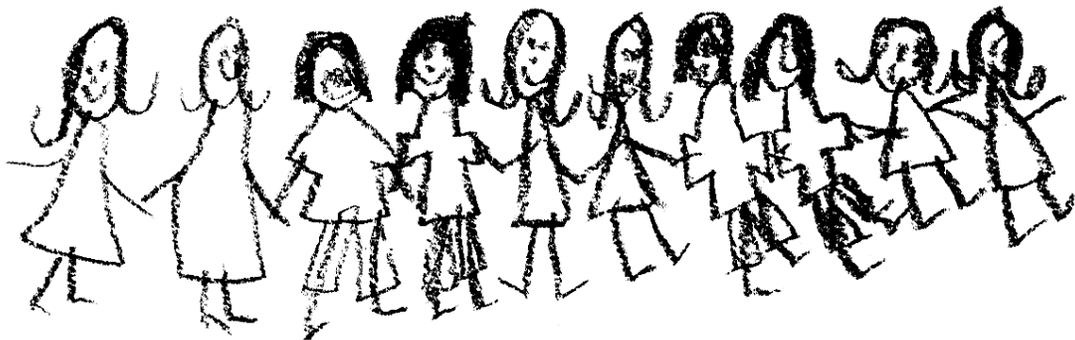


Parent Handbook

Printed June 3, 2025

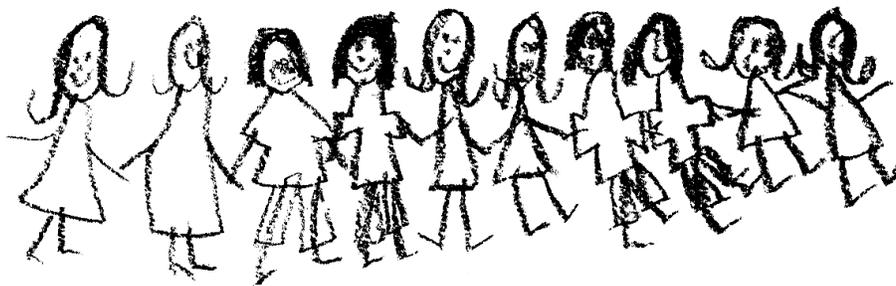
*Just about everything you might ever need to know about
Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc., and lots of other useful
information about children too!*



Playing for Keeps Since 1992

Discoveryschoolhouse.org

Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. We want a Little School with a Big Mission:
Discovery Schoolhouse to be the best place for children possible.
Our vision of Discovery Schoolhouse is one of a school which is recognized as a model of early childhood practice; a place where children learn about themselves and the world in a secure and pleasant environment which reflects the diversity of the community; a place where parents feel a part and can gain insights into their children and into better parenting at an affordable tuition; a place where teachers enjoy working, have opportunities for professional growth, and feel secure, fairly compensated, and respected in their work; and a place which is considered to be an asset by early childhood educators and the greater community.



Welcome!

Welcome to Discovery Schoolhouse. We hope that you and your child are as pleased with Discovery Schoolhouse as we are. As each child is unique, each family which joins our school community brings with it its own expectations and goals for their child's experience and education here. Through this parent handbook we hope to share with you our expectations, policies, and procedures. If you take time now to familiarize yourself with it, you will find that you will have a much better understanding of the philosophy and values of the school.

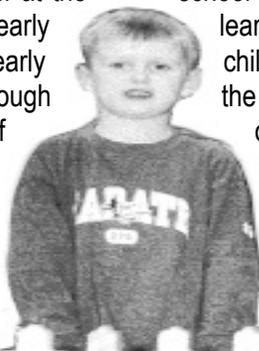


This parent handbook will answer many part of the enrollment process, all the policies and practices discussed need further information, please call or

of your questions, so keep it handy. As parents are asked to agree to abide by all here. Please read it over carefully. If you visit.

If you are enrolling you child at this time, you should complete all of the enclosed forms before your child's first day. The information you supply helps us to better care for your child. This Parent Handbook will be updated from time to time, and the most current version of it is always available online. We will let you know at least seven days before we make any changes in our formal policies or procedures.* Much of the information in this handbook and many of the forms we ask you to complete are required for licensing. Most of the forms will need to be completed annually.*

Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. is a non-profit corporation, formed by parents and teachers, in 1992. Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. has a commitment to parents, teachers, and high quality *developmentally appropriate* programming for children. The staff at the school has many years of experience and will help guide you and your child through these early learning years. We consider Discovery Schoolhouse to be more than just a small early childhood program, and we do our best to be a resource for the community. Through the Milton Early Childhood Alliance (MECA), which we administer, we provide a wealth of community resources to families and to those who care about young children and their families. Please come to us with your questions and concerns.



As a non-profit, chapter 503(c)

corporation and a registered public charity in



Massachusetts, Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. is considered tax-exempt by the Internal Revenue Service (Federal Tax ID #04-3164952). Gifts and donations to the school are greatly appreciated and are generally tax deductible. In general, any donation to the school helps us keep our tuition affordable, and your participation in our fundraising events is needed and greatly appreciated.



An asterisk (*) anywhere in this handbook indicates either specific wording or the inclusion of a policy statement required by state regulations. It does not affect the meaning of the text.

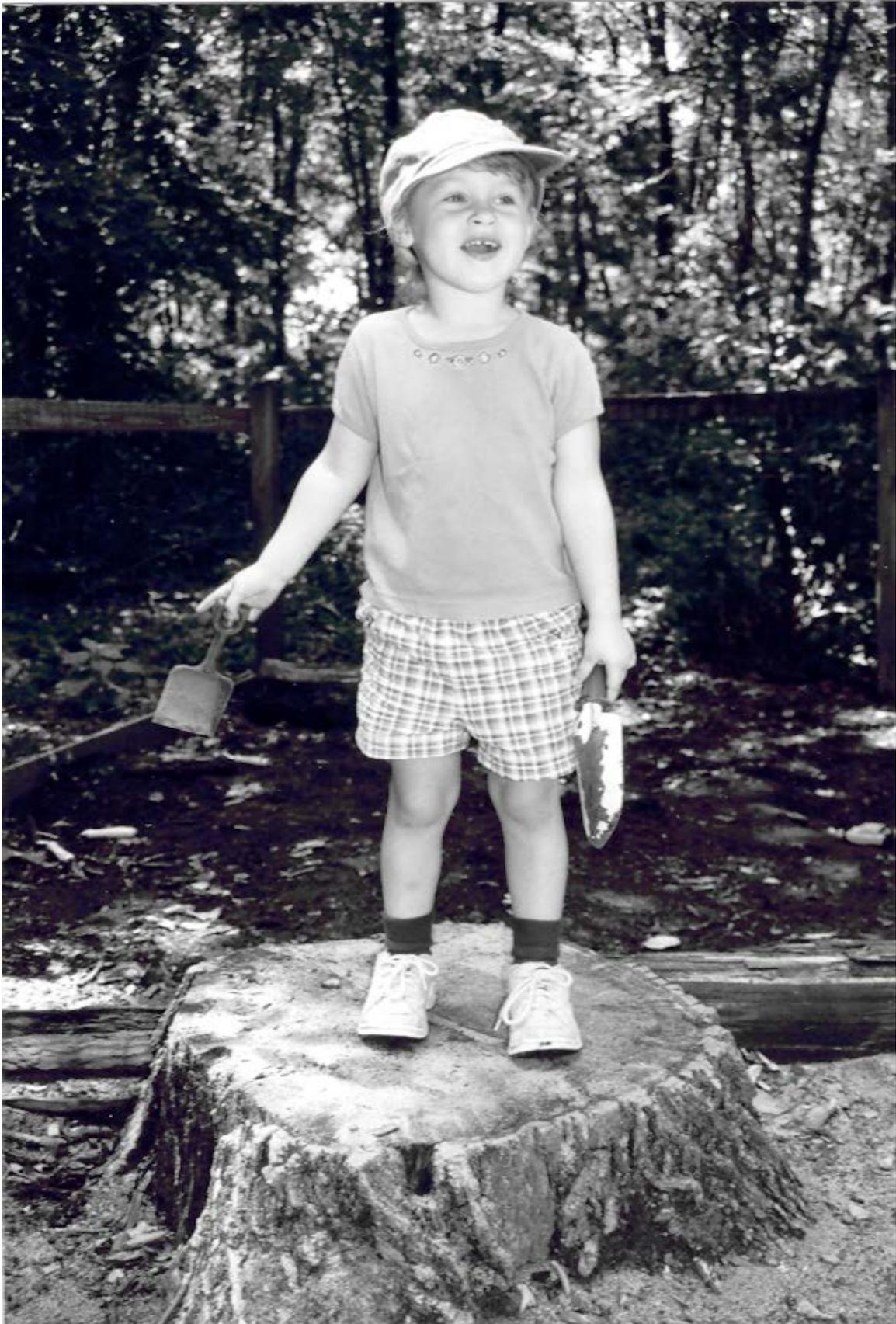
We look forward to having your family at our school!

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| WELCOME! | 3 |
| PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY* | 7 |
| STATEMENT OF PURPOSE | 7 |
| REAL TOOLS | 8 |
| IF A FAMILY’S FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH...* | 8 |
| Children develop predictably, but individually | 9 |
| Play is work! | 9 |
| Young children are learning everything! | 10 |
| Young children are learning to be people! | 10 |
| EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION | 12 |
| PARENT CONFERENCES & PROGRESS REPORTS | 12 |
| TEAMS | 12 |
| The Green Team – a special summer experience for the “big kids” | 13 |
| Team assignments | 13 |
| Team teachers and team teaching | 13 |
| General expectations by age | 14 |
| PLAN FOR TRANSITIONS* | 15 |
| SYMBOLS | 16 |
| PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES | 16 |
| Messy is OK! | 17 |
| Process vs. product | 17 |
| Journals & photos | 18 |
| Paperwork | 18 |
| DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT* | 18 |
| Some discipline techniques we use include: | 19 |
| TOILET TRAINING | 20 |
| Physically, emotionally, & cognitively ready | 21 |
| Keys to success | 21 |
| No “Pull-ups” allowed | 21 |
| What’s the difference? | 22 |
| Is my child ready to switch to underpants? | 22 |
| EVERYBODY GETS OUT OF DIAPERS EVENTUALLY! | 23 |
| DON’T WORRY. BE HAPPY! | 23 |
| DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS | 24 |
| REFERRALS* | 24 |
| MEALS & SNACKS | 25 |
| He won’t eat his lunch! | 26 |
| Lunch should be ready-to-eat | 26 |
| SOME NUTRITIOUS LUNCH SUGGESTIONS* | 27 |
| ORGANIZATION & STAFFING | 29 |
| ORGANIZATION & LICENSING* | 29 |
| ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF DISCOVERY SCHOOLHOUSE, INC. | 29 |
| STAFF POSITIONS | 30 |
| WHO TO ASK ABOUT WHAT | 31 |
| ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE & HOURS | 35 |
| VISITING DISCOVERY SCHOOLHOUSE | 35 |
| HOURS | 35 |
| FIRST DAYS AT SCHOOL | 35 |
| SAYING “GOOD BYE” | 36 |
| ARRIVING & DEPARTING | 37 |
| Cars & safety | 37 |
| LATE PICK-UP POLICY | 38 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| SNOW DAYS & EARLY CLOSINGS | 38 |
| CALLING THE SCHOOL | 38 |
| EVENTS | 43 |
| HOLIDAYS & BIRTHDAYS | 43 |
| Holidays | 43 |
| Birthdays | 43 |
| Party Invitations and Telephone Numbers | 43 |
| SCHOOL EVENTS | 44 |
| SCHOOL HOLIDAYS & STAFF DAYS..... | 45 |
| School Holidays | 45 |
| School Work Days | 45 |
| Tuition during School Closures | 45 |
| WHAT TO BRING AND WEAR..... | 47 |
| TOYS AND OTHER STUFF FROM HOME | 47 |
| TOYS AND OTHER STUFF <i>FROM SCHOOL</i> | 47 |
| Winter Clothing Suggestions | 48 |
| COLDS & THE COLD | 50 |
| CLOTHING..... | 50 |
| What to Wear | 50 |
| Extra Clothing | 51 |
| Seasonal Clothing..... | 51 |
| Wearing jackets..... | 51 |
| What to send in..... | 53 |
| ENROLLMENT | 54 |
| ADMISSION & PLAN TO AVOID SUSPENSION & TERMINATION * | 54 |
| WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD | 55 |
| Giving us sufficient notice | 55 |
| The Goodbye Song..... | 55 |
| Buy-a-Block | 55 |
| | 56 |
| PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS WITH STAFF | 57 |
| CHANGING YOUR CHILD’S SCHEDULE..... | 57 |
| Permanent changes..... | 57 |
| Attending for extra days or hours..... | 57 |
| Birthday BBQ | 58 |
| HEALTH | 59 |
| PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCIES AND ILLNESS* | 59 |
| MILDLY ILL CHILDREN* | 59 |
| WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME..... | 59 |
| WHEN TO START SENDING THEM AGAIN..... | 60 |
| NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OF ILLNESS..... | 60 |
| SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF CHILDREN..... | 60 |
| <u>SIDS RISK REDUCTION PRACTICES FOR INFANTS</u> | 60 |
| HOW SICK IS SICK?..... | 61 |
| CRITERIA FOR EXCLUDING CHILDREN FROM CHILD CARE | 61 |
| WHEN YOUR CHILD NEEDS MEDICATION* | 62 |
| PARENTS’ RIGHTS* | 65 |
| CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF RECORDS* | 67 |
| EMERGENCY CONTINGENCIES PLAN | 68 |
| EMERGENCY SITUATIONS REQUIRING EVACUATION OR SHELTER-IN-PLACE..... | 68 |
| MISSING OR LOST CHILD* | 68 |
| CLOSING THE SCHOOL | 68 |
| IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT* | 70 |
| ASSISTANCE..... | 72 |
| TUITION ASSISTANCE & VOUCHERS..... | 72 |
| HELP & RESOURCES | 73 |



Program Philosophy*

Statement of Purpose

Discovery Schoolhouse provides full and part day, year-round, educational childcare to children 15 months through 8 years old*. The program uses an interactive, child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach because children learn through active participation and discovery.* The curriculum emphasizes child-initiated activities, problem solving, making choices, imaginative play, fostering independence, social skills, respecting cultural diversity, creativity, and individuality.

At Discovery Schoolhouse each child is respected as an individual and given maximum support for learning and development. The curriculum is designed to nurture the development of the whole child, addressing cognitive, intellectual, social, emotional, ethical, and physical needs.

The curriculum and classrooms at Discovery Schoolhouse are designed so that children have a wide variety of appropriate activities available to them. Teachers are active facilitators of children's learning, constantly adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of each child. Teachers act as guides, helping children make choices, work out and discuss conflicts with their friends, answering and asking questions, modeling appropriate behavior, and monitoring children's progress.

At Discovery Schoolhouse children learn basic skills in all areas through hands-on, real-life experiences, exploration and discovery. They learn about numbers, letters, colors, and how the world works as they build with unit blocks, read stories with a teacher, paint pictures at the easel, and take field trips to the local hardware store, post office, and library, and go on nature walks through the woods. Children enjoy days filled with fun, challenge, caring, active learning, and discovery. Each day children experience success, and build confidence and self-esteem. In this way they develop a sense of independence, responsibility, and respect for other people.

Discovery Schoolhouse has an inclusive admission policy and of course does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, cultural heritage, or disability*; nor the marital status, political beliefs, or sexual orientation of their parents.*



Program Philosophy

ROSE IS ROSE by Pat Brady



ROSE IS ROSE
© United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Real Tools

A basic philosophy of the school is that children learn best about the real world by using *genuine materials and equipment* whenever possible. Toy tools, make-believe ovens, and plastic shovels simply do not function as they should, and the child who uses *only* a plastic hammer at a pretend workbench only learns that hammers do not work, cannot hurt your finger, and do not need to be used carefully. Therefore at Discovery Schoolhouse children use *real* tools and



equipment whenever possible, such as metal shovels, rakes, trowels, and hoes for gardening; real kitchen utensils such as potato peelers, apple corers, food mills, and metal tableware for cooking; and real carpentry tools such as hammers, saws, drills, screwdrivers, and files for woodworking. Of course, children are always carefully supervised, and teachers work with children so that they can learn the proper and safe handling of appropriate tools and materials, but parents should be aware that occasional cuts, scrapes, nicks, bumps, and bruises are to be expected and cannot be fully avoided.



If a family's first language is not English...*

Communication between a child's program and family is very important. When a family's first language is not English, Discovery Schoolhouse will seek alternative ways to better communicating with them. Some of these ways might be enlisting the assistance of another bilingual parent in the program, family member, or community volunteer; engaging an independent translation service or using an online translator; consulting with the Milton Early Childhood Alliance (which has translated its documentation into Haitian Creole), and asking the local public school for their assistance.

If you are fluent in both English and another language, and would be interested in helping a non-English speaking family should the situation arise, please let us know!

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)

We believe that teachers' practices with young children should always be Developmentally Appropriate. What does this mean? Simply put, Developmentally Appropriate Practices (or "DAP") are those practices which take into consideration the unique stage of development, level of understanding, level of physical ability, and emotional maturity of each individual child. Teachers who understand DAP understand that children generally progress, grow, and develop according to a fairly predictable pattern (although at different ages), and that activities and expectations should be guided by that understanding.

Children develop predictably, but individually



DAP takes into account the developmental needs of each individual child. Although children usually learn to crawl before they can walk, and walk before they can run, it is quite normal that different children learn these skills at different ages. What might be appropriate for one child might be inappropriate for another. That's why we value giving children many opportunities to make choices, and why we have designed the classrooms to be inviting, comfortable, and full of interesting and educational materials. That's also why we try to design activities which are "open-ended" and can be approached at a variety of levels. Most children are naturally interested in activities which challenge them appropriately, and when a child is engaged in a challenging activity,

the child is learning. When a teacher tries to get a group of children to participate in a very limited kind of activity, it is inevitable that some of the children will be bored and uninterested, some will be interested and challenged, and some will be lost. By always having a variety of choices available, children can naturally find appropriate materials and activities. Of course, all children need some guidance and direction (and some children more than others!). The teachers at Discovery Schoolhouse are knowledgeable about children's development and get to know each child as an individual, so that they can always be ready to encourage the child along.



