

**SAN DIEGO COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL**  
**PARENT HANDBOOK**

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## 1. Contacting the preschool:

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### **UCP'S NON -DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

UCP San Diego, a.k.a. San Diego Cooperative preschool, a.k.a. the Unitarian Cooperative Preschool, admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of the Preschool is both child-centered and play-based. We believe children learn through play in a safe and nurturing environment. Staff knowledgeable in the field of child development, provide appropriate developmental experiences and opportunities for each child through careful planning and observations of their group of children. The curriculum is designed to enrich the whole child, including social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and creative development. We see children as unique individuals and respect and respond to their individual needs. Respect for the role of parents is a hallmark of our preschool. Parents are an integral part of the program and are encouraged to participate in all aspects of running the school. Parents' input and participation enhances the curriculum, daily activities, and direction of the preschool. Parents are encouraged to share their own special talents and interests with the school. In the classroom, parent participation through cooping is at the cornerstone of our preschool's philosophy. This participation offers a unique opportunity for the parents to deepen the parent-child relationship. Parents are able to learn about their preschooler's development as well as skills and techniques for guiding young children. Outside the classroom, parents play a critical role in running the school. The school jobs which parents fulfill enhance the activities of the school at all levels – from providing guidance for policies and procedures (on the Board) to planning parent enrichment activities and school potlucks.

*“Families are the wellspring that creates and nurtures the children in our classrooms. When working closely with families, we help to foster their sense of belonging and their confidence. We help to strengthen parent's capacity to support their children over a lifetime.”* By Gale Fischer and Bridget Murray, “When Teachers Reflect”

The idea of a cooperative extends beyond the actual operation and maintenance of the Preschool. We could not function without the thoughtful consideration of each other and the development of a sense of community.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the San Diego Cooperative Preschool is to provide the highest quality care, while creating a nurturing and supportive community of children, parents, and highly skilled staff. Through a play-based program that attends to the whole child, we seek to enrich every child's experience, and to empower each child to joyfully develop at his own rate. Through the cooperative partnership of parents and staff, we provide a model of community that will sustain and enrich our children throughout their lives.

## **BACKGROUND**

The UCP San Diego, a.k.a. San Diego Cooperative preschool is a not-for-profit preschool licensed by the State of California, for children ages 18 months through six years. Established by parents in 1963, it continues to be managed by a board of directors elected from and by the parents of enrolled children. Admission to the school is without regard to race or national origin. All teachers have fulfilled state law requirements for teaching in preschools, and have been chosen for their qualities of warmth and responsiveness to children, as well as their educational qualifications.

The preschool is its own 501c3 organization and shares space with the First Unitarian Universalist Church. The preschool does not incorporate any religious doctrine in its curriculum, but both the preschool and the Church share basic humanistic values, which emphasize knowledge of and respect for the individual child.

# **I. CURRICULUM**

## **OVERVIEW**

All curriculums at this school is child-driven and child-centered.

All planning is centered on the basic knowledge that children learn through a play-based program.

All schedules and routines are in place to show inherent respect for children's developmental levels and are based on their needs.

All planning is based on children's interests. The use of themes is recognized as useful, but not absolutely necessary.

All areas of a child's development are emphasized, including social, emotional, physical, cognitive, imaginative, and creative.

All curriculum has a variety of recognized sources, including: teacher's interests, children's interests, things in the physical environment, people in the social environment, curriculum resource materials, serendipity: unexpected events, living together: conflict resolution, care-giving and routines, and values held in the school, community, family and culture.

All assessment of children's progress and development is respectful with an emphasis on teacher observations, anecdotal records, and parents' observations and input. Assessment of young children is most valid when it takes place in the child's natural environment. All assessment is grounded in the knowledge that children develop at widely differing rates and patterns and need to be considered as individuals.

All curriculum at the Preschool is designed to be inclusive of special needs and to enhance and support individual skills, learning-styles, and developmental stages.

All curriculum at the Preschool must help to create for our children a vision of a future in which each child plays an integral part as a doer, leader, and nurturer. We strive to encourage children to develop life-long, heart-felt values and to be sensitive to each other, their environment, and the world at large.

Following are some specific areas of your child's development, and ways in which they are supported in the classroom environment.

## **IMAGINATIVE PROCESS**

The child's world is essentially an imaginative one; he or she needs the opportunity to play out inner fantasies and feelings with other children. This is encouraged through role-playing, block building, water play, music, movements, and stories. We encourage--in these and many other activities--respect for each child's self-esteem and feelings.

## **SENSORY PERCEPTION**

The child learns about the world through the use of his/her senses. In order to develop a keenness of sense, the indoor and outdoor classroom environment provides activities to extend the use and awareness of touch, smell, feeling, seeing, and listening. Cooking projects, canyon walks, water play, art media, collage works, play-dough and sandbox play are some of these activities.

## **SELF-CONCEPT/POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM**

One of the most important goals throughout the school year is to give each child a positive sense of self-worth. Each class starts out the school year with the "ME" theme, addressing the questions "who am I, and who are the members of my family."

We allow room for growth by waiting to help a child until after he or she has first tried and then asks for help. To show that we have confidence in the child, we give choices within limits and respect a child's choices. When discipline is necessary, the child is supported and positive redirection is given. Self-esteem is never ignored--it is the action we dislike, not the child that does the action.

## **SOCIALIZING**

Socialization is the process of learning to cope in a group situation--with teachers, other adults, and peers. Children learn to socialize through role-playing, sharing, trading, listening, arguing, talking to each other, comparing ideas and ALL group activities. Some ways children socialize are:

- On-looker - Observing, talking; but not participating
- Solitary - Play nearby but without reference to other children
- Parallel - Play of a companionable nature with similar materials but without personal interaction.
- Associative – Play that is loosely organized around a common activity, shared interests, and materials.
- Cooperative - Play with different roles, common goals, usually with one or two leaders, of relatively long duration and complexity.
- Participating in Games with Rules - Young children are just in the beginning stages of being able to participate in games. By the time they reach 4 ½ - 5, they will have a true understanding of games and rules, and are able to enjoy them more fully.

## **LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE**

One of our goals is for the children to communicate and to appreciate the beauty of language. Children develop this through listening to stories, making up stories to be written down, songs, (they love rhyming and silly songs), dramatic play, puppetry, cooking and the use of picture recipes, and art descriptions. Every activity can be a basis for verbal expression.

## **LARGE AND SMALL MOTOR SKILLS**

The "me-do-it" stage of the preschool child marks the point where whole-body mobility has been attained along with a determination to use it to the fullest. Because of this, we provide appropriate physical equipment and materials to challenge the children. A safe environment is a must, so the curriculum reflects these needs. Open areas for running, jumping, climbing, rolling, crawling, sliding, and swinging are also important. Small muscle and eye-hand coordination is encouraged in every area of our curriculum. Characteristics of spontaneous play are as follows:

### 1. Primary gross motor

- Body movements: walking, running, parades, hikes, skipping, sliding
- Climbing: through, over, under, around, beside, after, etc.
- Wheel toys: tricycles, skates, big wheels, pushing and pulling wagons, shopping carts, etc.

### 2. Combined gross and fine motor

- Gathering or collecting materials
- Filling containers (with play-dough, sand, water, etc.)
- Dumping (emptying these containers)
- Stacking
- Knocking down
- Painting

### 3. Primary Fine Motor

- Trial-and-error manipulation (puzzles, stringing beads, Legos, Tinker toys, etc.)
- Sensory explorations (through nature, art media, the five senses)

Our programs show concern for all aspects of a child's development: intellectual, emotional, social, and physical. Our program reflects the fact that all are interrelated and cannot stand-alone. Above all, we value learning through play in an environment that allows choices. Choice encourages the child's natural curiosity, a sense of independence, and positive self-esteem

## **II. REGISTRATION**

In considering applications from the general public, the Director reserves the right to take the gender and age of children into account in order to create a dynamic and diverse class.

### **PROCEDURE**

The admissions procedure starts when a parent contacts the school regarding possible enrollment. A tour of the school is arranged with the Director, and the school philosophy and requirements for parent involvement are described.

Interested families complete a registration form upon completion of a school tour and are either placed on a waiting list or considered for immediate enrollment if an appropriate opening exists. Families are placed on the waiting list based on the date that they first contacted the preschool and will be offered a spot based on that order. An application fee, the amount of which is set annually, is charged at the time of placement on a waiting list. Prospective families must indicate whether or not they wish to co-op on the registration form when they apply for admission. Non-co-op assignments are made on a space-available basis.

During the general public registration period in the spring, the school will contact parents on the waiting list to determine if they are still interested in enrollment. If so, the registration process is initiated. The priority for registration is as follows:

#### **ENTRANCE PRIORITY**

1. Returning students
2. Siblings of returning students.
3. Families who receive Alternative Payment Programs (AP)
4. The general public

#### **PRE-REGISTRATION OF CURRENTLY ENROLLED FAMILIES**

Returning students are assured of the timeslot **they currently hold** (half co-op policy is at the discretion of the director).

The registration process is complete when:

The non-refundable registration/activity fee has been paid.

