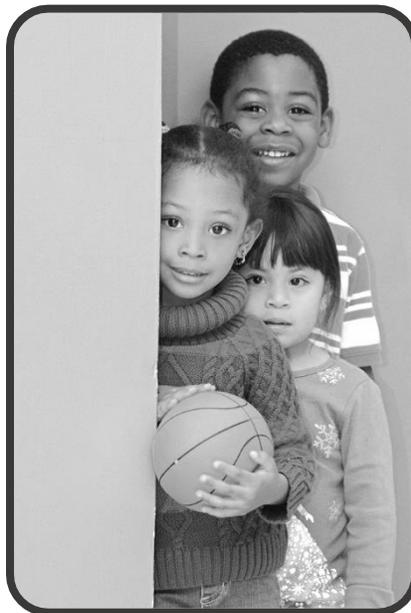



Kennedy Child Study Center
where every child matters

PARENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018



Kennedy Child Study Center:
Where Every Child Matters

Learn more about us at www.kenchild.org,
and like us on Facebook at [fb.com/kennedychildstudycenter](https://www.facebook.com/kennedychildstudycenter)

**KENNEDY CHILD STUDY CENTER
PRESCHOOL PROGRAM: PARENT HANDBOOK**

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Dear Parents...

WELCOME TO KENNEDY!

As your child embarks on a new year of growth and learning, we embrace the opportunity to become part of your world and celebrate the magic of childhood together. Our policies and procedures are meant to provide a safe and stable environment for both you and your child. Please keep this manual in a convenient place so that you can refer to it as needed throughout the school year. It contains important information about your child's early childhood program. The **CONTACT COVER SHEET** has all the specific contact information you may need during the school year, as well as the school calendar, so please hold on to it!

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE KENNEDY CHILD STUDY CENTER

1. OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Kennedy Child Study Center (KCSC) is dedicated to assisting children who exhibit difficulty in critical areas of early childhood development. These areas include cognition and learning, mobility, speech and communication, and social relations.

We accomplish our mission by:

- Providing evaluation and diagnosis, comprehensive therapy, and high-quality preschool education to young children with delays in learning and other areas of development;
- Advancing the holistic well-being of the families we serve through family support, including Medicaid service coordination, and information on healthy living and accessing community resources;
- Advocating for public policies that benefit young children with developmental delays, and developing programs to meet the changing needs of our families; and,
- Reinforcing best practices in early childhood special education through ongoing professional development for educators, therapists, and others working in the field.

The Kennedy Child Study Center is an affiliate of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York.

2. OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

This handbook has been prepared as a reference for **parents and guardians** who have children enrolled in the KCSC Preschool Program. Parents/guardians are **essential partners** in the education of their children, and we want to engage with you in the educational, social and physical needs of your child. Classroom philosophy focuses on expectations of the New York State

Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (visit <http://bit.ly/1VwhlPc> to learn more). We believe that children should learn to love school in a **child-centered environment** where active play and social relationships are key components.

KCSC has an **open door policy** regarding parents/guardians. We encourage parents/guardians to visit the school and observe and participate in classroom activities. If you would like to arrange a visit for extended family to visit us during the school day, we request that the parent/guardian call your Family Support Coordinator to make those arrangements. If you have concerns about any aspect of your child's development, our team of professionals will find time to discuss the concern and make recommendations as appropriate.

Each classroom is staffed with a full time certified **Special Education Teacher** and two full time certified **Teacher Assistants** (TA's). Related services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling) are provided by licensed New York State **Therapists** as mandated by each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). A **Family Support Coordinator** (FSC) is always available to each family to provide support for education and community resources.

Our teachers develop classroom activities that reinforce individual IEP goals and help children increase their social awareness of their peer group and other adults in the school environment. Teachers and therapists realize that **every child learns differently**, and they use teaching methods that encourage each child to participate regardless of language skills or social ability. While following Common Core guidelines, our staff uses a **flexible approach** that can evolve as your child learns and develops.