Play is work!

DAP values play because play is the work of young children and it is through play that they learn best. Through play children work out their theories, relationships, and ideas; through play children explore the

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston

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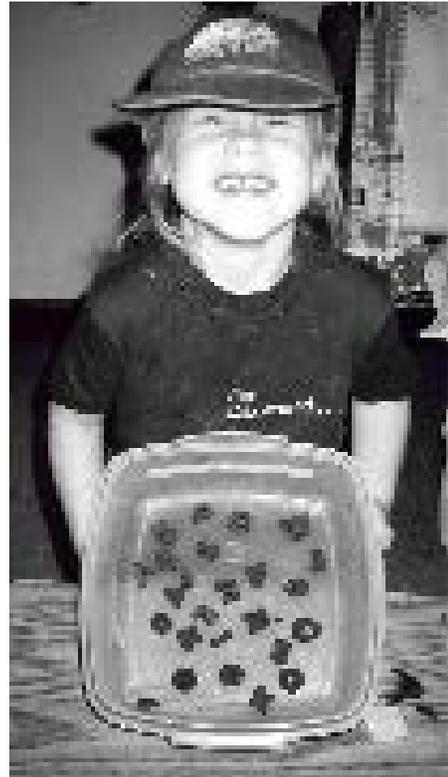


Program Philosophy

world and people around them; and through play children practice and gain an understanding of their abilities and skills. The teacher's role is to help the child expand and extend their play through asking questions and making comments, and to facilitate their play by providing appropriate materials and activities. Play is the work of childhood!

Young children are learning everything!

Young children at Discovery Schoolhouse are learning just about everything! Our curriculum is not limited to the "three R's." Children are learning how to be friends, how to be reliable and self-sufficient, how to communicate effectively and respectfully, how to help others, how to respect boundaries, how to get along in a group, how to play and work independently, how to take care of their own things, how to take turns, how to regulate and handle their emotions, and how to care for others. They are learning to run, climb, jump, zipper, hold a pencil, write, build with blocks, tie shoes, button pants, pour juice, build a sturdy Lego™ tower, and squeeze out *just enough* glue. They are learning to sing the ABC's and to recognize printed letters, count objects, and recognize printed numerals. They are starting to recognize some words and letter sounds, beginning to read, and learning to count up to and past 20. They are figuring out why *four* people can't sit in *three* chairs, where to put their jacket, that a chicken is a bird (and that we eat chickens), how to wash their hands, how not to fall down on the ice, why a jacket might be a good idea on a cold day, that it's nice to hold hands only if the other person wants to also, that dinosaurs aren't alive anymore (but alligators are), birds have feathers, and that dogs, foxes, and wolves are related, *and* how to use the bathroom, a hammer, a paintbrush, *and just about everything else!* Young children are learning *everything about everything*, and they are most importantly learning about *themselves*.



Young children are learning to be people!

We want young children to learn many interesting facts about the world they live in; we want them to learn to read and to count; and we want them to know their colors; *but what we really concentrate on are their social and emotional skills*, because that is what they are really in the process of developing. *We want children to be strong in themselves so that they can learn all the other stuff* as soon as they are ready. We will teach your child many facts, and all the basics that go along with reading, writing, and counting, but our emphasis is on their social and emotional wellbeing and development. Young children are learning *how to be people. After that they can learn anything!*



The child who is eager to learn, feels good about himself, is happy and secure, feels comfortable in his surroundings, feels competent and confident in his approach to the world, and can communicate his needs, will learn everything else when he is ready.

Educational Information

Parent conferences & Progress Reports

For preschoolers, every six months a teacher will provide you with a written report of your child's development and participation in the program.* For infants and for children with identified special needs, it's every three months. This is a good time to meet with a teacher to share information about your child, and you should request a conference if you would like at this time. Should you wish to discuss your child with a teacher at any other time, please let us know. We would be glad to arrange a meeting or phone call at a mutually convenient time.*



Although we encourage on-going dialogue, it is usually not possible for teachers to have *in-depth* discussions at pick-up and drop-off time. If you need to speak with a teacher for longer than just a moment, please call and arrange a time. Usually the best time for a short phone conference is while the children are asleep, usually 1:30-2:30, but we can arrange for a teacher to be available at other times also - just ask!

SAFE HAVENS

PARENTS SHOULD WATCH THEIR CHILDREN CLOSELY DURING THE FORMATIVE PRE-SCHOOL YEARS!

THINGS HAPPEN THAT SHAPE THEIR PERSONALITIES... ALTER THE COURSE OF THEIR LIVES...

EVENTS OCCUR THAT HAVE AN EVERLASTING IMPACT ON THEIR FUTURE!

SO, SAMANTHA, WHAT DID YOU DO AT DAY CARE TODAY?

I DUNNO. I FORGET.



Take a look at your child's Journal to see photos of their time at school!

Teams

At Discovery Schoolhouse each child is assigned to a *team*. The youngest team is the Purple Team in the Sunflower Room downstairs. This team is a mixed infant-toddler group of up to nine children (with a maximum of three infants). Infants are children up to fifteen months, and toddlers are children up to 33 months. The Red Team in the Ladybug Room downstairs is a mixed toddler-preschool group of up to nine children. The Yellow and Blue Teams are both for preschool age children (two years nine months and up). The Blue Team is a larger group, with a maximum of 20 children, and the Yellow Team is a smaller group with a maximum of ten children. The Yellow and Blue Teams use the large upstairs classroom. The Green

Team is an outdoor program for up to ten older preschoolers and kindergarteners that operates during the summer months.

The Green Team – a special summer experience for the “big kids”

The Green Team spends the majority of the day outdoors - *rain or shine*. Their “home base” is a 20-foot diameter bell tent in the grass lot, but they will usually be out on walking and bus trips almost daily for much of the morning. These trips will include going to the Franklin Park Zoo once every week! Other trips include Pope’s Pond, Kelly Field, Tucker School playground, Sheilds Park, the Ryan Wading Pool and Park, the Trailside Museum, the Blue Hills, and other interesting local destinations. To get to the Zoo, the Trailside Museum, and the Blue Hills, the children take public transportation. For all the trips you’ll receive permission slips with all the details. It is very important that your child arrive on time every day so that the group isn’t delayed in leaving. If you’re late, you may have to meet the group at their destination to drop off your child. When on school grounds, the children have access to the school facilities for using the bathroom and handwashing, etc. Children bring their own lunches, which should be packaged in a way that are easy to carry, do not need refrigeration, and have a minimum of disposable items. The curriculum is child-centered and directed, and develops organically as each day unfolds. Children are encouraged to explore their surroundings, take appropriate risks, be independent, and work as a group with the goal of developing confident and competent children who can work together as a team.

Team assignments

Children are not assigned to teams by specifically by age, except that, of course, all infants are assigned to the Purple Team, all toddlers to the Purple or Red Team, and all preschoolers to the Red, Yellow, Blue, or Green Team. Many other factors go into assigning a child to a team and determining when a child will move to a new team including: the number and ages of children enrolled, the dynamics of the group, and the general developmental level of individual children and the team as a whole. For practical reasons, we also need to consider children’s schedules and the openings available. Team groupings are re-assessed as needed throughout the year, although typically there are more significant changes in the fall when the oldest children are aging out.



Although children stay with their teams for most of the day, they do not necessarily spend their entire day exclusively with that team. Typically, there is some combining of teams during the early morning and late afternoon hours, and we may occasionally need to temporarily combine teams or move children to comply we regulations about ages, ratios, and maximum group size.

Team teachers and team teaching

Although all the teachers at the school work with all the children, your child's team teacher gets to know your child better than anyone else. The team teacher is responsible for writing progress reports and meeting with you as necessary. Usually, you should bring questions about your child to the attention of your child's team teacher. Nonetheless, all teachers know all the children, and teachers usually collaborate on writing progress reports and preparing for parent conferences.

Because all the children know all the teachers at the school, visit other teams occasionally, and teams work together every day, switching teams is not as dramatic



Educational Information

as switching classrooms at some schools. Regardless of whichever team your child is on, our goal is that all the children feel that they are part of the "Discovery Schoolhouse Team."

General expectations by age

The following are some *general* expectations for children based on their age. They are purposefully broad because we realize that children's development varies significantly. Some children will be very strong in some areas, but still growing in others.

Toddlers and younger preschoolers (15 months to 3 years)



- ☞ Child is learning to play with others.
- ☞ Child is learning self-help skills (washing hands, using toilet, opening lunch box, dressing).
- ☞ Child is learning how the school is organized (where toys belong, where to find crayons, markers, paper, where to get a tissue)
- ☞ Child is learning to follow one-step instructions from a teacher independently (get your lunch, use the toilet, get your jacket), and is learning the daily routine.
- ☞ Child learning to express self verbally.

Three year olds

- ☞ Child is able to follow one and two step directions ("get a piece of paper and go to the library")
- ☞ Child has a mastery of self-help skills and can follow through independently (uses the toilet successfully, flushes, snaps pants, and washes hands, or can put on own shoes, socks, and jacket, and is learning to zipper).



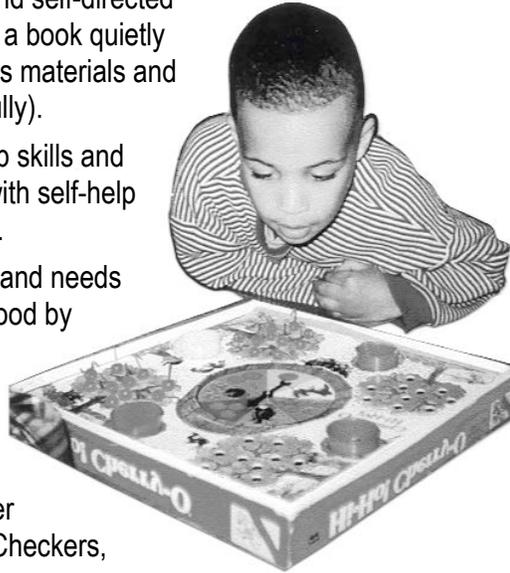
- ☞ Child follows the daily routine and notices changes in it (knows that after snack we go outside, then we come in and have lunch).
- ☞ Child knows specifics about daily routine and acts independently to accomplish them (i.e. washes hands the "Discovery Schoolhouse way," gets a place mat, sits at snack table, and serves self snack; or, puts toys away properly, puts on own jacket, and lines up at door to go outside).
- ☞ Child is able to communicate needs verbally, answer questions, and stay on topic in conversations with adults and other children.
- ☞ Child is able to play independently happily and in small groups solving simple conflicts as they arise verbally ("we can both be the Daddy," "I'll get you another one," or "let's take turns.")

Four and five year olds

- ☞ Child is able to follow multi-step directions ("everyone get a piece of paper, draw your symbol on it with a blue crayon, and meet me in the Library when you're done.")



- ☞ Child is able to concentrate on one task without being easily or frequently distracted.
- ☞ Child is able to be independent and self-directed appropriately for the setting (gets a book quietly looks at it while at the library, finds materials and works on an art project purposefully).
- ☞ Child has mastered most self-help skills and is able to help younger children with self-help skills, games, and other activities.
- ☞ Child is able to express thoughts and needs clearly so as to be easily understood by adults and other children.
- ☞ Child is able to take turns without adult assistance and play board games and other simple games with rules with other children cooperatively (Go Fish, Checkers, Candy Land, dominoes).



Plan for Transitions*

When a child will be transitioning to a new classroom, such as when a child moves from the mixed toddler-preschool group to the preschool group, they will be prepared so that the transition feels as natural and uneventful as possible. At Discovery Schoolhouse, children in all groups have many opportunities to interact with children and staff in other groups at the beginning and end of the day, occasionally during the day, and when teachers fill in for other teachers. By arranging the program in this way, children internalize that although they might be assigned to a particular group and room, they are also part of the larger school, so that the transition to a new group feels comfortable. Staff from each group will meet to discuss the child's transition.

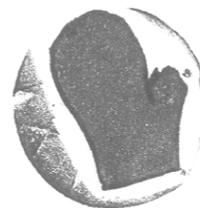
When a child will be transitioning to a new program or school (typically to kindergarten), we prepare the child by talking with them about the move as appropriate, and having the entire group participate with them in our "goodbye" routine. This routine consists of the group singing our own "Goodbye Song" to the child, looking through his or her photo journal together, giving the child a group "goodbye hug" and taking a picture of it for the child, and taking a "Goodbye Picture" of the child holding their journal in front of them. As appropriate in individual situations, staff will communicate with the new program with parental permission.

Educational Information

Symbols

Each child is given a symbol – a small, simple picture – which we use to represent their name. We usually use these symbols when we write their name. You will always find your child’s symbol on his or her cubby, journal, and on the team “hand” chart. Even the youngest children learn to recognize these symbols very quickly, and long before they could be expected to recognize their printed names. Since we always use the symbol along with the printed name, children learn to associate the letters in the names they see with the symbol and actual name of the children.

Using the symbols gives children a sense of independence in the classroom, since it helps them “read” each other’s names cubbies, charts, and lists. Often children are able to draw a representation of their symbol long before they could recognizably write the letters of their names. Teachers have symbols too!



Projects and activities

Children participate in a variety of activities at Discovery Schoolhouse. We plan these activities based on our understanding of children's development. We particularly like to create *hands-on* and *open-ended* experiences for children. *Hands-on* activities are those in which children participate *directly and actively*. We like to see children exploring materials, creating things, and being physically active. *Open-ended* activities are those which can be approached at different levels and do not have just one "correct" conclusion. Finger-painting is an open-ended activity. Cutting out a copied picture of a rabbit is not. Open-ended, hands-on activities teach children about themselves, help them develop skills and creativity, and help them grow as self-motivated, confident, enthusiastic learners; and they allow children of various abilities and ages participate successfully side-by-side.



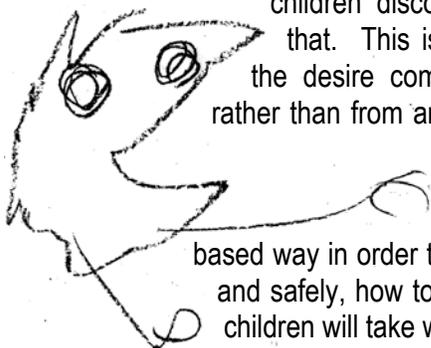
Messy is OK!

We don't mind if an activity is very messy, or, if after the activity is done we have nothing to send home. We generally do not plan activities around holidays, or in order simply to produce something cute to post on the bulletin

board or to send home. We allow children opportunities and materials to pursue their own ideas and interests and we encourage creativity, individuality, exploration, and discovery.

Process vs. product

Young children learn by *doing*. Although ending out with a product at the conclusion of a project can be fun and important *to the child*, it is in *the process of doing the work* that the child is learning. *At Discovery Schoolhouse we do not create experiences for children based on the end product that children will produce.* We design activities around the *process* children go through. Of course many children, and particularly older preschoolers take pride in making something which is representational and identifiable, and we help these children discover ways of doing that. This is different, because the desire comes from the child, rather than from an expectation of the adult.

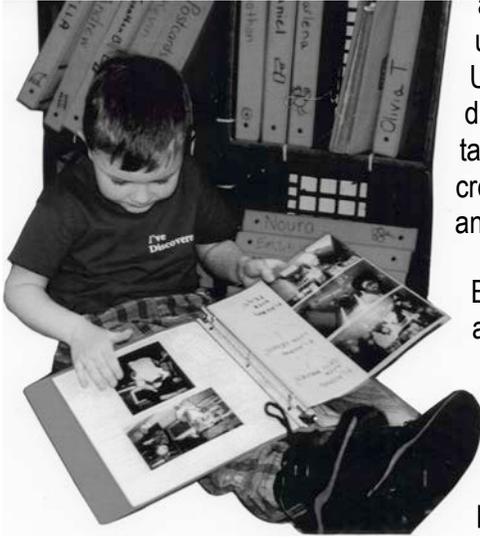


Activities and experiences for children are designed in this process-based way in order that children learn broad-based skills (i. e. how to use a tool effectively and safely, how to draw, how to plan out an idea, how to be creative). These are skills children will take with them as they progress through school and life.

Educational Information

Journals & photos

Much of what children do at school can not be sent home with them! So much of what children do, create, and accomplish is experiential in nature and gets put away at clean-up time. In fact, *most* of what young children do is experiential. Usually if a child's work is not on a piece of paper, it cannot be kept, displayed, or sent home. For this reason we take many photographs. The photos help to create a record of children's experiences and creations.

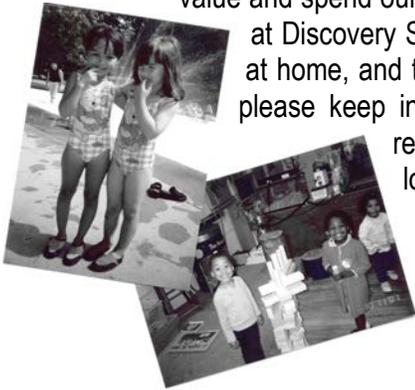
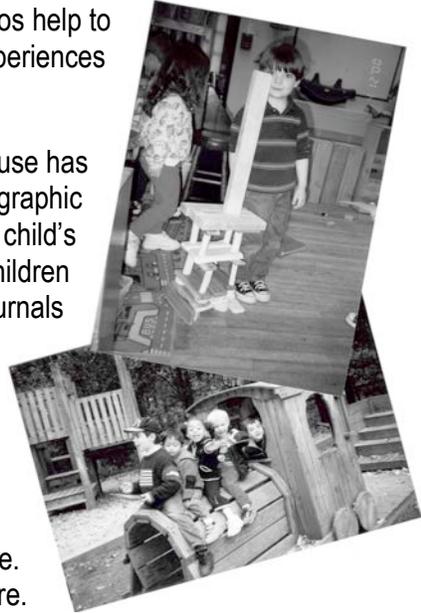


Each child at Discovery Schoolhouse has a *journal*. The journal is a photographic record of many of the child's experiences at the school. Children enjoy looking at their own journals and at their friends'. For parents, the journals give you a small glance into your child's life at

school.