The non-refundable September tuition has been paid.

The office has received signed copies of the Tuition Agreement and Membership agreement.

There are various forms that the State of California requires us to have on file for each family. Parents are required to submit new/updated forms as requested by the office.

#### **REGISTRATION OF NEW FAMILIES**

Registration for the public at large will take place immediately following the currently enrolled family pre-registration. The registration process as listed above applies to new families as well.

#### **CHANGING YOUR TIMESLOT**

If you would like to change to another scheduling option, please contact the office and complete and **Internal Waiting List form**. Any requests for timeslot changes will be honored on a first-come-first-served basis, at the discretion of the Director.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS FAMILIES**

The Preschool will enroll children with special needs as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (**a copy of this information is available in the Preschool Policy and Procedure Manual**).

#### **AUGUST SESSION REGISTRATION**

Registration for the August session is available only to currently enrolled preschool families, and spots are awarded on a first-come first-served basis, with a priority given to parents requesting full-time spots. The registration process requires the completion of a registration form and tuition agreement, and the payment of a non-refundable registration fee. Please note, August Session enrollment is not guaranteed, as it is dependent on staff availability.

Tuition, Fees and Fines

## **TUITION**

1. Parents may pay tuition monthly or they may pay tuition for the year in one lump sum. Parents who pay tuition in one lump sum receive a 2% discount. If one payment is made for the year, it should be paid at the time of the child's enrollment. For parents who choose to pay tuition monthly, the first month of their child's tuition must be paid at the time of enrollment. Tuition is due on the first of each month and is considered late if it is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup>. If the 10<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, tuition must be paid by the preceding business day. A \$35 late charge will be added if tuition is paid late. In addition, after 30 days, interest will accrue on any unpaid amount at the rate of 10% per annum. Once tuition is 45 days delinquent, the child will not be able to attend class and will forfeit his/her spot in school. In addition, if a family pays tuition but does not pay any fines stated on the invoice, the family will be subject to a \$35 late charge. (If you anticipate financial problems, please notify the office administrator before the tenth of the month. When a family is 30 days late paying tuition, the child's place in the school may be lost.) Checks can be dropped in the tuition box in the Preschool office or sent by mail.
2. September tuition is nonrefundable and must be paid at time of enrollment.
3. When a child enters after the school year has started, the tuition amount will be prorated accordingly.
4. When a family withdraws their child during the school year, one-month written notice is required. It is exceedingly difficult for the preschool to fill vacancies after the enrollment period ends. For this reason, a parent or parents withdrawing their child from the preschool after the date of enrollment will be assessed full tuition through the end of the school year. A child is considered enrolled when his or her parent or guardian has signed and returned this Tuition Agreement and the Membership Agreement. The Director will make reasonable efforts to fill these vacancies; if she is able to do so, the amount of tuition owed as a result of the vacancy will be offset by the new student's tuition, less an administrative fee of \$150, and the parent will receive a refund in the appropriate amount.
5. In the event of an extended absence, tuition must still be paid if space is to be held for the child.
6. Tuition is used primarily to meet the standing expenses of teachers' salaries, supplies, insurance and rent. Most other expenses must be met by the proceeds from fundraisers.

## **REGISTRATION/ACTIVITY FEE**

A \$250 registration/activity fee is charged each year to secure a spot for your child in the program. This fee covers the cost of cooking experiences, field trips, other instructional activities, and administrative costs related to registration. This eliminates the need for teachers' collecting additional fees throughout the year for special projects. The registration fee is non-refundable and is required each year that your child is enrolled in the school.

## **ADDITIONAL HOURS CARE:**

Additional Hours: Children who stay until 3:30pm can occasionally extend their hours until 5:30pm (notification ahead of time required) for a \$20 fee.

## **NON-PARTICIPATION FEES**

The preschool relies on parent participation to complete various school tasks. Parents who are unable to fulfill these obligations will be asked to pay additional fees to "buyout" of performing the service(s). The Preschool asks that these additional fees be paid in advance of the required service the parents do not perform. These additional fees are not fines; they are the Preschool's attempt to give parents flexibility in their participation in our cooperative preschool and to get the work that needs to be done completely covered.

### **Work Party**

Families who are not able to work at least four hours during the annual Work Party are permitted to do an after-party job within 30 days. Families may also chose to buyout of their work party commitment for a **\$150 fee**. **In an event that a family does fails to participate in the Work Party without prior arrangements, a fine of \$200 will be assessed to their account.**

### **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

A \$25 fee will be assessed for each returned check.

### **FINES**

In the event that a fine is necessary, the office will notify the parents. Fine payments are due the last working day of the month in which they are incurred. Fine payments will be considered late after the 10th of the following month, and will be subject to a \$35 late fee. In addition, if a fine continues unpaid 60 days after the date it is incurred, interest will be accrued at the rate of 10% per annum. Fines should be paid by placing the amount due in the tuition box in the Preschool office. In the event that there are extenuating circumstances, the fine can be appealed to the Preschool Director.

### **LATE PICK-UP OF CHILDREN**

Our teachers have after-work obligations and are not paid to stay late. After the first incident of late pick-up, families will receive a warning. Subsequently, families will be assessed a late fee of \$10 per each half-hour or portion thereof for the first late pick-up, \$20 per half hour or portion thereof for the second late pick-up, and \$30 per half hour or portion thereof for the third late pick-up. The fee will continue to increase by \$10 increments per half hour portion with each subsequent incident.

### **MISSED/LATE CO-OPING**

Parents who do not arrange for a substitute when they cannot co-op will be assessed a \$55 fine the first time, a \$75 fine the second time, and will be asked to leave the school on the third missed co-op day. Parents arriving after 8:50 for cooping will be fined \$10 per each half-hour or portion thereof for the first late co-op; \$20 per half hour or portion thereof for the second late co-op; and \$30 per half hour or portion thereof for the third late co-op. The fee will continue to increase by \$10 increments per half hour portion with each subsequent incident.

### III. DAILY OPERATIONS

#### PARKING

Preschool parents are able to park in the Ace lot adjacent to the church, in the stalls reserved for drop-off/cooping use, or in any other spots that are not otherwise reserved.

**It is not permissible to avoid parking by sending your child in alone.** California licensing requires that no child shall be accepted without contact between the preschool staff and the adult who is dropping off.

Parents are required to have a **parking pass** on display in their car for parking in the lot. These placards must be on display in each car exempt from paying for parking. Parking passes will be provided by the school.

If you park in the Ace lot for an appointment at UCSD Medical Center, for instance, you must pay for parking. We appreciate your cooperation regarding the use of the lot.

**Extreme caution and safety should be exercised in the parking lot – please hold your child’s hand at all times. The parking lot is a dangerous place for children who may run ahead of their escorting parents. When walking from the lot to your child’s classroom, please be courteous to the Church staff that is at work by remaining quiet.**

#### DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD

##### Dropping Off

There is a sign-in sheet in each classroom. Sign your **full name** and record the time you are dropping off your child. State law mandates this procedure. In the event of a disaster, these sheets are used to take attendance, and the child's welfare may depend upon the sign-in sheet's accuracy.

California State law also requires that you **bring your child to the supervising teacher upon your arrival at school.** This is a very important opportunity for us to greet your child and also to determine that he/she is feeling well and is ready for the demands of a busy day at preschool. This process also ensures that responsibility for the child is "handed-off" from the parent to the teacher.

##### Picking Up

Sign your name and record the time on the sign-in sheet. Check the pocket with your family's name on it for messages. Only adults who are authorized on the form on file in the Preschool office will be allowed to pick up a child. A parent may not prohibit a child's other parent from picking up their child unless the prohibition is supported by legal documents on file in the Preschool office. If you have made arrangements to have a friend or other family member pick up your child, please be sure that you inform the teacher and/or office – *they will also be required to show I.D.*

No adult will be allowed to pick up any child if the adult appears unable to safely drive and/or safely take care of the child. Your child’s emergency and information form will be used to find an alternative ride home.

Please stay with your child upon pick-up, and **walk them out to the car holding their hand or carrying them, especially in the parking lot area.**

## **Some Tips for Easing the Transition at Pick Up**

Transitions can be stressful to young children, as any parent who has tried to rush a two-year-old to bed knows well. One of our goals has always been to make "going home time" a smooth and easy experience for everyone: child, parent, the rest of the child's group, and the teachers.

It is important that the child and parent have a moment to re-connect after a morning or day apart. The child usually wishes to share some of his/her day's discoveries; "We read this book, I took my nap here, I painted this picture." The parent often needs to feel included in his/her child's day as well. A short period of listening and reacting now, as lunch box and artwork are gathered, sets a warm tone for the rest of the day. This is often an appropriate time for a brief exchange with your child's teacher, such as "She had a great time with the blocks today!" or "We might be a little late tomorrow". If the teacher is very involved with the group, a simple "See you tomorrow," might seem best.

There are some activities that do not work well at going home time. Long talks with a teacher are better planned for another time. Occasionally, a child will be so overwhelmed with emotions that he will become argumentative. Sometimes the best choice is to physically remove your child from the classroom - problems are often more solvable in private. Don't hesitate to ask for a teacher's help or input in these situations.

