

# Play & Learn School Parent Handbook

## Preschool (4) Edition

### **Our Mission**

Play & Learn School is dedicated to providing a safe, loving, and fun environment for children to learn, grow, and discover through developmentally appropriate instruction and activities. The classroom activities are based on the most recent research into the growth of the young mind.

All programs are based on a strong belief that each child is special in his or her own way.

Play & Learn School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or sex for the purposes of enrollment or employment.

### **Immunizations**

The Jersey City Board of Health sets the requirements for health and immunizations for children. Each parent must submit current health and immunization records that meet the Board of Health mandates. A copy of these requirements may be obtained from the office.

All children must be vaccinated with the required immunizations to be admitted into the center. A child who is not properly vaccinated will be excluded from the center until the parent can confirm that the vaccination has been obtained.

Exemptions from immunizations may only be granted from the State Board of Health. Documentation of such exemptions must be provided to the center.

### **Family/Caregiver Information Exchange**

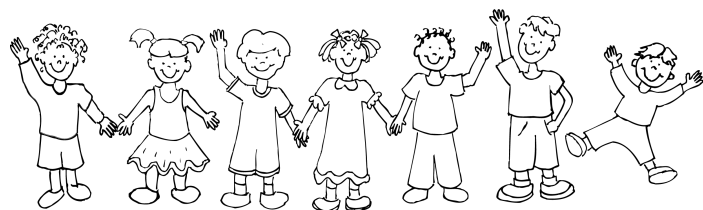
Upon daily arrival at the center, each child will be observed by a staff member for signs of illness/injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the day's activities. A parent will supplement these observations with an oral or written exchange of information with the child's caregiver.

### **Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedure:**

Caregiving adults who bring the child to, or remove the child from, the facility will sign children in and out of the facility. This policy will be explained to families at the time of enrollment and will be strictly enforced. Attending staff members are responsible for ensuring that the sign in and sign out procedure is completed by parents.

### **Outdoor Activities**

Exploring the environment is an integral part of every child's learning process. Therefore, in the event of nice weather, the children may take neighborhood walks, trips to the park, or experiment in the outside play area with the center's staff.



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### **Discipline**

#### *Philosophy of Discipline:*

Caregivers will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems, encouragement of appropriate behavior, consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Caregivers will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions.

Caregivers will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Caregivers will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. Caregivers will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child.

#### *Permissible Methods of Discipline:*

**For acts of aggression and fighting** (e.g., biting, hitting, etc.) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may:

- Separate the children involved.
- Immediately comfort the individual who was injured.
- Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.
- Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident.
- Review the adequacy of caregiver supervision, appropriateness of facility activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

**Physical restraint** will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then in the form of holding by another person as gently as possible only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

**Medicines or drugs that will affect behavior** will not be used except as prescribed by a child's health care provider and with specific written instructions from the child's health care provider for the use of the medicine.

**Time-out** will be used if other management techniques are ineffective. "Time-out" or removal of a child from the environment may be used selectively for children over 18 months of age who are at risk of harming themselves or others. The period of "time-out" will be just long enough to enable the child to regain self-control. As a general rule this period will not exceed one minute per year of age. Caregivers will monitor the effectiveness of "time-out" and seek the help of a mental health consultant when approved behavior management strategies do not seem to be effective.

### **Injury Reporting**

In the event a child becomes seriously injured while in the center's care, the Director will be notified immediately. The Director will then notify the parent(s). All accidents and injuries will be reported in the center's Injury Report Log that is located in the main office.

If the staff of Play and Learn is unable to contact a parent or guardian in the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for the staff to seek emergency medical attention for a child.

### **Policy on the Release of Children**

In order to maintain the safety and well being of all our children, the following policy will be strictly enforced.

A child may be released only to the child's custodial parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the custodial parent(s) if the custodial parent(s) cannot be reached. Play & Learn School will maintain a list of individuals authorized by the custodial parent(s) for pick up. Due to the importance of this information, parents must make the center aware of any changes to this list.

It is the responsibility of the Staff of Play & Learn to check picture identification for these person(s). A child will not be dismissed to a person that is unable to show proper picture identification. If for any reason a child is to be released to an adult that is not on the authorized list, written permission must be submitted by the custodial parent(s).

A child cannot be visited by or released to a non-custodial parent that has been denied access, or granted limited access, to the child by a court order. The parent or custodian must provide a copy of the court order to maintain in the files and must notify the center if there are any changes.

