

Commonwealth Children's Center

Parent Handbook



2018

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Commonwealth Children's Center! We are committed to forming strong ties between our parents, children and staff. Our CCC community of caring adults creates a unique setting for your child. We encourage you to be involved at CCC! There are many ways to do this. Our open door policy encourages you to visit daily with your child. Since we are run by a parent board, your expertise and involvement on the board would benefit our entire center. If you are interested in becoming a room parent, you will perform the important task of maintaining open communication between your classroom teachers and other parents. As a private, non-profit center we are always researching new ways to raise our revenue. If you are a skilled grant writer or fundraiser, or interested novice, we welcome your help. We seek to empower our children, parents and staff to create the best possible environment for each child's growth and development.

At CCC, our children thrive through nurturing, consistent relationships with their teachers. Each teacher has primary children that they observe, document and interact with. Your child's primary teacher will document daily your child's development using our online documentation/assessment tools called Teaching Strategies. You will meet with your child's teaching team twice yearly in the toddler and preschool rooms and three times with your infant teachers. At the time of these conferences, you will receive an observational profile about your child: a snapshot of how we see your child at that point in time. The teachers will also be reviewing your child's portfolio with you. This is a compilation of your child's artwork, pictures we have taken, and perhaps transcriptions of something your child has said.

We hope that you will find The Parent Handbook helpful in familiarizing you with our mission, philosophy, and as a way to orient you to our policies and procedures. This handbook was created by parents. Please read this handbook carefully! At the end of your handbook you will find our school calendar and a sheet for you to sign and return to us.

We are excited to begin this journey with you and your family and to lay a solid foundation for your child's accomplishments! Please also visit us at our website, www.commchildcenter.com, to find copies of important documents and links we think you will find helpful.

HIGHLIGHTS TO REVISED PARENT HANDBOOK

- The drop-off/pick-up sections have been revised to clarify teacher and parent supervision of children;
- The Child Guidance section has been revised to clarify prohibited practices;
- The Emergency Evacuation Procedures have been revised regarding the Blossoms exit route and new Evacuation site at 20 Somerset.
- A section has been added regarding Individual Health Care Plans.
- The voucher rates are extended to State and Non-State families with income \$75,000 and below, subject to availability.
- Effective September 1st 2013, forty-five days written notice is required in order to receive back the one month tuition deposit.
- Effective March 27, 2014, the Sibling Discount section has been revised.
- Effective May 28, 2014, the Enrollment section has been revised to clarify income requirements for a voucher rate.
- February 18, 2015, the Nutrition section has been revised.
- March 11, 2016, Enrichment Programs section has been added.
- May 5, 2016, Nutrition section updated.
- August 10, 2017 the Nutrition section has been revised to prohibit glass in the classrooms as dictated by our QRIS Level 4 rating
- August 10, 2017 the Emergency Evacuation Procedures have been updated to include the exit route for the new Buds classroom and Blossoms II classroom

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OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth Children's Center (CCC) is a private, nonprofit, non-affiliated, early childhood educational program that is open to the general public and gives priority of enrollment to state employees. CCC serves children ages 3 months to 5 years and their families. A parent-governed Board of Directors runs CCC.

CCC offers infant, toddler, and preschool/kindergarten readiness programs. We believe in emergent curriculum, where activities are based on the children's interests. Our curriculum is designed to foster the continued development of each individual child's cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth through hands-on, active exploration, experimentation, and creative expression.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

At CCC, we are dedicated to improving the lives of young children and their families. We strive to meet the needs of each diverse learner, adapting curriculum to meet each child at their own individual developmental level. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment in any classroom. We are committed to building a strong home/school partnership, as we encourage parents to be involved in their child's school life. We take pride in welcoming diversity and respecting the uniqueness of each child, family, and staff member as they become a part of the CCC community.

MISSION

The Commonwealth Children's Center has become a model for early childhood education. CCC thrives on its unique ability to attract families from economically and geographically diverse neighborhoods to the rich history of downtown Boston. Our teachers embrace this diversity by fostering each child's individuality, creativity and learning style in a nurturing environment with strong home-school communications. We demonstrate our commitment to public service and diversity by providing tuition on a sliding scale to state employees and welcoming voucher families to our Center. We ensure that at the Commonwealth Children's Center, the children are the center.

HISTORY

The Commonwealth Children's Center was established by a group of state employees committed to providing on-site childcare for their children and the children of other public employees. The Corporation was formed in October of 1979; but it was not until 1982 that we secured legislation authorizing space in the McCormack Building. We began operating in January 1983 with one classroom of 8 preschoolers and were in great need of additional space due to the high demand for childcare. Over the years, we have expanded our program to include four additional classrooms for infants and toddlers thanks to the much needed support of many State officials and outstanding fundraising efforts and volunteer hours of parents and staff. Now are serving up to 52 children in five classrooms, and we intend to continually enrich our program and to serve as a model for high quality and convenient childcare in both the public and private sector.

CCC gives many thanks to the invaluable support from: the Women's Legislative Caucus, the Division of Capital Asset Management, the Bureau of State Office Buildings, the Office of Employee Relations, the public-employee labor unions, and donations and loans from interested parents and friends.

PHILOSOPHY

The Commonwealth Children's Center philosophy is rooted in the belief that the quality of young children's lives can be enriched through positive early childhood experiences. Our downtown location supports the high parent involvement we feel is critical for a quality program. Each teaching team plans the classroom curriculum weekly so the varying developmental needs of each child are met. Classroom activities are geared to be responsive to children's thoughts, feelings, and environment, as well as to foster new skills and encourage creative problem-solving through conflict resolution techniques. Group life, which includes such daily routines as eating, preparing snacks, circle, activities, napping, outdoor play, taking turns, etc., is also considered a rich resource for children's growth and learning. Each classroom is bright, spacious, and has fully enclosed areas that have been divided into activity centers for the age group it serves.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Children learn through play. They are active sensory hands-on learners. Through play they explore social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Their exploration should be self-chosen, allowing for investigation, social interaction, and problem-solving. We are concerned with the process of their explorations rather than any products the children have created.
- ❖ We must set the appropriate stages for this play to happen. That is the classroom and playground environment. In other words, an environment that is child-centered, with open-ended materials organized in a thoughtful and stimulating manner, enabling and extending a theme emerging through a child's play. It is important for supplies to be organized and rotated to provide new avenues for children's self-discovery.
- ❖ Through observing the children as a group as well as on individual basis, we are able to facilitate the children's themes. Therefore, documentation of each child is critical to deepen the understanding of each child's needs in order to challenge and strengthen them through the curriculum and to provide up-to-date concrete information needed to continuously improve and adjust our services to children.
- ❖ We respect each child and their family for their cultural identity and seek to represent each child's heritage in the classroom through literacy, posters, themes, and parent participation.
- ❖ We must be in partnership with families by maintaining excellent communication (through feedback and information collected by way of surveys and parent-teacher conferences), sharing family experiences, maintaining open-door policies, avenues by which parents are able to extend curriculum at home as well as provide a safe, nurturing environment for children and their families to learn, develop, and feel part of a community.

Children are seen as active learners with the teachers serving as guides and facilitators who:

- ❖ Help children develop a positive self-image and experience the freedom to learn and grow with confidence.
- ❖ Foster children's creative self-expression and their ability to communicate their needs, desires, and experiences in a variety of ways.
- ❖ Support children's development of positive peer and adult relationships.
- ❖ Create a safe physical environment in which children can discover, explore, and master new materials, concepts and skills.

