



# NEIGHBORHOOD PRESCHOOL

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Parent/Guardian Handbook

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## **Introduction and Philosophy**

### **Objective**

The aim of The Neighborhood Preschool is to provide high-quality childcare programs to families. Those affiliated with Wesleyan University have priority for enrollment, in return for considerable financial support from the University. The school was founded in 1983; the arrangement with the University was adopted in 1988; new and expanded programs began operation in the fall of 1989.

### **Description**

The Neighborhood Preschool (NPS) is an independent, non-profit corporation, governed by a Board of Directors, which is elected by the parents of children enrolled in the school. Most of the Board members are parents; all are volunteers. The Board serves as a policy-making and planning body. It delegates to the Director the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school, and to the staff, through the Director, the responsibility for the practices of the school. The general membership is composed of parents and legal guardians of all children enrolled in the school and meets at least twice a year.

NPS is located at 60 Long Lane in our brand new facility on the Wesleyan University campus which houses two Infant/Toddler classrooms (for children ages 4 months to preschool age) and two Preschool classrooms (for children aged 2.9 months to kindergarten age). The Infant/Toddler classrooms have two sections of the classroom. One side may not exceed 8 children at one time and the other 5 children. Each program has its own playground.

### **Theory and Educational Philosophy**

The Staff at The Neighborhood Preschool would like to share with you our philosophy and theory. We draw from the well-established educational philosophy and theories of Jean Piaget's on how children learn to think, Erick Erickson's stages of socio-emotional development, the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner, stages of play defined by Mildred Parten, educational theories of Maria Montessori (just to name a few) and on accepted principles of physical development. The National Association of Education for Young Children's developmentally appropriate practices and the Connecticut Framework for preschool assessment are guides that we employ in developing our curriculum.

NPS is a child-centered, developmentally appropriate care setting, where children are treated as individuals; it strives to be non-sexist, non-racist, and non-competitive. Teachers provide little formal instruction, since we believe this can be counterproductive over the long term for such small children. We prefer to encourage children in self-directed play and investigation, as this promotes the children's confidence and enjoyment of learning. Teachers provide a variety of stimulating experiences for children, notice and promote their sense of curiosity, identity and foster their independence and problem-solving skills, and work to provide physical and emotional security for children as they grow in physical, social, cognitive, creative and emotional ways.

We know from research that children learn best from doing. It is through this active exploration of the world around them that children learn simple concepts and use this information to understand and construct more complex ideas. In order to accomplish these goals, the environment is critical. The richer the environment the more chances the child has to learn. The learning environment is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children and to encourage exploration, creativity and independence. Our role is to prepare materials that will provoke an understanding of the new and expanded concepts and to interact with the children in ways that develop language and thinking.

Since, we believe that children learn mainly through play and interactive activities, play and hands-on activities are used by us to make learning real and meaningful. We capitalize on children's play to further language development (using storytelling, rhyming games, and acting games), improve social skills (working together to clean up), and introduce scientific and mathematical concepts (showing children how to balance and count blocks when building a bridge or how to mix colors when painting). We use a less structured approach, including small group and one-on-one activities, and learning through creative activities such as art, dance and music, to teach preschool children.

## **Diversity**

Cultural, racial, religious, and socio-economic diversity are desirable within the community of NPS. We encourage teachers to develop programs that promote the child's sense of identity and awareness of other heritages within a context of respect and delight. Older children, for instance, cook and serve foods from various cultures, and celebrate a variety of holidays. We welcome parents at any time into the program. We hope some parents will choose to visit and share arts, crafts, music, dress, and stories of various heritages; such contributions are a real treat for children and staff.

## **Sexism**

The Neighborhood Preschool believes that developmentally appropriate practices are non-sexist. Older preschoolers, in particular, are hard at work on defining their sense of sexual roles. We encourage staff to model non-sexist behavior and to help children to do so as well.

## **Substitutes**

Caregiver continuity is a high priority for NPS, so when staff members have to be absent, we try to cover by reassigning available staff. When this cannot be done, we next call upon parents. We ask all parents willing to substitute to let us know what days and hours you might be available. Parents who work as substitutes are paid at the same rate as student workers; a rate set by Wesleyan's Financial Aid Office.