Paperwork

Children's paperwork is not emphasized at Discovery Schoolhouse. Paperwork can tend not to be hands-on and open-ended in nature. Ironically however, often what can actually physically be posted on the bulletin boards and sent home turns out to be the paperwork. This can give a false impression of what we value and spend our time doing, since work on paper is only a small part of what children do at Discovery Schoolhouse. It's great to have a nice painting to put on the refrigerator at home, and that can be a valuable and affirming experience for the young child, but please keep in mind that your child is doing so much more at school than what's represented by the pieces of paper sent home and posted! Just take a look in your child's Journal and see for yourself!



***One
picture...***

***... is worth a
thousand words!***

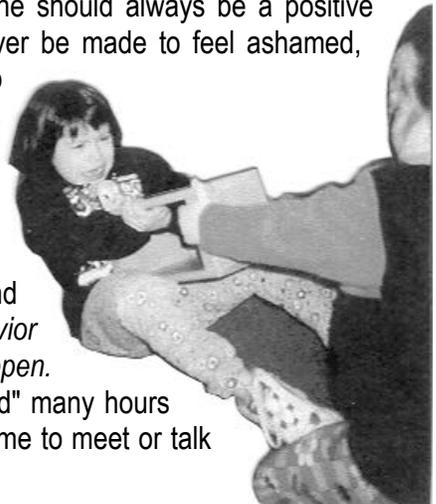


Discipline & Behavior Management*

**"Discipline is the slow, bit by bit, time consuming task of helping children to see the sense in acting in a certain way."
Dr. James Hymes**

Discipline is intended to be a learning experience in which children are helped to learn positive rules, appropriate ways of expressing their needs and feelings, and respect for the care and safety of other people and materials. Our discipline approach reflects our view that each child's ability to understand his or her actions is, and each child's needs are, unique. Discipline should always be a positive learning experience, rather than a punishment. No child should ever be made to feel ashamed, embarrassed, or "bad." Instead, discipline should help children to learn more appropriate behaviors by encouraging them towards responsibility, self-discipline, and competence.

As a matter of course we do not inform parents every day about *routine* discipline issues regarding their children. When we do share a negative event with a child's parent, it is simply to let them know, and not because we want the parent to discipline their child again. *Behavior issues which arise at school are handled at school when they happen.* Children are seldom helped by rehashing a "stolen" toy or "bad word" many hours after the event. If more serious issues come up, we will arrange a time to meet or talk with you.



Some discipline techniques we use include:

- ☞ Teachers **modeling** appropriate behavior.
- ☞ Teachers **reinforcing** children's positive attributes through praise, support, encouragement, and recognition with their friends.
- ☞ Teachers **encouraging and supporting** children's attempts to resolve conflicts amongst themselves.
- ☞ Using **natural and logical consequences**. For example, "if you throw your sandwich, it will get dirty and you won't be able to eat it," or, "if you don't put on your hat, you may feel cold."
- ☞ **Ignoring** some events so as not to reinforce them.
- ☞ **Stating rules in a positive manner** in terms of what is acceptable, rather than simply stating the unacceptable. This tells the child what it is he or she *can* do. Rather than simply saying, "please don't climb on the table," we add, "you can climb on the climber." Or, rather than simply telling a child to return a toy taken from another child, the teacher might explain that the child could *ask* for the toy, and give the child the words to use.
- ☞ **Redirecting** the child to another activity or area of the room.
- ☞ **Asking the child to wait or watch**, while they are temporarily removed from the situation.
- ☞ Teachers **including the children** in the establishment of school rules and expectations, when appropriate*

Educational Information

Massachusetts regulations and Discovery Schoolhouse policy prohibit:*

- ✎ Spanking or other corporal punishment of children;
- ✎ Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment;
- ✎ Depriving children of food or snacks or meals;
- ✎ Force feeding children;
- ✎ Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

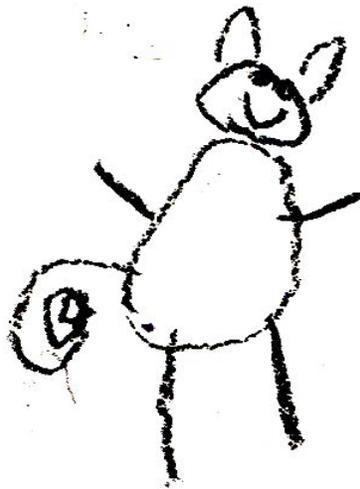


Toilet Training



Toilet training should be a positive learning experience for your child. *If your child is ready, it should take only a short period of time to make the switch from diapers to underpants.* There is no right age by which all children should be using the toilet, and although many children are trained before starting preschool, many are not fully trained until the age of four or older. It is not uncommon for even kindergartners to have occasional accidents. Toilet training children can be stressful, and parents often feel unnecessary pressure from grandparents, other family members, neighbors, and friends. This is unfortunate because *toilet training is most successful when both the parent and the child approach it in a relaxed and patient manner.* At Discovery Schoolhouse, we feel it is very important to let the child set the pace. *We do not pressure children to be trained early.* Realistically, just as you cannot teach an infant to walk early, you cannot teach a child to use the toilet before they are ready. *Children who are taken out of diapers before they are ready will experience more frequent accidents, more frustrations, and more disappointments.*

Please consult with us before you start toilet training with your child, so that we can work together to minimize false starts and frustration, and to maximize success.



Physically, emotionally, & cognitively ready

Children must be ready in three ways before they can be successfully trained: (1) They must be **physically** ready (their body must be able to do what is required); they must be **emotionally** ready (they must want to and be motivated to use the toilet); and, (3) they must **cognitively** ready (they must be able to understand what is expected of them). Often children are ready in some ways and not others. The child that is emotionally, but not physically and/or cognitively ready, is frustrated with themselves. The child who is physically and cognitively, but not emotionally, ready is frustrating to the parent that wants them trained.

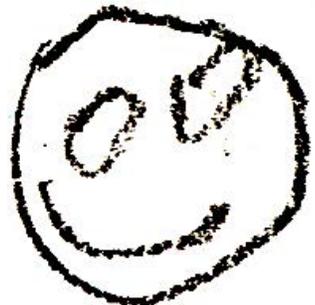
| Physically | Emotionally | Cognitively | Child | Parent |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---|--|
| Ready | Not yet ready | Not yet ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some success, but many accidents. • Child isn't interested and doesn't understand • Child feels sense of failure because he/she cannot meet parental expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent is frustrated with child who seems capable, but won't comply |
| Not yet ready | Ready | Not yet ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant accidents. • Child wants to use toilet, but doesn't really understand the process and body cannot cooperate. • Child is frustrated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent is sympathetic, but • Parent feels helpless |
| Not yet ready | Not yet ready | Ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant accidents. • Child "gets it," but doesn't seem to care. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent is frustrated with child who seems to understand what to do, but "won't." |
| Ready | Ready | Not yet ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of success, but • Lots of accidents. • Child frustrated with self. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent is frustrated with child who seems to use the toilet successfully often, but also has frequent accidents |
| Ready | Not yet ready | Ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermittent success. • Lots of accidents. • Child doesn't really seem to care. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent is frustrated with child who seems capable, is very inconsistent, and won't comply |
| Not yet ready | Ready | Ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant accidents. • Child frustrated and anxious. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent frustrated |
| Ready! | Ready! | Ready! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success! • Infrequent accidents. • Sense of accomplishment. • No more diapers! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent happy with child's progress! • No more diapers! |

Keys to success

The keys to success are (1) **waiting** until the child shows signs of readiness, (2) having very close **communication** between you, the school, and the child, and (3) **being relaxed and avoiding power struggles and pressure** over toilet training. *Preschool teachers have a great deal of experience with toilet training young children. We want to work with you to train your child effectively, pleasantly, and successfully.*

No "Pull-ups" allowed

*Children who are currently toilet training should not wear pull-ups during the day. Using Pull-ups prolongs the toilet training process. For most children they are an unnecessary and confusing intermediate step. Pull-ups are neither underpants that should be kept dry, nor diapers that may be soiled. **Discovery Schoolhouse does not allow the use of Pull-ups at school** because they hinder toilet training and confuse children, and we strongly discourage their use at other times (with the exception of the older child at night).*



Educational Information

What's the difference?

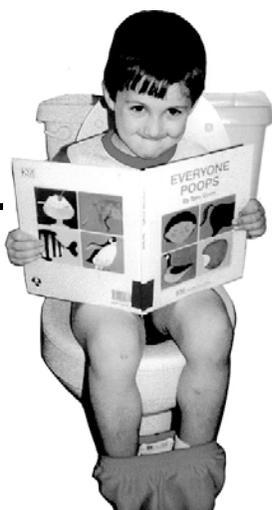
It seems that just to keep parents off-balance, these days the distinction between “diapers” and “pull-ups” has all but disappeared. This has much to do with product marketing, and very little to do with toilet training. As a practical matter, when we say “no pull-ups at school” we mean *nothing that must be taken off like a pair of pants*. Children who are not yet toilet trained must wear a diaper or pull-up *that can be opened and closed from at the waist*, so that the child does not need to remove his or her pants each time they get changed. This simplifies and speeds up the whole diaper changing experience. Teachers can have five to ten children to change in a row, and every little bit helps.

Is my child ready to switch to underpants?

Ready

Some signs that your child might be approaching readiness are:

- ▣ child has regular bowel movements
- ▣ child's diaper stays dry for long periods
- ▣ child is aware of when they have just peed or pooped
- ▣ child is uncomfortable in a wet / dirty diaper
- ▣ child asks to be changed
- ▣ child can dress self
- ▣ child is interested in using the toilet and wants to be trained
- ▣ child initiates use of toilet occasionally



Not Ready

Your child is not ready if:

- ☒ child is still in that “NO” stage
- ☒ child has frequent power struggles with parents
- ☒ parents need to remind child every half hour to use toilet
- ☒ child is content to stay in wet or dirty diaper or underwear
- ☒ after 10 days of attempting training the child is not 95% successful

We recommend the book *Toilet Training* by Vicki Lansky (Bantam Books). You can find a copy in our Parent Lending Library.

Everybody gets out of diapers eventually!



Don't worry. Be happy!

Educational Information

Developmental Concerns

Normal development in young children can vary greatly. Because of this, it is often not until a child is an older preschooler and/or has been at the school for some time that teachers' initial concerns about a child's development can be confirmed. We like to get to know each child before drawing conclusions about him or her. If you have any concerns about your child's development please let us know. Free testing is available through the public schools, and private testing is often covered by health insurance. The staff at Discovery Schoolhouse is knowledgeable and experienced about children's development, but we are not specialists when it comes to diagnosing and confirming specific developmental difficulties. When we have a concern about your child's development we will document what we observe and discuss it with you. If our concerns are serious, we will recommend that you seek out having your child evaluated by an outside professional. We want each child to reach his or her potential.



Although we do not provide transportation, parents have often been able to arrange for it between the Milton Public Schools and Discovery Schoolhouse. If your child might receive services (such as speech or occupational therapy, or attendance at the Milton integrated preschool), and you are a Milton resident, you may be able to have the public school pick-up and/or drop-off your child at Discovery resSchoolhouse. Usually we are able to accommodate this, however, sometimes the timing will not work with our schedule. Please let us know as early as possible, so that we may try to arrange the schedule to accommodate your needs.

Referrals*

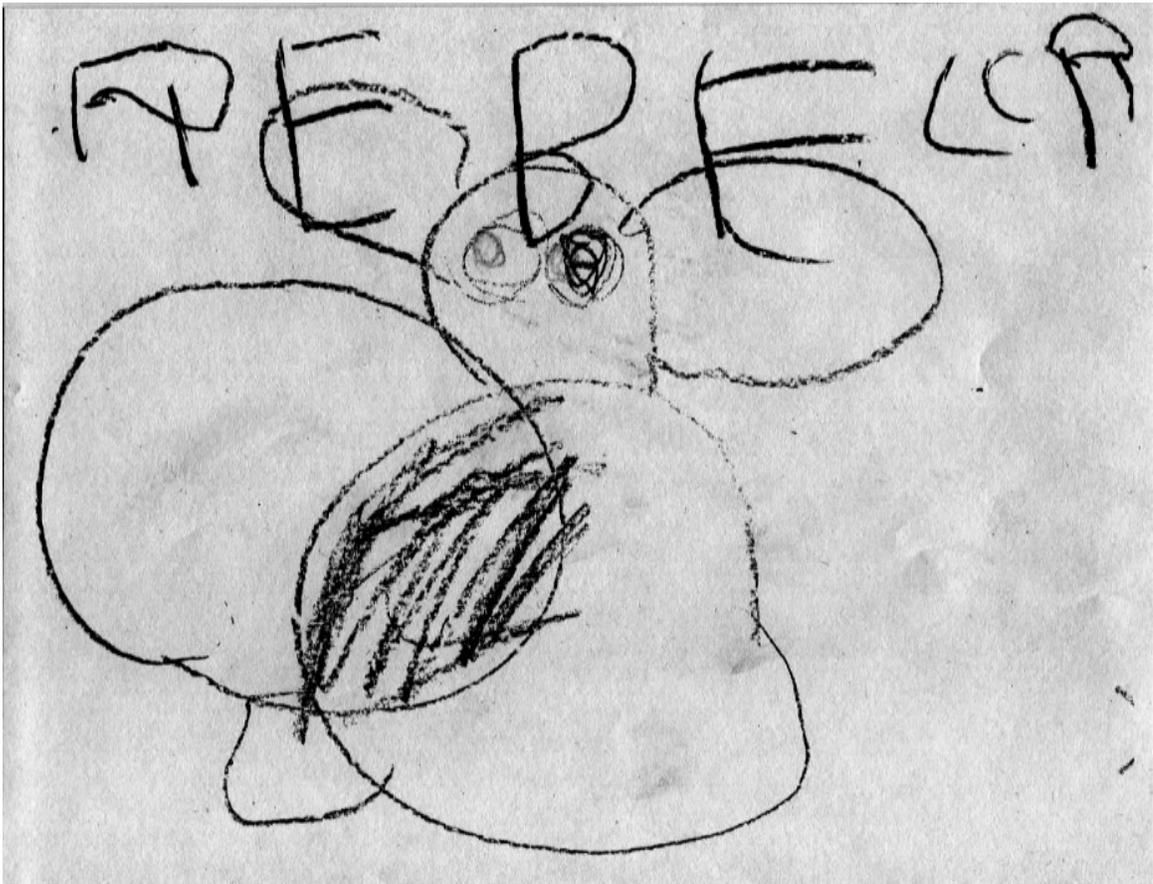
Should any member of the staff feel that an assessment for additional social, mental health, educational and/or medical, dental, vision, or hearing services would benefit a child the following guidelines are followed*:

- 1) The staff member informs the Executive Director of his/her concerns*
- 2) If the Executive Director determines that the child might need to be referred for additional services, staff will observe and record observations of the child in a manner and for a period of time appropriate to the concern, and this record will then be reviewed within three weeks.*
- 3) If, after reviewing the child's record, it is determined that a referral for additional services is advisable, staff will prepare for the parent a written statement which will include a brief summary of their observations, efforts made to accommodate the child's needs, and the reasons for making the referral.*



Educational Information

- 4) Parents may want to refer to the list of community referral resources included in this handbook .* You should be aware that as a parent you have certain rights regarding Chapter 766 and Early Intervention Programs, including the right to appeal.*
- 5) Staff will be available to meet with parents as soon as possible after notifying them of any concerns.*
- 6) Staff will assist the parent in making the referral and offer support and advocacy. Discovery Schoolhouse does not make direct referrals for outside services.
- 7) Staff will consult with the referral resource only with written authorization from the parent.*
- 8) A written record of any referrals, associated parent conferences, and results, as available, will be placed in the child's file.
- 9) After any referral, staff will review the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.
- 10) With parental consent and if the child has been diagnosed with a disability, the appropriate administrator of special education will be notified in writing that we are serving a child with a disability (if the child is a preschooler) or the administrator of the DPH Early Intervention program (if the child is a toddler).



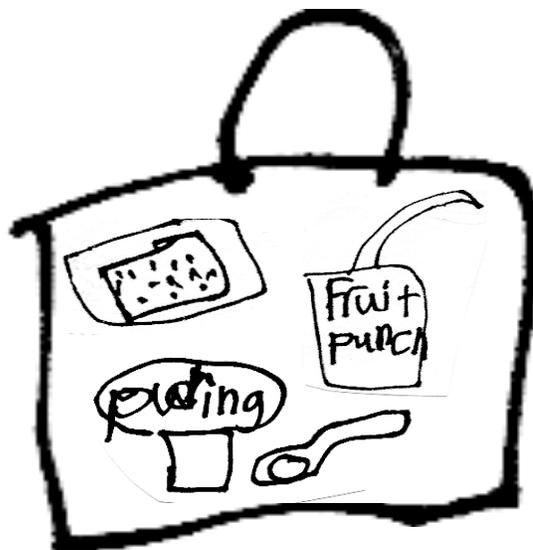
Meals & Snacks

Discovery Schoolhouse provides a nutritious breakfast, and morning and afternoon snacks.* Menus are posted on the front bulletin board. Parents must supply lunch and a beverage for children staying through lunchtime.

*We will provide a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere during meals, and we will encourage your child to eat well, but we will not pressure children to eat when they do not want to.** If you have any concerns about your child's eating habits, please consult with a teacher. Your child might enjoy a special note, picture, or "smiley face" in their lunch box from time to time as a special treat.

