



Parent Handbook

WHO WE ARE

Childrenspace North is a non-denominational, sister school to Childrenspace Preschool serving children ages 6 weeks to 3 years old.

OUR MISSION

Childrenspace North's mission is to create an environment where relationships are nurtured, differences are celebrated, challenges are seen as opportunities for growth, and children are happy.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Childrenspace North provides a progressive, play-based approach to education where community is central to our curriculum. Our educators use intentional, experiential, and developmentally appropriate practices to provide hands-on activities that promote learning in every area of development. Critical thinking and pre-academic skills are woven into the fabric of everything we do. **We teach each child at their developmental level and individualize our program while still meeting the needs of the whole classroom.** We believe in providing structure, routine and boundaries in a safe, nurturing and fun environment where each child is celebrated, feels valued, and part of the classroom community.

ADMISSION POLICY

Children will be admitted to the Childrenspace North without regard to sex, race, color or country of origin. The Childrenspace program is designed for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 3 years of age. Each child admitted will have a completed Admission Form, an Alternate Pick-up Form and a signed Contract/Policy Statement on file. Also required are an up-to-date Medical Form and an Emergency Release Form.

As part of the registration process, parents will fill out a Child Development Profile. The purpose of this form is to provide a vehicle for parents to share important information about their child with the child's future teachers.

Each year, parents will review forms on file and any necessary changes made to keep information current. Parents will also be required to update medical forms annually.

HOURS

The Childrenspace North will operate from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday and 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. Childrenspace North operates on a year-round basis. It is closed for an average of ten to twelve holidays a year and two weeks before Labor Day for staff vacations and building maintenance. ***See attached calendar**

PROGRAM

The Childrenspace North day is organized to include certain regularly scheduled activities and sufficient time for free choice periods. During the course of the day there are time periods set aside for snack, lunch, rest,

group activities, individual activities, indoor play, and outdoor play when weather permits. A typical day will be organized as follows:

Daily Schedule	Infant
6:30 – 9:00 am	Drop-off
9:00 – 9:30 am	Tummy Time/Floor Time
9:30 – 9:45 am	Diapering
9:45 – 11:15 am	Naptime
11:15 – 11:45 am	Feeding
11:45 – 12:45 pm	Outdoor Time/Diapering
12:45 – 2:45 pm	Naptime
2:45 – 3:15 pm	Feeding
3:15 – 4:15 pm	Tummy Time/Floor Time
4:15 – 5:15 pm	Outdoor Time/Play Time/Diapering
5:15 – 5:45 pm	Feeding
5:45 – 7:00 pm	Play Time/Pick-up

Daily Schedule	Toddlers
6:30 – 10:00 am	Drop-off/Breakfast/Free Play *Breakfast ends at 9:00 am
10:00 – 10:20 am	Circle/Movement Time
10:20 – 10:40 am	Snack
10:40 – 11:00 am	Puzzles/Books/Bathroom
11:00 – 12:00 pm	Outside
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 – 12:45 pm	Quiet Activities
12:45 – 2:45 pm	Rest Time
2:45 – 3:00 pm	Books/Puzzles
3:00 – 3:20 pm	Afternoon Snack
3:20 – 3:45 pm	Group Songs/Books
3:45 – 4:00 pm	Bathroom
4:00 – 4:30 pm	Outside
4:30 – 7:00 pm	Free Play/Outside/Pick Up

COMMUNICATION

Newsletters and calendars will be sent home on a monthly basis to inform parents of current projects, themes and special events. We will frequently use email as a way to send messages regarding individual children, to

share program information that arises between newsletters, and/or to invite parental assistance and participation in school activities. The latter is a special way to strengthen the school-home connection!

DISCIPLINE

Each year, our students have the difficult task of learning and remembering many new rules and routines. It is up to the staff to remind them as often as possible of the rules and the reasons for those rules. We must make sure that the school is safe, both physically and emotionally, for all the children in our care.

