



Family Handbook 2023-2024

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The Peaks Island Children's Workshop nurtures the growth and development of happy, healthy children in a creative learning environment, within our families and our community.

The Workshop is licensed by the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services as a Small Childcare Center

The Workshop is currently qualified as a Step 4 on Maine's Quality for ME rating scale. The state of Maine is about to switch to a new system and when it does, any new ratings will be communicated.

The Workshop is a partner site of the 5-2-1-0 Let's Go Program.

The Workshop is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment and prohibits discrimination in employment and enrollment on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, familial status, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The Workshop is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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History and Purpose

The Peaks Island Children's Workshop, formerly known as The Peaks Island Child Development Center, was established in 1972 by a group of concerned citizens to provide comprehensive and developmental child-care to families on Peaks Island. The Workshop is family and community oriented and encourages involvement of both groups in the life of the center. Along with its child care programs, The Workshop provides resource and referral to mainland resources and works cooperatively with other island services organizations, especially the Peaks Island Elementary School. The Workshop's basic goal is support for the positive growth and development of young children and their families.

Our Building

The Peaks Island Child Development Center was originally housed in the basement of St. Christopher's Parish Hall on Central Avenue as part of Catholic Charities of Maine. In 1991, the staff and Advisory Board recognized the need for a more adaptable and environmentally friendly facility and the community responded with enthusiasm and support. The Peaks Island Children's Workshop was incorporated as a community non-profit group to facilitate this project and \$400,000 was raised to ensure that island children have a responsive childcare environment. On October 25, 1995, the program was moved into the current facility. In November of 2000, The Workshop separated from Catholic Charities of Maine and named the center the Peaks Island Children's Workshop. The building, like the program, is child centered.

Funding

Peaks Island Children's Workshop is a private, non-profit agency. Funds to operate the program come from grants, parent fees, individual contributions, and fundraising. Families may be eligible for vouchers through DHHS, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or scholarships funded by the Peaks Island Children's Workshop fundraising efforts.

Program Philosophy

It is the philosophy of the Workshop that children grow and learn as they experience events in their environment and become more aware of their own abilities to create, change, and evaluate; and that they learn by doing. As such, staff create an environment rich in childhood experiences based on children's developmental needs. Emphasis is placed on each child's ability to make independent choices and to form relationships in work and play. The Workshop tries to incorporate all the unique aspects of an island by balancing the daily program with exploration of the community and honoring our island heritage.

The Workshop is a blended approach of school readiness and play based learning. Staff base much of their instruction and activities on child observations. Any information gathered about a child will only be shared within the Workshop, and parents are given full access to that body of information.

Inclusion

Peaks Island Children's Workshop believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. Every reasonable accommodation will be made to encourage full and active participation of all children in the program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

English Language Learners

Peaks Island Children's Workshop welcomes families of all backgrounds. The primary language in our program is English. If you communicate more comfortably in another language, please let the Director know. We will make every reasonable effort to make our resources and communications accessible to you in your home language. We will work with families to incorporate and celebrate every background, language, and culture in our program.

Goals

- To provide a safe and nurturing environment for young children
- To promote a positive self-concept in children and to foster all areas of each child's development
- To provide an environment where children are active learners, make choices, have responsibility for their actions, understand limits
- To provide an environment where problem solving is encouraged, both individually and as a group
- To implement a full program of staff development and training through periodic workshops and staff supervision and evaluation
- To provide an environment that fosters trust, responsibility, and communication

In order to do this, we stress the value of family-center communication, and work to build a trusting relationship among children, families, and staff.

The Workshop is currently a Level 4 on the Maine Roads to Quality Rating and Improvement System which is a state-wide organization dedicated to training and promoting quality child care. As of the writing of this handbook, Maine is undergoing a transition to a new quality rating system. When a new rating is given to the Workshop, families will be informed.

Due to the Workshop's high rating, parents can enter the number #0248 on Maine's State Income Tax Return to apply for a double tax credit.

Programs

The Workshop provides a caring, nurturing, developmentally appropriate multi-age experience for young children.

Infants/Toddlers: This year-round program is for children ages 6 weeks to 2.5 years.

Preschool: This program offers a year-round developmental program to children ages 2.5 to 4.

Pre-K Aftercare: This program offers aftercare for Workshop alumni in the Pre-K program at Peaks Island Elementary school, according to capacity limits.

Each child that attends the Workshop has the right to the following:

- Right to be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.
- Right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards as laid out by DHHS.
- Right to be provided care services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex, or family composition.

- Right to be treated with dignity, consideration, and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices.
- Right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that child in conjunction with community or state agencies.
- Right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
- Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to policies and practices.

Our Staff

The Preschool Teacher is responsible for assessment, development, evaluation, and curriculum designed around Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards to help prepare children for pre-kindergarten.

The Infant/Toddler Teacher is responsible for assessment, development, evaluation, and curriculum of the Infant/Toddler classroom designed around Infant and Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards.

The Assistant Teacher is responsible for implementing the goals of the program on a daily basis through a developmental, early childhood environment and curriculum which meets the changing needs of children and their families.

The Teacher's Aide is responsible for assisting teaching staff in implementing curriculum, providing a warm and supportive environment for the children, and maintaining a clean and safe building.