We have an excellent teacher/child ratio in each classroom. Our staff is comprised of early childhood professionals who meet or exceed state regulations. Each staff member contributes to the planning and implementation of the curriculum in order to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging school experience for each child. Our staff is considered the heart of our program, using their diverse skills and talents to provide the quality care and education that all children deserve.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at CCC will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. CCC does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.

ENROLLMENT

The Commonwealth Children's Center offers quality care to children from 3 months to 5 years of age. Admissions for all programs are made on a September to September enrollment model as well as on a space available basis. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers remain with their peers and teaching teams for the duration of our school calendar year as believe it is important to children's development to have consistent caregivers. CCC's hours of operation are 8:15 am-5:30 pm. Employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are given priority over non-state employees for enrollment in the Center. The Center also recognizes the important developmental benefits which arise as a result of having siblings attend the same child care program, and therefore equal priority will be given to employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and non-state employees with siblings currently enrolled in the Center. In addition, admission is based on preliminary application date and age ratios in each classroom. In the event that two families were to have equal priority, the one with earliest date of application would be enrolled. The Executive Director shall have the discretion to enroll a lower-listed applicant on the waiting list in preference to a higher-listed applicant while working in the best interest of the Center. Parents seeking to enroll a child at CCC should take the following steps:

- Parents are encouraged to make arrangements with the Director to visit the Center.
- Parents fill out and submit a preliminary application form, including the \$50 non-refundable application fee, which officially places your child on our waiting list.

- Upon notification of a space being available, an appointment may be made to meet with the Director and ask questions, as well as observe in the classroom where the enrollment slot is available.
- Children are officially enrolled when all necessary enrollment forms (see “Physical” under Health and Nutrition section) are in and a deposit of four weeks tuition has been made. This deposit is held and refunded when a child is withdrawn from/leaves the center if and only if the child’s parent/caregiver gives the center forty-five days written notice of the child’s departure. If a full 45 days’ notice is not given, there will be no refund of the security deposit. It is understood that any interest earned from this money will be used towards the operating budget of the Center. In the case that the Center terminates a child for whatever reason, the Center reserves the right to keep the initial security deposit.
- When a child begins attending CCC, a transition schedule will be followed to ensure that each child has a smooth adjustment into the program. This transition is personalized for each child’s/family’s needs. Upon departure from the Center, parents must notify the Center at least forty-five days in advance of the date of withdrawal. This is the time required to properly prepare your child for leaving and to enroll a new child. *Parents will receive a full refund of the security deposit at withdrawal only when forty-five day notice prior to date of withdrawal is given and there are no outstanding late fees. No partial refund will be considered if less than forty-five days written notice is given.* If a child is terminated from the Center, for whatever reason, the Center reserves the right to keep the initial 4-week deposit. The Center also reserves the right to deduct any outstanding late fees from the security deposit.
- The mission of the Commonwealth Children’s Center is to welcome voucher families as is economically feasible. The feasibility is determined by the budget and available alternative sources of funding. The Executive Director has discretion with regards to voucher availability, determined by the pool of enrolling children and budgetary considerations. Families, both state and non-state with total family income of \$75,000 or below may apply for a reduced rate.
- **STATE and NONSTATE** employees must fill out this section and provide copies of all documentation to be considered for the reduced rate¹, (income of \$75,000 or below) which is based on gross income. Gross income includes but is not limited to all wages and other income required to be reported on federal and state tax returns, all wages and other income of all adults living with the child and contributing to household expenses and/or contributing to childcare, and all familial or other third-party financial support used for and/or to offset tuition payments. *CCC additionally reserves the right to request and consider, at its sole discretion, additional information including asset information, in determining a family’s eligibility for the reduced rate and to adjust tuition accordingly. In the event of any discrepancies, the maximum rate will be charged. The date on which employment commences or the date of termination determines income and state employee status. CCC reserves the right to amend the parent contract with or without notice at its sole discretion.*

¹ Voucher slots are limited and subject to review by the Board of Directors.

- ***If you are a State Employee, you need to submit a copy of your State ID as proof of State employment*** in order to be billed at state employee rate.

TUITION

CCC has a strong commitment to affordability for a range of income levels. We offer a limited number of reduced rate slots to families with total annual income of \$75,000 or below. Families can qualify for a reduced rate after submitting a most recent tax return for income verification, based on gross annual household income (including any child support, if applicable). Proof of income needs to be submitted annually in June to continue receiving reduced rate.

Tuition rates vary between the infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms and there is a state rate available for state employees. Non-state employees have a non-state rate. Child care vouchers from are accepted. The bi-weekly tuition rate is figured to cover costs on a yearly basis. We cannot offer credit for days missed due to illness or vacation. Parents are responsible for notifying us in the event of an income or employment change, so that your tuition can be adjusted accordingly.

SIBLING DISCOUNT: Parents with two or more children in the Center are entitled to a 15% sibling discount off of the older child's (18 months and older) tuition. Sibling discount does not apply to the voucher rate. The preliminary application fee is waived for the sibling(s). However, a 4-week security deposit for each sibling is still required prior to enrollment. A sibling will be given priority in enrollment decisions equivalent to the priority accorded to the children of state employees.

PAYMENTS: Payments are due by 5:30pm every other Friday for the current and upcoming week. There is a tuition lock box for checks in the front office. Parents are encouraged to set up a direct deposit plan or an Electronic Funds Transfer through their bank for tuition payments. We accept personal checks and money orders but cannot accept cash or credit cards. Late tuition payments and bounced checks are disruptive, costly, and make extra work for the staff. A fee of \$25 will be charged for checks received after Friday at 5:30 or for checks returned by the bank. For habitual problems with returned checks, the Center reserves the right to decline personal checks and accept only bank checks or money orders after the second offense.

As a small non-profit childcare center, late tuition payments can have a significant impact on the ability of the Center to meet its financial obligations. Therefore, if a tuition payment is not received by 5:30 pm on Friday, the following steps will be taken:

- **First Notice:** A handwritten reminder notice from the Director will be given to the parents which sets forth the amount of overdue tuition and a fee of \$25 will be assessed on the overdue payment.
- **Second Notice:** If payment (including late fee) is not received within 2 business days of the first notice, a letter will be sent home by the Director to schedule a meeting with parents to set up payment plan arrangements. The meeting must take place no later than three (3) business days after receipt of the second notice. If this meeting does not take place and/or the payment plan established at such meeting is not followed, the Center reserves the right to deny child's attendance until payment is made or to terminate enrollment.

- Third/Final Notice: Upon failure to schedule/attend a meeting to establish a payment plan following receipt of the second notice, a letter will be sent home by the Director stating that the child's enrollment is in jeopardy due to delinquency in tuition payment. Payment (including late fee) must be made within 5 business days or child will be terminated from Center.

In addition, if two or more weeks of tuition are overdue at any time, the Center reserves the right to immediately terminate the child from the Center with or without notice. If a habitual problem of late payment exists, families will be charged an escalating fee of \$30 for their second offense, \$40 for their third offense and \$50 for their fourth offense. Payment must be timely for a period of two months before the late fee drops back to \$25.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

We at the Commonwealth Children's Center strive to provide the best possible experiences for the children in our care. Enrichment programs are an integral part of our curriculum. They promote healthy child development through social, physical, emotional and cognitive growth experiences. The brain is developing rapidly in the early years, so the more varied the experiences, the better the benefits for the child.

There is an annual enrichment fee charge of \$350 per child (\$100 for voucher families). The families are billed annually in September, and the fee is due by October 1 (late payments are subject to \$25 fee). The fee is non-refundable. Families who start CCC mid-year pay a prorated amount.

