



PARENT HANDBOOK

*“It is our vision that each child who comes through our door
joins a community of children, families, and teachers engaged in
the joy, work, and wonder of childhood.”*

Fort Hill
28 Lyman Rd.
Northampton, MA 01063
(413) 585-3290
CECE@smith.edu
www.smith.edu/forthill

September 2009

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Smith College Center for Early Childhood Education (CECE) at Fort Hill. I am pleased that you have chosen to enroll your child in our program and I am looking forward to your family's participation.

Parents are an integral part of our program and I hope you will feel welcome to participate in the program in ways that meet your families' needs. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the program, please feel free to contact me either by e-mail, telephone or visiting my office.

Fort Hill is unique in many ways and it is an honor to be the director of the program. The teachers are knowledgeable and caring and reflect genuine respect for children and their potential. We value the relationships we develop with families and children, as well as with each other. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to communicate more clearly with your family or if you have suggestions or concerns.

The Parent Handbook is designed to provide families with practical information about the Fort Hill program and community. We also communicate information by e-mail, blog, and on our website, www.smith.edu/forthill.

Thank you for joining the Fort Hill community.

Sincerely,

Martha Christenson Lees
Director, Smith College Center for Early Childhood Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Welcome to the Smith College Center for Early Childhood Education	
A. Program History.....	6
B. Core Values.....	7
C. Program Philosophy	8
D. Discipline Philosophy	8
E. Curriculum Philosophy	9
F. Starting the Year	9
II. Everything You Need to Know.....About Your Child and the Program	
A. Arrival and Departure Times	13
B. Separation Anxiety - A Healthy Developmental Stage.....	14
C. Morning Arrival Suggestions.....	15
D. Departure Time Suggestions	16
E. Clothing.....	17
F. Sunscreen.....	18
G. Handwashing	18
H. Shoeless Environment.....	18
I. Special Objects/Toys From Home.....	18
J. Health Policy	19
K. Outdoor Policy.....	22
L. The Playground.....	23
M. Food Policy.....	24
N. Snack and Lunch.....	25
O. Holiday and Birthday Celebrations	26
P. Toileting and Diapering.....	27
Q. Nap and Rest Time	27
R. Group Placement Decisions	30
III. Everything You Need to Know.....About You and the Program	
A. School-Family Communication	32
B. Parent Participation	34
C. PTO	34
D. Calendar	35
E. Late Fee Policy	35
F. Sign-In/Out	36
G. Photographs	36
H. Research/College Student Participation.....	36
I. Snow Days.....	37
J. Vehicle Approach to the Fort Hill Campus.....	37
K. Parking and Entering the Building	37
L. The Common.....	38
M. Babysitting Policy.....	38
N. Children's Records.....	39

O. Early Intervention Strategies and Referral Service Procedure	39
P. Termination Process Policy	40
Q. Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Procedure	41
R. Emergency and Non-Emergency Medical Procedures	43
S. Emergency Evacuation Procedure	43
T. Enrollment Policies.....	44
U. What To Do If You Have a Problem.....	46
V. A Last Word	46

WELCOME TO

THE SMITH COLLEGE

CENTER FOR EARLY

CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION

A. PROGRAM HISTORY

In 1926, Smith College President William Allan Neilson established both the Smith College Nursery School and the Smith College Day School.

The Nursery School opened with fifteen students, many of them children of the Smith College faculty. It had been organized as a cooperative school by The Institute for the Coordination of Women's Interests and provided educational opportunities for Smith graduate students. It became a part of the Education Department in 1928.

For many years the two laboratory schools formed one school called the Smith College Campus School located on two sites of the Smith College campus: Gill Hall on Prospect Street housing the kindergarten through sixth grade program and Fort Hill on Lyman Road housing the preschool program.

The Campus School began offering full-day programs at the Fort Hill site in 1992 when an Infant and Toddler Program and an Extended-Day Program were established to provide childcare services for Smith faculty and staff. Initially these programs were based entirely in the Fort Hill building. As the number of families utilizing the programs steadily increased, additional classrooms were added in adjacent buildings to accommodate the larger number of children enrolled.

In 2003, in response to a campus-wide Child Care Study Committee, the Preschool Program, the Infant/Toddler Program and the Extended-Day Program formed The Smith College Center for Early Childhood Education (an entity separate from the Campus School) to provide continuity for children, families, and staff.

A new facility was completed in August 2005 to house the early childhood program. The building has one classroom for infants, three classrooms for toddlers and three classrooms for preschoolers, as well as a visual arts studio, music studio, research lab, two community rooms and a library.

The program is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to serve eighty-six children. Our mission is to model and to provide exemplary early education and care for young children, to offer a laboratory for research, practicum, and internships for college students and faculty, and to support the needs of college employees and their families.

B. CORE VALUES

WE VALUE:

◆ AN ENVIRONMENT THAT CONVEYS RESPECT FOR CHILDREN AND ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

We value a dynamic, engaging, and aesthetically pleasing learning environment that encourages safe interactions between members of the community and invites interactions with materials. The space is thoughtfully designed and materials are chosen with meaning and purpose. The environment is intentional and reflects beauty, joy, order, comfort, and appreciation for the natural world. It is a relational space, where social and emotional expression is nurtured and communication is sustained.

◆ RELATIONSHIPS AS THE BASIS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Each member of the community is valued for his or her individuality and contribution to the group life of the school. Relationships are characterized by genuine listening, compassion, and respectful communication. We believe relationships are fundamental to teaching and to development.

◆ TIME FOR REFLECTION AND MINDFUL AWARENESS OF THE PRESENT

We value a pace of daily living and learning that provides time for reflection and mindful awareness. This pace should allow for learning from experiences, caring for each other, for our school community members, and for the natural world. We strive to offer children unstructured time and space to engage in activities of their choosing at an unhurried pace. We value children's health and respect their natural rhythms. We support their healthy development by planning for time outside, sleep and/or rest and good nutrition.

◆ COLLABORATION AMONG THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND TEACHERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Within a culture of inquiry and research, teachers actively engage in in-depth and ongoing professional activities to understand children's thinking. Teachers value listening, observation, documentation, and interpretation as the basis of curriculum development. Children are offered a wide variety of materials to express their theories and understandings and are supported in pursuing extensive investigations and explorations.

◆ COMMUNICATION THROUGH DOCUMENTATION

We value the exchange with parents and colleagues that is stimulated when the everyday details of the lives of the children are shared. Documentation fosters teachers' and parents' connections to the children and the school and encourages collaboration. Documentation invites focused conversation, a deep level of exchange and a sense of community.

C. PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

With a mission to provide exemplary early education and care for young children, we strive to create and sustain a caring and respectful community dedicated to supporting the growth and development of each child. In such a cooperative and responsive community, differences are accepted and celebrated, and all relationships are based on respect.

Central to our philosophy is the belief that emotional security and attachment to responsive and respectful adults provide the basis for learning. We view the learning process as a dynamic one that is enhanced by openness to new ideas and willingness to take intellectual risks in the pursuit of knowledge. Guided by a deep respect for the potential of all young children, we recognize the individual learning style, developmental timetable, and personal strength of each child as they grow and learn within the context of their family and community.

We believe that children learn best through active exploration, experience, interaction, experimentation and modeling. We see the classroom environment as another teacher; each classroom design is carefully planned and may evolve throughout the year to meet the needs of the children. The teachers maintain a structure through routine, predictability, and consistency. Teachers are guides, observers and collaborators with children in their learning and discovery. They are also partners with parents and collaborators with one another.

D. DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

The Smith College Center for Early Childhood Education shares with parents the ultimate responsibility for guiding children toward the goal of self-regulation. The staff believes that setting firm, consistent expectations helps to build a child's conscience and self-control. We utilize teaching strategies, limits and routines that foster the internalized controls, awareness of others, and positive social exchanges essential for constructive group life.

Children are guided with positive directions and rational explanations of expectations. To promote the development of autonomy, they are given choices within appropriate limits. We consider the classroom environment to be an important tool in this process. The environment is arranged so that a minimal number of "no's" is necessary. Teachers alter the physical environment, the style of supervision, or the activities offered in the classroom to affect children's behavior, minimize conflict and promote negotiation and cooperation.

We recognize, however, that it is both common and age-appropriate for young children to test limits and behave "out of bounds." This is their way of exploring relationships, expressing their deep feelings, and testing their own autonomy. Infants and toddlers especially may hit, pull hair, poke, push, snatch toys, bite and yell, as a means to get what they want, to express frustration, or simply to explore another person's response. Depending on the age and motivation for the child's misbehavior, our intervention strategies will vary. However, our message to the children ALWAYS is that, although these behaviors are understandable and their feelings are acceptable and important; hurtful behaviors are NOT acceptable. Our goal is

to recognize the individual needs of children while helping them develop legitimate, appropriate ways of meeting their needs without hurting others or school materials.

The Fort Hill teachers are guided by a book by John Gottman, Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child, and by the Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach articulated by Ross Greene in The Explosive Child. Discipline involves setting limits and at times restricting or prohibiting, and also incorporates respect and caring for self and others, explaining the reasons for limits, and helping to provide control for a child who lacks self-control. We help children to distinguish between feelings and behaviors, to develop an appropriate repertoire for expressing one's feelings and needs, and to develop empathy.

E. CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

We view children as researchers of their world, constructing knowledge on an ongoing basis.

We have found inspiration in the early childhood schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The schools of Reggio Emilia have been recognized worldwide for their care of young children and their commitment to excellence. We are fortunate that Smith College has a professional connection with Pistoia, Italy, where the philosophy and practice of the early childhood schools are similar to those of Reggio Emilia. Our staff includes a studio/visual arts teacher and a music coordinator.

