



## **PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

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January 2017

Your child's teachers are \_\_\_\_\_.

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WE WELCOME YOU AND YOUR CHILD TO HP COMMUNITY. THIS HANDBOOK IS PROVIDED TO FAMILIARIZE YOU WITH THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND TO ANSWER LIKELY QUESTIONS. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS NOT ANSWERED HERE, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK THE DIRECTOR OR YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.

## HISTORY OF HP COMMUNITY

- In 1951, HP Community, previously known as Highland Park Community Nursery School & Day Care Center, opened its doors under the direction of Martha Struve Freeman, in the basement of the YWCA on the site of the current Highland Park Public Library parking ramp.
- In the 1960's, HP Community moved to its current location at the Karger Center.
- A class for children with special needs was created in the late 1960's, but was discontinued three years later in favor of mainstreaming.
- Bilingual teachers joined the staff in the early 1970's, and an addition was built onto the school in 1978.
- Sandy Raizes began her tenure as Executive Director in 1978.
- In 1979 "Mom and Me" classes and the After Kindergarten Enrichment class began.
- The Before School program was created in 1986.
- The school was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children from 1989-1999.
- In 1994, Jean Wallace-Baker became the third Executive Director of HP Community. The "Mom & Me" class was discontinued and a class for young three year olds was created.
- In 2003, HP Community joined other nonprofits in Highland Park to form the Community Family Center.
- In 2007, Preschool for All was implemented.
- In 2008, six teachers visited Reggio Emilia, Italy which led to the creation of the art studio.
- In 2011, Community celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> year of operation.
- In 2012, the program collaborated with School District #113 to offer onsite childcare to their employees.
- In 2013, Pam Carlson became the fourth Executive Director of HP Community.
- In 2014, Lisa Adelmund became the fifth Executive Director of HP Community. The program earned its Silver Circle of Quality through ExceleRate IL.
- In 2016, the program earned its Gold Circle of Quality through ExceleRate IL.

## PHILOSOPHY

It is our philosophy to provide the highest quality care for your child within an environment that is safe, secure and comfortable. While our program is based on knowledge of general child development, modifications are made in order to meet the needs and interests of individual children. Experiences and materials are provided for the development of the child socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. Both group and individual activities provide a balanced curriculum, which includes art,

music, literature, language, math, science, social studies, dramatic play, movement, fine motor and perception.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of HP Community is to provide a safe, caring, and enriching environment where:

- Children and families are nurtured and supported and diversity is celebrated.
- Each child’s individual emotional, social, cognitive and physical development is fostered by a skilled and loving staff.
- Play is valued and natural curiosity is encouraged.
- Interpersonal relationships and collaboration are emphasized and seen as avenues for growth and trust.

Our advocacy of children extends to our commitment to families. We actively work to support their efforts in promoting the welfare of their children and to ameliorate their circumstances.

## GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION

### ADMINISTRATION

Executive Director: Lisa Adelmund  
Email: [lisa@hpcommunity.org](mailto:lisa@hpcommunity.org)

Family Development Manager: Sofia Alvarez  
Email: [sofia@hpcommunity.org](mailto:sofia@hpcommunity.org)

Curriculum Coordinator: Pam Carlson  
Email: [pam@hpcommunity.org](mailto:pam@hpcommunity.org)

School Accountant: Kathy Gutnayer  
Email: [kathy@hpcommunity.org](mailto:kathy@hpcommunity.org)

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Full-Day: 7:30AM– 5:30PM

Partial-Day: 8:45 AM – 11:45 AM

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Extended Day: 7:00 AM – 7:30 AM

12:45 PM – 3:45 PM

3:30 PM – 5:30 PM

5:30 PM – 6:00 PM

### DATES AND HOLIDAYS SCHOOL IS CLOSED

- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving & the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Winter Break – 5 days at the end of December/early January

Summer Break – 2 weeks in August



## EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES

For the safety of the children, their families and the staff, HP Community will follow North Shore School District #112 (D112) emergency closure policies. When D112 is closed, then HP Community will be closed as well. When HP Community is in session and D112 is not (such as over winter break, spring break or the summer), and we determine that a closure is necessary due to severe weather, power outages, disaster, or any unforeseen reason, HP Community will send out a mass email upon decision, usually by 6:00 AM. Your child's teacher will attempt to contact you, it will be posted on our website and Facebook page, and a notice will be posted on the Center's front door. Please note that no credit will be given for a snow day.

