

# ITC Parent Handbook



**2017 Edition**

**Infant Toddler Children's Center  
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Acton, Massachusetts 01720  
(978) 263-2064**

*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, and the Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, Harvard Early Childhood Council.*

### **The Non-Profit Childcare Model**

ITC is a non-profit organization. What does this mean for you, as parents? First and foremost, it means you have chosen a center for your family that is mission-driven rather than profit-driven. It means our budget is constructed every year so that we can provide the highest quality care by hiring the best possible teachers and supporting their continued growth as professionals through both in-house training and participation in offerings from the larger early childhood community. It means that your tuition dollars are carefully considered and put to work to maintain our facility and grounds, support our low teacher-child ratios, and assure that we keep on the cutting edge of the field by committing to a research-based, development-driven, child-centered education and care model. ITC is unique in its outlook and preparation, as well as in its carefully crafted practices and deeply held conviction that children are worthy and deserve an exceptional childhood. Maintaining our non-profit status, keeping parents as central to our Board of Trustees, and continually revisiting our mission and vision as a program will ensure that ITC can uphold its stellar performance as a leader in the early childhood field.

### **Federal I.D. Number**

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

### **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, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

## A Letter from the Director

Welcome,

The Infant Toddler Children's Center (ITC) has been partnering with families since 1981, when it was founded by Faith LeBaron, an early childhood educator, and Leslie Hill, a pediatric nurse, in response to a growing need for childcare 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 evolved from caring for infants and toddlers to providing rich, vibrant programs for children from infancy through 9 years old. Our evolution as a program mirrors our commitment to the developing child, where we start with a solid grounding in child development, layer on a well thought out system for relationship-based care, and partner with parents so that our view of the child is always within the context of the family. From this place of understanding we are able to build secure relationships with individual children and parents, offer responsive curriculum that celebrates the competence of each child, and build a learning community that weaves in children, families and teachers where everyone can thrive. That is a tall order, and it remains ITC's goal to meet it.

Whether you are a new family just starting your journey with us or a returning family continuing onward, we welcome you to the year ahead. We are so happy to have your family as part of our community! We aim to offer exceptional care, partnership, community, and transparency. This handbook is a resource and a roadmap that will provide answers to many questions you may have.

The parent handbook should familiarize you with our philosophy; policies; and procedures; clarify ITC's method of operation; and provide a consistent framework of understanding for everyone. Many procedures are based on the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations and all of our practices exceed both state licensing and NAEYC accreditation standards.

If you have additional questions or things you are wondering about after reviewing the handbook (or any time!) the administration is always ready to assist you.

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year!



*Infant Toddler Children's Center Director*



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# 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. A teacher's first job with children is to establish a relationship with every child, getting 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.

## Governance

ITC is governed by a Board of Trustees, which is comprised of parents, the Executive Director, staff representatives, and community members. The Board is elected annually by the Membership of the Corporation.

Through frequent interaction and consultation with the Executive Director, the Board 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.

Parent and staff committees provide support for the center by organizing events, parent education programs, and fundraising activities. Any parent/guardian of a child actively enrolled in the center is eligible to join the Corporation, Board, and/or support committees. Further information is available in the Parent Involvement section of the handbook.

## **Administration**

ITC has a fairly unique administrative structure that allows us to support a program as large as this one without losing intimate connection between program and families. We have an executive director who is responsible for the center in its entirety and who hires all administrative and teaching staff. The director is primarily responsible for teacher training and the tone of the program, in conjunction with both coordinators. More mundane (but no less critical) tasks include enrollment, monitoring the budget and keeping the Board fully informed about center business. As well, ITC has an assistant director who can take over responsibility for the center in the director's absence, has primary responsibility for our licensing process with the state, and who collaborates with the administrative team on all levels.

While we are one school with deeply held shared beliefs about children and families, we also recognize that there are some differences in care models for children under three and the remainder of early childhood. Because of this, ITC has two program coordinators, one to support the infant toddler program and one to support the preschool and school-age program. The coordinators ensure that classroom teams have additional support and guidance as they plan for daily routines, build curriculum and interact with children and families. This tiered administrative structure keeps connections personal, allows a parent ample access to support, provides strong teacher supervision and modeling, and allows for more individualized planning and relationships for children.

Our administrative team is rounded out by our business manager, who manages all billing for families, service contractors, and business partnerships, handles payroll for the program, and runs the front office for the center.