Our curriculum recognizes the importance of relationships for the well-being of young children. Within the context of supportive relationships, the curriculum emphasizes child-initiated problem-solving, long-term investigations, and prosocial behavior. Teachers are constantly trying to understand and consider what the children know about their world and help them to form new hypotheses through ongoing exploration of a subject. We help children develop a love of learning as they come to appreciate themselves as learners. The materials in the classrooms reflect our interest in the natural world and recycled materials.

We support children in acquiring a set of fundamental concepts and skills as well as the habits of mind and heart that enable them to understand and operate in their world as effective problem-solvers and responsible community members.

F. STARTING THE YEAR

A family's transition to an early childhood program is important in developing relationships and communication among adults and children. We have created preschool and infant/toddler orientation programs that allow you and your child to become familiar with the teachers, the other children and the environment as the first step in developing trusting relationships. The preschool and infant/toddler programs differ slightly because of the developmental needs of the children.

PRESCHOOL

Some children in each of the three preschool classrooms are returning for their second year of preschool and some children are new to Fort Hill. Teachers plan home visits for all children new to the classroom.

New Preschool Students' Home Visits

The August mailing will include a scheduled time for a home visit for each new student during the week before school begins. Home visits are very informal. Their primary purpose is to offer children the opportunity to meet their teachers for the first time in their home environment. The visits will last about fifteen minutes; no preparation is necessary! Teachers arrive at a child's home, looking forward to meeting the child wherever s/he feels comfortable. Home visits can take place on the front steps, the driveway, a child's room, basement playroom, or outdoor swing set. Teachers often take a picture of the child in a spot of his/her own choosing. A home visit ensures that each child who arrives at school for the first day will see a familiar face in the classroom. The children confirm the value of these visits by referring to them throughout the year, "Remember when you came to MY house?"

Also enclosed in the August mailing is a *Home Visit Supplement Form*. This form gives parents the opportunity to note any thoughts, concerns, or knowledge about their child that they or their child feel is important for teachers to know prior to the first day of school. Parents fill it out and give it to their child's teachers at the time of the home visit.

Preschool Two-Day Orientation Program

There are twelve to eighteen children in each of the preschool classrooms. On the first two days of school the class size is reduced to allow children to be introduced to the classroom routines and organization of the day in a small group with a lower child-to-adult ratio. This is an important transition even for those children familiar with the school and with prior large group experience as it allows them to be introduced to their new group in an environment with more individualized attention. Children attend school on their regular schedule for one of the two orientation days.

INFANT/TODDLER

Some children in the infant/toddler program are new to Fort Hill, some are returning after a summer break, and some have been here through the summer. For every child, even returning children, the first days of the year at Fort Hill are filled with new experiences. We try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as it can be for each child because it serves as a foundation for a positive and fruitful year at Fort Hill, as well as for future transitions. We have designed a transition program to allow you and your child gradually to become familiar with the teachers, the other children and the environment. Because each child responds to separation individually, this period of adjustment may vary among families. The classroom teachers will work with each family to facilitate a smooth transition.

New Infant/Toddler Students' Home Visits

Teachers make home visits to new students the week before school begins. Home visits are an opportunity for the teachers to begin making connections with children in an environment where they feel most comfortable. Teachers collect information from parents about their child's routines, cues and developmental milestones. Teachers answer questions about their practice and philosophy about working with young children.

Infant/Toddler Phase-in Program

We encourage you to consider the first week of the program as an important foundation for your child's full adjustment to her/his time at school as it helps to form the bridge between home and school. Transitions are often eased when a parent remains with the child and the child's schedule is reduced during the first week. We hope you will plan to stay with your child for a few hours to play, observe and communicate with the teachers and other families during the first days of the program. When children are prepared for and nurtured by their parents in the classroom setting, children gain an initial feeling of familiarity and emotional security that usually carries over when the parent is no longer present. This time also gives teachers an opportunity to observe and ask questions about individual patterns of interaction to enable them to continue consistency of care when the phase-in period is over. Children benefit in many ways when teachers and parents communicate and develop positive relationships. We hope that by transitioning in this way, you will feel a part of the classroom throughout the year.

The phase-in program also is important for returning children. All children will return to a new environment with new children and, most likely, at least one new staff member. The phase-in allows children an opportunity to ease into routines after a long break, to become familiar with the changes and reestablish connections.

EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO KNOW...
ABOUT YOUR CHILD
AND THE PROGRAM

W. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

Arrival Time: 8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

Pick-up Times: 12:15 p.m. Preschool Half-Day
3:00 p.m. Academic-Day
4:45 p.m. Full-Day

Please plan to enter the building no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and to leave promptly when you pick-up your child. Teachers have professional responsibilities before and after their work with children as well as personal commitments at the end of their workday. In the morning, the teachers arrive early to meet, prepare and set up rooms, and to review and update their plans for the day. At the end of each classroom-day, teachers have a finite amount of time to meet, discuss the day, and make preparations for the next day. At midday, staffing patterns may be changing, teachers will be getting rooms ready for lunch and rest, and planning times begin immediately at the end of pick-up time. In consideration of these responsibilities, we appreciate your adherence to the above listed arrival and departure times. Thank you very much.

The security system on the front door allows entry between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (the code is noted in the August letter and will change during the school year.). Please use only the front door to enter the building. We ask that only adults enter the security code; *please do not allow children to enter the code.*

The teachers' days end at 5:00 p.m. Please plan to leave the building no later than 5:00 p.m. If you would like to have a conversation with the teacher, if you have siblings to pick up in other classrooms, or anticipate a prolonged departure with your child, please plan to arrive early.

We work to balance a family-friendly climate with maintaining an appropriate environment for infants, toddlers and preschoolers for the entire day. We offer early departure times of 12:15 and 3:00 and older siblings frequently accompany parents to drop-off or pick up a child at Fort Hill. If older siblings arrive with a parent to drop-off or pick-up a child at Fort Hill, we ask that the parent carefully supervise the older child. State regulations require that every child be seen and heard at all times. Because many of the children stay at Fort Hill all day, it is disruptive to the classroom climate when families remain after the earlier departure times as the number of people and activity level greatly increases. Please explain to older siblings that the expectations for their behavior are the same for everyone in the school, and are probably similar to the expectations at their schools. For example, we walk and use quiet voices in the halls.

Much of our equipment is designed for young children and is not safe for older children. This includes the infant/toddler climber and the ladder in The Common. On the playground, the strength and speed of the older siblings can be intimidating to the younger children and the older children may model behaviors that are unsafe for younger children. For example, there is a limit to the height Fort Hill children can climb on the Net House and the momentum of the tire swing can be intimidating to younger children. If older siblings accompany a parent to

pick-up at Fort Hill, we ask that parents carefully supervise the children and plan to leave the playground or school promptly so that the children who remain at Fort Hill are not disrupted. Thank you for your consideration of all the children at Fort Hill.

There is a fifteen-minute grace period before late fees are charged (See **Late Fee Policy**). Please use the grace period only when necessary.

B. SEPARATION ANXIETY - A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

The beginning of school is an exciting time for your child, as she prepares to play and make friends in a new environment. Don't be surprised if she also feels some anxiety. Getting used to separation can be an emotional process, during which your child will be caught between her need to be close to you and her growing independence. Whether starting school for the first time, moving to preschool from a toddler program, or returning to the same classroom, she may display mixed feelings. Even a child who is used to school may experience anxiety after a long vacation, or during transitions such as toilet training or the birth of a sibling.

Young children are still developing communication skills. Their efforts at expressing their distress at separation can be confusing and painful to watch. Remember that these struggles are healthy and natural, no matter how difficult they may feel at the time. While you may not be able to eliminate separation anxiety, the following strategies can help the transition go more smoothly:

- ❖ Recognize your child's feelings. It can be as simple as reflecting, "You look kind of sad this morning."
- ❖ Have a special morning ritual, such as eating together or feeding the cat.
- ❖ As tempting as it may be to give in when your child begs to stay at home, offer a deal instead: "I know you're sad. You need to go to school today but I could: pick you up early; visit your classroom tomorrow morning; let you have a home day on Wednesday"
- ❖ Have your child bring in a soft object of comfort from home – a familiar blanket, hat, or stuffed animal. Or your child may prefer to have a photograph of you.
- ❖ Let your child see that you and the teacher are building a relationship. Greet your child's teacher warmly. Stay and talk for a minute, trying to include your child in the conversation ("Guess what Jesse and I fixed for breakfast this morning – pancake rollups!")
- ❖ Take time to say goodbye. It may be tempting to slip away when your child isn't looking. Clear goodbyes build trust. It is helpful to develop a goodbye ritual – for example, always waving goodbye from the same spot on the playground. Letting your child talk you into extending the goodbye – "Just one more push on the swing! Please! Please! – will only make the separation harder in the long run.

- ❖ Keep teachers informed of any big changes at home. Any change is a transition, and transitions (even happy ones, like getting a new puppy!) can cause anxiety.

At Fort Hill we also have several practices that are meant to support your child through the separation process. During the orientation period in August, your child becomes familiar with his new classroom and teachers with you by his side. As he observes your interactions with teachers and the new environment, he will see that you trust that school will be a fun and safe place. You can solidify his trust through positive comments, such as “This is such a great place. I’m so happy you’re getting to go to school here.” We also try to make it easier for children to adjust to the classroom schedule by reducing the class size on the first day of school.

Most importantly, be sure to talk to the teachers if your child is having a separation problem (preferably while the child is out of earshot). They will be able to help by giving your child extra attention if they know that she is having difficulty adjusting. Please be reassured that separation anxiety is healthy and normal. Together we will support your child as she goes through this important stage of development.

