



ITC Parent Handbook

2015 Edition

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Welcome

Welcome to the Infant Toddler Children's Center. This handbook will help familiarize families with the Center's philosophy, policies and procedures. It will also answer questions which may arise during enrollment at ITC.

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook will clarify ITC's method of operation and will help maintain a basis of understanding for everyone. Many procedures are based on the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations.

Any suggestions for clarification of policies, the format of the handbook, or inclusion of topics are always appreciated.

Nondiscrimination

The Infant Toddler Children's Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or marital status in the administration of its admission, education, scholarships, benefits, financial aid or personnel policies.

Licensing and Accreditation

ITC is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and has been accredited by the National Association of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children since 1989; re-accredited 1993, 1997, 2001, and 2005 and 2010.

1 Introducing the Infant Toddler Children's Center

We are a trusted, innovative early learning center that supports families and that collaborates with children as they learn about themselves, each other and the world.

Our Goals

ITC will provide the highest quality, relationship-based care and early education reflecting our core values.

ITC will be a community that attracts and retains the best teachers and inspires parents and alumni to contribute their skills and resources.

ITC will be a well-managed and financially stable organization.

ITC will be a highly visible leader in the Early Childhood Community and an advocate for responsive care giving.

Our Core Values

Relationships matter

We believe that above all, children need to feel welcomed and known in our community. Teachers' first job with children is to establish a relationship with every child and get to know each child's unique personality and approach to learning.

We want every family and visitor to feel welcome and respected here. From daily life in the classroom to center-wide events, we will provide meaningful opportunities for family involvement. We work together to create our community.

We believe that we must partner with parents and consider the child in the context of his/her family.

We value each person's unique culture and believe in sharing a diversity of perspectives. We believe that a learning community is created when staff, parents and children's diverse ideas, opinions and abilities are expressed, welcomed and respected.

We believe that children are constructing knowledge from the moment of birth. Our approach to curriculum is influenced by the thinking of theorists and practitioners such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Howard Gardner, and Magda Gerber, as well as by the Reggio Emilia schools in Italy. Our approach takes these values into consideration:

Children are competent and capable.

Children deserve time to play, explore, and re-visit experiences.

Children deserve the opportunity to be challenged to deepen their learning.

Learning takes place in the context of relationships and is enhanced in a social setting.

Social and emotional skills are as important as academic skills.

We honor, interpret and respond to children's differing abilities and behavior through the lens of development.

The present counts- we enjoy and listen to children in the moment.

Frequent and varied opportunities for free and unstructured play in the outdoors is an essential part of early childhood learning.

ITC values childhood as a special time in life. We have a responsibility to advocate for the rights of children to be respected and noticed and to be given time to play and explore.

ITC has a responsibility to hire and support professional early childhood teachers. We want ITC to be known as a workplace where staff are appreciated, rewarded and respected for their knowledge and skills, and where they are offered meaningful opportunities for long-term career development.

The best teachers are those who are committed to establishing respectful relationships and are curious and reflective of their practice.

A solid grounding in child development informs our practice and our practice in turn, inspires our desire to know more.

Who We Are

The Infant Toddler Children's Center was founded in 1981 by Faith LeBaron, an early childhood educator, and Leslie Hill, a pediatric nurse, in response to a growing need for child care for the very young. ITC was the first program in the

area specifically designed to provide Center-based care for infants and toddlers. Over the years the Center has expanded from caring for infants and toddlers, to providing programs for children from infancy through 9 years old.

ITC is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational corporation, licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Center is affiliated with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Boston Association for the Education of Young Children, the Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, Harvard Early Childhood Council, and the North America Reggio Emilia Alliance.

Organization

ITC is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees, elected annually by the current membership of the Center. Parents make up at least 50 percent of the Board. The Executive Director is an ex-officio and voting member. The remaining positions are filled by Teacher representatives, and community representatives. The Board hires the Executive Director, and through frequent interaction and consultation guides long range plans, policies, and fiscal matters at the Center. The Executive Director has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the overall program and policies. The current Board of Trustees is posted in the lobby.

Each of the Center's groups is staffed by a team of Teachers, led by a Lead Teacher. Occasionally, the Center enjoys the help of volunteers--including senior citizens, student teachers, high school and college students--all of whom make an important contribution to the Center. Regular substitutes are called on to maintain full care when Teachers are absent.

Parent and Staff committees provide support for the Center by organizing social events, parent education programs, work days, and fundraising activities.

Administration

The Executive Director is hired by the Board of Trustees. The Director has Center-wide administrative responsibilities and hires all other administrative and teaching

staff. The Administrative team includes the Assistant Director /Preschool-School Age Program Coordinator, the Infant-Toddler Program Coordinator and the Business Manager.

The Assistant Director assists the Director with implementing all Center policies and programs. The Business Manager handles all enrollment, financial and office records. Program Coordinators directly supervise Lead Teachers and oversee daily classroom activities.

Teaching Staff

ITC has a highly qualified and dedicated staff. Many Teachers have been with the Center since its earliest years. New Teachers add depth and freshness to the program each year. Over 30 Teachers work in well-coordinated cooperative teams. Our staff also includes on-call substitute teachers and summer interns. Teachers are chosen carefully on the basis of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulation requirements, credentials, training, professional experience, and congruence with our core values. Prior to being hired, all teacher applicants as well as other staff who will be regularly working with children at ITC must submit to a C.O.R.I. (Criminal Offenders Record Investigation) in the state and Federal data base as well as a DCF (the state agency which investigates abuse and neglect allegations) record check, have a personal interview, a 2 to 4 hour working interview, and provide two references.

Programs

ITC offers Full-Time, Part-Time, and Modified Drop-In (MDI) programs for children aged three months through school-age. The children are enrolled in programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and for school age children before and after school. The Center is open from 7:45 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, year round, with the exceptions noted on the Yearly Calendar.

Ages and Placement

The age span in each group varies somewhat each year depending on the current population enrolled, the individual development of the children, and the physical space available. Placement considerations include chronological age, developmental stage, group size, group configuration, specific parental concerns, and any special building and staffing factors. The final decision on a child's placement is made by the Teachers and Administrators with parental input. The group age range can be as much as a full year, and ages may overlap between groups.

As a general rule, at the time of entrance, the age span is:

Infants/Ones.....	3 mo. to 12 mo.
Young Toddlers.....	13 mo. to 18 mo.
Toddlers.....	20 mo. to 30 mo.
2/3's.....	24 mo. to 30-33 mo.
Preschool I.....	3-4 yrs.
Preschool II.....	4-5 yrs.
After School.....	For Kindergarten, First, Second and Third grades

Groups are formed on a yearly basis starting in September. In order to allow significant relationships to develop, children and Teachers stay together for a full year regardless of birthdates.

Transitions

Children who are already enrolled at ITC move up to the next oldest age group in September. In planning the move-ups, we try to move children who have been together the year before to the same new classroom. Whenever feasible, we try to also move a familiar Teacher up with a group of children so that children can have a familiar Teacher for two years. Beginning in June, Teachers and children in the toddler and preschool groups begin visiting the children's new classrooms so that

they can see where they will be in September. Teachers share information with one another about what children enjoy and often include some familiar favorite books or materials in the new classroom. Every school year in October, we have an open house so that parents can visit the classroom, meet all of the teaching team and hear about goals and plans for the upcoming year.

For children who will be moving on to kindergarten, we offer a variety of supports beginning with a parent evening to talk about the process of transitioning to kindergarten. In June, we begin talking with children about the upcoming transition to kindergarten. Our school age children share stories with the preschoolers about what kindergarten is like, we read books about kindergarten and support the children's confidence in their growing skills.

For children new to ITC, we have an orientation program during the child's first week at the center. (See Getting Started -Orientation).

Ratios

The ratio of children to Teachers is:

Infants/Ones	3 to 1 (7 children in the group)
Young Toddlers	3 to 1 (8 children in the group)
Toddlers	4 to 1 (9 children in the group)
Preschool I	7 or 8 to 1 (14 or 15 children in the group)
Preschool II	8 or 9 to 1 (16 or 17 children in the group)
School-Age	12 to 1 (up to 24 in the group)

There are additional Teachers who may "float" among the groups. They make it possible to offer more individualized care, provide breaks and lunch to Teachers while maintaining the ratios, and provide release time for weekly team and Lead Teacher meetings. In addition, ITC employs permanent substitute Teachers who fill in when Teachers must be out. They are well known to the children and provide a familiar Teacher in the absence of the regular Teacher.

Children with Special Needs

The Infant Toddler Children's Center welcomes children of all abilities in its programs whenever possible. We believe that all children and families benefit from inclusion of children with varying abilities. Our goal is to teach children about helping one another and to develop an awareness of and a respect for human differences.

Children new to ITC. If a child is already receiving services from Early Intervention or the Public Schools or has an identified disability for which accommodations may be necessary, parents should contact the Director prior to starting the program. We will work with parents to review possible accommodations and developmental and medical assessments and /or educational plans that are already in place. When a child is already working with Early Intervention or the Public Schools, ITC staff, with parental permission will work with the agency involved to coordinate the care of the child. Parents will receive a written progress report for children with identified special needs every 3 months so that we may monitor progress and adapt our procedures.

Currently enrolled children. Occasionally, Teachers and/or parents may feel a child would benefit from evaluation and assistance in physical or emotional development or with medical issues beyond what we can provide. Teachers can work with parents to share resources on other services or specific specialists. If a child seems to be having difficulty in the classroom, the following steps will be followed.