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GOALS AND THE KCSC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core is organized into five broad developmental domains. These domains are interrelated and guide us as we provide the framework to prepare each child for kindergarten. The domains are:

- **Approaches to Learning** – How children become involved in learning and acquire knowledge. This includes curiosity, concentration, creativity, persistence, and problem solving.
- **Physical Development and Health** – Children's physical health and ability to independently engage in daily activities. These activities include eating, dressing and using the toilet.
- **Social and Emotional Development** – The emotional competence and ability to form positive relationships that give meaning to children's experiences in the home, school, and larger community.

- **Communication, Language, and Literacy** – How children understand, create, and communicate meaning of the world around them.
- **Cognition and Knowledge of the World** – How children integrate all areas of development. A child’s ability to understand the world and apply what they know forms the foundation for the reading, writing and math skills they will need in kindergarten and beyond.

The children’s daily schedule incorporates all these learning domains. While classroom schedules will vary from day to day, children will engage in a variety of large and small group activities, structured play time, art, music, cooking, physical movement and outdoor play (weather permitting).

Our teachers and therapists monitor student achievement over time through developmental assessments and formal observations. Each child’s instructional program is adjusted to match progress and mastery as per the IEP (Individualized Education Plan). If changes to the IEP are necessary we will work with you and the CPSE (Committee on Preschool Special Education) prior to your child’s Annual Review to suggest modifications.

Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year to discuss your child’s progress and issues of mutual interest or concern. Additional conferences may be scheduled upon request. As per NYCDOE policy, we update your child’s progress three times a year for children who attend our 10 month program (September to June), and four times a year for children who attend our 12 month program (September to August), by sending home a short narrative report of your child’s achievements. Your child’s IEP is updated annually, or more often if a review is requested during the year.

B. PRESCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attending school every day is very important for your child’s growth and development. Your child attends the Kennedy Child Study Center because they are mandated by the NYC Department of Education to receive services every day according to their Individual Education Plan (IEP). When planning family vacations or other trips, remember to schedule around the school calendar so that your child does not miss school.

If your child is going to be absent from school, please take the following steps:

1. Call KCSC and state your child's name, the name of your child's teacher, and the reason for the absence. NYC Day Care regulations require the school to account for every student absence by 10:00am. If we do not hear from you by 10am, we are obligated to call you or your emergency contact to determine your child's whereabouts.
2. Call the bus company and inform them that they will not need to pick up your child. To resume bus services, you will need to call the bus company to let them know when your child is ready to return to school.
3. As per New York State Education Department rules, please provide a signed and dated note explaining why your child was absent. A legal absence (as defined by **175.6 of the Commissioner Regulations**) includes: *personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics.*
4. A **doctor's note is required** if your child had a contagious disease or is returning from a stay at the hospital. The doctor's note must state which day the child can return to school.
5. After 5 days without a legal excuse, KCSC is required to notify your child's school district. The school district will attempt to contact you within 15 days of our notice. If you have not established a legal excuse for absence, your child's services may be terminated

NOTE: Contact information for the school and the bus company are on the **CONTACT COVER SHEET**.

If your child has been mandated for a 12 month program, they are expected to be enrolled for the entire 6 week Summer Program. The program operates in July and the first two weeks of August. The actual calendar dates will be provided to you by April of the preceding school year. Failure to attend the mandated Summer Program may jeopardize your child's placement in the Fall Program.

REMEMBER: It is very important for your child to attend school on a daily basis so they can progress, reach their goals, and become accustomed to routines and schedules. Children who are frequently absent miss valuable therapy and classroom time.

2. ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

The majority of students who attend KCSC are mandated to receive busing through the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT.) **Kennedy Child Study**

Center does not hire the bus company or the drivers. We encourage you to report any concerns you may have about your child's transportation to us so we can help you resolve it as quickly as possible. However, because the bus company is contracted through the NYCDOE, parents are required to speak directly to staff at the bus company to register a complaint. Contact information for your child's bus company is included in the **CONTACT COVER SHEET**.

