

# **Parent Handbook and Guide 2010-2011**

Winnetka Community Nursery School

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Winnetka, Illinois 60093

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# Important

This handbook contains information about Winnetka Community Nursery School's programs, policies, and procedures.

## **Important Winnetka Community Nursery School Information**

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Federal Tax ID Number: 36-2167958

*Winnetka Community Nursery School is a peanut-free environment.*

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## **About Our School**

Winnetka Community Nursery School is located on the northwest corner of the Winnetka Community House in Winnetka. Winnetka Community Nursery School was founded during the Second World War to care for children whose mothers wished to take some part in the war effort. Until 1961, it was an all-day nursery, providing both a morning-only program for children in the community, and a morning, lunch and afternoon program for those children whose mothers worked outside the home.

In 1961, the full-day program was discontinued due to limited demand. The morning program consisted of four groups including a group for children with special needs. The special needs class was discontinued when special education was adopted formally by the Winnetka Public Schools in 1968. In 1975, the full-day program was reopened to meet the needs of the community. The program was further redefined in the 1990's when the full-day program was divided into a morning and an extended-day program. Depending on a child's age, parents can now choose to send their children two to five days in the morning nursery school program, four days in the afternoon program, and/or one to five days in the afternoon Splendid Day program.

Winnetka Community Nursery School is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Winnetka Community Nursery School works with community groups such as The Winnetka Alliance, The North Suburban Special Education District, National-Louis University and The Chicago Association of the Education of Young Children.

Winnetka Community Nursery School welcomes all applicants and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin. Winnetka Community Nursery School offers scholarships to children from families with financial need.

## **Mission**

We believe it is important to meet the needs of the whole child by providing a safe, consistent, nurturing environment encouraging the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth of children, while also responding to the needs of families. The unique personality, needs, abilities, and learning style of each child are accepted and appreciated, as the staff and parents work together in the best interests of the children. We emphasize socialization, building each child's self esteem through play, the natural learning experience for children. The WCNS staff works in partnership with families to increase the child's respect for her/himself and the rights of others.

## **Our Philosophy**

Winnetka Community Nursery School bases its philosophy on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's definition of a high quality early childhood program. Our teaching philosophy integrates the theories of Dewey, Piaget, Erickson, Montessori, and Vygotsky. Regardless of your child's stage of development, our goal is to promote three key developmental issues through interactions and curriculum: security, exploration and discovery, and identity.

Philosophically, Winnetka Community Nursery School strives to:

- Foster positive self-identity and sense of emotional well-being.
- Develop social skills and knowledge.
- Encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment.
- Encourage language and literacy development.
- Enhance physical development and skills.
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices.
- Encourage creative expression, representation and appreciation for the arts.
- Respect cultural diversity.
- Include families as partners in the education of their children.

By providing a rich and creative curriculum, highly qualified staff, opportunities for parental involvement and partnership, a sense of school community, Winnetka Community Nursery School strives to be a model of excellence in early childhood education.

### **Educational Organization**

Research has shown that most of the child's potential for learning is established by age six. During these early years, children need a stimulating environment which will enable them to build their knowledge through many and varied opportunities to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel. This includes opportunities to be "little scientists," to explore and experiment, to question and guess, to fail and try again.

Through research, we know that young children learn primarily through play. In play, children feel the freedom to try out new ideas, practice skills and imitate adult roles. As our teachers plan activities and direct opportunities for children to work together, children learn to get along with others and to feel good about themselves. These experiences affect their growth and all other learning for the rest of their lives.

### **Educational Philosophy**

We believe that "readiness" for formal school is based on play. Children play with important math concepts as they sort and classify, build with blocks, work on patterning with manipulative and puzzles. They learn by doing...counting trucks and cars and discovering what happens when 10 cars are divided evenly among five children. Counting to 20 and recognizing numbers are also important skills, but an understanding of the concept comes through play.

One important way children play with the concepts of reading and writing is by pretending to read and write letters or make books. Many of the marks they make do not yet resemble letters, just as collections of letters do not spell words. By dictating their own stories or messages to an adult, who will write them down and read them back, children learn that their words are important and can be permanently recorded. We believe in fostering a love for literature and reading in children through a variety of language arts, including reading storybooks, providing numerous fiction and non-fiction books in the classroom, illustrating and acting out stories. Each classroom encourages writing at the writing center, which may include "props" such as phones and pads of paper to take down "messages." Reciting the alphabet and writing letters correctly are skills adults recognize, but these are only part of the larger reading and writing process.

During these critical years, a child who learns to play successfully, develops self-confidence and an ability to cooperate with others and gains the most significant learning for life. When a child learns to communicate thoughts and feelings in positive ways, and to accept responsibility for her/his actions, that child has learned a lifetime skill. When a child learns to make choices and initiate productive activities, she/he has learned to take independent action that will produce life long rewards. Our objective is to provide opportunity for these foundations to be laid and strengthened.

### **Curriculum Goals for 2-5 Year Old Children Attending WCNS**

#### ***Personal & Social Domains***

##### **Self Concept**

- Demonstrates self-confidence
- Shows some self direction

##### **Self Control**

- Follows simple classroom rules and routines with guidance
- Begins to use classroom materials carefully
- Manages transitions

##### **Approaches to learning**

- Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner
- Engages briefly, and seeks help when encountering a problem
- Approaches play with purpose and inventiveness

##### **Interaction with others**

- Interacts with one or more children
- Interacts with familiar adults
- Participates in the group life of the class
- Shows empathy and caring of others

##### **Social problem-solving**

- Seeks adult help when needed to resolve conflicts

#### ***Language and Literacy***

##### **Listening**

- Gains meaning by listening
- Follows two-step directions
- Shows beginning phonological awareness

##### **Speaking**

- Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most listeners (4 yr olds: and without contextual clues)
- Uses expanded vocabulary and language for a variety of purposes

### **Reading**

- Shows appreciation for books  
(4 yr. olds: and reading)
- Shows interest in letters and words  
(4 yr. olds: shows beginning understanding of concepts about print)
- Comprehends and responds to stories read aloud  
(4 yr. olds: begins to develop knowledge about letters)

### **Writing**

- Represents ideas and stories through pictures, dictation, and play
- Uses scribbles and unconventional shapes to write  
(4 yr. olds: uses letter- like shapes, symbols, and letters to convey meaning)
- (4 yr. olds: understands purposes for writing)

### ***Mathematical Thinking***

#### **Mathematical processes**

- Shows interest in solving mathematical problems  
(4 yr. olds: begins to use simple strategies to solve mathematical problems)

#### **Number and operations**

- Shows curiosity and interest in counting and numbers  
(4 yr. olds: shows beginning understanding of number and quantity)

#### **Patterns, relationships, and functions**

- Sorts objects into subgroups that vary by one attribute  
(4 yr. olds: recognizes simple patterns and duplicates them)

#### **Geometry and spatial relations**

- Identifies several shapes
- Shows understanding of several positional words

#### **Measurement**

- Shows understanding of some comparative words
- Participates in measuring activities  
(4 yr. olds: orders, compares, and describes objects according to a single attribute)