- Teachers will observe and document the child's activity in the classroom. The Lead Teacher after consulting with her team, will meet with parents to share observations and get more information. The Lead Teacher will also share information with the Program Coordinator. Within one week, the Program Coordinator will observe the child as well.
- The Center employs the help of child development specialists who work with Teachers on classroom dynamics. One of the consultants may also be asked to observe in the classroom to give additional feedback on general teaching strategies and group dynamics.

If questions or concerns continue to persist after some interventions have been initiated and we continue to need additional support and guidance, the Program Coordinator may decide to call in the child development consultant again and with parental permission, specifically observe the child and provide help to Teachers on further intervention strategies and possible recommendations for further referral.

Referral Meeting. If the staff feels that an outside referral for further evaluation is warranted, we will meet with parents to share our observations and to make a referral. At the meeting with parents, the Lead Teacher and the Program Coordinator will provide parents with a written summary of the staff and consultant's observations, interventions and accommodations made and reasons for referral. Referrals may be made to either the child's pediatrician, specialists, Early Intervention or the Public Schools. Parents will be informed of their right to services under Chapter 766 if their child is 3 years and older or Early Intervention if their child is under 3 years. They will receive names and numbers of resources available to them.

The Lead Teacher or Program Coordinator will follow up with the parents to make sure that suggested referrals are acted upon within two weeks after the referral meeting and to offer assistance in getting an evaluation. The Center may require that an evaluation take place and recommendations be followed in order for the child to remain enrolled.

Conditions for continued enrollment at ITC. Sometimes a child's developmental needs or behavior are of on-going concern to teaching staff. The Lead Teacher and team will keep notes on classroom observations and on interventions and behavioral changes. The Lead Teacher will keep the Program Coordinator up to date on progress. After all the previous steps have been followed, ITC's ability to continue caring for the child will be assessed. It is our belief that we have an obligation above all to do no harm to children. The following criteria will be used to decide if attendance at ITC is in the child's best interest.

- The child does not present a serious physical or emotional danger to him or herself or others.
- ITC has the necessary staff, funding and classroom environment available to

provide for this child's needs

- The child is making effective progress toward successfully participating in the classroom.
- Modifications in teaching style and programming have a positive benefit for all children and are consistent with ITC's philosophy.
- Parents are willing to cooperate in following up on referrals and recommendations.

If a referral has been made and evaluations scheduled, the Center will make every effort to support the child's continued enrollment through this period as long as the child's developmental needs are being met or *unless* the child presents a serious danger to himself or others.

Once an evaluation is complete, ITC will participate in meetings with the Public schools or Early Intervention to develop an education plan.

Termination and/or suspension from the program. If it is determined that the conditions for continued enrollment have not been met, ITC reserves the right to terminate this child's enrollment. If this is necessary, parents will receive at least two week's written notice detailing the reason ITC feels that conditions for continued enrollment have not been met. ITC will work with parents to help determine a more appropriate placement for the child. The child's Teachers will work with the child to help the child prepare for the transition from the program in a way that is appropriate with the child's age and level of understanding. Parents will be responsible for tuition until the child's last day at ITC. Enrollment deposits and any remaining balance in the child's tuition account will be returned to the parent as long as all past due bills have been paid.

If a child is in the process of being evaluated or services have just begun for the child, ITC reserves the right to suspend or reduce the child's enrollment until it is determined that the child can safely and successfully attend ITC on the child's regular schedule. Suspensions or reductions in enrollment will be reviewed at least every six weeks. Parents will be responsible for paying tuition for only the time the child actually spends at the program.

2 Enrollment

New Families

The Infant Toddler Children's Center requires interested families to visit the Center. They tour the facilities, see the program in session, receive printed information, and meet the Director or Assistant Director before enrolling their child.

A family interested in enrolling submits their application form with the annual non-refundable registration fee. If space is available for the requested schedule in the appropriate group, the family will be notified of the placement of their child in the program. Their place is reserved when the one-time enrollment deposit is paid. This deposit is non-refundable if the family withdraws before attendance begins. The deposit is refunded at the end of active enrollment once all fees are paid and a four week notice of termination is provided.

When placement is confirmed, details of orientation, starting date, daily schedule, tuition fee and payment plans are sent. *(Please see page 23 for details about the required Orientation program.)*

Registration

Enrollment is on a yearly basis, beginning in September. Offers for September enrollment are made beginning in February. Priority is given to: (1) current enrollees; (2) siblings of current enrollees; (3) children of employees and (4) waiting list (The waiting list is renewed annually with a new application form and application fee.) Even though the vast majority of placements begin in September, applications are accepted continuously throughout the year and admissions are made as space is available.

Re-registration for currently enrolled families is held in January for the following September. Each family receives a re-registration form which is returned by the indicated deadline with a non-refundable re-registration fee for each family. After that date, all remaining spaces are filled from the waiting list and are then

opened to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Summer Enrollment

Families may elect to enroll their child for a full year. Families who have selected a program year that includes 3 weeks in the summer will be asked to indicate the specific weeks they wish their child to attend in the summer. If space is available, families who have signed up for the school year option may also reserve time in the summer. We offer a full day summer program for school age children as well. The summer program is usually 7 weeks, beginning in July. The Center is closed the last two weeks in August.

Term of Enrollment

If a family wishes to withdraw a child from the Center, written notice a month in advance is required. To withdraw, a family should indicate the date of withdrawal in writing. Failure to provide a month's written notice results in one month's tuition obligation regardless of attendance. Please take this into account when planning your child's departure. (*See Chapter 4 for payment policies.*)

If a family wishes to change their child's regular schedule, a parent should fill in a change of schedule request form. Time may be added as soon as space is available. Time may be dropped, with a minimum 5 months' notice unless we are able to give that time to another family.

If the Center determines it cannot continue care for a child after meeting with parents and attempting some solutions, families will be notified in writing. Fees will be charged through the last day of care. Circumstances for termination of care by the Center include, but are not limited to, failure to meet tuition payments, the inability by the Center to safely meet the needs of the child or the family, or failure by the family to follow Center procedures and policies.

3 Operating Schedule

Hours

The Infant Toddler Children's Center operates year round, Monday through Friday, 7:45 AM to 6:00 PM.

Calendar

A yearly calendar is published and distributed each September, listing the exact dates of the national holidays, as well as Center holidays and events.

The Center is closed the following days:

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Day

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

Presidents' Day

Patriots' Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Two weeks preceding the opening of the Fall session

The week between Christmas and New Year's Day

2 Teacher Development Days (one Friday in March, and the last Friday in June).

Emergency Closings

Weather Emergencies

ITC usually closes when the Acton public schools are closed due to poor weather conditions. Parents will be notified via e-mail by 6:00 AM if the Center will be

closed. A closing announcement will also be made on the itc website. In addition, parents may call the Center after 6:00 AM to confirm a closing.

If conditions change by mid- morning, we may decide to have a *delayed opening even if the Public Schools are closed for the day*. A decision for a delayed opening is contingent on utilities working, getting our parking lot plowed out and safe access to critical exits from the building. Please check your e-mail or our phone answering machine for updates on a snow day. A decision for a delayed opening will be announced by no later than 10:00 AM. A delayed opening would occur between 11:00 and 1:00. If ITC does have a delayed opening, we will not be able to accommodate school age children until 3:30(unless it is a Thursday) due to staffing constraints.

Occasionally conditions require the Center to close mid-day. In that event, parents are notified by telephone and e-mail.

Closing due to loss of water, heat or power

The Center will close if we will be without water for more than 1 hour. Waterless hand cleaner or alcohol based wipes are available for emergency clean-ups. In summer, the Center will close due to loss of power if power is not restored within 4 hours. In the winter, the Center will close if the indoor temperature falls below 65°F or when loss of natural light creates a safety hazard. After dark, the Center will close if power cannot be restored within one hour. Emergency lighting will last for 1.5 hours.

Whether the Center closes for all or part of a day, no refunds, exchanges, or credits are given for emergency closings.

4 Money Matters

Each family reserves a schedule based on a certain number of hours per week. A minimum tuition equal to 8 hours per week is charged for all age groups except the

school age group. Parents may choose a full or part day schedule each day for their child. Charges are figured in full or half hour increments on the hour or half hour with the exception of the 7:45 AM arrival time. The required orientation for new families is included as part of the tuition. New hourly rates are set by the Board and go into effect each September.

ITC reserves the right to change tuition rates with thirty days' notice. Tuition is prepaid a month in advance. Invoices are mailed on the 10th of the month and are due in full on the 20th of the month. Payments are made with personal or bank checks only. The tuition invoices should be kept as receipts, as ITC does not automatically provide an annual summary of child care costs for tax returns.

Program Length

For parents who have children enrolled in the infant through preschool 2 groups, parents may select the length of their child's year from the following choices.

School Year: September through June. Summer care may be purchased by the week if space is available.

School Year +: School year plus your choice of 3 weeks in the summer.

Full Year: September through August.

Each of these program lengths is priced differently and annual tuition is planned based on the program selected. Once a tuition contract is signed, there can be no decreases in program length.

Payment Plans

Requests for special payment plans may be made in advance to the Director.

Special payment plans must be renewed each year.

Financial Aid

A financial aid fund is budgeted annually to assist families with temporary or long term circumstances which make full payment a hardship. Assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Director and the availability of funds. In addition, state and other local funds may be available to reduce tuition costs for

families who meet income guidelines. Information is available from the Director.