The Executive Director is responsible for records, billing, payroll, contractual obligations, funding, community involvement, adequate staffing, program and staff evaluations, policy and procedure as well as assisting teachers in the classroom. The Executive Director also upholds the ins and outs of early childhood development, follows current state and federal legislation and advocates for young children and child care programs.

Staff work together as a team and many times roles and responsibilities overlap. The Workshop is committed to open communication among staff, children, parents, and community and to the provision of a safe, warm, and nurturing environment for young children.

Hours and Schedule

The Peaks Island Children's Workshop is open from 8 AM-5PM. Parents are asked to drop their children off by 9am so that they are able to participate in scheduled morning activities.

We understand that families are busy and that appointments and opportunities arise that may interrupt the normal school day, and are happy to accommodate these within reason.

If a child will miss all or some of a scheduled day, please let your child's teacher or the director know as soon as possible.

If a child cannot be dropped off before our lunch time, we ask that the child be kept out of school for the remainder of the day, as the flow of the day will be off for that child.

Only in rare exceptions can we accommodate a child leaving the Workshop and returning later in the day (for an appointment or similar), as we find the transition to be difficult.

We ask that parents be mindful of our schedule when making plans to pick up children outside of designated pick up times, and avoid lunch time (11:45-12:20ish); nap times (12:30-2:30ish), and snack times (9:30-10; 3-3:30); as our program is so small and we work hard to include and accommodate all children in all parts of our day.

State licensing regulations limit the number of children who may be in attendance at any given time to 12 children. At the time of enrollment, a schedule of days and hours will be set for your child and parents are asked to adhere to these hours. This is particularly important in a multi-aged program with many transitions during the course of a day. Since staff schedules are based on parent schedules, parents will be billed for hours reserved for their child whether the child attends or not. If a child is here on hours not regularly scheduled parents will be billed for those hours in addition to their regular schedule. If needs change, the Director will work to accommodate any necessary schedule changes based on availability in the child's classroom.

Below is the schedule for a typical day. Specific activities, based on the current curriculum and teacher observation of child interests, are built into the morning and afternoon periods.

Sample Daily Schedule

8:00-9:00	Arrival/Independent activities
9:00	Circle time
9:30	Morning Snack
10:00	Independent activities/structured activity Indoors/Outdoors
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Nap/rest time
2:30	Independent activities
3:15	Afternoon snack
3:30-5:00	Independent activities/staff led activity or project Indoors/Outdoors
5	Final parent pick-up

Waiting List

A completed Waiting List Application must be submitted to the Peaks Island Children's Workshop to apply for admission, extra hours or added days. When the application is received, the child will be placed on the official waiting list. Parents should see Director for application and Waiting List Policies and Procedure.

The application may be submitted via

- Email at director@peaksislandchidlrensworkshop.org
- Snail mail to PO Box 80, Peaks Island, ME 04108
- Hand delivered to 71 Herman Avenue

Enrollment Procedures

When an opening becomes available, an email is sent to families with the child's start date, weekly schedule, and Enrolled Session Fee amount. Parents then have 48 hours, or two business days, to accept or refuse this opening. If a response is not received within this time period, the child will automatically be removed from the wait list. If a delay in enrollment is needed, this delay can be for no longer than two weeks from initial start date. Any additional time will result in either an Enrollment Session Fee charge equal to the number of weeks enrollment is delayed or placement at the bottom of the current wait list.

Once a start date is agreed upon, an intake meeting where the Director and parents discuss the program, the child's interests, goals, and any other helpful information regarding the child or household will be scheduled. At this initial meeting, parents will also be asked to schedule a time between 30 - 45 minutes, depending on the age, for their child to spend alone with teachers and students if schedules allow.

Additional forms will be discussed at this time and given to parents to take home and complete. Before admission, a physical exam, including an immunization history, is required. Parents must complete and return all enrollment forms prior to the child's first day.

All enrollment forms and any other form in your child's personal file, including incident reports, can be accessed at any time. Please contact the Director for more information on how to obtain your child's file or receive a copy of a specific form.

Changes in Enrollment Agreement, Including Withdrawal from Enrollment

All families are required to provide the Director with two calendar weeks' prior written notice (by letter or email) of any change they wish to make to their child's enrollment schedule, including, without limitation, any (1) increase or decrease in the number of sessions for which their child is enrolled within a program or (2) withdrawal of their child from one or more programs. For any family failing to provide two weeks' written notice when decreasing the number of sessions for which their child is enrolled or when withdrawing altogether, the Workshop will charge such family the Enrolled Session Fee for a period equal to either two calendar weeks or the time for which the requisite notice was lacking, if such period is fewer than fourteen calendar days.

Weekly Fee Schedule for Infant, Toddler and Preschool Programs

For the Infant, Toddler and Preschool Programs, the Workshop offers the following schedule options for each day:

Third Day Session:	7:55 am – 12:30 pm*	(4-1/2 hours)
Two-Thirds Day Session:	7:55 am – 2:45 pm*	(6-1/2 hours)
Full Day Session:	7:55 am – 5:00 pm*	(9 hours)

Children may be dropped off anytime between 7:55 and 8:30am for the beginning of the day.