If there is no-one at home to receive your child and we have made every attempt to reach someone on your emergency contact list, the bus company has been instructed by the NYCDOE to contact the bus company dispatcher and bring your child to the local police station. **PLEASE** help us avoid this unnecessary trauma by keeping the school updated with any change in contact information.

3. EMERGENCY CONTACTS

When you registered your child, you provided us with a list of 3 emergency contacts. **These emergency contacts are the only people other than you who are allowed to pick up your child from school or receive your child from the bus.**

The following guidelines apply to emergency contacts:

1. You must provide written permission of any person you designate as an emergency contact. This should be done when you register your child.
2. Emergency contacts must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. Emergency contacts must be willing to pick up or receive children on an as-needed basis. For example, in the event of unforeseen circumstances (dangerous weather conditions, no heat or air conditioning, etc.), KCSC may need to close early and would require that you or your emergency contact pick up your child from school or the bus earlier than the scheduled time.
4. You must inform people that you have listed them as an emergency contact. Administrators and classroom teaching staff have the right to ask whether a listed emergency contact is aware of their responsibilities.
5. **All emergency contacts will be asked to show appropriate picture identification (driver's license, state I.D., etc.) when picking up your child.**
6. We will ask you to update your emergency information (home phone, cell, email) and list of emergency contacts at least three times per year. We request that you contact your Family Service Coordinator (FSC) with any contact changes as they occur.
7. An individual whose name does not appear on the emergency contact list will not be allowed to pick up your child unless you have made a prior arrangement in writing.

Again, you should inform your Family Support Coordinator immediately of any changes in emergency contact information or other important information.

8. If there is anyone you have identified who **should not** have access to your child, please note that on the emergency contact form AND call the school to speak directly to your Family Support Coordinator.

4. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

A. Related Services

If your child receives occupational or physical therapy, it is legally mandated that we have a current prescription that reflects the IEP mandates. As per your child's IEP, therapy sessions (like speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling) are scheduled for your child throughout the week. When your child is absent from school on a day that he or she is scheduled to receive a therapy session, we cannot guarantee that our therapeutic staff will be able to do a "make up" session. That being said, we will make every effort to meet your child's IEP mandates.

B. Illness

A child **must not** be brought to preschool when he or she is sick. Children with coughs, colds, nasal discharge or a fever of 101° or higher should be kept home until symptoms disappear. A child who has had a fever may return to school once the fever has been below 101° for at least 24 hours. Please call the school to alert us if your child has a contagious illness aside from the common cold or stomach virus. These guidelines help keep everyone healthy!

Should your child become ill during the day, the nurse or staff member will call you or your emergency contact person to come pick up your child.

Please be advised that the preschool nurse is available from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. The Nurse or a MAT (Medication Administration Trained) staff member are the only staff members authorized to administer medication at any time. Guidelines regulating the administration of both prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications can be found in the section below.

Children with significant medical or dietary needs will have a written Health Care Plan developed and monitored by our school nurse.

C. Administration of Medication

As per current New York State Department of Health regulations, if it is necessary for your child to receive medication during the time he or she is in our program, either on a daily basis or for an acute illness, the following procedures must be followed:

- A signed, up-to-date prescription from the physician indicating the need for the medication must be on file.
- A signed, up-to-date permission slip from you (the parent/guardian) authorizing the nurse to administer the medication must be on file.
- Medication must be delivered to the preschool nurse by the parent, guardian or another authorized individual (who has signed consent from the parent/guardian). Children are **NOT** permitted, under any circumstances, to bring in medication of any kind to school.
- Medication must be in the original prescription bottle which shows the child's name, dosage and times for administration.

Over the counter (OTC) medications, such as Tylenol, Motrin, diaper cream, cough syrup, etc., require written authorization for use from you, the parent/guardian, and from your child's pediatrician. Any OTC medications must be delivered to the nurse in the **unopened, original packaging**. The form authorizing the administration of OTC medications must be signed annually and is kept in your child's file.

