

Preschool Parent Manual



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PHILOSOPHY

The Park Ridge Park District Preschool Program staff is committed to fostering partnerships with the children and families we serve through mutual respect and understanding. We provide a nurturing, stable, and loving environment so that children have a sense of security and develop social and emotional skills.

Our teaching staff provides a wide variety of daily activities to expand and develop each child's physical, creative, cognitive, social, and emotional growth. We believe that children learn through hands-on exploration.

We motivate children with positive reinforcement, age appropriate toys, role models, and activities that help stimulate the many different areas of development. Daily activities encourage artistic expression, physical conditioning, and problem-solving skills. Language development in verbal and listening areas is emphasized. Children learn to grow emotionally as individuals and in group situations.

GOAL OF THE PROGRAM

Our goal is to provide the foundation for each child to have a love of learning.

REGISTRATION

Preschool registration will be held on-line. Registration is twice per year. Fall registration is held in early Spring and is on a first come first serve basis. Winter registration is held in late fall. A letter is sent home informing you that tuition for winter session is due. Registration for each session of Preschool is required. You are required to enroll in each session; classroom changes may be possible if spaces are available. **A one hundred-dollar non-refundable deposit is required at the Fall Registration and Winter/Spring Registration.**

- ❖ Residents currently enrolled in the Preschool Program will be given priority registration.
- ❖ Children must be age appropriate by September 1st to enroll in the Preschool Program.
- ❖ Registration for the fall session will be accepted until September 15th.
- ❖ Registration for the winter/spring session will be accepted until December 30th.

CLASSROOM RATIOS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Preschool staff will assign registered children to classrooms. These classroom assignments will be emailed to families before the start date of school.

All children will be assigned to the same group with the same staff and students everyday they are at preschool. At the time this manual was created, classroom interchanging or mixing of groups is limited and each class will be assigned a separate room.

- Age 2: 1:8 Maximum of 16 children with 2 staff
- Ages 3 & 4: 1:9 Maximum of 18 children with 2 staff

If a request is made for a child to be moved to a different room, teachers and the administrative staff will make the final decision. A transition plan shall be developed if it is determined appropriate to move a child.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

The staff will use the following methods for communicating with parents:

1. Phone Calls
2. Monthly Parent Newsletter
3. Seasonal Letters
4. Video Conferences
5. Parent/Teacher Conferences (1 per session)

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Each classroom will have a cell phone for communications. We suggest calling your class cell phone before and after class times. If you need to get a hold of your teacher during class times or to report an absence, you can text the classroom cell phone or call the preschool office.

Cell phone numbers will be provided to you at your Meet the Teacher event.

Preschool Room A, Playtime Parkway	(847) 685-4404
Preschool Room B, Discovery Drive	(847) 692-4806
Preschool Room C, Learning Lane	(847) 692-3369
Preschool Room D, Exploration Avenue	(847) 692-6912
Preschool Room E, Imagination Way	(847) 685-4401
Creative Court	(847)292-8918
Molly Jacobsen, Preschool Director	(847) 685-4400
Brooke Plofsky, Preschool Assistant Director	(847) 292-0324
Julie Greve, Recreation Program Division Manager	(847) 692-6911
April Armer Superintendent of Recreation	(847) 692-3319
Maine Park Leisure Center, Front Office	(847) 692-5127

TAX ID NUMBER

For Income Tax Purposes our ID number relative to child care deductions is: **36-6006042**

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are tentatively scheduled for November and April. Parents will receive a letter with more information regarding the conferences.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

HEALTH POLICY

Each child must have **a completed medical form signed by his/her pediatrician** by the first day of school. The Park District requires children to have a medical examination to participate in our Preschool program. If your child has any allergies such as peanuts or special needs such as a learning difficulty or ADHD, please note this on the General Information Form and contact us prior to the first day of classes to discuss any modifications that need to be made.

ILLNESS

For the well-being of your child, classmates and staff, please DO NOT bring a child to school who is running a fever, experiencing diarrhea, cold symptoms, or vomiting. Please try to call your teacher if your child is sick and ALWAYS report any contagious disease (i.e. chicken pox, measles, roseola, mumps, strep, pink eye, or rubella) immediately to your child's teacher. Also report any cases of head lice, impetigo, or other skin disorders. Children should be free of all symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. Call your teacher or the preschool office directly to report absences. It is a state regulation that "any child in attendance who becomes ill or who is suspected of illness shall be immediately isolated from the group and shall be removed from the facility as soon as possible." Parents will be called to come and pick-up their child if they become ill during class. A space will be provided for a child who becomes ill while at preschool, this space will have good ventilation and will be heated and within the view and hearing of an adult. A cot will be available for child's comfort and be easily cleaned and sanitized.