School-Age Fees

School-age children are charged for child care on the days which coincide with the public school days in session and ITC's calendar. Reservations may be made for non-school days in advance and are billed separately in advance *regardless of attendance*.

Weeks the Center is Closed

The Center is closed for Winter Holiday (December 24 through January 1) and two weeks at the end of August. Tuition is not charged for these weeks.

Absences

Tuition payments must be made in full each month regardless of absences.

Emergency Closings

No refunds, exchanges or credits are given for emergency weather related or other closings whether the Center closes for all or part of the day.

Late Payments

If checks are received or postmarked after the first of the month, a late charge of one percent of the monthly bill will be incurred. Penalties are billed on the 4th. The Center may terminate care when tuition obligations are not met in a timely fashion.

Pre-Tax Child Care Employee Benefit

Many families have access to the pre-tax dollar child care benefit program offered by their employers. Policies for verification of child care expenses vary by employer. If you need a receipt, return the original monthly bill to ITC with payment attached. The bill will be dated and marked "PAID" and returned.

Federal I.D. Number

ITC is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational corporation. ITC's Federal I.D. number is 04-2734010.

Sibling Discount

Siblings enrolled at ITC will receive a 10% discount on the oldest child's tuition. This discount does not apply to the Registration Fee or the Enrollment Deposit.

Other Fees

- *Extra hours payments* -- Occasional care beyond the reserved schedule can be requested in writing and approved by your child's Teacher as space is available. Extra hours are charged at your child's regular rate in half hour increments and billed on the following month's tuition invoice. You will be charged for the extra hours reserved unless you cancel at least 24 hours in advance. No charge will be incurred if a cancellation is due to the child's illness.
- *Late pick-ups and early drop-offs* -- Late pick-ups or non-approved early drop-offs are disruptive to staff schedules and confusing to children. These unplanned changes in arrival or departure time will be billed at the extra hour's rate in one hour increments. For late pick-ups at the end of the day, there will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute for any pick up past 6:01 PM. The center reserves the right to terminate care after excessive or repeated lateness.
- *Re-registration fee* -- Each year, parents of currently enrolled children are asked to re-register their child for the following year. There is a per family re-registration fee charged at this time.
- *Modified drop-in (MDI) program fees* - -Fees are charged hourly for the hours reserved at the Part Time B rate. MDI reservations can be canceled by 9:00 AM of the reserved day without obligation. Payments are made daily by check or cash at the MDI rate. (See page 21 for explanation of the

MDI option.)

- *Checks returned* -- A returned check incurs a \$10 fee to cover the charges for processing a second payment. ITC requires a bank check for payment after two returned checks.
- *Processing application forms to independent schools* -- Child assessments for private preschools and kindergartens will be completed by the Lead Teacher. The cost is \$15 for the first application per child and \$10 for each additional application per child. Payment should accompany each blank application form.
- *Materials fee* -- A materials fee of \$5 per child is charged monthly.
- *Staff Development day fee*—This fee of \$7.50 per month is charged to school age children only and covers the cost of paying staff for the staff development days. Parents in this program are not charged regular tuition for these two days.
- *Schedule change fee*- A fee of \$25 will be charged if a family requests more than 2 schedule changes in a school year.

Termination of Enrollment

Four full weeks written notice is required to withdraw from the program. Failure to provide 4 full weeks of notice of withdrawal, results in four weeks of tuition obligation. The enrollment deposit is refunded at the end of enrollment if ITC has been notified of termination at least four weeks in advance and all financial obligations have been met.

ITC reserves the right to terminate services for non-payment of fees, non-compliance with state regulation requirements, lack of attendance, or extra-ordinary circumstances in the child's adjustment, behavior or developmental needs which cannot be safely met by the Center. If a child must be terminated from ITC, parents will receive at least 2 weeks written notice detailing the reasons we cannot continue to have this child enrolled. Prior to receiving this notice, parents will have had

meetings with Teachers and/or Administrators to discuss the continued enrollment of their child and to try and come up with solutions to allow a child to continue. If a child's enrollment is ended, the Teachers will work with the child to help him/her transition from the program. Administrators will provide referrals to other programs if appropriate.

The enrollment deposit is also refunded if ITC initiates the termination and all the tuition has been paid.

5 Getting Started

Schedules and Attendance

Children may reserve a full time (30 or more hours per week) or part-time (29 or fewer hours per week) schedule.

For infants and toddlers, arrivals and departures are discouraged between 10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:30. For the preschool groups, arrivals or departures between 9:00-12:00 and departures between 1:00-2:30 are discouraged.

Parents should call when children will not attend as scheduled. A call is also appreciated when children will arrive late at the Center.

All schedules are assumed to be year-long. School-age children's schedules are for when the Acton-Boxborough schools are open. Care on days when the Public schools are closed is on a sign-up basis. Reservations for care on these days may be made in advance and will be billed in advance.

Occasionally families need to change their schedules mid-year. Requests must be made on the Change in Schedule form available in the office. This is submitted to the Director for consideration and a response is provided as soon as possible.

- Additional time can be added to your child's schedule as space is available.
- Time maybe dropped from a child's schedule with a minimum of 5 months' notice unless the Center is able to fill the dropped time.

- Changes to the number of weeks reserved will incur a fee and the return of any discount given.

Occasionally families may need extra time at the Center. Requests for extra time may be made in writing on the sign-up sheet in each room or by calling the office. “Extra hours” are billed the following month.

Modified Drop-In (MDI)

The Modified Drop-In program enrolls a few children who want to attend periodically. This program is reserved for children in the preschool through schoolage groups who have attended ITC previously. Attendance is arranged by coordinating parents’ requests with space available, on a day-to-day basis, in advance or on the day of care. The cost of care is based on the Part Time B rate. Payments are made daily for the time used. Cancellation can occur by 9:00 A.M. of the day reserved, without payment obligation. Prior registration is required.

Orientation for children beginning at ITC

ITC requires all children and their parents or significant member of the household to participate in an orientation before regular care begins. The time is designed to help children and families make a comfortable adjustment to the Center.

The two or three-day orientation begins with a two-hour visit. Parent(s) stay with the child to become familiar with the Center and to share information about the child and routines at home. Parent(s) practice saying good-bye by leaving the classroom for a brief time. During the second visit of three hours, and the third visit of four hours, parents leave for a longer time. The orientation period helps children and parents begin to build a sense of trust and mutual understanding with the Teachers. Of course, the process of adjusting to the program continues over time. Occasionally, children may have difficulty with separation from parents that can linger for many weeks, or may recur through-out the year ahead. Children are helped most when parents convey their confidence and trust in the Teachers. Saying good-bye is best done quickly. Parents are encouraged to call the Teachers if they are

concerned about their child. Our Teachers are available to help you and your child with this adjustment to a new experience.

School-aged children and their families visit the classroom for a one or two hour period. At that time they become acquainted with the Teachers and develop a sense of the routine and the space before actually beginning the program.

New families in full-time and part-time programs are oriented in September during the first week of the “school year.” If a family enrolls mid-year, the orientation is arranged on days mutually convenient for the Center and the family. This orientation is included as part of the annual tuition.

Parents of returning children should plan on staying at the Center for the first half hour on their first day back. The purpose of this extra time is to meet the Teachers, update forms, and review any new Center policies.

Required Forms

Every family is required to leave up-to-date information at the Center. The following forms must be completed prior to the child’s first day of care:

1. *a physician’s medical examination record*(examination must have been given within the past 11 months) including immunization records and a *lead paint test* for children between the ages of one and four years.
2. *an emergency care form*
3. *a transportation release form*
4. *a photo release form*
5. *a field trip release form*
6. *a developmental history form*

By Massachusetts law no child may attend the Center without up-to-date physician’s examination, immunization records, and lead paint test record (for children over one year old).If a child has not received standard immunizations, parents must consult with the Director or Assistant Director prior to the child attending the program. The child’s file will be modified to reflect his or her status as not immunized. An explanation for this status will be documented.

6 Health and Safety

Consultant

ITC is fortunate to have the consultation services of pediatric physician, Dr. Chris Cooper of Acton Medical Associates. His advice has helped us determine medical policies and to respond to both chronic and acute medical situations. In addition, the Center consults with several mental health professionals to provide guidance to teaching staff on classroom dynamics. A complete copy of our approved healthcare policy is available upon request from the office.

Health Guidelines

Because young children are susceptible to illness, ITC will exclude from care any child with a diagnosed communicable disease (measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc.) or obvious acute illness. Parents may not send their child to the Center when he/she is sick or has signs of possible contagious diseases (new cold, sore throat, fever, rash, and diarrhea). To avoid side effects occurring at the Center, a child who has been prescribed a medication that he/she has not taken before must remain at home for 24 hours before returning to the program. In addition, if a child is not well enough to participate in all the activities of the group, he/she should not be at the Center.

The basis for all the Center policies concerning illness is the protection of the ill child as well as the other children entrusted to ITC's care. When an infectious disease is present in the center, we will make every effort to inform parents via e-mail and postings in the classroom of the date and extent of exposure and symptoms to watch for.

Please note that it is the Parents' responsibility to keep emergency contact numbers up-to-date on the Emergency Medical Care form. Please notify the Teachers if corrections are necessary during the year.

