doctor's note may be requested stating that the child is free of symptoms and the date that the child may return to school.

When a communicable disease or condition is reported, a written notice will be posted at the entrance of the school designating the group and the illness. When warranted, notes and emails will be sent home notifying the families of contagious conditions as well.

The staff uses non-latex gloves when handling bodily fluids, and applies proper hand washing techniques.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Prior to admission, each child must have a physical and be updated on all immunizations. A Massachusetts School Health Form must be completed and signed by the child's physician and renewed each year. A child will not be able to attend the programs at Discover Preschool without a current health form.

MEDICATION

Discover Preschool encourages parents to administer all medications themselves with the exception of an antidote for allergic reactions and/or a chronic medical condition that is prescribed by the child's pediatrician. The above-mentioned medication will be kept in a red first aid/emergency backpack in your child's classroom, stored up high and out of the reach of all children at all times, and will go with your child's teachers wherever they are throughout the day.

In addition to written parental authorization, the medicine must indicate that it is for the specific child and specific instructions for its administration must be included. Any use is documented in the child's file and immediately reported to the parent. In the event that an EPI Pen is administered, 911 will be called and the procedures for emergencies and illnesses will be carried out.

However, any medication, prescription or non-prescription, including topical non-prescription medication may be administered only with written parental authorization *AND* a written order from a physician. These statements shall be valid only for one year* from the date on which they are signed. All medications will be

kept in their original containers labeled with the child's name, the name of the drug and direction for its use and storage.

*non-prescription medication including, but not limited to medications such as Tylenol, Motrin, and cough syrups must be reauthorized *weekly*.

The director or teacher, who is trained in *The 5 Rights of Medication Administration* required by EEC, will administer medication. Another staff member will always verify dosage. Children must be on the medication for 24 hours before it will be administered at Discover Preschool. Any initial dose of a medication *WILL NOT* be given at Discover Preschool.

If applicable, teachers will renew their training in *The 5 Rights of Medication Administration* annually and provide documentation to the director.

Discover Preschool will maintain a written record in the child's file of all medications (prescription or non-prescription) administered. All unused medication will be returned to the parent by the Director or designated teacher, when no longer needed, or in regard to emergency allergy medications, at the end of the school year.

Topical non-prescription medication when applied over open wounds or broken skin will not be applied at Discover Preschool.

Topical non-prescription medications not for application over broken skin or open wounds, such as Chap Stick, are discouraged. However, in the event of parental request, Discover Preschool will require written parental consent. Forms are available in the Director's office. Consent forms must be updated weekly.

Individual Health Care Plans will be maintained for children with chronic medical conditions that have been diagnosed by a licensed health care provider. Discover Preschool will follow the EEC Regulations in regard to such medical conditions. Policy is as follows:

The individual health care plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered.

(a) The educator may administer routine, scheduled medication or treatment to the child with a chronic medical condition in accordance with written parental consent and licensed health care practitioner authorization.

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of 606 CMR 7.11(1)(b)2, above, the educator must have successfully completed training, given by the child's health care practitioner, or, with his/her written

consent, given by the child's parent or the program's health consultant, that specifically addresses the child's medical condition, medication and other treatment needs.

2. In addition to the requirements for the routine, scheduled administration of medication or treatment set forth in section (3)(a), above, any unanticipated administration of medication or unanticipated treatment for a non-life-threatening condition requires that the educator must make a reasonable attempt to contact the parent(s) prior to administering such unanticipated medication or beginning such unanticipated treatment, or, if the parent(s) cannot be reached in advance, as soon as possible after such medication or treatment is given.
3. The educator must document all medication or treatment administration, whether scheduled or unanticipated, in the child's medication and treatment log.
4. The written parental consent and the licensed health care practitioner authorization shall be valid for one year, unless withdrawn sooner. Such consent and authorization must be renewed annually for administration of medication and/or treatment to continue. Educators may, with written parental consent and authorization of a (a) licensed health care practitioner, develop and implement an individual health care plan that permits older school age children to carry their own inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors and use them as needed, without the direct supervision of an educator. All educators must be aware of the contents and requirements of the child's individual health care plan specifying how the inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector will be kept secure from access by other children in the program.
 - (b) Whenever an individual health care plan provides for a child to carry his or her own medication, the licensee must maintain on-site a back-up supply of the medication for use as needed.