A child suspected of having or diagnosed as having a reportable infectious, contagious, or communicable disease for which isolation is required by the Illinois Department of Public Health's General Procedures for the Control of Communicable Diseases (77 Ill. Adm. Code 690) shall be excluded from the center. The center will maintain a file of reported illnesses that may indicate possible infectious disease.

Information pertaining to the admission, progress, health, or discharge of an individual child shall be confidential and limited to facility staff designated by the child care director and Department of Child and Family Services unless the parent(s) of the child has granted written permission for disclosure or dissemination.

EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT SELF-CERTIFICATION SCREENING

The Preschool will require self-certification and verification for all staff, children, and visitors prior to entering the preschool.

Individuals who exhibit or self-report a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius or currently have known symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea, may not enter day care facilities. These individuals should be referred to a medical provider for evaluation, treatment, and information about when they can return to the day care facility.

COVID-19

**** “Person” includes a student or staff member***

Families of children and staff should immediately notify the Park Ridge Park District Preschool Director’s office by calling 847-685-4400 or emailing [mjacobson@prparks.org](mailto:mjacobsen@prparks.org) if the preschooler or someone in their home tests positive or if the person has been in close contact with a positive case. Parents of children and staff who may have had contact or been exposed to a CONFIRMED CASE of COVID-19 will be notified through email.

If a preschool family or a staff member notifies the preschool of a COVID case, the Park Ridge Park District Safety Committee has a plan that is based on recommendations from the CDC, the IDPH, and DCFS.

If the notification of one of the following scenarios or a child or staff member exhibits symptom of COVID-19 is during school hours and is present, staff (equipped with proper PPE) will immediately move the person away from his/her group to a designated space at Maine Park that is ventilated and heated and equipped with a cot and materials that can easily be cleaned and sanitized. Staff will notify an authorized adult to immediately pick up the child and stay with the child to keep him/her comfortable. If a staff member shows symptoms, they will be asked to leave or wait in the designated area until they can be picked up.

COVID-19 SCENERIOS

Person tests “Positive” for COVID-19

- If the person tests positive with symptoms, then according to the CDC guidelines, the person can only return to work when ALL the following criteria can be met:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms
 - At least 24 hours have passed since all symptoms have resolved without the use of medication (except taste/smell)
 - Person can reply “no” to all items on the Wellness Screening Questionnaire
 - If absence is 3 days or less, person must provide a “Return to Work/School” note from doctor or a negative COVID test
- If person test positive and is asymptomatic, ALL of the following criteria must be met:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the date the test was taken
 - Person can reply “no” to all items on the Wellness Screen Questionnaire
 - If absence is 3 days or less, person must provide a “Return to Work/School” note from doctor or a negative COVID test

Person has Symptoms with a Known Exposure

- Person with symptoms who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the CDC Guidelines outlined in the “Positive Case Scenario” outline
- Person who has a negative test or does not get tested should meet ALL the following criteria:
 - At least 14 days have passed from the LAST point of exposure
 - 24 hours have passed since all symptoms have resolved without the use of medication
 - No new symptoms have developed
 - You can reply “no” to all items on the Wellness Screening Questionnaire

- If absence is 3 days or less, person must provide a “Return to Work/School” note from doctor or a negative COVID test

Person as One or More COVID-19 Symptoms with No Known Exposure

- Person with symptoms who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the CDC Guidelines outlined in the “Positive Case Scenario” outline
- Person who has a negative test or does not get tested should meet ALL the following criteria:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms.
 - 24 hours have passed since all symptoms have resolved without the use of medication
 - A lessening of ALL symptoms (except loss of taste/smell)
 - You can reply “no” to all items on the Wellness Screening Questionnaire
 - If absence is 3 days or less, person must provide a “Return to Work/School” note from doctor or a negative COVID test
 - Minor symptoms may not indicate COVID-19. A doctor’s note clarifying the individual has a history of a symptom or that a symptom is unrelated to COVID-19 may allow the individual to return to the Preschool sooner. These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Person with Possible Exposure to COVID-19