## **Program Information**

### **Admission Priorities**

Registration for the upcoming year will begin in early spring and follows the order of priority set forth in our contract with Wesleyan University. Open positions in the programs are offered to families in the following order of preference:

- a. Children already enrolled in NPS are offered first enrollment priority for the following year
- b. Children of Wesleyan-affiliated families who already have siblings enrolled in the program receive second enrollment priority, in order of pre-application
- c. Children of Wesleyan-affiliated families are given third priority, in order of pre-application
- d. Children of non-Wesleyan affiliated families who have siblings enrolled in the program receive fourth priority, in order of pre-application.
- e. Children of non-Wesleyan affiliated families receive fifth priority, in order of pre-application.

### **Pre-Application**

Parents who wish to enter their child's name prior to the formal application period may submit a wait list form. The date of the waitlist form will be used in determining priority for enrollment. During the formal application period, pre-applicants will be supplied with enrollment information and forms in order of wait list form date.

### **Calendar**

A current school calendar is part of the application package. The school year for those with a 12-month contract begins in July and runs through June. For those with a 10-month contract, the school year begins in September and runs through June. The school is open from Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. There are short breaks at Thanksgiving and between Christmas and New Year's.

Since our fiscal year ends June 30th, that means contracts of kindergarteners-to-be will end as well. Understanding families need care and also the importance of children finishing out their time before transitioning to the next milestone of their lives, we will do our very best to accommodate our Kindergarteners. Please know that available summer openings will go to 12-month re-enrollment families first, waitlist families second and then remaining spaces will be given on a first come first serve basis.

### **Typical Day**

We do not adhere to a rigid schedule of activities in any program, since part of operating a developmentally appropriate program is to adapt to the changing needs of the children, and to take advantage of serendipity. Teachers do approach each day with a planned framework,

however. During an average school day your child will be engaging in many different types of experiences such as art, water play, climbing and running. Please send your child in clothing that they can play "hard" in and an extra full set of labeled clothing.

We ask that all children please arrive at NPS no later than 9:30am, so each child will get the most out of their day. Late arrivals will not be allowed unless the child was at an appointment and a doctor's note is provided. All late arrivals must be in no later than 12:30. At no time, will an afternoon drop off be allowed.

## **Infants**

Here parent preference about feeding and sleeping schedules and the child's own patterns govern the course of events. Our caregiver ratios are designed to allow individualized care. (The state allows a ratio of 4 children to one staff member; our ratios vary with different times of day, due to the variety of scheduling options available to parents, but are generally close to 3:1) The staff is trained to recognize basic care routines of diapering and feeding as prime interactive time for babies. When the babies are awake and receptive, they will be carried, talked and played with, and taken on walks. For much of the time they will be able to watch older children. As they grow and change, they will be encouraged to explore appropriate materials, such as soft blocks, picture books, and so on.

## **Toddlers**

Toddler programs will be designed to suit the children in the group, will recognize the short attention span of children this age, and will allow considerable flexibility. A basic pattern would include:

- Self-directed play with a variety of materials
- More structured exploration: water play, play dough, a child centered simple project
- Group time: snack and a song or conversation or a book
- Outdoor time in the fenced playground or on a walk
- Lunch (more group time) Nap
- Transition at waking rocking, a book etc. Outdoor time and/or independent play
- Afternoon snack (group time)
- Table toys for small motor skills, story, focus on close relationships and "unwinding" time until parent arrives

## **Preschoolers**

Transitions can be stressful for children (and parents too!). We suggest that families develop a goodbye routine with their child daily. An example would be to greet your child's teacher and friends and check out the different experiences that are happening in the classroom. For preschool, we have established a "Wave Window" where children can go and wave goodbye to their parents. This routine will provide structure which overall reduces your child's anxiety. Please feel free to approach us if you have any questions or concerns. Because many of our daily experiences begin at 9:00 am we are requesting that your child arrive no later than 9:00 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made.