### ***Scientific Thinking***

#### **Inquiry**

- Uses senses to observe and explore classroom materials and natural phenomena
- Begins to use simple tools and equipment for investigation
- Makes comparisons among objects

### ***Social Studies***

#### **People, past and present**

- Begins to recognize own physical characteristics and those of others

#### **Human Interdependence**

- Begins to understand family structures and roles  
(4 yr. olds: begins to understand family needs, roles, and relationships)

- Describes some jobs that people do  
( 4 yr. olds: and what is required to perform them)  
(4 yr. olds: begins to be aware of technology and how it affects life)

#### **Citizenship and government**

- Shows awareness of group rules  
(4 yr. olds: shows awareness of what it means to be a leader)

#### **People and where they live**

- Shows beginning awareness of their environment  
(4 yr. olds: describes the location of things in the environment)

#### ***The Arts***

##### **Expression and representation**

- Participates in group music experiences
- Participates in creative movement, dance, and drama
- Uses a variety of art materials for tactile experience and exploration
- Understanding and appreciation
- Responds to artistic creations or events

##### ***Physical Development and Domain***

- Gross motor development
- Moves with some balance and control
- Coordinates movements to perform simple tasks

##### **Fine motor development**

- Uses strength and control to perform simple tasks
- Uses eye-hand coordination to perform simple tasks
- Explores the use of various drawing and art tools  
(4 yr. olds: shows beginning control of writing, drawing, and art tools)

##### **Personal health and safety**

- Begins to perform self-care tasks independently
- Follows basic health and safety rules with reminders

##### **Assessment of Learning**

At the year's beginning, parents are asked to complete a family assessment, as well as attend an in-take conference as a way to make in-roads in understanding each child as an individual.

In addition to written evaluations, co-teaching teams provide parents with collection of children's work that represents a child's growth through the school year. Following the Illinois Early Learning Standards as guidelines and the developmental guidelines of the Work Sampling System®, this portfolio includes work samples that serve as assessments of cognitive, physical and social and emotional developmental areas, as well as a means for improved communication between family and school.

##### **Our Staff**

Our teachers are chosen on the basis of their academic background, experience and their personal commitment to working with young children and their families. Each classroom is staffed with

professionals who have degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Throughout the year, all teachers attend in-service training and may participate in college coursework to keep them informed of new information in the field. The staff is a cohesive and caring group of educators who reflect the values of Winnetka Community Nursery School. We consider the experience, talent, and dedication of our staff to be our greatest asset.

### **Classroom Activities**

Each class posts a daily schedule outside their classroom, serving as a method of communication between school and home with specific curriculum plans for the subjects studied in class. We use the Illinois Early Learning Standards for Early Childhood as a guide and benchmarks for the classroom curriculum.

All classes may include:

- block play
- children's literature
- group time
- creative movement
- dramatic play
- experiential art
- fine motor activities
- free play
- imaginative play
- gross motor activities

### **Typical Classroom Schedule**

The order and length of time allotted to these activities will vary depending on the age and interest of the children

- 8:45-9:15      Arrival/greeting, hand washing
- 9:15-10:15    Free play, center activity, and snack
- 10:15-10:30   Circle time
- 10:30-11:15   Outdoor play

### **Admission & Enrollment**

Registration packets for the upcoming year will be available in September. Applications will be processed in the order received (via U.S. mail or dropped off at the school).

We hope to accommodate all families who wish to enroll their children in our programs. Applications are processed using first, second and third choices. In the event a class has more applications than spaces, placement is generally prioritized as follows:

1. Children whose parents are WCNS Board (including Honorary Board) or staff members.
2. Children currently enrolled in WCNS or a sibling of children enrolled in WCNS prior to the 2010-2011 school year (Returning Families).
3. All other children applying for registration before the deadline (New Families).
4. Children applying for registration after the deadline.

In the event a class becomes full using the above placement system, a waiting list is established. WCNS reserves the right to cancel or change programs, classes and enrollment procedures at any given time. Questions regarding registration should be directed to the Director at the school at (847) 446-4432 or the Vice President, Registration.

### **Splendid Day Extended Nursery School Application**

Applications for Splendid Day will be processed by the highest number of days requested. In the event a Splendid Day class has more applications than spaces, the same placement priorities described previously will be used. One day placement requests will not be filled until after May 9, 2011.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is payable in full or in two equal installments, the first on January 11, 2011 or within two weeks of being notified of your child's acceptance into a program, whichever is latest. Failure to make subsequent tuition by the due date will result in forfeiture of enrollment in the nursery school.

More than two weeks absence, without a doctor's note or pre-approval by the Vice President, Registration, or Director, constitutes forfeiture of enrollment. Notice of withdrawal must be confirmed in writing with the Vice President, Registration. All inquiries regarding tuition should be directed to the Vice President, Finance or the Board President.

*All tuition payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.*

### **Financial Aid**

Financial Aid is available for the Nursery School, Splendid Day, and Summer Camp. For information regarding Financial Aid, please contact the Director and the Vice President, Finance.

### **Hours of Operation**

Winnetka Community Nursery School is open Monday through Friday from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. offering morning or afternoon classes on a varying schedule, depending on the age of the child.

### **Splendid Day**

For a child needing a longer program, this extended nursery school afternoon and enrichment class provides an opportunity for creative, interactive play with other children in a multi-aged class (including kindergarteners). This program includes a nutritious lunch.

### **Lunch Bunch**

Children enjoy a healthy, hot lunch while they experiment with new foods and add them to their repertoire. Ten children join a member of our teaching staff for a family-style lunch, conversation and play. Registration takes place at the beginning of the current school year and the beginning of the winter semester.

### **Art Explorations**

Children enjoy a healthy, hot lunch and then explore, create, embellish and construct using art materials and recyclables for in-depth art projects. Registration takes place at the beginning of the school year and the beginning of the winter semester.

### **Science Explorations**

Children enjoy a healthy, hot lunch and then **[fill in with description of science class]**. Registration takes place at the beginning of the school year and the beginning of the winter semester.

## **Summer Camp**

WCNS offers a summer program taught by nurturing professionals in a small class setting. It follows the developmental philosophy of the school, which is to help each child grow and learn intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. The Summer Camp offers indoor and outdoor fun, creative activities, water play, nature study, music, art projects, picnics and much more.

## **Beginnings**

By Barb Gooden, M.Ed.

You have confidently made the right decision to enroll your child in nursery school as a way of introducing him to the outside world. However, saying good-bye on those first few days can be difficult for parents and the child. This is a normal reaction and is commonly referred to as separation anxiety. The reality is that separation is a lifelong task. Even as adults, we are often faced with having to say good-bye—ranging from small things, such as having friends move out of town to a final separation, death. If a child's first separation experiences are handled with sensitivity, it will pave the way for later successful separation throughout life. Although it may seem that it is taking forever for your child to begin their regular school schedule, at WCNS we try to give parents and children the time they need to feel safe and comfortable with the school, knowing that a gradual start will often ensure success down the road.