Parents will be informed immediately if any emergency care is needed or of any injury requiring more than minor first aid. In the event that a child needs immediate medical attention, ITC staff will also call an ambulance and have

the child transported to Emerson Hospital. All injuries requiring any first aid will be recorded and a copy given to parents. All Teachers and Administrators receive a First Aid certification every two years in *Early Childhood Health and Safety* and annual certification in CPR.

Immunization

Each child must be examined by *a licensed physician* prior to annual enrollment as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Department of Early Education and Care. Parents must submit to the Center documentation of a physical exam and immunizations annually. Each child must be immunized against the following and all others as specified by the Department of Public Health prior to entry at ITC: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT), polio myelitis (IPV), measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib), and Hepatitis B. All children between the ages of one and three years must receive an annual lead test. The results of these tests must be reported to the Center. All children who are 19 months of age or older must have 1 dose of varicella vaccine or physician certified history of chicken pox disease or objection to use of this vaccine. Under rare circumstances and only after consultation with the Director or Assistant Director a child who has not received standard immunizations will be allowed to attend ITC. In this event, the child's file will be modified to reflect his or her status as not immunized. An explanation for this status will be documented. Under-immunized children will also be excluded promptly, if someone in the Center is diagnosed with a vaccine-preventable disease to which the child is susceptible.

The child must have a yearly exam while enrolled, and a new health form included in the child's file each year. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in suspension of care, with full tuition obligation. Care resumes when the form is complete and on file.

Specific Illnesses and Conditions

AIDS/HIV Infection. In June 1989 Secretary of Human Services Philip Johnson announced a ruling that “children testing positive for the HIV virus which can lead to AIDS will be allowed to attend day care programs if they have no symptoms of the disease or a history of biting. Otherwise there is no reason to exclude children from day care.” However “child care would not be appropriate for a child with open sores that cannot be successfully controlled; a child who bites with unusual frequency and severity (draws blood); or a child with bloody diarrhea.” Additionally, the Center “can only be given information regarding a child’s HIV status with a parents’ consent, and regulations forbid the testing of children for HIV infection as a condition for admission to a child care program.” A Center is “prohibited from letting other parents know if a child in (the) program has tested positive for HIV infection.”

ITC consistently practices universal precautions for infection control. Teachers are trained in regard to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B.

ITC follows the Massachusetts medical policy that children “with HIV/AIDS have the same right to attend...school programs and activities as any other children,” as long as universal precautions are in place.

Allergies and chronic medical conditions. Allergies and chronic medical conditions are identified on the family information sheet at the time of admission to the Center, or when detected. ITC protects children from allergens by (a) clearly posting the child’s name, allergy causing material, and allergic response; (b) alerting all Teachers to allergic conditions and c) in some cases, asking that certain allergens not be brought into the classrooms. Parents of children with allergies or chronic medical conditions should speak directly with Teachers concerning their child’s specific condition. ITC will maintain an individual health care plan for children with a diagnosed medical condition that may require medical treatment at ITC. The plan will describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is at ITC, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered. Written parental consent and licensed health care

practitioner authorization is needed if an ITC staff member is to administer medication or treatment to the child. We will make an effort to notify parents if the need arises for an unanticipated administration of medication or treatment arises prior to or as soon as possible after administering such medication or treatment.

Biting. Biting is not atypical in young children. Most “biters” can be managed in a group program. If a child is deemed by the Center to have an unusual or threatening habit of biting (e.g., draws blood while biting) the child may be excluded from care. Therapeutic intervention may be recommended.

Bumps. Parents should notify the Teachers if their child has fallen during time away from the Center, since bumps and bruises often appear after the fact. Teachers will let parents know immediately if any unusual incidents occur while their child is at the Center, including treatment that was provided. Some bumps should be seen by a physician.

Colds. Children will undoubtedly have colds. Children should be kept home if the cold is new and is accompanied by fever, productive cough, chills, lethargy, or irritability. Many children have chronic runny noses with no other symptoms; this alone does not justify being excluded from child care.

Conjunctivitis. A child is not allowed to come to the Center with untreated conjunctivitis, regardless of the type. Since conjunctivitis is very contagious, children must stay home until 24 hours after the first administration of prescription antibiotic eye ointment.

Coughs. Children with congested, productive coughs should not be at the Center. Persistent coughs should be checked by a physician.

Coxsackie Virus. Hand, foot, and mouth syndrome is a mild disease caused by a germ called Coxsackie virus. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, stomach pain and diarrhea, and a rash of tiny blisters on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and in the mouth. It is most common in the summer and fall. If children have a rash and fever or are clearly not feeling well, they should stay home. Children can return when they are fever free for 24 hours and blisters are healing/healed and they are feeling well enough to attend.

Chicken pox, mumps, measles, rubella, etc. Please report exposure to any of these communicable diseases so that the information can be passed along to other

parents. ITC's policy is to observe closely any child who has been exposed to one of these diseases for the entire incubation period. If a child contracts the disease, he/she may return to the Center when all contagion has passed. Although different physicians may present slightly different numbers, ITC bases its policy on the following assumptions:

- *Chicken pox*: incubation period 7 to 21 days, contagious until all scabs are dry or gone and no new pustules are erupting;
- *German measles (rubella)*: incubation period 14 to 21 days, contagious seven days before symptoms appear to five days after symptoms appear;
- *Measles*: incubation period 10 to 15 days, contagious four days before rash appears to 5 days after symptoms appear;
- *Mumps*: incubation period 12 to 24 days, contagious seven days before symptoms appear until all swelling subsides.

Diarrhea. No child with acute diarrhea should come to the Center. Acute diarrhea is defined as an increased frequency of watery stool that cannot be contained in a diaper or by the child's ability to use the toilet. Exceptions will be discussed for individual conditions, such as reactions to medication. *Children may not return to the Center until they can tolerate their regular diet and have not had diarrhea for 24 hours.* Soiled clothing from an episode of diarrhea or loose bowels is placed unrinsed into a plastic bag. Health experts advise handling feces and soiled clothing as little as possible in order to prevent the spread of disease.

Children may not be at the Center if producing bloody stools or bloody diarrhea.

Ear infections. A child may be at the Center if he/she has no fever, if the infection is being treated by a physician, and if he/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. If a child is susceptible to earache and infection, or if a child has tubes in his/her ears, please notify Teachers so that they can ensure he/she wears a hat when outside. Parents are notified if a child is tugging at his/her ears or rubbing them excessively.

Fever. A child with a temperature of 100.4°F when taken inside the ear or mouth or an axillary temperature of 99°F or fever with behavior change should not be

at the Center. A fever is an indication of infection, and should be monitored for other signs of illness. If a child has unusual reactions to fevers or if there is a family history of such, please inform the Teachers and indicate on the medical form. Children may return to the Center when they have been afebrile (fever free) for at least 24 hours *without the use of e, ibuprofen, or aspirin*. If the fever is accompanied by any type of rash, it is best to consult a physician. If a fever is directly attributable to a DPT injection, the child may be given Acetaminophen and brought to the Center. The child will be monitored closely and sent him home if he/she is very uncomfortable.

A child who develops a fever of 100.4°F (rectal or oral), or 99°F (axillary) while at the Center will be given liquids and made comfortable by removing layers of clothing, and by sponging if appropriate. The Teachers may administer acetaminophen when the child's temperature is 101°F and if there is a current Parent Permission Form on file, with both the physician's and the parent's signature, authorizing the use of this drug to reduce fever. Parents will be contacted to pick up the child.

Fifth Disease is a virus that behaves like a mild flu in children. While it is a benign disease in children, it has, in rare situations, caused extreme problems including prematurity and still-births. Therefore ITC has to be very careful about the spread of this disease and will exclude children who are we believed to be communicable. Fifth Disease is also called "slapped cheek" disease because after the early appearance of the symptoms (low fever, aches, sore throat) the cheeks get a rash and it appears as if the cheeks have been "slapped." This is the conclusive evidence for the disease. Unfortunately, at this time the child's communicable stage has passed and contact with others will already have occurred. A diagnosis by a physician is still required so that other parents of children can be notified.

HIB Disease. Haemophilus influenza type B infection poses a serious threat to children under the age of five. Immunization is required for children born after January 1, 1992. This disease spreads through the air and by close personal contact: therefore children in child care can be exposed to this bacterial disease.

Impetigo. The same guidelines for conjunctivitis apply to impetigo. Please be aware of any new or unknown scabs, rashes, pustules, or sores and have them checked and cultured as necessary. Impetigo is extremely contagious but can be cleared up quickly when treated promptly.

Influenza. Listlessness, rubbing eyes, poor appetite, interrupted sleep, poor disposition, poor color, fever aches, pains, and congestion are all indicators of the “flu.” The doctor should be seen, and rest at home is required. This is very contagious in a child care setting.

Insect bites. If a child has an allergy or unusual reaction to insect bites, or if there is a family history of such, Teachers should be informed and this information indicated on the medical form. Insect repellent, if desired, should be applied before the child arrives at the Center. Since children put their hands and mouths virtually everywhere, a small amount applied to the top of the head can effectively repel insects while preventing ingestion. Our staff will apply additional insecticide if we have written parental permission.

Lice. ITC will notify parents if head lice are present in the ITC population. Lice are easily treated and are not a sign of unhealthiness or unsanitary conditions.

1. Children with nits and lice will be sent home for treatment with shampoo and removal of all nits and lice.
2. Children may return to ITC after treatment and removal of all lice and all nits.
3. Children with confirmed cases of head lice will be checked daily for the presence of new nits and lice for a 10 day period. (Please be assured that routine head checks are done discreetly.)
4. When there are 3 or more known cases of head lice in a particular group, Teachers will regularly conduct head checks on all children in the group.