Within this age group, a more regular pattern of events is appropriate, with ample time for children to choose their own activities within the structure provided. In planning staffing, we have targeted a teacher child ratio of 1:7; the state requires 1:10. Teachers in each program will design their own schedules, but will generally follow a predictable sequence, since a reliable pattern of events helps children to feel secure and confident. One such sequence, with approximate times follows:

8:00-9:00	Arrivals: focuses on getting the day started well, with attention for each family and child; help with adjusting to separation.
9:00-10:00	Independent play with access to small and gross motor areas, dramatic play, art materials, building, etc. as well as a hands on project (arts and crafts, nature objects, puppets, etc.)
10:00-10:30	Clean up and snack time.
10:30-11:00	Circle time. Group sharing, song or game, story, conversation about a specific theme when appropriate (what friendship means, the weather and seasons, etc.) All designed to foster language development, listening skills, self awareness, and group identity.
11:00-12:00	Outside time in the fenced playground or a walk.
12:00-12:30	Wash hands and lunch.
12:30-1:00	Transition time.
1:00-2:00	Nap/Rest time. Those children who sleep will be allowed to finish their naps.
2:00-3:00	Independent play and snack.
3:00-5:00	Depending on the weather, Outdoor time or Self-directed quiet activities with adult help as needed (reading, puzzles, puppets, manipulative toys, drawing, etc.) with the intention of helping the child unwind at the end of a busy day.

## Discipline Policy

A copy of the Neighborhood Preschool Discipline Policy is posted on our Parent Board and on our website: [npswesleyan.org](http://npswesleyan.org). You may request a copy at any time. It is our goal to provide a safe and caring environment in which children can play and learn. Teachers view discipline as part of the curriculum. Guiding children through interactions and coming up with alternatives to targeted behaviors. We strive to help children notice, acknowledge and

articulate their own and others' emotions, as well as deal with these feelings in appropriate and acceptable ways. Generally speaking, we try to have as few rules as possible. Most rules come under the one blanket rule of: "You can't hurt yourself, other people, or school property."  
"

## **Parent Contact**

The staff at NPS serves as a support to parents, not a replacement of them! The special connection between parent and child is strong and precious, and staff is trained to promote it. Parents' wishes for their child's care are always solicited, and will be respected whenever possible within the policies of the school. All conversations regarding children's development, health, family situations, and so on will be treated confidentially; only those staff members who need such information will be given it.

Frequent and reliable communication between parents and the school is vital to a good working relationship, and so a number of avenues for sharing information have been established. If you have any concerns or need to meet with your child's teacher, feel free to contact us.

### **Parental visits**

Parents are welcome at the school at any time, and may come to participate in the program in a number of ways (e.g. to play with their own child, to read to a group, to nurse or share lunch time, to lead an activity). If you're planning a visit, please discuss any plans with your child's lead teacher first.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up:**

Teachers and parents will have the opportunity to connect at the beginning and end of your child's day. Please ask us any questions you may have. Caregivers will greet each family. We request families inform us about each child's health, mood, feeding, or other experiences you feel we will need to take care of your child that day.

#### *For Infants/Toddlers*

Caregivers will maintain daily record sheets that note feedings, diaper changes, sleep periods, and any unusual occurrences for each infant and toddler. At pick-up caregivers will share information about the child's day and you can pick up the record sheet if you desire.

#### *For Preschoolers*

These programs rely less on daily exchange of paper. A written record will be made of any accident or injury, but most daily communication will be verbal.



## **Call-in Times**

We know it is very hard to find time to talk to your child's teacher, so parents are invited to call us at any time. Every effort will be made to have the appropriate staff available to speak with the parent. Generally, naptime is a good time to schedule a phone call conference with your child's lead teacher. When you have questions that relate more to school policies and fees than to your individual child, you should contact the Director by phone or email: [nps@wesleyan.edu](mailto:nps@wesleyan.edu).

## **Conferences and Special Meetings**

At least once a year, you will be specifically invited to schedule a conference with your child's caregivers. The Director is available and may be included if teachers or parents wish it.