In the event a child has not been picked up at the time of the center's closing, the child will be supervised at all times. The staff member will attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parents to pick up the child. If the child has not been picked up by one hour after the center's closing, the staff member will contact the 24 hour DYFS hotline for assistance in caring for the child.

In the event a custodial parent or authorized person appears to be physically or emotionally impaired at the time of pick up, the staff will deny the release of the child to the impaired person. The staff member will attempt to contact the other custodial parent or authorized person(s) to assume responsibility for the child. If the staff member is unable to make alternate arrangements, he/she will contact the 24-hour DYFS hotline for assistance in caring for the child.

Staff members are not permitted to baby sit or otherwise be employed by a family of an enrolled child. Staff members are also prohibited to transport any child or family member in a private automobile.

### **Absence**

Children that are enrolled in the program are required to maintain regular attendance. Sickness and vacation are valid reasons for absence but must be coordinated with the child's teacher.

Parents are required to notify the center by 8:30am each day the child will be absent.

A child that is absent for more than three days must provide a signed doctor's note with an explanation of the illness and permission to return to school.

Parents must discuss plans for vacation with the office.

Excessive absence may lead to termination from the program, as determined by the Director.

### **Tardiness**

The center's doors open at 8:00 each morning. Children are required to arrive before 8:30am. Children arriving after 8:30am are considered late. Students arriving after 8:30am should adhere to the late policy and return at 9:00am through the side entrance.

Excessive tardiness may lead to termination from the program, as determined by the Director.

### **Field Trips**

During the school year, the children will be taking field trips. Parents are invited to participate. However, sometimes parent participation is limited due to bus seating or site guidelines.

The center staff will do their best to accommodate as many parents as possible. Children that are not enrolled in the program *are not permitted* to go on field trips.

### **Uniforms**

A proper school uniform must be worn to class every day unless otherwise noted on the school calendar. Children will not be permitted to wear non-uniform apparel during the school day.

The uniform consists of:

#### **Winter Uniforms (October – April):**

- Girls
  - Navy Jumper (K-4)
  - Tan Skirt (5-8)
  - Uniform Blouse (no frills)
  - Navy or White Socks
  - Sneakers (PK4 only)
  - Sweater
- Boys
  - Tan Pants
  - White Polo Shirt
  - White Oxford Shirt
  - Navy Vest
  - Navy or White Socks
  - Sneakers
  - Uniform Varsity Sweater

#### **Fall & Spring Uniforms (September, May-June):**

- Girls/Boys Proper Navy Uniform Shorts
  - White Polo Shirt
  - Navy or White Socks
  - Sneakers

#### **Physical Education Uniform (September-June):**

- Girls/Boys
  - Primary Prep Sweatshirt
  - Navy Sweatpants Primary Prep Tee Shirt Navy shorts
  - Sneakers

### **Nap Time**

The children are provided with cots for an afternoon nap. Parents must provide a small pillow, small blanket, and a cot sheet for nap time. These items will be sent home each Friday for laundering and must be returned the following Monday. This rest period takes place from 12:30pm - 2:00pm daily.

### **Parental Involvement**

A "Parent Meeting/Orientation" is held prior to the school year. This is a time for parents to meet the staff and become familiar with school policies. All parents are encouraged to attend the meeting.

All visitors must be prepared to show picture identification and must sign in and out of the Visitor's Log in the main office.

Parents are invited to become involved in the various activities of the day. Volunteering can be coordinated with the teacher.

At least twice a year, the children take field trips. Parents are encouraged to chaperone these field trips.

### **Meals**

Parents may choose to prepare and send a lunch to school each day or order a lunch from the school's food vendor. Monthly menus are available on the school's website for your review.

Lunches sent from home must be fully prepared and packed in the proper manner for freshness. The school staff does not refrigerate or warm foods that are brought from home.

Snack time is provided in the morning and afternoon (for aftercare students). Snacks must be brought to school each day with your child.

## **Medication Policy**

### **Principle**

Play & Learn staff will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child or a specific condition for any child in the facility for whom a plan has been made and approved by the Director.

Because administration of medication poses an extra burden for staff, and having medication in the facility is a safety hazard, medication administration in child care will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside childcare hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. Parents or legal guardians may administer medication to their own child during the child care day.

### **Procedure**

Play & Learn staff will administer medication only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent, the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that meets the safety check requirements in the Medication Consent Log. The facility must have on file the written or telephone instructions of a licensed clinician to administer the specific medication.