He won't eat his lunch!

Often parents feel anxious about their child's eating habits and are concerned if their child does not seem to be eating enough. Keep in mind that usually children will appropriately regulate how much food they eat, usually eating too much rather than too little. Just like adults, children eat when they are hungry! In fact, *most American children eat too much.* According to the American Academy of Pediatric (2012) *almost half of all American children are either overweight or obese.* So, it's a good idea not to pressure your child to eat or to use food as a reward. Although it's perfectly normal for parents to want their children to eat more, it's probably worth second-guessing your instincts. If you are truly concerned, check with your pediatrician.



Children typically go through cycles from being very "big eaters" to barely touching their food. Sometimes the cycles seem related to growth spurts, but the evidence is unclear. Also, we serve healthy and generous snacks every day, so sometimes children are not as hungry at lunchtime as you might assume. *We don't often request that children "eat their sandwich before they eat their dessert."* If you want to be sure that your child eats his or her sandwich instead of just dessert, *pack a smaller dessert!* If the child is hungry, he will eat. If your child helps you prepare the lunch, he or she will be more likely to eat it. Sometimes we will send home a note in your child's lunchbox explaining, usually in your child's words, what they did or did not like about their lunch. *So that you may keep track of what your child is eating, we will send home in your child's lunch box any significantly uneaten portions.* However, this is only possible if children have appropriate containers. Most prepackaged foods cannot be sent home once their packages have been opened. We do not allow children to share food.

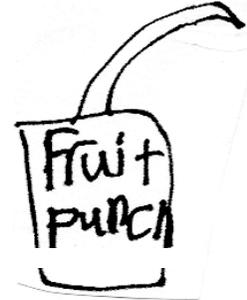
Lunch should be ready-to-eat

Please do not send items that require refrigeration, re-heating, or preparation, as teachers need to be available to the whole group of children and cannot spend time preparing one child's lunch. Warm foods such as macaroni and cheese, soups, stews, or spaghetti can be sent warm in a thermos with a wide mouth. Juice boxes and yogurt, if you prefer to keep them cold, can be sent with an ice pack. Many items such as lunchmeats, tuna, cheese, and chicken that require refrigeration for longer storage, will be fine in your child's lunch box for the few hours until lunchtime. Most children are not as particular about the temperature of their food as adults are. Surprisingly, many preschoolers do not like sandwiches! You can use re-usable plastic containers to pack many different kinds of food, and they are often easier for children

to open than sandwich bags. The most nutritious, appetizing, least expensive, and easiest to prepare lunch can often be made from last night's dinner leftovers.

Some Nutritious Lunch Suggestions*

- ☞ hard boiled eggs or egg salad
- ☞ peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- ☞ tuna fish
- ☞ chicken wings
- ☞ roll-ups
- ☞ cream cheese and jelly sandwich
- ☞ cheese sandwich
- ☞ turkey sandwich
- ☞ chunks of cheese, ham, or pineapples
- ☞ bagels
- ☞ carrot sticks
- ☞ cold pizza
- ☞ soup or chili
- ☞ cottage cheese or yogurt
- ☞ burrito
- ☞ chunks of pepperoni
- ☞ celery sticks and peanut butter
- ☞ raisins or dried fruits
- ☞ fruit
- ☞ leftovers
- ☞ pancakes, waffles, French toast
- ☞ fish sticks or chicken nuggets
- ☞ stir-fry
- ☞ spaghetti-O's, ravioli
- ☞ pretzels
- ☞ pudding, Jell-O
- ☞ cookies, crackers
- ☞ salad
- ☞ rice
- ☞ tossed salad
- ☞ hummus or dip
- ☞ pasta



We participate in the "Federal Food Program." This means that we provide nutritious meals and snacks according to the guidelines of the program, and we are reimbursed by the state for some of our expenses. In order for the school to receive this important funding, we will ask you to complete a *food program form* each year. The form is a bit confusing because it appears as if it is an application for your family to receive support, but it is not. We need each family to complete a form so that we can receive funding, and our level of reimbursement is based on the income levels of the families we serve.

Although it is not required that you disclose your family income, you must in any case, return a signed form.



Organization & Staffing

Organization & Licensing*

Discovery Schoolhouse is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), which is the state licensing authority for all group childcare in Massachusetts (including day care, preschool, nursery school, pre-k programs, etc.). Interested individuals may contact EEC to obtain a complete compliance history of any licensed program.* You can find contact information for EEC in the Help and Resources section of this handbook.*

A copy of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations is available for your review at the school. The regulations are also available directly through the Commonwealth at www.mass.gov

Like all nonprofit corporations, Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. We are always interested in having committed and enthusiastic parents and other individuals on the Board. At Discovery Schoolhouse the Executive Director is responsible for the operation of the school, and is accountable to the Board. All other staff is accountable to, and supervised by, the Executive Director and/or the Assistant Director. An organizational chart appears below which shows the general structure of the staffing at Discovery Schoolhouse. A similar chart, with the names of the current individuals in each position, is posted at the school.

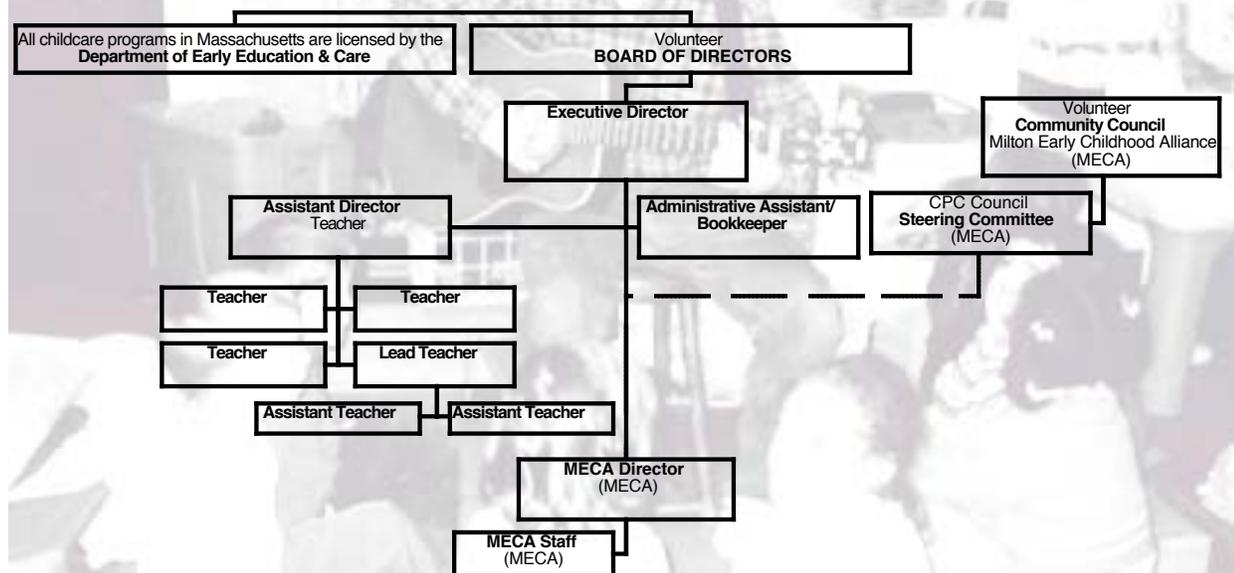
The Milton Early Childhood Alliance (MECA), located in the First Congregational Church in Milton, is a program of Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. MECA's main activities are funded through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Program (CFCE). MECA provides a variety of services to families and early childhood programs in and around

Milton. MECA is a community-wide group that seeks to support families and children, and to expand access to affordable, high quality early childhood care and education. For more information, contact the MECA office directly. Their contact information can be found in the Help & Resources section of this handbook .



Organization & Staffing

Organizational Chart of Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc.



Staff Positions

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing all functions and staff of the school as well as the operation of the school as a business (managing enrollment, long and short-term planning, financial record keeping, licensing, marketing, personnel, etc.). The Executive Director also participates with the teaching staff almost daily and fills-in in the classroom as needed.

Assistant Director

The Assistant Director assists the Executive Director in administrating the school and is the person primarily responsible for supervising the teaching staff. The Assistant Director works daily with the children. You should bring general questions or concerns about the program or staff to the Assistant Director.

Lead Teacher

The Lead Teacher assists the Assistant Director with some administrative functions, staff scheduling, and in the supervision of some teaching staff.

Team Teachers

Team Teachers are responsible for implementing each Team program, writing progress reports for individual Team children, and meeting with their parents. You should bring your questions or concerns about your child to you child's Team Teacher first.

Afternoon Teachers

The Afternoon Teachers works with children from all teams in the afternoon. You should bring general questions and concerns about the afternoon program, or your child's behavior *in the afternoon*, to the afternoon teacher first.

Assistant Teachers

Assistant teachers help out and fill in as needed (and often on a part-time basis). Assistant Teachers always work under the direct supervision of the other teaching staff. Assistant Teachers cannot usually address concerns about your child, and will refer you to a teacher.

Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant

The Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant does all routine bookkeeping, parent billing, and accounts payable, as well as many other secretarial and administrative tasks. The Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant works part-time, usually weekends and some evenings. You can leave messages for her regarding your account via email, written note, or voicemail.

MECA Director

The MECA Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the Milton Early Childhood Alliance, which is located in a separate office at the in the First Congregational Church, 495 Canton Ave., Milton, Phone (617) 696-2262.

Mini-resumes and other information about most regular teaching staff are usually posted in the lobby or available on line.

Who to ask about what...

...Children

Questions, concerns, or comments specifically about your child, your child's behavior or development, or your child's routine should be addressed to your child's team teacher. Your child's team teacher will relay more serious concerns to the rest of the staff, the Assistant Director, or the Executive Director, as appropriate. Teachers always take parent's concerns about their children very seriously. If you should require clarification after speaking with your child's team teacher, please feel free to also bring your concerns directly to the Assistant Director or the Executive Director.

...The Staff

Questions, concerns, or comments about your child's team teacher, or any other staff person should be directed to that staff person, if possible. If you require further assistance, please see the Assistant Director or the Executive Director.

...The Program

Questions, concerns, or comments about the program in general can be addressed to your child's team teacher, the Assistant Director, or Executive Director.

...The Afternoon Routine

Questions, concerns, or comments specifically about the afternoon routine should be addressed to either the Afternoon Teacher or the Assistant Director.

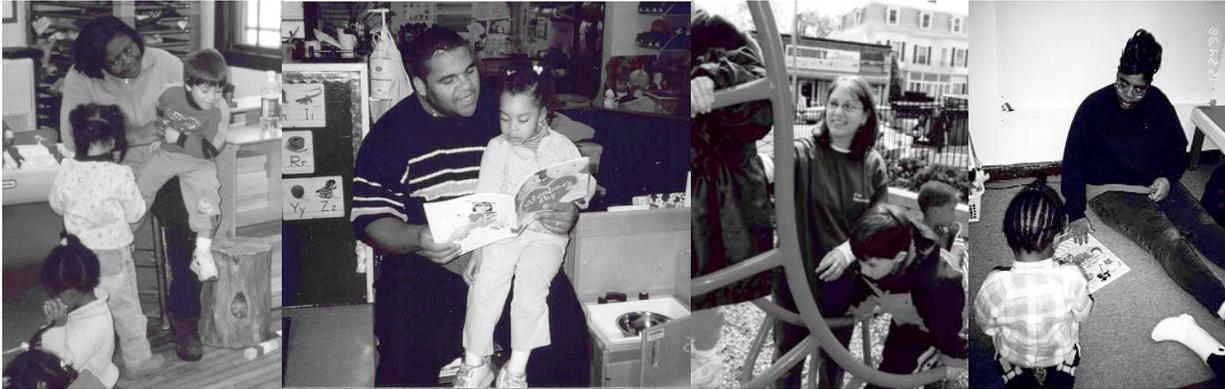
Organization & Staffing

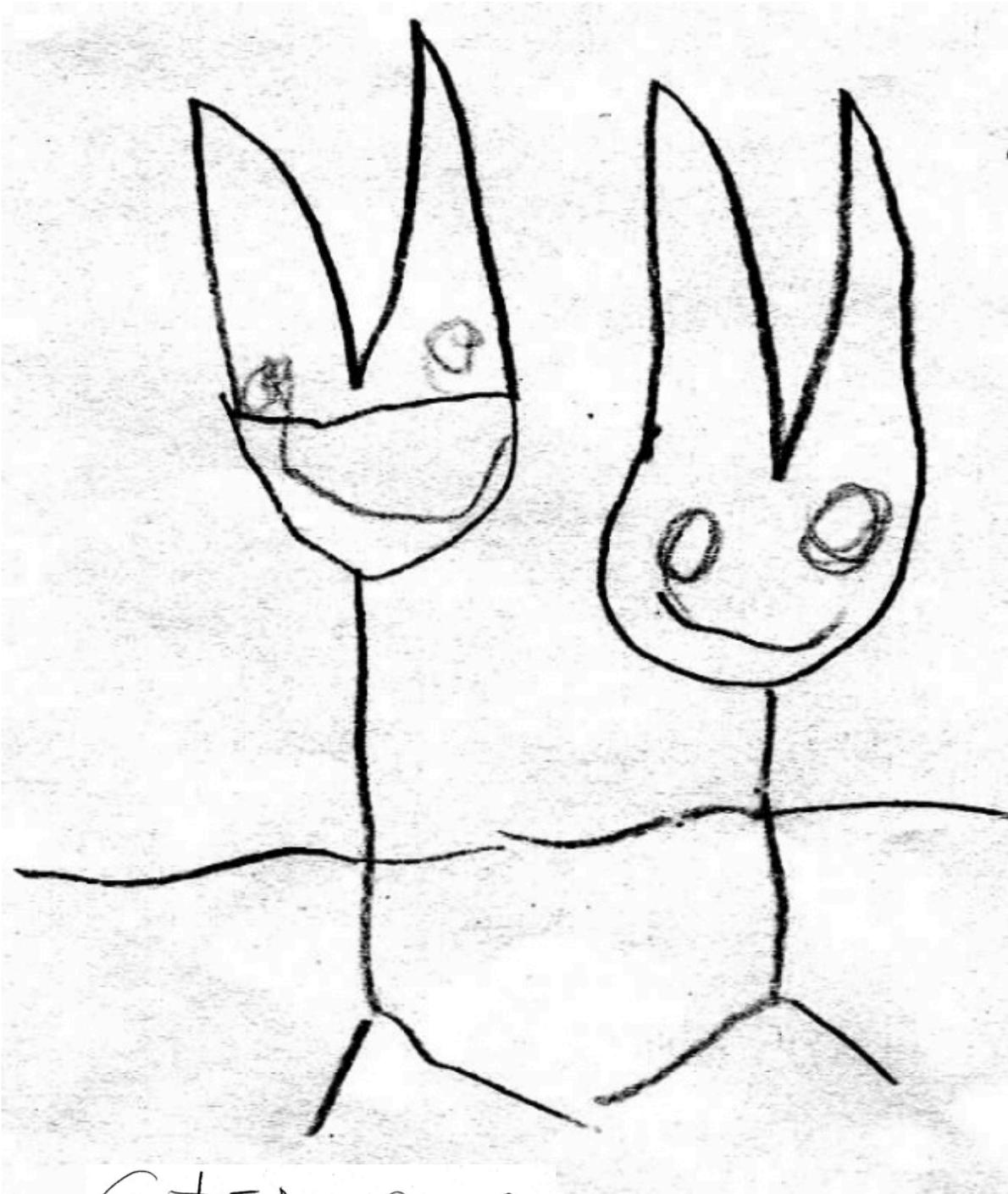
...Money and Your Account

Questions, concerns, or comments about billing or your tuition account should be addressed to the Executive Director or, if you do not require a quick answer, left for the Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper will usually get back to you within one week.

...Changes in Schedule, Additional Days, and Enrollment

If you want change your child's schedule, please let the Assistant Director or Executive Director know. If you would like your child to attend for additional time, please speak any Teacher, the Assistant Director, or Executive Director (but not Assistant teachers).





STAVROS



Arrival, Departure & Hours

Visiting Discovery Schoolhouse

We encourage parents to visit the school at their convenience. You may wish to share activities with your children, join us for lunch, drive on field trips, go on a walk with us, or just pop in for a surprise visit. *Advance notice is never required. Visit us anytime!*

Hours

Discovery Schoolhouse is open from 7:00AM to 6:00PM, Monday through Friday, year-round. *Although a teacher may be in the building before 7:00AM, he or she cannot accept your child until then.* The teacher is at the school early to prepare for the day. You are welcome to wait in your car, or play with your child in the playground, but *please do not ring the doorbell or knock until 7:00AM.* The staff is not permitted to allow parents into the school prior to 7:00AM.

Please refer to the Holiday List that is included in your enrollment packet and posted at the school for specific dates of school holidays. The school also closes for four Staff Work Days per year so that teachers can meet, clean, and organize the classrooms. School calendar listing holidays and early closures is available online and posted at the school.

First Days at School

To prepare yourself for your child's first day at school, be sure to use the *blue First Day Checklist* included in the enrollment packet. On your child's first day at school, a teacher will greet you and your child, show you where your child's cubby is, and where your child should put his or her lunch box and jacket. The teacher may also double-check your enrollment paperwork, and will take a picture of you with your child to keep in your child's cubby. As opportunities arise, we will take other "family pictures" to keep at school. The teacher will introduce him or herself to your child, and, when ready, will try to engage him or her in an activity. A child's first day of school can carry with it mixed emotion for both the child and the parent, but often it is most stressful for the parent. Children easily pick up on their parent's feelings, so if you can be secure and confident about leaving your child at school, your child will likely be secure and confident about saying "good bye." If you think you will need help, ask the teacher.



Arrival, Departure & Hours

CATHY

CATHY ©1993 Cathy Guiswit.