There are several things that you can do to help your child make a smooth transition to the life of a preschooler:

1. Put yourself in her shoes. Remember when you start a new job—not knowing what to wear, where to go, who will be there, what is expected of you? Think about how overwhelming new situations must be for young children who are far less experienced in dealing with the unknown. Two hours is a long time to be away from home, especially in a new situation.
2. Realize your child's temperament will play a big role in the difficulty or ease of separation. Even children within the same family will handle separation differently. Children can exhibit their anxiety in a variety of ways: crying, withdrawing, clinging, regressive behavior, change in eating and sleeping patterns, etc. Separation anxiety can be viewed positively as a milestone in your child's development and their normal, healthy attachment relationship with you.
3. Explain to your child ahead of time about what is going to happen, so he knows what to expect. Give her as much information as you can, be specific about what kinds of things he will be doing at preschool. A visit to the school or classroom ahead of time might increase comfort and familiarity. As the year goes on, the pictures will keep school fresh in your child's mind between days they have school.
4. On the first day of school, try to avoid a morning rush at home. Routines add predictability and continuity in your child's day.
5. You are invited to stay with your child at school until your child is comfortable, if you so desire or are able to do so. Stay close and be available but you do not need to cling to your child. Try to observe rather than play with your child.
6. When you know it is time for you to go, please be very clear with your child that you are leaving but that you will be "back to pick them up when school is over" (or whatever arrangements you have made). You could say "I will pick you up after you have played on the playground" (or whatever the last activity is). It is easier for your child to understand if you plan your return on

an activity the child will know rather than on time. **Never** sneak out without saying good-bye to your child, as this would violate your child's trust and increase his anxiety. You may want to encourage him to go to the window and wave as you leave or talk to him about what you will do when you are reunited.

7. Think twice about turning around and coming back if your child cries. It says to the child that you are not sure this is the right thing to do and your uncertainty will intensify anxiety and make separation difficult.
8. Know that your teachers have had lots of experience with caregiver-child separations and they can handle the situation. They will tell you if they sense that your child is not ready. If they sense that the child is ready and the caregiver is not, they will encourage the caregiver to go, promising to call if the child is really having a hard time.
9. It is helpful to develop an arrival/good-bye routine and keep it the same for each visit. Always accompany your child into the room. Set a limit on how long you will stay. It should become briefer as your child will be anxious to begin play as her comfort level increases. Be friendly and loving, but firm about leaving. **Always say good-bye.**
10. Be on time to pick up your child. Waiting when the other children are leaving can be agonizing.
11. At home, be ready to hear about your child's day, about his feelings. Tell him about your day.
12. Check out the book The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn and that old classic Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown.

Talk to your teachers about anything that concerns you.

To reinforce the bridge between home and school and to help reassure your child, please send a *family picture* that can be kept at preschool throughout the year. If there is a *favorite transitional object* (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.) that helps your child through times of stress, we also recommend that you send it. It may be kept in your child's cubby and only brought out if needed. Sometimes, just knowing that it is available is enough to make a child feel comfortable.

*Editors note:*

Barb Gooden, M.Ed., an early childhood educator wrote this article for the older 2's and Young 3's class during her tenure at WCNS. We feel the suggestions for separation and sound developmental philosophy are extremely beneficial for all parents and their children.

### **First Days of School**

Parents should plan to stay at school with their children on the first day or until parent and child feel comfortable with separation and the transition from home to school. Please arrange childcare for siblings so that you can focus your attention on the child who is coming to school. When you are able to leave the classroom, you may enjoy refreshments and conversation at the Corridor Coffee (see Guide to WCNS Activities in this Handbook for details on this event).

### **Endings**

As the year comes to an end parents and teachers usually notice a change in their children's and students' behavior---more energy, a general "whipped up" attitude and acting out or, conversely, sometimes we see a regression to younger behavior. In either case, these are symptoms of anxiety about the transition from the "known" of school to the "unknown" of whatever is happening next in a child's life. As adults, we have many life experiences to call on when making our own transitions, giving us more resources to work with when easing into an un-easy change. Children do not have these resources; nor do they have the necessary development to ask questions that would aid their

transition. Instead, their emotions—in this case, anxiety—come out in their actions and attitude. The independent child becomes clingy and dependent; the easy-going child becomes resistant and demanding. As the caregivers in our children's lives, it is our job to read past the acting out—in whatever form that takes—and attempt to meet their needs as they say good bye to one chapter in their very young lives and say hello to the next.

In fact, it may be more important to take sufficient time to say good-bye than it is to focus on the next chapter. After all, your child has invested a lot of time and energy on the school year: they have learned how to be away from you; they have learned how to make and keep friends; they have learned to trust and count on their teachers. We have asked so much of these little people, we must also respect that in their minds we are asking them to manage a very real loss. Here are some suggestions for helping a young child transition through the end of the school year.

- Check with your child's teachers to find how they will prepare the class for the end of the year. Also find out a good time frame for discussing this with your child.
- Show your child exactly when school will be over. Use something tangible and visual: the squares on the calendar or a chain of paperclips that will be subtracted off as the days pass.
- Children need to know that people still care about them even though their time together is over. Say, "Your teachers will sure miss you."
- Model for your child that we all can have mixed feelings about a situation: "I'll miss seeing you play with the children in your class. But, I'm also happy that you will have the chance to make even more friends at camp."
- Find ways for your child to be part of the good-bye process. Have him or her draw a picture to give to their teacher on the last day of school; take pictures of school and school friends and help your child put them into a small photo album; together, write a list of favorite things about school.
- Build bridges for keeping in touch: Give your child's friends (or their parents) and teachers postcards already addressed to your child; set a date to get together sometime during the summer.
- Keep other changes to a minimum during this time. One big change at a time is enough to manage for a young child.

Even after all your efforts, your child may still show challenging, different behavior. If so, patience will help you both through the process. There's a lot to learn about saying good-bye to people you have grown to care about. And many years in which to learn about it.

### **Building a Community through Communication**

WCNS has a long history of interaction with the local community. Periodically, some classes will take a walking field trip to locations nearby to support classroom curriculum. These trips might include: The Grand Food Center, Hlavacek Florist, the Winnetka Library, The Winnetka Fire and Police Department, The Winnetka Post Office and many other local businesses.

### **Parent Education**

We aim to provide educational resources for parents. WCNS sponsors various seminars addressing child-rearing issues. In addition, we encourage parents to borrow books related to early childhood from the bookshelves by the Killian Court entrance or take a current article from the binders located in the office.

### **Conferences**

Three parent-teacher conferences are scheduled each year: one before the child's entrance into the school, one mid-year and one at the end of the year. At the end of the year parents will receive a portfolio of their child's work, as well as a written evaluation. Parents or teachers may request conferences any other time. In addition, conferences may be scheduled with the Director at any time.

