



RAINBOW CORNER PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



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WELCOME TO RAINBOW CORNER!

Rainbow Corner Preschool is licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Education and complies with all of the standards put forth by that Department. Rainbow Corner Preschool is operated by CARE for Children, a private 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children of all abilities. CARE provides pediatric therapy, pediatric health, and community outreach services for children and early childhood education programs. A Preschool Director, agency Executive Director and a volunteer Board of Directors govern the operation of the preschool program.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OVERVIEW/PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of CARE for Children that early childhood should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploring and discovery. It is also our belief that our preschool program should consist of positive and purposeful strategies designed to help children meet their individual goals. Rainbow Corner Preschool is a unique, integrated preschool for children who are 3-5 years of age. This preschool has the responsibility to assist children to achieve and function at their optimal developmental level. The mutual respect and collaboration between parents, teachers, aides, children and peers are of vital importance in helping children meet their goals of independence and self-awareness. Developmentally appropriate, child-centered activities where children can be active participants in the learning process are critical. This paired with teacher-directed learning activities ensures optimal learning and success. The classroom strives to provide safe structured experiences in an inviting, comfortable, organized atmosphere that promotes active discovery and choice making to encourage the development of confident, socially conscious human beings.

PLAYGROUP OVERVIEW/PHILOSOPHY

Playgroup is for children between the ages 24-42 months. Playgroup focuses on the developmental needs of older toddlers. Playgroup concentrates on social interaction with other peers and adults through sensory and language based activities. Playgroup is child-centered where the children are given a variety of activities and resources to explore and learn about their environment.

INCLUSION PHILOSOPHY

At Rainbow Corner, it is our goal to encourage opportunities for the inclusion of special needs students with typically developing peers.

CREDENTIALS

The Preschool Director/Teacher is a certified teacher with early childhood credentials.

CURRICULUM

The *Creative Curriculum* is used for the preschool program at Rainbow Corner. The curriculum focuses on four areas of development: social/emotional; cognitive, language and physical development. To develop social/emotional skills Preschool staff aims to make children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends and feel that they are part of a group. Preschool students need to experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life. In the second area, which is cognitive development, the staff wants the students to become confident learners. This is accomplished by letting the children try out their own ideas and experience success, by helping students acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings. The third area, language development, involves listening and speaking activities (understanding and following directions, asking questions, participating in conversation) and reading/writing activities including being introduced to the alphabet. Rainbow Corner also uses *Leap Frog Learning Systems* similar to those used in area school districts. Students preparing to enter Kindergarten will be introduced to *Handwriting without Tears* to help them learn proper letter formation and emerging writing techniques. The final area is physical development. The staff works with students to increase their large and small muscle skills through various movement activities and arts & crafts which are designed to aid coordination and fine motor skill development. Once a week children participate in fun gross motor activities, led by a licensed physical therapist, (including obstacle courses, playing with balls, and animal relay races) that promote well rounded physical wellness.

CREATIVECURRICULUM.NET

As part of the preschool curriculum we are excited to offer to parents *creativecurriculum.net*. This is an online component to our curriculum where parents are able to access weekly lesson plans, monthly newsletters, progress and planning reports, regular communication with the teacher, events calendars, and developmentally appropriate activities suggestions to do at home to build upon your child's current skills. If you do not have access to a computer with internet access you are able to log on at CARE for Children to view or child's information.

STUDENT EVALUATION

A skills report/evaluation is sent home three times throughout the school year. The report is in checklist format that covers 50 objectives in social/emotional, cognitive, language and gross/fine motor skills highlighting preschool skills in preparation for kindergarten. Two times a year a narrative of the child's progress will be included with the checklist. Parental involvement is encouraged and if there are significant problem areas, these should be discussed with the teacher via a conference.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES

PRESCHOOL ADMISSIONS/ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Children who are 3-5 years of age are eligible to enroll in the preschool. Admission requirements and enrollment procedures are as follows:

1. A child must be 3 years old to be admitted into the program. Rainbow Corner Preschool has a Rolling Registration policy based on availability. (I.e. if a child turns 3 in November and there are openings in the preschool, they could enroll at that time.)
2. Classes are filled on a first-come/first-served basis according to the date of enrollment. The classroom teacher and/or the Executive Director set the date of enrollment after registration materials are completed and registration fees are paid.
3. If the classes are filled when a parent calls, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur.
4. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin or religion.

REGISTRATION

Registration may be an ongoing process throughout the year, depending on class size. A registration meeting must be held with a least one of the child's parents (or legal guardian) present for the following purposes:

1. Guarantee the child's place in the class
2. Complete registration form and other paperwork
3. Give school calendar and other important information
4. Discuss registration materials and go over policies
5. Discuss curriculum at Rainbow Corner Preschool
6. Answer any questions parents/guardians may have
7. Pay fees (parents must pay fees at the registration meeting unless other arrangements have been made)
8. Obtain immunization records
9. Obtain copies of custody/legal guardianship papers
10. Tour the classroom

REGISTRATION FEES

There is a registration fee that is set each year prior to the beginning of the preschool year. This must be paid at the time of registration, prior to enrollment in the preschool. The registration fee is used to fund your child's participation in *creativecurriculum.net*. This fee is non-refundable.