A simple routine is usually best for all - check the cubby; look at the project; bye-bye to our friends, the bunny, and the teacher; and we'll see you tomorrow.

## **ROOM ASSIGNMENTS**

**Room 109:** Lead Teacher, Ljiljana Jotanovic - Toddlers 1 ½ to 2 ½ years,

**Room 105:** Lead Teacher, Marta Kuczaj - 2½ to 3 ½ year-olds

**Room 107:** Lead Teacher, India Creef-Blizzard - 3½ to 4 ½ year-olds

**Room 103:** Lead Teacher, Lisa Fahrnkopf - 4 to 5 ½ year-olds

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

**7:30 a.m.** School opens; parents begin dropping-off toddlers in Rm. 109, other children in Rm. 105

**8:15 a.m.** All children move into their own classroom with their teacher.

**9:00 a.m.** Indoor/outdoor choice in all rooms.

**10:00 a.m.** Clean-up

**10:15 a.m.** Group time, followed by hand washing and snack time (Snack time varies per classroom).

**10:45 a.m.** Open choice activities--indoor and outdoor.

**11:45 a.m.** Group time, followed by hand washing and lunch.

**12:00 p.m.** Lunch, farewell to children whose timeslot ends at 12:00 in the toddler classroom

**12:15 p.m.** Farewell to children whose timeslot ends at 12:15 and the transition to nap time starts.

**12:45 p.m.** Naptime begins with music, books and back rubs.

**2:30 – 2:45 p.m.** Children gradually wake up from nap time -- Indoor/outdoor choice activities

**3:00 p.m.** Afternoon snack (provided by the school)

**3:30 p.m.** Indoor/outdoor choice

**5:00 p.m.** Group time and farewells for all remaining children

**5:30 p.m.** School closes

## **NAPS**

Children in all rooms are encouraged to rest quietly. The preschool provides mats, however each child brings napping blankets from home, which are stored in individual bags. It is required that each mat or cot be covered by a sheet and blanket. We recommend purchasing a crib sheet, as they fit our mats well. Please keep your child's sheets and blankets in a small bag, as storage room can be an issue. It is the parent's responsibility to take bedding home each Friday for washing, to be returned each Monday morning. Please use blankets that are small and fit into your child's personal bag.

Note: A rest time, uninterrupted, is required by Community Care Licensing. Asking to prevent a child from sleeping would not be in accordance with licensing or respectful.

When picking your child up in the afternoon, please be respectful of naptime – an interrupted nap can be an unpleasant experience for you, your child, and other napping children. Whenever possible, avoid pick-up between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

## **FOOD**

### **Snacks/Lunch**

In all classes, children will need to bring a morning snack consisting of about two different food groups and a drink. Water is always available to students in the classroom.

Children whose timeslot goes to 12:15 or after will need to pack additional food for lunch. The school supplies a nutritious snack at about 3:00pm and it is posted in each classroom and in the office. The lead afternoon teacher shops for and prepares the snack each day.

### **Food Safety**

The school policy is to avoid sharing of snack and/or lunch food. This allows parents to monitor what their children eat, prevents children from eating food they are allergic to, and allows children to enjoy their own lunches.

**Hard candies of any kind, popcorn, hot dog rounds, whole hot dogs, whole grapes and anything grape-sized, such as cheese cubes, present a choking hazard to small children and are not allowed.**

On a child's birthday, his or her parents are welcome to bring a special snack for the entire classroom to enjoy. We try to keep this snack nutritious, and we strive to make the event both low-key and child-focused. **Please be aware of any allergies in the classroom.**

### **PACKING YOUR CHILD'S LUNCHBOX**

Snack and lunch are not only exciting, social moments, they are also a well-needed opportunity for your child to refuel after the demands of a busy preschool day. For many children, the lunch they eat

at school will be their biggest meal of the day; therefore it is important to make this meal count nutritionally. Start your lunchbox meal planning in the market. Read labels. Most foods packaged for individual consumption are higher in fats and calories, and lower in nutritional value than food packaged for family consumption. They are also much more expensive. Invest in a lot of very small plastic containers. With these, you can make servings closer to the amount your child is likely to consume.

When packing your child's lunchbox, try to make a well-rounded meal by packing a variety of food. Following are some suggestions:

### **Fruits**

Melon, apples, oranges, kiwi, bananas, applesauce, raisins or other dried fruit, grapes (cut in half for a child under four)

Fruit can be cut in different ways, e.g. apples/oranges sliced in rounds - presenting something familiar in a new shape often reawakens interest. A new mix (kiwis and watermelon) is good for this too.

### **Veggies**

Carrots with ranch dip, cucumber slices, celery filled with cream cheese or peanut butter, cherry tomatoes, peas, green beans, corn. Frozen vegetables can be packed straight from the freezer to the lunchbox – they will thaw.

### **Proteins**

String cheese, tofu, hard-boiled eggs, nuts, trail mix, yogurt, pizza, quesadillas and burritos are common sources of protein in preschooler's lunches.

Provide cheese, p b & j sandwiches, sliced luncheon meats (in a sandwich, or just rolled up on their own), cottage cheese, tuna, chicken (something to dip it in is fun), turkey dogs sliced lengthwise, beans.

### **Grains**

Rice cakes, pita bread, bagels with cream cheese, muffins, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat pretzels, pasta sprinkled with parmesan, a slice of whole wheat bread (made into a half-sandwich), a FEW chips, like three or four, granola or other cereal, fruit juice sweetened cookies (such as Health Valley Brand), fruit bars, granola bars

### **Drinks**

Fruit juice is often not nutritionally rich. Pediatric nutritionists suggest herbal tea (try Celestial Seasonings Wild Berry Zinger and Orange Zinger sweetened with one teaspoon of honey per quart). Give juice, diluted with water. Always check for added sugar when buying little boxes of juice.

### **Some additional tips:**

Blue ice in the lunch box helps to keep food cold.

A short note in a child's lunch box can make snack time special.

When introducing new foods, offer just one at a time. If your child turns it down, try it again in a month. Tastes change.

Beware of nutritionally deficient foods, such as Jell-O and pudding, that tend to fill your child's stomach and prevent having an appetite for more useful food.

### **Medication**

1. The child's primary teacher is designated to administer all medications.
2. All medication must be in its **original container**.
3. Children who need medication long term, must have a form filled out by the parent and left on file in the office.
4. Medicines are kept in the classroom refrigerator or an upper cupboard in the classroom.
5. A medicine log is also in each classroom. Parents fill in medication information, and the teacher initials when administered.
6. Medication and sunscreen is not to be kept in a lunchbox or cubby.
7. The Preschool discourages the use of cough medication at school, as it sedates the child. Children requiring cough medicine should be kept at home.

### **CUBBIES/PARENT POCKETS**

Children are provided with a drawer or "cubby" in their classroom. Cubbies are the children's private space in which they keep their lunchbox, extra clothes, and any other possessions they have brought from home. Once a week, parents **should clean their child's cubby** by removing dirty clothes to be washed and to see what might need to be replaced. Please make sure you child has extra clothes in his/her cubby in case of an accident or change in weather.

Completed artwork, projects, and other work will be stored in an **art file** located in your child's classroom.

Notes to parents will also be stored in the family's parent pocket in the classroom. Please check your pocket daily for important information about school events.

### **SUGGESTED CLOTHING**

Due to the nature of children's activities, and for safety reasons, we **highly recommend** that tennis shoes be worn at the Preschool. If the child must wear sandals or boots, he or she needs to **bring a pair of tennis shoes** for use on the climbing structure, big wheels, and tree climbing. We have read information from physicians, that wearing well fitting shoes is very important for young children. Please do not wear shoes such as "Crocs" to preschool. We continue to see sliding, slipping and tripping accidents with that type of shoe.

A complete change of clothing, including socks and underwear, should be available in your child's cubby every school day in case of accidents or water play. To avoid mix-ups, parents should put their child's name in all clothes.

### **TOILETING & TOILET TRAINING**

We encourage toileting independence where appropriate. Communication around toileting issues is important, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you and your child. Toddlers and preschoolers are not required to be toilet trained in order to attend school.

## SHARING

*Some* classes offer the children an opportunity to share something brought from home. The staff has established the following guidelines:

Children should bring something meaningful, not "just a toy", i.e., book, tape, photograph, souvenir, or something related to the theme in the classroom.

Weapons (guns, swords) or any potentially dangerous toy should be kept at home.

In classes with assigned sharing days, children should bring something only on that day.

## FIELD TRIPS

Classes sometimes leave the classroom to go on short walks in the immediate neighborhood. In addition, classes may go on longer field trips throughout the year. Field trips are always scheduled in advance so that parents can be notified. On field trip days, we recruit extra parents to ensure adequate supervision of the children. Parent cars are used for transportation. We require that all children be placed in a car seat or booster seat with a locking clip for the seat belt. On field trip days, be sure to leave your child's car seat, labeled with their name, in the hallway outside the classroom door.

Parents who will be driving other preschool children to and from field trips will need to show proof of insurance to the Office Manager.