If a child is not following a rule, he/she will be gently reminded of the rule and told the reason for it. If the child persists in not observing the rule, he/she will be removed from the difficult situation for a few minutes and his/her energy channeled into a more acceptable activity.

Discipline is not carried out in a punitive way. It is rather our attempt to guide the child to more appropriate behavior; it is our attempt to teach. At all times, the child's positive self-image is considered most important, and is carefully supported.

DISMISSAL

A child whose behavior is injurious to self and/or others may be discharged from Childrenspace North at the discretion of the Director.

Childrenspace North will work closely with parents and caregivers to prevent dismissal from our program. We view ourselves as partners in your child's education and development and understand the importance of consistency for very young children. Childrenspace North recognizes that some children's individual needs may require a higher level of support and understanding from our staff. Any strategies or behavior plans developed for a specific child will be discussed with parents and caregivers to develop a plan that promotes success and consistency across environments. We also recognize that some children may have outside related therapists working with them (i.e. physical therapist, speech therapist, etc.) All related service providers are welcome in our program. We will work closely with children, families and relevant professionals in order to maintain open lines of communication, use shared language and promote consistency and expectations of behavior.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to our program. All verbal and written information shall remain confidential and will not be discussed or shared with any individual, other than relevant Childrenspace North staff, without explicit written permission from the parent or caregiver.

FEES

Childrenspace North will operate on a space-reserved basis. At the time of registration, the child's schedule and weekly fee will be determined. Parents will sign an agreement to pay the determined amount on a monthly basis, regardless of child's attendance. There will be no reduction in your child's tuition if she/he is absent due to illness, family vacation or religious observance. Tuition will also not be reduced for school

closings, whether scheduled holidays or weather-related events. A schedule of school holidays will be distributed in September.

Childspace North offers flexible scheduling. We ask that you schedule a minimum of 21 hours per week (ideally 3, 7-hour days) so that your child will benefit from our classroom community and more easily learn the routine of the day. If your child attends Childspace North between 21 and 28 hours per week, tuition will be \$12.50 per hour; if your child attends Childspace North between 29 and 35 per week, tuition will be \$11.50 per hour; if your child attends Childspace North for 36 or more hours per week, tuition will be \$10.50 per hour, with a maximum tuition of \$2500 per month.

# Of Hours	Price Per Hour
21 - 28 hours per week (minimum)	\$12.50
29 - 35 hours per week	\$11.50
36+ hours per week	\$10.50

There will be no registration fee. Monthly payments are due on the first day of the month incurred, or on a date agreed upon by the director and parent/caregiver. Payments may be made either in cash or by check, payable to Childspace North. All tuition payments must be made on time.

When checks are returned to the Center due to insufficient funds, a \$15.00 fee will be charged.

In the case where two or three siblings are enrolled at Childspace, the largest fee will be paid in full while the remaining fee(s) will be discounted by 10%.

OCCASIONAL CHANGES IN SCHEDULING

If, on an occasional basis, parents need to add hours or days to their child’s schedule, requests should be made as far in advance as possible. If requests can be accommodated, additional hours will be charged at either \$11.50 or \$10.50 per hour.

If there is a holiday in a given week, and that holiday falls on one of your child’s scheduled days, it will not be possible to reschedule that day. Such requests might be too numerous for Childspace North to honor and still maintain our staff/child ratio and our state licensed capacity.

If there are any changes in the child’s routine (different hours one day, different time of pick-up, different person than usual picking up), such information must be written down in the logbook on the morning when these changes occur. Parents are also required to sign their child in when they arrive in the morning and out when they leave in the afternoon. Please initial time in and time out in the logbook on a daily basis.

PERMANENT CHANGES IN SCHEDULING

If for any reason the parents' scheduling needs change, Childrenspace North requires a **30-day notification** in writing to amend or nullify the fee agreement. If notice is summarily given, Childrenspace North will hold the parents responsible for **one month of payment**.