### **Classroom and School Newsletters**

The school uses various forms of written communication to keep the parents informed of the activities in each classroom and at the school. Four times a year the Board publishes the Nursery News. The newsletter contains articles on early childhood development, activities and upcoming school events. Each classroom will send home a newsletter to give families a larger "snapshot" of your child's daily activities in the classroom. In addition, classroom newsletters will be emailed to each family once per month. Other special school events and information will be emailed to each family on an as needed basis.

### **Pioneer Press Publications**

Read the *School Digest* section of your local Pioneer Press newspaper to find out what's happening at our school.

### **Parent Involvement**

There are many ways for you to become an active participant and partner in the education of your child at the school. We believe that the role of the parent is the major influence in a child's life. The school encourages family (parents, grandparents, aunts & uncles) involvement through a variety of opportunities. Further descriptions of the events listed are provided in the *Guide to WCNS Activities* contained in this Parent Handbook or may be obtained from our Parent and Board Volunteer Coordinators.

### **Classroom Volunteer**

Family is always welcome to visit and volunteer in the classroom. Providing volunteer time in the classroom offers parents the opportunity to observe children in a group, to spend time with children and to share special talents and ideas with children. **[Family members who wish to volunteer in the classroom attend one of the two orientation sessions offered in September.]** We ask that when working in the classroom you do not engage the teachers in lengthy conversations. The staff needs to direct their attention to the children and management of the classroom. Instead, ask the teacher to call you to discuss any issues. Please arrange childcare for siblings on days that you plan to visit your child's classroom.

### **Room Parent**

Help coordinate communication between the school and among parents. Each class organizes a "get to know you" coffee or cocktail party for the parents in the fall, holiday gifts to children and teachers and end of the year gifts to teachers. Room parents also contact parents to promote school events and advise them of school closings.

### **Winnetka Children's Fair**

This fundraiser for our school is an event enjoyed by the entire community. Help is needed posting fliers, financially underwriting or obtaining corporate underwriting of an activity at the Fair, setting up or taking down the Fair, locating volunteers to work, and working at the Fair.

## **School Activities**

### **September**

#### *Corridor Coffees*

Relax with refreshments and acquaint yourself with the school, fellow parents and Board Members while your children explore their classrooms and meet their teachers. You may also sign up to volunteer for different school events at this time. On days that you will not be in the classroom, siblings are welcome to enjoy the refreshments and play with the toys in the lobby.

#### *Fall Family Social Event*

You and your entire family are invited to cool down with some sweet treats. Meet other WCNS families while your children play on the playground equipment. Before you leave, let your child show you his or her classroom and cubby.

### **October**

#### *Super Science Saturday*

This event is open to all community families and their children ages three through third grade. Utilizing all four classrooms, the school show cases interactive learning experiences for parents and children to experience together. Past events have included Family Art Day, Mega Math Morning and Super Science Saturday.

#### *Room Parent Coffee*

All Room Parents are invited to enjoy refreshments at the home of a Board Member. You will meet fellow room parents and learn about your role as a room parent and the many ways to contribute to your child's class.

#### *Parent Education Evenings*

Attend seminars and discussions, led by experts, about child rearing issues.

#### *Fall Parent Party and Benefit*

All parents are invited to attend this fundraising and social event. This event is a great chance to get to know other parents and support the school's fundraising while bidding on exciting auction items or signing up for other social opportunities with WCNS families.

### **November**

#### *P.J. Storytime*

Bring your children in their pajamas to listen to stories and preview the season's "top picks" at this popular evening event. This event kicks off our annual Book Fair.

#### *Book/Toy Fair*

The Book Stall and Village Toy Shop. Buy or order books from these wonderful local shops for the holidays, birthdays or rainy days and help raise money for our school.

#### *Class Parties*

Dates to be determined by classroom parents.

A coffee or evening get-together will be organized and hosted by the classroom parents. This provides an opportunity for the parents/guardians to get to know one another.

## **December**

### *Holiday Gatherings*

Enjoy some special time with your child when you join them in their classroom and listen to songs, hear a story and enjoy some holiday treats.

## **January**

### *Prospective Board Member Coffee*

Interested in joining the Board? Join WCNS Board Members for this informal coffee in the WCNS lobby to learn more about the activities and experiences of WCNS Board Members.

## **February**

### *Parents Go to School Night*

An evening at the school that provides parents with a chance to see and hear what a day at school is like for their child. Listen to the Director share more about the WCNS philosophy, chat with your child's teachers and explore your child's school environment.

## **March**

### *Family Art Day*

Join us for an interactive experience for preschoolers through third grade children and their parents. Enjoy a variety of hands-on art explorations for TV Tune Out participants. This event is a collaboration with The Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood and TV Tune Out Week.

## **May**

### *New Board Member Coffee*

For parents interested in meeting new people and learning about the inner workings of our special school, joining the Board of Directors is an ideal solution. The New Board Member Coffee is a welcome party for those joining the Board.

## **June**

### *Class Picnics*

Pack a picnic lunch and a blanket for your family and join your child on the playground for lunch and some fun and conversation. Teachers serve a sweet treat for dessert.

### *Winnetka Children's Fair*

On the Village Green, Winnetka. Join us for the Annual Children's Fair. Enjoy games, crafts, rides, food and entertainment with your entire family. A community service and the principal fundraiser for the nursery school, the Fair requires thousands of hours of volunteer time. All parents are encouraged to join the fun by volunteering at the Fair. The first Children's Fair was held in 1946.

## **School Policies**

### **Health Information**

Every child must have a current medical form (with the initial form dated no more than 6 months

prior to the first day the child starts school) on file at the school. This form must list immunization dates and be completed by both physician and parent/guardian. All subsequent immunizations must be reported for inclusion in the file. In accordance with NAEYC recommendations, new forms must be completed every year. DCFS and the Health Department monitor our compliance. New students must have their forms on file before they begin school.

Please check medical forms carefully to be sure they are complete. TB test and lead screening results should be recorded in the proper spaces, and the box labeled "health history" must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian.

### **Immunization Policy**

In order to comply with the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Children and Family Services, and to protect our school community as a whole and in particular to protect pregnant mothers and younger siblings who may not be fully immunized, the Winnetka Community Nursery School has adopted the following policy:

*Children attending WCNS must have received the following immunizations, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Illinois Department of Public Health:*

- Poliomyelitis
- Measles
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis B
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Tetanus
- Haemophilus influenzae B
- Varicella (or proof of havign chicken pox)
- TB skin test (or an X-ray proving the child is free of TB) within six months of starting nursery school
- Lead screening

### **Exceptions**

WCNS places paramount importance upon the protection and safety of the school community as a whole. If a family has a *medically or legally valid reason* for requesting an exception to a particular immunization requirement, the parents/guardians must provide:

- a letter attached to the Medical Form or a note written directly on the Medical Form by the child's doctor stating that the requirement is medically contradicted, or
- a written and signed statement detailing the religious belief that conflicts with the immunization requirements.