## **Teaching Staff**

Each of the center's classrooms is staffed by a team of teachers, led by a Lead Teacher. 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 working with children at ITC must submit to: a C.O.R.I. (Criminal Offenders Record Investigation) in the state and federal database, a DCF record check (the state agency that investigates abuse and neglect allegations), fingerprinting through SAFIS (which provides state and national criminal history record information checks), have a personal interview, complete a 2 -4 hour working interview, and provide at least two references.

Each of the center's classrooms is staffed by a team of teachers who work in that classroom for a full year. Additional teachers "float" among the groups, making it possible to offer more individualized care, provide teacher breaks and lunch, and provide release time for weekly team and lead teacher meetings. In addition, ITC employs permanent substitute teachers who fill in when regular teachers must be out. Permanent substitutes are well known to the children and center, providing familiarity in the absence of the regular teacher.

Our 30+ person staff is supplemented by on-call substitute teachers and summer interns. Occasionally, the Center enjoys the help of volunteers, including parents, senior citizens, student teachers, older high school students and college students.

## **Programs**

ITC offers full-time and part-time programs for children aged three months through preschool. Before and after school care is provided for school age children. 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.

## Classroom Groups / Placement

Groups are formed on a yearly basis following the school year start in September. To allow significant relationships to develop between children and teachers, groups stay together for a full year regardless of birthdates. Placement considerations include chronological age, developmental stage, group size, group configuration, specific parental concerns, and room and staff availability. The final decision on a child's placement is made by teachers and administrators, considering any parental input. The group age range can be as much as a full year, and ages may overlap between groups.

Groups are typically divided as follows:

Group	Ratio	Age Range
Infants/Ones	3:1 (max 7 children in group)	3 months – 12 months
Young Toddlers	3:1 (under 15 months) or 4:1 (max 8 children in group)	13 months – 22 months
Toddlers	4:1 (max 9 children in group)	20 months – 30 months
2/3s	5:1 (max 9 children in group)	25 months to 35 months
Preschool I	7:1 (max 14-15 children in group)	3 years – 4 years
Preschool II	8:1 (max 16-17 children in group)	4 years – 5 years
School Age	12:1 (up to 24 in group)	Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades

## A Word about Ratios

ITC is committed to the best possible care and a contributing factor is our ability to maintain better teacher-child ratios than the state mandates. This is accomplished a few ways:

- Our Infant Room has a third teacher all day, maintaining a 3:7 ratio
- Our YT Room has 8 children enrolled, rather than the 9 allowed by state regulations, and we supplement the 2:8 ratio by adding a third teacher for critical times during the day
- Our Mixed Toddler Room has a 2:9 ratio, which is also supplemented by a third teacher for critical times during the course of the day
- Our 2/3's, who straddle the toddler and preschool years, are well-staffed at 2:9
- Our preschool groups also maintain much better ratios and group size. State regulations allow for preschoolers (children over 2 years 9 months) to be in groups of 20 with a 1:10 ratio, whereas ITC supports 3 to 4 year-olds with a 1:7 ratio and 4 to 5 year-olds with a 1:8 ratio.

We feel that our ratios support a positive social climate, make individualized, responsive curriculum possible, and allow teachers to do their best work.

## Continuity of Care

Children enrolled at ITC move up to the next age group in September. When feasible, we try to move a group of children who have been together the prior year, along with a familiar teacher in order to provide consistency for the group. Our commitment to responsive care giving and continuity of care is greatly enhanced when we can have teachers "loop" with children from one year to the next, so this is a priority in our planning for our birth to three year-olds in particular, and is also carefully considered when planning teaching teams in preschool.

Beginning in June, teachers and children in the toddler and preschool groups begin visiting the children's soon-to-be new classroom so that they can become familiar with the spaces where they will be in September.

Once teaching teams for the following year have been established, teachers begin to share information with one another about what children enjoy and often include some familiar favorite books or materials in the new classroom, making children feel welcomed and known upon entering their new space.

### **Matriculation to Kindergarten**

For children who will be moving on to kindergarten, we offer a variety of supports for both parents and children. A parent evening opens discussions between parents and teachers about the process of transitioning to kindergarten. Preschool teachers file evaluation forms with the child's expected kindergarten program. Evaluations are filed in the spring and discussed at the respective parent-teacher conference.