If it is necessary for your child to receive medication at any time after admission, the **Medication Administration Forms** are available in the nurse's office.

5. WELLNESS POLICY

The Kennedy Child Study Center (KCSC) is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

This Wellness Policy clarifies nutrition and wellness activities at the agency. It is updated on an as-needed basis with input from the Executive Director, Education Directors, and Director of Operations. The Wellness Policy is available to students, staff, and the community upon request.

A. Nutrition and Physical Activity

Nutrition Education Goals

1. Students at KCSC will receive nutrition education that is developmentally appropriate and teaches the skills children need to adopt healthy eating behaviors.
2. KCSC will promote family style dining practices to create and reinforce a healthy and social environment for mealtime.
3. KCSC students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the classrooms and at home through lesson plans that reflect New York State Prekindergarten Common Core Foundation goals about physical health and wellness.
4. Regular parent newsletters include healthy recipes that are often similar to recipes students and teachers have made in class.
5. KCSC will create public displays related to nutrition and physical activity where they can be easily viewed, such as bulletin boards and website / Facebook posts.
6. KCSC will work with a licensed nutrition educator to assist kitchen staff with adopting healthy recipes that meet nutritional guidelines as set forth by NYSED and NYCDOH.

Establishing Nutrition Standards

KCSC follows meal patterns and nutrition standards established for Pre-K students by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). KCSC offers free breakfast and lunch to all students. Our breakfast and lunch menus are created by a licensed nutritionist and focus on:

- Whole and enriched grain products that are high in fiber and low in added fats/sugars.
- Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables using healthy food preparation techniques, and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice. Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables will be served most often, rather than juices and canned fruits and vegetables.
- Low-fat, plain milk and yogurt, and nonfat and/or low-fat real cheese, rather than imitation cheese.
- Nuts, nut butters (when allergies are not an issue), seeds, trail mix, and/or soybean snacks.
- Lean meat, poultry, or fish using healthy food preparation techniques.

KCSC does not use food as a reward.

Water shall be accessible to students throughout the school day.

Teachers and staff are encouraged to model healthy eating and behaviors. Staff and students

participate in family style lunch, during which staff reinforce appropriate mealtime behavior.

Setting Physical Activity Goals

Students have at least 60 minutes of physical activity during the school day both through occupational and physical therapy (when applicable) and unstructured play time. Gross motor skills are continually addressed in classroom activities. In addition to working with professional instructors, KCSC will expand our efforts to train teachers to lead yoga and Zumba in the classrooms, thus increasing our ability to increase physical activity in the classroom.

Unstructured playtime, outside when feasible, is provided for 20-30 minutes daily for each child. This is in addition to any structured physical activity.

KCSC will encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

Setting Goals for Measurement and Evaluation

Measuring/Data Collection:

- KCSC records daily meal participation.
- Nutrition education activities are included in weekly lesson plans that are implement in the classroom.
- Any staff nutrition education is documented.
- Any parent nutrition education is documented.

Non-Discrimination and Dietary Restrictions

KCSC is a Provision II School and provides free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of income eligibility. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) KCSC may not discriminate against any students by refusing to provide them with free breakfast and/or lunch. Students with religious, medical, or other dietary restrictions are offered alternate meals that meet their requirements.

B. “Food from Home” Policy

KCSC policy does not allow food from home. There are three reasons for this:

- Our menus follow New York State guidelines for preschoolers, meaning they are specially crafted to give your child the best possible nutrition.
- Mealtime is an opportunity to encourage all of our students – including “picky eaters” – to try new tastes, textures, and food items, in a supportive, family-style environment.
- Snacks or food from home can create tension at mealtime, causing unnecessary temper tantrums for children who do not have snacks from home, and distracting all our students from eating the healthy food we have prepared for them.