## TEACHER-PARENT COMMUNICATION

Good communication between staff and home is key. There are several ways for parents to communicate with us. In each classroom, there is a notebook for parents to leave us general messages. Parents may use our pockets in the office for more private notes. Verbal communication at drop-off and pick-up is also strongly encouraged.

Teachers should be informed about changes in home life, i.e., parents going out of town, illness or death of a relative or pet, new sibling, etc. Such situations may cause changes in a child's behavior. An informed teacher can be more sensitive to the child's needs.

## Handling Classroom Concerns

The first step in resolving classroom concerns is always a parent- teacher discussion. This step is essential. **Teachers are very helpful** when they are involved in the process of resolving concerns. Our policy manual recommends the following steps.

Schedule non-classroom time for a private discussion with the teacher (can be by phone).

1. State the problem, issue, or concern.
2. Listen to the teacher's observations and perspectives regarding your concerns.
3. If this process does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, use the problem-solving steps outlined in the policy manual. **See the *policy for contract termination in the appendices.***

## Gift Giving Policy

- At the beginning of the school year Room Representatives will get staff birthday information as well as other important dates out to the families in their class, leaving it up to the families

how to acknowledge the day.

- If a parent would like to give a gift, suggestions such as cards or a gift for the classroom in the staff member's name should be included to give parents some ideas. No general collection of money for a gift for birthdays will take place.
- Individual parents wanting to give a more personal gift may do so.

### **Home Visits**

A home visit will take place at the beginning of the school year. At this time, the teacher will come to the child's home for some special attention on a one-to-one basis. This individual time spent with the teacher is very important to the child. It's an opportunity to bond with the teacher and to play freely without the competition of other classmates for the teacher's attention. This time should be spent building the relationship between your child and their teacher. In that regard, please try to minimize interruptions from other family members.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled at the middle of the school year. The teacher will provide written information about your child regarding developmental stages and observed behaviors. The conferences also provide an excellent opportunity for discussion of parental concerns or questions regarding their child's development.

## **IV. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES & CO-OPING**

The Preschool is a parent cooperative, which depends on the full participation of all parents. Our school is a rich community of parents with different skills and interests; parents provide a wide range of services and expertise. An important result of this participation is positive role modeling as well as a sense of belonging and community for the children.

### **PARENT'S OBLIGATIONS**

1. Attending room meetings called by teachers (for a description of room and other meetings listed, see section XIII – Events and Meetings)
2. Performing one school job each year per family (e.g., Auction Committee, Room Representative, etc. -see the appendix “School Jobs Handbook”)
3. Attending Fall Orientation each year
4. Participating in the annual Work Party (a minimum four-hour commitment per family)
5. Participating in our annual auction (our main fundraising event)
6. Working in the classrooms, called cooping \*(see The Choice to Co-op)

Optional Responsibilities Include:

7. Attending Board of Directors' meetings

## **Work Party**

The Work Party is an annual event designed to incorporate major school maintenance with parent socializing. Each teacher makes a list of items in need of construction, repair, or replacement; equipment which needs to be painted; sandboxes to be filled, etc. Every family is required to participate for a minimum of four hours in the classroom in which their child is enrolled. (Families with more than one child can work 2 hours in each child's room. A fee can be assessed in lieu of work party participation. Childcare and refreshments are provided.

## **THE CHOICE TO CO-OP**

The toddler class is the only class where all families are required to co-op due to licensing regulations, which stipulate adult-to-child ratios.

All other classes have a very limited number of non-coop or half cooping spots. Parents must indicate whether or not they wish to coop when they register each fall. Non -coop and half coop slots are awarded at the discretion of the Director.

## **The Benefits of Cooping**

The decision to enroll your child in a cooperative preschool has a great commitment attached to it. If you and your partner work outside the home - you will have to decide how the two half day monthly commitments are met. The time might go unpaid, or you may use up vacation & personal days given by your employer, in either situation, the cost is substantial. Whatever the case may be, make sure you derive the full benefit of those hours spent cooping. Get involved, enjoy the children, listen to the teacher and learn better ways of handling various situations. The rewards you reap from time well spent will be numerous, but we will try to name just a few here:

- You will learn phraseology that will teach your child the verbal skills necessary to resolve conflict.
- You will see your child beam with pride as he/she takes credit for the 'other adult' in the classroom, (not always, but most of the time).
- You will get the chance to observe your child in peer group situations.
- You will be living and enacting the model of community you hope your child will emulate.
- You will set the expectation of involvement in his/her life (knowing classmates and friends as well as their parents).
- You will provide the other children, as their parents are to yours, adult connections that promote confidence in themselves and their ability to relate to all ages.
- You will be doing some hands-on parenting in a learning environment outside of your home.
- You will be in an emotionally safe environment to encourage your child to practice the social skills he/she is learning (teamwork, joining groups, good citizenship, etc.).
- You will be there to witness the birth of possible lifelong friendships for your child.

You will have the opportunity to be an active participant in your child's early school days.

- You will develop an even greater commitment to your child's academic life, (many alumni parents go on to be PTA members, thereby making significant contributions to the school system at large).

## **Who Can Co-op?**

Supporting the parent-child relationship is inherent in our school philosophy, and cooping is a key to this. **Therefore only parents, step parents or legal guardians are permitted to co-op.**

As per state law, all coopers must provide the office with a physician-completed health history, including proof that they are clear of active TB, before their first day of cooping.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF CO-OPING PARENTS**

1. Work in their child's classroom two mornings a month. Each class holds a meeting for the parents to work out a system to sign up for their days in the classroom. The Classroom Representative can help with scheduling problems or adjustments.
2. The cooping commitment is from 8:45 to 12:15. Because of the importance of classroom readiness, parents who are late for cooping will be fined (please see section above on late co-op fines). Cooping parents are required to sign-in on the Cooping sign-in/sign out sheet located outside the preschool office. Fines are levied by the Office Administrator.
3. Make arrangements with another parent if you are unable to co-op on a scheduled day. The class list of families in your child's class will help you contact another parent to substitute for you. Parents who do not arrange for a substitute when they cannot co-op will be assessed a \$55 fine the first time and another \$75 if a second day is missed. If a parent misses a third co-op day, the family will be asked to leave the Preschool.
4. Check with the teacher to see what needs to be done, both in terms of supervision of the children and necessary cleaning.
5. Dedicate your time and attention to the children rather than to other cooping parents.
6. Please make child care arrangements for siblings on cooping days. Due to state licensing considerations and safety concerns, both older and younger siblings, including infants, are not allowed to accompany a parent while the parent is cooping in the classroom. A caregiver (other than the cooping parent) may bring an infant to the preschool on cooping days so that the cooping parent may feed the infant, as needed, outside the classroom.
7. Share the work to be done in the classroom equally with other parents. Failure to divide and perform the necessary classroom tasks can create resentment and detracts from the cooping experience.
8. Communicate with the teacher your observations of each child's interests and behaviors.
9. **Refrain from bringing cell phones into the classroom.** Leaving a classroom to take a phone call leaves the classroom out of compliance with Licensing. If you need to receive a critical phone call, please inform the office. A staff member will briefly substitute for you in the classroom. Your presence in the classroom is a critical factor in our maintaining both the staff/child ratio required by our license and the secure supervision of the children.
10. **Keep hot liquids out of the reach of children at all times.** If you bring coffee, please keep it on a high counter away from the children's reach. You need both hands free to work in the classroom.

### **THE CO-OPING DAY**

When cooping, remember that you are there to assist the teachers with all of the children in the class, not just your own child (although this may be hard for your child to understand at first). Your primary focus should be on the classroom – therefore cell phone use is not permitted while cooping.

Also, we ask that you please limit your socializing with other cooping parents during your time in the classroom.

### **Arrival**

Please sign in on the co-ops sign-in sheet, just outside the preschool office. Upon arrival in the classroom, check in with the teacher, and see where you are needed most. Often, supervision of the children is the highest priority while the teacher sets up the activities for the morning and greets arriving children and their parents.

### **Open Choice**

The room is divided into various interest centers such as Blocks, Dramatic Play, Art, and Discovery Table. Your help may be needed at one of the art tables, supervising outside, reading a book to a child, or sitting down on the floor with a few children playing with puzzles, legos or blocks. Ask for direction if you're unsure where you will be most needed.

### **Outdoor Play Time**

Supervision of the children in the yard and indoors is especially important. Outdoors, you could sweep off the sidewalks, climb the structure, explore the garden, dig in the sandbox with a few children, read a story to a child on the bench, or just observe the exuberance of children at play.

### **Group Time**

Group time activities vary from classroom to classroom. Children are called to come indoors and encouraged to sit on their bottoms forming a circle. Your child may sit on your lap, but more than one child on your lap can make it difficult for your own child to handle sharing you. You decide what works for your child and what will be the least disruptive to the activities of group time.

During group, your main responsibility is to help in maintaining the children's attention and focus. Please remember that group is an important social experience for the children. We understand that sometimes you all will get involved and will want to participate, but when it comes to telling about experiences at home, what we are trying to do is to stimulate the child's imagination and offer them an opportunity to express themselves. So, as much as possible please let them develop their participation in-group on their own. (Of course, we need all the help we can get when it comes to singing, dancing and so on).