### **Administering Medications at School**

*A Medical Consent form is available in the school office in the event your child needs to take medication during school hours.*

**No medication will be given unless a parent/guardian has completed this form. Prescription medication may be given to a child by a WCNS staff member if the label bears the child's name, the physician's name, the drugstore's name, the prescription number, the date of the prescription, and the parent/guardian has completed and *signed* the medical consent form.**

A copy of this form is kept in the classroom. Each time the medication is given, the *WCNS staff member will record* this on the Medical Consent Form that is kept in the classroom. Non-

prescription medications may be administered by a WCNS staff member with written permission of the parent/guardian in accordance with the packaged instructions, **except for aspirin and aspirin-substitutes, which may be administered only if there is a specific prescription written by the physician.** This medication must be labeled with the child's name and date and the parent/guardian must *complete* and sign a *Medial Consent Form*.

### **Illness at School**

If your child is unable to attend school, please contact the school as soon as possible. We request that you call prior to 8:30 a.m. for morning classes, 10:00 a.m. for Splendid Day and 12:00 p.m for afternoon classes. To help us ensure a healthy environment for our children, we ask that parents/guardians *use good judgment and please do not send a sick or overly tired child to school.*

If your child is not feeling well and you do not know whether to send your child, we recommend keeping your child home the entire day to see if further symptoms develop. When a child's resistance is low, she/he is more susceptible to illness. A fresh cold, pink eye or upset stomach can infect an entire class, *including teachers and their families*, within days. Sick teachers (and sick children of teachers) affect the entire program, as we have to hire substitute teachers to be with your children while they recover. We, therefore, ask you to err on the side of caution when deciding if your child is well enough to come to school. If a child is not healthy enough to participate in both indoor and outdoor play, she/he should not be in school that day. It is not possible to keep a child indoors while the rest of the class is outside. If your child is ill for six consecutive school days, the law requires a physician's letter stating that your child is able to return to school and participate in all activities.

Parents and caregivers are our first line of defense against the spread of disease. Since you know your child best, we must depend on you to use common sense and be considerate of others. **If there is any doubt about whether your child is well enough to go to school, please keep her at home. Sick children do not enjoy being in school.**

Our teachers will send children home if they do not seem healthy upon arrival, become ill during school hours, or report having been ill within the past 24 hours.

### **Treatment of Illness or Accident While at School**

If a child should become ill while at school, we will keep him/her as comfortable as possible while we contact the parents/guardians, or emergency numbers provided by the parents/guardians. For this reason, it is essential that we have **the most current work numbers as well as cellular phone or pager numbers; we also require four emergency numbers for each child. Parents/guardians should update these numbers if there are any changes.**

The parent/guardian or emergency contact will be asked to take the child home. Sick children will be isolated from the rest of the class while waiting to go home. If a child should get hurt at school and the injury does not require immediate attention, we will keep her as comfortable as possible while we contact the parent/guardian. If the injury is minor and the parent agrees, the child may remain in the classroom for the remainder of the day. An *Accident Report* will be completed by the child's teacher, signed by the parent/guardian, and kept on file in the school office.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency or accident requiring immediate medical attention, we will call the Winnetka paramedics at 911. One of the child's teachers or an administrator will stay with the child

at all times and accompany him/her to the hospital with the paramedics. Remaining staff members will immediately contact the parents/guardians or emergency numbers to notify them of the emergency. An Accident Report will be completed by the child's teacher, signed by the parent/guardian, and kept on file in the school office.

### **Communicable Diseases**

*Notify the school immediately so that we may inform the families of children who may have been exposed.*

Parents/guardians whose child has contacted a communicable disease (chicken pox, strep throat/scarlet fever, head lice, pin worms, scabies, conjunctivitis, hepatitis, meningitis), are required to report their disease to the school. For serious illnesses which are highly contagious or of long duration, a note from the child's physician is required before the child returns to school.

### **When a Child is Well Enough to Return to School**

Please use the following guidelines to determine whether your child should attend school or when your child may return to school. These guidelines help to ensure the best health of all the children and staff participating in the school's activities.

#### **Chicken Pox**

*Notify the school.* Child may return when all pox are scabbed over. This may take up to 10-14 days (1 week minimal).

#### **Cold/Cough**

Please use good judgment and remember that children who do not feel well are not very happy to be at school. We can't avoid colds, but we can help to control their spread by having children with excessively runny noses and/or coughs stay home.

#### **Diarrhea**

Child may return when she/he no longer has loose stools.

#### **Fever**

Children should stay home a full 24 hours temperature free following a fever.

#### **Fifth Disease**

*Notify the school.* Fifth Disease is a mild, non-febrile rash which causes the child to look as if she/he was slapped in the face. The skin all over the child's body may redden or a lacey rash may appear. The rash may fade and then recur. Parents are advised to consult their child's physician as to when the child may return to school. Most doctors recommend keeping children home for 2-4 days. Children with Fifth Disease are not contagious when the rash is present. Note: Pregnant women exposed to Fifth Disease may want to consult their physician.

#### **Fractures**

Parents/guardians are asked to provide written information from the physician regarding restrictions to child's level of activity.

#### **Head Lice**

*Notify the school.* Child may return to school after treatment with a lice shampoo and after all nits

have been removed.

### **Pin Worms & Scabies**

*Notify the school.* Child may return 24 hours after treatment.

### **Hepatitis**

*Notify the school.* Symptoms include behavioral changes, fatigue, loss of appetite, yellowish skin & whites of eyes, dark urine, and light colored stools. If you suspect hepatitis, keep your child at home and consult your pediatrician.

### **Meningitis**

*Notify the school* with any type of meningitis. Early symptoms include fever, headache, stiff neck, vomiting. The child's active level will decrease, associated with not feeling well, and symptoms can progress rapidly, becoming more severe. Contact your pediatrician.

### **Open Sore (Impetigo)**

*Notify the school.* Child may return to school when lesions have stopped draining and the treatment has begun.

### **Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)**

*Notify the school.* Both forms of conjunctivitis (viral & bacterial) are highly contagious. A child who is uncomfortable or has a thick, colored discharge should be kept at home. As with a cold, parents/guardians should use their judgment and not send a child with a fresh case of conjunctivitis or a child who is feeling ill to school. Contact your physician. If your child is given an antibiotic, she/he may not return to school for a full 24 hours following the start of medication. Viral conjunctivitis is contagious as long as there are symptoms.

### **Sore Throat**

Please use good judgment. Often a child is most contagious at the onset of an illness. Contact your physician if a fever is associated with the sore throat, the sore throat persists without a fever or other cold symptoms. Your child could have strep throat. Untreated strep infections can lead to serious side effects, such as rheumatic fever.

### **Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever**

*Notify the school.* Child may return to school a full 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun, and after the child is fever and symptom free.

### **Vomiting**

Child should stay home at least 24 hours after initial vomiting episode occurred, and be symptom-free before returning to school. Our experience is that a child who has vomited the night before school (or before coming to school) is sick and will often vomit again at school.