In addition, you may request a meeting with teachers and/or the Director at any time to discuss any special concern, your child's adjustment or experience at the school, your own questions about behavior or developmental issues, or any other topic. This will allow you to have the undivided attention of staff members, which is not possible during the more chaotic drop-off and pick-up times.

The Director and the lead teachers in each program are available for consultation about placement questions, and can also make referrals to various other specialists. The school also has consultants whose expertise and skills can be called upon as well.

## **Message Boxes**

Each child has a mailbox or pouch where projects, messages and receipts are put. Please make a practice of checking it each time you pick up your child.

There is also a mailbox in front of the Director and Financial Assistant's office where you may leave tuition payments, forms, or messages.

## **Information Sheets**

Upon enrollment, parents of infants will be asked to fill in a form about their baby's routine including information about feeding times and quantities, sleeping patterns etc. This helps us get to know your child and better take care of him/her. Please update us verbally with any changes to routine etc.

## **Emails/Newsletters**

The Director and the Board will contact all parents via email on a regular basis to share school news and updates, general program and curriculum information, publicize events and Board meetings, and remind parents about deadlines or policies. Please inform the

Director if your email address changes or if you would like to subscribe an additional email addresses.

### **Parent Bulletin Board**

In each program there is a bulletin/wipe board with updates and notices and other items of interest.

### **Board Meetings**

Most Board members are parents of children currently involved in the program, and an effort has been made to include representatives from each age group and building. All Board meetings are open to all members of the corporation (which means all parents and legal guardians of enrolled children.) There are times when the Board must meet in a closed executive session in order to respect the confidentiality of individual personnel or family matters, but such occasions are rare.

## **Scheduling**

### **Change of Hours**

Families request their schedules when they apply, and the school makes every effort to provide their first choice of schedule. Once registered for a given schedule, we ask that a family not reduce their hours since this would create an unexpected budget shortfall. If parents choose to withdraw their child or reduce their schedule for other reasons (e.g., family relocation, job change, dissatisfaction with the program) they may be liable for one-month's tuition or until the opening is filled, whichever comes first.

However, it may be possible to increase the number of hours a child spends at the school. In order to extend the schedule the family is asked to submit a written or email ([nps@wesleyan.edu](mailto:nps@wesleyan.edu)) change of hours request to the Director. If space and staffing is available the change of hours will be granted.

### **Withdrawal**

If parents choose to withdraw their child or reduce their schedule for other reasons (e.g., family relocation, job change, dissatisfaction with the program) they will be liable for the final month's tuition.

### **Extra Hours**

Parents who wish to add additional time for their children on a given day must obtain prior approval from the Lead Teacher, since staffing is planned to cover only those children registered for each portion of the day. Space or staffing considerations may make it impossible to give approval for extra hours. If approval is requested and granted, the family

will be charged the current extra hour rate. Frequent requests for extra hours may lead to a requirement that the family submit a formal Change of Hours request to alleviate scheduling difficulties. (In most cases a change of hours will also be less costly for the family.)

### **Late Penalty/ Late Pick-up**

Parents are expected to observe the pick-up schedules they have requested. Parents who arrive late prevent the staff from leaving at their scheduled times, and as a result may cause the child/teacher staffing ratio to change and/or require the staff to stay on the premises after the end of their official work day. Arrangements can be made for extra time as needed. If a child has not been picked up by the time specified in their contract every effort will be made to reach parents and then the authorized people on the parent's release form. If none of these people are available, the local police will be contacted to help locate the parents, after 20 minutes past pick-up time. This is necessary because of state regulations, which prohibit staff from taking a child home with them or taking the child to a friend's home. Staff will stay with the child until an authorized person has picked up the child. You may be certain that under no circumstances will a child be left at the school unattended, and that staff will avoid alarming a child further whose parents are late. Unexpected lateness will incur a late fee. Families are expected to pick their children up by the time specified in their contract. Unless special arrangements are made, a \$10 late fee will be charged for every five minutes or part thereof the pick up is late. All or part of this fee can be waived at the Director's discretion. Repeated failure to pick up a child on time will require a change in the child's schedule. Questions about this policy should be referred to the Director. At all times there will be at least two staff of 18 years or older.