Pneumonia. Pneumonia is inflammation of the lungs caused primarily by viruses or bacteria. Symptoms may include fever, chills, pain in chest area, coughing and fatigue. Children who have pneumonia are likely to feel debilitated and not well enough to participate in the usual group activities. Parents are urged to consider this when determining when to send children back to group care.

Children who have been diagnosed with bacterial pneumonia may return to the Center after they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours and are fever free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen. Children diagnosed with *viral pneumonia* may return when they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen.

Rashes. Parents should notify the Teachers if their child has an unusual rash anywhere on the body. Any rash should be checked for possible contagious disease. Many contagious diseases are associated with rashes.

SARS. (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) This newly identified disease is not fully understood at this time. Currently we believe that SARS begins with a fever of greater than 100.4°F, followed by respiratory illness such as a cough or shortness of breath. Children and adults entering the Center who have been exposed to SARS or who have traveled to areas in the world with documented high transmission of SARS must notify the Center. Those exposed who are asymptomatic may attend the Center. Staff will check a child for fever upon arrival for 10 days after Center is given notification. If symptoms develop within 10 days of possible exposure children must seek immediate medical care for diagnosis. Children may not attend the Center and should isolate themselves from contact with others until well and until a diagnosis of SARS has been ruled out. The Center will continue to update its policy as more is known about this disease.

SIDS prevention. The American Academy of Pediatrics has determined that placing a baby on his/her back to sleep reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the sudden and unexplained death of a baby under one year of age. If your child does not usually sleep on his/her back, please contact your pediatrician immediately to discuss the best sleeping position for your baby. ITC will put children to sleep on their backs unless otherwise instructed in writing by your pediatrician.

Sore throat/Strep. Strep infections are most contagious the day before any symptoms appear. Once a child has been on the proper medication for 24 hours, fever free without acetaminophen, and is feeling well, he/she may return to the Center.

Sunburn. Some children are especially sensitive to the sun. Parents should

inform the Teachers if this is the case for their child, and provide labeled sunscreen. Children should have sunscreen applied before arriving at the Center in the morning. Teachers will reapply as needed. Hats are very helpful, as well as shirts and lightweight pants.

Vomiting. Children must stay at home if unusual and persistent vomiting occurs. A child may not return to the Center until he/she can tolerate his/her regular diet, and has not vomited for 24 hours.

If children become ill at ITC, a Teacher will call the parents to pick up their child. *It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Center should emergency numbers or contacts change during the year.*

If a child is not well enough to participate in the full activities of the group, including outdoor play, then that child is not well enough to be at the Center. Parents should call the Center when their child will not be in due to illness.

Medication

In accordance with the Department of Early Education and Care regulations, ITC's policy on administration of medication is as follows:

- Prescription medication must arrive in the original prescription container with date, dosage, and the doctor's name.
- A parent must sign the medication permission form on a daily/weekly basis, writing the purpose of the medication, the date and times of administration, and the amount to be given.
- *Medication must be handed directly to the Teacher in charge, and may not be left in lunch boxes, school bags, or children's clothing, or in the cubby.*
- Medication may not be disguised in the child's food or beverage unless specifically ordered by the child's physician, since this may be a hazard to the children, and may also compromise the exact dosage.
- When a medication must be given at both the Center and at home for several days, parents may ask the pharmacist to put the prescription in two containers, one for home and one for the Center.

- Medication will not be given in any amount exceeding the dosage indicated on the prescription container.
- Non-prescription drugs or herbal medicines will be administered only when authorized with a form signed by a physician and parent. Conditions of administration and typical types of non-prescription medication are enumerated on the authorization, available from Lead Teachers.
- Non-prescription topical ointments will be administered with parental authorization only.
- Long-term prescription medication for conditions such as asthma or heart disease may be prescribed for up to 3 months and require physician's signed authorization.
- All medications given are logged in the "Medication Log Book" in each group.
- To avoid a child experiencing side effects at the Center, any new medication must be administered at home for 24 hours before the child can return to ITC.

Pesticide Use

Pesticides can pose risks to people and the environment. It is the policy of ITC to incorporate Integrated Pest Management procedures for control of structural and landscape pests. Non-chemical control methods and agents will be used first if a pest problem is identified. If chemical pesticide must be used outdoors or if any pesticides are used indoors, ITC will provide notification to parents and staff if the Center is in session 2 days prior and 3 days after the application. Treated areas will be posted with clear and conspicuous warning signs. No pesticides classified as known human carcinogens or containing inert ingredients categorized as "List 1: Inerts of Toxicological Concern" by the U. S. EPA will be used.

Abuse & Neglect suspected

Whenever there is suspected child abuse or neglect, Teachers will alert their Lead Teacher. Lead Teachers will consult immediately with the Director and/or Program

Coordinator to evaluate the situation. The Center may consult with the parents if appropriate. A report may be filed with DCF (Department of Children and Families) and the Department of Early Education and Care. All ITC staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

All persons regularly on the premises who have the potential for unmonitored contact with children are required to release to ITC permission to conduct a Criminal Record Check. Anyone suspected of abuse and neglect on ITC premises will immediately be released from classroom duties and/or will not work directly with children until a DCF investigation is completed and for such further time as DEEC requires.

Emergency Safety

In the event of an emergency situation that requires an evacuation of ITC, we have several plans which can be implemented. The administrator in charge will determine whether evacuation or sheltering in place is the appropriate response to a severe weather event or natural disaster. Our building is alarmed and equipped with smoke and heat detectors as well as a sprinkler system. All alarms are wired to the Acton Fire Department. We practice emergency evacuations monthly so that children and staff know what they are to do to get out of the building quickly. Escape routes are posted in each room of the facility. We also practice, at least annually, sheltering in place drills which we would use in response to some severe weather emergencies or other threats to children's safety. Our classrooms are connected with an intercom system so that simultaneous communication to the entire building is possible if necessary. All practice drills are handled in a matter of fact, upbeat manner so that children can feel confident that we all know how to keep ourselves safe. All staff are trained in procedures for counting children before and after leaving the building as well as what emergency kits should be carried out. The administrator in charge checks with each group to insure that all children and adults are accounted for once the evacuation has been completed. If we need to evacuate the grounds of ITC (in the event of a fire or severe building damage), the

children will be taken in our walking carts or strollers or by staff vehicles to the West Acton Baptist Church on the corner of Central St. and Mass. Ave. unless otherwise advised by emergency personnel. Children will remain at the off site location supervised by staff until parents are contacted and arrive to pick up their children. In the event of any building evacuation, emergency contact numbers and emergency medical care permissions are carried outside the building in our "emergency bags" located in each classroom.

In the event of serious injury or illness, children will be transported to Emerson Hospital where they will be provided appropriate medical treatment. Staff will remain with children at the Hospital until parents or emergency contacts are notified and arrive to be with children.

It is essential that parents leave accurate contact information with the staff whenever their child is in attendance. If parents are on the premises during a practice drill we ask that you participate with us.

Building Security

The front door into the lobby is the main entrance to ITC. All visitors and parents are asked to use this entrance ONLY. All other entrances to the building are kept locked except when children are on the playground. Visitors check in at the office and receive a visitor's tag to wear while in the building. The door from the lobby to the children's rooms is kept closed and locked at all times. Parents and staff will be informed of the keypad code. Only those persons who regularly pick up or drop off children or who regularly work with children will be given the code to the classroom corridor door. All others such as visitors, vendors, delivery or repair people or those picking up children on an occasional basis should check in the office and will be let in by an ITC staff member. The keypad code will be changed periodically.

7 Daily Happenings

Curriculum

Throughout ITC, from Infants to School-Age groups, you will observe curriculum taking shape week by week and day by day, with Teachers thoughtfully making plans that draw on the children's interests. This type of planning reflects our belief that children learn best when they are exploring questions that are relevant to them or practicing skills that they have chosen to work on. This means that we give each child time to make choices of activity from among many possibilities and that Teachers are carefully observing each child's choices and listening for what children are talking about and wondering about.

Drawing on the children's interests, the Teachers plan and facilitate a wide variety of play opportunities. It is through this play that the children will explore and expand their knowledge and skills. The ITC curriculum helps children master age-appropriate tasks at each stage of individual development. Activities to help children develop emotional, social, physical, and cognitive skills are integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. These activities reflect the broad range of growth and development among the children. Children's development is encouraged through play and exploration of process-oriented rather than product-oriented activities. A truly appropriate curriculum will not look the same from one classroom of children to the next nor from one year to the next for it is reflective of both the children and the Teachers in each particular group. One group may have a larger block corner because the children in that group are particularly interested in exploring structures. Another group may have a wider variety of dress up clothes because a lot of the children are trying out roles and figuring out what it feels like to be various kinds of people. Much of what happens in the daily life at ITC provides the context for first learning experiences: hellos and good-byes, eating, resting, keeping clean and comfortable, enjoying nature, being with friends, coping with emotional experiences, taking turns, and respecting others.

During the preschool and kindergarten years, children gain skills in logical thinking, problem solving, information gathering and acquisition of a body of

common knowledge through daily activities. At any time one group may be exploring birds through artistic expression, books on birds and observations of birds in nature. Another group may be experiencing kings, queens and castles while another is experimenting with all the qualities of color. School readiness skills are acquired through exposure to numbers, letters, categories, size, shape, sequence, identification of objects, cause and effect, how things work, seasons, and ways to use materials to express ideas. The curriculum for the before-and-after school children is based on developmentally appropriate activities. There is plenty of time to play, explore and socialize, as well as time to rest, eat, exercise and relax. The purpose is to provide recreation time before and after the formal school experience. Friendships are very important, and opportunities to develop good friendships are promoted, along with independence and responsible behavior.