### **Snack Time**

When snack-time is called, assist children with hand washing. During snack, please sit with the children and engage them in casual conversation. Children are required to sit on their bottoms and remain at their own table. Encourage the children to eat. Nutritional items are eaten first before sweets and/or chips, etc. Quiet voices, sitting on their bottoms, staying at their own table and respect for others are essential for maintaining a positive dining experience. Bring a snack for yourself as well!

### **Lunch**

Children need to be assisted with hand washing and directed to sit and eat their lunch. The teacher generally sits with the children at lunch and greets parents who arrive to pick-up their children. The assistant teacher arrives at noon. She greets children, checks in with the teacher concerning the day, and begins preparing the room for nap. This is a good time to begin the outdoor yard clean up. Tell your child you need to do a short task outdoors and will be right back.

## CO-OPING GUIDELINES

**Note:** Guidelines will vary from classroom to classroom depending on the age of the children and the environment. Here is one example:

### General Outdoor Guidelines

- Ask the teacher for guidelines on swing use.
- Books remain at the bench
- Sand stays on the ground
- Toys aren't allowed on the climbing structure (we ask children to use both hands for climbing).
- No running with toys in hand (these tend to become weapons during flight)
- Contents of the sensory table stay inside the container and are not used for other purposes

Please ask the teacher if you have any questions or need direction – each yard and classroom will have rules based on the environment and the children's ages.

### Indoor Clean Up

Parents are responsible for most aspects of classroom maintenance. Clean-up duties may vary, depending on the teacher's needs.

*Prior to snack, the tables need to be cleared off and washed with disinfectant.*

After snack, tables need to be cleaned again and the floor swept. The indoor broom and dustpan can typically be found in the closet.

A good time to clean the bathroom, including toilets, sinks, and floor is after snack clean up.

### Outdoor Clean Up

The sidewalk, climbing structures and planks will need to be swept, and sand around the climbing structures must be raked to ensure a better cushion of protection.

At the end of the morning, clean paint brushes and paint cups. If there is still paint remaining in the paint cups, please save these and cover them.

Collect any toys left out in the yard, and place them in the appropriate container- encourage children to help.

Rake and broom are stored out of sight, due to licensing safety regulations. Ask the teacher where the rake is.. Ask the teacher about the best times to use them.

### Guidelines for Dealing with Children in the Classroom

1. The safety and physical welfare of the children come first.
2. Requests should be phrased positively, i.e., "Please sit on the chair," rather than "Don't stand on the chair," or "Please walk," rather than "Don't run."
3. Judgments and labeling children, i.e., "That's a bad boy," or "That's mean," should be avoided. The word, "bad," should not be used by parents. Instead, parents can say, "That's not safe," or "Hitting hurts." Use your hands for digging, painting, etc." This method helps a child learn the

appropriate behavior. (See the article “Giving Children Positive Verbal Direction” in the appendix)

4. Preventive intervention (or positive redirection) is the preferred method of discipline at the Preschool. Time outs are not a preferred practice unless the child feels *out of control*. Only Preschool staff will determine when a time out is appropriate. There is no corporal punishment.
5. When verbal suggestions are given, the adult's voice and behavior should imply that he or she knows they will be carried out.
6. The adult should be sure that he or she has a child's attention. The adult should then make a request or direction as simply as possible.
7. A child should be given a choice only when he or she is really free to make it.
8. When working with two or three children, it is important to also supervise the surrounding areas at the same time by frequently scanning the room/yard.
9. When commenting on the children's work, parents might say, "Tell me about your picture," rather than "What is it?" Most children naturally assume you should know what it is, and some may not have a name for their creation. For further information about talking to children about their artwork, see the article “How to talk to a Scribbler” in the appendix.
10. A child is the only one who knows if his artwork is finished. Adults can ask him when he is done and then make sure that a name and date are on the picture. This aids parents in evaluating their child's developmental progress.
11. The most important contribution you can make is to show interest in the children and their choices.
12. In any situation, the child should be given just the help that he or she needs to gradually become less dependent on adults.
13. When reading, the book should be held so the children can see the pictures. The reader should stop to answer questions.
14. If children ask an adult to join their play, the adult should join in but try not to direct their play. This should be the children's socialization experience.
15. Adults should enlist the children's help during clean up. Adults can keep the job from looking too big by helping and starting a little bit before clean-up time and working with them during clean up.
16. Parents who most effectively build up children's self-esteem and feelings of competence are those whose voices combine warmth and sureness; they are ones whose faces are relaxed and pleasant; steady without being severe. The appendix of articles in this handbook should help to hone these skills.

### **Simple Steps for Obtaining a Child's Cooperation**

Speak very slowly and distinctly to the child, especially when you are giving instructions or commands.

If you have much to say, first get the child's attention and stoop down or sit on a low chair, so as to bring your eyes on her/his level. This is only common courtesy and consideration.

Try to be relaxed and friendly when you are talking to children, and show this in your voice and manner. When you meet the child's eyes, show that you approve and love him/her.

Have clearly in your mind at all times what you wish the child to do, and show it by the tone of your voice and the form of your command (see the article "Giving Children Positive Verbal Direction" in the appendix).

If there is no choice for the child, do not offer a choice (Would you like to...). Say, "You may come in for lunch now," in a positive tone, taking obedience for granted. But do not expect instant obedience. REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT A CHILD'S TEMPO IS SLOWER THAN OURS IS. Studies have show that it is, in fact, three to four times slower. Give the child time to understand and digest your command, and to react and to obey, if the child is doing something, give her/him a little warning. For example: "In a few minutes, your lunch will be ready," or "As soon as you have two more swings, it will be time to wash your hands for lunch." Then stay with it, and lovingly but firmly help him/her obey. Give the child a little leeway, but work steadily toward the objective.

## V. ANNUAL SCHEDULE, EVENTS & MEETINGS

### SCHEDULE & HOLIDAYS

The Preschool year begins the Tuesday after Labor Day and ends on July 31<sup>st</sup>, covering 11 months of continuous school. We are closed for the following holidays (these follow the calendar set each year by the San Diego Unified School District):

- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Vacation (closed W, T, F of Thanksgiving Week).
- Winter Vacation (closed two weeks)
- Martin Luther King Day
- Lincoln Day
- Washington Day
- Spring Vacation (closed one week)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

### AUGUST SESSION

In May/June we evaluate the availability of staff and the need of parents to determine the length of the August program (i.e. – two weeks to three weeks). Registration for the August session is available only to currently enrolled preschool families, and spots are awarded on a first-come first-served basis, with a priority given to parents requesting full-time spots. The purpose of the August session is to provide a nurturing environment for working families. Cooping is not required during this session. Please note that August Session enrollment is not guaranteed, as it is dependent on staff availability.

### EVENTS

Because this Preschool emphasizes family learning and interaction, several events are organized during the year (Fall and Spring Potluck, New Parent and Fall Orientation, Health Screenings for Children, Outreach to Greater Community, etc.) Other traditions are also carried out each year for the good of the Preschool. Events team (potluck organizer, health screeners, photo assistants, outreach person, and orientation organizer) helps to organize and administer all of these events.

#### **Work Party**

Work party is an annual event. A description can be found in the *Parental Responsibilities* section of this handbook.

#### **Fall Orientation**

This **required** meeting is held the first week after school begins in the fall. Traditionally, a dessert and fruit potluck is followed by a word from the Director, who welcomes new families and introduces the staff, as well as representatives of the Preschool Board. The group then breaks up and meets in their children's classrooms, where the teachers discuss curriculum and classroom procedures. Children do not attend the Fall Orientation meeting.

## **Fall/Spring Potluck**

This potluck brunch is usually held at a beach or park during the first to second month of school. Its purpose is to allow parents, class members, and teachers to become acquainted in an enjoyable setting.

## **Halloween Parade**

On Halloween children are encouraged to wear costumes to school, and each teacher sets up a Halloween party and other activities in the classroom. All of the students join in a parade around the church campus.

## **Auction**

**Each year, generally in the spring, we hold a fundraising event, which is a combination dinner and silent/live auction. This is both a fun social gathering for parents and an important fundraiser for the school. The Development Team determines what events will take place each school year and share this with you at the beginning of each school year.**

## **New Parent Orientation**

This in-depth meeting is held in July for families who are new to the Preschool and is designed to introduce new families to the Preschool philosophy and various policies and procedures. Children do not attend this event.

## **Room Meetings**

Room meetings consist of the teacher and the parents of all the children in a particular class. Attendance at these meetings is **required**, since their main purpose is to establish a close relationship between parents and teachers. This is a good time for the teacher to explain curriculum in detail and to discuss the developmental progress of children in that age group. Parents also benefit from the informal exchange of ideas. There are usually four meetings per school year. The Fall Orientation meeting held in September counts as one of the required meetings. Room Meetings are generally held at the home of a parent, refreshments are potluck.

## **MEETINGS**

### **Board Meetings**

Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the preschool, Although only Board members (including Room Representatives) are required to attend these meetings, all parents are encouraged to come and participate. Any questions about school policies or suggestions will be welcomed. The date, place, and agenda of each Board meeting will be publicized in advance of the meeting.