This fee allows CCC to provide children with programs, such as Knucklebones, Super Soccer Stars, swimming lessons at Boston University, Trailside Museum, MFA art class, Horticultural Society, Music Therapy, and other programming.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

The Center maintains an individual written record for each child, as required by EEC. Children's records are updated at least yearly. The information contained in children's records is protected from unauthorized use and from disclosure to anyone not directly involved in caring for the child without written consent of the child's parents. CCC staff will not distribute, share or discuss information (including photographs or other images) about children and families in their care by any means, whether written or verbal, using any medium, including but not limited to telephone, e-mail or electronic text, without the expressed written permission of the child's parents or pursuant to a court order. Images of children, whether or not they are identified by name, as well as personal information related to children and their families, will not be posted on the publicly accessible portions of social media website or networking website under any circumstances. However, images of children and personal information related to children and families may be shared on the restricted, private portions of such websites only with the express written permission of the child's parents. CCC staff will not discuss children and families in their care with anyone not directly involved in caring for the child, including but not limited to other parents in the program, and will not distribute copies of information in a child's record without the expressed written permission of the parents or pursuant to a court order.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The Commonwealth Children's Center offers several advantages to parents by being an on-site center. As a private, non-profit center founded by parents and not directly subsidized by the state, your involvement is essential in making our program work. We ask each of you to be a part of our community and contribute to your child's school experience. All families are expected to contribute financially and with their time. CCC is governed by a parent-run board consisting of fourteen voting members (twelve parents, one staff representative and the Executive Director), which meets a minimum of four times a year to decide on the operating budget and vote on policies/procedures deemed to be in the best interests of the CCC Community. The CCC parents (one vote per family) elect the new board each October.

Each family enrolled at the Center will be expected to participate in volunteering opportunities and fundraising efforts. . Other opportunities may include, but are not limited to: volunteering to be a room parent, selling raffle tickets or other items, accompanying the children on field trips, attending Parent Night and Parent Lunches or Workshops, serving on a committee, volunteering in their child's room, purchasing an item on a classroom "wish list". For other opportunities, please see your child's teachers as well as the Executive Director or Assistant Director.

Aside from the above efforts, on a daily basis, parents are expected to:

- *Read posted notices
- *Bring home their child's work
- *Check their mailboxes
- *Communicate with teachers and Director

ROOM PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

At CCC each classroom has a room parent who acts as a communication/fundraising liaison/facilitator, helping to bring each family's tradition to their child's classroom. The designated room parent will receive email addresses of all the parents in the classroom. As needed, the room parent will forward information to each family regarding parent help for field trips, social gatherings, wish list items or information regarding center wide events, such as fundraising efforts, social gatherings, or board communications. The room parent will receive information from the classroom teachers, the administrative assistant, and the executive director.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

CCC has an open door policy. We encourage unannounced visits by parents and caregivers to the program and/or to their child's room at any time while their child is present. For the safety of all children, we do request that you make your presence known to the person in charge.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

In case of inclement weather, please call [617-727-4802 ext.10](tel:617-727-4802) for notification of CCC delayed opening or early dismissal. This message will be recorded by 6:30 am.

Although our emergency closings will continue to be directly linked to the release of non-essential State Employees, it is reasonable for you to expect that if Boston Public Schools (BPS) are closed for the day, then there is a high likelihood that CCC will experience a two-hour delay.

This means that if you learn the night before that BPS has cancelled school, you can anticipate *at least* a two-hour delay (accepting children at 10:15 AM) that will allow staff adequate time to safely commute to work. It is also possible that the Center will close for the entire day, at the discretion of the Executive Director. Please call the above noted phone number to find out if CCC has a two-hour delay or has closed for the entire day.

If the Governor releases non-essential State employees the morning of the storm, the Center will be closed for the entire day.

EMERGENCY CLOSING: If circumstances arise that jeopardize the health and safety of the children (e.g., loss of power, water, heat/air conditioning, a national Threat Advisory) the Center may close at the discretion of the Executive Director, the building supervisor, or Board of Directors. If this occurs, parents will be notified by telephone and will be required to pick up their child(ren) immediately.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure: In the case of fire, natural disaster, or other situation (Chemical spill, Bomb threat) where the children need to be removed from the Center, the children will be brought to:

20 Somerset Street, Suffolk University Building, First Floor Lobby

- The Seedlings room exits through the Seedlings/Buds door. *Assistant Director helps the infant room evacuate.* Evacuation cribs are labeled.
- The Sprouts room and Blossoms I room exit through the main door near the center library. *Executive Director helps the young toddler and preschool rooms evacuate.*
- The Buds room exits through the Seedlings/Buds door. *Assistant Director helps the older toddler room evacuate.*
- The Blossoms II room exits through the back door near the staff room. *Executive Director helps the preschool room evacuate.*

Executive Director and/or Assistant Director sweeps the center during evacuations.

- CCC proceeds out the front of the McCormack building down the ramp located on the left side of the McCormack building towards 20 Somerset Street.
- Once the children have reached the lobby, parents will be called to come to the evacuation site.
- The Executive Director will change her message to notify parents of the evacuation. The number to call is 617-727-4802 x10.
- If the Center is not reopened, children will be released to authorized emergency release contacts noted in writing on the emergency contact cards, if a parent is not able to pick up.

- Teachers will carry attendance sheets, evacuation and first aid backpacks. Attendance sheets must be completed daily and accurately reflect the children present daily in each classroom.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Parents are responsible for their children’s transportation to and from the Center for drop off and pick up. CCC is conveniently located near several MBTA bus stops and train stations. Parents may also apply for a parking pass which allows for limited parking outside the Center.

DAILY ROUTINES OF THE CLASSROOMS

We strongly encourage all parents to have their children arrive at the Center by 9:30am and attend regularly to receive the full benefits of the program. We respectfully request that if your child will be arriving past this time (or if your child will be absent for any reason) that you call and notify your child’s classroom teachers at the earliest opportunity. This allows teachers to plan for morning activities and fieldtrips.

GOALS – INFANTS: 3 MONTHS – (13-15) MONTHS

- 1) To care for infants in a warm, affectionate way that lets each child know that s/he is a special person, including the physical affection and cuddling that is so important at this stage of development.
- 2) To encourage the development of trust between infant and caregiver.
- 3) To meet each child's emotional and physical needs.
- 4) To provide opportunities for exploring, learning, and social interaction through a variety of daily activities.
- 5) To prepare activities to stimulate the senses recognizing that infants learn through the use of their senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell.
- 6) To care for children in small groups, so as to prevent over-stimulation and provide opportunities for 1 to 1 interaction between children and staff.
- 7) To provide opportunities for the use of large and small motor skills and development.
- 8) To establish awareness among staff to always provide for a safe environment.
- 9) To provide a certain consistency between Center care and home care practices that will be most beneficial to the infant and will offer the parents an opportunity to influence the kind of care their child receives. It is recognized, however, that infants may naturally fall into a different schedule and have different needs once in group care.

INFANT (SEEDLINGS) ROOM DAILY ROUTINE:

8:15 - 9:30	Greet children and families, morning snack
9:30 - 10:00	*Diapers and bottles, clean-up, free play/ individual attention
10:00-11:00	Morning nap
11:00-12:00	Wake up, *diapers, free play, indoor/outdoor time
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 3:00	Clean-up, quiet time, individual attention, afternoon nap, *diapers
3:00 - 4:00	Wake up, *diapers, PM snack, clean-up, free play
4:00 - 5:00	Indoor activities/outdoor play, *diapers

5:00 - 5:30 Prepare infants for leaving, general clean up, saying good-bye

*Diapering is done as needed.