- Person received notice that they’ve been exposed (within 6 ft. for 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) to someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 or positive with COVID-19
- Person with symptoms who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the CDC Guidelines outlined in the “Positive Case Scenario”
- Person does not get a COVID-19 test
 - If the person lives with, cares for, or will continue to have exposure to person with a positive COVID-19 case, a quarantine is recommended and person can return to preschool if ALL of the following criteria are met:
 - At least 14 days have past since the last point of exposure assuming no symptoms have developed
 - You can reply “no” to all the items on the Wellness Screening Questionnaire
 - Provide a negative test or a doctor’s note to “Return to Work/School”

MEDICINE AT PRESCHOOL / MEDICAL CONCERNS / ALLERGIES

If your child needs assistance with medication during preschool, has allergies, or other medical concerns (e.g., asthma), please review the Medicine at Preschool Appendix to this Handbook and submit all required informational and release forms as soon as possible and well before the first day of preschool. Please also note this data on the ePACT Program Information Form and contact us well before the first day of preschool to make any special arrangements. The Medicine at Preschool packet and required forms are also available on the Park District's website and electronic portal (ePACT).

Whenever possible, medications should be dispensed or administered by parents or guardians before or after preschool. Please note that the Park District does not have medical providers (e.g., licensed medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, etc.) on staff. The Park District reviews requests for dispensing medicine on a case-by-case basis.

As to allergies, the Park District does not serve foods which contain nuts or peanut oil. However, staff will make every effort to monitor snacks/lunches brought by our participants.

FORM POLICY

A medical form, immunization record, general information, discipline policy and birth certificate must be provided by the first day of school. This includes all parent/guardian information, who is authorized to pick up the child from preschool, release permission, and other additional information. ****Your child will not be allowed to start preschool until ALL forms are submitted.***

Keep all forms and emergency numbers up to date. **Your child will not be released to any person whose name does not appear on the pick-up list.** All persons on this list will be required to present a photo I.D. until recognized by staff.

We use an online database (ePACT) to collect all family information. You will supply the preschool with your child's information and will be responsible for making changes to your family account as needed. Please reach out to our Preschool Office if you have any questions regarding this service.

CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS

If you are experiencing any concerns or have any questions, please go to your child's teacher first. If you need further assistance, please contact the Preschool Director. If you are still not satisfied, please take your concerns to the Recreation Program Division Manager.

SAFETY POLICY

Most minor injuries will be handled by our staff. In the case of a more severe injury, first aid will be administered and parents will be informed. In the case of an emergency, paramedics will be called immediately, and then parents or an emergency contact will be notified.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Teachers will practice fire drills, tornado drills and lock down drills each month, as required by the City Ordinance and the Department of Children and Family Services.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Our program will follow School District 64's calendar with regards to **some** national holidays, spring and winter breaks. **You will receive a text and/or e-mail if preschool is closed for a snow day.** If you are unsure if preschool is in session, please check the website www.prparks.org or call the Preschool Director at (847) 685-4400.

DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURE

Staff and Families will be expected to perform a Self-Certification Wellness Screening before coming into the preschool wing.

Staff will meet their assigned class at a specific drop off location. Grown-ups dropping off their preschooler will be encouraged to stay out the Preschool Wing and/or their child's classroom unless arrangements with the Preschool Office have been made.

Authorized adults, students, and staff are required to wear a face mask during drop off and pick up regardless of your vaccination status. There will be no physical contact, including hugs or handshakes between staff and adults authorized for picking up or dropping off.

Teachers will not collect signatures and will mark children present while practicing social distancing and welcome child to school. Children will be picked up at the same location as drop off and teachers will not collect signatures.

Preschool staff are required to check out each child every day. The person picking up the preschooler must be listed in the families EPACT form. If **STAFF** does not recognize the individual a photo ID must be presented. If the person is not listed in EPACT, staff will phone the family and require an ID for pick up.

In the case that a child needs to be picked up before the scheduled end time of class, arrangements with the preschool office need to be made. We encourage families to reach out to us for appointments and illnesses. We strongly discourage parents interrupting the preschool class schedule to pick up a child up early for convenience.

If the authorized pick up person does not pick the child up by the end of the class, a 10-minute grace period will be granted. If the pick-up person is later than 10 minutes, a charge of \$1.00 per minute of lateness will be issued.