## DEFINITION OF PROGRAMS

There are 6 early learning programs offered by HP Community. They are:

### ▪ Full-Day Programs (5 or more hours)

Two's/Young Three's	24 months to 42 months	12 – 14 children
Mixed Age Preschool	3 years to 5 years	16 – 20 children
Kindergarten Enrichment	5 years to 6 years	18 – 20 children

### ▪ Partial – Day Programs (3 hours or less)

Three's	36 months to 48 months	14 – 16 children
Four's & Five's	4 years to 5 years	16 – 20 children
Before School	5 years to 10 years	10 – 12 children

## RATIOS

At HP Community we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios in our classrooms:

<u>Child's Age</u>	<u>Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children</u>
▪ 2 Year .....	1 staff for every 8 children
▪ 3 Years .....	1 staff for every 10 children
▪ 4 Years .....	1 staff for every 10 children
▪ 5 Years .....	1 staff for every 10 children
▪ 6 Years to 10 Years .....	1 staff for every 15 children

## LICENSING

HP Community is a public program voluntarily licensed to serve 80 children by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. A copy of the licensing guidelines (407's) is available for review in the front office and online at:

<http://www.state.il.us/dcf/docs/summdch.pdf>.

## EXCELERATE IL

HP Community is a participant in the Illinois quality rating system, ExceleRate IL.

## PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

### INTAKE INTERVIEWS

An initial intake interview with your child's classroom teacher is required, preferably before your child is enrolled in the program, but definitely within his/her first week of attendance. This interview allows the teacher to learn about your child's development, likes and dislikes and habits along with information regarding his/her physical well-being, for example, allergies or physical limitations. Such information is important for your child's teachers to have in order to provide the safest and most positive experience for your child.

### MEET & GREETINGS AND ORIENTATIONS

At the beginning of each school year, each classroom schedules meet & greets for families to visit the classrooms prior to attending the program to familiarize themselves with their child's personal cubby space and mailbox, the classroom, and the center.

Orientations take place shortly after the school year has started to review center policies and classroom procedures. It is a time to get acquainted with other families and to meet support services staff such as our social work consultant. Orientation attendance is a requirement of the Preschool for all programs.

### CONFERENCES

In addition to the intake interview, you will be required to attend a conference to be arranged during the winter months. At this conference, information will be shared with you on your child's development in the program.

If your child participates in the Preschool for All program attendance for an additional conference is required in November. This conference is optional for those children who are not participating in the Preschool for All program.

All conferences are optional for kindergarten aged children.

### SETTING AN APPOINTMENT

You are encouraged to share information regularly with your child's classroom teacher though it may

not always be possible for the teacher to talk at length while the program is in session. If you find you need to talk with the teacher in greater detail, arrangements can be made to communicate by phone, e-mail or at a special conference.

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### CHANGES AT HOME

It is very important that your child's teacher be informed of changes at home so the teacher can discuss these changes with your child and reassure him/her while he/she is at school. When teachers are aware of such changes, they can provide books and play situations that may help your child learn to handle his or her feelings. Examples of changes that may affect children include moving to a new home, birth of a sibling, visitors in the home, death of a pet, separation and/or divorce, death or illness of a family member or friend. Other day-to-day happenings may also affect your child's feelings and behavior such as having stayed up late the night before, a fight with a brother or sister, not being able to finish breakfast, or a bad experience with a dog. Any knowledge or insight you may have about your child's physical or emotional condition can help the teachers in working with him/ her.

HP Community is fortunate to have a social work consultant who regularly visits the classrooms and meets with staff. She is very available to meet with parents to discuss concerns or to make referrals.

### NEWSLETTERS, EMAILS, SOCIAL MEDIA & BLOGS

Each quarter an electronic, center-wide newsletter will be sent out to families. A copy will be posted on the bulletin board near the front entrance. This newsletter provides you with general information and announcements about the center. Emails are sent out to make immediate announcements in regards to programming and upcoming events.

HP Community is on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and posts often the events and happenings of the day. School announcements such as weather closures are posted as well.

Each classroom has a blog for families to follow. Blogs share photos and comments about the learning that is taking place in the child. Each time a new post is made the classroom will send an email providing the blog address. Please make comments on the site as we like to hear from you.

### ROOM TRANSITIONS

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the developmental milestones for a particular classroom. As the time to transition draws near, you will receive information about your child's new classroom. Both your child's current and future teacher is available to address any questions or concerns you have during this process. Before the transition process is complete, parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the new teachers in order to familiarize themselves with the new classroom, children and curriculum.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our program. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's experience:

- Fieldtrip supervision
- Leading or assisting with special classroom projects
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Volunteering in your child's classroom
- Volunteering for the executive committee of the Community Family Association
- Volunteering to serve on the center's Board of Directors

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom as a whole. Preschool for All participants are required to attend at least 80% of the time the program is in session or risk disqualification. Please inform your child's teacher of any extenuating circumstances that may cause extended periods of absence so programming adjustments can be made to accommodate the situation.