GOALS → TODDLERS: (13-15) MONTHS - 3 YEARS

CCC has two *different* Toddler Rooms. Although both rooms are licensed for 13 months-2.9 years, we do our best to group children according to their own developmental level. Our Sprouts room generally consists of children aged fifteen months to two years, whereas our Buds room generally consists of children aged two to three years. The design of the classroom and curriculum in the Sprouts room allows children to explore child-centered activities with close teacher guidance. The design and the curriculum of the Buds classroom allows children to explore child-centered activities in the forms of “stations” (i.e., science table, art center, math table, etc.) with teacher direction as needed. Both rooms strive to provide a warm and nurturing environment, where children are encouraged to explore and discover.

Our curriculum provides developmentally appropriate activities and materials to enhance each child’s growth and development based upon their interests and individual curriculum goals. Books, pictures, and songs are used to stimulate language and cognitive development. Physical development is stimulated with gross motor activities, manipulatives and outdoor play. Dramatic play and experiences with different art mediums are provided to foster creative expression. Many different sensory opportunities are offered to stimulate and develop each child’s senses.

One of our main goals in both toddler rooms is to foster a sense of self-esteem and autonomy. Children are given opportunities to develop self-help skills, therefore giving them a feeling of accomplishment. Each child is treated and respected as an individual. Children’s behavior is responded to in a positive manner. We believe in redirection and positive, specific praise as the way to encourage self-control.

SPROUTS and BUDS ROOM DAILY ROUTINE:

8:15 - 9:15	Arrival / Free-play
9:15 - 9:45	Clean-up / *Diapering, Bathrooms / Handwashing
9:45 - 10:00	Circle (stories and songs) / Snack
10:00-10:45	Outside Time
10:45-11:30	Activities (“Areas” for Buds) / Clean-up
11:30-12:15	Songs / Lunch
12:15-1:00	*Diapering, Bathrooms / Handwashing / Quiet Time
1:00 -3:00	Rest Time
3:00 - 4:00	Wake-up / *Diapering, Bathrooms / Handwashing / Snack
4:15 - 5:00	Activities (“Areas” for Buds) / Free-Play / Clean-up / Outside Time
5:00 - 5:30	Circle (stories and songs) / Quiet Time Activity / Pick-up

*Diapering checked or changed every two hours/toileting as needed.

GOALS → PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN READINESS: 3 - 5 YEARS

1) To meet each child's physical needs while encouraging independence in self-care.

- 2) To provide an atmosphere in which children have respect for others.
- 3) To establish respect for the equipment and materials.
- 4) To provide a relaxed, loving, and calm atmosphere where self-concept is enhanced, independence and choices are encouraged, and self-discipline is gained in an environment where s/he knows the limits and expectations.
- 5) To provide a wide variety of activities, within a routine, where cooperative play is encouraged. These activities should be drawn from the curricula areas of: art, math, science, cooking, music and movement, large muscle, social studies, practical life, dramatic play, language arts, and manipulative activities.
- 6) To develop in the child an active curiosity about the world in which s/he lives and an enthusiasm for learning which stimulates exploratory behavior and creativity.
- 7) To develop in each child an appreciation for beauty and nature.
- 8) To provide ample opportunity for the use of large motor skills and coordination through physically active play either indoors or outdoors.
- 9) To be supportive of parents encouraging involvement, and open and honest communication, while using tact and discretion.

PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN READINESS (BLOSSOMS I and BLOSSOMS II) DAILY ROUTINE:

8:15 - 9:15	Arrival / Free-Play
9:15 - 9:40	Clean-up / *Bathrooms / Handwashing
9:40 – 11:00	Small Groups: Focused Areas, Special Project, Morning Meeting, Scheduled Enrichment (sharing stories, songs, gross motor)
11:00-12:00	Outside Time
12:00-1:00	Handwashing / Lunch / *Bathrooms / **Brushing Teeth
1:00-1:30	Areas / Story / Quiet Time
1:30-3:30	Rest Time
3:00 – 4:00	Wake up / *Bathrooms / Handwashing / Snack / Journals / Areas
4:00-5:00	Outside Time
5:00-5:30	Afternoon Circle / Clean-up / Pick-up

*Children are, as always, allowed to use the bathroom facilities as needed. Toilet training is not a prerequisite for enrollment in the preschool room.

**Teachers will monitor and assist the children in brushing their teeth after lunch. Depending on a particular day's activities, children may brush their teeth earlier or later in the day.

PLAN FOR CLASSROOM AND PROGRAM TRANSITIONS

Children transition from one classroom to the next as a group each September. Transitions may occur at other times of the year at the Director's discretion. Educators assist children with the transition in a manner consistent with each child's ability to understand. This may involve discussion and visits to the new classroom. With parental permission, the child's current educators share information with the child's new educators, whether the transition is from one classroom to another or from CCC to another setting. Educators and

parents also collaborate and share information with each other through orientation meetings. Families new to the Center receive individual orientations prior to their child's transition.

DIAPERING AND TOILETING

Our philosophy when it comes to toilet training is that each child learns at his/her own readiness. This is a big step in a child's development, so it is important to remember not to push your child. In most instances, your child will give you clues indicating that s/he is ready. Timetables you may have read are guidelines, but remember that all children are individuals. However, we do recommend that children be working on toilet training when entering preschool.

Staff members follow Level 4 QRIS sanitary practices while diapering and toilet training. Children are diapered on a changing table that is covered with disposable paper liner. If a child is wet the staff members are able to change the child on the floor while the child is standing, following Level 4 QRIS standards which are posted above each changing table.

Diaper changes/checks and toileting (including toilet training) take place every two hours or when the child awakens, if the child is dry the child is checked again in half an hour. Each diaper change must be noted on the daily sheet. If a child has an accident that is toilet training/trained, the child must be changed on the changing table if the child has a bowel movement. A designated area is provided for diapering and toileting. Parents are responsible for providing a supply of disposable diapers, wipes, powder and any ointment that their child(ren) uses. Parents may bring cloth diapers along with their own diaper pail.

SEPARATION ISSUES

Separating for both parents and children is a difficult adjustment and the staff sympathizes with you. During the first few weeks, both you and your child may experience some separation anxiety. We will work with each individual family to come up with a plan to help both you and your child during this time of transition.

Children may also experience separation problems during difficult times of the year, due to changing family situations or transitions of staff at school. This is not something to be overly concerned about. Again we will work with families to help ease the situation for all. Please be patient, all children adjust differently. We welcome you to call and check in during the day, but do want to reassure you that children usually do become happily involved in play within a short time after a parent leaves. (Long, drawn-out, repetitive good-byes are ultimately more difficult for all. However, we never recommend that parents sneak out without saying good-bye to avoid an upset). Staff should be used as partners and resources in discovering a comfortable positive way to say good-bye if this is a difficult time.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

- Diapers and wipes
- Ointment (if used at home)
- Sunscreen (for early spring and summer months; CCC provides sunscreen with your consent)
- Sippy cup or bottle (if used at home)
- Lunch brought in an insulated bag with ice pack properly labeled with your child's name and placed in child's cubby upon arrival at school. All lunch containers and lids must be labeled.

- Breast milk must be dated and labeled with the child's first and last name (Teachers double-check with a co-worker to ensure that the correct breast milk is served to the correct child each time)
- A few changes of clothing, including socks/shoes (weather appropriate)
- Crib sheets (compact crib size, infants only)
- Sleepsack (for infants) Blanket (for toddlers and preschoolers) labeled with child's name
- Soft, small cuddly animal for nap ** (soft objects in cribs are not permitted)
- Hats, mittens, ski pants and boots should be worn in the winter months, as we will be going outside for part of each day

**Please do not bring in other toys from home. We have a good supply of toys for the children and toys from home are difficult to share and risk getting lost or broken. Toys that do come from home are kept in the child's cubby during the day. Books from home are welcomed items to share with others. We ask that no toys or books that represent violence, superheroes or other commercial promotions be brought to the Center. These may promote negative attitudes and behaviors that we discourage. If you are in doubt, please check with the Director.