Saying “Good Bye”

We want your child to make a comfortable adjustment to school. Your child's previous experiences and disposition will effect how he or she reacts to the transition. Often children who are ready and excited about school, may still be upset or tearful when you leave. Some children are comforted by having a parent stay for a short time, while others are not. You know best how your child handles "good byes" and new situations. If you are concerned about your child's reaction to being left at school, please ask a teacher for some helpful ideas. Here are some suggestions for less stressful "good byes":

- ☞ Establish and follow a comfortable routine
- ☞ Be secure, comfortable, and matter-of-fact
- ☞ Set a relaxed pace, but keep it short
- ☞ Share information with staff (changes in routine, sleepiness, one parent away...)
- ☞ Let your child know what to expect ("We'll look at the gerbils and then I will be going" or read one story or hang up your jacket...)
- ☞ When you decide its time to leave, say "good bye" and leave (we know this can sometimes be hard, but, in the long run, it will be easier for both you and your child)
- ☞ Return on time
- ☞ Call the school later to talk with a teacher and/or your child to see how they're doing
- ☞ Don't "sneak out," even though it might seem easier at the time
- ☞ Put your cell phone away!

COMMITTED



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Arriving & Departing

Please bring your child into the building and greet a teacher, so that we may accept responsibility for the care and safety of your child. Please do not allow your child to walk unattended from your car to the building. If your child will be taking a school bus or other transportation, we may arrange for a teacher to bring the child to and from the bus if the driver is not able to.

Please never allow your child to open the school doors or gates. Only teachers and parents are allowed to open doors and gates at the school. Sometimes children like to push and hold the inside door open. Please ask them not to. Try to avoid having lengthy conversations at pick-up time since fidgety children always seem drawn to the door. If you must have a conversation at pickup time, explain this to your child and tell them you will call them when you are ready.



Many children say goodbye at the front window each morning

Please arrange a consistent schedule with us. We do not recommend dropping your child off late in the morning (after 9:00) or during rest (1:00 - 2:30). These are difficult times for your child to join the program. *We like to know if your child will be out, arriving late, or leaving early.* This helps us plan the day and prepare your child. Changes in routine can be difficult and stressful for children. If a person who does not normally pick up your child will be doing so, it's a good idea to let us and your child know. We only release children to people you have authorized on your child's "pick-up list," so, keep it current.

Only Adults Open the Doors and Gates. This is one of our most strictly enforced rules — no exceptions — and we need your help enforcing it! Children should not even touch the front doors or the latch on the playground gate. Please explain to your child that "only adults open the doors and gates at school."

Cars & safety

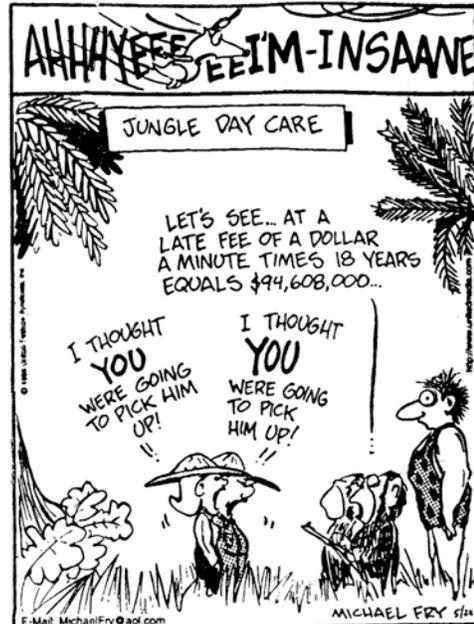
Please drive slowly down the driveway and in the parking lot. Park your car behind the building, facing the back fence, so as not to block entryway. Do not park in the entrance along the ramp or side fence. Remember that in Massachusetts all children must be in an approved child car seat until they are five years old and weigh at least 40 pounds. All children should be buckled in a seatbelt! Automobile crashes are the number one killer of children in the country.

Discovery Schoolhouse *does not* provide for the regular transportation of children to and from school. Parents are responsible for arranging transportation of their children at arrival and departure. Although we are glad to do our best to coordinate with private transportations services, such as those arranged by parents or the public school, we cannot accept responsibility for these services.

Late Pick-up Policy

Please respect the our closing time (6:00 p.m.) and pick-up your child prior to that time. Like you, teachers often have other personal commitments after work, and cannot stay late.

If your child is enrolled for an earlier schedule, it is equally important that he or she leave by that time. The program is staffed based on the number of children enrolled, and having an additional child might put us out of compliance with state regulations, and be detrimental to the program for all of the children. If you anticipate running late, or run into unexpected delays, please arrange for someone else on your child's "Pick-up List" to pick-up your child and call us. Late pickups incur additional charges. *Parents who repeatedly pick-up their children late will be required to pick-up their children earlier than their regularly scheduled time until otherwise notified by the school.* In such cases, the regular tuition will be charged without adjustment and additional late fees will apply. *Failure to pick-up the child on time will eventually result in termination of the child's enrollment.* Further details are available. *Please don't be late!*



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Snow Days & Early Closings

We make every attempt to remain open regardless of the weather. However, *during severe weather please call the school before leaving home to be sure teachers have arrived to open and/or check the school web site for weather related notices.* *During severe weather staff will be sure to answer the phone if they are here.* We do not follow public school closings, nor do we list closings on the radio or TV. *During severe weather if no one answers the phone at the school, we have not yet opened for the day.* If it becomes necessary to close early, you will need to arrange transportation for your child, so that staff may get home safely. During severe weather anticipate that the school will likely open a little late as staff make their way in, and make plans to pickup early in anticipation of a difficult afternoon commute. Take your time, have some hot chocolate, and enjoy the snow with your child! And send a snowsuit! If it's snowing, the children *will* go out.



Calling the School

We screen our calls! *We do this so that we can try our best to pickup parents' calls,* and avoid the numerous sales and marketing calls we get every day. Although we prioritize calls from parents, teachers' *first* priority is to the children in their care. When you call the school, leave a message! We can't call you back if you don't leave a message! Usually teachers are available to return calls between 1:00 and 2:30, which is also the best time to reach a teacher. Incidentally, it's all



right to call 'hi' to your ask how Sometimes have from

BOOMERS' SONG

BOOMERS'

SHE'S OKAY?
I'VE NEVER LEFT MIKKI BEFORE...
YEAH, I KNOW I JUST DROPPED HER OFF...



just to say child or to he's doing. children permission parents to

call them too!

Arrival, Departure & Hours

Events

Holidays & Birthdays

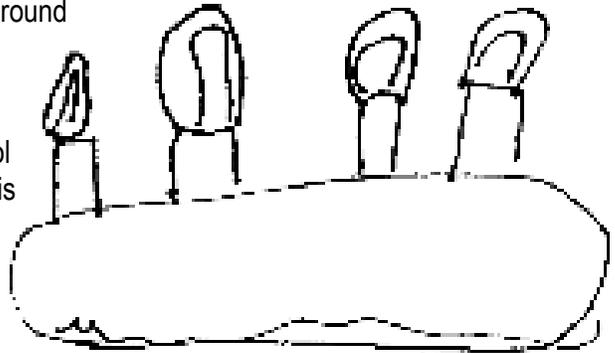
Holidays

Holidays can be a fun and enjoyable time for families, but they can also be a hectic, stressful, and over-stimulating time for young children. During holidays children's routines are upset, schedules change, and people come to visit. Young children are often not yet ready to comprehend the historical, religious, and cultural relevance of holiday celebrations. Also, each family has its own culture, holidays, and traditions.

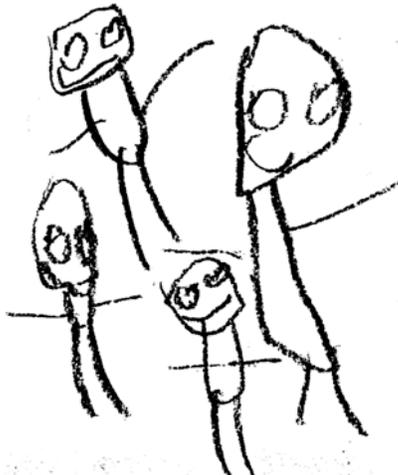
For these reasons you will notice that celebrations at the school are kept purposely low-key, and very few holidays are "celebrated." Maintaining the regular routine and curricula provides children with a stable environment and activities appropriate to their development. We generally do not have children do holiday related art projects, and rarely base activities around holidays.

Birthdays

Discovery Schoolhouse has established its own school tradition for children's birthdays. Children learn this routine and come to expect it. On each child's birthday the children participate in making a birthday cake with the child's symbol on it. The cake is served, with candles and singing, at snack or lunchtime. Photos are taken to be kept at school and for home. *Please do not send in a cake or other paraphernalia for your child's birthday.* If you would like to send a healthy or homemade snack at some other time, that's usually fine. Please ask your child's teacher.



Party Invitations and Telephone Numbers...



If you are inviting other Discovery Schoolhouse children to parties outside school, we ask you to *please place the invitations in the Parent Mailboxes.* This allows *parents* the opportunity to decide *before* their child anticipates attending. Please do not let your child distribute invitations him or herself to other children or place them in children's cubbies. This helps prevent needlessly hurt feelings and confusion. From time to time parents ask for the phone numbers of other children enrolled at the school so that they can arrange get-togethers, birthday parties, carpooling, and other activities. To contact other parents simply leave a note at the school in their Parent Mailbox with your contact information.

These are some of the events we have done in the past (we don't do them all every year). The dates and times are approximate. Please watch for notices about events. If you'd like to help out with a particular event, please let us know!

Events

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| First Aid & CPR Training | Monday and Wednesday of the Second week in January | This two-evening training, which is open to parents and the general community for a small fee, is attended by all regular teaching staff. If you would like to participate, please call Community Care for Kids at 800-637-2011 to register. |
| Slide Show / Wine & Cheese | February 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM | See how your child and other children spend the day. Meet the staff, the board, and other parents. <i>This is our only event for which we ask that you leave your child at home.</i> Get a babysitter and enjoy a short evening with other adults! |
| Spaghetti Dinner | Last Wednesday in March 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Join us with your whole extended family for this all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner. We provide the spaghetti, meatballs, sausage, and sauce. Families provide the bread, drinks, and sides. |
| Discovery Schoolhouse Earth Day | Sometime in the early Spring near Earth Day | Join us to help plant annuals and perennials around the school and in the window planters and do a little outdoor "spring cleaning." Celebrate our hard work with a pizza lunch afterwards! Plant and other donations are welcome. |
| Pancake Breakfast | First Thursday in June 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM | Join us before work with your child's immediate family for full breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, and fruit salad. |
| Birthday BBQ | Last Saturday in September Early Bird Helpers 9:00 – 11:30 BBQ 12:00 – 3:30 | This is the school's big annual reunion event. We invite all "alumnae" and their families for a great BBQ and (usually) animal show. Often we have face painting, balloons, and whatever else fun we can think of! Currently enrolled families are invited to come early to help fix-up our outdoor environment and set-up for the BBQ. Definitely set this date aside. Don't miss it! |
| Children's Sing-a-long Concert | One weekend day in October | Join us and the general community for this fun concert, bake sale, and raffle! This is our major fundraising event. We expect families to help by selling tickets, baking, and/or volunteering. |
| Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner | Tuesday of Thanksgiving Week November 5:00 – 7:00 | Join us with your whole extended family for this Thanksgiving Potluck. We provide the turkey & stuffing, each team makes a side dish, and the rest is potluck, which means that everyone brings something to share. |

School Events

There are many annual family and parent events planned for the school each year. We try to hold all of them, but due to changes in scheduling sometimes we need to skip one or two, and sometimes others are planned. As each event draws near, we will let you know its specific date and time.

School Holidays & Staff Days

School Holidays

Our goal is that the school remain open 7:00AM to 6:00PM, Monday through Friday, year round, except for 12 holidays and four Staff Work Days. Depending on how Independence Day, Christmas, and New Years Day fall, we sometime close early or add one additional holiday to the schedule. A school calendar is posted online and at the school. Some years when July 4th, Christmas, or New Years Day falls on a Tuesday or Thursday we close on the Monday before or Friday after the Holiday if it is anticipated that less than a few children would attend.

While many other schools close for extended vacation periods and the summer, and offer limited hours, we remain dedicated to serving the scheduling needs of all families.

The twelve holidays are:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day After Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

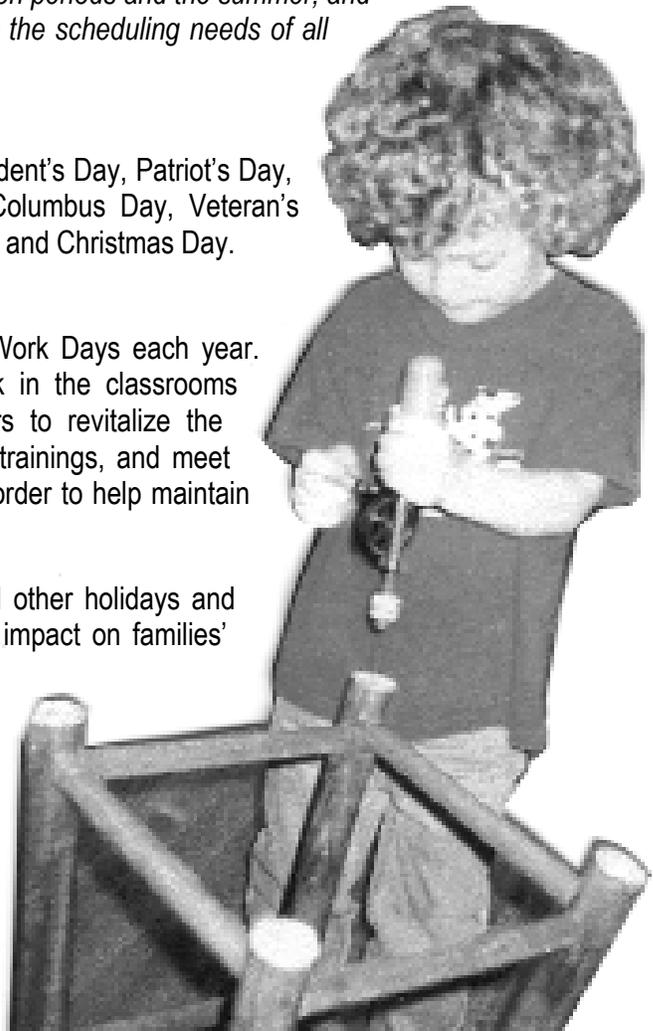
School Work Days

The school is closed to children for four school Work Days each year. These are days during which teachers can work in the classrooms without the children. These days allow teachers to revitalize the classrooms, reorganize the facility, attend on-site trainings, and meet together as a group. These days are important in order to help maintain the quality of the program for the children.

We have tried to schedule the Work Days around other holidays and public school vacations in order to minimize their impact on families' schedules. For specific date, refer to the school calendar.

Tuition during School Closures

Regular tuition is due regardless of school closure for holidays, Work Days, snow days or any other reason. Please refer to your Tuition Agreement for details.





What to Bring and Wear

Toys and other Stuff from Home

Children are comforted by having familiar objects from home at school. We welcome and encourage your child bringing *some* things from home (with parental and teacher discretion). This helps bridge the gap between home and school, can help children feel more comfortable and at ease at school, give children opportunities to learn about sharing and playing cooperatively, and expand the choices of available materials.

Although children are allowed to *occasionally* bring in favorite toys, we much prefer items like the ones listed below because of their educational value. Please do not send in action figures or weaponry, and please send toys only occasionally:

- ☞ **Interesting Found Objects** - a shell from the beach, an insect, a pine cone, a rock, a plant, a photograph, a keepsake from a trip...
- ☞ **Things to Share** with a small group or team - books, balls, a board game, collage materials, audiocassettes & CD's...
- ☞ **Good Food** - apples from an apple-picking trip, fresh vegetables from the garden, cookies made with Grandpa, cultural foods...
- ☞ **Treats for the School Animals** - vegetable scraps for the gerbils, live crickets for the toads...
- ☞ **Special Attachment Objects** that your child needs for comfort or to help him or her sleep and relax on their cot during rest time.
- ☞ **Books And Photos** are always nice to share!



Although we will help your child take care of their things, we cannot be responsible for lost or broken items. Please do not send fragile or irreplaceable items to school. We discourage most *noisy electronic* toys!

If your child is staying for rest time, please provide something for his or her cot (a blanket, pillow, sleeping bag, special stuffed animal, or doll).

- ☞ Please *label all items* with your child's name.
- ☞ Please take blankets and bedding home at least monthly for laundering.

Toys and other Stuff from School

Children may borrow school books and other items occasionally by *signing them out* and taking responsibility *with their parents* for their care and return. Please keep items

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50 →

Winter Clothing Suggestions

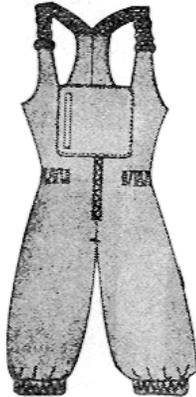
Children can be warmer, happier, more self-sufficient, and more comfortable if they wear winter clothing that is easy to manage and keeps them warm. Remember that winter clothes should do more than just *look* warm. They need to actually be warm, waterproof, and easy to manage! Here are our suggestions for

YES



Hats with ear flaps and (especially for smaller children) **Velcro or other ties.**

Snow pants with "bib" fronts or one-piece snowsuits to keep snow out and keep children warm and dry.



Mittens only please! Knit ones are easy for children to put on (and they can go on either hand too). Several pairs are needed because they will get wet. **Mittens keep hands much warmer than gloves.**



The best boots are easy for children to pull on and have thick removable liners for real warmth.

A few **extra pairs of warm socks** to keep feet dry and warm.

NO

Avoid mittens with designs knitted into the pattern because the insides are full of threads which catch fingers.



No gloves (gloves have five fingers). Separate fingers are cold and hard preschoolers to put on.



Avoid tight ski mittens. They are too difficult to put on sweaty hands.

No uncomfortable hats which your child hates to wear!



Avoid waist-high snow pants because they allow snow to sneak in around the waist.