### **Prescription Medications**

Parents or legal guardians will provide Play & Learn School with the following:

- medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name,
- the name and strength of the medication
- the date the prescription was filled
- the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription
- the medication's expiration date
- administration, storage and disposal instructions
- a delivery device with clear and specific measurement markings (e.g. syringe)

### **Over-the-Counter Medications**

Parents or legal guardians will provide Play & Learn School with the following:

- the medication in a child-resistant container
- medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names
- specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child
- a delivery device with clear and specific measurement markings (e.g. syringe)

### **Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications**

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, duration of administration will be provided to the child care staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication.

A physician may state that a certain medication may be given for a recurring problem, emergency situation, or chronic condition. The instructions should include the child's name; the name of the medication; the dose of the medication; how often the medication may be given; the conditions for use; and any precautions to follow. Example: children may use sunscreen to prevent sunburn; children who wheeze with vigorous exercise may take one dose of asthma medicine before vigorous active (large muscle) play; children who weigh between 25-35 pounds may be given 1 teaspoon of acetaminophen 160 mg/5cc (1 teaspoon) for up to two doses every four hours for fever. A child with a known serious allergic reaction to a specific substance who develops symptoms after exposure to that substance may receive epinephrine from a staff member who has received

training in how to use an auto-injection device prescribed for that child (e.g., EpiPen®). A child may only receive medication with the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian and when the staff person who will give the medication has demonstrated to a licensed health professional the skills required.

### **Policy Concerning Illness and Communicable Diseases**

In the event a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend school. If such symptoms occur during the school day, the child will be removed from the classroom and a parent or guardian will be called to take the child home.

Severe pain or discomfort	Acute diarrhea
Episodes of acute vomiting	Red eyes with discharge
Sore throat or severe coughing	Swollen joints
Yellow eyes or jaundice skin	Blood in urine
Infected untreated skin patches	Stiff neck
Difficult or rapid breathing	
Skin rashes lasting more than 24 hrs.	
Weeping or bleeding skin lesions	
Visibly enlarged lymph nodes	
Elevated oral temperature (+101.5°F)	

A child must be symptom free for 24 hours or must have a doctor's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to others to return to school.

In the event a child contracts any of the following diseases, it is mandatory that a parent call the school immediately. A child will not be permitted to return to school without a doctor's note stating that the child is in good health and poses no threat to himself/herself or others.

#### **Respiratory Illnesses**

Chicken Pox	Meningococcus
German Measles	Mumps
Measles	Tuberculosis
Whooping Cough	COVID

#### **Gastro-Intestinal Illnesses Contact Illnesses**

Giardia Lamblia	Impetigo
Hepatitis A	Lice
Salmonella	Scabies
Shigella	

### **Expulsion / Termination Policy**

The staff members at Play & Learn School are dedicated to provide a safe and loving environment for the children in our care.

Play & Learn School reserves the right to exclude a child from enrollment if the child displays consistent actions that are dangerous to himself or others.

Termination will only occur after the following have been attempted and have found to be unsuccessful:

1. The parent will be notified and included in a conference with the director and other related staff members.
2. The parent will be given an explanation of the unacceptable behavior and strategies for confronting the issue.
3. The parent will commit to helping resolve the problem.
4. The parent will sign a copy of the topics that were discussed at the conference.

Expulsion will commence if the above are unsuccessful. The parent will be given three(3) business days to find alternate care for the child. However, a child may be excluded immediately if circumstances arise that are potentially dangerous to himself or others in the center.

### **Dismissal & Late Pick Up**

The staff of Play & Learn is dedicated to the safety and well-being of each child. Therefore, a child is dismissed only to approved parents or guardians. This information is provided by a parent at the enrollment interview and remains on file for future reference.

Please do not send school aged children to pick up your child. Children will only be released to authorized adults.

The center closes at 6:00pm. Late parents must call the center as soon as possible to make arrangements. Parents will be charged a late pick up fee as posted in the main office.

Failure to arrange a pick up for a child three times during the year will result in removal from the program.

### **Information to Parents Statement**

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 10:122), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements, and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, a center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey," and mailing it to: NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application, or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements of Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parent(s) to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our Center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the Bureau of Licensing's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Office's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for filing a LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required to periodically review the Department of Law and Public Safety (DLPS), Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA), unsafe children's product list, make the list accessible to staff and parents, and ensure that the items on the list are not at the center. The list is available at:

[www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recall/recalls.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recall/recalls.htm)

Internet access may be available at your local public library.

Anyone who has a reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Child Abuse Hotline, toll free at 1 (877) NJ ABUSE. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.nj.gov/dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf) and select publications.