IMPORTANT SAFETY & COURTESY NOTE

During drop-off and pick-up, please drive cautiously and park legally as well as familiarizing yourself with the stop signs and cross walks located by the Maine Park Leisure Center. Please respect our neighbors and do not park in front of nor turn around in their driveways.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child practically and appropriately. We will be painting, getting messy and playing outdoors, so dress your child in casual play clothes. In cases of an accidental spilling, falling, or getting wet, we ask that you bring a full change of seasonally appropriate clothes (top, pants, underwear and socks) in a clear plastic zip lock bag labeled with the child's name to be kept in the child's backpack.

We understand that sometimes children have accidents and will cry. To ensure that we keep everyone safe from secretions, we ask all students to bring multiple changes of clothing. In house clothing will not be provided to students who need a change of clothes and the child will be called to be picked up if there are no clothing items for the child to change into.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Preschoolers are not allowed to bring money, toys, electronic games or items of value from home. The Park District is not responsible for personal belongings that are brought to preschool.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Children MUST be completely toilet-trained BEFORE they start the program. NO DIAPERS, TRAINING PANTS, OR PULL-UPS are allowed. This adheres to sanitary guidelines set forth by DCFS. NO EXCEPTIONS will be made. Toilet trained means being able to wipe themselves, flush the toilet and wash their hands independently.

NUTRITION POLICY

The Park Ridge Park District will not provide any food or drinks (except water) to any students at the Preschool.

SNACKS

Students are responsible for providing their own snack in a disposable container. Please label all snacks and keep them in their backpack.

Children are allowed to bring a refillable, labeled water bottle. Although we are not allowing group snacks, we encourage all families to provide healthy nut-free snack options for your child.

HAND WASHING

Children are required to wash hands upon entering the classroom, after using the bathrooms, before and after eating, and additionally when staff feel it necessary. Staff will verbally instruct children and assist children who are not able to properly wash their hands independently.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be placed in every classroom, in the first aid bag for outdoor classrooms, and at the entrance to every classroom. Please note that hand sanitizer is not an acceptable substitute for soap and running water.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

All staff will wear a face mask or shield at all times when indoors. Children ages 2 years and up, when tolerable, shall wear a face mask when arriving and leaving the preschool, when in hallways, and throughout the day, except when playing outdoors and eating.

Families are welcome to provide their own face mask for their child. In the case that a child forgets their face mask or there is damage to a mask, age appropriate face masks will be available for students. Staff will have access to PPE. Additional resources will be stored in a marked cabinet in the preschool office.

FAMILY SITUATIONS

Staff understand and respect the differences in all families and will aim to do our best to work with each individual circumstance. Regarding divorce and separated situations, Park District staff will not act as an intermediary between parents. Parents must communicate with each other first, and then contact the Park District. Staff will not coordinate items such as payments, communication between parents, or who is picking up the child. We understand these situations can be difficult and emotional, but we ask to please refrain from taking out frustrations on staff. We can help by setting up separate accounts and, if requested, we can email both parents/guardians program information. To set up separate family accounts or to request an additional email for communication please contact Debbie Majchszak at dmajchszak@prparks.org or 847-692-5127.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto must be uploaded into ePact in the Shared Files section. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the parent or parents with legal custody requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents have joint legal custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file, both parents will have equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Without a court order, the Park Ridge Park District cannot limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. Staff will contact the police should a conflict arise.

INCLUSION SERVICES

The Park Ridge Park District welcomes participation in preschool for individuals with disabilities and special needs. The Park Ridge Park District is committed to inclusion and providing public recreation services in the most integrated setting, in which interaction between people with and without disabilities is provided to the maximum extent feasible. The Park Ridge Park District works cooperatively with the Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation (M-NASR) to facilitate successful participation for participants who register for inclusive programming. Due to COVID-19, participants will be required to:

- Function and participate within set ratios
- Maintain social distancing
- Independently manage personal care including toileting, feeding, and personal hygiene
- Wear a face mask when it is appropriate to do so

If you have a special need or request for reasonable accommodation, please contact Molly Jacobsen - Preschool Director. Phone 847-685-4400 or email mjacobsen@prparks.org. Our Preschool team and M-NASR will evaluate each request on a case by case situation to abide by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Once reviewed, the Park District will contact you.

Dear Incoming Families,

One of the most wonderful things about working with children is getting to know each child's unique personality. Every child is different: some may be energetic, some may be quiet. Some children walk into a classroom and know how to listen and follow directions while some children are still learning this skill. Our staff is great at teaching your child according to his/her strengths and helping every child develop skills that they may not have mastered yet. However, we need your help with this.