### **Early Pick-up**

Parents who want to pick up their children at a time earlier than their scheduled pickup hour are allowed to do so, but we cannot reduce or refund fees in this event. Groups of children and teachers leave the premises to go for walks, so it is best to let teachers know in the morning if you plan to pick your child up earlier than usual.

### **Weather Policy**

Snow/Inclement Weather: In order to keep our community safe while traveling to and from NPS, there may be times where NPS may need to delay opening, close early or for the day due to inclement weather.

If there is a possibility for inclement weather, please be on the lookout for any emails and/or postings on our Facebook page "FRIENDS OF NEIGHBORHOOD PRESCHOOL (NPS)" and NBC Connecticut regarding school hours. NPS is registered with NBC Connecticut as Neighborhood Preschool, M'Town.

We will do our best to notify you as early as possible if a delay, early dismissal or closing will occur. For early dismissals : Staff will remain at school until all children have gone home with authorized people.

Did you know: you can sign up for "Winter Weather Closing Alerts" on nbconnecticut.com. If interested, please click on the link to sign up:

<http://my.textcaster.com/asa/Default.aspx?ID=651c5aed-b306-472c-9b67-8d79ecb9f5dc>).

NBC Connecticut will notify you by text/email if we have any changes to opening/closing NPS. You can also select to receive notifications for public schools and/or some businesses.

Air Quality Alerts: During Air Quality Alerts due to brush fire or smoke, NPS will plan on staying inside until the air quality has improved and is safe to be outside..

#### In Case of Severe Weather:

1. If there is enough warning, parents or guardians will be called to pick-up children. If we need to change location due to the severe weather event then: WESLEYAN PUBLIC SAFETY WILL BE INFORMED OF OUR LOCATION.
2. Staff will gather children in the interior of the classrooms, unless windows need to be avoided. In that case, staff will gather children in their classroom closets and kitchen areas. Staff will be responsible for maintaining morale and reassuring children.

## **Fees**

All fees are billed monthly and the bill should be returned with a check or cash for payment. The returned bill will be marked paid, returned to the parents and act as the receipt. Additional, specialized receipts are available upon request. Checks should be made out to The Neighborhood Preschool. Payments made later than the date specified in the bill for any given month can be subject to an additional 10% late payment charge.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Gate Policy**

Although we at NPS have few rules there are two that must be enforced by everyone- parents and staff. This policy is the safety of our children.

1. No child is to open the gate-not even in the presence of an adult.
2. No child is allowed to climb the fence or be lifted out over the fence by a parent.

This means that children must be met by the parent inside the play yard. We thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

### **Emergency Procedures/First Aid**

In cases of emergency NPS staff will follow the following procedures:

- First aid will be administered immediately, as necessary.
- Staff will call 911. A staff member trained in first aid will stay with the child until emergency apparatus arrives.
- Parents/guardians will be notified. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, emergency numbers will be called.
- One staff member will accompany the child to the emergency room until the parent/guardian or designated emergency person arrives.

The child will be taken, if necessary, to the Emergency Room of Middlesex Memorial Hospital, or hospital designated by emergency personnel, by emergency vehicle accompanied by a staff member or the child's parent/guardian.

In the programs, we will maintain legal child/staff ratios, borrowing staff from other programs is necessary.

### **In cases of illness NPS staff will follow the following procedures:**

If you suspect that your child is ill, and may not be able to participate in a full day of activities including outdoor play, please do not bring them to the school.

Infections spread easily in a group environment, and we must consider the health of all the children. Please call the school during the morning to notify us that your child will be absent.

If a parent arrives with a child who is not well (according to the guidelines established in the "Health Policy Guide"), the teacher will insist that the child not stay at school. The staff will make the final decision as to whether your child is well enough to participate in the group's activities once he/she has arrived for the day. If children demand one-on-one care because of illness, or show signs of continuing listlessness or crankiness, parents will be asked to pick them up or keep them home the following day. This will help the staff maintain a healthier environment for everyone.