### **School Policies**

#### **WCNS Parking Sticker**

A WCNS sticker is required to park on Killian Court. Teachers will distribute the stickers during conferences or parents may obtain them from the school office. The sticker should be affixed to the lower right corner of the rear window of your car and allows you to short term park in Killian Court. Because parking is limited, please be courteous of other families and do not park in

Killian Court for an extended period of time. Please park as close to the end of the Killian Court parking lane as possible. Please do not wait for a parking space because it will cause traffic to back up into Pine Street. For the safety of the children, do not park beside the yellow curb at the South end of the parking lane (in the municipal lot). You may be ticketed if you park in this area. If no parking space is available on Killian Court, you may park in the appropriately designated spaces in the adjacent municipal lot or circle around again to Killian Court. If you plan to spend any time at the school other than promptly picking up or dropping off your child, please park in the adjacent municipal lot.

### **Drop-Off and Arrival**

For children to experience all the activities at school and to have fun, it is important that they arrive in a timely manner. Otherwise, they can feel left out. Consistency and predictability are important to children of all ages. The teachers plan each day's activities for the same time each day so that children always know what is going to happen next. To miss part of the day often confuses children and contributes to making them feel insecure. Your promptness at the start of the day helps your child make the transition to school at the same time as the other children and enables all children in your child's class to start the day in a smooth and uninterrupted manner. We ask that all children be in their classrooms at the scheduled starting time of their class. If this is not possible, please notify the classroom teacher.

### **"Tickets"**

When you arrive, please bring your child to take a "ticket" (a strip of construction paper) from and be greeted by, the Director, and then bring your child with the "ticket" to your child's teacher. The "tickets" allow the children to be individually greeted by both the Director and their teacher. All children must be brought directly to their classroom teachers. Parents, guardians, caregivers, or carpool drivers are to make sure every child in their care is greeted by their teacher before leaving school.

### **Pick-up/Sign-out**

For the protection of your child, all children are signed out at the end of the day by parents/guardians or by someone that has been authorized in writing. No child will be sent home with anyone other than the parent/guardian unless the name is listed on the Emergency Card kept in the school office. Please take time to consider all possible people who may have occasion to bring your child home (relatives, friends, carpool, neighbors) when completing the release section on the Emergency Card. You may change or add to this card at anytime during the school year. Also, please inform the school in writing if you wish to have someone deleted from your card.

**If your child is to go home with someone whose name is not on your list (e.g.: a friend's parent), we must have your written permission.**

All of these policies are in compliance with the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

### **Late Policy**

We understand that on occasion a family may run into a situation which would cause them to be late picking up their child. We ask that a courtesy call be made to inform the faculty that you will be late and what your expected time of pick up will be. We appreciate your consideration in making every effort to pick your child up on time. In an event where a parent/guardian is later than 15

minutes we ask that alternative arrangements be made. Remember WCNS cannot excuse a child to any individuals that are not on the emergency card located in the school office.

### **Emergency School Closings**

On rare occasion, severe weather conditions (extreme cold, excessive amounts of snow) or unsafe building conditions (no power or water) necessitate the closing of the preschool. Your child's room parent will call you if WCNS has an emergency school closing. Decisions about closings are made by the Director and Board President. WCNS will follow Winnetka Public School's emergency closing for severe weather. Please bear in mind that the safety of our children, families, and staff are our primary concern in making these decisions. If possible, families will be called the night before a closing. School closing information is broadcast by WGN-AM 720 or WMAQ-AM 670. You may, also call (900) 407-SNOW and use the Winnetka Public School Access code, 847- 446-9400 to learn of school closings.

### **Discipline and Guidance**

*The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires that all licensed schools have a written discipline and guidance policy. Staff members and parents/guardians are required to read the policy and sign a document stating that they have done so.*

A positive guidance approach is used to help children develop positive self-esteem, build trust in the world around them, and develop autonomy and pride in their work. A supportive, nurturing environment with caring adults is the first step in the development of inner control and appropriate behavior.

The goal of discipline is to teach children to function in a social setting with respect. Discipline is not a punishment, but rather a way to help children maintain self-control, follow the rules for classroom behavior, and treat one another with kindness and acceptance. By allowing children to assume responsibility for their actions, they develop self-control and become aware of the rights of others. Consequences (logical or natural) developmentally related to the child's behavior/act might include reinforcing positive behavior, modeling appropriate behavior, and assisting the children with finding the words to describe how they are feeling. We believe that discipline involves teacher planning to prevent problems, simple and clearly stated rules and expectations, redirection when problems arise, and appropriate adult intervention when necessary. Each classroom will review and discuss the basic code of behavior for our school which is:

1. We do not hurt ourselves.
2. We do not hurt others.
3. We do not hurt the things around us.

Teachers are responsible for handling discipline for the children under their care. This is to be done in a positive but firm manner, privately and individually. Discipline is used when a child's behavior becomes disruptive to the functioning of the class, is disturbing to other children or is potentially dangerous for the child or other children. In general, children who have lost control of their behavior are given the opportunity to regain control in a quiet place in the room. Redirection to another activity or individual project often helps children to regain composure. A teacher will be near the child and removal from the group will not exceed one minute per year of age. If a child hurts herself or another child, or behaves in an unusually disruptive manner, the teacher will document this behavior in writing. Limits and consequences are clearly explained, consistently

enforced, and discussed with children as part of any disciplinary action. When a specific plan has been developed to respond to a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior, all staff members who work with the child will be aware of the plan and responsible for its implementation.

As a DCFS licensed and NAEYC accredited program, we agree that the following are never permitted:

*Corporal punishment, abusive language, withdrawal of food or bathroom privileges, threats of any sort, public or private humiliation, discipline for toileting accidents, emotional abuse (shaming, rejecting, isolating).*

### **Parents'/Guardians' Role**

We ask that you reinforce these rules at home. We welcome your input as to what works best for your child, and whenever possible, we try to be consistent. We encourage open communication with parents/guardians to help children behave appropriately in the preschool setting. In addition to formal conferences, teachers will inform parents if behavior problems persist and will consult with the Director and/or school specialists. Parents may be asked to attend an extra conference to collaborate on solutions. If you have any questions about how discipline is handled for your child, please do not hesitate to ask our teaching staff or the Director.

### **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

Under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, all staff members are mandated reporters. This means that staff members are required to report to the Child Abuse Hotline whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional official capacity may be abused or neglected.

### **Termination Policy**

When it is determined that a problem exists that would jeopardize the safety and well being of a child or others around him/her, a meeting will be scheduled with the child's family and the Director, teachers and support staff. These parties will discuss the problem, design a plan of action, and determine a time frame for the implementation of this plan. The situation will be re-evaluated at the end of the specified period. At this time a decision will be made either to (1) allow the child to remain at WCNS as we continue to monitor and make adjustments for his/her needs or (2) assist in the placement of the child in an environment that better fits the needs of both the child and family.

### **Grievance Policy**

If, at any time, a parent/guardian has a grievance with any part of the program, children, or staff, a special meeting can be arranged with the Director.

### **Children's Files**

All forms required by law must be on file in the school office prior to the first day of school. This includes:

1. Child and Family History or Update.
2. Medical Form.
3. Emergency Card including general release/permission.
4. Copy of your child's birth certificate.