Nutrition is an important part of your child’s overall health and we can work together to create a lifetime of healthy habits while your child is young and impressionable. We have worked with thousands of preschoolers over the years, and we know that even the pickiest eaters can learn to enjoy the meals prepared at our school!

We are able to provide modified food items (soy, gluten free, etc.) and/or puréed food to meet each child’s individual needs. If you have significant concerns about your child’s eating habits or health, we will set up an appointment for you with our Registered Nutritionist. If you believe you need to send specially prepared food from home to meet your child’s dietary requirements, please speak with your Family Support Coordinator and we will discuss your concerns.

C. Birthday/Celebration Policy

While we actively encourage parents to be involved and take part in activities and special events, there are specific guidelines we ask you to follow if you choose to celebrate your child’s birthday at school. Classroom staff always acknowledge children on their birthday in their own special way. Some classes celebrate with special birthday hats or Birthday Helper jobs, and of course by singing the Happy Birthday song. We understand that parents may want to join in on the fun and add to the festivities.

These guidelines help to keep children safe and allow us to continue to promote good nutrition.

All staff will monitor what is being brought in for children. Since some of our children have food allergies or special diets, it is important to check with your child’s teacher before you bring a special party treat.

FOOD CATEGORY	PROHIBITED	ALLOWABLE ALTERNATIVES
Beverage	Soda Fruit Drinks Chocolate Milk	We provide water throughout the day.
Dessert Item	Small candies Lollipops Large Cupcakes Ice Cream cakes	Mini Cupcakes/muffins Small Cookies Animal Crackers Baked Chips or Pretzels Fruit Ices
Fruit or Vegetable	Grapes, Cherries	Fruit-Kabobs (cantaloupe, watermelon, banana) Apples w/ Caramel Dip Veggies and Ranch Dip

Please do not bring Goodie Bags to distribute. Children often take out the small toys during the school day, and can become upset if they get lost or broken. They may go into their backpacks in search of the toys during the bus ride, which can be dangerous. In addition, some of the toys may be choking hazards.

6. CHILD SAFETY

All children are entitled to live and go to school in a safe and nurturing environment. All staff and clinical consultants at the Kennedy Child Study Center treat each student with respect and respond to their needs in a calm and supportive manner.

All staff and clinical consultants at Kennedy are trained to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, as mandated by New York State Public Health Law. If our staff and/or clinical consultants suspect that a child has been subjected to child abuse, neglect or maltreatment, they are required by law to contact the Child Abuse Hotline (800-635-1522).

KCSC will make every effort to maintain confidentiality in all such cases and is committed to supporting students, parents, and staff members throughout the reporting process, while working cooperatively with Child Protective Services (CPS) and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

If you have any concerns about your child; if your child has been injured while outside of school; if you or your child needs assistance in any way; or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Family Support Coordinator at your school site. Communication with our school staff is encouraged. All undocumented injuries, sustained absences from school, verbal reports made

by students, noticeable changes in a student's behavior and/or appearance, etc., must be reported and investigated. If your child is injured during the school day, you will receive a phone call and/or written documentation of the incident. Your child's well-being is our top priority.

Fire, evacuation, and lockdown drills are conducted throughout the school year. The preschool has an emergency fire and evacuation plan on file. If we need to vacate the building during an emergency, you will be notified of your child's location as soon as possible. **It is essential that you provide the school with up to date emergency contact information.**

In addition to the drills noted above, KCSC has a written Health and Safety Plan, which is reviewed with staff on an annual basis. This plan includes: a Lost Child Plan, an Emergency Evacuation Plan, and a Medical Emergency Plan. If you would like to review a copy of the Health and Safety Plan, please contact the Education Director. You will find their information on the **CONTACT COVER SHEET**. It is our goal to keep your child safe at school and to communicate with you about any concerns you may have.

7. MEDICAID SERVICE COORDINATION

At KCSC, we understand the importance of support outside the classroom. Our Medicaid Service Coordination program provides eligible families, parents, and caregivers with support, training and information on topics such as autism and the transition into the NYC public school system. Prior approval from the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is necessary for Medicaid Service Coordination.

