

New England Preschool Academy, Inc.

Parent Handbook
(Rev. 2011)

One Foxwood Drive
Windsor Locks, CT 06096
(860) 627-6575

133 Post Office Road
Enfield, CT 06082
(860) 745-6575

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Our Mission Statement

At New England Preschool Academy, our mission is to serve each family to the best of our ability, while creating the framework of high self esteem, confidence, and independence in all of our students.

Our Philosophy

The goal of New England Preschool Academy is to provide your child with experiences that foster high self esteem and self confidence. We offer your child hands on learning in a relaxed atmosphere, which grows in structure as your child grows and prepares to enter the elementary school system. We offer the opportunity for each child to explore his or her surroundings, learn new things every day, and learn to adapt successfully to a group situation. With competent adult supervision and guidance, we give the children the opportunity to make decisions and put them in control of their environment. Every child should leave our program with the ability to meet new and challenging experiences with confidence.

Customer Service

It is important to us to give your child the highest quality care available. Please do not hesitate to speak with your child's teacher or the Center Director with any suggestions or concerns. You may also leave suggestions at any time in the tuition box in your center. We will, throughout the year, have many opportunities for you to be actively involved in the life of our center, through conference sessions or family gatherings. Please be aware that we are a group center. While we strive to meet the individual needs of each family, we must also think of the group as a whole, and make decisions for our families based on your needs and the needs of the entire center.

Equal Opportunity Provider/Employer

New England Preschool Academy, Inc. offers care to all families regardless of race, religion, sex, or national origin; we hire all staff members in the same manner.

Programming and Communication

Our programs are structured to give your child a well balanced schedule of individual time, group time, and active and quiet activities. We try to stimulate the interest level of each child as an individual, and to teach them to learn and play successfully in a group setting. We communicate with our families through daily contact, bulletin boards, daily reports, newsletters, progress conferences, and center functions. All of these methods help to assure a strong liaison between our center and families. We notify parents of field trips and require permission for participation. We use daily incident/accident reports to keep our families aware of anything that may happen at our center, or that staff may notice while the children are with us. We will also communicate to families if we feel that observations or special services may be needed for any of our students. We have many resources available to us for referrals so that we may assist the students and families to the best of our ability.

Health and Safety

Nurse Consultant- we employ a nurse at our WL facility who is on site once a week to review and update health records, and perform health and safety inspections for us. We are required to have this service at any of our facilities that include a toddler program, or children under three years of age. Our nurse visits our Enfield centers on a quarterly basis to provide the same services.

Health Records- Must be in your child's file upon enrollment, and updated yearly until your child enters elementary school. This is a state mandated requirement. You will be notified when updated records are needed.

Allergies- Please alert us to any allergies your child has, and list those allergies in the space provided on the enrollment form. We are very careful to keep our children safe from any type of allergic attack. Per state regulation, we are required to have signed physician forms for any medication your child may need in case of an allergic reaction.

Should your child have a reaction while in our care, we will contact emergency personnel if necessary, and we will call the parent to come pick the child up to monitor and assess his or her needs.

Illness and Exclusion Policy- Please see the attached policy that lists the specifics of contagious illnesses and our policies regarding them. For the health and safety of all the children we must work together to strictly adhere to these policies. All contagious illnesses will be posted on the main bulletin boards and will alert families to the age groups affected. Please try to keep your child home for one day following an illness so that others might stay healthy.

Medications- Are not routinely given in our centers. By state law, any medications that we do administer, for asthma, chronic illness, etc. must be kept locked in the Directors office and administered by a staff member trained by a state approved organization to administer medications and Epi-pens. Medications are prohibited at all times from being left in cubbies, diaper bags, or put into a child's cup, bottle, or backpack. Please feel

free to stop in at any time to give your child a needed dose of medication. Over the counter medications or ointments must be accompanied by a parent authorization form, and the medications left in the office. Our trained staff will make a written log of the time and date of each medication administered. We will NEVER administer a medication if it is a first time use, as we cannot tell if a child will have an allergic reaction to that medication.