Avoid long scarves.



No construction boots. They are not waterproof, are not insulated, are not warm, and leave children without another pair of shoes to change into when they come inside.

No cowboy boots or (for the snow) vinyl rain boots. They are cold! (We do like rain boots the rest of the year *for the rain!*)



what to get and what to avoid.

pooh
SCHEFF



What to Bring & Wear

← CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

for just a day or two, and only sign out one item at a time. Help your child learn to take responsibility for the items they borrow, but remember that this is difficult for young children and they will need your help.

Colds & the Cold

Young children in school get sick often. *Children catch colds from viruses spread by people.* Although many people think that being cold can cause a cold, *this is simply not true.* In fact, people only catch more colds during the winter because they are more likely to be cooped-up inside in close quarters with other people. Tips for avoiding colds and the flu: wash your hands often; don't cover sneezes with your hands (yuck!!); don't touch your face; and do get lots of fresh air *outside!*

Teach children to sneeze into the inside of their elbow instead of into their hands! This greatly reduces the spread of germs.

— Of warmth and colds —

Q *We are frequently told, when venturing out in bad weather, "Bundle up, don't catch cold." How does the way we dress affect our chances of getting a cold?*
RIDGE, N.Y. S.L.

A It doesn't. There's no evidence that the common cold occurs because of **chilling** from inadequate clothing. Nor does the **chill** weaken your body's ability to fight the disease. Colds do occur more frequently in cold weather, but that's probably because people tend to cluster together indoors then, making it easier for cold viruses to spread from person to person. The viruses seem to spread readily through skin contact as well as through the air. So the best ways to prevent spread are frequent hand washing and keeping your distance.

CONSUMER REPORTS APRIL 1995

Clothing

What to Wear

Please dress your child in sturdy, washable, work clothes and *expect that your child will get dirty* from actively participating in the program.

- ☞ **We recommend sneakers** (rather than sandals, jellies, flip-flops, dress shoes, or work boots); and,
- ☞ **We prefer work pants** like jeans, sweats, or corduroys (rather than slacks, fancy dresses, or dress clothes).

Children should wear clothing which they can manage with minimal adult help. We encourage independence as children learn self-help skills. Children who are currently toilet training should not wear overalls or one-piece jumpsuits! See the *Toilet Training* section of this handbook for more suggestions.



Dress for success!

Extra Clothing

☞ Please **label all extra clothing** with your child's name! We always have permanent laundry markers on hand, just ask! We have to keep track of the clothing of up to thirty young children, which can amount to *hundreds* of individual items! Please help us by putting your child's name inside as much of it as possible!



☞ Please **provide at least one complete change of clothing** for your child to be kept at school in their extra clothes bin. This should include underwear, socks, shirt, pants, and sweatshirt or sweater.

☞ **Children who are toilet training** will require *many* changes of clothing.

☞ **Whenever you take dirty clothes home** to be washed, remember to bring a fresh supply of extra clothes the next morning.

Clothing and other items that are not labeled are placed in the Lost and Found basket. Please check it routinely.

Seasonal Clothing

Outdoor play is an important part of our curricula. *Your child will go outside almost every day – rain, snow, or shine.*

We encourage children to explore snow, ice, mud, puddles, and leaves.

Provide your child with *layers of clothing*, so that we will have options for appropriately dressing your child for the out-of-doors. Layers are warm and adjustable!

Wearing jackets...

Sometimes a parent might request that their child “always” wear a hat (or jacket, mittens, etc.) while outside. Although we recognize parents’ concerns, please understand these requests are problematic for the reasons discussed below. *Be assured that teachers will do their best to see that your child is happy and comfortable throughout the day.* Keep in mind that the weather in New England is very changeable, and although it may be very cold when you drop your child off early in the morning, or when you pick them up after dusk, it may be quite warm and comfortable at noon.



If your child is sick and you do not want them going out in the cold, please do not send him or her to school! Going outside is a regular part of the program - winter, spring, summer, and fall.

Please do not ask teachers to be sure your child wears a jacket (or hat, etc.) or make your child promise to wear one!

What to Bring & Wear



Dress for the weather

Keep in mind that (1) the teacher is outside with your child and can monitor the temperature on the spot, (2) we want your child to be comfortable, happy, and warm (3) children who are being physically active stay warm even when it feels chilly to an inactive adult, and (4) being cold *will not* make your child sick or sicker!

In the spring and fall the temperature can vary considerably during the day as well as from day to day. Teachers need to have the flexibility and authority to decide about appropriate outdoor dress

Give teachers the chance to dress your child for a variety of weather conditions by sending your child with a variety of acceptable clothing options.

for your child.

Consider leaving a sweatshirt, light sweater, and/or T-shirt permanently at the school which could be worn instead of, or in combination with, your child's regular jacket, or not at all.

When you make your child promise to wear his or her jacket, you are unwittingly setting up a situation which undermines the teacher's authority, and puts the teacher in the position of enforcing different rules for different children.

Consider also the situation where you have made your child promise to wear a jacket because you thought it was going to be a cold, wet day, but instead the sun comes out and everyone's feeling pretty hot. Now the teacher and child are in the uncomfortable dilemma of having to contradict your authority. There have been times when a miserably hot, sweating, and unhappy child has insisted that she keep her jacket and hat on because "Mommy said so," and the teacher has had to cajole the child into removing it so that she could be comfortable! Other children untruthfully insist, *so they can be comfortable*, that their parents said that they could take their jacket or hat off, then "get in trouble" at pick-up time. *These situations can easily be avoided by asking your child to wear a jacket if the teacher asks him or her to wear it.*

Whenever possible, teachers will give your child a choice about wearing his or her jacket. Often children are asked to bring their jackets out with them, so that they can decide after they see how the temperature actually feels. They are encouraged to decide based on how *they* feel, and not on whether or not their friends are wearing jackets.

As part of the program, we want children to learn to make appropriate decisions about dressing for the weather, and an important way they can learn to do this is through the experience of being allowed to make some decisions about it themselves.

What to send in

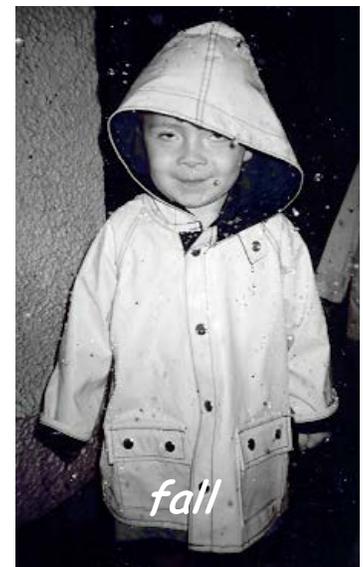
In the winter, please send a warm jacket, snow pants (or suit), waterproof and insulated boots, hat, and mittens daily (mittens are preferable to gloves, avoid long scarves and mask-type hats, find insulated boots that go on easily). A pair of slippers kept at the school can be easily managed by children after removing their wet boots. Sweatshirts and sweaters are nice options. Extra mittens are helpful.

In the summer, please send your child with a bathing suit and towel, and extra pants and shirts for playing in the mud. We sometimes take the children to the spray pool, and often let them play in the sprinkler or spray them with the hose.

On rainy days send your child with a raincoat and, if you have them, rain boots, so that they can go outside with their group.

Children are encouraged to take their jackets off if they are hot, and to put them back on if they are cold!

winter



Enrollment

Admission & Plan to Avoid Suspension & Termination *

Discovery Schoolhouse has an *inclusive* admission policy. We accept applications from *all* children and their families.* We recognize that each child is an individual with unique needs and abilities, equally deserving the best possible care. We will endeavor to meet the needs of every child enrolled or applying for enrollment. Toilet training status is never a requirement for enrollment at Discovery Schoolhouse.

Specific enrollment decisions are based on the availability of openings and the enrollment needs of the school with some preference given to siblings of currently or formerly enrolled children, families enrolling more than one child at one time, and employees of the school. Discovery Schoolhouse accepts state childcare vouchers.

Although it is our goal not to deny enrollment to any child, recognizing that no one program can meet the needs of all children and families, acceptance and continued enrollment of a child must be conditional on our assessment of the appropriateness of the program for that child and/or that child's family. In the case of a child with challenging behavior, our priority is to work with the child and the parents to find a way to make the program work for the child. This will include documenting the behavior, meeting with the parents to discuss behavioral interventions in the school and at home, referrals to parents for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services, and developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program. As possible, we will also seek supportive services, consultation, and/or training for program staff. Every effort will be made to individualize and adapt the program for each child. However, if it is determined by the Executive Director that a child's needs cannot be appropriately met without causing an undue burden to the program, we reserve the right to terminate or deny the child's enrollment. Please refer to Program Philosophy (in this handbook) for our statement of non-discrimination. If it is necessary to terminate or

deny enrollment of a child, the decision will be discussed fully with, and a letter of explanation given to, the child's parent(s). When it is necessary to terminate enrollment of a child, staff will prepare the child appropriately during the transition.* Parents should look at the Help and Resources section of this handbook to find information regarding other services, and we will make suggestions, as appropriate for referrals to other services.* Parents may also wish to contact the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to determine whether the program is in compliance with applicable regulations and may have other rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Some additional reasons for terminating a child's enrollment are, but are not limited to, the following: a tuition account has not been kept current; failure to pick-up a child by closing time;

leaving a child at school beyond the child's regular schedule without prior approval; failure to provide required proof of child's current physical examination and immunization records; failure to provide required completed paperwork; failure to respect and abide by the policies and procedures of Discovery Schoolhouse as discussed in this Parent Handbook or other communications; and, the inability to find a mutually agreeable solution to a disagreement between the school and the family.

CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



Day-care centers are becoming increasingly selective about which students they will admit for enrollment.

CLOSE TO HOME ©1994 John McPherson
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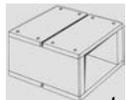
Withdrawing your child

Giving us sufficient notice

When you decide it is time to withdraw your child from the school, please remember that *four (4) weeks written notice is required* in order to have your tuition pre-payment credited to your account. If you do not give four (4) weeks written notice, tuition will continue to be charged until four (4) weeks after your notice was given or until four (4) weeks after your child's last day. We require this so that we may notify other parents who are waiting to enroll their children.

If you have been pleased with the school, we really do appreciate a short note or letter that we may share with your child's teachers and inquiring parents. Thanks!

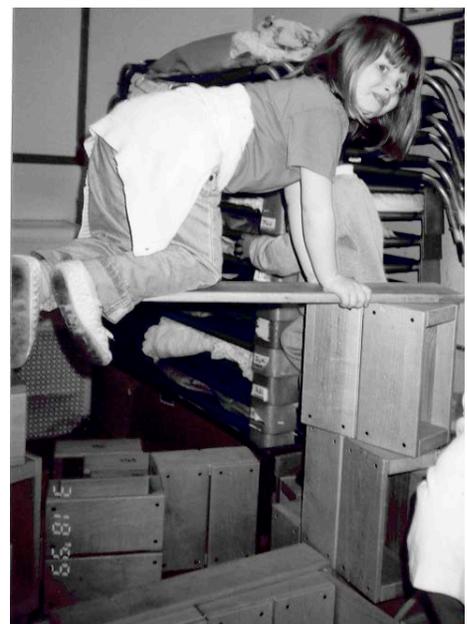
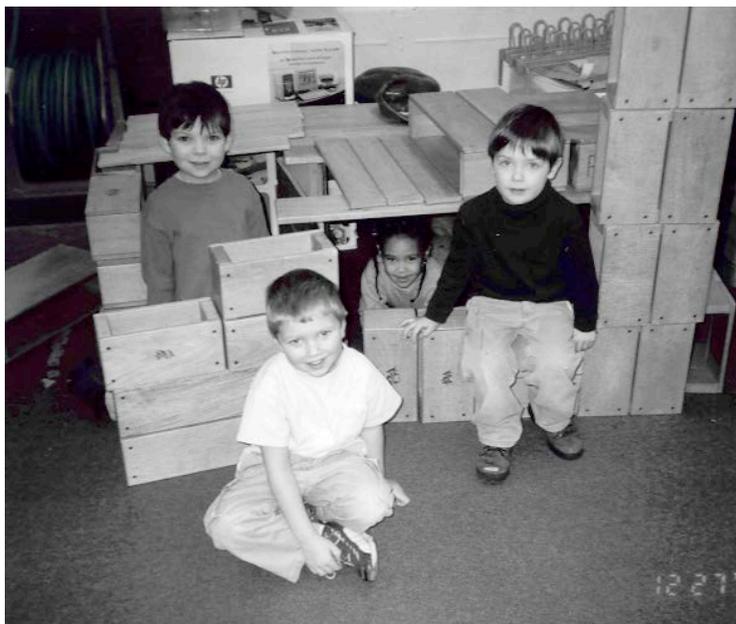
The Goodbye Song



We will prepare your child for their last day at school with our own "good bye" tradition. We sing our own version of "So Long it's been Good to Know Ya," read through, and then have your child bring home their journal with "good bye" drawings from the other children and the teachers, take some "last day" photos, and have your child draw a picture for the school. Sometime parents like to send in a special treat for the children's lunch such as pizza or buy a block (see below) as a gift for the school. This is wonderful and appreciated, but not required. You are welcome to come in for your child's goodbye song. *Please do bring your child back for a visit from time to time. It's great to see them!*

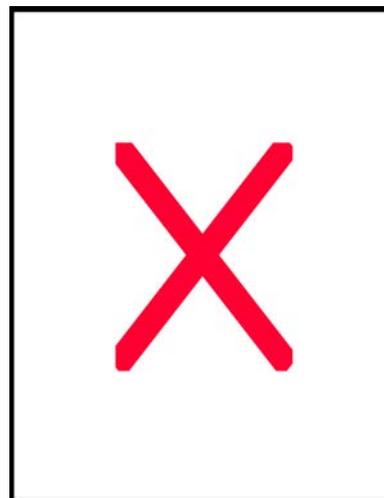
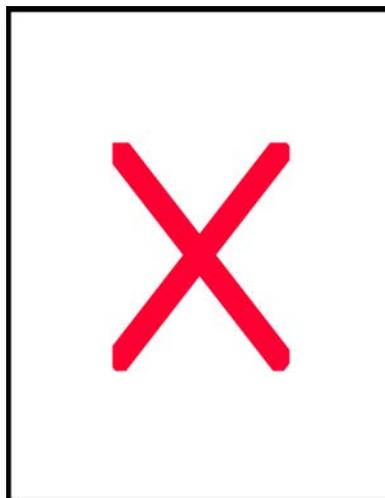
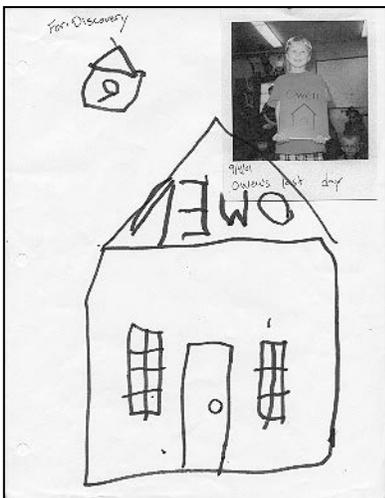
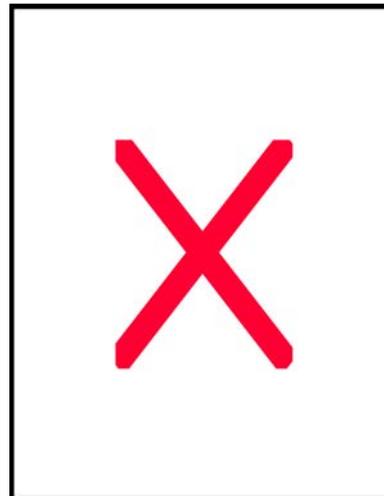
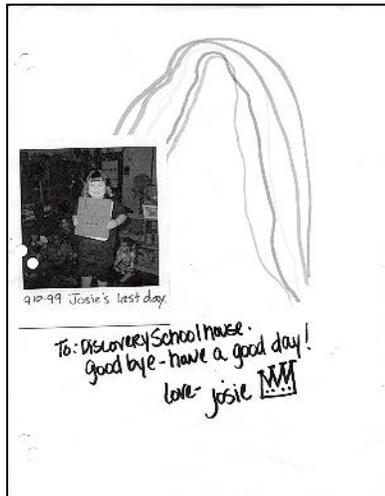
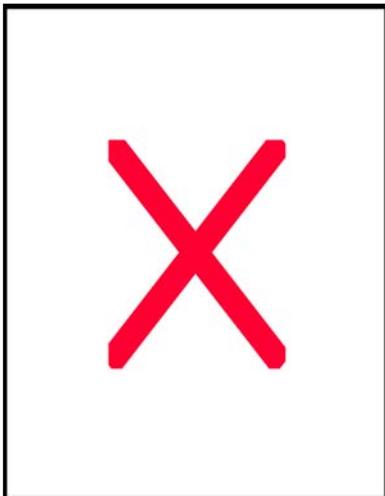
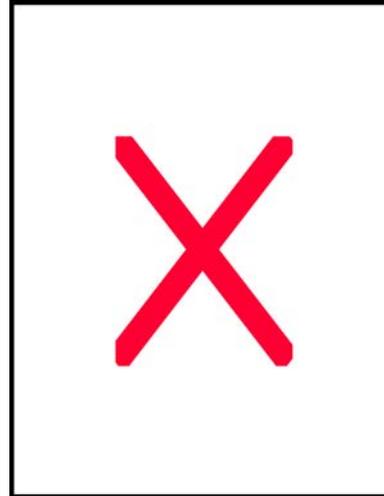
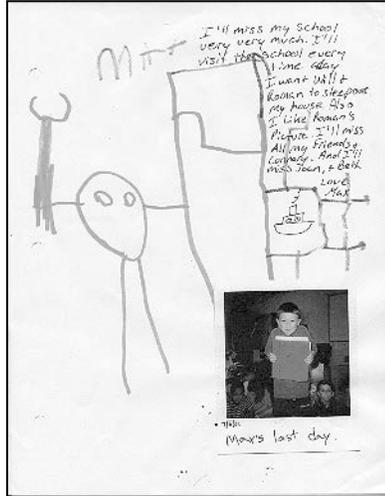
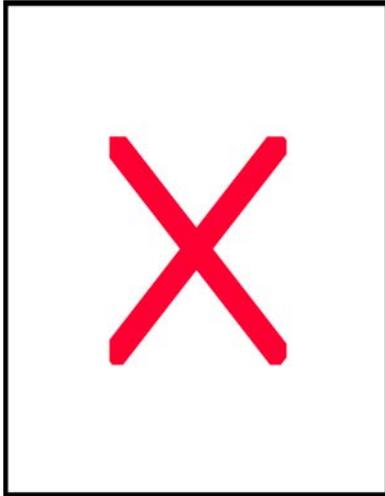
Buy-a-Block

If you would like to buy a large hollow building block for the school and have it marked with your child's name and symbol, please ask! Blocks cost from \$10 to \$40 each. Each block you buy will be a lasting and well-used keepsake for the school of your child's participation. We are always hoping to add to our hollow block collection!