CLOTHING

Two full changes of your child's clothing should be kept in his/her cubby at all times. Please check your child's extra set of clothing periodically to make sure the clothes are sized correctly and seasonally appropriate. We recommend comfortable, casual clothing, which you would not worry about keeping in perfect condition. Children often times get their clothing "messy" as they experiment with new materials each day.

We have found that rubber soled footwear gives the best traction on the linoleum floors and helps in avoiding unnecessary falls and accidents. Closed-toe shoes are the safest for walks and on our playground. Outdoor activities are a part of each classroom's daily schedule throughout the year. Please be sure that your child comes to school prepared for outside play each day, even in the winter months. Any outerwear or clothing brought into the Center should be labeled with your child's full name.

ROUTINES AND EVENTS IN THE CENTER

ATTENDANCE: The Center is open from 8:15am to 5:30pm during the week. It is important for your child to arrive by 9:30am and attend regularly to gain the full benefits of the program and assure stability and consistency in the classroom and for other children. Please contact the Center by 9:00 a.m.(or at the earliest opportunity) if your child will be unable to attend. The program at CCC is designed so that there is a flexible drop off time from 8:15 to 9:15am each morning. It is important that all children arrive by 9:30am at the very latest, so that the classroom activities can begin on schedule. If you must be late, please call and let us know in advance when your child will be arriving. If you arrive late without notifying a teacher and your child's classroom is not in the Center, it is your responsibility to either meet the class where they are or wait in your child's room with your child until the class returns.

RELEASE AUTHORIZATION: Any person picking up your child must be authorized to do so by you in writing, and listed on the Child Release Form in your child's file. When someone else will be picking up your child, you must let us know by signing the Child Pick Up Authorization Form on the Parents Bulletin Board and by telling or calling your child's teacher. Please be sure that the name of the person you authorize on the sign up sheet also

appears on your child's release form. Please inform the person who picks up your child that the Center will ask them for picture identification before releasing the child to them.

Please inform your child's classroom teachers, the Executive Director, and the Assistant Director if your family has a court-ordered custody agreement. We ask that you provide all necessary legal documents explaining the drop-off, visitation, and pick-up arrangements that we will need to help monitor while your child is in our care. Parents and guardians are also required to update the teachers, Executive Director, and Assistant Director of any changes to the arrangements.

Parents and guardians must appear to be of sound mind and judgement when picking up their child. Adults who arrive for pick-up and appear to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances poses a direct threat to our children and our school environment. Building security will be notified immediately of any parent or guardian who appears to be unable to safely pick-up their child. The child will remain in our care with a member of security until one of the adults listed on the child's emergency pick-up list arrives. CCC will notify the Department of Children and Families and will follow-up with a report to the Department of Early Education and Care.

DROP OFF: When dropping your child off, accompany him/her all the way into the classroom, assist your child with their classroom morning routines, and make some contact with a teacher. Making contact with his/her teacher ensures that we are aware that your child is accounted for and in our care for the day. Additionally, this helps your child transition into the classroom and gives the teacher an opportunity to check in about your family's recent experiences and to remind you about the activities planned for the day.

PICK-UP: The Center closes at 5:30pm. Children should be regularly picked up any time after 4:30pm. Notify your child's teacher if you will be picking up early. Please finalize all cell phone conversations prior to entering your child's classroom so that you may observe or join your child in their learning environment and make contact the teacher before you leave. This is also the opportunity to have a quick check-in with the teacher about your child's day. Once contact is made, the child is under the parent/guardian's supervision, yet is still expected to follow their classroom's rules and safety procedures.

Please allow ample time for this transition. Sometimes your child may be in the middle of an activity when you arrive. It often helps things go more smoothly if you give him/her a moment or two to finish up. We ask that the children put away what they are doing before they leave the classroom. If you are in a hurry, let us, and your child, know and we can help you in moving things along. Once you've made contact with your child we will assume that s/he is in your care. Make sure that your child says good-bye and that a staff member knows they are leaving with you and signs them out.

LATE PICK-UP: The Center closes at 5:30pm. In order to ensure that our program ends in a predictable way for both teachers and children, we ask that you respect the closing time. Any parent that arrives after 5:30pm is considered late, even if they have notified us by telephone. Parents will sign a late arrival form with the time noted and the parents will then receive a late fee notice on their next tuition statement. Late fee charges are as follows: \$5.00 for each five minutes or any part thereof. *We know that it is nice for parents to talk and*

“catch-up” with one another at the end of the day; however, if it is 5:30pm we ask that you respect that the Center is closed and move your conversation to the lobby of the building. If you are in the Center past 5:30pm, the Center reserves the right to charge you a late fee as outlined below.

Any family that is late more than two times in a thirty-day period will be charged an escalating fee i.e., \$10.00 per five minutes for the third offense, \$15.00 per five minutes for the fourth offense, etc. The escalating fee structure will stay in place for a thirty (30) day period from the date of the third offense. A family will return to the \$5.00 per five minutes after a thirty-day period free of any late offense. If a late fee has not been paid after a thirty-day period, the late fee amount will be deducted from the family's security deposit classroom. Families with two or more children will be charged a late fee per child. *If we deduct money from the security deposit, we expect that the deposit will be replenished in full.

If a child has not been picked up by 5:40pm and the parent has not called, a telephone call will be made to the parent or pick up person. If s/he cannot be reached at home, school, or work, the emergency numbers will be called and arrangements will be made to have the child picked up at the Center.

SAFETY: CCC is located in a busy, public building. For the safety of your child(ren) and others, it is important that your child(ren) walks with you when going to and from Commonwealth Children's Center. Parents should not allow their child(ren) to run through the lobby of the McCormack Building. The Center also has a combination lock on each of our entrances. The combinations to these locks are to be given to Center Staff and parents only. The combinations to these two locks will change periodically. Please do not allow your child to play with the buttons as the locks are expensive to replace.

BIRTHDAYS: Parents who would like to have their child's birthday celebrated at the Center should arrange it with their classroom teacher at least one week in advance. We recommend a special snack, and discourage overly elaborate celebrations that are not available to all. A gift of a book or small item to the Center in your child's honor is a nice alternative to an elaborate party. Please provide birthday snack ingredients one week ahead of the celebration allowing for parents of children with severe allergies notice.

NAPTIME: In keeping with the Department of Early Education and Care licensing regulations, CCC provides for a rest time each day. Beginning after lunch, each child is set up with his/her own cot or mat and has one and a half to two hours of rest. Teachers rub children's backs to help them fall asleep. In our experience, we have found that most children do sleep after their active mornings at the Center. Children who do not fall asleep are expected to stay on the cots and rest quietly with the group for a 45 minute time span. After 45 minutes, your child's cot is removed and s/he may engage in quiet activities.

A blanket and a soft cuddly toy from home (both labeled with child's name) (not for infants) can help your child settle into the nap routine daily. Parents are responsible for seeing that these are washed on a weekly basis.

Infants nap on their own individual schedule. To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), all infants are put to sleep on their backs in cribs. No toys, blankets or stuffed animals are placed in infants' cribs and crib bumpers are not permitted. Sleeping children are not allowed to be left in carriages or car seats once inside the classroom and must be transferred to their designated crib. Children may not sleep with bibs, hoods or any strings attached to garments.