Some parents hesitate to provide us with personal information about their child's behavior or past experience. Some fear the information may be misused, while others are concerned about their child being labeled, singled out or treated differently. All parents want to see their child have a fresh start in a new program, unencumbered by past performance. As program providers, we appreciate these concerns. We also know how valuable such information can be in assisting us to help your child make a smooth and happy adjustment to our program. Remember, we only have a short time to get it right! We need your help!

- Having prior knowledge about a behavioral concern, learning difficulty, attention issues, or a major change in the family or child's life makes a tremendous difference in helping us be sensitive to your child's need for patience, understanding and reassurance, especially in the first few days of the program!
- Some parents fear programs will not accept their child if they share information about concerns families may have noticed at home. And sometimes, your teacher may notice something that you have not noticed at home. The truth is that children need us to be partners to have a safe and successful preschool experience.
- Our Park District has great resources available for our patrons that can help you better understand any concerns and to work with professionals who are trained and ready to help. Our staff may make recommendations for your child in an effort to offer ways to help make your child's experience more successful. Often these resources come at no cost to you.
- Please remember our commitment is to use such information to help your child adjust to our program. As always, the information you provide will remain confidential.

Remember, when faced with challenges, together we can help your child have a great school year and start their journey to learning on the right foot. We encourage you to make us a full partner in planning for your child's success. To assist us in providing the most positive environment for your child, please contact me directly at (847) 685-4400, to discuss any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Molly Jacobsen
Preschool Director

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

No participant shall on the basis of race, gender, creed, sexual orientation, national origin or disability be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, benefits or to be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage or opportunity. In keeping with our program goals, we encourage fun for all of our participants; however certain rules are necessary to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our discipline policy is to first and foremost REDIRECT the child to stop the inappropriate behavior. By controlling the situation, there should not be a need for any additional discipline. However, sometimes a child needs to be removed from play to relax and calm down during a rest period. If a problem arises that needs to be addressed, the teacher will notify the Preschool Director and then contact the parents to work out a plan to be reinforced at home as well as in school. Our primary objective is to avoid a situation wherein a specific child continues to disrupt the experiences of the other children in the classroom.

The following outlines the form of discipline that will be used in cases of aggressive behavior.

I. BEHAVIOR

Participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The staff will set limits from the start of the program and attempt to correct improper behavior. The following guidelines have been developed to help make Park District programs safe and enjoyable for all participants. Additional rules may be developed for particular activities as deemed necessary by staff.

Participants shall:

1. Show respect to all participants and staff
2. Refrain from using foul language
3. Refrain from causing bodily harm to any participant or staff
4. Show respect for equipment, supplies, and facilities

II. DISCIPLINE

A positive approach will be used regarding discipline. The staff will set limits from the start of the program and attempt to correct inappropriate behavior. The Park Ridge Recreation & Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior either endangers the child or others or if grossly disruptive. **Each situation will be evaluated on its own merit.** Appropriate action will take place as soon as possible.

III. PROCEDURE

If a participant exhibits inappropriate actions, the following guidelines will be followed.

1. The Preschool Program teacher will determine the severity of the action and will immediately take the appropriate steps to correct it.

The steps to be followed:

- a. Positive verbal reminder of appropriate behavior
 - b. Redirection to another activity
 - c. Direction to a quiet time activity
 - d. Temporary removal from classroom
2. Repetitive or intentional violent behavior will result in the teacher completing a conduct report that will be given to the Preschool Director. A copy of the conduct report will also be given to the parents. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Preschool Director may dismiss the child from the program.
3. If the action requires dismissal from the program, the Preschool Director will contact the Recreation Program Division Manager after investigation of the incident.
4. If an action involves a person with a disability, staff will contact Maine Niles Association of Special Recreation for advice; however, final decisions will be made by the Park District.
5. The Superintendent of Recreation will be informed of all incidences and their outcomes as soon as possible.
6. Appeals may be made to the Superintendent of Recreation.

The Park Ridge Park District is required by DCFS to maintain a file of each child. A copy of this Discipline Policy signed by the parent or guardian must be kept in that file. The copy is enclosed with your information packet.

PARK RIDGE RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT
CONDUCT REPORT
COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

Reports must be turned into the Preschool Director within 24 hours of incident.

Program: _____ Date: _____

Participant: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Birthdate: _____

OFFENSE LEVEL – Please circle.