Using the applicable table below, the weekly fee is based on the total number of hours for all combined selected sessions per week:

Infant Program		Toddler Program		Preschool Program	
Hours	Rates**	Hours	Rates**	Hours	Rates**
5-9	\$109.00	5-9	\$98.00	5-9	\$90.00
10-14	\$145.00	10-14	\$132.00	10-14	\$121.00
15-19	\$181.00	15-19	\$164.00	15-19	\$152.00
20-24	\$217.00	20-24	\$197.00	20-24	\$182.00
25-29	\$252.00	25-29	\$229.00	25-29	\$213.00
30-34	\$288.00	30-34	\$262.00	30-34	\$243.00
35-39	\$307.00	35-39	\$279.00	35-39	\$259.00
40-45	\$327.00	40-45	\$297.00	40-45	\$275.00

****Note:** For families receiving a subsidy through the Maine Department of Health and Human Services' ("DHHS") Child Care Subsidy Program, the Workshop charges either (1) the "Market Rate" for Cumberland County as defined by DHHS or (2) the tuition rate set forth above for the total number of hours, whichever is less.

Fee Policies

The Workshop's Board of Directors reviews the operating budget each fall to determine the appropriate tuition for infants, toddlers, and preschool age children. Accordingly, families should expect to receive revised Fee Schedules (along with any changes to these Enrollment, Tuition and Collection Policies) at least once per year, usually in January.

Timing of Payments; Method of Payments

The Enrolled Session Fee is due and must be received by the Workshop on or before each Friday in advance of and for the immediately following week-long period. Any Additional Session Fee(s), see below, will be due on the next Friday following the week in which such Additional Session Fee(s) was incurred.

We use a management application called Brightwheel, which has many functions, including billing.

Delinquent Payments

If an outstanding balance exists on a family's account, the balance must be paid in full in order for the child(ren) of such family to attend the next scheduled program day. Absent specific and express approval from the the Workshop Board of Directors, Workshop staff members are not authorized to allow the child(ren) to attend any Workshop program if such balance remains unpaid.

Families will be notified and credit cards on file will be charged if payments are more than two weeks late. Families will be notified via email before charged. There will be a \$10 late charge added to the payment for every two weeks the payment is delinquent.

Fee Payments Required for Missed Sessions, Additional Sessions and Closings

The Enrolled Session Fee will not be reduced if a child does not attend all of the sessions for which he or she is enrolled. If an enrolled child attends the applicable program in any given week during one or more sessions that are in addition to or an extension of the sessions for which the child is enrolled, the family will be charged an Additional Session Fee of \$10 per added hour. All additional sessions will need a minimum of 24-hour pre-approval from Director. Due to the specific nature of infants and toddlers, any additional session that includes nap time will not be approved if the child has never napped at the program.

For avoidance of doubt, the Workshop does not allow “swapping out” of enrolled sessions with additional sessions: For children who attend one or more additional sessions in a given week but do not attend all of their enrolled sessions in such week, families are nevertheless required to pay the Enrolled Session Fee plus any Additional Session Fee.

When the Workshop is closed on legal holidays, scheduled breaks (Thanksgiving days, winter break, summer break,) announced in-service staff training days, or as a result of inclement weather (with inclement weather closures announced by the Workshop in accordance with its then-current policy), water/electrical or heat problems, lack of appropriate staffing to maintain staff/child ratios, or illness & Covid, families will be charged if their child is enrolled on those particular days. (Note: In line with industry practice, the Workshop charges for such days because it is obligated to continue to pay personnel, building and similar costs, regardless of whether the facility is closed.)

Late Pickup Fees

Each child must be picked up prior to the end of the session for which the child is enrolled. If a parent or authorized pick-up person is more than 5 minutes late (without pre-approval of a member of staff) the family may be charged a Late-Pickup surcharge of \$15.00 and an additional \$15.00 for every 15 minutes that they are late after that. The Workshop understands that delays happen at Casco Bay Lines so if a parent or authorized pick-up person is on a 12:15pm, 2:15pm, or 4:30pm boat that is running late; they will receive a 15 min grace period before being charged. The Workshop asks that parents call staff to inform them of a delay. If a parent or authorized pick-up person notifies staff that they will be more than 15 minutes late, even with pre-approval, the family will be charged as if they added an Additional Session.

After 5:00 pm: If a parent or authorized pick-up person arrives after 5:00pm (without pre-approval of a member of Workshop staff), the family will be charged a late-pickup surcharge of \$15.00. After 5:05pm, the family will be charged \$1.00 for each additional minute along with the late-pickup surcharge of \$15.00. If the child has not been picked up by 5:15 pm, individuals listed on the emergency contact form will be called. If no emergency contacts can be reached by 5:45pm, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services will be contacted.

If a child is late being picked up three times or more a month, that child will be at risk of losing their childcare.

Sibling Discounts

For families with two (2) or more children enrolled in the Infant/Toddler or Preschool Program, the Workshop designates the oldest child the “Primary Enrollee,” and offers a 10% discount on the Enrolled Session Fee of the Primary Enrollee.

These sibling discount offers do not apply to “Additional Session Fees” or “Late Fees”. Also, families receiving childcare subsidy for their Enrolled Session Fees through DHHS, CDBG or the Workshop scholarship fund are ineligible to receive any of the foregoing discounts, as they are already benefiting from a discount.