C. MORNING ARRIVAL SUGGESTIONS

The family’s arrival and a parent’s subsequent leaving in the morning can be facilitated with the establishment of a daily good-bye routine. Planning to stay for a few minutes before you leave for work makes leave-taking a little easier for some children. Reading a book to your child, doing a short activity with him/her, or helping him/her to get involved in an activity are some suggestions for the morning routine. Having a usual good-bye place or planning for a wave at the fence or window afterwards may be helpful as well. Teachers are always happy to help establish a routine. They have observed many parents and children and can help you individualize the farewell for your child if you would like.

Even children who are happy throughout the day may have a hard time saying good-bye to a parent in the morning. It is normal for children to protest when a parent leaves and some may protest for many mornings. Many children, though they greatly enjoy their friends and activities at school, would find it a perfect world if they had it all – you and school! On occasion your child may need help from a teacher. Your child may cry when you leave. You may even have to give your child to a teacher to hold as you depart. These are all appropriate reactions to leave-taking between young children and parents. If your departure leaves you feeling uncomfortable, you can call the office when you get to your workplace to see how your child is faring. Usually children stop crying and get involved in an activity fairly soon after a parent leaves.

Your leaving may also be difficult on days when there have been changes at home: a parent traveling, discussion about the arrival of a new sibling, discussion about moving, actually moving, etc. Again, it’s important to keep the teachers aware of any changes at home that may affect your child’s day here.

We understand that there will be days when your child has a doctor’s or other appointment that means arriving late or leaving early from school. We strongly urge that you make your

appointments for early in the morning or late in the day. When children arrive at transitions, lunch or nap time, or are taken out and returned in the middle of the day, they are aware of what they have missed and may have difficulty with the rest of their day. You may want to request appointments at the end of the day to make your child's day easier. If you choose to make an appointment early in the morning, please inform your child's teacher *the day before the appointment* so that we can incorporate the information into our planning. *We strongly encourage bringing children before 11 a.m. so that they have sufficient time for play and engaging with their peers before afternoon routines begin.*

A final word about early arrivals: Sometimes every family gets ahead of themselves and arrives earlier than they normally do. If you arrive before 8:00 a.m., please feel free to enjoy the grounds and playgrounds.

D. DEPARTURE TIME SUGGESTIONS

A separation that frequently gets overlooked is pick-up time. Children must now make the separation from school back to family or other caregivers. They may greet parents with confused emotions: happy to see them at the same time as upset that they left. This confusion can manifest in a number of ways: greetings of "Why did you come so early?" tantrums, refusal to cooperate, indifference to parents, or a sudden need to do all the puzzles again, for example. Parents also may feel confused or distressed by a child's behavior, especially if they anticipated a warm reunion such as a child racing into their arms, telling them happily about their day and how much they were missed! Clearly, the end of the day can be difficult also and may need to be given as much care and planning as the morning separation. The following are things to think about for enhancing a smooth departure:

- Allow your child to have some control over the departure scenario. For example, letting a child pick one activity to do with you or choosing one item to put away at playground pick-up can facilitate the separation.
- Arrive on time as much as possible! *Even a short delay can seem endless to a child who is waiting.*
- Come 5-10 minutes early to spend time with your child and/or talk to the teachers before leaving whenever possible. Arriving at closing time (12:30, 3:15 or 5:00) does not allow for giving a child choices or talking with teachers as the departure will need to be a quick one.
- Maintain a focus on your child as much as possible. Parents often enjoy talking with each other at the end of the day. However, children may require a parent's full attention at departure and may act out or become upset if they don't have it.
- Ask a teacher for help. Sometimes it is easier for the teachers to get the children ready to leave because children do not have the same emotional agenda with the teacher as they do with their parents. This is not a reflection of anyone's competency but rather simply that children tend to make the biggest fusses (and reserve the most love) for their parents. Even with a nap, a child can be tired and emotions can be high at the end of the day. A teacher is

more than willing to help you if your child is having a hard time leaving. Please let the teachers know if you would like help or feel uncomfortable with what is happening at the end of the day.

- If you are going to have someone else pick up your child, please let the teachers know in person and leave a written note. Please introduce us personally to any baby-sitters, friends or relatives who will be regularly picking up your child. We will not allow children to leave with anyone who does not have written permission or whom we don't recognize. If the pick-up person is someone we don't know, we will ask for picture identification.

E. CLOTHING

Please dress your child in sturdy, comfortable clothing. Smocks are available in each room. However, because some children may refuse to participate in activities rather than wear a smock, wearing a smock is always a child's choice. A certain amount of staining is inevitable with young children, and we do not want children to feel they have done something wrong if they get their clothes dirty. If your child does wear special clothing to school, be aware that it may get dirty or stained sometime during the day.

Each child needs a complete set of extra clothing that will be stored in a plastic box in the classroom in the case of spills or accidents. Infant and toddler children need two to three changes of clothing, including a second pair of shoes. Preschool children need a complete set of extra clothes (pants, shirts, sweater or sweatshirt, two pairs of socks and two pairs of underwear). If your child is recently toilet trained (or in the midst of toilet training) please send extra sets of pants and underwear.

Infant and toddler children should bring blankets for napping. The program provides sheets for cribs and nap-mats. Preschool children who stay for the full day should bring a small blanket for nap. We encourage families to send one special object such as teddy bear, cloth diaper, pacifier, etc. which will stay at school in a bag with their blanket and pillow. Please do not send toys or large stuffed animals for rest time as they can be distracting. The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care *Infant Sleep Safety Policy* states: “...**no child under 12 months of age shall be napped in a crib, bassinet, portacrib or playpen containing pillows, comforters, stuffed animals, or other soft, padded materials.**”

PLEASE MARK ALL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME. You can use name tapes or a laundry or permanent-ink pen. We ask that you check your child's box regularly and replace the clothing your child uses. Also, if your child borrows clothes from school or another child's extra clothing, please launder and return.

For preschool and toddler children, we encourage as much independence in dressing as children are capable of. For this reason, we recommend pants with elasticized waistbands. They are more easily managed especially during toileting routines. Suspenders, belts, and pants with snaps and buttons often complicate the dressing process. For infants, we recommend pants with snap legs to facilitate diaper changes.

All children should be dressed so they can enjoy outdoor play every day. Non-skid shoes afford maximum safety for both indoor and outdoor activities, and we ask that all children keep a pair of non-skid footwear in the classroom. Indoor shoes are required for playing in The Common. Shoes with Velcro fasteners are preferable to laces because Velcro promotes dressing independence. Please consult with individual teachers for recommendations of appropriate footwear for young children at school.

Children go outside every day. Please send rainwear if it is raining or if the forecast calls for damp weather. In cold weather children need boots, snow-pants, hats, and mittens every day. If your child stays for the afternoon, please send two sets of snow wear, as frequently the outerwear gets wet in the morning and is not dry before children go out again later in the day. It is helpful to your child if you send garments that are easy to manipulate. For example, zippers are easier than buttons, mittens are easier (and warmer) than gloves. Our goal is to help children do as much dressing as they are capable of on their own. (See **Outdoor Policy** for more information.)

The Lost and Found is located on a shelf in the niche in The Common.

F. SUNSCREEN

We request that parents apply sunscreen and insect repellent in the morning before school. With written parental permission, the teachers will reapply the lotions when appropriate. Each family will receive a permission slip that details the products that we use.

G. HANDWASHING

Please help your child wash his/her hands before entering the classroom.

H. SHOELESS ENVIRONMENTS

Several spaces at Fort Hill are shoeless environments. These include The Common (we also ask that no food or drink be brought onto the carpet in The Common) and Infant/Toddler wing.

I. SPECIAL OBJECTS/TOYS FROM HOME

It is very common for a young child to have a special object, such as a blanket, pacifier or stuffed animal. We welcome these special objects as they not only provide comfort and valuable self-soothing but also can help to build a child's self esteem.

Very young children will keep these objects close by. It is developmentally appropriate for them to do so, and they are not expected to share them with other children. Teachers will work with children to help them learn respect for each others' possessions.

As children grow older and learn to interact in the classroom independently, there will be less need for these comfort items. For example, we ask preschoolers to keep them in their cubbies as much as is possible. However, it remains helpful for children to have such special objects available at rest time or other times when they need to self-soothe.

We ask that children do not bring toys from home. Toys from home distract children from the planned environment, risk being lost or broken, and can create social issues in the classroom. Natural materials, photographs, and non-commercial books are welcome. If you have any questions, please talk with your child's teacher.

J. HEALTH POLICY

We strive to maintain a healthy environment for ALL of the children in our care as well as for the staff. Illness spreads more easily among children in group care than for those in home care. When any signs of illness are present, we ask parents to give close attention to their children to determine the advisability of their participation in the program. Being at school requires more energy/stamina than being at home. As a result, a child who may appear well at home may wilt under the demands of a group environment. An ill child exposes all of the other children and staff at Fort Hill to that illness as well. *We ask that parents consider the needs of all of the children and staff at Fort Hill as they give their attention to this very important issue.* Illness significantly impacts the quality of the program and the individual lives of families and staff. If your child seems to be not quite well, please keep him or her home.

If your child has a sick sibling, please refrain from bringing the sibling into the building. The administration or the classroom teachers will be happy to meet you in the driveway and bring your child into school. Please call us and let us know when you will arrive and we will greet you outside. There is a "pull-off" area of the driveway near the entrance that is reserved for these pick-ups and drop-offs.