Please review the following article which is available in each classroom and online at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/5/1030>

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice during the year for Toddlers and Preschoolers and every three months for infants. Additional conferences with your child's teachers or the Director can be requested throughout the year. Each conference allows staff and parents an opportunity to exchange information and insight about an individual child in a manner more in-depth than the day-to-day communications. During these meetings, teachers will share the child's Family Conference Form with parents. The form is made up of daily observations and provides developmental goals in a variety of areas. For infants and children with disabilities, staff will complete a written observational profile every three months. Parents, in turn, are encouraged to discuss any areas of their concern and to share any relevant information about their child's life at home and/or school. The information will only be released with parental permission. A copy of the Family Conference Form will be kept in the child's file. These files are confidential, but can be immediately available to the child's parent, administrators and teaching staff with parental consent, and to regulatory authorities. Parents are asked to make every effort to keep appointments once scheduled.

Parents who have questions or concerns regarding their child or activities in the classroom should feel free to talk with the teacher at their earliest convenience. Parents should also feel free to talk with the Director about any matter that concerns them at the Center. If a parent has an issue/concern that the Director cannot solve, or has an issue/concern with the Director, s/he may send it to the Board. The Board will review the issue and refer it to the Executive Committee or a Special Committee, as appropriate, which will try to resolve the issue.

PARENT EDUCATION

The Center and staff will sponsor and/or participate in several workshops throughout the year to support parents in areas of concern. We will also host a Potluck on the Playground each summer to give families an opportunity to connect with each other and the staff. The Center also will regularly post useful information on our resource board. The Center maintains a Parent Resource Library of current literature in child development, health, mental health, parenting, activities for children, and many more topics! Parents may check out these materials for use at home. We ask that you please return the materials you check out in a timely manner for the next person.

HEALTH

CCC has a Health Care Policy available in our foyer for parent review. Each classroom has a copy of this policy in their first aid backpack.

Staff at the Center will take every precaution to minimize the spread of infection among the children at the Center by practicing infection control procedures. If your child is sick and will not be attending the Center on a particular day, please contact us by 9:00 A.M. Your child should not come to school:

- within 24 hours of a fever of, or over, 100.4 F

- if s/he has had 2 cases of diarrhea in a 24 hr. period
- with throat infection or severe cough
- within 24 hours of vomiting
- with an undiagnosed or contagious rash
- with red, infected eyes
- with a severe cold
- any time she/he cannot fully participate in classroom and/or outdoor activities.

If you suspect that your child is ill or contagious, please do not jeopardize the health of others by sending your child to school. Children who are ill often infect other children and staff. We realize it is very difficult for working parents to take time off from work when children are sick, but please remember CCC is not a sick child care program. It is important that each family make plans in advance on how they will handle their child(ren)'s sick days.

In the event that your child develops any of the symptoms listed above while at school or that you have informed us that your child is underimmunized and may be in greater risk because of the above symptoms, we will call you to come and take your child home. Children who become sick at the Center may rest in their classroom while waiting for their parent. The care received will be based on the type of sickness and anticipated arrival of the parent and will include any type of first aid procedure needed. If your child seems only slightly uncomfortable and is not contagious, we may call and simply ask that you come check on him/her. We do not recommend that sick children be taken back to offices. If your child is well enough to come to school, your child should be able to participate in outdoor activities.

INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES:

- Rashes - Skin rashes may have a variety of causes and can appear on any part of the body and face. Any child with an undiagnosed rash cannot attend the Center.
- Sore Throat/Strep - The symptoms of this are usually: a fever, swollen neck glands, and a red, very sore throat. Your child can return to the Center after being on an antibiotic for at least twenty-four (24) hours.
- A.I.D.S./H.I.V. - Commonwealth Children's Center follows the Massachusetts medical policy for children with A.I.D.S./H.I.V.
- Allergies - If your child has some type of allergy, no matter how mild, please let the Center know as soon as possible.
- Colds & Coughs - If your child has a fever and/or a congested productive cough, please keep your child at home until s/he feels better and symptoms are gone.
- Conjunctivitis - This illness is extremely contagious and can spread within the Center very quickly, if not caught on time. The symptoms are often red, scratchy, watery eyes and a yellowish discharge coming out of the eye. A child can return to the Center twenty four (24) hours after the first application of the antibiotic.
- Chicken Pox/Mumps/Measles - These are all very contagious illnesses. If you think that your child was exposed outside of the Center, let us know so that we can watch for signs. Please do not return your child(ren) to the Center with these illnesses unless they are past the contagious stage and are feeling okay.

- Ear Infections - If your child suffers from ear infections or has a tube in his/her ear, please let the Center know. If your child does come down with an ear infection, please keep your child at home until s/he is feeling better and is able to return to the Center.
- Influenza - The symptoms are: listlessness, rubbing eyes, poor appetite, trouble sleeping, fever, aches and upper respiratory congestion. Children with influenza should not be brought into the Center because it is a highly contagious illness.
- Head Lice - A child with head lice may return to the Center when free of all nits or scabies and free of all mites. Children with head lice should not be brought into the Center because it is highly contagious. The child may return after being evaluated by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner, and it has been determined that he/she is considered to pose no risk to the other children. Nevertheless, the Center may make the final decision concerning the inclusion or exclusion of the child.

In general, parents will be notified in writing if there are two or more confirmed cases of an infectious disease in the Center. Exceptions will be made in those cases where one diagnosed case might warrant notification or when notification is prohibited. The administration will use sample letters from the Department of Public Health and Child Care Book as a guide when notifying parents. The Center will ask a parent who calls in sick for their child if there is a possibility that the child could have a case of the disease in question. We will request that parents notify their pediatrician of the child's sickness and may ask for a note from the pediatrician before the child returns to the Center.

PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE CONSULTANT: The Director and Staff at the Center consult regularly with our health care consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Pinsky from MGH, (617) 724-5600, regarding general issues and issues pertaining to specific children at the Center. Such consultations will be handled with the strictest confidence.

MEDICATION: CCC strictly adheres to the Department of Early Education and Care regulations dictating the administration of medication in child care centers. Staff can administer only doctor prescribed medication with a prescription label bearing the child's name, and cannot administer the first dose of any medication. Parents must fill out a medical form to authorize staff to administer such medication. A written record of all medication administered to a child will be kept and stored in the child's file. All medication must be handed directly to a staff person. Medication will NEVER be left in the child's cubby. Emergency medications such as Epi-Pens, asthma inhalers, Diastat, etc are stored in medication bags that are kept with the First Aid bag in the child's classroom. The medication bags are labeled with the child's name, photograph, medication dosage and instructions. Medications that need to be refrigerated are kept in our Medication Refrigerator located in the front lobby. After the course of medication has ended, staff will return any unused medication to the parent. Tylenol will only be administered to children by a designated staff member if there is a prescription from the doctor. Parents may come to the Center and administer non-prescription medication to their child themselves if necessary.

Aspirin and non-prescription cough syrup may not be administered to the children by the staff unless prescribed by a physician. They will NOT be left in children's cubbies. Parents who wish to have their child receive medication of this kind have the option of dropping by themselves during the day.

The Center may ask to contact your pediatrician for prolonged prescriptions, if we observe adverse effects from medication, or to consult on a potentially dangerous condition.

Topical preparations (such as diaper cream or sunscreen) can be administered to children as deemed necessary by staff as long as a written parental permission is given.