Scholarship Programs

The Workshop recognizes that meeting the cost of quality childcare can be challenging for families and is committed to helping eligible families reduce the cost of tuition through scholarships.

To be eligible for the Workshop’s scholarship program for a particular child, a family must meet each of the following criteria:

- The family’s household income must be at or below the most current “Low” income limit as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for Portland, Maine
- The family must have submitted a completed application for a childcare subsidy to Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program, and either (1) such application must be in process or (2) the family must have received an express denial from Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program (with no changes in the family’s income, family size, or in either parent’s employment occurring since receipt of such denial).
- The family must not be receiving a childcare subsidy through Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program or from any other organization

To be eligible for a scholarship through the CDBG, a family must meet each of the following criteria:

- The family’s household income must be at or below the current “Moderate” income limit as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for Portland, Maine
- The family must have submitted a completed application for a childcare subsidy to Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program, and (1) such application must be in process, (2) the family received only partial funding from Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program or (3) the family must have received an express denial from Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program (with no changes in the family’s income, family size, or in either parent’s employment occurring since receipt of such denial).

In order to be considered for a scholarship, eligible families must complete either Workshop Scholarship Program Application or the CDBG Application in its entirety and return it to the Director by the deadline. Accordingly, parents are encouraged to read through the entire Workshop Scholarship Program Guidelines and CDBG Applications immediately upon receipt and note all requirements, including the need to submit income verifications forms and documentation concerning Maine’s Child Care Subsidy Program. Please ask the Director for specific dates as applications will not be considered after the deadline. Scholarship availability varies.

Holidays and Closed Dates 2023-2024

The Workshop is closed for legal holidays, two to four floating staff training days, the public-school winter break in December, and a summer break in July. Parents are notified in advance of the floating staff training days and reminders are posted for holidays and shutdown weeks. Parents are expected to pay for holidays and breaks.

September 4 th	Labor Day
October 9 th	Indigenous Peoples' Day
November 10 th	Veteran's Day
November 22 th	Close at 12:30pm
November 23 rd – 24 th	Thanksgiving
December 25 th – January 1 st	Winter Break
January 15 th	MLK Day
February 19 th	Presidents' Day
April 15 th	Patriots' Day
May 27 th	Memorial Day
June 19 th	Juneteenth
July 1 st – July 5 th	Summer Break
August 29 th - 30 th	Staff in-service

Inclement Weather/ Unforeseeable Closures

Because the Workshop is staffed mainly by islanders, we are often able to stay open even if Portland Public Schools are closed. If we have to close or delay an opening due to inclement weather, plumbing, electrical or other unforeseen events, staff will text or email parents as soon as possible to inform them of the closure or late start.

We make every effort to stay open, and close only when it is necessary. In the case of loss of electricity with no promise of a relatively quick restoration, we must close the Workshop, as we need to maintain temperature conditions and other DHHS licensing regulations for our facility.

Immunization Policy

Immunization records are a requirement of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A copy of a child's immunization record must be provided during the enrollment process for a child to attend the Workshop. As of September 1, 2021, immunizations are mandatory, unless medically exempt, and each child must remain up to date on their immunizations. Updated records are requested by the Director at the start of every new school year and will be checked against Maine's Daycare Immunization Standards (<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/documents/Childcare%20Immunization%20Standards.pdf>) .

Any child who is not up to date on their immunizations at the start of the school year will be asked to produce a written plan, including timeline, from their doctor outlining how they will become current. A child will not be able to return to care until this plan is given to the Director.

Any child that meets the requirements of a medical exemption will need to have their medical provider complete the Request for Medical Exemption from Mandatory Immunization ChildCare Form. The director has copies of this form or it can be found at <https://www.maineaap.org/providers/vaccine-info-resources>. Only a medical doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.), nurse practitioner (N.P.), or a physician's assistant (P.A.) can complete this form.

A record of all students who are not immunized due to medical reasons will be kept in the office and they shall be excluded from school during an outbreak of the vaccine-preventable disease for which the student is not immunized. The exclusion will be for the danger period as defined by state rule.

Illness Policy

In the event of illness, parents will be notified immediately and the child should be removed from the Workshop as soon as possible. The Peaks Island Children's Workshop reserves the right to send home any child who becomes or appears ill.

Children are not allowed at the Workshop with any of the following symptoms or diseases:

- Fever of 100 or higher (Must be fever and fever reducer free for 24 hrs)
- Severe cold, cough and/or excessive drainage or discoloration from the nose
- Discolored drainage from the eye and/or red eye (Must remain at home for 24 hours after medication in cases of diagnosed conjunctivitis.)
- Suspicious rash or rash with fluid (Must remain at home for 24 hours after medication for impetigo.)
- Chicken Pox (Must remain at home for 7 days from the onset of the rash or until all sores are dry.)
- Suspicious lesions and open or draining sores (Must stay home until sores are dried up)
- Diarrhea (Diarrhea has been reported in some children with Covid19 so a child will be sent home after first loose, watery stool. Must stay home for 24 hours after last loose stool)
- Vomiting (Must stay home for 24 hours after the last time the child vomited)
- Strep Throat (Child with diagnosed strep throat must remain at home for 24 hours after start of medication.)
- Head Lice (Appropriate treatment and removal of all nits required before returning to the Workshop.) The Workshop is a nit free environment and will conduct lice checks upon infected person's return.
- Meningitis (Must remain at home until given written consent by doctor to return)
- Any condition considered contagious requires medical advice before the person is readmitted to the Workshop.
- **Please remember to be attentive to Covid-19 symptoms. See the Covid-19 section for more information.**

In cases where a child is not technically excludable based on the above criteria, staff will make their best judgment about whether or not a child is able to fully participate in and enjoy their day.