Parents can contribute significantly to the curriculum by sharing their time and talents with the children in the classroom. The curriculum at the Infant Toddler Children's Center is always new and always fresh. It has an innate enthusiasm that is contagious. It is a growing experience for everyone.

Ultimately, the goal is for each child to develop positive self-esteem and a joy of learning in preparation for a happy and productive life among peers, colleagues, and loved ones.

Beginning the Day

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the classroom, sign in, and let a Teacher know of their arrival. Teachers will meet children delivered to the Center by bus, school van, or taxi if they are arriving from another program without a parent.

Parents and Teachers need to talk each day to exchange important information concerning the children's health, energy level, mood, and special events at home or at the Center. Parents are welcome to spend the first few minutes in the classroom with their child to ease the separation. Children seem to respond best to a decisive and clear good-bye, with the reassurance that parents will return at the end of the

day. If parting seems to be difficult for a child, the Teachers and parents will discuss ways to work together to make the transition successful. Parents may not leave without saying good-bye to their child. It is alarming to a child to discover that his parent has disappeared. Failure to say good-bye can undermine basic trust.

Telephone Contact

ITC must be able to reach parents at all times. This information should be noted in the sign-in book. If parents have voice mail or beepers, they must provide clear instructions on how to make direct contact.

Daily Schedule

The schedule for the day differs from group to group. The infants are on individualized schedules, with caregivers responding to their needs and interests as they arise. As the children grow older, the schedule becomes more uniform. Each group has a general schedule posted in their room.

The typical day includes time for play and socializing, both inside and outside, clean up, hygiene, eating and resting. Routines are very important and reassuring. Occasional surprises and unplanned events add depth and excitement to special days. Special movement and music times are often planned by Teachers and are held in our indoor recreation areas. The preschool groups participate weekly in science and nature excursions and activities.

Outside Play

Children go outside in winter and summer, weather and other conditions permitting. Infants and toddlers go outside when the temperature is above 20°F and preschoolers and school-age children when the temperature is 10°F or above. In the summer months, children will be kept inside if the temperature exceeds 96°F and humidity is high. Fresh air promotes good health and the outdoors presents unlimited opportunities for play and exploration. Fresh air is essential to good health and all children well enough to attend, are well enough to go outside. Parents

must provide proper outdoor clothing.

Naps and Rest

Napping procedures vary with the age groups. Infants and toddlers sleep in cribs and on mats, according to their own schedules and needs. The Center follows the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that infants (children 12 months and under) be placed down for sleep on their backs unless a child's pediatrician recommends otherwise. Infants each sleep in an individual crib that has a firm, properly fitted mattress with clean coverings, and that does not contain potential entrapment areas or pillows, comforters, stuffed animals or other soft, padded materials. Our cribs conform to the latest recommendations of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The preschool children have a rest period after lunch. Children who do not fall asleep rest quietly for about 45 minutes and, after resting, may play quietly at an activity in another room. Requests that a child not sleep, or be allowed to sleep only for a specified amount of time, will be considered individually and reviewed regularly. Teachers will not withhold sleep from a child. State regulations mandate a minimum of 45 minutes of quiet or rest time for each child who is in care over four hours.

Parents are invited to send a favorite "snugly" or pacifier along with their child's blanket. The Center provides soft music, fans, dimmed lighting, and back rubs!

Toileting

"Toilet training" is a major milestone in a child's (and family's) development. It is usually a slow process, with a wide variation as to when and how a child is successful. Discussion between parents and Teachers about timing, attitudes, and methods of training is important so that a consistent effort is made for a child's success. Children are not required to be toilet trained in order to enter any group.

Toys from Home

Guidelines on bringing toys, books, and games from home differ from group to group. Teachers use their discretion in deciding how items from home are affecting the child, the other children, and the program. The Teachers cannot be responsible for the safety of items brought from home. Parents should discourage their child from bringing very precious items to the Center. Everything brought from home must have the child's name on it.

Parents are asked to help discourage children from bringing in toys associated with aggressive and violent behavior and toys which perpetuate gender or racial biases.

Toy guns and other “weapons” are not allowed in the Center. They promote aggressive play that can be frightening to some children. ITC makes an effort to minimize the use of promotional toys, props and gadgets associated with TV, film and video. The use of and the dependence on these commercially promoted items has had increasingly negative effects on the social interactions of the children at the Center.

Child Guidance

ITC provides children with the opportunity to learn about themselves and others in the context of a group. We believe that in the first years of life, children are in the process of discovering who they are and how they fit into a group. We work with parents to support children as they learn about emotions, respecting others and negotiating play as is developmentally appropriate. Since this is an important and on-going developmental step, parents and teachers will share their perceptions of the child in various contexts in order to best understand how to support each child's unique social and emotional learning.

ITC encourages an atmosphere where children feel safe and respected. The first job of every teacher is to establish a relationship with every child in the group. We believe that when a child feels known and welcomed, that child will be comfortable learning and making the mistakes that come with learning. The

Teachers' job is to help children to navigate the social and emotional challenges that are inevitable as they learn to become members of a community. Teachers orchestrate the environment and carefully pre-plan space, group configuration, activities, and adult interaction with the children to minimize barriers to children's ability to be successful in a group. We work to provide a predictable schedule and environment with clear boundaries so that children can know what to expect and what is expected of them. For example, the idea of sharing may be a foreign concept to a young child, who is naturally egocentric. Teachers will encourage children to share, help them find ways to take turns, work together, find an alternative, or make a simple choice. We will always set realistic expectations in the context of children's age and developmental capabilities:

Infants. Infant care is a partnership in every sense of the word. Through our relationship with each baby, we read signals, interpret wants and needs, and partner with the baby in managing the routines and transitions of the day. Building successful relationships with each baby is facilitated by our primary caregiving system in which individual teachers on the team, specifically work close with 2 or 3 of the children enrolled to know them well and advocate for their needs with the rest of the team. Our goal is to build a predictable, responsive, consistent environment that offers the baby security and a sense of trust. From there, the baby can begin to organize and make sense of the world, expectations and social conventions. In this partnership, the baby and teacher are in constant communication, sharing control and building an understanding together. This co-regulation of emotion serves as the building block for the development of self-regulation, a life-long skill that only begins to emerge in toddlerhood.

Toddlers. We believe that teachers are models for social behavior. How we comport ourselves is probably one of the most important ways adults influence children's learning of social skills and appropriate behavior. Providing good role models of social behavior is critical when we are dealing with the very young, especially as toddlers begin to test their environment, people, objects and "rules". We find that toddlers operate best with simple choices within clear boundaries. A predictable routine that the toddler can depend on offers a sense of security and

control and our consistent response and guidance with limits supports that further.

Preschoolers. Preschool age children are beginning to be very interested in their peers and in testing their environment as they learn about the physical and social world. This can sometimes mean that children find themselves in conflict with their peers or disrupting the rest of the community or classroom. Teachers carefully orchestrate the environment so that children can work together easily and can understand what they can do in the environment. When possible the children will contribute to a list of simple class guidelines so that children can know what is expected. This kind of activity can contribute to a sense of community and shared responsibility and a clear understanding that there are boundaries that help us all to feel safe and to get along with each other.

Self-discipline is taught through the problem solving approach and a growing understanding of natural consequences of behavior. Children are assisted, according to their developmental stage, to make appropriate choices, encouraging good decision-making, and thoughtful reinforcement of positive behavior.

Preschoolers often feel and express emotions intensely. As they are negotiating social situations, feelings may be strong. Sometimes taking a break from a conflict situation helps, particularly if a child may be endangering themselves or others. Teachers will support the children in regaining composure by offering a drink of water, moving to another part of the classroom or center or encouraging alternate activity.

Encouragement is given for efforts to be cooperative, to use self-control, to be thoughtful, or to try one's best. Hugs, smiles, pats, or encouragement of cooperative group behavior build group spirit and build children's pride in themselves and in the group. Teachers will model cooperative and appropriate social behavior. At all times, Teachers will be aware of their tone of voice. Shouting is never necessary. Teachers go to where the problem is and talk with the child/children. They will talk at their level -- bend down/sit down to make eye contact and physical contact. Teachers will give the child a chance to explain what he/she did and why, without being judgmental. Understanding often helps disperse anger. Before Teachers talk to children having difficulty, they will consider the best way to be helpful based on what they know about that particular child. Simple statements describing realistic

consequences are most effective. Some useful phrases are:

“Let me try to help you.”

“Let’s figure out what went wrong.”

“Now it is time to...”

“I want/need you to ...”

“This_____is ready for you to...”

“S/he wants you to ...”

“Next we are going to ...”

“Your job is to ..., his job is to ...”

“I cannot let you ...”

School-Age Children. School-age children realize there is not always just one right view or one way of doing things. They share the notion of fair exchange. Fairness and understanding are important factors in their personal growth and development. Usually as children reach school-age, they begin to feel genuine remorse for hurting another child or another child’s feelings. They can be encouraged to say “I’m sorry” if this feeling appears genuine. School-age children also begin to problem solve more in group settings.