Children whose files are incomplete may not attend preschool, so please be sure to schedule an appointment with your child's physician in a timely manner if a physical form is required.

Information in your child's file will not be made available to any other school, agency, or individual without your permission.

### **Release of Personal Information**

All information in a child's file is strictly confidential and will be seen only by his/her classroom teacher and the Director. In order to release this information as well as information regarding a child's social/emotional development and adjustment to the school, the parents/guardians must sign Permission to Release Information Form, which may be obtained from the office.

### **Working with Children Who Have Special Needs and/or Receive Support Services**

It is not unusual for preschool age children to receive supportive services outside the school or during class time (i.e. speech and language therapy, physical therapy, play therapy, etc.)

WCNS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex national origin or disability. WCNS is committed to providing programs and services that meet the needs of all children. We accept children with special needs in accordance with our established school registration policies. However, if a child's individual needs require accommodations that cannot be provided through existing WCNS resources, parents/guardians will be asked to contribute to the cost of such accommodations. While WCNS makes every effort to accommodate all children who register, if a requested accommodation would result in an undue burden on WCNS resources or fundamentally alter the nature of the WCNS program, admission or continued enrollment may be denied. We cannot accept children who in our judgment are 1) of danger to themselves, 2) of danger to others, or 3) a disruption to normal activities making it reasonably difficult for others to benefit from our program.

At WCNS, we believe that it is important to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of young children, while also responding to the needs of the family.

We believe that including children with special needs in a regular preschool program enriches the lives of all children by bringing them together in an environment that teaches acceptance, respect and an appreciation of individual differences. It also enables children with special needs to model the social, language and play skills needed to succeed in school. It is an appropriate practice in a developmental early childhood setting.

We urge parents and guardians to discuss with the Director any special circumstances involving their child prior to registration or the beginning of the program.

### **Identification of Children with Special Needs**

WCNS is committed to providing individualized instruction, which addresses the needs of each child in its programs. WCNS is also committed to identifying children with special needs. From time to time consultants may observe in the classroom to identify children who may benefit from additional services. In addition, on occasion, WCNS may need to do any of the following:

- require additional parent/teacher conferences to discuss and identify concerns

make recommendations to seek assessment in speech/language, cognitive, physical and social/emotional areas

- require parental consent to call in a consultant to observe a child, or children, and advise the Director and teachers
- make changes/adjustments in a child's schedule or program based on identified needs
- consult with parents/guardians regarding accommodations and additional services necessary for a child's continued participation in WCNS programs
- ask parents/guardians to contribute to the expense of reasonable accommodations for their child
- refer parents/guardians of children who cannot participate, with reasonable accommodations, in WCNS programs to a more appropriate placement

### **Requirements for the Enrollment of Children with Special Needs**

It is important that WCNS be considered part of the team of professionals working to enrich each child's preschool experience. Accordingly, WCNS staff members working with a special needs child must have access to information from outside services that would help facilitate each child's adjustment to preschool. Reports from agencies and/or private therapists providing services to each child enrolled at WCNS should be forwarded to the Director on a timely basis. All information will be treated with confidentiality. Unless required by law, WCNS will not send information to any other agencies or schools, without the written authorization from the parents or guardians.

To facilitate an understanding of a child's needs and, where appropriate, make adjustments, WCNS also requires parents sign a release of information form enabling the classroom teachers and the school Director to talk directly with the agency or therapists providing services to best meet the child's needs in the classroom. WCNS also may require parental consent to permit WCNS staff to participate in the child's IEP/IFSP meetings with the public school district. Failure to assist WCNS in obtaining information it believes is necessary to accommodate a child within the school may result in admission or continued enrollment being denied. If it is determined that a child, even with reasonable accommodations, is unable to participate in WCNS programs, we are glad to assist in determining the best placement for the child.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. Preschool children need freedom to explore and master a wide variety of materials. Their clothes often get dirty in the process. To ensure their success, please make sure that your child comes prepared to get "messy" and to allow movement. The teachers encourage the children to develop self-help skills at school. Therefore, please dress your child in clothing that they can put on and remove by themselves. During cold weather, all children should be equipped with snow coats, snow pants, hats, mittens and boots. Outerwear should be labeled with your child's name (including hats, mittens and boots).

#### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a very special time for young children and a special event at WCNS, with each class celebrating in a unique way. We feel that all children welcome a simple celebration at school. You may bring a special snack such as muffins, cupcakes (the smaller version is most appropriate) or

cookies on your child's birthday. Please let the classroom teacher know in advance. The classroom teachers will inform you if there are any allergies in the classroom. If you would like to bring a treat The Health Department requires it must be store-bought and in its original sealed package. Please do not bring candy. In addition, please note that we can not allow balloons in school as they pose a choking hazard.

**WCNS is a peanut-free school. Please do not bring any items containing peanuts, peanut traces, or peanut oil into the school (read the packaging labels carefully). In addition, we can not allow candy of any kind to be brought to school and distributed to children. Many types of candy are manufactured on equipment on which foods containing peanuts have been made and therefore, candy is not allowed in school.**

### **Snacks**

The school will provide a daily nutritious snack for the class that includes juice. For special occasions such as birthdays, your child may bring in a special snack. **Please do not bring candy as many candy is made on equipment that has touched peanut traces.** If you would like to bring in a treat, the Health Department requires it be store-bought and in its original sealed package. Healthy snacks are appreciated. If you plan on bringing fruit, the teachers will take the responsibility of washing and cutting it into appropriate servings. **WCNS is a peanut-free school. Please do not bring any items containing peanuts, peanut traces, or peanut oil into the school. Marshmallows are never allowed at school as they are a choking hazard for young children.**

Some children have severe allergies to certain foods. For their safety it is imperative that you inform the teachers of what you plan to bring to school for snack.

### **Holidays**

At Winnetka Community Nursery School we are sensitive to the developmental stages and needs of our young students. Celebrations, rituals and social activities are an important part of childhood. They help children learn that they belong to the family, community, culture, and society. Most holidays are based on things children do not understand. Therefore, early childhood educators recommend keeping the classroom routine consistent to avoid over stimulating children. This means we keep holiday activities to a minimum. We use a seasonal approach to celebrations instead of a holiday-centered approach. This approach allows everyone to celebrate something that is universally shared, such as autumn. We invite families (parents, grandparents, aunts & uncles) to share their customs, traditions, holidays, and celebrations with us. We feel it is very important and beneficial to connect holidays to the children's daily lives, to learn about one another and to approach them in a developmentally sensitive way. Thus, while we want to validate their importance in the lives of children, we do not want to "teach" about them or base our curriculum on holidays. **WCNS is peanut-free and candy-free school. Please do not bring candy of any type to school.**

### **Child's Possessions at School**

We know how important it is to young children to bring their special possessions with them to school. Bringing one favorite thing to school as a comforting transitional object or to show the teachers and/or class is a lovely custom. We do not want to discourage this, however, we need your help in setting limits with your child on what is appropriate to bring to school. The following are not appropriate and not allowed in WCNS:

- action figures

- money.
- guns
- balloons
- war toys (including "Star Wars")
- costumes
- masks
- sticks
- toys with very small pieces
- books or other objects with

frightening content and/or pictures

Each classroom has its own way of handling things brought from home. Because children become upset when small toys are misplaced or lost or when special toys are handled by other children, we will have the children leave their items in their cubby for safekeeping after showing the teachers.