We follow the National Health and Safety Guidelines for Out of Home Child Care as published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. They recommend that a child be sent home as soon as possible if one or more of the following situations exists:

- 1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the teacher.
- 2) The illness results in a greater need for care than the childcare staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children as determined by the teacher.
- 3) The child has any of the following symptoms: fever, symptoms of severe illness (e.g., lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs for the child), diarrhea, vomiting illness, persistent abdominal pain, mouth sores with drooling, rash with fever or behavior change, purulent conjunctivitis, head lice, scabies, impetigo, strep throat, chicken pox, pertussis, mumps, measles, unspecified respiratory tract illness or rubella.

We remind parents that the more conservative they are about bringing their children to school when early symptoms appear, the healthier their children and the other children and staff at Fort Hill will be.

Please call the office between 8:00-9:00 a.m. at 585-3290 if your child is ill and will be staying home. If a parent is uncertain about a child's health, we recommend calling to discuss the child's symptoms and how they may affect her/his day at school with a teacher. We may have information about illnesses that are "going around" that may help to clarify a child's condition. If at drop-off time it appears that a child is not well enough to be at school, teachers will ask the parent to take her/him home. Teachers also may call parents, or emergency contacts, during the day to pick up a child from school. We will e-mail all families when a contagious illness is "going around" in a classroom.

H1N1

Information about the H1N1 virus is available on the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care website, <http://www.eec.state.ma.us/SwineFluUpdates.aspx>, and on the Smith website, <http://www.smith.edu/influenza/index.php>.

Listed below are further details regarding some of the more common health concerns. Please consult and use the following information in making your decision regarding your child's health and ability to thrive in a group environment on any given day.

STREP THROAT

If your child is tested for strep throat, please keep him/her home from school until you receive the results of the "quick test." If the test is positive, your child may return to school after receiving three doses of medicine, or twenty-four hours after beginning treatment.

COLDS

The early isolation of a child with signs of a cold not only cuts down on the number of children and staff exposed to the infection but also may minimize an individual child's symptoms or shorten the course of illness. When a child has a cold, s/he needs rest, quiet, extra fluids, often a cool mist humidifier, and may need additional holding and attention to keep her/him comfortable. Because teachers must respond to the needs of a large group of children, they are not able to provide a sick child with the care and comfort s/he may need. *If your child is unable to maintain his usual routine and to participate fully in the program, s/he should be kept home until s/he can do so.*

FEVER

Any child with an axillary temperature of 100 degrees or more should be allowed to stay at home until s/he has been *fever-free for 24 hours after the fever breaks*. A child who develops an axillary temperature of 100 degrees while in care will be isolated until the parents can be

called and arrive to take her home. We expect that parents will respond to such calls quickly and pick up their child *within 30 minutes*.

DIARRHEA

Loose stools are attributable to several causes. Children can have loose stools from eating too much fruit, from teething, as the result of an illness, or from the use of antibiotics. Diarrhea is evident when there is a strong, unpleasant odor associated with the stool. A mucous consistency also is often an identifying characteristic of diarrhea. *We are required to exclude any child with diarrhea from group care as it is highly contagious and difficult to control hygienically.* If a child develops loose stools while in our care, we will closely observe that child to determine its cause. If the loose stool is repeated in that day, the parents will be called to pick her/him up as soon as possible. Children may return to school when the diarrhea has resolved. (The child has had a well-formed stool or twenty fours have passed.)

CONJUNCTIVITIS (OR PINK EYE)

Conjunctivitis is very contagious and requires close attention as well as medication or some form of alternative treatment. A child with purulent conjunctivitis will be excluded from care until after treatment has been initiated. Purulent conjunctivitis is defined as pink or red conjunctiva (inner eyelids and white of eye) with white or yellow discharge. Any recurrence of symptoms will result in the child being sent home immediately.

VOMITING ILLNESS

A child who has vomited two or more times in the previous 24 hours should be kept home until s/he has been free from vomiting for at least 24 hours. A consultation with the health care provider is strongly recommended.

CONTAGIOUS CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

Parents should notify staff immediately if their child develops a contagious illness. Staff is required by law to give notice to all families in a child's room that other children could have been exposed to the illness before or during its outbreak. The notice will include information about what to look for in detecting symptoms. (See **Health Policy** for more information.) We will send an e-mail to all parents when a contagious illness has been reported in the school. We will post the notice in the affected classrooms so that parents are aware that a child in their classroom has been ill.

MISCELLANEOUS (OR MYSTERY) ILLNESSES

Other symptoms that might warrant exclusion or special attention include ear aches and/or ear drainage, unusual listlessness, unexplained rashes or sores, difficulty in breathing, headaches, croupy cough, etc. For any of these symptoms, we ask parents to consult their child's physician before bringing her/him to school. A follow-up note from the physician will be required if the symptoms persist even if a physician previously granted permission to attend

school. **If a child is not well enough to fully participate in all normal activities of the day, please keep her/him home.**

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Non-prescription medication will be given only with written consent of the child's physician. The CECE will accept a signed statement from the physician listing the medication(s), the dosage and criteria for its administration. This statement will be valid for one year from the date that it was signed.

Prescription medication can be given to a child while in care at Fort Hill. Whenever possible, a parent should plan to come to Fort Hill to administer prescription medication if a mid-day dosage is required. When this is not possible, a staff member may administer the medication if a parent has signed a Medication Authorization Form (available in each room). *The medication must be labeled and in its original container with the child's name, the name of the drug, and directions for administration and storage clearly indicated on the label.* No medications will be given if pre-mixed in food or a baby bottle. No medications will be administered without a doctor's order.

ADMINISTRATIONS OF TOPICAL OINTMENTS OR SPRAYS

Topical ointments such as petroleum jelly, salve for dry skin, sunscreen, bug repellent, etc. will be administered to children with written parental permission. The signed statement from the parent will be valid for one year.

We ask parents to apply insect repellent and sunblock when needed before children come to school in the morning. For children who stay for the afternoon, Fort Hill teachers will apply insect repellent and sunscreen with written parental permission. We purchase large quantities of specific brands, which are detailed in the permission form.

ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING THE DAY

If a child should become ill or injured at school, parents will be notified immediately. If it is necessary, staff may ask a parent to come to take the child home or to a physician. If parents cannot be reached, those listed as emergency contacts will be called. Scratches and bumps are a normal part of any young child's experience. Parents will be notified about these incidents at pick-up time. (See **Emergency and Non-Emergency Medical Procedures** for more information)

K. OUTDOOR POLICY

As teachers of young children, we believe strongly in the physical, emotional, and social advantages of fresh air and outdoor play. Children are happy to be outdoors as they benefit from the fresh air and exercise accompanying their play. We believe it is important for children to have an equivalent time for gross motor activity in a less structured outdoor environment as they do for fine motor activity indoors. Preschool and older toddler children

spend much of their outside time on the playgrounds adjacent to the Fort Hill building and on exploratory walks in the area. Infants and toddlers also are outside for stroller rides as often as the weather allows. Because infants are confined to strollers and may be far from school when they are discovered to be cold, teachers use discretion taking infants out in cold temperatures.

Preschool children, however, play outside everyday, even if it is for only ten or fifteen minutes, in all types of weather with the exception of heavy rain or extreme temperatures. The school pediatrician has advised that even on a very cold day with proper clothing, children can be safe and comfortable. Teachers monitor children's comfort closely, and children who complain of being cold are brought indoors. We have discovered that warmly dressed children enjoy unstructured outdoor playtime even on very cold days. Our motto is a Norwegian saying: *"There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."*

On rainy days children need rain jackets as well as boots or an extra pair of shoes to change into when they come inside. In cold weather, all children need hats, mittens, boots, and snow pants to enjoy their time outdoors. Generally, layered clothes are helpful as the temperature changes throughout the day. On the advice of the school pediatrician, we ask every child to have a head covering in order to maintain a warm body temperature. We have found that mittens, especially mittens made of material designed for outdoor activities rather than cotton mittens, are much warmer than gloves and allow the children to play comfortably in the snow and cold air. Many children wear neck warmers to school. These are versatile and children can wear them bunched around their necks or pull them up to cover their faces. Winter socks, such as those sold for skiing, help keep children's feet warm in their boots. Boots should fit snugly enough to prevent falling off during active play. Children who stay for the afternoon need two pairs of snow pants. Please clearly label every item of clothing; snowsuits and jackets can often look similar, and labeling also cuts down on lost clothing.

L. THE PLAYGROUND

There are two play areas at Fort Hill – an infant/toddler playground and a preschool playground. The equipment on each playground is age-appropriate for that age group.

Playground Gates

The gates on the playground are closed during the day. We ask that if you enter or exit the playground, please be sure to secure the gate. We do not allow children to manipulate the gates at any time and ask families to follow the same protocol and not allow children to open or close the gates.

Wheeled Toys and Helmets

Helmets must be worn whenever a child is on a wheeled toy on the Fort Hill campus. Every toddler and preschooler is given a helmet when they begin school. There are toddler and preschool helmets. The helmet is labeled with the child's name and fit to his/her head. When the child leaves the school, the helmet stays at school and is reused.

Safety Rules

We try to limit the rules on the playground to ones that are necessary for safety. We ask parents to also support these rules when they are on the playground and especially when

siblings are on the playground. The playground rules will be e-mailed to all families in September.

M. FOOD POLICY

INFANTS

Parents provide all the food necessary for infants, including baby foods and prepared formula or breast milk. All provisions are stored in the refrigerator. Infants' bottles need to be taken home and washed each day, as there are not adequate facilities for sterilizing bottles or preparing formula. Bottles of breast milk or formula are refrigerated until right before eating. Prepared bottles of powder formula should be discarded after 24 hours. We will cover, refrigerate, and discard after 48 hours any open containers of concentrated formula. Unused breast milk can be frozen for up to 3 months.