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 continue to support the children's confidence in their growing skills.

### **Children with Special Needs**

ITC 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 his/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 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*** - If 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 - Getting Started**

### **Orientation for children beginning at ITC**

For newly enrolled children, ITC organizes an orientation period where the child and their parents or significant member of the household make their initial adjustment to the Center together. The orientation is a two or three day process that occurs before regular care begins. New families in full-time and part-time programs are oriented in August/September during the first week of the "school year." If a family enrolls mid-year, orientation is arranged on days mutually convenient for the Center and the family.

The orientation process is designed to give families an opportunity to spend time in their child's classroom, become familiar with the teachers, and get to know the space and daily routines. Throughout these first few days together, parents, teachers, and children begin to build a foundation of trust and mutual respect as they spend time together, share information, and learn about one another.

The first day of orientation consists of a two-hour visit where parent(s) stay with the child and help them to acclimate to their new space. Depending on the comfort level of the parent and child, the parent(s) may 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 longer periods of time, giving their child an opportunity to explore their classroom and experience the center alongside their teachers and peers. Parents are encouraged to check in as needed to ensure a comfortable transition for both the parent and child.

Parents of returning children should allow extra time for drop-off on their first day back in order to meet the teachers, update forms, and review any new center policies.

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.

### **Required Forms**

Prior to your child's first day of care, each family will fill out and return up-to-date information for the Center. The following forms must be completed:

- 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
- an emergency care form
- a transportation release form
- a photo release form
- a field trip release form
- a developmental history form

## **3 - 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, as well as artistic expression, 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, even though it is carefully tailored to address the skills children are developmentally ready to acquire at each age and stage. By committing to a truly emergent curriculum, we are best able to address the interests and specific talents and challenges that particular children present year to year. This is a more complex way of building curriculum (from more traditional, top-down models of prescribed activities on a pre-determined timeline) which takes careful observation, team collaboration, time for reflection and access to ample resources. ITC has honed these skills in its teaching staff and we continually stretch ourselves to ensure that we meet all children where they are in their development, capturing each opportunity to both wonder and inspire.

Much of what happens in 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. Daily life is both the backdrop for and the catalyst of much of the

curriculum that unfolds each day. As children move through the daily routines, they are encouraged to be active participants in their own care---from sweeping up to scrubbing tables to sorting blocks and folding laundry. Each task offers opportunities for acquiring skills across all developmental domains. Even our youngest babies feel like active agents in their own care (and rightly so!) as they partner with the teacher through eating, napping, dressing and even diapering routines.

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.

The curriculum at the Infant Toddler Children's Center is always new and fresh. It has an innate enthusiasm that is contagious. Curriculum 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**

Upon arrival, parents are expected to accompany their child into the classroom, sign in, and let a teacher know of their arrival. During the drop-off period, parents are asked to help their child wash their hands and put away their child's belongings (hats, coats, lunchboxes, etc.) in their designated spaces. For children who are arriving at the center from another program without a parent, an ITC staff member will meet them at their bus or school van and assist them to their classroom with written consent from the parent.

Teachers and parents take a few moments to check in with one another and share information concerning the child's morning, their previous night, or any special events or "news" that might be relevant. Parents are welcome to spend the first few minutes in the classroom helping their child to acclimate before separating. Occasionally, children may have difficulty with separation from parents that can linger for many weeks, or may recur throughout the year. 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. We strongly encourage parents to say good-bye to their child before they leave, even though it may seem more difficult in the moment. Failure to say good-bye can undermine basic trust and leave children feeling more worried or upset. Parents are encouraged to call the classroom if they are concerned about their child as our teachers are available to help support parents and children through this transition.

### **Telephone Contact**

It is important for ITC to be able to get in touch with parents at all times. If you need to be reached by a number not specified on your emergency contact form, that information should be noted in the sign-in book. If parents have voice mail or extensions, please provide clear instructions on how to make direct contact. If parents need to contact the center for any reason, your call will be answered by one of the administrative staff who can transfer you to your child's classroom, if needed.

### **Daily Schedule**

The daily schedule and routines differ from group to group. The infants follow individualized schedules, with caregivers responding to their needs and interests as they arise. As the children grow older, the schedule naturally becomes more uniform. Each group has a general schedule posted in their room which includes time for play and socializing (both inside and outside), clean up, hygiene, eating and resting.