BREAKFAST, SNACKS AND LUNCH

Childrenspace North works closely with a nutritionist to ensure a breakfast and snack menu, which includes a variety of foods while still incorporating familiar favorites.

Breakfast is served between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. daily and is provided by Childrenspace North. It consists of cold cereal, bagels/English muffins/raisin toast, fruit, fruit juice and/or milk.

Childrenspace North will provide snacks twice a day. At this time the children may choose from two healthy items: a piece of fruit or vegetable, yogurt, cheese, a half sandwich, etc. The snack will change daily. Weekly snack menus are posted in both classrooms for your inspection.

Parents are responsible for preparing an adequate and nutritious lunch for their child.

Such a meal should include a source of protein in soup, yogurt, cheese or a sandwich, a piece of fresh fruit or a fresh vegetable and either fruit drink or milk. The quantity of food sent will be determined by the number of hours the child is in our care and the size of his/her appetite. We respectfully request that you leave all sweets at home.

Childrenspace North values the importance of promoting healthy eating choices and habits. We will always encourage children to try new food items. Likewise, we will never force a child to eat something they adamantly oppose; this includes items sent from home. Please send items that you know your child will eat, in addition to, any new items you would like us to encourage her/him to try. Lunchtime is viewed as a time to eat, as well as, a time to promote language and community.

Childrenspace will happily heat up food but actual cooking is not an option. If there are perishables in the lunchbox (yogurt, cheese, tuna fish, etc.) refrigeration is available. Parents should inform the teacher that such is required.

Infants will be provided with school snacks that have been approved by parents or caregivers. The youngest infants, who are still on formula/breast milk only, will only be given formula/breast milk provided by parents or caregivers.

DROP-OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES

After having observed parents and children at pick-up and drop-off time over the years, we have some tips that we think may be helpful to you at this delicate time. It is important to remember that we all need a time of transition from one activity to another.

When you drop-off your child, at either the front door or in the classroom, it is important to say goodbye. Parents sometimes feel that it's easier to disappear when the child is not looking. Allowing the child to have a clear understanding of the transition provides a sense of safety and routine and shows the child that you trust the care in which you are leaving her/him. Looking around for a parent who the child may think is still in the room may cause panic and fear. The Childrenspace North staff is there to help transition your child into the school day. We will talk them through it, provide a nurturing experience while redirecting and engaging them in an activity.

When you come for your child, please be aware that he or she may be involved in an activity, may need to clean up or may want a few minutes to collect gear and say goodbye to friends. Please be patient and prepare to spend a few minutes relaxing while we help your child get ready to go home. If other children accompany you at pick-up time, we respectfully ask that you keep them under your supervision at all times. Thank you in advance.

If you know you will be rushed, please call ahead and alert the teachers to your arrival time. Teachers will make sure that children have cleaned up, gathered their belongings and are ready to leave at the appointed time.

We are a very mobile group. We like to take advantage of our location at the Temple to visit the playgrounds, walk around the grounds or surrounding area. If we are out when you come to pick up your child, there will be a note on the front door telling you where we are and when we will return. The Center is always open during the daytime hours so you can come in and collect belongings before you meet us to pick up your child.

Please do not allow your child to exit from the Center alone at any time.

Please do not send an older sibling to pick up your child. We will not release children to other children.

It is the parent's responsibility to see that the child is picked up by 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. In case of a last-minute emergency where parent or guardian was planning on picking up the child but cannot, the following procedure will be followed: Parent will call the Center as soon as possible to designate either a person on the Alternate Pick-up Form, or a substitute pick-up person for that day. When picking up, the person must be able to provide appropriate identification and/or a password agreed upon in advance between parent, pick-up person and teacher.

No child will be released to a person other than the parent or guardian unless designated by the parent or guardian verbally or in writing. We will not release a child to any undesignated person.