Since January 1989, the policy at HP Community has been to charge the parents the previously agreed upon fee when the school is open whether or not the child is present. This includes days not attended because of illness.

## REPORTING ABSENCES

Please call the morning your child will be absent so that we may plan our program and/or lunch accordingly. A message can be left at 847-432-3301.

### KINDERGARTEN

Calling is especially important if your child rides the bus to "HP Community" from morning kindergarten. Unless we hear from you, we will assume he/she will be on the bus on his/her scheduled attendance days. If your child is not on the bus, we must begin making phone calls to locate your child.

### PARENT'S DAY OFF

Unless your child is enrolled in our "Preschool For All" program, we encourage you to keep your child at home with you on your day off. Spending quality time with your child is very important to his/her development. Doing home projects or running errands can be fun and educational for both you and your child.

## WITHDRAWAL

If your child will no longer be attending HP Community because of a move or for any other reason, please inform the school as soon as possible, but **a minimum of two weeks is required**. This can be a difficult change for children. Your child's teachers will want to work with you to prepare your child as well as the other children in his or her class. Saying "good-bye" is important, and requires careful preparation and closure.

## KINDERGARTEN PARENTS

When your child has completed kindergarten, we suggest they enroll in a summer camp program that is designed for school age children. We urge you to make arrangements early in the spring as these programs fill quickly. Scholarships are available, but must be applied for early in the year.

## ARRIVING & LEAVING HP COMMUNITY

### BRINGING YOUR CHILD TO HP COMMUNITY

When bringing your child to HP Community be sure to bring him/her to his/her classroom or wherever his/her class is at the time, for example in the gym or on the playground. Parents should also speak with the teacher in the classroom, if only briefly. We encourage parents to communicate with the teachers about their child's temperament that particular day, how he/she slept the night before, whether or not their child has eaten that morning, etc. **Children must never be dropped off alone outside.**

It is required that children be signed in with the time and name of adult dropping off. For safety reasons, do not leave other children in the car, leave the motor in your car running or park along the fence while you come inside. If you are concerned about your car starting again in winter, please carry an extra set of keys and lock your car with the motor running. The police patrol our lot regularly and ticket any car left running or not parked in a designated space.

Please do not park in front of the gate - park your car in a legal space in the lot. If a legal space is not available, a member of the staff or board will direct you to a drop off location. Under no circumstances should cars be parked in designated "youth services" spaces.

### PICKING UP YOUR CHILD FROM HP COMMUNITY

Children must be picked up promptly at the end of each session. ***Be sure to say good bye to let your child's teacher know that you are taking your child.*** Children must be signed out with time and name of adult picking up. Once you have reunited with your child, HP Community is no longer responsible for your child. Please assist your child daily in collecting his/her artwork and possessions. Also, please be sure to check your child's file daily. Please take all notes and artwork.

When picking up your child, you must come in his/her classroom or if the class is outside, to the playground. For your child's safety, please do not allow him/her to open the gate or cross the parking lot alone. Please be sure the gate is closed securely after you pass through it.

It is sometimes a difficult time for children when their parents come at day's end. Please try to help your child leave promptly and with ease. The teacher will be glad to be of assistance at this time.

When someone other than the child's parents is to pick up, the school must be notified; otherwise, we cannot release your child to that person. If this person will be picking up your child on a regular basis, you may give written permission by listing their name and telephone number on your child's emergency card. Please be sure to keep this information up-to-date. If someone else will be picking up your child for a limited time only, write that person's name and telephone number in a note and give to the office or your child's teacher. If you find you are going to be delayed by an emergency, you must make arrangements to have someone else pick up your child. You must then call the school to inform us of who will be picking up your child. Parents will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and a \$1.00 per minute thereafter if they arrive after the scheduled pick up time. The late fee must be paid to the teacher/director before the child returns to "HP Community". Repeated tardiness will not be tolerated and could be cause for withdrawal.

*Under no circumstances are staff allowed to drive children home.*

## GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

### PHILOSOPHY

The educational philosophy at HP Community emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships as avenues for intellectual and social growth as the preschool age child begins to interact independently outside of the family setting. To that end, our guidance and discipline policy reflects our concern with enhancing the child's abilities for success in this endeavor. We view guidance and discipline as another arena through which we can promote a child's growth and development. Our approach to behavioral issues underscores this goal.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their

caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledges the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, is likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. *HP Community* staff will use **only** positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions:  
“Am I...”

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

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## REASONS FOR MISBEHAVIOR

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.

- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules, or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

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## PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (*e.g., walking feet; gentle touches*)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (*e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested for longer periods*)

- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (e.g., “*You may pick up the blocks or art center.*”)
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (e.g., “*Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.*”)
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.
- Say "Yes" whenever possible.
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., “*Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.*”)
- Encourage children often and generously.
- Set a good example. (e.g., *using a quiet voice when children should be quiet*)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

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## RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR

Below are strategies *HP Community* staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

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### REDIRECTION

This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."

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### LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.

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### PARTICIPATE IN THE SOLUTION

If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please help me make him feel better."

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## NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. *Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.*

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## “TAKE A BREAK”

In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to “take a break.” This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the calm down area. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go calm down. I will talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

- Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Executive Director.
- The Executive Director and/or Administrative Director will observe the child and meet with the teaching team to develop a behavior management plan.
- The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
- The Executive Director and/or Administrative Director, teaching team, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

*\*\* If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period of time.*

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## WHEN PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH CHILDREN

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### USEFUL PHRASES

**Instead of “No” or “Don’t”**

**Say** “Please stop”, “I don’t like that”, “That’s not OK”, or “That is not a choice”

**Instead of “That’s not nice”**

**Say** “That’s not OK”, “Please use gentle touches”, or “That hurts Jordan”

**Instead of “No running”**

**Say** “I need you to use your walking feet” or “You may run when we go outside”

**Instead of** “Stop crying”

**Say** “I need you to use your words to tell me what is wrong”

**Instead of** “Can you put away your toys?” (If it is not a choice, do not pose it as a question)

**Say** “You may help me pick up the blocks, or help Alyssa pick up the puzzles”

**Instead of** “I said yes” (when a child tells you “no”)

**Say** “No is not a choice, I need you to...”

## WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Perhaps one of the most crucial parts of helping a child develop more appropriate behavior is communicating clearly and thoughtfully with the child’s family. When a child is experiencing significant and repeated behavioral problems in school, we advocate meeting with the child’s family in a nonjudgmental, calm environment so that we can work as a team to help the child. Meeting should be in a private area where both teachers and parents can share their experience with the child, communicate clearly with one another, and generate solutions in a thoughtful and empathic manner. Follow-up contacts with the parents are critical for permanent change and should continue as necessary.

If deemed necessary, clinical behavior management plans may be developed to meet the needs of a particular child if developed with the parent and a professional clinician. This must be documented in the child’s file. All staff working with the child shall receive training on implementing the plan.

Termination of a child’s enrollment in the school because of disciplinary issues would only occur once every effort has been made to accommodate the child bearing in mind that the safety of others in the class is also of paramount importance. There must be documented accounts of problems which occurred and resultant accommodations, meetings with the family and social worker, possible outside referrals to the family and follow-ups, and possible outside resources which have been brought to bear on the problem. Written notice of termination is warranted if, after great effort, we are unable to resolve disciplinary difficulties balancing the best interests of the child involved with the safety of and quality of learning environment for the other children in the room; and if the child’s needs cannot be met using our current staff/child ratio. This notice shall include reference to the above documentation, a transition plan, and shall establish a time period for the child’s termination of enrollment. It is our goal to ensure a successful transition for the child, and we will work to the fullest extent possible to achieve that goal.

## OTHER SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

1. Written rules for all children are established and available to children, parents and staff. These rules shall set the limits of behavior required for the protection of the group and individuals. The rules shall be understandable to children, be stated in a positive form whenever possible, pertain to

important situations, and be enforceable. We believe that brainstorming and problem-solving around important classroom rules can be an effective learning experience for young children. Consequently, classrooms are encouraged to post their own rules if they desire. The classroom rules should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. People must speak respectfully to each other at all times,
  - b. School property and other people's property must be treated respectfully,
  - c. Using physical force of any kind is not allowed,
  - d. Children need to move in a safe manner throughout the school,
  - e. Good hygiene is practiced at all times and table manners are used while eating.
2. Removal from a group to help a child gain control shall not exceed one minute per year of age.
  3. Children shall not be disciplined for toilet accidents.
  4. The following are prohibited under all circumstances:
    - a. Corporal punishment of any sort,
    - b. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom,
    - c. Abusive or profane language
    - d. Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment, and
    - e. Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, or terrorizing, or isolating the child.

## REMOVING A CHILD FROM THE CLASSROOM

Children cannot be removed from the classroom as we do not have extra staff available to correct ratios. In rare instances, children may be brought to the main office and the Executive Director will assist the child in calming down and/or help staff manage the classroom. Teachers should check if office staff is available before removing a child from the classroom.

If at any time a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the Executive Director should be immediately notified.

## BITING POLICY

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at *HP Community* to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, “Stop biting. Biting hurts” in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child’s needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child’s behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - Was the space too crowded?
  - Were there too few toys?
  - Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent and Executive Director and/or Administrative Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child’s permanent enrollment file in the office.