## **CLASSES AND SPEAKERS**

The Parent Enrichment School job arranges several classes a year of special interest to parents and/or staff. These change from year to year, but subject have included Kindergarten Options, Disaster Preparedness, and Parenting. Childcare is available, at a nominal cost.

## Health Screening

Vision and speech and language screenings are traditionally held each year to check for early signs of slow growth or unusual development. Screenings are performed during school hours by volunteer health care professionals from the community.

### Figure 1 Health and Safety

#### KEEPING A CHILD HOME

**In order to keep our California State license and for the protection of children and staff, the illness policy is of the utmost importance.**

The child's comfort should be assessed before leaving for school. If a child is listless, complains of a headache, is pale or unusually irritable, this would be a good day to *stay home*. Working parents should have a back-up plan in place before their child becomes ill. **If cough or cold medicine is needed at school, the child should be kept at home.**

The school should be called if a child will be staying home due to illness. The staff needs to be aware of illnesses, which may be present among the children, and it is important to notify the Preschool if you suspect that your child has an infectious disease. These include, but are not limited to: conjunctivitis (pink eye), fifth disease, impetigo, chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, and bacterial diarrhea. If your child may have been exposed to one of these illnesses at the Preschool, we will distribute a notice to alert you.

A child **must be kept home** if he or she has:

1. A fever. A child must stay home until a normal temperature has been maintained for at least 24 hours.
2. An unusual rash that might be a symptom of a contagious disease.
3. A contagious virus such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, roseola, fifth's disease, hand foot & mouth, or any diarrhea illness.
4. An eye infection with a discharge. After being examined and placed on medication, the child may return when they are no longer contagious and there is no discharge
5. An ear or throat infection. Once the child has been examined, placed on medication, and made comfortable, he or she may return to school when no longer contagious. The typical time for return to school is 24 hours after receiving medication.
6. A cold. A child should stay home until the symptoms of a cold such as *coughing, sneezing, watery eyes*, and thick, green mucus secretions have subsided. It is difficult for a child to enjoy preschool with these symptoms, and they may be contagious.
7. Diarrhea and/or symptoms of flu. Children need to be kept out of school for 24 hours from the time diarrhea or vomiting occurred.
8. Difficulty breathing.
9. They are recuperating from any illness – please allow them *enough time* at home to fully recover.

**Note: If your child is ill, it is important to allow him/her enough time at home to truly recuperate.**

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

In the event of an emergency involving your child, **it is imperative that we be able to reach you** in a timely manner. Provide the school with any and all means of contacting you – cell, pager, work phone, home phone, etc. **Be sure to inform the office whenever there are changes to your phone numbers or addresses.**

The Preschool is *not licensed* to care for even mildly ill children. Parents whose children become ill at the preschool will be contacted by Preschool staff and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible. Please have a contingency plan in place for this possibility.

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

The Preschool holds fire and disaster drills and is prepared to care for children for up to 72 hours in the event of a natural disaster. The staff has CPR/first aid training and is in charge in the classroom in case of a natural disaster. Parents are required to provide an emergency supplies pack for each child, as described in a communication to parents at the beginning of each school year.

## **GENERAL SAFETY AND FIRST AID**

### **Fountain Safety**

Children should not be permitted to play in the courtyard fountain. The bottom is very slippery, and we want to avoid injuries. Even putting hands in the water might result in an accident. The water is not chlorinated.

### **The Greeting Garden and New Landscaping**

Located on the patio, this is a place for resting or visiting. We have requested that vigorous outdoor play after picking up your child take place at local parks and not in this area. Safety is our major concern here, as well as consideration for church staff that have offices adjacent to the area.

## **WHEN YOUR CHILD IS INJURED**

If a child becomes injured at the Preschool, the staff on duty will administer first aid. The staff has been trained in first aid procedures for preschoolers. In the event of serious or life-threatening injury, the staff will take advantage of the Preschool's proximity to UCSD Medical Center and will summon help.

Minor injuries (i.e. scraped knee, bumped head, etc.) which do not require a doctor's care will be reported to the parent on an "Ouch Report" form, placed in your mail pocket or child's cubby. In the case of more major injury, which the teacher and/or director feel may require a doctor's visit; you will also be notified as soon as possible by phone.

## **HAND WASHING**

The best way to reduce the risk of disease in our preschool is to ensure that staff, cooperating parents, and children follow recommended hand washing procedures.

### **HOW**

- Use soap and running water.

- Rub hands vigorously as you wash them. Wash all surfaces, including: backs of hands, wrists between fingers under fingernails
- Rinse hands well. Leave the water running. Dry your hands with a single-use (paper) towel.
- Turn off the water using a paper towel instead of your bare hands.

#### WHEN

- When children, staff, and parents come to the preschool in the morning. . Before preparing or serving food.
- After diapering a child or wiping his nose or cleaning up messes.
- After they've been to the bathroom - either with a child or by themselves

**BE SURE THE CHILDREN'S HANDS ARE WASHED, especially when they arrive at the preschool, before they eat or drink, or after they've used the bathroom, had a diaper change, or touched a sick child.**

# **APPENDICES**

## **VI. APPENDIX : COMPLETE CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY AND POLICY FOR CONTRACT TERMINATION**

### **POLICY FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS AND TERMINATION OF THE PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT CONTRACT KNOWN AS MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT**

#### **Procedure for Resolving Classroom Issues**

##### **Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to outline parent and staff procedures for resolving concerns that arise in the day-to-day classroom environment at the preschool. This policy does not apply to director-initiated actions regarding staff performance issues.

##### **Policy**

Individuals with concerns about classroom issues are responsible for initiating a constructive problem-solving process directly with the other adults involved. The following guidelines are to be followed by both parents and staff, with mutual respect and concern for the best interests of the child. The first step for resolving classroom concerns is always a parent-teacher discussion. Though it might be difficult for a concerned parent to directly approach a teacher, it is an essential first step. The teacher cannot participate in problem solving if s/he is uninformed and/or uninvolved.

##### **Procedure**

- a. Schedule non-classroom time for a private discussion between the teacher and the parent. Either the parent or the teacher can initiate this procedure and let the other party (whether parent or teacher) know in advance that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a problem or concern and give them a brief idea of what the issue is.
- b. Begin the meeting by stating your concern and describing how and why you feel the child or overall classroom environment is affected.
- c. Listen to the other participant's observations and perspectives regarding your concerns.
- d. If, after this exchange of views, either party feels that there is still an issue requiring resolution, the teacher and the parent should jointly define:
  - 1) A statement of the issues/problem
  - 2) A goal that, once reached, would indicate that the problem is resolved
  - 3) The actions that each will take to reach that goal
  - 4) A specific time line for implementing the actions
  - 5) A follow-up meeting date to review progress and evaluate whether the plan is working or needs revision.
- e. A conference report is to be completed by the teacher summarizing points 1) through 5) with copies to the parent and the child's file.
- f. In the event no acceptable resolution of the problem has been reached at the classroom level, the matter can

be brought to the Director and heard by the Director and/or the Board of Directors. The two parties will each present their issue separately to the executive committee of the board at which time a course of action will be determined based both on policy and what is best for the preschool community. The executive committee will present their decision to the greater Board of Directors for approval before an action is taken. If a termination of an enrollment contract is deemed best for the preschool community and in line with the policies and procedures, the steps outlined in section "Termination of an Enrollment Contract" will be used. This decision will be conveyed personally to the family by one or both of the Board co-Presidents.

### **Termination of an Enrollment Contract (see numbers 10 and 11 in the Membership Agreement)**

#### **Policy**

This policy describes the conditions and procedures for termination of a child's enrollment contract. Termination of enrollment, described in the **Membership Agreement** signed by the families upon acceptance into the program, is as follows:

### **UCP SAN DIEGO, A.K.A. SAN DIEGO COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL**

#### **MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING**

The UCP San Diego, a.k.a. San Diego Cooperative preschool is a parent participation school. It naturally follows that parents are involved in every aspect of the program. This agreement and understanding has been prepared to promote a clear and effective partnership between the parents and the Preschool. A more extensive description of policies and procedures is available in your Parent Handbook. In the event of a discrepancy between this agreement and the Parent Handbook, this agreement will take precedence.

By signing below, each Parent acknowledges and agrees to abide by the following:

**1. The most important obligation parents have is their time spent co-oping in the classroom. Parents who choose the co-op option will work in their child(ren)'s classroom twice a month. They are expected to arrive at 8:45 a.m. and to remain until 12:15 p.m. to assist the teacher with the Morning Program. Because of State licensing requirements, parents must sign in and out so that we can track adult-student ratios. Timeliness is also crucial to classroom readiness; therefore parents who are late on the day they are co-op'ing will be charged fee. If you are absent on this day and do not provide a substitute, you will be required to pay a \$55 fee in addition to your child(ren)'s regular tuition for that month. Failure to meet this commitment may result in exclusion from the program.**

2. Tuition is due on the first of each month if paid monthly or by August 2, 2012, if the annual tuition is paid in one lump sum. Each family will sign a Tuition Agreement, the terms of which are incorporated herein. Please refer to your Tuition Agreement for details regarding the payment of tuition.