Routines are very important and reassuring for young children. Classrooms tend to follow the same overall routine

each day, giving children a sense of comfort and security as they begin to predict what will happen next. Occasional surprises and special days (i.e. pajama days or themed days) are planned by teachers and add depth and excitement to the overall curriculum.

Age-appropriate music and movement experiences are woven into the daily curriculum by classroom teachers. In the youngest age groups, teachers sing with children during times of transition (going outside or waiting together in the hallway), during daily routines (washing hands, diapering, etc.), and during free play. As children get older, more formal circle times are offered. Teachers adapt their musical experiences and expectations to accommodate the needs of the children in their specific group. Additionally, preschool children who attend on Mondays participate in a planned music session led by a specialist in our indoor recreation area. This is a supplement to their classroom music experiences that continue throughout the week.

### **Outside Play**

At ITC, we value time spent outdoors and view our outdoor spaces as an extension of the classroom. Each classroom is connected to a shared playground that is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children it serves. We also utilize the Little Woods (a wooded trail behind the school) and the Big Woods (conservation land trails behind the cemetery nearby) which many of the children explore throughout their time at ITC. We understand the importance of outdoor play in child development and we put an emphasis on taking full advantage of our outside spaces. While exploring the outdoors children are able to practice using their large muscles through running, jumping, and climbing, practice using their small muscles while collecting various materials (rocks, sticks, plants, etc.) they find while outdoors, strengthen their relationships and trust with their peers and teachers, and develop more confidence in themselves and their physical abilities. Once children begin preschool, their outdoor explorations have an added component - weekly nature walks with our Science and Nature specialist. During these walks children develop a relationship with nature as they learn about animals and plants that can be found in our community.

Because we hold so much value on outdoor play, we aim to bring children outdoors in all weather conditions. We ask that you provide your child with appropriate clothing for all weather (including comfortable, washable clothes, jackets, hats, and shoes/boots that are appropriate for the season). For specific advice about proper seasonal attire, please consult your classroom teachers. For extreme weather circumstances we follow these guidelines in bringing children outdoors: infants and toddlers will 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.

### **Food at ITC**

At ITC, we view meal times as opportunities to socialize and connect with children, making these moments an important part of our daily routine. Staff are trained in USDA nutrition requirements and we recognize that growing children thrive when their nutritional needs are met. Our goal is to serve a variety of nutritious foods which will encourage children's development of healthy eating habits and behaviors that promote positive long-term health outcomes. We welcome your feedback and suggestions regarding food at ITC.

#### ***Infant Feeding***

In the infant room, feeding times are a true partnership between the caregiver and child. Children are fed by their familiar teachers following a schedule that is communicated by parents and respectful of the child's needs. We feed children based on routines and practices that have been established at home and foster these routines as children grow and develop. Teachers take note of individual preferences and reactions to foods and will document the amount of food and milk that each child consumes during their time ITC. This information will be supplied to parents at the end of the day through conversation as well as written documentation.

**Breast milk or Formula** - Parents will provide all breast milk or formula for younger infants, which must be labeled with the child's full name and date. We offer freezer space for a back-up supply of frozen breastmilk (labeled with child's name and date that the milk was expressed). Bottles will be warmed in warm water (no hotter than 120F) for no more than 5 minutes, unless indicated by parents. When children

are over 12 months and have begun drinking cow's milk from a cup, we will supply whole milk from Mapleline Farms, unless indicated otherwise by parents.

**Solid foods** - Once solid foods have been introduced at home, parents can send them in for their child to enjoy at ITC. Children who are eating solid foods will be fed either in a lap, high chair, or low chair at a table, depending on their age and developmental needs. We ask that any new foods be introduced at home prior to bringing them to ITC so parents can note any reactions that may occur. As children begin bringing in foods from home, we ask parents to send it in a labeled insulated lunch bag with a cold pack, as refrigerator space is limited and reserved for milk and bottles.

#### **State licensing requirements:**

- Commercially made foods should be sent in to ITC in their original unopened containers
- Homemade foods should come in a sealed container
- All containers of food (commercial or homemade) should be labeled with the child's full name
- If parents request that we offer their child juice, it must be 100% fruit juice and be limited to no more than 4 ounces daily.