Enrollment

When children leave Discovery Schoolhouse, the other children draw a "Goodbye" picture for them to keep in their journal, and the child who is leaving draws one for the school to keep.



Private Arrangements with Staff

From time to time parents ask teachers to baby-sit, provide transportation, or other services for their children. In such situations it is important to avoid confusion about at what point the teacher is acting as a private individual and at what point the teacher is acting as an employee of the school. It is important for both teachers and parents to understand this distinction and to understand when responsibility and liability shifts from the school to the staff person acting independently of the school.

Parents should be aware that when they arrange for a teacher to “babysit” they are not making an arrangement with the school and that the teacher is not acting as an employee of the school. Authorizations and consent forms which parents sign upon enrollment (such as for emergency medical care, medications, etc.) are not valid for private arrangements.

If, as part of an arrangement, the teacher will be removing the child from the school, the arrangement will start when the teacher leaves the school’s premises with the child. Also, the parent will give the school written authorization to release the child to the teacher by adding the teacher’s name to the child’s “Pick-up list.”

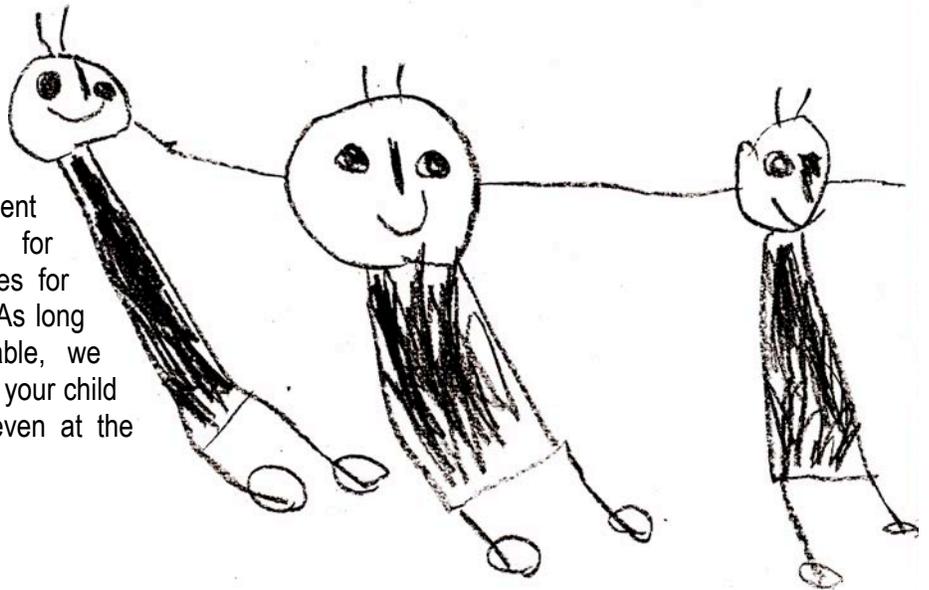
Changing Your Child’s Schedule

Permanent changes

If you would like to permanently change your child’s schedule, please make your request in writing at least four (4) weeks in advance of when you would like the change to become effective. Although we try to be accommodating, your schedule preference may not be available.

Attending for extra days or hours

If you would like your child to attend for extra days or stay for additional time, please leave us a note or call with as much advance notice as possible. Space is sometimes available depending on the enrollment for that particular day. Please refer to your Tuition Agreement regarding payment policies for additional time. Current fees for additional time are posted. As long as we have space available, we would be very happy to have your child attend for additional time, even at the last moment. Just ask!



Enrollment

Birthday BBQ

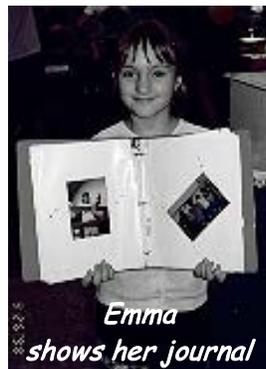
As an alumnus of the school, your child and family is invited back every year to the school's Birthday Barbecue (Usually the last Saturday in September). It is our annual reunion event, and we hope to see you there! Don't wait for you invitation. You're always welcome! Check on line for details and updates.



Discovery Schoolhouse Birthday BBQ September 1999



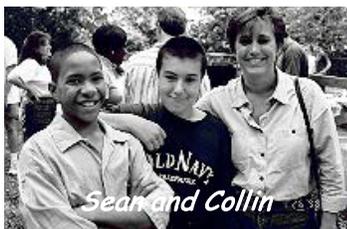
Good friends even after all those years!



Emma shows her journal



Mark and Mike were no longer preschoolers when they brought their journals to the Birthday BBQ!



Sean and Collin



The cooks

Health

Procedures for Emergencies and Illness*

The following procedures will be followed by Discovery Schoolhouse staff in the event of a medical emergency:

During a medical emergency, proper first aid is the primary concern.

A trained staff member will administer first aid while another staff member contacts 911, or, in the case of poisoning, the Poison Control Center.

The child will be transported and cared for as directed by emergency medical personnel with the child's Emergency Information Form & Authorization and Consent Form (found in the Emergency Binder). If possible, a staff member will accompany the child.

The child's parent(s)/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. If the parent(s)/guardian are unable to be reached, one of their emergency contact(s) will be called. A staff member will continue to attempt to contact the parent(s)/guardian or emergency contacts until one of them can be reached.

In the event of a medical emergency during a field trip, the same procedures as above will be followed except that the nearest emergency personnel (police, fire, health care facility, or 911 as available) will be contacted.

Mildly ill Children*

When a child becomes mildly ill or injured while at school, staff will attempt to inform parent(s)/guardian of the child's condition. Mildly ill children do not necessarily need to leave the school immediately for the day. The decision to send a child home is made in conjunction with the child's parent/guardian, and takes into account the nature of the child's illness, the comfort of the child, the ability of the child to participate in the program, the ability of the program to continue to care for the child, the time of day that the child became ill, and the recommendations in the Department of Public Health Health in Day Care manual.

For children with gastro-intestinal, respiratory, and skin or direct contact infections staff will follow any special precautions recommended in the Department of Public Health Health in Day Care manual.

Until the mildly ill child leaves the school, staff will attempt to make the child feel as comfortable as possible (have the child rest in a quiet place or on cot, play a low-key activity, etc.). Staff will monitor the child's condition. If a child at school shows symptoms which may require exclusion from school, the child will be isolated from the group as reasonable, considering the nature of the suspected illness until the child leaves the school or until a qualified medical professional determines that they pose no serious health risk.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Children should not attend school if they have a temporary medical condition which would not allow them to participate in the regularly planned program; require treatment which cannot be administered at the school;

Health

or if they have a temporary infectious disease which would pose a risk to others. If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent(s)/guardian will be notified and may be asked to pick-up the child. If the child needs to be sent home, and the parent(s)/guardian cannot be reached, then one of the child's emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick-up the child. Please let us know if you will be keeping your child home for the day, and when you expect they will be returning to school.

See "How Sick is Sick?" for a list of some of the more common diseases and symptoms and info on when to keep your child home.

When to Start Sending Them Again

Children who were excluded from school usually may return when they are well, when they are non-contagious (usually 24 hours after being placed on antibiotics), or with a physician note. Some specific medical conditions may require different re-admission policies, and each will be discussed individually with the parent(s)/guardian after consulting the Department of Public Health Health in Day Care manual, or the school's Health Care Consultant. All children must be well enough to participate in the regularly planned program.

Please read also the section: *Colds & the Cold.*

Notification to Parents of Illness

Please let us know if your child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease so that we may post information for other parents. The notification will not include who got sick, just what they had. Notice will be posted when any serious communicable disease which poses a risk of infection to others has been introduced into the school population as soon as such a disease has been diagnosed by a physician.

Special Health Care Needs of Children

The parent(s)/guardian will be asked about children's allergies and specific health care needs at intake and should list them on their child's Emergency Information Form.

Children's allergies and special health care needs are posted on the white cabinet, near the kitchen.

Most of our procedures relating to the management of health, sanitation, and safety are described in the school's Health Care Policy. This policy is available to you upon request* and posted at the school.

SIDS Risk Reduction Practices for Infants

In order to reduce the risk of SIDS ("Sudden Infant Death Syndrome" AKA "Sudden Unexpected Infant Death") we use safe sleeping practices for all infants, including (1) that they are always put to sleep on their backs (unless the child's health care professional orders otherwise in writing), (2) we use individual cribs for your infant, (3) cribs have firm, properly fitted mattresses with clean coverings, and do not contain any potential head entrapment areas, (4) slats on cribs are no more than 2-3/8 inches apart, and (5) cribs, or other spaces used for sleeping infants younger than 12 months of age do not contain pillows, comforters, stuffed animals or other soft, padded materials. If your child falls asleep on their own in other places in the classroom, they will be moved to their crib. When a child falls asleep while being held, the teacher may continue to hold them or place them in their crib.

How Sick is Sick?

Criteria for Excluding Children from Child Care

| Condition | Exclusion |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Chicken Pox (Varicella) | Exclude for five days after the onset of the rash <u>OR</u> until all lesions have dried and crusted over, whichever is later |
| Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) | Exclude until 24 hours after treatment begins |
| Diarrhea | Exclude when is watery or decreased in form <u>AND</u> cannot be contained by diapers or controlled by toilet use, or if stool contains blood or mucus, or if accompanied by fever |
| Head Lice (Pediculosis) | Exclude for 24 hours after treatment begins |
| Hepatitis A | Exclude for one week after the onset of illness or until the immune serum globulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff in the program within two weeks of exposure, as directed by the health department |
| Impetigo | Exclude for 24 hours after treatment begins |
| Measles | Exclude for 4 days after rash appears |
| Mouth sores | Exclude only in children who cannot control their saliva, unless the child's physician or local health department states the child is not infectious |
| Mumps | Exclude for 9 days after the onset of gland swelling |
| Pertussis | Exclude for 5 days after appropriate antibody therapy has been completed |
| Pinworm | Exclude for 24 hours after treatment begins |
| Rash | Exclude with fever or behavior change until a physician determines that the illness is not a communicable disease |
| Ringworm | Exclude until after treatment begins |
| Rubella | Exclude for 7 days after rash disappears |
| Scabies | Exclude until after treatment is completed |
| Strep throat | Exclude for 24 hours after treatment begins <u>AND</u> the child has had normal temperature for 24 hours |
| Tuberculosis | Exclude until the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious |
| Vomiting | Exclude if the child has vomited two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration |

When Your Child Needs Medication*

If your child requires medication (including non-prescription creams and insect repellent) of any kind (see below) while at school, you must complete an **Authorization for Medication** form and give it along with the medication to a teacher. *Please always hand medications directly to a teacher, and do not leave them in your child's cubby, backpack, or anywhere else.* An extra form has been provided with your enrollment packet. Please read this policy now, before your child becomes ill. Many medications require a physician's written authorization even though they are non-prescription. *When in doubt, get a note from your child's pediatrician.* We endeavor to meet children's needs for medicines ordered by a physician.



Please apply *sunscreen* and/or *insect repellent* to your child at home or upon arrival if you want your child to have these protections during the morning. We often have sunscreen available at the school for you to use.

ALL MEDICATIONS require written consent. No medication (whether topical, non-topical, prescription or non-prescription, etc.) will be administered without a signed consent form from the parent/guardian. All medications must be in their original container, labeled with the child's name, and administered in accordance with the labeling. Staff will keep a log (on back of Authorization for Medication form) of each time any medication is administered, except for BOX (C) below. *We can only administer medications in their original containers.*

A

Prescription medications

may be administered with parent/guardian's signed consent (the prescription label serves as the physician's authorization and instructions). Ask the pharmacist to put medication into two separately labeled bottles - one for school, one for home.

B

Non-prescription, NON-TOPICAL medications

(such as Tylenol, etc.) require written authorization and instructions from the child's physician. Staff will attempt to contact parent before administering medication, unless giving the medication should not be delayed.

C

Non-prescription, TOPICAL medications

(such as ointments, creams, sun-screen, petroleum jelly, etc.) require only written authorization from the child's parent/guardian and do not require authorization from the child's physician. Non-prescription, Topical Medications will be administered only in accordance with the directions on the label. Authorizations for Non-prescription, topical medications are valid for one year only.

Parents' Rights*

The following statement of parental rights is copied from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Parent Information handout. "The Licensee" refers to the school and "The Office" refers to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

Chapter 28A, Section 10 and subsequent amendments to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Office of Child Care Services the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of child day care centers (including nursery schools), and school age child care programs.

These regulations, 102 CMR 7.00, establish minimum standards for operation of group day care and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (child care program owner) in regard to their work with parents. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities follows.

Parental Input. The licensee must appropriately involve parents of children in care in visiting the program, meeting with the staff and receiving reports of their children's progress. The program must have a procedure for allowing you to give input and make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

Meeting with parents.

In group day care programs, the licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee meets with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the program. The parents shall have an opportunity to visit the program's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child. In school age programs, the licensee shall provide an opportunity for the parent(s) and child to visit the program and meet the staff before the child's enrollment.

Parent Information. The licensee must provide to the parents upon admission of their child the program's written statement of purpose, including the program philosophy, goals and objectives, and the characteristics of children served; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision; the program's behavior management policy; the program's plan for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, education and medical services for children; the termination and suspension policy; a list of nutritious foods to be sent for snacks or meals; the program's policy and procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect; the procedures for emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; the program's transportation plan; the procedure for administration of medication, and, upon request, a copy of the complete health care policy; a copy of the fee schedule, and in school age child care, the procedures for on-going parent communication. All of this information may be contained in a "Parent Handbook".

Parent Conferences. The licensee must make staff available for individual conferences with parents at your request.

Progress Reports. At least every six (6) months the licensee should meet with you to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. The licensee will prepare a written progress report for your child, will provide a copy to you, and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file. If your child is an infant or a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report at least every three (3) months. Program staff must bring special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

Parent Visits. You have the right to visit the center and your child's room at any time while your child is present.

Children's Records. Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Program staff may not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to

implementing the program plan for the child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to your child's record. You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You must have access to the record within two (2) business days of your request unless you consent to a longer time period. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location. The center must have procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of children's record, and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record which identifies anyone who has had access to the record or who has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the center's records.

Amending your child's record.

You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. You also have the right request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record. If you believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to a conference with the licensee to make your objections known. If you have a conference with the licensee, the licensee must inform you in writing within one week of his decision regarding your objections. If the licensee decides in your favor, he must immediately take the steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

Transfer of Records. When your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give your child's record to you, or any other person you identify, upon your written request.

Charge for Copies. The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Providing Information To The Office

The program must make available any information requested by the Office to determine compliance with any Office regulations governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff and references.

Reporting abuse or neglect

All center staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Social Services or to the licensee's program administrator. The licensee must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

Notification of injury

The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. The licensee must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

Availability of OCCS Regulations

The program must maintain a copy of the regulations, *102 CMR 7.00: Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs*, on the premises of the center and must make them available to any person upon request. If you have a question about any of the regulations, ask the center to show them to you.

Confidentiality and Distribution of Records*

Discovery Schoolhouse will make every attempt to respect your family's privacy by maintaining the confidentiality of any information we learn about you. Information about you and your child will be shared only with Discovery Schoolhouse staff, except as discussed below. If you would like us to release any information about or discuss your child with other professionals, such as doctors, therapists, the public school, or other teachers, we will require your written authorization . *

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations require that we do not release any part of your child's written record without your written consent. It is our policy to generally only release such information to you, the parent/guardian. If you would like others to have access to your child's records, we would prefer to give you a copy so that you may forward it yourself. Please be aware that the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care has the regulatory authority to view your child's record for the purpose of monitoring the school's compliance with regulations, as well as for other reasons.

In the unlikely event that we find it necessary to seek assistance in the collection of an unpaid balance due, we will share any and all relevant information we need to in order to attempt collection (including, but not limited to any names, addresses, phone numbers, other contact information, work information, and social security numbers you have supplied).

Normally we do not consider children's and parent's names, children's ages, and community of residence to be confidential information with regards to conversations with other currently enrolled families unless this has been specifically requested. Also, in the event of a suspicion of abuse or neglect we will release any relevant information to the appropriate authorities as required by regulation (see section on Identifying and Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect).



Emergency Contingencies Plan

Emergency Situations requiring evacuation or shelter-in-place

In the case of a fire, natural disaster, or other unusual situation (chemical spills, bomb threats, etc.) necessitating evacuation of the building, staff will follow the Plan for Evacuation the Building, above. Parents, or emergency contacts, will be notified by phone, text or the the brightwheel app, and, if necessary, asked to pick up their children. Staff will follow the advice of local authorities regarding whether to evacuate or shelter-in-place.