Educators receive Medication Administration Training each year, which includes that each staff person must wash his or her hands before and after administering medication. Training also includes the “5 Rights of Medication” (right child, right medication, right time, right dose, and right route/method). Our Health Care Consultant provides annual training on How and When to Administer an Epi-Pen as well as training on how to use inhalers. If there is a child enrolled in our program that has another type of medical condition, our Health Care Consultant will also conduct an annual training on it for as long as the child is in our program. CCC is a full-time childcare program and is required to have a person on site who is trained in each of the children’s medical conditions.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTH CARE PLANS (IHCPs): Any child with a chronic health condition and/or who receives medication on an ongoing or as-needed basis (Example asthma, seizures, allergies, etc.), must have an Individual Health Care Plan. The plan, which is signed by both parent and doctor and renewed annually, must include the condition, its symptoms, medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, potential side effects of treatment, and potential consequences to the child’s health if treatment is not administered. When a child has an IHCP, the parents help train the staff in its implementation while our Health Care Consultant provides a more formal training on the medical condition, symptoms, treatment, and possible side effects.

PHYSICALS: It is mandatory that your child have a complete physical and up-to-date immunizations (including Varicella) before starting school or within one month of admittance. CCC requires a written statement signed by a physician stating that the child had a complete physical exam (including immunizations), or a letter written by the child’s parents stating that they object to such examinations on the grounds that it conflicts with their religious beliefs. This information needs to be updated annually while the child is enrolled at the Center.

LEAD SCREENING: Pursuant to the Department of Public Health regulations (105 CMR 460.050 (C) Regular Screening of Children for Lead Poisoning), “all children shall be screened once between the ages of nine months and 12 months, and again at ages two and three. In addition, children who live in one of the cities and towns at high risk for childhood lead poisoning, as determined by the State Program and distributed to clinicians and the public, shall be screened at age four”. Parents are required to provide a signed note from the doctor with the results of the lead screening.

PARENTS AND STAFF: CCC IS NUT-FREE

As childcare providers and early childhood educators, we take on the awesome daily responsibility of creating a healthy, safe, and enriching environment for every child enrolled at CCC. Food allergies are on the rise and many daycare centers have made their centers nut free to protect their children and staff. Nut allergies tend to be associated with a severe allergic reaction, putting children at risk for anaphylaxis, which is potentially life-threatening. In a group care situation such as CCC where children are encouraged to participate in age-appropriate eating and social activities, protecting children from allergens can prove challenging.



To keep children with food allergies safe, CCC has adopted certain preventive measures including:

- posting food allergies prominently in the classrooms and on the eating tables;
- training our Teaching Staff to teach the children to not share food at mealtimes;
- ensuring that the children wash their hands and faces after eating; and
- training all teachers how to administer an Epi-Pen.

Effective April 30, 2007 CCC is nut-free.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

While we do not expect you (or the CCC staff) to know all of the ingredients packed into your child's lunch (or snacks stored in your child's stroller, coat pockets or other places in addition to the lunch pack), please refrain from bringing to CCC food products commonly known to contain nuts of any kind. This will minimize the risk that children will share with a child with a nut allergy potentially harmful lunch items or snacks before, during or after school.

Examples of foods that contain nuts include peanut butter (or other nut-based butter) sandwiches, bags of nuts and granola bars, candies and some breads or muffins. Some suggested nut-free alternatives are attached to this ALERT. By no means is this list comprehensive.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU MISTAKENLY PACK A LUNCH WITH NUTS?

We understand that there will be times when you (or someone caring for your child) accidentally packs in your child's lunch a peanut butter sandwich or other food item that obviously contains nuts. If your child is in the same classroom as a child with a nut allergy, you will be called and you or your emergency contact will work with the staff to find a healthy alternative for your child. If your child is not in the same classroom as a child with a nut allergy, your child will be allowed to eat his/her lunch and a reminder that CCC is nut-free will be sent home to you.

NUTRITION

How your children eat today will have a striking impact on their health throughout adolescence and adulthood. Consuming nutritious foods helps children grow, develop, do well academically and feel good about themselves. Good nutrition also helps prevent child and teen issues such as eating disorders, obesity, dental cavities and iron-deficiency anemia. CCC staff follows the best practices to ensure that children develop healthy eating habits that lay the foundation for a healthier more fulfilling life. Here are some of the views that CCC supports with regards to nutrition:

- The "clean plate" principle encourages children to distrust their bodies' messages and results in refusing food and eating less
- Forcing a child to eat something will cause them to hate it

- Children have smaller stomachs and eat less; offer 6 mini meals per day, so they learn to eat only when they're hungry, let them ask for more
- Offer 3-4 healthy food choices at each meal – research shows that children will choose a healthy diet when exposed to different healthy foods
- Children's bodies tend to get the nutrients they need if left to own control
- Keep exposing kids to the right foods – it takes a minimum of 10-15 exposures before kids willingly eat new things
- Food is never to be used to bargain or reward

Please visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

As childcare providers and early childhood educators, we take on the daily responsibility of creating a healthy, safe, and enriching environment for every child enrolled at CCC. To maintain this safe environment we are asking that if parents want their child's food to be served warm, to please pack it in a thermos container ready to be consumed, as heating food in plastic using a microwave may not be safe.* You may also choose for us to transfer your child's food to a paper plate for heating. Our QRIS level 4 prohibits the use of glass in the classroom, therefore, food may not be sent to school in glass containers.**

We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and thank you for helping us keep every child at CCC safe and healthy!

* This will comply with the emerging NAEYC Criterion 5.B.10 (e) "no infant foods are warmed in a microwave oven," and address the concern that microwaving food in plastic containers may not be safe.

** QRIS Level 4 Standards "Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments" prohibit using glass in the classroom.

Parents are responsible for providing their children with lunches for school. The Center provides milk with lunch, as well as water and two nutritious snacks per day. Please do not allow your child to bring gum, candy, or any food that is not part of their lunch into the Center. Breakfast should be eaten before children arrive and *should not be* brought with them into the Center. Please pack food in a thermos container if you would like it served warm. Below are some ideas for nutritious, easy lunches:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---|
| -Rice cakes with toppings | -Pastas | -Turkey/Tuna wraps |
| -Yogurt/Cottage Cheese | -Cereals | -Meat in bite size portions |
| -Soy Butter and Jelly Sandwich | -Fruit | -Jell-O/pudding |
| -Egg Salad or Tuna Sandwich | -Cheese | -Soups |
| -Bagel with toppings | -Tofu | -Leftovers: pizza, casseroles, spaghetti, chicken, etc. |
| -Beans | -Vegetables | |

Please DO NOT send in the following:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| -Candy | -Lollipops | -Other items high in sugar or sodium |
| -Cough drops | -Gum | -Any nut products |
| -Soda or sugary drinks of any kind | -Chips | |

In addition, NAEYC criterion 5.B.14 states that children under **four** years old are not to be offered the following foods:

- hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds)
- hard pretzels
- whole grapes
- meat larger than can be swallowed whole
- raw peas
- chunks of raw carrots
- popcorn

You and your child may occasionally enjoy going outside of the Center for lunchtime. If you do decide to take advantage of this option, please make sure that the teachers know your plan ahead of time. Please have your child back in his/her classroom by 1:00 P.M. You are also invited to arrange with the classroom teacher to join the class for lunch.

FAMILY EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Each family is asked to maintain a minimum of three updated emergency contact people (other than parents), within a 20 mile radius, and a Medical Release Form. It is important that we have an emergency number for you at all times. If you will be away, please let the staff know and leave a number at your work place where you can be reached. If your work or home phone number changes, it is essential that you notify the Center immediately.

Should an emergency arise where your child requires medical attention, you will be notified at the number you have given us. If we are unable to reach you, one, or all of the emergency contact people you have designated will be contacted. In an emergency necessitating immediate medical attention, children will be taken by ambulance to Massachusetts General Hospital.