ALLERGIES

Information for identifying and protecting children with allergies is requested on the application forms. These forms are kept in your child's file and in their classroom's red First Aid/Emergency backpack. A compiled list of allergies is posted in each classroom and in the office. Anyone acting as a substitute teacher will be informed of these allergies by the director or supervising teacher.

AUTHORIZATION TO PICK UP CHILD

No child will be released to a person unauthorized by a parent to pick that child up. Authorized individuals are those outlined in your enrollment forms completed in the spring.

We will need *verbal* notification in the event that one of these individuals is picking your child up from school.

We must have a *written and dated* note for any other changes in pick up including play dates.

POLICIES FOR REPORTING NEGLECT AND ABUSE

Teachers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are mandated reporters: while in professional capacity, if a teacher has a reasonable cause to believe that a child is at risk for abuse or neglect, the teacher must report such information immediately to The Department of Social Services by oral communication *and* by making a written report (51 A) within 48 hours after such oral communication.

Discover Preschool views the reporting and investigation process as a positive intervention for the family. If possible, the parents will be made aware of the concern and will be involved in the process of reporting.

The Director will be the designated reporter for Discover Preschool. Any teacher suspecting that a child enrolled in Discover Preschool may be suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him/her, including sexual abuse, or from neglect including malnutrition, should report concerns immediately to the Director. The Director will assess the situation, and if warranted, report the suspected or alleged incident to the Department of Social Services. In the event that the teacher disagrees with the Director's determination that there is not reasonable cause to file a report, the Teacher needs to inform the Director of her intent to file a report on her own.

The Department of Social Services, Child Abuse Hot Line is:

1-978-927-4600 (daytime, weekdays)

1-800-792-5200 (evenings & weekends)

A complete copy of our Health & Safety Policies is available in the Office.

REFERRAL OF CHILDREN FOR SERVICES

- The following plan will be implemented in the event that any teacher feels that a child who is enrolled at Discover Preschool would benefit from appropriate assessment for social, emotional, educational, medical services, dental check-ups and/or hearing and vision screening:
- The Lead Teacher will inform the Director.
- The Lead Teacher will provide written observations with specific details.
- The Lead Teacher, Teacher, and Director will meet to discuss concerns and strategies to help the child.
- The above team will develop a written referral plan of recommendations for parents, including reason for referral and adaptations made by teachers in the school setting.

- The Lead Teacher will arrange a meeting between the parents, Director, and Lead Teacher.
- At the parent meeting, the Director will provide resource material for the parents.
- Parents must give written consent before any information, written or verbal, is provided to outside agencies.
- The Lead Teacher will follow up on results of the parent meeting.
- The Director will assist and provide support for both teachers and parents throughout the referral process.

In the event that a child has been evaluated, and is not in need of services, the Lead Teacher will review the child's progress every 3 months to determine if the referral process should once again be implemented.

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS TO NOTE:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Parental Stress Hot line | 1-800-632-8188 |
| National Drug Hot line | 1-800-241-7946 |
| MA Dental Society | 1-800-342-8747 |
| Physician Referral | 1-800-580-6648 |
| Vision Foundation | 1-800-852-3029 |

HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS

Discover Preschool follows a modified Andover Public School calendar year. We are closed the following holidays and vacations as outlined on the Discover Preschool calendar:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Columbus Day | Martin Luther King Day |
| Veterans Day | February Winter Vacation |
| Thanksgiving | April Spring Vacation |
| December Holiday Vacation | Memorial Day |

There are five dates (that are not holidays) that Discover Preschool is closed for the following reasons: parent/teacher conference dates (3), a teacher training date (1) and Open House for prospective families (1), These dates as well as holidays and vacation weeks are not included in your tuition.