Social workers and Medicaid Service Coordinators provide information, referrals, and coordination of services in many areas, including:

- parent education
- child nutrition
- housing and health care
- access to legal and other social services in the community
- advocacy for appropriate resources and services

If you are interested in receiving Medicaid Service Coordination for your child, contact your school's Family Support Coordinator for more information.

8. CLOSING FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the New York City Department of Education closes due to inclement weather, the Kennedy Child Study Center will be closed as well. The NYCDOE website will provide up to date information on school closures, as will local TV and radio stations. The NYCDOE website is: <http://schools.nyc.gov>. Because all of our students are transported to school by bus, depending on transportation/safety concerns **KCSC may choose to close even if the NYCDOE remains open.**

In the event of a school closure, parents/guardians will receive an automated message over the telephone. Parents/guardians can also opt to receive closure information via text message and email. In order for the system to work, it is imperative that we have your updated emergency contact information.

You can also learn about school closures by calling our main office using the numbers listed on the **CONTACT COVER SHEET**. You will hear a recorded message in English and Spanish if school is cancelled.

9. VISITATION POLICY

A. Parents/Guardians and Authorized Persons

We welcome parents/guardians and authorized persons to visit the program to learn more about the care and education of your child. We ask that you keep the following requirements in mind:

- You will be asked to show a picture ID at the reception area. Once we get to know you, this will not be needed each time you visit the school.
- If you wish to simply see/observe your child in class, you can do so by making an appointment in advance or by dropping by and checking in at the reception desk.
- If you wish to speak with any staff member regarding specific care or educational issues, you are required to **make an appointment** so that your concerns may be addressed more thoroughly.
- Please note: **teachers cannot leave their classrooms for meetings when the program is in session, i.e. between 9:00 am – 2:30 pm, unless a prior appointment has been made.**

B. Other Visitors

All other visitors to one of our programs must call in advance and schedule an appointment with whomever they wish to visit. If the visitor is an extended family member, the parent/legal guardian must contact the Family Support Coordinator to make those arrangements. To ensure

the safety and security of all children in the building, visitors are required to:

- Sign in with the receptionist;
- Wear a Visitor's Pass to identify them while in the building;
- Have an escort with them at all times while in the building;
- Sign out at the reception/security desk at the end of the visit.

Program administrators will ensure that:

- The receptionist/security guard has a current list of anyone identified by you as not able to have contact with your child.
- The receptionist/security guard will be informed in advance of all scheduled appointments.
- The educational supervisor will be contacted by the teacher if help/coverage is needed during a meeting with a parent/guardian/visitor.

All visitors will use appropriate and acceptable language and respectful behavior towards teachers, administrators, staff, students and other visitors. If a visit is deemed a distraction by the teacher or education supervisor, the visitor will be asked to end the visit and will be escorted out of the building.

10. PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

We look forward to your active involvement and support of the program. Communication and cooperation between preschool and home help to establish a warm and nurturing environment and further our efforts to provide a rich learning experience for your child. Our website, www.kenchild.org, contains lots of resources and information that will help you keep up-to-date on school activities, developments in early childhood education, and other news. You can also follow us on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/kennedychildstudycenter.

KCSC hosts a variety of family events, parent workshops, and parent support groups to encourage involvement in your child's education program. We have a bilingual Director of Family Services who is available to support you throughout the year and to help with individual needs. You will receive regular family newsletters with information on school events, healthy recipes, educational activities and other approaches to help your child.

11. CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS

In order to be comfortable and able to participate fully in class activities, your child should be

dressed appropriately, including shoes. Dress him or her casually and according to the season. Keep in mind that there are indoor and outdoor play activities that include working with paint, water, and sand.

It is our goal to help your children with toilet training and to work with you through this process. If your child is not yet trained, you are required to supply diapers. You may send them daily, weekly, or monthly.