At the beginning of the school year, we discuss classroom behavior and encourage the children to participate in the establishment of classroom rules and guidelines. Expectations become clear and consistent when children are involved in the planning. If a child should test or exceed agreed upon limits, he or she is respectfully spoken with individually and asked to review the behavior. Teachers help the children process why what they did may have been inappropriate. Children are actively engaged in verbal problem solving individually and in groups. If certain behaviors persist, Teachers find it helpful to have the group come together at a meeting time to problem solve inappropriate behaviors by sharing possible appropriate alternatives.

In accordance with our beliefs and requirements of the State Department of Early Education and Care, the following practices are ***strictly forbidden***.

- Yelling in anger at a child, spanking or other corporal punishment.
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks
- Depriving a child of outdoor time, meals or snacks or force feed children or otherwise make them eat against their will or in any way use food as a consequence.
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet, or force a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet or use any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.
- Confining a child to a swing, highchair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision.
- Excessive time out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

Release of Children / End of Day

The end of the day is a relaxed time when children may choose from a variety of free play activities. In early fall, late spring, and the summer, the day usually ends outdoors. In the winter, small groups play inside.

Parents are encouraged to spend a few minutes observing, joining their child in an activity and/or chatting with the Teachers. However, to prevent confusion parents should plan to leave for home within five to ten minutes. Of course, parents must notify a Teacher when they leave and they must sign out their child.

It is important to pick up children on time. Late pick-ups confuse the child, inconvenience the Teachers, and put constraints on compliance with licensing regulations. Parents should call if they will be unavoidably late.

At orientation time, parents fill out a form designating those people who may pick up their child. For a child's safety, he or she will not be released to anyone not named on this form. If someone on a pick-up form will be picking up a child, parents must notify the child's Teacher so they can help prepare the child for a change in routine. If another caregiver will be regularly transporting a child or providing a link between home and the Center, parents should introduce the

caregiver to the Teachers and inform her/him of all drop-off and pick-up procedures. The Caregiver should be familiar with ITC policies and must be listed on the child's signed emergency contact and transportation release form.

In an emergency, a child will be released to someone not designated on the pick-up form only if:

1. the parent has given the Teacher a signed note
2. the person picking up presents photo identification

When parents are temporarily out of town, they must designate, in writing, the authorized adult to be fully responsible for the child's care. If parents are separated and sharing custody of a child, ITC is not responsible for deciding which parent the child leaves with unless there is a court order. We will follow written instructions from parents whenever possible and/or court orders. Many parents bring (an) older or younger sibling(s) to the Center. Please remember it is the parents' responsibility to supervise siblings to guarantee everyone's safety. This will ensure that siblings' visits will be enjoyable.

Our staff is responsible for insuring that children are safely transported from the Center. If we feel a driver's ability to operate a vehicle safely is impaired, ITC reserves the right to not release the child to this person. In this case, we will offer to call a cab or an alternative driver. All children must use appropriate car seats or seat belts when traveling to and from the Center and may not be left in cars in the parking lot.

Celebrations

Festivities revolving around holidays, traditions, and birthdays are always enjoyable and are part of the experience of learning about each other. Within the Center the meaning of various cultural traditions and holidays are experienced through simple exposure to foods, music, dress, and crafts. ITC does not espouse any particular religious or political beliefs. Religious messages are avoided, but questions are answered honestly. Families are invited to share their traditions and celebrations at the Center, making appropriate plans with the Teachers ahead of time.

Birthdays are joyous events. The Teachers will help to celebrate children's birthdays in a manner that is appropriate for each age group. Children may wish to have a crown or hat made for them while others may find the celebration overwhelming and may choose to not have a special celebration with the group. Each child's comfort level is respected. If parents would like to bring in a special snack for this day, it is welcomed as long *as you notify your child's teacher in advance that you are doing so*. Many families choose fresh fruit or the birthday child's favorite snack instead of traditional birthday cake or cupcakes. Smaller mini-muffins are especially appropriate to minimize sugar content. If you wish to not have your child's birthday recognized at ITC, please let your child's Lead Teacher know. In regard to home birthday parties, we ask that you mail party invitations to children's homes rather than distributing invitations at ITC, to avoid disappointment among children. We will provide parents with a class list which includes addresses.

Field Trips

Formal field trips requiring transportation in cars are not part of the regular program at ITC. However, frequent walking trips are planned in ITC's famous "pollution free vans" or on foot to see natural and community surroundings. A general field trip permission form for these walking trips is signed by parents each year.

Special walking field trips or occasional trips involving public transportation are planned periodically. Parents are invited to accompany the group as a helper. Field trip permission forms are signed by parents for each of these special trips.

8 Parent Responsibilities and Involvement

Transportation

Parents are responsible for the transportation of their children to and from the Center. All children must be picked up from the Center by the child's parents or a designated driver listed on the transportation release form. Children arriving from or departing to special programs may be transported to and/or from the Center in a school van if the parent provides written instruction. The same instructions are

required for children being delivered or picked up by taxi. School-Age children can be dropped off and picked up by school buses, vans and taxis. Parents make arrangements directly with the Public Schools or other private transportation companies for transportation to and from ITC. Parents sign a transportation release form which is kept at the Center. ITC staff will meet each bus or taxi outside at the front entrance and escort the child to his/her classroom.

At no time will staff transport children to or from the Center. If a child needs emergency care, children will be transported by ambulance to the hospital.

Staff Babysitting

ITC staff are strongly discouraged from babysitting for currently enrolled families. In doing so, both staff and parents increase risks of

- compromised effectiveness working with children
- compromised confidentiality regarding families, children ITC business or staff

We therefore ask that parents respect a staff member's right to say no to requests for child care beyond those contracted with ITC. In addition, staff may not accept calls from parents regarding child care jobs during ITC work hours, or conduct any business with families during work hours other than that of the Center.

Clothing

Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing which is suitable for active play. Teachers do not deny children participation in activities because of anxiety about dirtying special clothes. Each child needs seasonally appropriate outer

clothing for summer, fall, winter, and spring. Children spend time outdoors routinely and appropriate protective clothing is essential.

Parents are asked to keep complete changes of correctly sized clothing including socks, shoes, pants or shorts, shirt, sweater, underwear, and outer clothing in the child's cubby. If a child is sent home in Center clothing, it should be washed and returned clean as soon as possible.

Parents should check periodically to see that their child's extra set of clothes is complete, suitable for the season, and still the correct size. *Everything* must be labeled with the child's name on it. ITC *cannot be responsible for unmarked clothing.*

For naps and rest each family provides a flannel covered rubber pad (for Infants and Toddlers) and a fitted sheet for all ages, along with a blanket. These should be taken home and washed weekly. The pads/sheets and blanket must be labeled.

Parents are required to maintain a supply of diapers (disposable or cloth), creams, powders, and wipes. Cloth diapers and soiled clothing are sent home soiled and un-rinsed as required by health regulations. Plastic bags and ties must always be provided for children in cloth diapers.

Food at ITC

At ITC, we recognize that growing children thrive when their nutritional needs are met. Staff are trained in USDA nutrition requirements. Children are fed according to parents' wishes and with their developmental needs in mind. Our goal is to serve a variety of nutritious foods and to encourage children's development of healthy eating attitudes and behaviors that promote positive long-term health outcomes. We welcome your feedback and suggestions regarding food at ITC.

Infant Feeding Infants are fed on a schedule specified by the parents and guided by the nutritional needs of the child. Teachers will document daily the amount food and milk each child consumes while at ITC and supply that information to parents

at the end of the day. Teachers will note reactions and preferences and report these to parents. Please introduce new solids at home so you will know your child's reaction to the new food prior to sending it to ITC. Teaching staff familiar to the infant will feed each child when they seem hungry. Parents are responsible for providing breast milk or formula for younger infants. All containers of formula, breast milk or cow's milk will be labeled with the child's name and date. Unless indicated by a parent, bottles of human milk and formula will be warmed in warm water (no hotter than 120°F) for no more than 5 minutes. When children are over 12 months and are drinking from a cup, we will supply whole cow's milk from Hood's for children unless parents indicate otherwise.

Infants over six months (unless otherwise recommended by the child's pediatrician) will be offered solid foods, when supplied by the parent. Solid food for infants should be sent to ITC in original unopened commercial containers labeled with the child's name. If homemade food is used, food should be in sealed containers, which are labeled with the child's name. All food not commercially sealed should come to ITC in a labeled insulated lunch bag with a cold pack. While we do not recommend that infants drink fruit juice, if parents wish us to give an infant fruit juice, it must be 100% fruit juice and be limited to no more than four ounces per child daily. Once children begin finger foods, we will offer Cheerios and foods that have already been offered to children at home.

Toddlers through School Age Children

Morning and afternoon snack: We offer children a healthy morning and afternoon snack daily in each group. Eating together is an important time for building relationships and practicing developing language skills. Children will be offered a fruit or vegetable or a dairy product such as milk, cheese or yogurt with a grain product at every snack. Sugary cakes with icing, cookies, ice cream, puddings, and sweetened milk products will be limited to special occasions such as birthday celebrations. ITC is nut restricted. This means that you may not include any foods containing nuts in your child's lunch or snacks to lessen the possibility of exposing

a child with a severe allergy to nuts. This restriction involves peanuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashew, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio nuts and walnuts. Please check the label on your child's foods every day. Avoid labels that say "contains nuts" or "may contain nuts". ITC also has a no trans fat rule and will not provide foods containing trans fats.