We understand that keeping a child home from the Workshop can often mean a significant disruption in your day, and do not take any decision lightly. We appreciate your understanding, especially as we work together to limit the spread of infections.

Covid19

We remain aware of an attentive to Covid-19 and all highly infectious diseases. Following CDC guidance, and the guidance of our health consultant, anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 must not attend the Workshop for at least 5 days.

- If your child tests positive for Covid and has no symptoms, that is their “day 0.”
- If your child tests positive for Covid and HAS symptoms, the first day of their symptoms is their “Day 0.”
- Your child must not attend the Workshop for their days 0-5. On day 5, please test your child again. If they test negative, they may return to the Workshop on day 6.
- If they test positive, please keep them home until they test negative, or until day 10.
- We understand that illnesses like Covid that require long absences are significant challenges, but urge families to test if they come into close contact with a known positive case or feel sick. Keeping each other safe and healthy is a priority.

Medication Policy

If it is necessary for a child to take medicine while at the Workshop, a parent must first fill out the Workshop’s Medication Administration Authorization forms and talk with the Director about last dose, administration, and side-effects. Prescription medication must be given to the Director in the original container with prescription label still intact and with any special instructions written by the child’s doctor. The Workshop requires parents to administer the first dose to monitor for any adverse reactions and staff will not give a medication that has not been first given at home.

Over the counter (OTC) medication, homeopathic and herbal medicines can be given to a child only with a written order from a licensed health care professional and written permission from a parent. These medications must be in a child-resistant container and come with a label that lists medication name, ingredients, directions, dosage, and warnings.

In the case of “as needed” or emergency medications, the Workshop needs specific instructions from a health care professional for when a medication should be administered, frequency and when to discontinue and/or seek further medical care. Verbal or telephone instructions to give a medication will be accepted only for medications that have been given before but must be immediately followed by written documentation.

The Workshop does not administer cold medicine, narcotics or off-label, folk remedies.

Medication will NOT be administered if:

- Medication Administration Authorization forms are not completed
- There is no prescription label or it is partially covered
- Medicine does not come in original container
- Parent has not administered first dose
- There is no written order from licensed health professional for OTC, homeopathic or herbal medications

For more information, contact the Director for a copy of the Workshop's Medication Administration Policies and Procedure.

Communicable Diseases

Parents will be notified of any known disease in the community so they can check for symptoms. Names will not be used. A chart of the important facts regarding a communicable disease is kept at the center.

Nutrition

Parents must pack a lunch each day in accordance with current nutrition policy. Parents of infants will be notified by the child's teacher when the child's eating schedule has become uniform enough that a lunch is necessary.

The Workshop participates in the 5-2-1-0 Let's Go! Program. The program emphasizes establishing healthy nutritional patterns, exposing children to a variety of foods, increasing awareness of nutritional principles, providing children with experiences that reinforce nutritional principles, and the serving of nutritionally sound and attractive meals. Parents are asked to adhere to this policy when preparing lunches to bring to the center.

Please note that staff will send back any uneaten portion of a child's lunch so that families can better understand what a child is and is not eating.

5-2-10 Policy

The Peaks Island Children's Workshop supports healthy food choices by:

- Gently encouraging children to try fruits and vegetables and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
- Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating fruits and vegetables in the presence of children.
- Observing and supporting hunger and fullness cues.
- Providing opportunities for nutrition education for parents and staff.
- During celebrations and holiday parties, the Workshop will limit unhealthy foods and offer fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods instead.
- Not using food as a reward.

Providing good nutrition for a child is a partnership. The Peaks Island Children's Workshop asks for parent's support:

- For packed lunches, please include fruits and/or vegetables.
- For celebrations and holiday parties, limit unhealthy foods and provide healthy food options (especially fruits and vegetables) instead.

Also in keeping with the 5-2-1-0 Program, The Peaks Island Children's Workshop understands that TV and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others, which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development. Therefore, screen time is restricted by:

- Allowing a maximum of 30 minutes total per week of educational and age-appropriate screen time for preschoolers (YouTube videos about current curriculum).
- Having zero screen time for children under the age of two.

The Peaks Island Children's Workshop understands that active play is important for healthy growth and development of young children. Because of this:

- If weather is permissible, all children will receive at least 60 minutes of outdoor play.
- When weather is NOT permissible, children will receive at least 60 minutes of indoor gross motor activity (active play). Indoor "active play" activities will include: dancing, matt tumbling, toddler-related active play (e.g. Duck Duck Goose, Ring around Rosy, etc.)
- Active play time will never be withheld as a punishment unless a child is a danger to themselves or others
- Physical activity will be used as a reward.
- At least one provider will join the children in active play daily.
- Opportunities for physical activity education for parents and staff will be provided.