Emergency Care- If your child requires emergency care or hospitalization, the ambulance and parent will be called, in that order, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and wait with the child till the parent arrives.

Holidays- No tuition adjustments are made for holiday closings. We will observe: New Years Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday the day prior to or after that day will be observed.

Early Closings: 1:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve.

Weather Emergencies- If NEPA has to be closed, we will broadcast the closing on WFSB Channel 3 First Alert news by 6:00 a.m. If we feel we need to close the centers early, we will phone each parent to come and pick up their child/children.

Fees

Registration- \$60.00 upon enrollment, \$35.00 each spring for the following fall per child or \$45.00 per family. Registrations are non-refundable.

Tuition- Due at the beginning of each month or each Friday for the following week. No cash is accepted. A direct debit option is available to you for your convenience. Please contact your Director for a direct debit form. Late fees of \$10.00 per week will be charged if there is a balance remaining on your account by noon each Tuesday. Children will not be allowed into the center if three weeks or more balance is owed, until that balance is settled with the center.

Vacation or Illness- No adjustments are made for vacation or illness, as we are required to staff our center based on ratio, per state regulation. We will dis-enroll and re-enroll on a case by case basis if you need to be out of the center for one month or longer.

Meals- At NEPA, we serve a cold breakfast, snack and snack time beverage, and lunch beverage. All food and beverage is included in your tuition rates. Gum is never allowed, and candy is only allowed under special circumstances and under teacher supervision. It is also only allowed in accordance with age appropriateness for what is being served. Please do not bring in foods from home other than your child's bagged lunch as we have to control children's exposure to many food allergens.

Withdrawal from Program- One week written notice is required, and full tuition will be charged for the final week, regardless of attendance. NEPA reserves the right to dis-enroll a child if we feel our environment is unsuitable for that child or family.

Transportation- If NEPA is transporting your child to school, there is a monthly transportation charge. Please see your tuition rate sheet. There are no discounts for transportation fees. IF YOUR CHILD IS SENT HOME FROM SCHOOL OR THE SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR CENTER DIRECTOR. THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS DO NOT WANT US CONTINUALLY CALLING BECAUSE WE CANNOT LOCATE A CHILD WHOSE PARENT FORGOT TO LET US KNOW THEY WOULD NOT BE GETTING ON OUR VANS.

Summer Fees- These fees are a one time fee each summer for school age children to cover the cost of all their summer field trips and special activities. Preschool children will normally be charged on an activity by activity basis, as they do not leave the center for outside activities as the older children do. Discounts on summer fees are on a case by case basis, and are usually for those families who are only in the center for one block of time each summer.

Preschool Program- There is a one time fee for our preschool program charged at registration. This fee covers the expense of the materials the children use with this program, and also helps cover replacement of portions of the program as they wear out.

Kindergarten Program- NEPA offers the Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen Workbook series to all kindergarten children whose parents wish for them to participate. This is a fee based program, and includes all of the children's materials and instruction. It is an excellent program on it's own or in addition to the public school program as it more than adequately prepares children for the challenges of first grade. Please see your Center Director to review this program prior to your child starting Kindergarten.

Late Pick-up Fee- NEPA charges this fee per child to encourage parents to be on time by the close of our center to pick up their children. Please call us if you have an emergency on the way to pick up your child. Our staff needs to leave to be home with their families after 6:00 p.m., so please give them your consideration and be on time.

Returned Checks- There is a fee due for all returned checks, and will be entered on your child's ledger as a returned check charge. We reserve the right to require cash or bank checks if you continually have returned check issues. We also have direct debit as an option if you would like your child's tuition taken directly from your account each payday. A returned check charge is also assessed for any returned bank transfers, as we are also charged for them by our bank. Please see your Director for this option.