A child who becomes ill, as determined by the staff members, will be removed from the program area, under the direct supervision of a first aid trained staff member. The parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible. We ask that all parents be sure that they have given us their cell phone number(s). If you will be out of reach, please give us an alternative phone number for that period of time. In cases where neither the parents/guardians can be reached, the staff will call the designated emergency persons as outlined on the Emergency Information Form.

For more detailed information about procedures relating to specific illnesses, please consult the separate Health Policy Guide.

### **Medications**

Neighborhood Preschool will administer non-prescription topical medications i.e. sunscreen, diaper and teething ointments. Parents are required to fill out an

Authorization for Administration of Medications and staff will complete a Medication Administration Record.

All medications must:

- Be in its original container with pharmacy label
- Medication is appropriately labeled with child's name
- Date on label is current

In emergency situations the staff will administer epi-pens, inhalers and medications i.e. diphenhydramine (Benadryl) but not limited to. Parents and the child's physician are required to fill out an Authorization for Administration of Medications form and upon use the staff will complete a Medication Administration Record.

All medications must:

- be in its original container
- medication is appropriately labeled with child's name from pharmacy
- date on label is current

Under no circumstance should any medications be put into lunch boxes or baby bottles. All medications will be out of reach of children and will be put in a secure location.

At this time NPS does not administer medication but parents are always welcome to come and administer medication. If your child might need an emergency epi pen or inhaler, please contact the Director for the appropriate paperwork, to be completed by your child's physician.

## **Sunscreen**

During the summer months the sun rays are very strong, please sunscreen your child before they come into school. If your child stays at school in the afternoon and you would like us to reapply more sunscreen, leave a bottle at school, labeled with your child's name.

## **Food and Nutrition**

### **Infants**

Parents are responsible for providing all food for infants who are too young to participate in-group snacks. Your written instructions about timing and types of foods will be followed as much as possible. The daily record sheet will approximate times and amounts of each feeding.

NPS supports nursing mothers and tries to provide a private, quiet space or at least a rocker for feeding. If it is your decision to nurse after your child enrolls in the school, we will want to work with you to help make this possible, and will want you to tell us how we can help.

## **Older Children**

We ask families to bring snack(s) and lunch for your toddlers and preschoolers. Please label the lunch box with your child's name. We will be happy to heat lunches that need to be warmed. Due to allergies and food restrictions, children are not allowed to share food.

We follow the philosophy by the renowned nutritionist Ellyn Satter's Golden Rule for parenting with food: "Parents are responsible for what is presented to eat and the manner in which it is presented. Children are responsible for how much and even whether they eat." We will do everything we can to create a pleasant and helpful eating environment but will not exert any pressure on the children to eat foods in any particular order or amount. Unfinished food will be returned to the lunchbox so you can see what your child has eaten. If you have specific questions about this philosophy, please talk with us.

## **Allergies**

A list of children with allergies will be posted in each classroom, to guide staff in snack and activity planning. Parents of children with severe allergies may be asked to approve or provide their child's snacks.

Because of allergy concerns, the tables/tray chairs are to be used for any eating and drinking. All food should be served in one spot and contained to that area and any remaining food should be removed when finished. Children should remain seated at the table or on an adult's lap when eating. We do not allow food on the playground unless as a supervised activity by a teacher.

## **Dietary Preferences**

If your child has special food needs, (for example: a vegetarian or kosher diet) please let the staff know in writing. This information will be posted for guidance in snack planning, and placed in the child's permanent file. We are happy to respect family choices in these matters.

## **Diapering/Toileting**

How children's bodily needs are met translates for them into powerful messages about their self-worth. The staff is trained to handle diapering and toileting children in a relaxed, friendly, matter-of-fact way while observing strict hygienic procedures. Children will be reminded and expected to wash their hands after using the bathroom. Our bathrooms are unisex.

If your child is in diapers, you will be expected to provide diapers, wipes, and any desired powder or ointment and to replenish the supply before it runs out. In the Infant/toddler program diaper changes will be listed on your child's daily record sheet.