Whereas we understand that lateness is occasionally unavoidable, repeated failure to pick up by specified times will be deemed a serious infraction of the Childrenspace North policies.

VISITATION

Parents are welcome to visit the Center at any time.

BIRTHDAYS

If you and your child would like him/her to celebrate a birthday at Childrenspace, we would be happy to oblige. Usually, parents bring some special treat and we share it at afternoon snack. If you would like to celebrate a birthday, please ask the teacher how many children will be present on that particular day.

CONFERENCES

Conferences with parents will be scheduled on a semi-annual or as-needed basis. At this time, observations on your child's adjustment to and development within the program will be discussed. In addition to these formal conferences, we are always available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding your child.

PLANS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

IN CASE OF FIRE:

The Director will conduct monthly fire drills to acquaint children with the evacuation procedure and the location of exits from the building. In case of an actual fire, children will be evacuated from the building. Our fire alarm is hooked up to the Central Station; agents there will notify the local fire department. Parents will be called to come and pick up their children. If an emergency evacuation of the outside grounds area is required, the children will be sheltered at 15 Park Trail (residential home.) Our backup emergency evacuation location is 17 Glengary Road (residential home.). Teachers will remain with the children until all of them have been safely picked up.

IN CASE OF WEATHER EMERGENCY:

The Director will conduct bi-annual "shelter-in-place" drills to acquaint children with the procedure, in case of extreme weather or a radiological event.

IN CASE OF A RADIOLOGICAL EVENT AT INDIAN POINT

A Westchester County Radiological Emergency Preparedness Plan (REP) has been created in the event of a radiological emergency at the Indian Point nuclear power plant in Buchanan, New York. The plan covers a range of possible procedures to protect children in public and private schools and facilities within the ten-mile Emergency Preparedness Zone (the EPZ). The Westchester County Executive, acting in conjunction with both the Westchester County Office of Emergency Management (WCOEM), and the Westchester County Commissioner of Health, will be responsible for issuing directives, depending upon the timing of the event, and its severity. Notification of a radiological event may come in the form of the Siren System, or a phone call from a representative of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS), the agency that licenses Childrenspace North. These signals are designed as prompts for Program Directors to monitor the Emergency Alert Radio System in place for detailed information on the emergency at Indian Point and what actions will need to be taken.

GENERAL HEALTH POLICY

All teachers shall have pre-employment physical examinations and regular reviews by a responsible health source. All children shall have accurate and current health records, including allergies and special medications, on file at the Center.

ILLNESS AND MEDICATION

The decision of when to send a sick child to school and when to keep her/him home is often a sensitive and difficult one. While we appreciate the parent's need to work, we are also very conscious of our responsibility to safeguard the health of the larger group. In that spirit of appreciating both viewpoints, we hereby set forth certain guidelines that may help you in making a safe and sane decision.

In general, a child with a mild illness, such as a cold or a treated ear infection, can remain in the childcare setting if the child is well enough to participate, if the child does not need too much extra attention, and if the child does not represent a new source of infection. This means that the child is not bringing into the setting a new infection to which the other children have not been exposed.

There are certain times when a sick child should stay at home:

1. When the child's condition compromises the health and safety of others.
2. When there is a fever. Children must remain at home during the course of a fever and for an additional 24 hours after the fever has passed. (Fever means temperature by ear of 100.4 degrees or more.)
3. When a child shows signs of not feeling well, and cannot fully participate in the school program.
 4. When the child requires one-on-one care.
5. When a child has a special condition that a healthcare consultant has advised may put him or her at increased risk from a contagious disease.
6. Until a medical evaluation allows inclusion, signs and symptoms of possible illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, discolored urine, change in appetite, unusual irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, an undiagnosed rash, stiff neck or other unusual signs.
 7. Persistent diarrhea, defined as three or more stools in 24 hours.
8. Vomiting two or more times in previous 24 hour period, or any vomiting accompanied by symptoms of dehydration or other signs of illness.
 9. The presence of lice or live nits.
 10. Any combination of the above symptoms (e.g., vomiting accompanied by diarrhea)
 11. In case of a diagnosed condition, please follow the guidelines below:
 - a. Chicken pox (a note from the health care provider saying it is safe to return)