REFUND POLICY

Refunds are only given in cases of extenuating circumstances (i.e. child moving out of town; child becomes seriously ill and cannot attend school). Refund requests must be submitted in writing for consideration.

TUITION

Tuition is pre-paid on a monthly basis. The Finance and Office Manager handles the billing of the preschool program. A sliding fee scale is available for families in financial need. They must show proof of wages (copy of most recent paycheck stubs for one month or a copy of the Schedule C form from the previous years' tax reporting if current pay stubs are not available) and all household income should be reported, regardless of relationship with a child. **Checks for tuition and registration fees are to be made payable to CARE for Children.**

NON-PAYMENT OF TUITION

It is very important that tuition be paid on time. In the event that tuition payments are late, parents/guardians will be given up to one month to make up the payment, unless suitable payment arrangements have been made and approved by the Executive Director. A reminder of tuition payment will be sent home by the 15th of the month. Rainbow Corner Preschool reserves the right to access an additional charge of up to 10% of the amount past-due tuition. If, after one month, payment has not been made, a letter will be sent home to the parent requesting immediate payment. They will be given two weeks to complete payment; otherwise, the child's enrollment in the preschool will be terminated. Rainbow Corner makes every effort to help families facing financial hardship, please call the Finance and Office Manager to make payment arrangements if there is a need.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL

If a child needs to be withdrawn from preschool, one month's notice is required. If one month's prior notice is not given, the monthly tuition fee will be billed to the parent or guardian.

PROGRAM POLICIES

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our staff uses positive guidance, redirection, "time-out" and the setting of clear-cut limits that foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and to be responsible for their actions. Discipline involves teaching character and self-control. Under no circumstances will children be subject to physical punishment or abusive language, as these approaches teach children to respond in the same manner.

Staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or other children is unacceptable. Staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. To this end, staff will show children positive alternatives rather than just telling children "no". Good behavior will be encouraged and praised.

For acts of aggression and fighting (i.e. biting, hitting, etc.): the children will be immediately separated and immediate comfort and care/treatment for the injured child will be provided. Parents/legal guardians will be notified of the incident. Each incident is documented and reviewed by the Executive Director to assess adequacy of caregiver supervision and appropriateness of response. Physical restraint will be not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then only for as long as necessary for control of the situation.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

By law, preschool staff and the support staff at CARE for Children are considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse, therefore all observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to child protective services.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Rainbow Corner Preschool strongly promotes communication between families and caregivers. Communication can take place through journal entries on creativecurriculum.net, conversations at drop-off and pick-up times and prearranged family conferences. Journal entries on creativecurriculum.net are checked and replied to within 24 hours of posting during the week. If your family does not have access to a computer there is a computer for use on-site at the preschool, please talk to the teacher or CARE staff for more information.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any concerns a parent/guardian has regarding the preschool should be brought to the attention of the preschool director/teacher. Questions or concerns that are not satisfactorily resolved between the parent/guardian and the teacher after one week should be brought to the attention of agency Executive Director who will investigate the matter under the direction of the Policy & Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors. If the concern or grievance involves the teacher, it should be brought immediately to the attention of the Executive Director of CARE for Children. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily within 30 days, the concern may be brought to the attention of the State Board of Private Academic Schools. Correspondence can be directed to: Secretary of the Board of Private Academic Schools, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333 (717) 783-6840.

DAYS & HOURS OF OPERATION

The preschool is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays. There is a morning session from 8:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. and an afternoon session from 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Playgroup is offered once a week for a two hour session.

DELIVERY AND PICK UP OF CHILDREN

No child is to be brought to preschool or playgroup more than 15 minutes before class begins, and must be picked up no later than 15 minutes after class is over. If a child is left beyond those limits with no arrangements made, a babysitting fee will be assessed when the child is picked up. For safety sake, children must never be left without direct transfer to an adult; therefore children must always be brought directly to the classroom. Parents must return to the classroom to pick up their own children.

RELEASE OF CHILD

If a child is to be picked up by someone other than his/her usual caregiver, parents/guardians should send a written note stating who will be picking up the child. Only in cases of necessity or emergency should a change be made over the telephone. Staff will call the parent/guardian back to confirm the information regarding the change and the person picking up the child will be required to present identification when they arrive at the school.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Rainbow Corner has an open door policy for parent classroom visitation. We understand that the transition to preschool is sometimes not only difficult for the child but also the parent. You are welcome to observe your child through the one way mirror at any time throughout the preschool session. We ask that if you do choose to exercise the 'open door' policy that you remain unobtrusive and unobserved to the students so there is no disruption. If your child is having a particular tough day, you are more than welcome to call the office and a staff member will quickly check on your child.

DRESS

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and sneakers. Daily activities include active and messy play and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. The child's name should be placed in all outdoor clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all proper possessions and clothes. In addition, we ask that each child bring an old T-shirt that can be placed over their everyday clothing for messy art projects and an extra change of clothing should a child spill their drink or have an accident.