The Peaks Island Children's Workshop understands the importance of providing age-appropriate food and beverages and because of this:

- If a mother wishes to breastfeed exclusively, the program will make every effort to provide breast milk to the child and supplement only when breast milk is gone.
- The Workshop will continue supporting families who are breastfeeding beyond 12 months.
- The Workshop will follow the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and not serve any food or drink other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula in a bottle unless medically necessary.
- Water will be clearly visible and available to the children at all times (indoors and outdoors).
- There will be no juice, soda, sugar-sweetened drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks served at the Workshop.
- There will be no foods high in sugar or salt such as potato chips, candy, cookies, or cake served at the Workshop.

The Peaks Island Children's Workshop is committed to the health and nutrition of all children and recognizes the importance of the staff as positive role models for the children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore:

- Staff will not drink soda and sugary beverages in front of the children in their care.
- During functions or meetings at the center, only water or milk will be served.
- Sugary beverages will not be permitted during meetings. This includes 100% juice, juice cocktail, soda, sports or energy drinks and lemonade.

If there are dietary concerns or restrictions please inform the director immediately and we can make arrangements.

The monthly menu is posted on the Parent Bulletin Board located in the entrance way. The current meal schedule is as follows, with some variation allowed for children's needs:

Morning Snack: 9:30 AM Lunch: 12:00 PM Snack: 3:15 PM

Breastfeeding Policy

Breastfeeding has been shown to be the best form of infant nutrition, providing a multitude of health benefits to both infant and mother. The Workshop is committed to supporting breastfeeding mothers. Due to this, the Workshop has adopted the following policy:

Breastfeeding mothers are provided a place to breastfeed or pump their milk. Breastfeeding mothers are provided a private and clean place to breastfeed their babies or pump their milk. This area has an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.

A refrigerator will be made available for storage of pumped breastmilk. Breastfeeding mothers may store their pumped breast milk in the program's refrigerator or freezer. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.

Sensitivity is shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. The Workshop is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and afternoon, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless first discussed with mother.

Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped.

Staff shall be trained in handling human milk. Staff is trained in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers.

Written notification: breastfeeding beyond 12 months. In line with our food programs and our support of breastfeeding mothers, a written statement from the child's caregiver is requested (to be stored in the child's folder) for continuing breastmilk beyond 12 months.

Guidance

Peaks Island Children's Workshop is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. The program works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the Workshop's community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help

children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. The Workshop encourages children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions. Children are taught that it is the teacher's job to keep them safe and are reminded of it frequently when unsafe behavior is exhibited.

The Workshop will only use constructive methods of guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, interventions such as:

- Conflict resolution,
- Encouraging the use of language skills,
- Redirecting,
- Providing choices,
- Using praise or positive reinforcement,
- Recognizing strengths,
- Allowing children to take supervised breaks away from the group when needed,
- Reminding children of expectations using positive, clear language,
- Teaching self-regulation,
- Modeling appropriate behavior, and
- Allowing for individual differences

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Each student at the Workshop has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, staff will intervene immediately to protect all of the children. The Workshop's usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. Children who are showing signs of undue aggressive behavior may need to be moved from activities in order to provide a safe environment for the other children in the program. Once the aggressive child has calmed down, they will rejoin the classroom activities. If a child shows excessive and continual aggression throughout the day, staff will write an Incident Report describing the behavior and discuss it with the parent at pick-up. If parents have any concerns about behavior, it should be reported to the child's teacher.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, the child's lead teacher will initiate communication with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. Teaching staff will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. If a child's behavior/circumstance escalates, the lead teacher will engage the director in a collaborative conversation between staff and parents to establish a supportive plan of action.

The Workshop is committed to a collaborative environment between families and the Workshop, and we aim to work together as a team to support every child.

Removal

On rare occasions, a child's behavior or circumstances may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. The director will discuss these circumstances with parents after other avenues of negotiation have been attempted. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child as determined by medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on Workshop staff, resources, and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.
- Parental refusal to engage in evaluations, screenings, and services necessary for the child's success and participation in our program.

Biting Policy

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, the Workshop's response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. The focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

After a biting incident occurs, an Incident Report will be written for the child who was bitten and the biter. Staff will work together with families to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

If biting is consistent and does not seem to fall into the "lack of communication skills" category, staff will meet with parents to produce an action plan for the child.

Incident Reports

All Incident Reports must be signed and dated by a child's parent within 48 hours of the incident. If a parent is not available within that period, a copy of the report will be emailed and they will be asked to send an acknowledgement stating they have received and read the report. All original reports will be stored in the child's file and a copy will be made for parents upon request.

Safe Sleep Policy

To ensure the safety of napping infants, the following steps are to be taken:

- Staff will place children under the age of 12 months on their backs while sleeping
- A child is placed on a firm mattress with a fitted crib sheet.
- No pillows, blankets, stuffies or toys should be in the crib or pack and play while a child is sleeping
- A child who falls asleep in a stroller, boppy, bouncy chair, beanbag, or any place other than a crib will be immediately move to a crib

- A child's arms must be free at all times. Swaddling a child before placing them down for a nap is prohibited
- Staff will remove bibs and/or any garment that has either a hood or tie before placing the child down to sleep
- Only one sleeping child in a crib at a time
- Cribs will be placed in a well-ventilated area that allows for staff to actively observe them by sight and sound at all times

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. The Workshop is committed to working with parents to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with a child's physical and emotional abilities and family's concerns.

Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process.

Development

The Workshop utilizes the Infant and Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards, Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards and Emergent Curriculum along with a wide range of observation forms to track a child's development from infancy through their preschool years. Observations are performed multiple times throughout the year and are used to assess a student's skill level, create curriculum, and develop lesson plans that scaffold learning on an individual and group basis.

If a concern about a child's development is brought up during Parent Teacher Conferences or any time throughout the year by staff or a parent, a referral to Child Development Services (CDS) can be made and the child evaluated. CDS works together with parents and schools to provide early intervention and educational services to children from birth to 5 years. This service is free to parents and can be done at school during operating hours. CDS will never be contacted by a Workshop employee without first discussing and getting approval from a child's parent or guardian.

Feel free at any time to contact your child's teacher about their development, although please understand we are not able to provide on the spot evaluations. Longer conversations are best saved for times outside of pickup and drop off.

Emergent Curriculum

The Workshop uses the framework of an "emergent curriculum," which Bright Horizons describes as being "rooted in the work of noted early childhood theorists like Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky, [and] defined as a process where teachers plan activities and projects based on the specific group of children they are working with, taking into account their skills, needs, and interests."

Basically, this means the Workshop teachers are closely watching their students to discover their interests and planning activities and themed work around those interests. In doing, teachers are also

taking into account Maine Learning and Development Standards as well as daily life and pre-K readiness.

Emergency Operation Procedure

The Workshop has an Emergency Operation Procedure manual that outlines the appropriate steps to be taken in the case of various emergencies. In the case that children and staff need to evacuate the building for an extended period of time, protocol demands that everyone relocate to the Peaks Island Elementary School (PIES). If PIES is closed, New Brackett Church will be designated as a secondary relocation site. Parents will be notified by the Director or designated staff person that they will need to pick up their child at PIES or Brackett Church. In this situation, the Workshop will only release a child to either the parent or a person already listed as an emergency contact or additional pick-up person.

This procedure is practiced and reviewed semiannually. A copy is kept in the Director's office for parents.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire extinguishers, alarms and lights which are checked on a yearly basis. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff once a month and posted at exits.

Emergencies

If a child receives a serious injury while at school, a parent will be contacted immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, the Workshop will contact that child's third emergency contact listed on their enrollment sheet and contact sheets kept in Emergency Bags. A minor injury will be treated at school and an Incident Report describing how the injury happened, was treated and any follow-up recommendations will be filled out and signed by the parent at pick-up.

First Aid Kits are located in every room of the Workshop as well as on both playgrounds and both Emergency Bags. If the injury to the child is serious enough to need immediate attention from a health professional, 911 will be called and the EMTS will either treat the child on island or call for the Fire Boat to take the child to town.

Emergency Transportation

In the event a child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, a proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Injuries While at Home

If a child receives a serious injury at home that requires a visit to the doctor or emergency room, a note clearing them to return to care and/or stating restrictions and limitations must be given to the Director before they can return to the program. Teaching staff will do their best to follow doctor's instructions but if doing so impairs staff's ability to care for the other children, parents will be asked to keep their child at home until they improve.

Policy of Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff members of the Peaks Island Children's Workshop are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The Child Protective Services agency will

determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. The Workshop will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

For more information regarding Child Abuse and Neglect and training, the below link will take you to Maine's Office of Child and Family services website: [Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect](#) or [Preventing Child Abuse](#).

Drugs and Alcohol

The Workshop has a strict substance abuse policy. Drinking, smoking, and drug abuse are not allowed in the program or on the surrounding property. Staff, parents, or any authorized pick-up person entering the center while intoxicated will be asked to leave or a ride will be called to pick them up. If the parent or authorized pick-up person insists on removing the child while under the influence, whether walking or driving, the police will be contacted immediately.

Outings & Field Trips

Weather permitting; children are taken on supervised walking trips around the island where children are accounted for at all times.

From time to time, staff and children will go on field trips off island and parents are encouraged to join the trip if space is available. Most field trips are designed for the preschool classroom and the Workshop does everything possible to make sure that trips of equal value are planned throughout the year in order to make sure each child is included in an outing outside of school. Due to ratios, only children who are enrolled on the day of the field trip will be allowed to participate.

For field trips, parents are asked to dress their child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are necessary. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for the child.

No outing or field trip will ever involve transportation in a vehicle other than Casco Bay Lines or in case of a serious emergency without getting prior written permission from parents or guardians. A yearly Hold Harmless Agreement is needed for participation in all outings.

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Water Safety Policy

There is no swimming pool on the premises. Water play will be accommodated through the use of a water table inside the building, a sprinkler on the playground and kiddie pools that contain less than two inches of water. Both the infants and toddlers and preschoolers will be taken on field trips to beaches on Peaks Island.

The following beach procedures will be adhered to at all times:

- A lifeguard must be present for children to enjoy ocean water activities.
- Prior to allowing a child to participate in water activities, a written permission slip will be obtained from parent or legal guardian that describes the water activities.