SNOW – INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS

If there is no school in the Andover Public Schools, there will be no school for Discover Preschool. If a 90-minute or more delay is announced Discover Preschool will be closed. If a 1 hour delay is announced Discover Preschool will open at 1 hour later also. No School announcements are posted on NECN.com, updated on the Andover Public School App, and broadcast on radio station WBZ 1030 AM. No School announcements will also be broadcast on the early morning news on TV channels 5 and 4.

Discover Preschool does not make up snow days that have been announced per above by the Andover Public Schools. However, in the event of excessive snow days (4 or more snow days for a group), make up days (up to 2 days) will be made up in accordance with the teacher's contracts. The actual make-up days will be decided by the director. There are no make-up days for Stay and Play.

TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION 704(17)(i)

Discover Preschool is committed to providing for the needs of children and their families within the scope of the school's purpose and philosophy. In the event that Discover Preschool feels it is not able to meet the needs of either the child, parent, or family, we reserve the right to terminate or suspend the child from the program on a time line that is in the child's best interest.

Every effort will be made to inform parents of available information and referrals for services that would suit their child upon the request of the parents.

Reasons that may result in the termination or suspension of a child from a program at Discover Preschool are as follows:

- 1) Non-payment of tuition and/or lack of adherence to our tuition payment policies.
- 2) Lack of cooperation from parents with Discover Preschool's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent-staff meetings or conferences.
- 3) Abusive behaviors and or verbal threats by parent toward Discover Preschool or other parents.
- 4) Parent disciplining, in any way, children (other than their own) while at Discover Preschool.
- 5) Frequent late pickups.
- 6) Child exhibits special needs or needs related to serious illness that are not possible to be met at Discover Preschool (despite genuine attempts to meet the needs of the child) due to an undue burden that the accommodations for these needs would cause to Discover Preschool.

7) A child's behavior endangers the health and welfare of her/himself or others at Discover Preschool.

Prior to termination or suspension the parents will receive written notification of potential termination/suspension and actions that parents may take to avoid termination or suspension. Actions may include the following:

- An opportunity to meet with the director and discuss options other than suspension and termination.
- Referrals for evaluation, diagnostic and therapeutic services, from the director.
- Opportunity to pursue options for supportive services to the program, including consultation and educator training.
- Developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

In the event termination or suspension cannot be avoided, written documentation will be given to parents explaining the reason(s) for termination or suspension.

TOILETING

Children are always welcomed to use the bathroom as the need arises with the supervision of a teacher whether they are indoors or outdoors on the playground. The bathrooms are always supervised by an adult. Also, a regular bathroom time is scheduled for mid-morning (before snack) for each class. Children wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after toileting and before handling food. Staff members also wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after assisting children with toileting or toileting themselves and before handling food. Individual disposable towels are used for drying.

No child will be punished, verbally abused or humiliated for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. Toileting accidents or soiled diapers are treated as a natural part of the toilet learning process. Every effort is made to support the child's self-esteem: an adult will discreetly help the child change his/her clothing or change his/her diaper. Sterile gloves are worn by all staff during changing of soiled clothing or diapers. Soiled clothing is put in a bag and taken home at the end of the day. Diapers are placed in a plastic bag and disposed of in the trash barrel with a cover located in the children's bathroom. We accept children who are not yet toilet trained and generally diapers are changed while the child is lying down. Diapers can be changed while the child is standing up as long as the child is able to balance and stand on their own and they are standing on the floor. Although Discover Preschool always has extra clothes available, we also ask that a complete change of clothes, labeled with your child's name, be left at school at all times.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITES

Discover Preschools accepts the application of any child with a disability. Upon consent of the parents, Discover Preschool will request information from either the Local Education Agency, Early Intervention, or health service providers. The Director and parents of the child will identify in writing any changes needed to accommodate the child such as:

Change and modification in child's participation

Size of the group to which the child is assigned and the staff to child ratio

Any specific equipment, materials, ramp, and aids

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the above information, the parents will be notified in writing if the accommodations cause undue burden to the center. The notification shall include the reason for the decision, parent's right to contact the Office for determination of compliance, and the center's need to maintain a copy of the parent notification in its records.