Infants are fed bottles either when held or in a sitting position. We do not prop bottles up nor do we allow children to carry bottles around. Teachers transfer food for babies from original containers to dishes at feeding time. Staff will not offer new food until after it has been given at home. All items from home such as bottles, food jars, and other containers must be clearly labeled with children's names.

TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

Parents of toddlers and preschoolers provide all the food (parents also provide utensils for preschoolers) necessary for lunch for their children. The school provides both a morning and an afternoon snack for toddlers and preschoolers. The snack menus are posted one week in advance in each classroom. Parents can choose to sign up for their children to have milk provided or send beverages of their own. Water is always available.

Toddler lunches are stored in a refrigerator. Refrigerator space, however, is inadequate for three classrooms of preschoolers, so we ask that parents include a frozen ice pack to keep food and drink cold. We will return all leftovers in children's bags so parents will know what children have or have not eaten. Preschool children should put lunchboxes in their cubbies when they arrive in the morning.

We support the development of healthful eating habits and ask that, to the greatest extent possible, families provide nutritious lunches and food for the children. Families often bring a special snack on their child's birthday to share with the class. Because each family makes choices about the foods they serve, we ask that when you bring food to share, you provide a nutritious snack and avoid foods that have high sugar or fat content. Please also note any allergies in your child's classroom, as well as the "peanut-free" policy of the school.

Suggestions of healthy lunch foods for preschoolers and toddlers include: yogurt, cheese, sandwiches, leftovers from dinner, soup in a thermos, applesauce, fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts (as age appropriate), salads, bagels, slices of pizza, breadsticks, carrot (or other vegetable) sticks and dip. Some children prefer only a few foods, but all children can learn to eat a varied diet when new foods are offered more than once.

Because we encourage both preschool and toddler children to feed themselves, we ask parents to prepare children's food in small, manageable, "ready-to-eat" portions. Such portions are the easiest for children to handle independently. We also allow children to determine the order in which they will eat their food. Please pack only food that you are comfortable in having your child eat at any time. For example, if you pack a sweet treat, your child may choose to eat the treat before eating more nutritious food.

Please be aware that some children have allergies. For this reason, we ask children not to share food with others and may restrict certain foods from the building. Individual teachers may inform parents of any particular food allergies as necessary. We encourage parents whose children have food allergies to provide a supply of non-allergenic snack foods to be kept in their child's classroom. We have had children with severe allergies to peanuts and we have determined that *we will be a peanut-free school*. Alternatives to peanut butter include soy nut butter or almond butter.

All items from home such as lunchboxes, thermoses, food containers, or utensils must be clearly labeled with children's names. (See also **Snack and Lunch Philosophy and Guidelines**)

N. SNACK AND LUNCH PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDELINES

Each preschool and toddler group has a morning snack, lunch (the preschool lunch begins at 12:30), and an afternoon snack (after 3:15). A large part of social learning and family living involves food. Teachers sit with the children during lunch and try to make these meal times relaxed and warm. In this way, the children begin to participate in the social aspects of eating.

An important part of a comfortable eating environment is the preparation of the food itself. There is a continuum of food preparation as children grow. For instance, infants need adults to provide completely prepared foods (usually warm) for them to eat. For children wanting to feed themselves, we ask parents to begin to provide food that is easy to pick up such as sandwiches or pasta. When children become fully able to feed themselves, we ask that parents send their food in individual lunch boxes. As children become more independent, less adult preparation is needed. For instance, by the time children are in preschool, they bring their own lunchboxes to the table and set up their own food as much as possible.

Toddler and preschool teachers strive to provide nutritious and balanced snacks for children. We serve a variety of different foods and present them in an enjoyable manner. A snack menu is posted in each room.

Birthday snacks are discussed in **Holiday and Birthday Celebrations**.

We ask parents to prepare lunches that are nutritious and appealing to the child. Keep the following guidelines in mind when preparing the child's lunch bag or box:

- Provide small portions, cut in pieces that the child can manage without assistance.

- Choose items you know your child likes.
- Send beverages in a thermos or juice box (no glass bottles, please).
- Do not send peanut butter, candy or gum.

O. HOLIDAY AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

PHILOSOPHY

We respect the fact that families often have different holiday traditions, and we encourage parents to come into the classroom and share their family celebrations with us. Holidays in general have become quite commercialized and can be over-stimulating for young children. Aware of children's excitement surrounding such celebrations, we allow time for group discussion of their individual experiences without emphasizing holidays in the curriculum.

Most infant/toddler children are too young to learn about and appreciate the diverse celebrations, beliefs, and rituals of our families. We believe that holiday celebrations are best participated in and understood by infants and toddlers when they occur in the context of their particular family.

PRACTICES

Infant/Toddler Program

Birthdays are honored with small celebrations to mark growth and change and reaffirm the importance of each individual. Please discuss with the teachers what kind of celebration would be appropriate and fit into the room's routine.

Preschool Program

We do celebrate children's birthdays in the preschool. Children often enjoy bringing a special snack to share. Children are greatly influenced by others' choices for birthday snack. We find that once a tradition of cupcakes, for example, is established, most children will ask for that same snack on their special day. This may result in many mornings of cupcakes for snack and we encourage families to consider alternatives to snacks with high fat and sugar content. Please consider the nutritional content of the food that you will be serving the children in your child's classroom when you provide snack for the group.

Please notify teachers a week in advance if you plan to provide a snack so that you are aware of the individual allergies and dietary restrictions of the children in your child's class. We post snack menus a week in advance and according to state regulations, must notify families of the food their children will eat in school.

If you are having a birthday party for your child, we ask that invitations be sent through the mail unless every child in the class is invited. Invitations found in cubbies cause great excitement, and we wish to avoid unnecessarily hurt feelings for those children not invited. We encourage children not to discuss their out of school parties for this reason.

Families frequently invite teachers to attend children's birthday parties. While we are honored by invitations, we discourage staff from attending children's birthday parties. This policy protects both children and teachers. It is likely that teachers will not be able to accept every invitation and we would like to eliminate the possibility that a child is disappointed because a teacher attended one child's party and not another's. The policy also ensures that teachers do not feel "pressure" to attend school-related functions on personal time. The policy prevents the perception that some teachers are more accessible, caring or involved than other teachers because of how they choose to spend their personal time.

O. TOILETING AND DIAPERING

Parents provide diapers and ointments for infants and children not yet toilet trained. Children in diapers are changed at specific times during the day, but are also changed whenever necessary. We ask parents to check their children's supplies of diapers and extra clothing regularly. We will give reminders as necessary.

When children do express interest in using the toilet at school, teachers offer them the chance to sit on the toilet at each diaper change. When children are out of diapers and staying dry most of the time at home, teachers are happy to begin the transition at school as well. Teachers will talk with parents about how best to support children's needs through this transition. We ask that parents use diapers until children are ready for underwear. Our experience with "pull-ups" is that they give children mixed messages about their toileting independence and make diaper changes more difficult in group care.

We find that the transition to using the toilet takes place most easily when children initiate the training process. This may involve extra patience and giving up of adult expectations. When children are ready, this process most often happens quickly and easily.

Children who have learned to use the toilet on their own will be encouraged to continue to do so. Children who are toilet trained are reminded periodically throughout each day to use the toilet. Child-sized toilets are located in the classrooms for the convenience and safety of the children. No child is ever punished, scolded, or humiliated for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Teachers can be a source of information and guidance in the toilet learning process.

P. NAP AND REST TIME

Each preschool and toddler group has a rest time after lunch. Teachers promote rest time by darkening the room (shutting off the lights and pulling down shades), rubbing children's backs and by playing quiet music or story tapes. Children are not required to sleep but are expected to stay on their rest mats with books or quiet materials so as not to disturb those who do sleep. Once the children who sleep during the afternoon have fallen asleep, children who are awake engage in quiet activities in the room. We have arranged the schedule of our day to allow for children who take some time to fall asleep to be able to have a complete rest when they do. Children sleep as long as they wish and are not wakened by the staff. If your child is asleep when you arrive to pick her up, you are welcome to stay with her until she awakens.

In the infant room, teachers work closely with parents to develop a routine that is both familiar and predictable. The infants follow their own individual rhythms of sleeping, eating, diapering, and playing. Predictable routines help children develop self-regulation and trust in their caregivers and their environment.

If sleep becomes an issue for your family, as it often does in early childhood, staff can offer resources and experience and would be happy to talk with you about it.

We provide cribs for infants. When children are one-year-old, we begin transitioning them to nap mats.

Infant Sleep Policy

An infant is defined as a child **younger than fifteen months** of age. This infant sleep policy will be **published in the staff and parent handbooks** and will be **reviewed with parents during the home visit** prior to attending the program. The policy will be **reviewed with teachers during the new hire orientation**.

SLEEP POSITIONS

Back to Sleep and Exceptions

Infants will be **placed flat on their backs to sleep unless written orders from a physician** indicate an alternate sleep position. In the event of written physician's orders, the orders will identify a **timeframe** for how long the orders are in effect and the order will be **placed in the child's file**. Instructions specifying the alternate sleep position, without specific medical information, will be **posted on the child's crib**.

Transitioning from An Alternate Position

If an infant has been sleeping in an alternate position prior to enrollment, the program will either: a) obtain written parental permission to seek advice from the child's pediatrician about the best and safest way to transition to the back to sleep position, or b) request that the parent supply written documentation from the pediatrician with the information.

Placing Infants on their Side and Positioners

Infants will **not be placed on their side to sleep** and **devices such as wedges and infant positioners will not be used**.