Missing or lost child*

State licensing requires that Discovery Schoolhouse have a policy in place in the unlikely event that a child in our care is lost or missing. Children's safety is of paramount concern to Discovery Schoolhouse, and staff is meticulous about tracking children's arrival, departure, and where they are throughout the day. If a child becomes lost or missing while in our care, we will implement the following procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to finding the child is taken, while the other children in the program are kept safe and calm.

Staff will immediately notify their supervisor and all other staff present of the situation including (a) when and where the child was last seen, and (b) what the child was wearing. The time will be noted. All available staff will immediately search for the child while maintaining proper supervision and normal routine for other children in the program. The search should be calm, quick, immediate, systematic, thorough, and efficient. The search should be completed in two (2) minutes *or less*. Regardless of whether the child was last seen inside or outside, the search will start with at least one staff person checking outside in the vicinity of the building by (a) going down the ramp (b) to the front of the building, (c) looking down the sidewalk carefully in each direction and across the street, (d) continuing clockwise around the building, and (e) looking behind the storage container and under, behind, and (as possible) in parked cars, and (f) finishing with the play yard. At the same time, another staff person will search the building starting with the classroom looking in and behind shelves, and under cushions tables, and toys, and then proceeding systematically to all other areas inside the building, both upstairs and downstairs, including the front vestibule, all bathrooms, the pantry, the art room, the boiler room, closets, and entryways. The attendance will also be checked and all staff consulted to confirm that the child was actually in attendance and/or was not already picked up for the day. If, after the search has been completed or 10 minutes has elapsed, whichever is first, the child still has not been found, 911 will be called immediately and child's parent(s) notified. In the event of a missing or lost child while on a trip, the same general procedures will be followed including, as possible, notifying facility staff (i.e. at zoo or museum) and posting DSI staff at the facility's exit(s).

Closing the school

We try very hard to keep the school open, and we do not follow local school closures or emergency declarations, etc. However, we do have to close the school at times, particularly if we cannot guarantee

that we have enough staff to run the program. In the event of a situation such as loss of power, heat, water, telephone service, hot water, air conditioning, lighting, etc. the Center Administrator on duty will decide if it is necessary to close the school for the day. Due to the unpredictable nature and variety of circumstances of such events, judgments must be made at that time. In general, the school should remain open unless the specific circumstances absolutely necessitate closing.

In making the determination to close the school the following will be taken into consideration: The time of day, knowledge of the probable duration of the situation, the severity of the situation, the weather forecast, the availability of appropriate staffing, the inconvenience to, and safety of, parents and staff (especially if forced to travel to pick-up children), the comfort and wellbeing of the children, and the ability to continue operating the program in a safe manner.

Fire - evacuate the building according to the Plan for Evacuation of the Building. The alarm will automatically alert authorities. The alarm should not be silenced or re-set until after the Fire Department or Center Administrator has authorized re-entry into the building. Any false alarms should be reported to a supervisor.

Natural Disaster - listen for any announcements on the emergency radio (Emergency Broadcast System) or Internet for recommendations from governmental authorities. Closing the school does not necessarily guarantee that parents will be able to pick up their children by a certain time.

Bomb Threats or other Threats of Violence - call 911 and ask for assistance and advice. Depending on the situation, it may be prudent to either keep the children in the locked building or evacuate the center according to the Plan for Evacuation of the Building.

Power Outage or Loss of Phone Service - call NSTAR for power outages at 800-340-9822. Inform them that the service is for a *school*. Check for a tripped circuit breaker, and notify the Center Administrator. The alarm system and emergency lighting will function for many hours on backup batteries.

Loss of Heat or Hot Water - Inform the Center Administrator and/or contact James Devaney Fuel Co. at 1-800-DEVANEY or 617-964-8383. Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. maintains a service contract with the oil company, and they should be able to respond to any problem quickly.

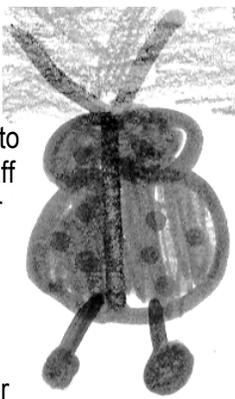
Loss of Water - contact St. Inform the Center Administrator and/or contact the Town of Milton Water Department

Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect*

Mandated Reporters

The staff at Discovery Schoolhouse will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care and custody.

Childcare teachers are mandated by state law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (commonly referred to as a 51(a) report). Staff receive training in their responsibilities as mandated reporters, specific procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, and indicators of child abuse and neglect.



Department of Children and Families Child at Risk Hotline: 1-800-792-5200

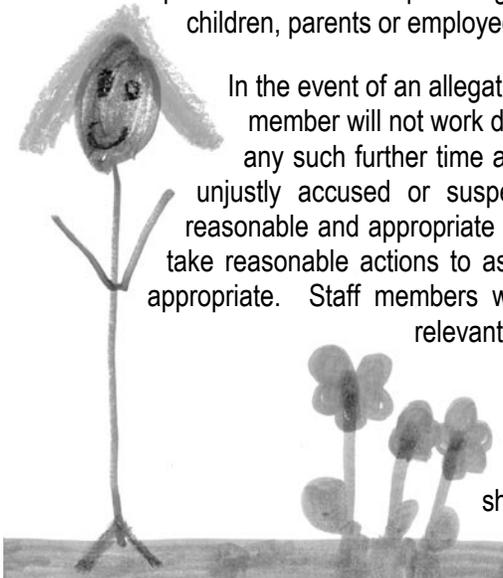
Suspicious of Abuse or Neglect

Any staff member who suspects child abuse or neglect will immediately inform their supervisor and/or report it to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Either the Executive Director or the Director/Lead Teacher, as appropriate, shall call the Department of Children and Families immediately and file a 51(a) report (if one has not already been filed by the staff member). In the event that a 51(a) report has been filed alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) will be notified immediately after filing the 51(a) report or learning that a one had been filed.

Cooperating with Investigating Authorities

With representation of legal council, Discovery Schoolhouse will cooperate in all investigations of alleged abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program, including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the program, providing consent for disclosure from, and allowing EEC to disclose information to, any person and/or agency EEC may specify as necessary for the investigation of allegations and protection of children providing such cooperation does not violate any law protecting the rights of children, parents or employees.

In the event of an allegation of suspected abuse or neglect against a staff member, that staff member will not work directly with children until the DCF investigation is completed and for any such further time as required by EEC. Recognizing that an innocent person may be unjustly accused or suspected, Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc. will attempt to provide all reasonable and appropriate support as determined by the school. Discovery Schoolhouse will take reasonable actions to assess the validity of the allegations and will respond as it deems appropriate. Staff members will immediately document their actions and observations of the relevant time period.



Staff will be mindful that most information pertaining to children and staff at discovery schoolhouse is confidential (see Confidentiality and Distribution of Records), and no staff person shall answer any question during any investigation without the school's attorney present.

Assistance

Tuition Assistance & Vouchers

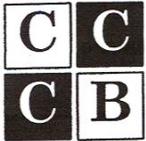
Milton Early Childhood Alliance (MECA)



The best first place to call is the Milton Early Childhood Alliance (MECA) at 617-696-2262. Although MECA does not offer tuition assistance directly, they can help you get onto the right list and answer many of your questions. They know the “in and outs” of childcare vouchers, and have lots of other useful information for you as well. Call them first!

Community Care for kids (CCK)

Child Care Choices of Boston (CCCB)



live, not



Discovery Schoolhouse accepts a limited number of children enrolling with state childcare vouchers. We unfortunately must limit the number because the state reimburses the school only a small fraction of what we normally charge. Your local Resource and Referral Agency (R&R) which is determined by where you where your childcare program is located.



Help & Resources

We consider Discovery Schoolhouse to be more than just a small early childhood program, and we do our best to be a resource for parents and families. Please come to us with your questions and concerns, and we'll do our best to assist you. We have a small parent lending library at the school, and we post workshops and other notices which might be of interest to parents in the lobby. As Lead Agency for the Milton Early Childhood Alliance (MECA) we invite you to explore the comprehensive Parent Resource Center at the Milton Public Library, or call MECA for assistance. The following listing has been compiled for your convenience from local resources, and does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc.

Dept. of Early Education & Care

Central Office
1 Ashburten Place
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 626-2000

Regional Office
1250 Hancock St., Suite 120-S
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 472-2881

Childcare Resource & Referrals

ABCD, Child Care Choices

(For residents of Boston...)
178 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02111
(617) 357-6020

Community Care For Kids

(For residents of Milton, Quincy, Randolph, Braintree, Weymouth...)
1509 Hancock St., Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 471-6473

Department of Children and Families

541 Main St., South Weymouth, MA
(781) 682-0800

Milton Early Childhood Alliance

(See below)

Tuition Assistance

Milton Early Childhood Alliance

Administered by Discovery Schoolhouse, Inc.
— For residents of Milton
(617) 696-2262 miltonearlychildhoodalliance.org

(Residents of other towns should call Community Care for Kids or ABCD, above, and ask for the number of the Childcare Resource and Referral Agency for their community)

Dental, Vision & Hearing

For vision & hearing screening call your public school, ask your pediatrician, or try:

1-800-DENTIST
ASK-A-NURSE 1-800-544-242

Public Schools

Boston Public Schools

(617) 635-9000 (Main Number)

Mass. Dept. of Education

350 Main St., Malden, MA 02148
(781) 338-3000

Milton Public Schools

- Superintendent's Office
391 Brook Rd., Milton, MA 02186
(617) 696-4809

Milton Public Schools – Early Childhood

- Early Childhood Coordinator (Judy King)
391 Brook Rd., Milton, MA 02186
(617) 696-4578

Early Intervention Programs

For children birth through three years at no cost to the parent

Early Intervention National Info & Referral

(800) 950-TIES
www.massfamilyties.org

Step 1 Early Intervention

(For Milton, Randolph, Canton residents)
(Phyllis Fazzio)
6 Fort St., Quincy, MA 02169
(617)847-1950

Wesros - Park Early Intervention

(For Boston residents)
(Dr. Kathie Rose, Director)
656 American Legion Highway
Roslindale, MA 02131
(617) 522-6000

Help & Resources

Disabilities

Association for Children with Learning Disabilities

(412) 341-1515

Autism Information Center

(304) 525-8014

Cerebral Palsy of the South Shore

(617) 479-7443

Disability Law Center

11 Beacon St., Boston, MA

(617) 723-8455

Easter Seals Society

(781) 622-1433

Federation for Children with Special Needs

Roxbury, MA 02118

(617) 236-7210

Troubled Children

Bridge Over Troubled Waters Runaway Hotline

(617) 423-9575

Child at Risk Hotline

1-800-792-5200

Missing Children Help Center

(800) USA-KIDS

National Hotline for Missing and Exploited Children

(800) 843-5678

National Runaway Hotline

(800) 621-4000

National Suicide Hotline

(800) 784-2433

Samaritan Suicide Hotline

(617) 247-0220

Youth in Crisis Hotline (for 12 to 18 year olds)

(617) 773-4878

Health

Burn Care Information at Shriners Hospital

(617) 722-3000

Cancer Hotline

(800) 422-6237

Lead Poison Prevention Line

(800) 532-9571

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Center (SIDS)

(617) 414-5742

Mental Health

Alanon / Alateen

(781) 843-5300

Alcohol Abuse hotline

(800) 234-0246

Cocaine Abuse Hotline

(800) 262-2463

Parents Anonymous

(800) 352-0386

Parents Without Partners of the South Shore

(781) 337-6766

Parental Stress Hotline

(800) 632-8188

South Shore Mental Health Center

6 Fort Street, Quincy, MA 02169

(617) 847-1950

(617) 770-4000 (Crisis Line)

Miscellaneous

Boston Rape Crisis Line

(617) 492-7273

Car Seat & Child Seatbelt Law Info

(800) 443-SAFE (Buckle-up Hotline)

(800) CAR-SAFE (Mass. Car Safe Line)

Child Abuse Hotline

(617) 792-5200

Child SAFE (Sexual Abuse Finally Exposed)

- Terry Wilcox

14 Erin Way, Weymouth, MA

(781) 335-7400

Department of public Utilities

(800) 392-6066 (Client Help Line)

Domestic Violence Ended (DOVE)

P. O. Box 287, Quincy, MA 02169

(617) 471-5087

(617) 471-1234

Mass. Dept. of Transitional Assistance

(617) 348-8500 (Central Office)

(617) 847-4600 (Quincy Office)

Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)

507 Washington St., Braintree, MA 02184

(781) 848-0110

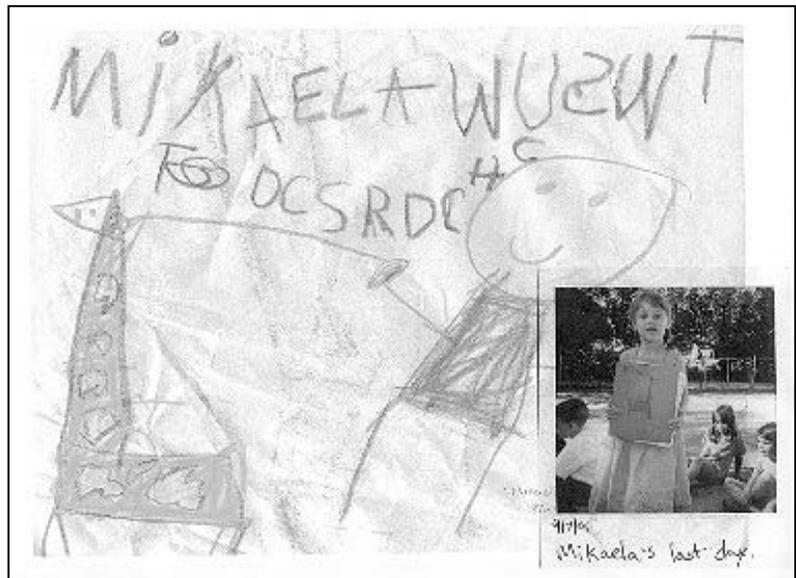
(800) 775-0275

United Way

(617) 624-8000

***"Mikaela went to
Discovery
Schoolhouse"***

*On Each child's
last day of school
he or she draws a
"Goodbye Picture"
for the school and
we take a photo of
the child holding
their journal.*



Read To Your Bunny



Rosemary Wells

Read To Your Bunny

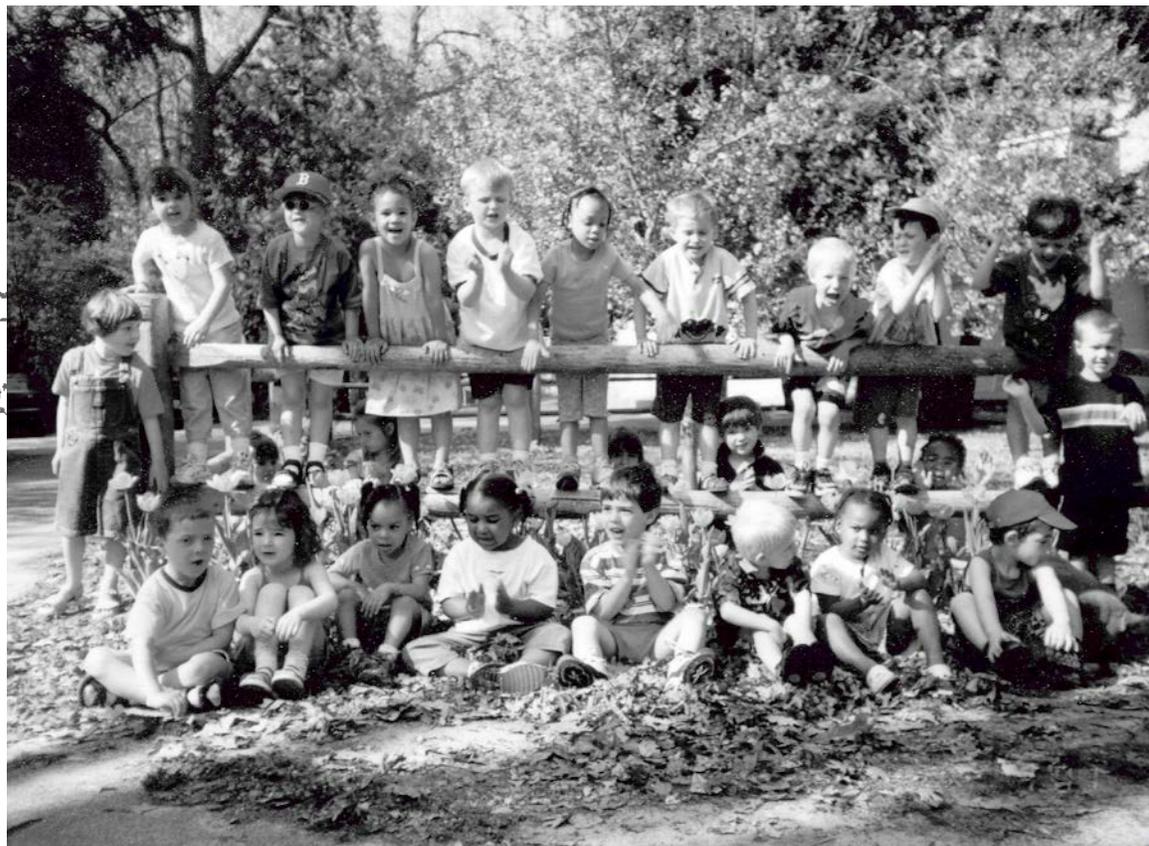
Read to your bunny often,
It's twenty minutes of fun.
It's twenty minutes of moonlight,
And twenty minutes of sun.
Twenty old-favorite minutes,
Twenty minutes brand-new,
Read to your bunny often,
And.....
Your bunny will read to you.

by Rosemary Wells

Read to your child every day!

*It's the most important thing you can do to
promote literacy and reading skills in your
young child!*

Discovery Schoolhouse was founded in the fall of 1992. We celebrate with alumni, family, staff, and friends every year by hosting a reunion barbecue. Put it on your calendar now!



You are invited

to our

Annual Birthday Barbecue

this fall