#### **Toddlers through School Age Children**

**Morning and afternoon snack** - Eating together is an important time for building social relationships, developing language skills, and practicing life skills such as waiting, turn taking, washing hands, and cleaning up. We offer children a nutritionally balanced morning and afternoon snack in each group which includes a fruit or vegetable, a protein, and a grain. When possible, fruits and vegetables are harvested and prepared from our ITC community garden located in the front of the school. **Though ITC provides the majority of the food for snack time, we ask that parents help to supplement snacks with contributions of fruit and vegetables to be served in their child's classroom.** Each classroom will have its own procedures for group snack donations. Sugary cakes with icing, cookies, ice cream, puddings, and sweetened milk products will be limited to special occasions such as birthday celebrations.

**Lunch** - Parents supply lunch for their child, brought to ITC in an insulated lunch box, labeled with the child's full name. As children are able, they begin to share responsibility of mealtime preparations by opening up their own containers, selecting their foods, and packing up any uneaten foods. When necessary, we will warm foods in the microwave on paper plates or in glass containers to a temperature that will not exceed 110<sup>0</sup>F (for children over 12 months). All food given to children will be prepared and handled in a way that is safe and sanitary. Staff wear food service gloves when directly handling food. ITC will offer water or milk (whole milk for children under 2 and 2% milk for children over 2) 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.

#### **Some suggestions for healthy lunches**

Small containers of finger foods: meats, cheeses, vegetables, fruits, hardboiled 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, potatoes  
Sandwiches: cut small, not made with nut butters (alternatives are Sunflower butter or Soy butter)

**A NOTE ABOUT OUR MILK:** ITC is proud to serve children the high-quality milk we get from Mapleline Farms, a Massachusetts dairy that follows strict quality control measures to ensure a superior milk product. Our ability to bring this milk to the center is dependent on the generosity of both Mapleline Farm, who sells us their milk at a discount, and Idylwilde Farms, who coordinates our weekly delivery and allows us to collect our milk there each week.  
Thank you to both of these businesses for the creative collaboration!

### **Special Circumstances**

ITC has a no trans fat rule and will not provide foods containing trans fats when serving center-provided snacks. Please do not send candy, gum, soda, or any foods or butters made from tree nuts or peanuts. For children under 4, we are not able to serve popcorn, pretzels, or fruit leathers or roll-ups. Foods should arrive at school “ready to eat,” with the exception of the warm-up process. EX: Avoid products such as “Easy Mac” that require preparation. 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.

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”.

### **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. 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.

If your child has a food allergy for which an epi-pen has been prescribed, parents are asked to send in their own snack from home. When appropriate, fresh fruits or vegetables from ITC may also be served.

### **Naps and Rest**

Napping routines vary with each age group. In all rooms, we set the stage for rest by dimming the lights, playing soft music, and having teachers available to sit with children as they unwind and rest. Infants and toddlers sleep in cribs or on mats or cots, according to their own schedules and needs. Teachers are respectful of each child’s sleep process and we aim to keep children’s sleep routines consistent with their routines at home, when possible. Infants each sleep in an individual crib that has a firm, properly fitted mattress. ITC provides tightly fitted sheets that do not contain potential entrapment areas. Our cribs conform to the latest recommendations of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. 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 to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). ITC will only put children to sleep on their backs unless otherwise instructed in writing by your pediatrician. State regulations require that children under the age of one not have blankets, stuffed animals, or other soft, padded materials in the crib with them while they are asleep. We encourage families to send in a sleep sack for their infant to keep them warm and snuggled as they nap. Any blankets or sleep sacks will be sent home weekly to be washed.

For older children, parents are invited to send a favorite “snuggly” along with their child’s crib sheet and blanket, which will be sent home weekly to be washed. Preschool children settle in on their mats for a quiet rest time after lunch. State regulations mandate a minimum of 45 minutes of quiet or rest time for each child who is in care over four hours. Children who do not fall asleep 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 by teachers and parents.

### **Toileting**

Diapering and toileting are important parts of our classroom routines. For the youngest children, we utilize diapering times as moments to interact and connect with children. Children are encouraged to be active

participants in the diapering process, which often makes diaper changes a moment that children embrace rather than resist. Parents maintain a supply of diapers (disposable or cloth), wipes, and creams for their child. Cloth diapers and soiled clothing are sent home soiled and un-rinsed, as required by health regulations.