EMERGENCIES, DRILLS, AND CLOSINGS

There are written policies for staff to follow in case of emergencies or the need for evacuation. Fire Drills are practiced on a monthly basis and the Fire Department visits the preschool annually. The agency is equipped with 3 fire extinguishers that are inspected bi-annually. If the school needs to close due to inclement weather for any other reason, every effort will be made to contact you in advance by telephone. An announcement will also be made on WESB/WBRR radio station and will be under cancellations on wesb.com.

HOME VISITS

Home visits are offered upon request of the parent/guardian.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

At Rainbow Corner Preschool, we engage in activities that celebrate various holidays. You will be notified via a newsletter each month of the upcoming holidays the school will be recognizing through activities. If you do not want your child to take part in the activities for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact the staff so that alternative activities may be arranged.

PARENT EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

Once a year, parents/guardians will be given a program satisfaction survey to gain important feedback regarding their child's and family's experience with the preschool program. The information gathered from the survey will be reviewed with preschool staff in an effort to enhance and improve services.

SCHOOL RECORDS & RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Student records will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in the office. Access is only made on a need-to-know basis by authorized staff. Parents are authorized to review their child's record. The teacher must be present for the review. If a parent request photocopies of the record, copies can be made at twenty-five cents per page. For verification and record keeping purposes, parents should be asked to put into writing their requests to review, copy, or receive copies of their child's educational records. The student's record may be released only on written consent by the parent/guardian with the following exceptions:

- a. Authorized representatives of the Department of Education
- b. Health or safety emergencies where it is believed that a clear and present danger exists.
- c. When courts or government agencies mandate the release of information the principle of informed consent shall apply in all cases except those under child abuse or neglect statutes.

STUDENT EVALUATION

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HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

HEALTH INFORMATION

Each child is required to have health statement on file, which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations and the signature of the child's source of medical care. If a child's health care summary is not complete at the time of enrollment or within thirty (30) days after enrollment, the child will be not be eligible to participate until the necessary requirements for enrollment are met. The preschool must have on file for each child signed "Permission for Health Care" from authorizing emergency care and transfer of medical records to the local hospital. Emergency numbers for reaching the parent/guardian and another authorized person must also be on file.

STAFF TRAINING

All Rainbow Corner and CARE staff members are trained and certified in Child/Infant CPR and First Aid. The staff is also annually trained in infection control, procedural safeguards, and cultural competency.

ILLNESS & TRANSMITTABLE DISEASE

If your child is ill and won't be attending school, we do ask that you call the school office at 362-4621. In the event that a student becomes acutely ill at school, we will need to contact the parent/guardian to pick the child up early. The following guidelines are meant to assist parents with the decision to keep their child at home:

1. The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities of the program.
2. The staff cannot care for the sick child without interfering with the care of the other children.
3. The child has any signs or symptoms that indicate a contagious disease or an immediate need for medical evaluation
4. For more information please visit web MD

<http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/features/your-child-too-sick-for-school> or the Keep Kids Healthy site <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/infectionsguide/schoolexclusion.html>

If head lice are present, the teacher and/or classroom aide will check the heads of all students to make certain no other infestations are present. The child is not permitted to return to school without proof of treatment (i.e. note from pediatrician that the child is "nit-free"; box evidencing treatment, etc.).

INJURIES

If a student becomes injured while at school, staff will immediately assess the situation and treat the child's injuries, with basic first aide (staff members are trained by the American Red Cross). If injuries are severe and require professional medical attention, staff will contact an ambulance and the parents/guardians. When a child is injured, Parents/guardians will always be notified, regardless of the severity of the injury.

MEDICATION USE AT SCHOOL

Medication will be administered to a student at preschool only when absolutely necessary. It is requested that medication be given before or after school hours whenever possible. However, if it is essential that a child receive medication during school hours, there must be a physician's prescription prior to administration of medication. Medicine must come to school in the original container with the prescription labeled by a pharmacist or a physician and be handed to the teacher by the parent or legal guardian. The label must contain the child's name, physician's name, pharmacist, medication, dosage, frequency, starting date and expiration date if applicable. Medications having a specific expiration date are not used after the date of expiration. Medication sent in unlabeled containers cannot be administered. Any drug container having a detached excessively soiled or damaged label is returned to the parent for re-labeling by the pharmacist. (Any change in the type or dosage of medication must be reported to the teacher immediately and a new set of forms will need to be completed.)

If a child has an allergy that requires an epi-pen or asthma and requires an inhaler, one should be obtained from their doctor and left at school where it will be kept in case of an emergency.

THANK YOU

Thank you for choosing Rainbow Corner Preschool for your child. We strive to give your child the best early learning experience possible. We recognize that parents are truly the first and most important teachers. As we continue to provide a rich educational and developmental experience for your child, we encourage your active participation in the learning process. For more information, forms, or general resources please visit our website at www.careforchildren.info/preschool.htm