### HEALTH POLICIES

For the comfort of your child, as well as the protection of other children and school personnel, you are asked to keep your child at home when there is any suspicion of illness. Children must be free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Children should only return to school when they are able to participate in the daily routine. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified so that you can make arrangements for his/her care at home. The school is to be notified immediately of all contagious diseases contracted by your child so that other families can be alerted to the exposure as soon as possible.

### ILLNESS

Our first priority at *HP Community* is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. Children will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- **Fever** of 101 and higher accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including: lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- **Diarrhea** (not associated with diet changes or medications) until diarrhea stops or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed health care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- **Vomiting** (two more instances in past 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- **Pink eye** (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated
- **Head lice**, from the end of the day until after first treatment
- **Scabies**, until after treatment has been completed

- **Tuberculosis**, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend child care
- **Impetigo**, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Strep throat**, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- **Chicken pox**, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- **Pertussis**, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- **Mumps**, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- **Hepatitis A virus**, until 1 week after onset of illness
- **Measles**, until 4 days after onset of rash
- **Rubella**, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- **Herpes simplex**, with uncontrollable drooling

A child who becomes ill while at *HP Community* must be removed from the classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be sent to the office to wait for his/her parent to arrive.

*HP Community* reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

## MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

If your child requires medication during the school day, you must give written authorization to school personnel to dispense it. Authorization forms can be found on the clipboard in the front office. The name of the medication, the dosage, and the time it is to be administered as well as your signature must be provided each day that the medication is required. Medication must never be sent to school in your child's backpack. You must deliver the medicine to school and give it to office personnel. Medicine must be in prescription bottles with the name of the medicine, the dosage and your child's name.

### KINDERGARTEN

Parents of kindergarten students may wish to sign the authorization form the day before the medication is to be given. If you wish to leave medication at school, it must be in a prescription bottle marked with your child's name, and the dosage as well as the name of the medication. We cannot dispense medication from non-prescription bottles.

## HAND WASHING

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in early childhood programs such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival. Other times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- Upon arriving at the center or when changing classrooms
- After each diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under nay jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

## PHYSICAL & IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Each child must have a current physical and immunization record on file. The physical must be updated at least annually; immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received. Updated immunization and physicals may be faxed to HP Community directly from your healthcare provider. HP Community's fax number is 847-432-3308.

## DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at *HP Community* using an Accident/Incident Report. Please document all biting incidents as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report needs to be completed for the biter as well as the child who was bitten. Use great detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted before pick-up. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Executive Director and/or Family Development Manager to be placed in the child's permanent file.

## DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH INCIDENTS

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, staff members should complete a Health Incident Form. A copy of the form should be given to the parent and the original to the Executive Director and/or Family Development Manager to be placed in the child's permanent

file. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via a notice in their child's mailbox explaining the illness. In addition, parents with children in the classroom of the infected child will receive an email regarding the illness.

## DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

## DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child or staff member with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the front office emergency contact file folder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's or staff member's specific health care needs.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows HP Community staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. **It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.**

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the front office staff will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Executive Director and/or the Family Development Manager until a parent arrives.

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## WHEN IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IS REQUIRED

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.

- A staff member who witnessed the emergency situation will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Executive Director or Family Development Manager will contact the parent(s).

## NUTRITION

We encourage proper nutrition at school by serving nutritious meals and snacks and urge you to do the same. At HP Community, children are provided with nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks. We follow the nutritional guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus will be posted on the bulletin board near the main entrance. You may request a copy to take home if you would like.

Children will be encouraged to sample all foods that are offered, but will never be forced to eat. **Please inform your child's teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made.** For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child.

If your child is an early riser, you may want to serve him/her breakfast before you bring him/her to school. While the program provides breakfast around 9:00am, it may be too long a period for some children to wait for food to be served. Children who are hungry have a difficult time concentrating.

Please do not bring your child's breakfast to school. Be sure he/she has time to finish before you leave home. Because breakfast is served as an interest center, your child can choose to play instead of having a second breakfast.

Lunch service begins at 11:30 for the younger children and for the children who will be attending afternoon kindergarten at District #112. Afternoon snack occurs between 3:00 and 3:30pm.

## FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN

If your child has a food allergy, please complete a Food Allergy Action Plan form, available in the front office. This form will be posted in your child's room, as well as in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the Food Allergy Action Plan as well.

## FOOD FROM HOME

Please check with your child's teacher before bringing in any food from home. A list of healthy snack options approved by the USDA and Illinois State Board of Education is available from the front office. All food brought in from outside the center must be preapproved.

Please be mindful that **HP Community is a nut free zone.** No nuts or foods containing nuts should be brought into the center.