- Staff must directly supervise children at all times. Children must be within sight and sound of staff. Staff to child ratios must be maintained at all times.
- Swim instruction programs must be designed by a water safety instructor currently certified by the American Red Cross to ensure that the program is age appropriate and safe. Other swimming or wading activities are not required to be planned by a certified swim instructor.
- All non-swimmers, when in water over their waist, must be protected by a Coast Guard
- Approved flotation device properly fitted for age and weight, except during swim instruction.

Clothing

The Workshop asks that extra clothes, shoes, outdoor gear, and diapers, if child is enrolled in the Infant/Toddler program, be left in their cubby as children do a variety of activities in the course of a day (i.e., painting, water table) and can get messy or wet. All clothing and accessories need to be labeled. Staff makes every attempt to keep track of all clothing items, but at times things do get misplaced and labeling helps avoid lost items. If a child goes home in extra Workshop clothes, the clothing must be washed and returned so it is available the next time a child is in need.

As the seasons change, staff will update parents on the types and amounts of outdoor gear needed.

We act with care in all activities, but we also think of messy clothes as a sign of a good day! Please do not send your child to the Workshop in anything too precious, and be prepared for wardrobe changes.

Toys from Home

Toys from home should not be brought into the Workshop unless told otherwise by the child's teacher, to prevent damage or loss. Toy guns, even water guns, are never allowed at the Workshop.

Approved Pick Up List

At the time of enrollment, parents give the Director a list of people who are authorized to pick up a child. A child cannot be released unless this authorization list is received. If there is a last-minute change to a child's additional pick-up list, verbal confirmation, text, or phone call will be accepted. If it is a permanent change, a written statement must be given to the Director to add to the child's file. Staff can request a photo ID on any occasion they deem necessary to confirm identification of the person against our authorized list of pick up persons.

Communication

Formal parent-teacher conferences are offered twice a year on an ongoing basis. On an informal basis, the teaching staff will seek to keep parents aware of their child's daily involvement with the program. A parent can, and should, request a scheduled meeting time with staff (outside the classroom) at any time to discuss their child's behavior or development. Staff will do the same.

Brightwheel

The Workshop uses the app Brightwheel for daily communication, as well as newsletters from the director. It is an invaluable resource for us, and where you will find photos, updates, our snack menu, and other information about our day.

It is where parents of children in the younger room will find logs of naps and diapers.

Teachers will often reach out to parents on Brightwheel as a first means of communication about non-urgent things, such as diaper or clothing needs, so families should feel comfortable with the app. Brightwheel has an extensive support team which is very helpful.

Families should feel comfortable using Brightwheel as the primary mode of digital communication with teachers, but will also receive teacher email addresses.

If there is an emergency, however, the Workshop will notify parents by text or phone call—Brightwheel will never be the exclusive means of communication, especially about something time sensitive.

As staff are required to stay actively engaged with children, brightwheel messages and emails may not be answered immediately during school hours. If a parent has not received a response from their child's teacher within 15 minutes of the message being sent or if there is an emergency, the parent is asked to call the office phone, which is (207)766-2854.

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to become involved in the Workshop. Parents are invited to volunteer, accompany classrooms on outings or field trips, and help out with annual fundraising events. Parents who are interested in becoming Board or Committee members should see the Director or Board President.

Parents are always welcome to come and observe in the classrooms and schedule a conference with staff about their child's progress and program participation. Daily contact with staff is important, and parents are asked to make sure that the staff is made aware of any special concerns when the child is dropped off.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents have equal rights to custody. The Workshop is legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. The Workshop will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the legal governing entity of the Workshop and is a forum for open communication between parents and community members who work with the Director and program staff in the following areas:

- Understanding of Federal, State, and other funding guidelines and regulations and to help interpret these at a local level.
- Promoting program philosophy and development of policies and procedures which meet community needs and comply with required regulations and budgetary configurations.
- Development and implementation of a yearly fundraising strategy.
- Community relations and advocacy for child and family issues.

The Board currently meets once a month and is open to the public during general information of the agenda.

Who to speak to about what...

From time to time, questions will arise about different aspects of our center. A general guideline of who to talk to is:

- Fees: Director
- Scholarships: Director
- Enrollment: Director
- Scheduling: Director
- Vacations: Any staff member
- Health Policies: Any staff member
- Parent Conference Request: Director or Lead Teacher
- Daily Program Involvement: Any staff member
- Special Dietary Concerns: Director
- Daily Menu: Entire Staff
- Program Philosophy: Any staff member
- Licensing Regulations: Any staff member
- Suggestions, Ideas, Concerns: Any staff member or Board members

Suggestions, Ideas, Concerns

If more information is needed or if a parent is not comfortable with staff or the Director's response, they can contact the Board with their concern.

Mail to:

Peaks Island Children's Workshop
Attn: Heather Thompson, Board of Directors
P.O. Box 80
Peaks Island, ME 04108

Email to: heather@juniperdesignbuild.com

Phone: 207-653-1392

The board will respond as quickly as possible.

It is especially important for parents to air their concerns, as well as to share appreciative comments, with the staff. They may occasionally be asked to fill out a questionnaire about the program. These surveys are part of the Workshop's ongoing attempt to improve service and create a child care center that meets the needs of the parents and community. Quality child care is a joint effort between home and center, parents, and staff.