1. Continuous inappropriate behavior
2. Intentional violent behavior
(Self, Other Children or Instructor)
3. Other _____

Description of Incident: _____

Action Taken: _____

Participant Reaction: _____

Follow-up Recommendation: _____

Comments: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

WELLNESS SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

PRESCHOOL WELLNESS SCREENING CHECKLIST DURING COVID-19

The District is requiring families of preschool students to conduct their own wellness screening every day prior to reporting to school. If student responds “yes” to any of the following questions, please notify the Preschool Office and remain home. If the symptoms occur during school, the Preschool Office will immediately notify the family and/or emergency contacts on the student’s EPACT.

QUESTION	NO	YES
1. Has your child felt feverish or do you have a fever 100.4° or above?		
2. Does your child have a new or unusual cough?		
3. Does your child have a new or unusual sore throat?		
4. Has your child been experiencing new or unusual difficulty breathing or a shortness of breath?		
5. Does your child have unexplained muscle aches?		
6. Has your child had a new or unusual headache (not related to caffeine, diet or hunger, not related to a history of migraines, clusters, or tension, not typical to the individual)?		
7. Has your child noticed a new loss of taste or loss of smell?		
8. Has your child been experiencing unexplained or unusual chills, shivering or sweating?		
9. Does your child have any gastrointestinal concerns such as abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhea?		
10. Is anyone in your household displaying any new or unusual symptoms related to COVID-19?		
11. To the best of your knowledge, have you or anyone in your household come into close contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?		

SUMMARY OF LICENSING STANDARDS FOR DAY CARE CENTERS

Introduction

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for licensing day care centers. When a day care center is licensed, it means that a DCFS licensing representative has inspected the facility and the facility was found to meet the minimum licensing requirements. A license is valid for three years. The day care center's license must be posted. It will indicate the maximum number of children allowed in the facility and the areas where children may receive care.

Licensed day care facilities are inspected annually by DCFS licensing staff. If a complaint has been received regarding a violation of the licensing standards of a day care center, a licensing representative will conduct a licensing complaint investigation to determine if the alleged violation should be substantiated or unsubstantiated. Individuals may contact the Day Care Information Line to learn of substantiated violations.

Day Care Information Line **1-877-746-0829**

This statewide toll-free information line provides information to the public on the history and record, including substantiated violations, of licensed day care homes, day care centers, and group day care homes. This number operates Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Summary of Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers

The following is a summary of the licensing standards for day care centers. It has been prepared so that you may monitor the care provided to your child. This is a brief summary and does not include all of the licensing standards for day care centers. State licensing standards are minimum standards, while some municipalities may impose stricter standards on day care centers operating within their jurisdictions. If you observe a violation of any of these standards, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the day care center operator. In most cases, parents and day care operators are able to resolve the parents' concerns and issues. If you believe the day care operator is not responding to your concerns, and may not be meeting state licensing standards, you may make a complaint to the local DCFS Licensing Office or by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-2873 and stating that you want to make a licensing complaint. A DCFS licensing

representative will investigate your complaint and report the results back to you. The day care center is required to provide a copy of its own written policies regarding the operation of the facility to each staff person and to parents of enrolled children.

Staffing

- The day care center must have a qualified child care director on site at all times. The director must be at least 21 years old, have completed two years of college or have equivalent experience and credentials.
 - Early childhood teachers must be at least 19 years old, have two years of college or have equivalent experience and credentials.
 - School-age workers must be at least 19 years old. They must have completed one year of college or have the equivalent experience and credentials.
 - Early childhood assistants and school-age assistants must have a high school diploma or the equivalent and must work under direct supervision of an early childhood teacher or a school-age worker.
 - Student and youth aides must be at least 14 years of age, at least five years older than the oldest child in their care, and must work under direct supervision of an early childhood teacher or a school-age worker.
 - Student and youth aides are not generally counted for purposes of maintaining staff/child ratios.
 - The director and all child care staff must have 15 hours of in-service training annually.
 - All staff must have current medical reports on file and are subject to background checks for any record of criminal conviction or child abuse and neglect.
 - A person certified in first aid, including CPR and the Heimlich maneuver, must be present at all times.
 - All child care staff in a facility licensed to care for newborns and infants must have training on the nature of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), SIDS and the safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
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Group Size and Staff Requirements:

AGE OF CHILDREN	STAFF/CHILD RATIO	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
Infants (6 weeks through 14 months)	1 to 4	12
Toddlers (15 through 23 months)	1 to 5	15
Two years	1 to 8	16
Three years	1 to 10	20
Four years	1 to 10	20
Five years (preschool)	1 to 20	20
School-age: Kindergartners present	1 to 20	30

- Exception: One early childhood teacher and an assistant may supervise a group of up to 30 children if all of the children are at least five years of age.
- Whenever children of different ages are combined, the staff/child ratio and maximum group size must be based on the age of the youngest child in the group.