### DIAPERING & TOILET TRAINING

Diaper changing services will be provided for those children enrolled in our full-day 2's/Young three's classroom. It is the parents' responsibility to provide all diapering supplies including diapers, wipes, and any powders or ointments (to be administered with parent permission form). All supplies must be labeled with the child's first and last name. Every attempt will be made to inform parents when supplies are getting low to ensure their child has the necessary supplies. In the event that a child runs out of diapers, a fee of \$1.00 per diaper used that is supplied by the center will be assessed.

Children who are not completely toilet trained are welcome to participate in our three-year-old partial day program if someone from their family will be available by phone to come and change them should they have a bowel movement. Because an additional staff person is required to maintain the staff/child ratio while a member of the staff is out of the classroom changing diapers, HP Community does not accommodate diapers as part of the partial day programs.

Every effort is made to work with children who have demonstrated readiness and shown an interest in toilet training. Interest is indicated by having a dry diaper after nap and/or for extended periods throughout the day, talking about using the toilet, etc. The center will follow the parents' lead in terms of timing, language, and process. Our social work consultant is available to assist with the toilet learning process.

### CLOTHING

Children at school are active and should wear clothing that is comfortable and washable. Clothing should be easy to get on and off to encourage children to dress independently and prevent toileting accidents. Belts are discouraged.

Be sure to send your child in clothing appropriate for outdoor play as children do go outside every day, weather permitting. In winter you must send a coat, hat, mittens, snow pants and boots. Water repellent clothing is recommended for your child's comfort. Please label all clothing sent to school with your child's name. Please provide extra shoes/slippers with soles to be worn in the classroom when boots are necessary for outdoor play. This helps us to keep the center clean, prevents your child from overheating and provides more stable footwear that is appropriate for indoor play.

Sometimes it may be necessary for your child to change his/her clothes while at school. Please send an extra set of labeled clothing from home to be kept in his/her cubby or backpack.

Please send your child in rubber soled gym shoes. Sandals, party shoes and flip-flops are not safe for climbing, and do not protect toes from wood chips and wheeled toys.

## TOYS

As a general rule, we do not allow children to bring toys from home, as sharing favorite toys can be difficult. However, if you and your child's teachers determine that a "transitional object" between home and school would be helpful for your child's adjustment, we recommend a photo, book, stuffed animal, doll or small car. Breakable objects, very expensive items, toys composed of many pieces and "super hero" figures are not permitted. Please be sure to mark your child's item with his or her name. While every effort will be made to safeguard your child's possessions, the school cannot be responsible for toys from home.

Special "loveys", (blanket or stuffed animal) are welcome for children who nap at the center.

## BIRTHDAY & HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

The school is happy to help your child celebrate his or her birthday at school with a variety of customs, which may include singing, a birthday hat, a birthday book etc. In an effort to be consistent with the policies of DCFS and School District 112, we are no longer encouraging birthday treats at school. Instead, we suggest that you join your child at school for his/her birthday celebration. Perhaps you and your child could select a favorite book that you could read to your child's class as part of the birthday celebration. Your child's teachers would be happy to entertain other non-food alternatives for birthday celebrations.

To prevent hurt feelings among children we ask that invitations to your child's birthday party at home **NOT** be distributed at school. Instead, we ask that you mail or deliver them to the children's homes. If you plan to invite most of the children from your child's class, please consider inviting all of the children so that hurt feelings might be spared. A rule of thumb that some parents have found helpful is to invite the same number of children as the age of the child, e.g. if your child will be turning four, invite four children. A smaller group can be more manageable and result in a more enjoyable time for those involved, especially the birthday child.

Holiday celebrations at HP Community may include a special food snack that will be distributed in the classroom. This treat will be agreed upon by the classroom teachers and parent volunteers. As always we ask that good nutritional practices be taken into consideration and that sensitivity is shown to children with known food allergies in the classroom.

## HELMETS

We are pleased to announce that beginning in June of 2007, HP Community began supporting the use of bicycle helmets for all attending children riding tricycles on the play ground. This means that those parents wishing to require the use of helmets for their children will be supported to that end. Helmet use is not required by the school but teachers will enforce specified family helmet rules on the playground.

Please teach able children how to remove and secure their helmets properly. Of course teachers are available to assisting this task, but we all benefit when the children can do this themselves.

Please be reminded that parents are responsible for the safety of their children after the teachers leave the playground. We ask that you continue to enforce our playground safety rules while on the premises. In order to accommodate all the classrooms' outdoor/gross motor play times, we discourage families from lingering on the playground and in the gym once the next group of children come into the area.

## MANDATED CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member of HP Community is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

## TOBACCO USE

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on HP Community premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas.