3. Room meetings are scheduled approximately four times during the year and include the fall orientation meeting. These meetings are enriching times, offering the exchange of ideas about the class and about children's growth and development. **Parents are required to attend these meetings.**

4. The extensive repair and maintenance of school rooms and play yards are tackled at one work party scheduled at the end of the school year. Families have the option of paying a \$150.00 fee if they can't meet this commitment.

5. Each family is required to clean their child/children's classroom once during the year. The major cleaning needs are determined by the teacher (e.g. dusting and washing windows). Families who cannot meet this commitment have the option of paying a \$75.00 fee. This fee will be due the month the family signed up to clean.

6. To aid in the functioning of the Preschool, each family is required to assume a school job each year. A directory of possible jobs is available at Orientation and in the Preschool office. Families that do not complete their school job will be fined \$350 *and* will be reassigned to a different job.

7. Children should be brought to the Preschool on time and picked up on time. Our primary concern is for the well-being of the child and respect for the staff. The Preschool in its sole discretion will not release any child to an adult who appears unable to safely transport the child home. In the event this happens, the Preschool will rely on the Emergency Information form to call another adult authorized to pick up the child.

For families whose children are enrolled in the 7:30 - 3:30 time slot, late pick-up may be arranged (to 5:30) for a fee of \$20, if the family provides 24 hours notice and the Director approves the request. Late pick-up is not allowed for other time slots. Unscheduled late pick-ups are subject to the following fines: first late pick-up \$10.00 fine per half-hour or portion thereof; second late pick-up \$20 fine per half hour or portion thereof; third and subsequent late pick-up(s) \$30 fine per half hour or portion thereof. Families who pick up their child(ren) late (without pre approval) more than three times are subject to losing their place in the school.

8. California State Licensing requires that no child shall be accepted without contact between the Preschool staff and the person bringing the child(ren) into the classroom. It also requires the daily signing in and signing out of each child. In the event of an emergency, the sign-in sheet will be used to account for each child. Please use your full signature when signing your child(ren) in and out. California State Licensing requires this also.

9. For the safety of your child(ren) and the Church staff, there is absolutely NO PARKING IN THE RED ZONE PORTION OF THE DRIVEWAY. There is also NO PARKING OR STOPPING IN THE CHURCH STAFF SPACES. All parking should be in the Pay Lot adjacent to the Church. Designated spots for drop off and pick up are available. Preschool parents are not required to pay for parking in the Pay Lot adjacent to the Church during drop-offs or while co-op'ing; the preschool provides parking validation.

10. In the event the Preschool, in its sole discretion, determines that the program does not meet the child's needs (e.g. behavior and health), the Preschool shall provide 20 days written notice to the parents in order to facilitate the relocation of the child by the parents for alternative care. In this situation, at the conclusion of 20 days, this Membership Agreement will terminate and any tuition credit due from the date of written notice shall be refunded.



## VII. APPENDECIES: ARTICLES

### WHY PLAY IS SO VERY IMPORTANT

By James L. Hymes

Ask any young child what happened at school. You will almost always get the same answer: "Played." And when you visit school you are apt to have the same overall impression: "They're just playing." But don't be misled by that word "play." Children in early childhood groups do play - no question about that. But they don't play games with rules and scores and teams, the way older children play. Young children's play isn't that kind. And their play isn't like that of grown-ups playing golf or bridge. Young children's play isn't recreation. It isn't a dessert when the day's work is done. It isn't a change of pace.

Nor is their play giggles and laughter. Young children playing are very intent and earnest. Children's "play" - there ought to be a better word for it! - is very serious business.

Young children "play" with playthings: with paints, clay, riding their trikes, climbing, building with blocks in the sandbox, with their dolls, doing puzzles, on the swings, on the slide, on the jungle gym... But young children "play" even when they are busy with ordinary, realistic, down-to-earth activities: when they are toileting, taking a bath, feeding an animal. Listen and you suddenly realize: they're not all here their minds are elsewhere. They are "playing." Young children can have their feet on the ground at the same time that the rest of their body and soul is imagining, pretending and making-believe. The young child sees a chair. A chair is to sit on and a chair is a horse, a plane, a boat, a car, a bus, a house, a cave, a garage.

Watch a youngster at an easel. The child consciously, carefully, deliberately puts red exactly where he or she wants the red to go. That is "play" and that is thinking. Listen to a child

on top of a jungle gym: "This must be our house and I must be the mother." That is "play" *and* that is a child with a plan, a child with an idea.

Whether the child speaks the words out loud or simply thinks them, in play the child always feels: "I have an idea." The idea doesn't have to be our grown-up kind of idea; the chair doesn't have to look like a horse or smell like a horse. Later, when the child is older, ideas will have to meet the harsh test of reality, and the child will want them to. Now, when the child is under age six, what counts is that the child thought up the idea. It is "play" and it is the beginning of thinking. The notion can surprise you but the fact is: "Play" - happy-sounding, seemingly easy-going - involves very vigorous intellectual activity.

Play serves a second important purpose in development: *Play is the young child's emotional equalizer.* Every young child meets some blows and disappointments, even under the best of conditions. Inevitably, adults are busy time passes slowly...toys break or get lost...day becomes night...Young children need some defenses against the realities of life, and "play" does that job.

Through play, children can feel more loved, more cared for, more protected, whenever any of these feelings would make life a little sweeter. All they have to do is say: "I must be the baby"... "I must be sick"... "I must be your prisoner"... Just as easily, through play children can feel more important, more powerful, more impressive. It is easy to do: "I must be the driver"... "Giddy yap horsey, go, go"... "I must be the conductor. I collect the tickets."

Play is solace, play is strengthener. Play is comforter, play is courage-builder. "Play" - simple sounding - makes children stronger, better able to take whatever life sends their way.

*Play turns children into social human beings* - that is the third contribution to development. Children do play atone at times, even in school groups, but usually "Play" means people. It means listening to what the other children say; it means speaking up for your ideas. It means going along with what the others do; it means persuading others follow you.

Play times are practice sessions in not being too bossy, not being selfish or grabby and not being too meek or too mild or too shy. *"Play" starts a child on the way to becoming civilized - a companion, a contributor.*

Play brings so much good to young children - it is built so deeply into their bones- that it goes on, for better or worse, whether we adults nourish it or not. But support for children's play is important. Without it the play can turn downhill. It can become repetitive - the same old activity over and over again. Or play can become wild and out-of-bounds. Or the urge to play can be pushed down within the child, submerged exclusively into daydreaming.

What can we do to help? Children don't need our Ideas or direction from us - child play has to be their idea. But we can help by being sure that children have space that play needs at home and at school. We can help by providing the age mates that make play richer. We can help by making available the kinds of materials that let play flow easily: blocks, sand, clay, paints, dolls, dress-up clothes...

We help most of all simply by believing in the worth of and in the importance of play. The temptation is to become impatient with an activity so misleadingly named. Now that they are in school, the temptation is to push children into "serious things," forgetting how serious play is to them. The temptation is to prize only achievements and accomplishments that *we* can recognize, ignoring the basic contributions to mental and emotional and social development that play makes.

If you find yourself tempted to minimize child's play, keep this in mind: It grows and blossom only in this particular under-six span of years. For that short span in life, it touches almost all of the activities that fill up almost all of the minutes of the child's day. We ought to think twice before taking too lightly something so impressive.

Anything can be anything in the child's own "play" world. Anybody can be anybody, and anybody can do anything: "I must be the boss and you must be the worker. And you must do what I tell you..."

Anybody can be anybody, anybody can do anything; even nobodies who don't exist can do anything! In their special world, young children often talk to people who really aren't there. They have make-believe friends whom we can't see at all! Why? What's the good of this very different, under-six kind of play? This is the unique characteristic of the under-six age: It lives in two worlds. One we call "the real world." But the other world is even more real to the young child: the private world, the "play world," the world within the boy or girl's mind. You and I see a chair. A chair is to sit on.

This play serves three very important purposes in nourishing the young child's development. First and foremost: *Play promotes very significant mental capacities.* It stretches the attention span. It builds the child's

vocabulary. It develops perseverance. And most important: Play is the young child's distinctive way of beginning to organize ideas and to plan and to think

## HOW TO TALK TO A SCRIBBLER

A piece on children's artwork From *Young Children*, August 1973

Usually the role of the parent and teacher [in children's artwork] is seen as (1) providing the opportunity for creativity and (2) acting as an interested observer. This article goes beyond this to focusing on the importance of "talk" between adult and child.

How many sensible things can one say about a scribble? Or even about the picture of an older child? They need encouragement in the form of verbal approval and respect. Beyond that, they benefit by hearing language that stimulates awareness of the creative process and give names to things. This sort of language development is important in providing basic equipment needed to develop more mature thought.

Principles suggested include:

- Communication must be geared to the level of the child. 2. Be specific, relate comments to work child has done.
- Be specific, relate comments to work child has done.