General Program Requirements

- Parents must be allowed to visit the center without an appointment any time during normal hours of operation.
 - Staff must demonstrate respect for each child enrolled regardless of differences in gender, ability, culture, ethnicity, or religion.
 - There must be a balance of active and quiet activity. Children of all ages shall be encouraged to participate daily in at least 2 occasions of age-appropriate outdoor time, with active movement or play for mobile children.
 - In pre-school programs where children receive care for less than three hours per day, outdoor activity is not required.
 - Children will be limited in the amount of daily passive screen viewing.
 - Children may not be left unattended at any time.
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Infants and Toddlers

- Infants and toddlers must be in separate space away from older children.
- A refrigerator and sink must be easily accessible.
- Toys and indoor equipment must be cleaned and disinfected daily. Safe, durable equipment and play materials must be provided.
- Either the day care center or the parent may provide food for infants not consuming table food. Feeding times and amounts consumed must be documented in writing.
- No food other than formula, milk, breast milk or water may be placed in a bottle for infant feeding. Microwaves are not to be used for bottle warming.
- Infants must be placed on their backs to sleep.
- The facility must have a clearly defined diaper changing area with the procedures for changing diapers clearly posted. A hand-washing sink must be accessible.
- Staff changing diapers must wash their hands and the child's hands with soap and running water after diapering.
- Information about feeding, elimination and other important information must be recorded in writing and made available to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.
- Only new cribs manufactured on or after June 28, 2011 can be utilized.

School-Age Children

- The facility must have a designated area for school-age children so they do not interfere with the care of younger children.
 - Clear definitions of responsibility and procedures are to be established among parent, day care center and school when children move to and from school.
 - A variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials must be available for children. Opportunities must be provided to do homework, if requested.
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Evening, Night and Weekend Care

- Family-like groups of mixed ages are allowed.
- Staff must be awake at all times and in the sleeping area whenever children are sleeping.
- Dependent on age, each child must have an individual cot, bed or crib.
- An evening meal and a bedtime snack must be served.
- Breakfast must be served to all children who have been at the facility throughout the night and are present between 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

Enrollment and Discharge

- Parents must be provided the names, business address and telephone number of persons legally responsible for the program.
- Parents must be provided the following in writing: Information on the program, fees, arrival and departure policies explaining to the parents and guardians what actions the caregiver will take if children are not picked up at the agreed upon time, as well as policies related to guidance and discipline.
- Parents must complete an initial enrollment application, which includes a certified copy of their child's birth certificate (which will be copied by the center and returned to the parent), emergency numbers, and persons authorized to pick up their child.
- A child may only be released to a parent or other responsible person designated by the parent in writing.
- Daily arrival and departure logs must be kept by the center.

Guidance and Discipline

- Parents must be given a copy of the guidance and discipline policy.
 - The following are prohibited:
 - corporal punishment
 - threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom
 - abusive or profane language
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- public or private humiliation
 - emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child
 - “Time-out” is to be limited to one minute per year of the child’s age.
 - “Time-out” may not be used for children less than two years of age.

Transportation

- The driver must be 21 years of age and hold a driver’s license that has been continuously valid for three years.
- Children must not be allowed to stand or sit on the floor of the vehicle.
- Age appropriate safety restraints must be used when transporting children in vehicles other than school buses.
- Any vehicle used to transport children must have liability insurance coverage in an amount required by statute.
- The driver must make sure that a responsible person is present to take charge of a child when delivered to his or her destination.