- b. Impetigo (a note from the health care provider saying it is safe to return)
- c. Infectious conjunctivitis or "pink eye" (until 24 hours after treatment begins)
- d. Lice (until no visible lice or live nits)
- e. Ringworm (until treatment begins)
- f. Scabies (until treated)
- g. Strep throat/scarlet fever (until 24 hours after treatment begins)
- h. Influenza (until fever and other symptoms have subsided)

If your child becomes ill, please advise Childrenspace North immediately. Childrenspace North will likewise inform parents of the presence of any communicable illness in the group, its common symptoms and general treatment.

If a child becomes ill while at Childrenspace, his or her parent or guardian will be notified immediately and asked to pick up the child. Parents must be able to designate an alternate pick up person if they are unable to pick up the child within one hour. While the child is awaiting pick up, she or he will be removed from the larger group and offered rest and quiet activities. Since Childrenspace is a well child only facility, the following conditions will necessitate sending a child home because of illness:

1. When the child's condition compromises the health and safety of others.
2. When the child has a tympanic (ear) temperature of 100.4 degrees or more.
3. When the child shows signs of not feeling well, and cannot fully participate in the school program.
4. When the child exhibits signs and symptoms of possible illness, such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, discolored urine, change in appetite, unusual irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, an undiagnosed rash, stiff neck or other unusual signs.
5. Persistent diarrhea, defined as more than two loose stools during the school day.
6. Vomiting more than once in the school day.
7. The presence of lice or live nits.
8. Any combination of the above symptoms, (e.g., vomiting accompanied by diarrhea).

The Childrenspace program is not authorized to administer medications in any circumstances. We will only administer over-the-counter creams and lotions such as sunscreen, diaper cream, or moisturizer.

IN CASE OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

All teachers have taken approved courses in the use of first-aid techniques and CPR appropriate to the ages of the children in our care. Such training is updated as required. First-aid supplies, with directions for administration, are readily available.

In case of a medical emergency, the following procedure will be followed:

- Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, the next person on the notification list will be contacted, as will the child's physician.
- The Director will secure first aid or emergency medical care.
- If transportation of an injured child is necessary before the parent arrives, the police will be called to provide ambulance service to Phelps Memorial Hospital in Tarrytown. If the injury is not life-threatening, parent can request transportation to an alternate medical facility.
- The Director or a teacher will accompany the child in the ambulance and bring to the hospital the emergency permission release form and medical form from the Center records.

IN CASE OF CHILD ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT

All teachers have received training to help them identify signs of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and malfeasance of the children in their care. Under Social Services Law, teachers in early childhood programs are designated as mandated reporters of child abuse and/or maltreatment. If a teacher, acting in his/her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or maltreated, he/she must make a report to the New York State Mandated Reporters Hotline. The purpose of the mandatory reporting statute is to identify suspected abused and maltreated children as soon as possible so that those children can be protected from further harm and, where appropriate, can be offered services to assist their families.

SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Childrenspace will generally, but not always, follow the Croton-Harmon School District's policy on school delays or closings due to inclement weather. We will inform parents of our decision on delays, early dismissals and closings via text and email as early in the morning of the day in question as we can. There will also be a recorded announcement on the school message machine as soon as a decision is made. Those families that prefer to be contacted directly by telephone should advise the Director, and she will follow through on that request.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Center: (914) 271-4705, ext.7

E-mail: childrenspacenorth@gmail.com

Staci Hall: (718) 541-5435 (cell)

Sarah Forth: (917) 974-0757 (cell)