Should a child be injured beyond just a simple bump or scrape, and it is not a medical emergency, it is the Center's policy to notify the parents so that they can come and check their child. Injuries requiring treatment of any kind will be followed up by the filling out and filing of an Injury Report on the incident. This injury report will be placed in a child's main file. Parents will be given a copy of each injury report.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Teachers and Directors are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, that staff person will immediately report the suspicion to the Director or designee. A call is then made to the Department of Social Services to file a 51-A. Written documentation will be recorded by team members suspecting the abuse and will be forwarded to DCF and will also be confidentially kept in the child's main file at the Center. CCC will cooperate with involved agencies (DCF and EEC) in all investigations of abuse and neglect.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY: It is the Center's foremost goal to maximize the growth and development of the children, to protect the group and individuals within each classroom and to foster positive interpersonal relationships among children, parents, staff, and any visitors of the Center. Staff will set reasonable and positive expectations for

the children, offer a variety of choices, and will provide children with an opportunity to verbalize their wants, needs, and feelings safely and appropriately. Staff encourages children to develop self-esteem and self-control through modeling appropriate behaviors and using conflict resolution techniques.

We strictly 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 including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;
 - depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence;
 - disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting;
 - confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for more than 20 minutes throughout an eight hour day in lieu of supervision; and
 - EEC prohibits excessive time-out; CCC prohibits any time-out.

BEHAVIOR RESPONSE ACTION: CCC may respond with removal, referral, or termination to repeated, regular incidences of unsafe or inappropriate behavior, or to an isolated, extreme incident that jeopardizes the safety of the child, his/her peers, or staff members. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following: excessive biting, hitting, kicking, spitting, obscene language and/or gestures, running from the classroom/street without teacher supervision, throwing objects, self-injurious behaviors, and climbing on furniture. In case of immediate *removal* of the child from the Center for the day, staff will call parents to notify them of the incident(s) and ask that they come pick up their child. CCC may also *refer* the child and family to appropriate services (see “Referral” section below), or *terminate* the child’s enrollment (see “Criteria and Procedure)

REFERRAL SERVICES

In a case where it is determined that a child may be in need of services through appropriate social, mental health, educational and/or medical services, the following may be implemented to assist the child:

- 1) Teachers and/or Director will observe and record behavior of child in his/her classroom.
- 2) Teachers will meet with Director to discuss concerns and will brainstorm ideas to develop a plan of action to help meet the child’s individual needs.
- 3) Either classroom teachers or Director will schedule a team meeting with parents to discuss concerns within one school week, at which time the Director will provide a letter to the parents outlining the reasons for the recommendation for a referral with a list of relevant community resources/agencies.
- 4) At the team meeting, parents, teachers, and Director will develop and write a plan of action to address concerns and meet the child’s individual needs both in the classroom and at home. Team members (parents, teachers, Director) will follow plan of action and document progress made for thirty calendar days.

- 5) Parents may give consent for CCC to make a referral to appropriate agency by signing a “Release of Information” form, allowing CCC and chosen agency to provide and receive verbal and written information/documentation with one another to best meet the child’s needs.
- 6) The team (parents, teachers, Director) will schedule a feedback meeting at the end of thirty calendar days from start date of plan of action to review progress made.
- 7) The team (parents, teachers, Director) will continue to maintain open communication to best meet the child’s individual needs and review and revise plan of action as necessary.
- 8) If a child is two years and nine months old or older and receiving (or in need of receiving) special education, a written notice will be provided to the appropriate administrator of special education to inform them that CCC is serving a child with a disability.
- 9) If a child is younger than two years and nine months and receiving (or in need of receiving) early intervention, a written notice will be provided to the DPH Early Intervention program to inform them that CCC is serving a child with a disability.

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

PHILOSOPHY: Any suspension and/or termination decision will be based upon evaluation of the individual child’s needs, the Center’s capacity to meet those needs, and the safety and well-being of others in the Center. Except in extreme cases, CCC will first work with the child and his/her parents to remedy the situation before considering suspension or termination. CCC firmly believes that a parent’s involvement is critical to the success of any strategic interventions to modify behaviors. The child’s self-esteem will be considered in the implementation and transition of any suspension or termination. As with all CCC policies specific to an individual, each child and family will be treated in a respectful and confidential manner. Our goal is to ensure that each child receives the appropriate services in the appropriate setting to support and promote his/her full potential.

SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION CRITERIA: A child’s enrollment at the Center may be suspended or terminated in any of the following circumstances:

- When a child engages in continued, regular incidences of unsafe and inappropriate behaviors.
- When a parent, for whatever reason, fails to attend either the team meeting or the feedback meeting during the referral process.
- When a parent refuses to follow through with referrals under the recommendation of the Director.
- When, at the completion of the referral process, the Director determines that the child’s behavior cannot be managed safely and effectively given the Center’s in-house resources.
- When an evaluator from an outside agency determines that CCC cannot meet the needs of a child.
- When tuition is frequently paid late (see “Late Payment” section, p. 4-5).
- When a child is frequently picked up late (see “Late Pick-up” section, p. 12).
- When a parent engages in inappropriate treatment of a child, parent, employee, or visitor of the Center.

- When a parent repeatedly fails to follow policies and procedures of the CCC Parent Handbook.

In each case, CCC will communicate openly with the parent in an attempt to resolve the situation before terminating enrollment. CCC will pursue consultation and training, develop a home/school behavioral intervention plan, make appropriate referrals to outside agencies, and work with community resources to assist the child and family in order to prevent suspension and termination.

IMMEDIATE TERMINATION: CCC may terminate enrollment immediately, without further attempt to remedy the situation, in certain extreme situations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- When a child or parent engages in extreme behavior that jeopardizes the safety of a child, parent, employee, or visitor of the Center.
- When a child or parent physically, verbally, or emotionally abuses or threatens harm to a child, parent, employee, or visitor of the Center.
- When a child or parent engages in illegal activity in the Center building.

TERMINATION PROCEDURE:

- 1) Parents will be notified in writing of the reasons for termination. In the case of immediate termination, this notice may be given after the child is permanently removed from the Center. A copy of this letter will be kept in the child's main file.
- 2) In accordance with EEC regulations, the Director will inform parents about other services provided by neighborhood or private agencies or HMO's.
- 3) When any child's enrollment in the Center is terminated, whether initiated by the Center or the child's parents/guardians, the child's teachers will help to provide closure for the child and his/her classmates in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand to the extent feasible given the circumstances of the termination.
- 4) The Center reserves the right to keep the initial 4-week security deposit given prior to enrollment in order to have sufficient time to fill the child's enrollment slot.

Our Behavior Guidance Policy is in accordance with federal and state civil rights laws.

LICENSING

Commonwealth Children's Center is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care. If you have any questions about CCC's history of compliance, you may contact the regional office at

1250 Hancock Street, Suite 605-N
South Quincy, MA 02169
Phone: (617) 472-2881
Fax: (617) 472-2722
www.eec.state.ma.us

PARENT CONTRACT

WITH THE

COMMONWEALTH CHILDREN'S CENTER

Dear Parents,

The Commonwealth Children's Center requires that you read this handbook from the beginning to the end and sign this contract afterwards. This contract is written evidence that is kept in your child's file that you have read, understand, and agree to the rules and requirements for the Center and are willing to abide by them.

"I understand that my failure to follow the policies, rules and practices of the Center may result in the termination of my contract with Commonwealth Children's Center for my child".

PRINT NAME(S) _____

SIGNATURE(S) _____

DATE _____