As children get older, "Toilet learning" becomes 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 ultimately successful. Discussion between parents and teachers about timing, attitudes, and methods of training is important so that a consistent effort is made for the child's success. Children are not required to be toilet trained in order to enter any group. Toilets are available in the Mixed Toddler, 2/3's, and preschool classrooms and a changing table is available through the Preschool I year. Accommodations will be made for children through Preschool II or school-age, as well, should the need arise.

### **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 teacher's 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 closely 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.

**Preschooler** - 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 encouraged 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. (Time-out is rarely, if ever, used at ITC)

### Release of Children / End of Day

When it is time to pick your child up, parents are encouraged to spend a few minutes observing, joining their child in an activity and/or chatting with the teachers. However, lingering for too long can cause confusion for children, so parents should plan to depart within 5-10 minutes. Before leaving, parents must sign-out and notify their child's teacher that they are leaving. This is a great time to check your child's mailbox and cubby area to ensure that they have their necessary supplies (extra clothes, diapers, wipes, etc...).

It is important to pick up children on time. Late pick-ups confuse the child, inconvenience the classroom routines, 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 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.

Our staff is responsible for ensuring 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. 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 that includes addresses.

## Field Trips

Formal field trips requiring transportation in cars are not part of ITC's regular program. However, frequent walking trips are planned, with children carted in wagons or on foot to see natural and community surroundings. Parents annually sign a general field trip permission form for off grounds excursions.

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

## 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. If you have questions about something your child would like to bring in from home, check in with the classroom teachers, who will help you decide how to handle each situation individually. As a general guideline, toys with batteries or electronics with screens are not part of the classroom environment and should be avoided as a choice to bring to school if at all possible.

## 4 - Enrollment

### New Families

Before enrolling your child at ITC, interested families visit the center to meet with a member of the administrative team, tour the facilities, see programs in session, and receive printed information.

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.

### Registration

Enrollment is on a yearly basis, beginning in September.

Offers for September enrollment are made beginning in February, after current families complete the re-enrollment process. 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. We do our best to grant parents' requests for schedules, but also reserve the right to waitlist requests for specific days that prohibit even enrollment across the group (EX: Mid-week bulges in enrollment). After current families are placed, all remaining spaces are filled from the general waiting list and are then opened to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### 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 ease of daily routines, we encourage arrival times before 10 AM for infants and toddlers and before 9 AM for 2/3's and preschoolers. Similarly, arrivals or departures are discouraged between 1-3 PM for all ages.

Parents should call when children will be late or not attend as scheduled. All schedules are assumed to be year-long

(EX: School year or Full year option). School-age children's schedules are for when the Acton-Boxborough schools are open. Care on planned 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.

### **Summer Enrollment**

Families may elect to enroll a child for a full year, the school year (September-June), or School year + 3 weeks of summer. 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 sometime in the late spring. If space is available, families who have signed up for the school year option may also reserve time in the summer, once all the full year and school year + 3 families are placed. We offer a full day summer program for school age children as well. The summer program is usually 7 weeks, beginning in late June. The Center is closed for two weeks in August, as we transition into the new school year.

### **Terms of Enrollment**

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.
- Changes to the number of weeks reserved will incur a fee and the return of any discount given.
- Time may be dropped, with a minimum 5 months' notice unless we are able to give that time to another family.

### **Ending your 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, regardless of attendance. 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 - 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.

### **Scheduled Closings**

The Center is closed the following holidays: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Patriots' Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. The Center is also closed two (2) weeks in August (before the start of the new school year), the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, and two (2) Staff Development Days (one Friday in March and one Friday in June).

## Emergency Closings

### *Weather Emergencies*

ITC typically follows the Acton public school closures for poor weather conditions. Parents will be notified via e-mail by 6:00 AM if the Center will be closed. If conditions are expected to 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 and safe access to critical building exits. Please check your e-mail 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 e-mail or telephone.

### *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 65F 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.

## 6 - Health and Safety

### **Consultant**

ITC is fortunate to have the consultation services of pediatric physician, Dr. Chris Cooper of Acton Medical Associates. 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**

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 which include the date in which the child was last at the center, extent of exposure, and symptoms for which to watch. 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). In addition, if a child is not well enough to participate in all the activities of the group, including outdoor play, he/she should not be at the center. 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.

### **Handwashing**

As recommended by the Massachusetts Office of Early Education and Care, in an attempt to reduce the spread of germs, we ask that parents take a few minutes to wash their child's hands upon arrival in the classroom every day.