Toilet training is not a prerequisite for entry into any program. Staff can be a supportive and knowledgeable resource for parents who are wondering if it is time and how to proceed. We will follow your preferences about toilet training, provided these go along with developmentally appropriate practice (for instance, no child should be rushed, or shamed for accidents; adult help should be supportive and matter-of-fact). Close communication between home and school will be essential throughout the training period.

## **Rest**

Infants are assigned cribs, and the school provides sheets, which are changed daily. Older children rest on small cots. The school provides sheets that are washed weekly. Children should bring a washable blanket and may also bring a washable pillow or cuddly toy that stays at school.

All children are to rest for at least an hour; those who sleep will be allowed more time if needed.

## **Extra Clothes**

Each family is asked to provide a full change of clothes to keep at school and to replace them as size or season dictate. These clothes are used in case clothes get wet or dirty during the day and should be replaced the next time the child comes to school. Clothing should be durable and washable since it will see hard use.

## **Things From Home**

Children are welcome to bring a favorite toy or other object of interest to play with and share. Frequently it is difficult for children to share their most precious possessions and so it is wise to leave these items home. Breakable objects and those with many pieces should also be left home. Prior arrangement must be made before bringing in pets.

## **Policy on Child Neglect and Abuse**

The Neighborhood Preschool understands and adheres to the statutory mandate for daycare program staff to report all incidents of suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or the police. Our policy represents a commitment to the safety and well being of the children who attend Neighborhood Preschool and a desire to assist families in obtaining support and service. The protocol depicted in our policy has been developed to support program staff and families through the difficult and emotional process of reporting. There is a special emphasis on maintaining confidentiality for the child and family throughout the investigation and afterward. There is a policy available for review on our Parent Board.

## **Forms**



## **Health Forms**

By state law, NPS must have a health form on file for each child served; your child's physician must sign it, show all necessary immunizations, and be updated throughout the year. Forms will be provided to you before your child begins school and you will be notified when updates are required. A PDF of the state required health form is available on our website. Children without valid forms will be excluded from the school until we have their forms, since the school's continued license to operate is at risk if we serve them.

### *Emergency Form*

By state law, NPS must have an emergency form on file for each child served; it must be signed by the child's parent or legal guardian and list the child's physician, dentist and at least one authorized alternate contact in case the parents or guardians cannot be reached. A completed Emergency Form must be on file before your child can attend NPS.

### *Alternate Pick-up*

Parents may use the Alternate Pick-up form to designate an authorized adult to pick up their child. NPS cannot release a child to anyone other than the parent, guardian or person(s) listed on the Emergency Form without a completed Alternate Pick-up form. An Alternate Pick-up will not be contacted in an emergency unless also listed on the Emergency Form.

## **Babysitting**

We appreciate confidence in our staff members and understand there may be a desire to have them babysit. However, NPS is not responsible for outside arrangements made with staff members and all such arrangements must be made in advance to avoid interrupting staff at work. Please note: any individual arrangements are strictly between the parent and the individual. NPS is not responsible nor liable in any way for these individual agreements.

## **Observation and Research**

Part of the special relationship between NPS and Wesleyan University is that NPS children have the opportunity to participate in research studies on child development and be observed by students in courses on child development. Wesleyan students who come to NPS to observe or volunteer generally make arrangements with the NPS director, the head teacher, and their professor.

Children also are invited to participate in research studies sponsored by the thriving child development laboratory on campus, housed in the Psychology department and co-directed by Professors Hilary Barth and Anna Shusterman. Each year, student researchers who are supervised by these professors come into the preschool and conduct several studies with the children at NPS. The studies are short, structured games played with one child at a time. Every family receives a consent form at the beginning of the academic year. Parents will indicate on the form whether or not they are willing to have their child participate.

If you give permission, your child will be able to participate in all of the studies that will be run at NPS throughout the year. As new games are developed, the NPS will decide whether to approve them, and approved study descriptions will be emailed to parents through the

NPS listserv. If there is ever a particular study in which you do not wish your child to participate, you can notify your child's teacher or the NPS director to opt out of permission for that study.