Children's Schedules and Classroom Changes

At New England Preschool Academy we try to accommodate families when a change occurs in family dynamics, whether it be career changes, separation or divorce, or a family crisis. Please meet with your Center Director to discuss any schedule changes that may come up, so that we can have everything in writing in your child's file. If there are custody issues, we need to have copies of any pertinent legal paperwork on file in order to enforce any directives to people coming into contact with an individual child or children. All schedule changes must be in writing and submitted to the Director for approval. These change forms are available to you in the main sign in area.

Classroom changes are done as we have the availability in the next group, and according to the child's age and developmental readiness. Most parents have their ideas when they want their children moved, so please discuss your ideas with your Center Director, as we have to look at the groups as a whole, and also try to move children together whenever possible for an easier transition for them. We also prepare the children by allowing them frequent visits prior to their actual start date in a new classroom.

Behavior Management

At NEPA, we understand that positive methods of discipline encourages the healthy development of your child's self esteem, and teaches him or her the best approach to problem solving. We discuss behavior problems with the children, call attention to positive behaviors, and redirect activities when necessary. These methods almost always work to help the children make the right choices in their behavior, or to change the behavior that is occurring. A time out for a few minutes is a last resort, and is one we don't usually have to utilize. However, if necessary, it gives the child a few moments to reflect on the nature and consequences of the behavior, and is always accompanied by discussion with the teacher so that the child understand the behavior that resulted in that time out. Meals, naptime, and outdoor exercise are never used as punishment to control behavior.

No Tolerance Policy

Although it is difficult to believe that this needs to be a part of a handbook for a childcare facility, we need to ask that you be aware of everything that is in your child's backpack each day. If a child is found to have anything on his or her person that could be considered harmful to themselves or others, NEPA will remove the item and the parent will be called to pick up the child. On a case by case basis, administrators will decide the severity of the incident and take appropriate action. This could be anything from educating the children to dis-enrollment in the interest of the health and safety of all the students and staff.

Staffing

Our staff is carefully chosen to work with your children. We look for mature individuals who have experience working with your children, and we try to maintain a good blend of younger and older staff with a broad range of experience, both educational and practical. All of our staff become First Aid and CPR certified with us, and we encourage all of our staff to continue their college educations with an emphasis on our field. All staff are taken through a criminal background check by the State and FBI, and all staff are required to maintain a certain number of hours each year in continuing education regarding young children. Our administrators work with all staff to develop curriculum skills, problem solving strategies, and learning good communication skills. We provide them with many benefits including health benefits, vacation and personal time, a 401K plan, and educational reimbursement benefits in order to support them in their long range goals. This also assures us a higher level of professionalism, integrity and loyalty

to our center and our families. Staff turnover, though lower with our facility than many, is always a concern, but we work closely with the staff to assure that we are hiring strong people that truly love this field. We will also not allow any staff person regardless of longevity with our company to remain in our classrooms if they are disregarding our policies in any way so as to compromise the health and safety of any of our children.

Special Activities for Children

We offer small fee based programs such as gymnastics and also offer homework assistance and regular homework time for the school aged children, and many field trips through out the year both on and off our premises. Parents are always notified of special activities we offer your children.

Insurance

New England Preschool Academy, Inc. is a fully insured company for the health and safety of all of our children, staff and families.

Important Information Regarding Discipline, Abuse and Neglect Policies

It is NEPA's policy to discipline children fairly and consistently, with the intent to teach them self control in resolving conflicts and move them toward appropriate social behavior. Our staff will utilize the following techniques when disciplining children, in this order; setting clear understandable limits based on the age of the children, and positive guidance with the use of redirection whenever possible. All staff members are trained to recognize behaviors and physical attributes that may be associated with some form of child abuse or neglect. We are mandated reporters in the State of Connecticut, and are required by law to report a suspicion of child abuse or neglect, even if it turns out to be false. We are not required to notify parents of our suspicions, or get permission to report, but we will in most cases work together as a team with our staff and administrators to follow these regulations with professionalism and compassion for our children and families.

New England Preschool Academy, Inc. reserves the right to make any changes to our policies in order to comply with state or local regulations of licensed childcare facilities.