An extra, complete set of clothing (including underwear, socks, shirt, pants/skirt, sneakers, and sweater) should be brought to school in a marked bag. This will be kept in the child's cubby for use as needed. **Label all personal items;** it helps to prevent loss. Although we will do our best to ensure that your personal items are safeguarded, KCSC cannot be responsible for items brought to the preschool program.

Please do not send electronic games, cell phones, expensive items like jewelry, or special toys to school. Children have a hard time sharing these items and they are easily broken and/or lost. Any special items brought to preschool are restricted to planned show-and-tell events. Your child's teacher will inform you of such events.

12. CLASS TRIPS

Class field trips are a part of your child's educational experience. Teachers will notify you in writing about any special scheduled trips. Parents are welcome to accompany their child on a class trip and volunteers are appreciated. Permission slips must be signed before your child will be permitted to participate in a class trip.

Since we are a community program, we sometimes take children on neighborhood walks to encourage language and appropriate public behavior. These require general permission from you. The Community Trip permission form is included in your registration packet. Community Trip permission slips must be signed annually.

Throughout the school year we have special programs scheduled for the children, and we welcome you to participate. These may include cooking classes, art activities, yoga, Zumba, gardening, or visits from therapy animals.

13. SCHOOL CALENDAR

Our preschool program operates 12 months a year. We will send home two calendars, one for the summer months of July and August (if your child has been approved by the preschool district to attend the 12 month preschool year) and a separate one for the September to June school

year. Please keep this calendar handy for your reference and planning. Any changes to the calendar will be communicated in writing.

14. FERPA POLICY AND STUDENT RECORDS

The Kennedy Child Study Center respects our students' privacy and protects the confidentiality of their education records. KCSC adheres to the guidelines outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

We maintain a file on each child enrolled at KCSC. This file contains all the information reviewed with you at your preschool district CPSE meeting. Your child's file is confidential and only certain people are able to access it for educational or administrative purposes. This includes your child's current teaching and therapeutic team, school administrators, and clerical staff. We must have written permission from you, the parent/guardian, in order to release any information from a student's educational record.

You have the right to contact us to review your child's file at any time. Parents/Guardians may request that the student's educational records be amended if you believe those records to be inaccurate. You should clearly identify the part of the record you want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. This request must be made to your preschool district chairperson. If the preschool district decides not to amend the record as requested, you may request a fair hearing from the NYCDOE. KCSC staff can assist you with contact information should you need to contact the district office.

15. CELEBRATION OF HOLIDAYS

The children and staff at Kennedy come from diverse backgrounds. Not everyone celebrates the same holidays, and not everyone celebrates a given holiday in the same way. We invite families to come into school to show the class how their family celebrates a particular holiday. Helping children understand the diverse nature of our school community is one of the goals of celebrating holidays at school. If you do not want your child to participate in holiday celebrations, please inform your child's teacher.

16. BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

At the Kennedy Child Study Center, we believe that every child, regardless of current ability, is capable of further growth and achievement. Our staff is trained to guide children's behavior by word and example. Staff realizes that children may not immediately understand or follow all the rules. Until children learn what is expected of them, they will occasionally exhibit challenging behavior. Furthermore, staff understand that children who struggle with language or other skills

often use “temper tantrums” and other tactics to communicate their needs, because they do not know how else to express themselves.

We view discipline as part of good teaching, and disciplinary problems are viewed as “errors in learning.” Instead of thinking that a child is choosing to behave badly, behavior is viewed as a skill that still needs to be taught, whether it is related to social and emotional interactions or communication. When a child acts out, our school psychologist, along with classroom teachers and teaching aides, consider where the behavior is coming from. Once we identify the source of the problem, we can begin teaching the child about appropriate reactions. Part of our responsibility is teaching children how to create and maintain healthy relationships. With this in mind, our teachers aim to establish nurturing and responsive relationships built on mutual respect and trust with every child who enters our program.

We hope this handbook will be useful as we embark on an exciting year of growth and learning with your child! On behalf of all of us at the Kennedy Child Study Center: WELCOME!