Health Requirements for Children

- Parents or guardians of infants, toddlers and preschool children enrolling in day care for the first time must provide a medical report dated fewer than 6 months prior to enrollment; children transferring from another licensed day care center may use their current medical report, if it is less than one year old.
 - Parents or guardians of school-age children may submit a copy of the most recent regularly scheduled school physical (even if it is more than 6 months old) or the day care center may require a more recent medical report by its own enrollment policy.
 - A medical report indicating that the child has been appropriately immunized must be on file for each child. Parents are encouraged to be informed about childhood immunizations by going to the following Web site:<http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/pgci.htm> . A tuberculin skin test is to be included in the initial exam unless waived by a physician.
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- The medical report is valid for two years for infants and preschool children. Exams for school-age children are required consistent with the requirements of the public schools.
 - The center must comply with the Illinois Department of Public Health's Hearing and Vision Screening Codes and the Illinois Child Vision and Hearing Test Act.
 - Children aged one to six years must have either a lead risk assessment or a lead screening.
 - Water must be freely available to all children.
 - Children's hands must be washed with soap and water upon arrival at the center, before and after meals or using the toilet, after wiping or blowing their noses, after outdoor play and after coming into contact with any soiled objects.
 - Prescription and non-prescription medication may be accepted only in its original container. The center must maintain a record of the dates, times administered, dosages, prescription number (if applicable) and the name of the person administering the medication.
 - Medication must be kept in locked cabinets or other containers that are inaccessible to children.

Nutrition and Meals

- Menus must be posted.
- Meals and snacks must meet nutritional guidelines and shall be prepared so as to moderate fat and sodium content.
- Children in care two to five hours must be served a snack. Children in care five to 10 hours must be served a meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack. Children in care more than 10 hours must be served two meals and two snacks or one meal and three snacks.

Napping and Sleeping

- Children under six years of age who remain five or more hours must have the opportunity to rest or nap.
 - Infants must sleep in safe, sturdy, freestanding cribs or portable cribs.
 - Toddlers may use either stacking cots or full-size cribs.
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- A cot or bed must be provided for each toddler or preschool child in attendance five or more hours. Each cot, bed or crib must be labeled with the name of the child.

Physical Space

- Infants and toddlers must be housed and cared for at ground level unless special approval has been granted from the Department.
 - Indoor space must provide a safe, comfortable environment for the children. Floors and floor coverings must be washable and free from drafts and dampness.
 - Toilets and lavatories must be readily accessible to the children.
 - Hot and cold running water must be provided.
 - Hazardous items must be inaccessible to children.
 - Parents must be notified before pesticides are applied.
 - Lead paint or asbestos removal must be in accordance with public health standards and statute.
 - Exits must be unlocked and clear of equipment and debris.
 - Drills for fire and tornado must be conducted. A floor plan must be posted in every room indicating the areas providing the most safety in the case of a tornado and the primary and secondary exit routes in case of fire.
 - Smoking or the use of tobacco products in any form is prohibited in the child care center or in the presence of children while on the playground or on trips away from the center.
 - The facility must test for radon at least every 3 years and post the results in an area visible to parents, along with an informative notice about the effects of radon.
 - Play materials must be durable and free from hazardous characteristics.
 - The facility may not use or have on the premises any unsafe children's product as described in the Children's Product Safety Act. Lists of unsafe children's products and recalls from 1989 forward are available at: <http://srs.dph.illinois.gov/webapp/SRSApp/pages/>.
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- The facility must be cleaned daily and kept in sanitary condition at all times.
 - First-aid kits must be maintained and readily available for use.

Outdoor Play Area

- Play space must be fenced or otherwise enclosed or protected from traffic and other hazards. There must be a shaded area in summer to protect children from excessive sun exposure.
- All areas of the outdoor play space must be visible to staff at all times.
- Equipment must be free of sharp points or corners, splinters, protruding nails or bolts, loose or rusty parts, the potential for entrapment and/or other hazards.
- Protective surfaces must be provided under equipment from which a child might fall.
- All swimming pools must be fenced or otherwise inaccessible to children.
- During hours of operation and at all times that children are present there must be a means for parents of enrolled children to have direct telephone contact with a center staff person.

This summary has been developed to assist parents in monitoring the care provided by the day care center. Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers may be accessed through the DCFS website: www.DCFS.illinois.gov. You may also contact your nearest DCFS office for assistance. Locations of DCFS offices are also available on the DCFS website. Locations of DCFS offices are available on the DCFS website.

State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT

I/WE, _____
Please Print Name(s)

parent(s) of _____, hereby certify that I/we have
Name(s) of Child(ren)

received a copy of a summary of licensing standards printed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

THIS COMPLETED FORM IS TO BE PLACED IN EACH CHILD'S FILE AT THE DAY CARE FACILITY.