### **Emergency Care**

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 call an ambulance and have the child transported to Emerson Hospital. All injuries requiring first aid will be recorded on an Injury Report. A copy should be signed by parents at pickup. Parents may request a copy of the injury report, if desired. All teachers and administrators receive a First Aid certification every two years in Early Childhood Health and Safety and annual certification in CPR.

### Sunscreen and Insect Repellents

During warmer months when children are spending a great deal of time outdoors, ITC encourages the use of sunscreen and insect repellent. Parents who want their children to start the day with sunscreen and/or repellent should apply it before coming to the Center, or upon arrival (bottles available in every classroom). Teachers will re-apply sunscreen and repellent as necessary during the day. As recommended by Dr. Chris Cooper, our consulting physician at Acton Medical, ITC will provide “Waterbabies” (sunscreen), “Natrapel” no DEET (repellent) or “Off” 7% DEET (repellent) if requested, and “Tick Guard” (repellent). All repellents will be applied to hats clothing instead of skin. If desired, parents are able to send in another sunscreen or repellent from home, labeled with their child’s name, for teachers to apply. All sunscreen and/or repellents (from home or those provided by ITC) require written authorization from parents.

As recommended by Dr. Cooper, we will wash off these lotions regularly in order to avoid the possible negative effects of cumulative absorption.

Families who use ITC’s supply of sunscreen or repellent are asked to contribute \$3.00 per season to help defray the expenses incurred.

### Immunization

Every 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. Each child must be immunized against the following and all others as specified by the Department of Public Health prior to entry at ITC:

<b>diphtheria</b>	<b>pertussis</b>	<b>tetanus (DPT)</b>
<b>polio myelitis (IPV)</b>	<b>Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)</b>	<b>Hepatitis B</b>
<b>Varicella vaccine or physician-certified chicken pox vaccine (19 months or older)</b>	<b>Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib)</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. 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.

Parents must submit documentation of an annual physical exam and immunizations to the Center annually. 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.

### 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 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 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.

### **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. Children in all other groups will be helped to brush their teeth using water and a toothbrush. ITC will provide each child with a labeled and dated soft bristle toothbrush that 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. If parents do not wish to have their child's teeth brushed during their time at ITC, they can provide a written request stating so.

### **Pesticide Use**

Pesticides can pose risks to people and the environment. It is ITC's policy 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**

All ITC staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. 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 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 evacuation of ITC, the administrator in charge will determine whether evacuation or sheltering in place is the appropriate response. Our building is alarmed and equipped with smoke and heat detectors and 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. 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. 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 - Money Matters**

Each family reserves a schedule based on a certain number of hours per week. A minimum tuition equal to eight (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 at the beginning of each school year.

ITC reserves the right to change tuition rates with thirty (30) days' notice. Tuition is prepaid one (1) month in advance. Invoices are mailed on the 10th of the month and are due in full on the 20th of that same month. Payments accepted via personal or bank checks only. The tuition invoices should be kept as receipts, as ITC does not automatically provide an annual summary of childcare costs for tax returns.

Requests for special payment plans may be made in advance to the Director. Special payment plans must be renewed each year.

### **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.

### **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, other local funds may be available to families the year before kindergarten if the family meets income guidelines. Information is available from the Director.

## School-Age Fees

School-age children who are enrolled for regular care after school during the school year are charged tuition for all scheduled care. Reservations may be made for additional days when the public schools are closed but we are open. Families are billed separately in advance and are accountable for tuition for reserved time regardless of attendance.

## 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 childcare benefit program offered by their employers. Policies for verification of childcare 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.

## 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** - 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 to cover administrative fees.
- **Returned Check** - 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.
- **Independent School Application Forms** - 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** - A materials fee of \$5 per child is charged monthly.
- **Staff Development Day** - This monthly fee of \$7.50 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** - A fee of \$25 will be charged if a family requests more than two (2) schedule changes in a school year.