Pacifiers

Infants **who use pacifiers will be offered the pacifier** when they are placed to sleep. The pacifier **will not be put back in the infant's mouth if it falls out** while the infant is asleep. Teachers will **check the pacifiers periodically** for tears and clean and maintain them as required.

Infants Turning Over During Sleep

After being placed on his/her back to sleep, **an infant who can easily turn over** from back to front and front to back **may remain in whatever position s/he prefers** to sleep.

SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

The program will use only U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses.

- Each infant, including siblings, twins, and triplets, under 12 months of age will **have his/her own individual crib**
- Crib slats will be **less than 2 3/8 inches apart**.
- Corner posts on cribs will **not be higher than 1/16 of an inch**
- Infants **will not be left in a crib with drop sides down**.
- Playpen/port-a-crib weave will be **less than 1/4 inch**.
- **Manufacturers' requirements for height and weight** will be followed in assigning infants to cribs/port-a-cribs.
- Infants will **not be placed to sleep on any soft surfaces** such as water beds, couches or air mattresses.
- Mattresses will be **firm and fit the crib** without allowing space between the crib sides and the mattress. The mattress will be deemed **too small if two fingers** can be squeezed between the mattress and the crib.
- Mattresses will be covered with **snug, fitted sheets**.
- Cribs will be **free from loose bedding, toys, and other soft objects**. This includes, but is not limited to, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheep skins, bumper pads, and/or stuffed toys.
- If an infant falls asleep in a highchair, bouncer, swing, car seat or other equipment, s/he will be **removed from the equipment and placed in a safe sleep environment**.

- To prevent infants from overheating the **temperature in the room will be monitored and any outdoor or excessive clothing will be removed**. Sleep clothing such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets may be used as an alternative.
- If a **light blanket** is used, the infant's **feet will be placed at the foot of the** crib and the blanket will be tightly tucked along the sides and foot of the mattress. The blanket will not come up higher than the infant's chest.
- **Bibs and pacifiers will not be tied** around the infant's neck or clipped to their clothing during sleep.
- **Smoking is not allowed** in or near the program.

SUPERVISION

- All children, including infants, will be provided with adequate supervision that ensures their health and safety. Teachers will be able to **visually supervise infants without obstructions** such as blankets draped over the sides of cribs, shelving units, or other classroom furnishings.
- All rooms, including nap rooms and rooms used for sleep, will have **sufficient lighting to allow teachers to monitor infants at all times**, including during sleep.

Q. GROUP PLACEMENT DECISIONS

The placement of children in classrooms at the CECE is a very careful and thoughtful process. We have several goals when we determine placements. As a primary goal, we plan, to the greatest extent possible, for children to stay together with their teaching team for their years in the infant/toddler level. Another goal is to ensure that children have appropriate social peers in their room. We solicit input from infant/toddler teachers and parents to place children in supportive social groups. An additional goal is to balance a variety of aspects of the group. This may include gender, age, individual needs and abilities, family circumstances and schedule requests.

The classrooms at Fort Hill collaborate with one another to a great extent. Children interact with children from other classrooms both formally and informally on the playground, in the studio and The Common and in the classrooms. There are many opportunities for children to interact with children of all ages and for siblings to interact with one another during the day.

EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO KNOW...
ABOUT YOU
AND THE PROGRAM

A. SCHOOL/FAMILY COMMUNICATION

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children benefit significantly when teachers and parents regularly and openly communicate and in the process develop positive relationships. Building relationships among parents and teachers helps to provide a strong foundation for children's positive experiences at school. Parents are encouraged to talk openly with teachers to establish these relationships.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit and to observe in their child's classroom. When parents visit, they communicate to children that they value the school. As parents build relationships with staff, other children, and each other, we can provide continuity between home and school, and the entire program is enriched. We welcome your comments and suggestions. An envelope is posted on the Parent Bulletin Board in the front hall for your ongoing suggestions and comments.

PRACTICES

Early in the school year we hold a parent meeting. The community of parents and teachers meet and whole-school topics are discussed. Parents and teachers then adjourn to individual classrooms where parents have an opportunity to tour classrooms and teachers share information about the program and respond to parents' questions and suggestions.

Our website is an important mode of communication. The URL is www.smith.edu/forthill. We encourage families to visit the website often as it is updated frequently. There is a link to classroom blogs and to documentations on the "Parent and Educators" page. The username and password are distributed by e-mail each year.

In the infant/toddler classrooms, parents complete a short daily log when bringing a child to the classroom. The log documents information about a child's prior evening, night and morning at home. This information is essential for teachers to understand and care for very young children. We encourage you to speak with the teachers each day as well, especially about any special instructions or unusual events. Infant teachers record information about eating, sleeping, and diapering in the log as well.

Parent and teachers meet for conferences several times during the year. We strongly recommend that both parents attend. Parents who cannot attend a conference at a scheduled time may request a more convenient time. Conferences are a time to exchange information, discuss children's development and set goals. Teachers or parents may initiate additional conferences as needed. Initial conversations with parents will be held in September. Conferences will be scheduled again in January. Parents will receive a written report with an optional conference in May. Teachers are happy to meet at any time during the year. Please contact the teacher directly to schedule additional conferences.

Teachers prepare written progress reports to complement scheduled conferences and less formal conversations. These reports include information about a child's adjustment to school, each child's growth in many areas of development (social-emotional, language, motor, cognitive, etc.). The number and length of these reports correspond to the rate of growth of

young children. For example, parents of infants will receive more frequent reports than preschool and toddler parents. The preschool program uses an assessment known as Work Sampling, which includes a portfolio of children's work. The portfolio is kept at school for the time the child is enrolled at Fort Hill and is given to the family when the child leaves the school.

Teachers are always willing to meet with parents at their request. We value daily informal communication. We also encourage parents to call and share their questions, concerns, and suggestions as they arise. We ask that parents keep us informed of family events and circumstances that may affect their child. Changes that may seem routine or ordinary to an adult may affect a young child differently. It is also important that you notify the office staff of any changes of address, phone numbers (at home and at work), caregivers, or persons designated for pick-up.

A school-wide calendar is another source of communication between the school and families. *Please note on your personal calendar any holidays or early school closings or special school events.*

Individual classrooms send regular e-mails detailing classroom activities and upcoming events. A school-wide documentation is posted every Friday on the "Parents and Educators" page on the Fort Hill website (www.smith.edu/forthill).

We communicate non-confidential information through email to facilitate communication with families and to support a college-wide effort to reduce the amount of paper used on the campus. If you do not regularly check email, please inform the administrative assistant and s/he will distribute paper copies in your family's classroom mail pocket.

We also share information about the program and children's experiences in less formal ways. Please check the bulletin boards located in the hallway outside classrooms for information about school activities, daily schedules, lesson plans, and other information for parents. Displays of photographs or children's work in the halls and rooms throughout the building also document in great detail children's experiences and learning and can be a good starting point for conversations about school.

There is a Parent Bulletin board in the front entry. Please feel free to post information of interest to families on the board.

School-wide meetings are occasionally scheduled to discuss important issues.

Individual classrooms, parent organizations, or staff may schedule group events throughout the year. Parents are welcome to suggest topics for school meetings and/or plan a group gathering even if simply to enjoy one another's company.

Each year parents are asked to complete an evaluation survey form to provide formal feedback about the program. This survey is also an important communication tool.

TELEPHONES

Each of the classrooms has a telephone. Ringing telephones can be disruptive and conversations on the telephone remove the teachers' attention from the children. For these reasons, all calls will be answered by voice mail. A prompt at the end of the message offers the caller the option to dial "0" to reach the administrative assistant. If the call is an emergency, we will interrupt the classroom and notify the staff to answer the call. Teachers will check the voice mail, pick up messages and return calls when the call will not be disruptive to the program. Please feel free to press "0" or dial the main number, 585-3290, if you would like to "check-in" and find out how your child is doing.

The telephone numbers are:

Main Office:	585-3290
Fax:	585-3292
Director:	585-4329
Program Coordinator:	585-4280
West Room:	585-4203
South Room:	585-4587
East Room:	585-4588
North Room:	585-4589
Group A:	585-4984
Group B:	585-4990
Group S:	585-4991
Studio	585-4992

B. PARENT PARTICIPATION

Teachers invite parents to participate as much as they are able or would like to in the program. Parents may choose to go on outings, do special projects, to read to children, or simply to spend time in the classroom. We ask that parents follow classroom guidelines to provide consistency for all children.

When spending time in the classroom, we ask that parents honor the confidentiality of what they see and hear in the classroom. If parents wish to talk about their own children or about anything they observe during their visit, teachers are happy to respond to their questions when children are engaged elsewhere.

C. PTO

The Fort Hill PTO is an active group and sponsors many social, educational and fundraising events. All families enrolled in the program are members of the PTO and we welcome active participation. Sweatshirts, T shirts and coffee mugs with the Fort Hill logo are available through the PTO.

D. CALENDAR

A draft of the CECE annual calendar is sent to families in July. The final calendar is published and sent with the August mailings. The calendar lists closing dates and dates for all-school events. The CECE follows the Smith College calendar for holiday closings. The program also closes for the Smith College March Break and for monthly staff development meetings.

The closings for staff development days are scheduled as frequently as possible on days that there are no classes at Smith College or on days that the Campus School and/or local public schools are closed. Staff development days offer training and development opportunities for all staff members and enable staff to:

- work together to develop a comprehensive, cohesive curriculum from infancy to preschool;
- renew the classroom environment;
- engage in professional development activities;
- document children's learning;
- develop assessment and reporting tools;
- review best practices; and,
- build and strengthen classroom teams and community.

More information about the rationale for the calendar is available on the website on the "Parents and Educators" page with the link to the annual calendar.