## ACCESS POLICY

Any person in the center who is not a staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care **shall not** have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. **Unrestricted access** means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care.

Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Lead Teacher unless he/she delegates it to another Teacher due to a conflict of interest with the person.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, he/she will contact the Executive Director or Family Development Manager to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the Illinois sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.
- Shall not be on the property of the child care center without written permission from the Executive Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child to

and from the center. The Executive Director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their DCFS licensing agent first.

## CURRICULUM

Curriculum at *HP Community* includes child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. *HP Community* uses the Creative Curriculum for Preschool as guides for planning the curriculum in each of its program rooms.

Each classroom has weekly lesson plans, posted in the classroom. These plans contain a number of activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group as a whole. Lesson plans should be changed in order to accommodate the children's changing interests.

Each classroom is set-up in centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "free-play" is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development of important social skills.

## DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES

Each classroom team works cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children **thrive** on consistency! Routines should be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

## REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH TO LEARNING

The Reggio Emilia approach focuses on a child's natural development. It's child-centered and directed, taking the philosophy that learning must make sense to the child in order to be effective and meaningful. A child's point of view is completely respected and the child is encouraged to follow his/her own educational path.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy is based upon the following set of principles: children must have some say over what they learn; the senses play a big role in the learning process -- children must be able to touch, move, listen, see and hear in order to fully process something; children are encouraged to

interact with other children and explore the world through material items and relationships; children should be encouraged to always express themselves and be given infinite means and opportunities to do so.

Parental involvement is invited and encouraged. Many parents volunteer in the classroom and employ many of the methods found in the classroom at home. A variety of materials are used -- clay, paint, dramatic play among others.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The actual room arrangement of each program room is organized according to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Centers include blocks, dramatic play, art, large and small motor, and books. These areas are clearly defined, with obvious boundaries. Quiet areas are set-up as far away from noisy activities (blocks, cars, etc.) as possible. The room décor consists mostly of child artwork and photographs of animals, people, food, and the children themselves at the child's eye level. Room arrangement takes into consideration that staff must be able to see every child at all times.

## FREE-PLAY

“Free-play” (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) is incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. Teachers actively participate with the children during free play activities by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free-play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule for both the morning and afternoon, in almost all weather conditions. In the event of rain, severe wind/cold, or extreme heat, children are permitted to remain indoors.

There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with.

The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Concepts taught indoors can be expanded upon while outdoors. For example, building with blocks on an uneven surface outside, or playing with toy cars in the grass teaches children about different textures, sounds, and smells because the environment is naturally different from the indoors. Lesson plans must include an outdoor learning component.

## NAP/REST TIME

The Illinois Department of Children & Family Services requires that all children be provided a regularly scheduled nap or rest time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. After 45 minutes of resting, children who are not sleeping will have the opportunity to engage in quiet activities.

## MULTIMEDIA

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Children are not required to view part or all of a video or television show, or to play computer games. Instead, the activity is offered as one of several centers. All multimedia must have a rating of “PG” or “E” and must possess an educational theme. Computer time should last for short durations of time, not more than 10 minutes per child per day.

## WEAPONS/VIOLENT PLAY

There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play at *HP* Community. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play. If a child brings a weapon to the center, the weapon should be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

## PETS & VISITING ANIMALS

Staff may introduce a class pet to the classroom. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into the center without first notifying and receiving permission from the Executive Director and/or Curriculum Coordinator. Once approved by the Executive Director and/or Curriculum Coordinator, pets and visiting animals must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal(s) is fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

## FIELD TRIPS

*HP* Community offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Field trips are a creative way to enrich a project and expand the learning environment. Parents must complete a

“Field Trip Permission Form” for field trips requiring transportation. Walking field trips are approved as part of the intake interview process. These forms can be obtained from the Executive Director and/or Family Development Manager. Parents must be notified at least one week before the planned field trip.

As a participant in our program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to: walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local parks; trips to local businesses. Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times. Parents complete a “Parent/Guardian Permissions” form at enrollment for this type of field trip.

## ASSESSMENTS

The Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is the assessment tool used by HP Community to evaluate and track each child’s individual development during their time at the center. It is an on-going assessment system, meaning that teachers are continually watching, observing, and documenting each child’s development. By tracking a child’s development, our teachers are able to plan activities that are appropriate for each child’s developmental abilities.

### ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

A permanent assessment portfolio will be kept for each child. Assessment portfolios contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. It is the responsibility of the classroom teaching team to ensure portfolios are periodically and continuously updated.

When a child leaves the program, the assessment portfolio is given to the family.

## PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

### ELIGIBILITY

All children of working parents, who are three or four years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year, are eligible for our state funded “Preschool For All” program. All children who wish to enroll in the class will be screened using the Dial 3Assessment tool and/or Ages & Stages Assessment tool.