## 8 - Parent Involvement

At ITC we value parent partnerships and recognize that childcare is a shared process. We encourage parents to

become involved as they are able. We offer a variety of opportunities for parent involvement throughout the year:

- **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 (family potlucks, the ITC auction, etc.)
- **Organizational function** - An adult-only evening Open House is held annually in fall to familiarize parents with the overall program, personnel, and 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. Monthly ITC Board of Trustees meetings are open to all.
- **Contributed time, goods, money, and services** - As a non-profit center, ITC relies on donations of money, goods, and time to retain the highest quality program. Tuition dollars alone do not cover the full cost of our program. Parents are encouraged to participate in fundraisers, donate time to serve on a committee, help with classroom projects, and/or serve on our Board of Trustees.
- **Visit** - 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 (September 1 to October 31 annually). 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, though parents are welcome to request a meeting at any time. Conferences are a great time for parents and teachers to connect (without the presence of their child or siblings) to discuss their child's activities and participation in the classroom. Teachers prepare a written narrative which encompasses developmental domains and parents are given an additional opportunity to ask questions and understand their child's experience from the teacher's perspective.

We will provide a translator in a home language if that enables family members to better participate in a conference with a Teacher. When parents are separated or divorced, two conferences may be arranged, if preferred. 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.

### Communication

At ITC we value the partnership between home and school and are continually seeking ways to communicate our mission, values, and daily happenings:

- Log stories are written every afternoon in each group, individually for infants and by group for the toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children. Group log stories are emailed to families daily and often include pictures as well as anecdotes about the day's events
- Each family has a mailbox for daily memos, notes, "take-homes," newsletters, and art work
- Newsletters are published 10 times a year
- The Faith LeBaron Parenting Lending Library located in the front office, maintains many books and reprints on child development and parenting

- Bulletin boards announce on-going and special events and display important information about curriculum, child development and the center
- Children’s work is regularly displayed throughout the center

Of course, nothing can replace direct communication and we make every effort to put aside time to speak with families daily. Daily chats build connection between parents and teachers, support continuity of care for children, and help parents have a deeper understanding of their child’s time away from home. If a parent is not regularly at the center, phone calls can easily be arranged in order to maintain frequent communication. Emails, too, are handy to get a conversation started.

### **Suggestions and Concerns**

From time to time a concern or problem may arise which requires special attention or further discussion. Please feel free to approach a Lead Teacher, the Program Coordinator, or the 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 survey is distributed to parents to evaluate the program. The results of this survey help guide the year ahead and reflect on best practices. Participation is voluntary and anonymous.

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 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 access to their child’s records upon written request. Record requests are 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—ITC 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.

## Questions

Do you still have questions? Stop by the office, email, or call. We are happy to help!

- Cindy Heaney, Director: [cheaney@itcacton.org](mailto:cheaney@itcacton.org)
- Kathy Linnane, Assistant Director and Preschool Program Coordinator: [klinnane@itcacton.org](mailto:klinnane@itcacton.org)
- Karen Paskiewicz, Infant Toddler Program Coordinator: [kpaskiewicz@itcacton.org](mailto:kpaskiewicz@itcacton.org)

## Reference - 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/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 biting situations can be managed in a group program, with appropriate support. 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 temporarily while a plan of action is developed. Therapeutic intervention may also be recommended in extreme cases.

### **Bumps**

Teachers will let parents know immediately if any unusual incidents occur while their child is at the Center, including treatment that was provided. 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.

### **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.

### **Communicable diseases (i.e. 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. If a child contracts the disease, he/she may return to the Center after the incubation period, 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

<b>Diarrhea</b>	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 un-rinsed 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.
<b>Ear infections</b>	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.
<b>Fever</b>	<p>A child with a temperature of 100.4F when taken inside the ear or mouth or an axillary temperature of 99F 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 acetaminophen, 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 home if he/she is very uncomfortable.</p> <p>A child who develops a fever of 100.4F (rectal or oral), or 99F (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 101F 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.</p>
<b>Fifth Disease</b>	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.
<b>HIB Disease</b>	Haemophilus influenzae 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 childcare can be exposed to this bacterial disease.
<b>Impetigo</b>	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.
<b>Influenza</b>	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 childcare setting.
<b>Insect bites</b>	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 (see section on sunscreen and insect repellants for more information).
<b>Lice</b>	<p>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.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children with nits and lice will be sent home for treatment with shampoo and removal of all nits and lice.</li> <li>2. Children may return to ITC after treatment and removal of all lice and all nits.</li> <li>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.)</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>
<b>Pneumonia</b>	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

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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 100.4F, 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). 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, so once diagnosed please inform staff so other parents may be notified. 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**

If your child is sensitive to the sun, please notify the staff, 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 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.

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