Because we have limited refrigerated space, we ask that parents help supplement our snacks with contributions of fruit, vegetables or cheeses and dips. Each classroom will have a parent sign up for snack contributions. We ask that parents chose a snack contribution from the list provided by the teachers so that we can ensure a healthy variety. Check at the sign in desk and choose a time when you could contribute food on the classroom list.

Lunch:Parents supply lunch for their child. All lunches should be packed in a labeled and insulated lunch box or bag and should include a cold pack to keep foods cool. ITC will offer water or milk (whole milk for children under 2 and 2% milk for children over 2 from Hood's) to children unless parents supply other drinks. If a parent forgets to send a lunch from home, ITC will maintain a supply of nutritious lunch options to offer as a substitute.

All food given to children will be prepared and handled in a way that is safe and sanitary. Staff wear gloves when directly handling food. We will warm foods in the microwave on paper plates or in glass containers only to a temperature of no more than 110° F for children over 12 months at the parent's or child's request. Uneaten food will be discarded or returned to parents in a child's lunch box daily.

Some suggestions for healthy lunches

Small containers of finger foods: meats, cheeses, vegetables, fruits, hard boiled eggs, cut to bite size

Containers of spoon foods: yogurt, cottage cheese, meat pies, rice, noodles, pasta, plain tuna, cooked beans, dinner leftovers, stew or soup, potato

Sandwiches: thin, simple, cut small, not made with nut butters (an alternative is a

soy butter)

Please don't send:

Candy, gum, soda or packaged mixes such as mac and cheese that need preparation (i.e. "Easy Mac") or ***any foods or butters made from tree nuts or peanuts***. Because we are supervising groups of children eating together, we must avoid foods that pose a choking hazard. For children under 4, we are not able to serve nuts, popcorn, pretzels, or fruit leathers or roll-ups. Raw carrots and baby carrots, whole grapes, whole hard boiled eggs, whole cherry tomatoes, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole should be cut into small bite sized pieces. Avoid cutting foods such as hot dogs and carrots into "rounds". Please cut raw carrots lengthwise, no thicker than 1/2" and cut grapes into fourths.

Children with allergies or special food requirements

ITC will protect children with food allergies from contact with problem foods in a manner that is discussed and approved by the parents and the child's health care provider. When available, we will serve all children fresh fruit or a vegetable for snack (as age appropriate). If your child has a food allergy for which an epi pen has been prescribed, please supplement your child's snack with crackers and/or a protein source of your choice or supply a complete snack for your child. If your child has a food allergy we will need a written plan for managing your child's allergy and we ask you to meet with your child's teachers to discuss the best management plan for your child. A written plan for meeting a child's special food requirements will be kept in the child's folder, put on ITC's "Special Considerations" list and posted on an allergy alert sheet in the child's classroom. Teachers will alert parents to allergies present in the classroom and give parents instructions should we need to eliminate some foods from the classroom.

Toothbrushing

The Massachusetts Department of Education and Care has issued regulations requiring that early childhood programs give all children who are at ITC for more than 4 hours or who consume a meal here the opportunity to clean their teeth after eating. Children in the infant and YT groups will have their teeth and gums wiped

with their own soft, damp cloth unless parents specifically request in writing that we do not do so. Children in all other groups will be helped to brush their teeth using water and a tooth brush unless parents specifically request in writing that they do not brush here.

ITC will provide each child with a labeled and dated soft bristle toothbrush which will be stored in a sanitary manner open to the air. Toothbrushes will be replaced every three months or after a child has been absent due to illness.

Parent Involvement

Child care is a shared process and ITC encourages parents to become involved.

- *Parent evening discussion groups.* ITC periodically sponsors educational programs to discuss issues concerning parenting, child development, and other relevant topics.
- *Social gatherings.* There are opportunities to get together with other families and the Teachers at several social gatherings and fundraising events held throughout the year.
- *Organizational functions.* An Open House is held each fall. This is an adult evening, so please arrange for sitters early. The purpose is to familiarize parents with the overall program, its personnel, and its goals. In the Spring, the *Annual Meeting* of the membership of the Corporation is held. At this meeting, annual committee reports are presented and nominations to the Board are confirmed. Refreshments and socializing are enjoyed after the meeting. Monthly ITC Board of Trustees meetings are open to all.
- *Contributed time, goods, money, and services.* ITC relies on donations of money, goods and time to provide a high quality program. Tuition dollars alone do not cover the full cost of our program. Parents are encouraged to help out by participating in fundraisers, donating time to serve on a committee, helping with classroom projects or serving on our Board of Trustees.

- *Visits.* Enrolled parents are welcome to visit the Center and their child's group at any time.
- *Classroom.* Any parent who has a particular event or skill that is appropriate to share with the children is most welcome to do so by prior arrangement with the Lead Teacher.
- *Membership in the ITC Corporation.* Membership in the ITC Corporation is open to ITC administrators and staff, all parents and legal guardians of children enrolled at ITC and all members of the Board of Trustees. Membership is renewed annually. To become a member, those eligible sign the member register kept in the Office during the membership enrollment period which is from September 1 to October 31 each year. Members vote on ITC By-law changes, elect the Board of Trustees and vote on special issues brought before Membership meetings.

9 Parental Rights

Right to Visit

Parents have a right to make unannounced visits to their child's classroom while their child is present. We welcome parents' involvement in the life of the classroom.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Regular parent conferences are offered at least twice a year and every three months for infants and children with identified special needs. We will provide a translator in a home language if that enables family members to better participate in a conference with a Teacher. Parents are welcome to schedule a meeting with their child's Teacher at any time. It is hoped that both parents can meet with their child's Teacher. When parents are separated or divorced, two conferences may be arranged, if that is preferred. Conferences take place without the child or a sibling

in attendance. Child care during conferences is provided if the child is already scheduled for care or if there is space available. There is no fee for “extra hours” during a conference.

During the conference the Teacher will share with the parent a written progress report of their child’s activities and participation at the Center. This written report then becomes a part of the child’s record at the Center.

Communication

The Center provides many regular communication vehicles:

- *Log books* are written in every afternoon in each group, individually for infants and by group for the toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children. Look for remarks and photos each day in these books on the sign-in desk.
- A sign-in sheet is posted each day with a space for comments regarding day- to-day information vital to both Teachers and parents.
- Each family has a *mailbox* for daily memos, notes, “take-homes,” newsletters, and art work.
- *The Parent Handbook* outlines expectations for both Center and families.
- *Newsletters* are published 10 times a year.
- *Calendars* are published monthly.
- The Faith LeBaron Parenting Lending Library located in the front office, maintains many books, tapes, and reprints on child development and parenting.
- *Special notices* and all parent e-mails are distributed periodically.
- *Bulletin boards* announce on-going and special events and display important information about child development and the Center. Please take time to study the bulletin boards.
- *Children’s work* is displayed throughout the Center.

Of course, nothing can replace direct communication. Daily chats provide for excellent Parent-Teacher communication. The *telephone* and *e-mail* is a convenient way to keep in touch with the Center from work or home.

Suggestions and Concerns

From time to time a concern or problem may arise which requires discussion. Please feel free to approach a Lead Teacher, Program Coordinator, the Assistant Director or Director to set up an appointment to meet. Every effort is made to arrive at a satisfactory solution. *Please refer to this handbook to help clarify policies and procedures.*

Many parents are pleased with the programs offered and the quality of care provided at the Center. Knowing what works well is useful to the Teachers and Administrators. Positive feedback is equally as important as constructive criticism.

Each year, a questionnaire is distributed to parents to evaluate the program. Participation in this survey is voluntary, but most helpful.

This program is licensed by the State Department of Early Education and Care. The Regional Office responsible for ITC is located at 10 Austin St., Worcester, MA 01619. The phone number of this office is 508-798-5180. Parents may contact this department at the above address for information regarding the program's compliance history.

Confidentiality

Children's records and family information are kept in locked files in the main office of the Center. ITC will protect the child's and the family's right to confidentiality. ITC will not distribute or release information about a child or his/her family to any unauthorized person, or discuss with any unauthorized person information about a child or his/her family without the written consent of the child's parent. ITC will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone who is not employed by ITC and is not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parents(s).

Disclosure of the child's records and family information beyond a child's parents and program personnel will require written consent by the family. In the

case of abuse or neglect it is permissible for the Center to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child's interest. If your child's records are subpoenaed by a court, ITC will notify parents of the release of those records. The Center is required to make available to the Department of Early Education and Care licensing personnel all forms and information including a child's records. Authorized licensers will not remove identifying materials from the Center and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records. ITC will respect the family's right to privacy and will not enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children. ITC will not use its relationships with families for private advantage or personal gain.

Amending Children's Records

- Parents may add information, data or any other relevant materials to their child's record.
- Parents may also request that information in their child's file be amended or deleted.
- If after changes to their child's records have been made, parents are still not satisfied with the clarity or correctness of the records, they may schedule a conference with the Director.
- Within one week after such a conference, the Director will provide the parents a written decision regarding their child's record which includes the reason for the decision. The decision will be acted on immediately.

Transfer of or access to records

- Parents are entitled to have access to their child's records on request. Requests for records will be granted within 2 business days after request is received.
- When a child leaves ITC, parents may request, in writing, that the child's records be given to them or to another person of the parents' choosing.
- Charge for copies—IITC does not charge a fee for copies of information contained in your child's record.

The Center has a copy of CMR 102.700, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School-age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. These written regulations are available to parents upon request.