E. LATE FEE POLICY

Many families are occasionally late. If you are going to be late, please call the school, 585-3290, and let us know so that we can communicate to your child and his/her teachers. The late fee policy was developed by a group of parents and teachers to recognize that sometimes lateness is unavoidable and at the same time is disruptive for children and classrooms. Late pick-ups will be noted at the following times:

- 12:30 p.m. - Half-Day Program
- 3:15 p.m. - Academic-Day Program
- 5:00 p.m. - Full-Day Program

Each family is allowed three late pick-up "warnings." In an effort to discourage chronic lateness, upon the fourth late pick-up, the family will be billed a \$100.00 fee. A subsequent late pick-up will be billed at \$100.00 and will be accompanied by a meeting with the Director to discuss possible solutions.

Please note that we use an honor system to record pick-up times. There is an atomic clock adjacent to the sign-out board and we ask families to record the time on the clock. Once a parent signs out, s/he is responsible for the child. We ask families to refrain from "signing out" a child and then leaving the child to be supervised by the teachers or another family.

We offer three departure times and it is important to the well-being of all the children and teachers for families to leave promptly after they greet their child and collect their belongings. The classrooms continue to operate in the afternoon and it is disruptive to the classroom if families and children remain in the classroom or common spaces and socialize.

(See also **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES, MORNING ARRIVAL SUGGESTIONS, and DEPARTURE TIME SUGGESTIONS** for more information)

F. SIGN-IN/OUT

Each classroom has a clipboard with a form to record the time your child arrives at school and the time you depart with your child. There is also a place to record any information you would like to share with your child's teacher. Please complete this form every day when you arrive and depart, as we are required by licensing regulations to maintain these records. Please use the time on the atomic clock that is adjacent to the sign-in/out board to record the time.

Please be sure to sign in and out every day. The log is used to verify attendance during times of emergency or evacuation.

Please be sure to leave a telephone number where you can be reached. It is very important that we are able to contact parents in case of emergency or illness. Please check messages frequently if you are away from your phone.

G. PHOTOGRAPHS

Parents frequently ask if they may take photographs or videos in their child's classroom. We allow families to photograph, however, to protect the privacy of the children and their families, this is only allowed for personal use and with the permission of the Director. If we receive a request to photograph from someone other than an enrolled family, we require signed permission from families.

H. RESEARCH/COLLEGE STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The Center for Early Childhood Education serves as a lab school for Smith College and faculty and students frequently conduct observations and research in the classrooms. Signed permission is obtained from families before children participate in research projects and children may choose not to participate.

Smith College students also assist teachers and participate as student workers, volunteers and interns.

I. SNOW DAYS

The Center for Early Childhood Education follows the Smith College cancellation policy for delayed openings, early closings, or cancellations due to weather.

The Smith College Information Line at 585-INFO will carry a recorded message if there are changes in office opening or closing times. *The information line is the only “official” source of weather emergency information.* The CECE follows the schedule of the administrative offices at Smith College. Local radio stations also will carry information about Smith College delays and closings.

J. VEHICLE APPROACH TO THE FORT HILL CAMPUS

We ask families driving to Fort Hill to follow the safe traffic pattern detailed here. Because Lyman Road is narrow and cars are often parked on the side of the road, we ask families to use it only for exiting Fort Hill. To enter Fort Hill, turn off of South Street onto Monroe Street, then turn left onto East Street, cross Lyman Road and arrive at the campus via the one-way entry driveway. Leave the campus via the one-way exit driveway, turning right onto Lyman Road.

Please drive very slowly through the Fort Hill campus.

K. PARKING AND ENTERING THE BUILDING

Parking is available in the large parking lot for all Fort Hill families. A few spaces located near the building are reserved for families carrying infants. One space near the building is designated for handicapped parking. Please leave these spaces free for qualified families. *Please park only in the designated parking lot and do not park on the driveway.*

For safety reasons, we ask that children walk next to their parents on the inside of the sidewalk that runs along the driveway. *Please do not let children run ahead of adults on the sidewalk or in the parking lot.*

If you enter or exit the school through the playground, please remind your child that only adults open and close the gates. Children should wait for adults at the gate and the adult should open and reclose the gate.

Please enter the building only through the front door. This practice helps to keep the classrooms clean as well as secure. Infant/Toddler families may exit through the back door at the end of the Little Common.

L. THE COMMON

The Common is the central space in the school. We also have a “Little Common” at the end of the infant/toddler wing. The spaces are named after the idea of a New England town common and the space serves the school in much the same way as a town common. We gather for all-school functions in the common and children will go to the common to interact with children from other groups. The space is valuable for large group gatherings and as an alternative to the classroom space and as a space where small groups of children are able to move freely.

If the common is not being used by a classroom, families are welcome to use the common after school hours for a limited period of time. Because of the space and needs of the children in the infant/toddler wing, **we ask that families do not use the little common at any time.** The rules for the big common are posted on the shelf at the entrance of the common. We appreciate it if the expectations for children remain the same when they are with their parents as when they are with teachers. Licensing regulations require that all children be seen and heard at all times and we ask that parents supervise their children at all times. Because the space is important to the whole school, we ask that families use the common for a limited time after picking up their child and plan to leave the common by either 12:30, 3:30 and 4:45, depending on your pick-up time. If older siblings are with the group, please monitor their behavior so that the younger children feel safe. Please monitor activity level and voices, as there are many children who are engaged in their day at school at that time. You will note that some of the equipment, including the ladder, is not safe for children older than four-years-old.

M. BABYSITTING POLICY

We ask that teachers, long-term substitute teachers, and student teachers not provide childcare outside of the program for families enrolled in the program. Although developing appropriate personal relationships among teachers, children and families is an important part of creating a responsive school community, we also respect the professional nature of these relationships. As we strive to maintain a balance between the personal and professional, we have found that direct involvement with families outside the program has the potential for disrupting this balance. We believe it is in the best interest of staff, children, and families to uphold this policy.

In the fall, we publish a list of students at Fort Hill who are interested in babysitting for families. Please maintain the confidentiality of this list. Smith College does not screen or in any way evaluate the students whose names are on the list. The list is provided as a convenience to families, but not as a recommendation or “approval” of the students.

N. CHILDREN'S RECORDS

The information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The program will distribute or release information in a child's record only to those directly related to implementing the program plan for the child, or unless we receive the written consent of the child's parent(s). If a child's record is subpoenaed, we will notify the parent(s).

A parent may request access to his or her child's record. The record will be available within two business days after the initial request. The administrative assistant will document the following information when records are released: the name, signature and position of the person releasing or distributing the information; the date; the portions of the record which were distributed or released; the purpose of the distribution or release; and the signature of the person to whom the information was distributed or released. This log will be available only to the child's parent(s) and the program personnel responsible for record maintenance.

A child's parent(s) has the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant information to the child's record, as well as to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in a child's record. If the parent(s) is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child's record, the parent shall have the right to have a conference with the director to make his objections known. Within one week of the conference, the director will, in writing, provide a written decision and reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the parent(s), steps will be taken immediately to put the decision into effect.

When the child is no longer enrolled at Fort Hill, parent(s) may request in writing that the records be transferred to the parent(s) or to any other person the parent(s) identifies.

O. EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND REFERRAL SERVICE PROCEDURE

The philosophy of the CECE is to provide early intervention strategies to support children's individual development.

When a staff member has concerns about a child, the following procedure will be used. Any written reports are confidential and are only available to the child's parents and school staff. Parents must sign a written release before any information can be shared with consultants or other agencies.

- Teachers document observations of the child.
- The teacher asks the director or consulting school psychologist to observe the child and meet with the child's teachers.
- The team will develop classroom strategies to support the child. This discussion will be documented and a copy placed in the child's file.

- If concerns persist, the teacher will arrange a conference with parents. The director may attend this meeting. The meeting will be documented and a copy placed in the child's file.
- During the conference the team may make a recommendation to the director to schedule a meeting or screening with a consulting psychologist or other school staff. The consultant will then observe the child in school.
- After the consultant observes the child, s/he will meet with staff to discuss the observation and make recommendations. These recommendations may include referring the child to the special education department of the public schools (children 3+ years) or REACH (an early intervention agency for children under 3 years).
- This meeting will also be documented and a copy placed in the child's file.
- A plan of intervention will be developed in consultation with the consultant, teachers and parents and will be documented by the consultant or by the teacher.
- The initial observation and conference with the consultant will be funded by the CECE. Any further evaluation and/or treatment is the responsibility of the parents.
- If a referral is made to the public schools, outside agency or specialist, the teachers and director will communicate regularly with specialists and will attend evaluation meetings. If a child receives services such as physical or occupational therapy, we welcome service delivery at school.
- If the parents choose not to participate in the evaluation or treatment plan, the director reserves the right to deny the family further participation in the school's programs. (See Termination Process Policy)

P. TERMINATION PROCESS POLICY

1. A child may be terminated from the CECE if:
 - The health and safety of the child or other children cannot be assured
 - The child's developmental needs are not being met at the school.
 - Tuition has not been paid according to contract.
2. Parents will be notified both in writing and at a face-to-face meeting, when possible, about the circumstances including the reasons for termination, and a copy of this letter will be kept in the child's file.
3. The director will inform the parents of the availability of information and referral for other services.
4. When any child leaves the school (whether initiated by the parents or the CECE), we believe it is important for the child and his/her friends and teachers to say good-bye and prepare for the departure however it is possible.