Adults can mention:

- The child's movements, emphasizing the actual physical process, the act of creating. "Look how fast your hand is moving back and forth." "You are really pushing hard on that crayon, aren't you!"
- The way things look. "You've made some little dots and a long curvy line." The adult might even point to the little dots when mentioning them.
- The feelings that is apparent. Clues to a child's feelings can come from body language, facial expression, or noted in color or work preferences. "You worked a long time on that painting; you must have enjoyed it very much." "It's exciting to find new things to do with a crayon."

When children initiate a conversation, adults have a lead to follow. If the child says, "See my big man," the adult might encourage awareness of personal aspects by asking who the bit man is or what the child thinks about the man. For example, "Your man is so big he fills up the whole paper. Is he someone you know?" The child must feel free to disregard the adults, and they must accept it.

When children are reluctant to comment, the adult might ask "Would you like to tell me something about the things you have painted?" Children who cannot comment may be developmentally unready or may just want to keep them in their own private world. Adults might make a positive comment like "I'm glad you are having fun painting." (Remember, you don't need to talk, and neither does the child.)

Children who are not motivated to even scribble may get involved with group work, with an adult suggesting they choose crayon or felt pen and just move it around. A positive comment like, "I enjoyed sitting with you."

Maybe we can do something special next time," is a positive note if the child still won't cooperate.

Some children hum or sing as they work, and shouldn't be interrupted. Some even stare into space, with the motor activity obviously most important. When a child is fully involved in the activity, it is best not to make comments, but when the work is done there may be an appropriate gesture or phrase. Adults should avoid questions such as "What are you drawing?" or "What's this?" because they put the child on the spot.

You might comment on the nice bright red used, but avoid repeating stock phrases. As one child said, "Oh, Mrs. Merrill, you say that to everybody! "

## GIVING CHILDREN POSITIVE VERBAL DIRECTION

From The Nursery School: A Human Relationship Laboratory by Kathryn Read

Consistency of staff members and co-oping parents in guiding and limiting behavior contributes to the development of desirable behavior, as well as, to the child's feeling of success in learning. Put requests in positive rather than negative terms, and avoid asking the child's opinion about doing something if they don't really have an option.

<b>Say</b>	<b>Avoid Saying</b>
Sit down when you slide	Don't stand up when you slide
Keep the sand low	Don't throw sand
Sit in the swing	Don't stand in the swing
Use both hands when you climb	You'll fall if you don't watch out
Climb down the ladder	Don't jump off the box
Throw the stick over the fence	Don't play with the stick; you might hurt someone
Keep the puzzle pieces together	Don't scatter the pieces all over
Turn the pages carefully	Don't tear the book
Talk in a quiet voice	Don't shout
Wipe your hands on the paper towel	Don't put your hands on anything
Be sure the ladder is safe	Be careful, you might fall
Keep your chair flat on the floor	Don't rock the chair
Walk around the swing	Be careful, the swing might hit you
Wipe your brush on the jar	Don't drip paint on the floor
Put your apron on	Don't you want to put your apron on?
Time to go inside	Shall we go inside?
Wash your hands	Don't you want to wash your hands?
Drink your milk	Don't you want your milk?
Drink out of your own glass	Don't bother the other children

## DEFENDING CHILDHOOD -- ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO BE THEMSELVES

From *Childcare Information Exchange*, January, 2001, by Johann Christoph Arnold

Despite all the talk about putting children first, our society is becoming increasingly hostile to its young. How different our schools, homes, and child care centers would be if parents and educators would defend children's right to a childhood, instead of fixating on their progress and success.

The pressure to excel is undermining childhood as never before. Naturally, parents have always wanted their offspring to "do well," both academically and socially. No one wants their child to be the slowest in the class, or the last to be picked for a game on the field. But what is it about the culture we live in that has made that natural worry into such an obsessive fear, and what is it doing to our children?

Why are we so keen to mold them into successful adults, instead of treasuring their genuineness and carefree innocence? As my friend and fellow children's advocate Jonathan Kozol said in a recent interview: "It's almost as though we view those qualities as useless, as though we don't value children for their gentleness, but only as future economic units, as future workers, as future assets and deficits."

Of all the ways in which we push children to meet adult expectations, the trend toward high-pressure academics may be the most widespread, and the worst. I say "worst" because of the age at which we begin to subject them to it, and the fact that for some of them school quickly becomes a place they dread, and a source of misery they cannot escape for months at a time.

In my book *Endangered: Your child in a Hostile World*, I quote Melinda, a veteran preschool teacher in California: "We have parents asking whether their two-and-a-half-year-olds are learning to read yet, and grumbling if they can't. I see kids literally shaking and crying because they don't want to go in to testing. I've even seen parents dragging their child into the room."

Of course, children ought to be stretched and intellectually stimulated. They should be taught to articulate their feelings, to write, to read, to develop and defend an idea, to think critically. But what is the purpose of the best academic education if it fails to prepare young people for the 'real' world beyond the confines of the classroom? What about those life-skills that can never be taught by putting a child on a bus and sending him to school?

It is not just schools that are pressuring children into growing up too fast. The practice of rushing them into adulthood is so widely accepted and so thoroughly ingrained that people often go blank when you voice concern about the matter. Take, for example, the number of parents who tie up their children's after-school hours in extracurricular activities. On the surface, the explosion of opportunities for "growth" in areas like music and sports looks like the perfect answer to the boredom faced by millions of latchkey children, but the reality is not always so pretty.

It's one thing when a child picks up a hobby, a sport, or an instrument on her own steam, but quite another when the driving force is a parent with an overly competitive edge. The pattern is all too familiar: ambitions expectations are followed by the pressure to meet them, and what was once a perfectly happy part of a child's life becomes a burden that is impossible to bear.

As an author I became aware, after completing my first book, of something I had never noticed previously: the importance of white space. White space is the room between the lines of type, the margins, extra space at the beginning of a chapter, a page left blank at the beginning of the book. It

allows the type to “breathe” and gives the eye a place to rest. White space is not something you’re conscious of when you read a book. It is what *isn’t* there.

Just as books require white space, so do children. That is, they need room to grow. The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu reminds us that “it is not the clay the potter throws that give the jar its usefulness, but the space within.” Our tendency to overbook children, emotionally and time-wise, robs them of the space and flexibility they need to develop at their own pace. They need stimulation and guidance, but they also need time to themselves. Hours spent alone in daydreams or quiet, unstructured activities instill a sense of security and independence and provide a necessary lull in the rhythm of the day.

It is a beautiful thing to see children absorbed in play; in fact, it is hard to think of a purer, more spiritual activity. Play brings joy, contentment, and detachment from the troubles of the day. Especially nowadays, in our hectic, time- and money-driven culture, the importance of play cannot be emphasized enough. Friedrich Froebel, the father of the modern kindergarten, says, “a child who plays thoroughly and perseveringly, until physical fatigue forbids, will be a determined adult, capable of self-sacrifice both for his own welfare and that of others.” In an age when fears of playground injuries and the misguided idea that play interferes with “real” learning has led some 40% of the school districts across the county to do away with recess, one can only hope that the wisdom of these words will not go entirely unheeded.

Allowing children the room to grow at their own pace does not mean ignoring them. Clearly, the bedrock of their security from day to day is the knowledge that we who care for them are always at hand, ready to help them, to talk with them, to give them what they need, and simple to “be there” for them. But how often are we swayed instead by our own ideas of what they want or need?

The answer, of course, is to drop our adult expectations entirely, to get down on the same level as our children and look them in the eye. Only when we lay aside our ambitions for them will we begin to hear what they are saying, find out what they are thinking, and see the goals we have set for them from their point of view.

Obviously, every child is different. Some seem to get all the lucky breaks, while others have a rough time simply coping with life. One child consistently brings home perfect scores, while the next is always at the bottom of the class. Another is gifted and popular, while still another, no matter how hard he tries, is always in trouble and often gets forgotten. As parents and caregivers, we must refrain from comparing children. Above all, we must refrain from pushing them to become something that their unique personal makeup may never allow them to be.

Wanting children to be “good” and “well behaved” is a dubious goal in the first place. Getting into trouble can be a vital part of building character. As Polish pediatrician Janusz Korczak points out: “The good child cries very little, he sleeps through the night, he is confident and good-natured. He is well behaved, convenient, obedient, and good. Yet no consideration is given to the fact that he may grow up to be indolent and stagnant.”

When we welcome the prospect of caring for the problematic child with these things in mind, we will begin to see our frustrations as moments that can awaken our best qualities. We will remember that children who break the rules often make more self-reliant and independent adults than those whose limits are never tried. By helping us to discover the limitations of “goodness” and the boredom of conformity, they can teach us the necessity of genuineness, the wisdom of humility, and finally, the reality that nothing good is won without struggle.

“Unlearning” our adult mindsets is never easy, especially when children sometimes seem more of a bother than a gift. When there are children around, things just don’t always go as planned. Furniture gets scratched, flowerbeds trampled, new clothes torn or muddied, toys lost and broken. Children want to have fun, to run in the aisles; they need space to be rambunctious, silly, and noisy. After all, they are not china dolls or little adults, but unpredictable rascals with sticky fingers and runny noses.

Yet, if we truly love them, we will welcome them as they are.