### **A Place for Personal Belongings**

Every child is assigned a permanent place in the school (cubby) for her outer clothing, slippers, extra change of clothing, etc. Things brought from home may be safely left in this cubby during school hours. The teachers may leave artwork and notes to be brought home in each child's cubby.

### **Hand Washing**

In an ongoing effort to curb the spread of germs, hand washing takes place several times throughout the day, upon arrival in the classroom, before and after snack, after outside play, and after toileting. We ask that you help your child wash his hands upon arrival in the classroom, as this will help reduce the spread of germs by an estimated fifty percent.

### **Outdoor Play**

The children play outdoors whenever the weather permits. In general, this means any day when it is not raining and warmer than 20 degrees. On days when the temperature is between 20-32 degrees, factors such as sunshine and wind chill are taken into account. The Director will make the best judgment call on these days. Please accept the Director's decision, even if it is not one you might have made. Remember to dress your child appropriately so she/he can enjoy play outdoors.

### **Field Trips**

When studying a particular subject, the teachers may wish to take a class on a brief walk to visit the library, the Grand or the Police Station. The teacher will inform parents in advance of the planned field trip. All walks will be carefully supervised by the teachers and parent volunteers. We do not take any field trips that require transportation. If you have any concern about your child going on a field trip, please discuss it with your child's teacher or the Director.

### **Community Outreach**

Throughout the year, Winnetka Community Nursery School encourages our school community to support organizations in surrounding communities that are responsive to people in need. Our school develops age-appropriate service learning programs to help strengthen our community and enable

our children and their families to reach out to others. In addition to our neighbor program, we will also work with selected charities. The school lobby will serve as a drop off point for various items.

#### *Bookworm Angels*

In March 2009, WCNS kicked-off it's book partner with Book Worm Angels to help children in Chicago's inner-city schools. By collecting gently-used children's books from our families, we are able to contribute to dozens of classroom lending libraries established Book Work Angels. These libraries are located in elementary schools where the majority of children read below grade level and think of reading as "just work". The lending libraries, however, give children access to a wide variety of books for fun so they can discover enjoyment in reading—and by doing so, learn to read better. Book Worm Angels helps thousands of Chicago public school students each year and continues to replenish and establish the libraries. Our collection basket in the school lobby will always welcome book donations. For more information, please visit [www.bookwormangels.org](http://www.bookwormangels.org).

#### *The Pajama Program*

This charity provides new, unused pajamas and books to children in need—many of whom are awaiting adoption. In many cases, these children have not enjoyed having a loved one tuck them into bed at night. By providing warm, comfortable sleep wear, The Pajama Program hopes to contribute to a warmer, more loving environment and bedtime routine.

#### *Annual Toy Drive*

WCNS holds an annual toy drive to re-stock the play space at the Evanston YWCA's Mary Lou's Place, a crisis shelter for children and families who are victims of domestic violence. New toys are collected during the month of May and presented to the shelter on or around June 1, which is Stand For Children Day in the United States.

#### **Summary of Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers**

*The following is a reprint of a document prepared by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.*

#### **Introduction**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for licensing day care centers and preschools. When a day care center or preschool is licensed, it means that a DCFS licensing representative has inspected the facility and the faculty was found to meet the minimum licensing requirements. A license is valid for three years. The day care center/preschool 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/preschool facilities are inspected annually by DCFS licensing staff. If a complaint has been received regarding a violation of the licensing standards of the center, a licensing representative will conduct a licensing complaint investigation to determine if the alleged violation should be substantiated or unsubstantiated. Substantiated violations are reported to individuals who call the Day Care Information Line.

#### **Day Care Information Line: (877) 746-0829**

This statewide toll-free information line provides information to the public on the past history and record, including substantiated violations, of licensed day care homes, day care centers, preschools and groups 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 and Preschools**

The following is a summary of the licensing standards for both day care centers and preschools. It has been prepared for you so that you may monitor the care provided to your child. This is a summary and does not include all of the licensing standards for a center. State licensing standards are minimum standards. If you observe a violation of any of these standards, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the director. In most cases, parents and directors are able to resolve the parents' concerns and issues. If you believe the director 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. A DCFS licensing representative will investigate your complaint and report the results back to you. The day care center/preschool is required to provide a copy of written policies regarding the operation of the facility to each staff person and to parents of enrolled children.

### **Staffing**

- The day care center/preschool must have a qualified child care director on site at all times. The director must be 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 19-years old, have two years of college or have 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.
- 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.

### **Group Size and Staff Requirements**

<i><u>Age of children</u></i>	<i><u>Staff/Child ratio</u></i>	<i><u>Max. group size</u></i>
Infants (6 wks - 14 months)	1 to 4	12
Toddlers (15 - 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 10	20
School-age (Kindergartners)	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 minimum 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 gender, ability, cultural, ethnic or religious differences.
- There must be a balance of active and quiet activity. Daily indoor and outdoor activities are to be provided for children to make use of both large and small muscles.
- In preschool programs where children receive care for less than three hours per day, outdoor activity is not required.
- Children may not be left unattended at any time.

### **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 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.
- Children who cannot turn over alone must be placed on their sides or backs.
- 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 for hand washing.
- 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.

### **School-Aged Children**

- The facility must have a designated area for school-aged 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.

### **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.
- Each child must have an individual cot, bed, 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 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, in writing, information on the program, fees, arrival and departure policies, and the guidance and discipline policies.
- Parents must complete an enrollment application, which includes emergency numbers and persons authorized to pick up the child.
- A child may be only released to a parent or other responsible person designated by the parent.
- 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.
- 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 age. "Time-out" may not be used for children less than two years of age.

### **Health Requirements for Children**

- A medical report indicating that the child has been appropriately immunized must be on file for each child. A tuberculin skin test is to be included in the initial exam unless waived by a physician.
- 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.
- 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 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.

- 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 Meals**

- Children under six years of age who remain five or more hours must have the opportunity to rest or nap.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Play materials must be durable and free from hazardous characteristics.
- 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.
- Routinely, indoor spaces are treated by a licensed and bonded pest control company, Orkin Pest Control Services, when children are not in attendance.

### **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 the children from excessive sun exposure.
- All areas of 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.

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.

### **Where to Write for Further Information**

This summary has been developed to assist parents in monitoring the care provided by the day care center/preschool.

For a complete copy of the licensing standards, write or call:

Department of Children and Family Services  
Office of Child and Family Policy  
406 East Monroe Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62701  
Telephone (217) 784-1983

Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers may be accessed through the DCFS website at [www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs). You may contact your nearest DSFC office, also. Locations of DCFS offices are available on the DCFS website.

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