Q. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT PROCEDURE

Background Record Check Policy

The following people have been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to conduct and review Background Record Checks (BRCs):

Licensee: Martha Christenson Lees
Reviewers: Lois Ducharme
Lori McKenna

The Licensee and reviewer will be approved by the EEC every two years. If there is a change in Licensee or Reviewers, the Licensee will submit the appropriate forms to the EEC.

BRCs will be conducted on all employees, student workers, volunteers, substitutes, and interns every two years, or whenever the program receives information that may indicate that a new CORI and/or DSS background records check is appropriate.

Prior to offering a position, a BRC will be completed for every new employee over the age of fifteen. The candidate will submit a Request/Consent form for a BRC with a photocopy of a government-approved photo ID. The Licensee/Reviewer will submit the Request/Consent form to BRC via mail or web BRC Manager (<https://www.eec.state.ma.us/SSO/>).

The decision to hire will be made after receiving a “no record/no finding” response to the CORI and DSS check. The “New Interim Optional Policy” regarding the DSS finding may be implemented as necessary. If the result is other than “no record/no finding,” further review will be conducted. If the result is “pending,” the candidate will not be offered a position requiring unsupervised contact with children until the pending issue is resolved.

If there is an adverse CORI finding, the candidate will be notified of the finding and given a copy of the BRC results. A discretionary review may be conducted and the candidate will be offered the opportunity to provide additional information, e.g., a letter of recommendation, a letter from a probation office or information from a mental health professional.

If there is an adverse DSS finding, the candidate will be notified of the finding and asked if s/he would like to continue with the hiring process. If s/he chooses not to continue, s/he will be considered ineligible for hire. If the candidate wishes to continue, the appropriate box on the EEC notification will be checked and the form will be returned to the EEC BRC unit. Once the redacted copy of the 51B is received, the hiring process will continue.

Personnel files will include the original Request/Consent for BRC Form, a copy of the photo ID, and one of the following:

- Statement that both CORI and DSS review was completed prior to hire
- Web BRC receipt page signed and dated after the review

If a Discretionary Review is conducted, the information will be maintained in a separate and secure location accessed only by the Licensee or Reviewers.

All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts law. If a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, he/she must file a report with the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.

The following are the steps for this procedure:

1. A staff member who suspects abuse or neglect must document his/her observations including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior and any other pertinent information. The staff member will discuss this information with the director.
2. The director or the staff member with assistance from the director will make a verbal report to DSS, to be followed by a written report 51A within 48 hours.
3. If a staff member believes that an incident should be reported to DSS, and the director disagrees, the staff member may report to DSS directly.
4. All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect that are reported to DSS will be communicated to the parents by the director unless a report is contra-indicated.

Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect While in Care of the Center

It is the CECE's commitment to protect all children in this facility from abuse or neglect. We conduct a background check on all staff members prior to employment (described above). The following are procedures for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect while the child is in the Center's care.

Any report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child will be immediately reported to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform him/her of the filed report. **DSS telephone number is 1-413-775-5000.**

The staff person in question will be immediately suspended from the program with pay pending the outcome of the DSS and EEC investigations. If the report is screened out by the DSS, the Director has the option of having the staff member remain on suspension pending the EEC investigation or allowing the staff member to return to the classroom. This decision will be made by the Director and will be based on the seriousness of the allegations and the facts available.

If the allegations of abuse/neglect are substantiated, it will be the decision of the Director whether or not the staff member will be reinstated.

The Director and staff will cooperate fully with all investigations.

If staff members are alone with a child, they will remain in full view of others and do not meet behind closed doors.

R. EMERGENCY AND NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES

The staff at Fort Hill are certified in CPR and first aid. First aid kits are located in the kitchen area of each of the classrooms, in the office and in the playground sheds in a prominent, labeled location. They are carried on field trips. The content of the kits is monitored by the supervising teacher and includes gloves, bandages, tweezers, sling, and antiseptic towelettes.

In case of **minor accident or injury**:

1. Staff will administer first aid to the child. If any treatment is administered, an injury report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. One copy will be placed in the child's file.

In case of **non-life-threatening emergency**:

1. The staff will immediately administer first aid to the child.
2. A staff member will contact the parent to come and pick-up the child.
3. If the parent needs assistance, a staff member will offer to contact Smith College Public Safety to drive to the hospital and/or accompany the child.
4. If parents cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts and staff will continue to attempt reaching them.
5. The incident will be documented in writing with a copy placed in the child's file.

In case of **life-threatening emergency**:

1. The staff will immediately call Smith College Public Safety. The Public Safety officer will call an ambulance.
2. Emergency first aid will be administered by a staff member or Public Safety officer, if necessary.
3. A parent will be called and asked to meet the child and teachers at the hospital. If we cannot reach a parent, we will call an emergency contact, and we may call the child's physician.
4. The teacher or director will accompany the child in an ambulance to the Cooley Dickinson Hospital and bring the child's authorization and consent form.
5. If a parent has not yet been reached, staff will continue to attempt making contact.
6. The incident will be documented in writing with a copy placed in the child's file.

S. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Emergency Exits are posted in each room, and staff is trained in emergency procedures. Fire drills are conducted once every other month.

In case of fire or other such emergency, the building will be evacuated as follows:

1. The fire alarm will sound in the building, at the Smith Public Safety office, and at the Northampton Fire Department.

2. Two teachers will lead/carry the children out of the building to a designated area where attendance will be taken. Infants will be transported in an evacuation crib.
3. One teacher from each group will check classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, etc. for children before exiting the building and will bring the class lists/sign-in sheets with them.
4. The administrative assistant will carry out emergency contact cards for the children.
5. If necessary, children will be brought to the Smith College Campus Center to await the resolution of the emergency and parents will be notified by phone.

T. ENROLLMENT POLICIES

BILLING

The Smith College Controller's Office sends semester bills in August (due September) and December (due January) for the academic-year. Summer bills are sent in May and due in June. Interested families may contract with Sallie Mae to pay monthly. Smith College employees may opt for monthly payroll deduction.

Smith College Late Payment Fee Policy: Beginning on the next business day after any payment is due, monthly late payment fees, which are based on the outstanding balance remaining after any payment due date, will be assessed at the rate of \$1.25 on every \$100.00 (1.25%) that remains unpaid until the payment is received in full, on or before the next billing month in which the family is invoiced. Please direct questions regarding charges or credits to the Office of the Controller (585-2200).

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Increasing time: If you would like to increase your child's schedule, please see the program coordinator. If you increase your time and contract with Sallie Mae to pay tuition, please make the appropriate adjustments to your contract.

Decreasing time: The enrollment agreement is for the full academic-year or entire summer. If you wish to decrease time, please notify the program coordinator. She will place your name on a waiting list and if the space is filled, you will be refunded the appropriate tuition.

LEAVE POLICY

Placements will be reserved for the following year for children of faculty members at Smith College who will be on leave for a full academic year or who will be on leave for the spring semester only. In each case the faculty member must notify the director in writing by February 15th of the year preceding the leave and, in the latter case, must enroll his/her child for at least the fall semester.

The program is unable to reserve spring semester placements for children who will be away for the fall semester only. However placements may be reserved for the following year under the

terms above and these children will be given priority should openings occur for the spring semester.

EXTRA HOURS – EXTENDED-DAY

Children who depart at 12:00 or 3:00 may opt to extend their day until 4:45, if space is available. The fee is based on an hourly rate of the program. While families are welcome to pick up their child any time before 4:45, there is one fee for extended day. The additional time must be approved by both the teacher and the program coordinator. Please request additional time at least two days in advance by contacting the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant will bill families for the extra time. Please pay the bill in the office at Fort Hill and make the check payable to Smith College.

TUITION GRANTS

Benefited Smith College employees are entitled to tuition grants. Please contact the Office of Human Resources for more information (x2260).

REENROLLMENT

Reenrollment forms are sent to families in mid February and are due with a non-refundable deposit on March 1st. Forms and deposits received after March 1st will be considered with new applications. Benefited employees of Smith College receive priority for placement and schedules. *It is possible that during the reenrollment process a family that is not a benefited employee of Smith College may be unable to reenroll or will be offered an alternate schedule.*

WITHDRAWAL

Enrollment is for the entire academic-year or summer program. Withdrawals should be made in writing to the Director of the Center for Early Childhood Education. Children who withdraw on or after the first day of the program will be entitled to a tuition refund as follows:

- Prior to the 2nd week of the program 75%
- Prior to the 3rd week of the program 50%
- Prior to the 4th week of the program 25%
- Prior to the 5th week of the program 10%
- Thereafter 0

The deposit is non-refundable. Information about tuition reimbursement for the summer program is included with the summer enrollment materials.

SUMMER PROGRAM

We offer a ten-week summer program to families who are enrolled in the academic-year program. The details of the program are mailed to families in January.

U. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

- **Concerns about finances or scheduling** – speak with the administrative assistant, program coordinator or the Controller’s Office.
- **Concerns about your child** – speak to the supervising teacher first. If necessary, speak to the director.
- **Concerns about a staff member** – talk to the individual person first, if possible. Speak to the director if necessary.

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care licenses the program. The regulations are available in the office at Fort Hill and at the website www.eec.state.ma.us. Karen Burns is the licensing specialist responsible for Fort Hill.

The Center for Early Childhood Education is a department of Smith College. The director of the program, Martha Lees, reports to the Director of Human Resources, Larry Hunt. The supervising teachers, studio teachers, program coordinator and administrative assistant report to the director. The rotating assistants report to the program coordinator and the assistant teachers report to the supervising teachers in their classrooms.

V. A LAST WORD

We are always interested in learning more about better ways to support you and the children you have entrusted to our care. We take this responsibility and this honor very seriously. Please let us know if there is something you do not understand or if you have a suggestion. We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and feedback.