Children who participate in the Preschool for All program must attend five days each week from 8:45-11:45 a.m. during the 180 school days of “Preschool For All”. Children who need preschool and the wrap around child care services will receive priority at HP Community.

## CALENDAR

“Preschool for All” meets 180 days during the school year. There is no “Preschool for All” program in the summer months.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

It is a requirement in the “Preschool For All” program that parents meet with the classroom teachers a minimum of four times during the school year. Two of those meetings are parent/teacher conferences. The other two times could be parent meetings, field trips, volunteering in the classroom, etc. We strongly urge parents to participate in the classroom whenever and however they can.

Parents are also encouraged to help their children with the homework that is sent home weekly. Participation in these activities will strengthen your child’s pre-academic skills.

## PAYMENT OF FEES

### REGISTRATION

Registration fees must be paid at the time the registration application is submitted for a child to be considered “registered”. If there is more than one child registering in a family, a single “family fee” is sufficient. Please note; a place cannot be held for a child or family without the registration fee.

### FULL-DAY PROGRAM PAYMENT

Payment for full-day services is due the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month before services are rendered, i.e. services for the month of September must be paid by the 1<sup>st</sup> of September. There will be a 1% late fee on all account balances that are not current on the 11th day of each month. You are welcome to make payments, weekly, bi-monthly or monthly. Families who have not made a payment in two months must meet with the executive director to discuss how to proceed. Should an account become delinquent for more 3 months, the account will be sent to collections. Delinquent accounts will be responsible for all collection fees.

If the center is open, fees are due for every day your child is enrolled, regardless of whether or not he/she attends. If he/she is ill for an extended period, adjustments can be made.

### VACATION

A child may be absent when the center is open due to a family vacation. 50% of the daily full fee will be charged if a child is absent a full week for up to a maximum of two weeks during a calendar year.

Children who are subsidized by the state are required to pay the weekly co-pay if they attend one day/week. Subsidized children who attend less than 80% of their eligible days risk losing their subsidy.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS AND CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

If you think you might qualify for the state’s child care subsidy, you may bring in three consecutive pay stubs for both parents for the same time period within the last 30 days. If it looks like you fall within the income range, we will have you complete an application for funding. You may be eligible to pay a reduced rate for your children.

If you do not qualify for state subsidy, but cannot afford the full fee, you may be eligible for a “HP Community” scholarship. Please see the executive director for details. It is our mission to provide affordable, quality program for the children of working parents.

## PARTIAL-DAY PROGRAM PAYMENT

Tuition is based on an annual fee. Payment options include making 9 equal monthly payments, each due on the first of each month. On the 11th of the month a one percent late fee will be charged on the balance of the account.

Scholarship applications are available from the executive director, should your family need financial support either before school begins or at any point during the year.

## LATE PICK-UP FEE

*HP Community* charges a late fee of \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter if parents arrive after the scheduled pick up time.

Once the scheduled pick up time has passed, the Director will call parents of children who are still in attendance. Once the family is reached, we will ask how long it will be before they arrive to pick up their child. After the call, the late log with the date, child’s name, and pick up time will be completed. While waiting for the parent to arrive, we will prepare your child for leaving – have all backpacks, coat, etc. on so they are ready to go home when the parent arrives.

If parents cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the authorized pick-up persons. The Director will remain up to 2 hours past closing attempting to get in touch with the parents or someone on the emergency list. If we are unable to reach the authorized pick-up persons, the Highland Park Police Department and/or DCFS will then be contacted.

Many things can happen that can cause us to be late. With that in mind each family is granted one late pick up pass where we will not charge. However habitual lateness will not be tolerated and a meeting between the family and the Executive Director will occur to ascertain if HP Community hours can accommodate the family’s need for care.

## RETURNED CHECKS/INSUFICIENT FUNDS

All returned checks or direct debit payments rejected due to insufficient funds will be charged a \$25.00 penalty. Missed payments and late fees must be paid within 2 weeks. Repeated incidents of returned checks or insufficient funds notices could result in termination of child care services. A payment plan should be discussed with the Director if a family is having trouble making tuition payment.

## EXTENDED ABSENCE

In the event that a child needs to take an extended absence such and wishes to return to the program after a period of time, a fee of 50% of the monthly tuition must be paid each month the child is absent. More than two consecutive months of non-payment and no contact with the executive director could result in termination of enrollment.

For children whose parents are teachers and do not work during the summer, part-time enrollment may be available if two or more families seeking part-time enrollment are able to coordinate their schedules to occupy one full-time spot. This option is only available to current families and must be preapproved by the executive director. Part-time families are not eligible for the vacation rate.