

Child's Play

Handbook

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History of Child's Play

Child's Play ("CP") has always been an innovative program with many firsts to its credit. In December of 1978, a group of 12 parents who had their toddlers in home playgroup situations decided it would be great to enroll their children in a program for 2 ½ - 3 year olds, 3 mornings a week in an extended play group situation. There was just one slight problem – this kind of program did not exist! Any child who was not 3 by September 30 could not attend nursery school until his/her 3rd birthday. Because of this, virtually all nursery schools adopted a policy of showing preference to those already 3 prior to September 30 and would reserve a place for a child under 3 only if no older children were available and only if the parent agreed to pay a full year's tuition even while the child was not in the program. By this policy 25% of children would be excluded from being with the same group of children they would enter kindergarten with in 2 years time.

So this group of 12 parents began to discuss the possibility of starting a program for this age group which would focus on their needs. Their ideal model was as follows:

1. A three morning per week program (9-11:30)
2. In an approved facility (Fox Point Neighborhood Center)
3. With 10-15 children (age 2 ½ - 3)
4. With one qualified teacher (early childhood background preferred)
5. And one parent assistant each day
6. To provide a playgroup setting
7. With play and learning opportunities
8. Geared to the varying abilities and interests of the children.

In January of 1979, Day Care Licensing and Dept. of Ed. were contacted to inquire about proper certification. Day Care stated that because of a "loophole" in day care regulations, any sort of program for children under 3 could be conducted without any certification as long as the program did not exceed 4 hours per day. Dept. of Ed. concurred with this but added that as soon as any child in the program turned 3, we would have to provide a certified nursery school program for this child in an area completely separate from the rest of the children, with a certified teacher, etc. Apparently mixed age grouping was unheard of then, at least for 2 ½ - 3 year olds!

This group of 12 continued working to solve this dilemma by writing to, meeting with or speaking to educators including the commissioner of Education and government officials. Basically they were told they could establish a program, not requiring approval, where very young two year olds who would be turning three in the second semester of the school year would be treated as part of the two-year old group for all intents and purposes. So the group, called Child's Play, began. They hired a teacher in August of 1979 and began their playgroup but they continued their fight even contacting the Providence Journal to do a story on their plight. Because of this group's dedication, changes to the law were explored and proposals made to the legislature. Child's Play ultimately won its battle and opened the door for programs for 2 ½ - 3 year olds.

In the spring of 1979, with battles still being fought and the law still being looked into, these parents of Child's Play were so pleased with their school they decided to expand to include a group for 3's and 4's to continue the philosophy of education they believed in. So once again they forged ahead hiring a second teacher and beginning this new program. Eventually, both programs were certified and licensed under the dual regulations of the Dept. of Ed. and DCYF.

In 1985, the parents of Child's Play decided that the Fox Point Neighborhood Center was no longer suitable for their needs and began a search for a new location. They found Central Congregational

Church – a beautiful space with its own play yard, quiet, safe side streets with little traffic. But there was work to be done to get the approval of Dept. of Ed. and DCYF. Neighbors had to be notified, zoning and building boards of review had to be dealt with as well as a myriad of inspectors, etc. All this work began in May of 1985 and by September (after a few problems with our fire alarm system which caused a week's delay to the start of school) Child's Play officially began in this wonderful, new home.

May of 1986 brought the beginning of mandatory fingerprinting laws to nursery schools and Child's Play was deeply involved in the discussions and hearings that took place on the issue as well as joining in a class action suit with other area co-ops trying to become exempt because we were a parent run school. But when the laws took affect, Child's Play readily complied for the benefit of the children.

Over the years, many people expressed an interest and a desire in expanding our program to include a kindergarten based on the philosophy and educational beliefs of Child's Play. It remained just a dream until 1989 when a group of parents with the same dedication and perseverance of the founding parents decided to make it a reality and, with a lot of hard work and more battles, Child's Play kindergarten came to be a year later. Another first – a licensed kindergarten run by parents.

In the meantime, a loosely organized toddler group that was run by the church was being offered on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in the same space our 2 ½ - 3 ½ year olds occupied on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Not happy with the way this program was being run and concerned that visitors to Child's Play would assume this group was part of Child's Play, it was suggested that we ask to take over this group and, with church approval, another first came to be – a licensed, Parent Cooperative toddler program.

We have grown from a single group of fifteen 2 ½ year olds to four groups including our Toddler, Nursery, Preschool and Kindergarten children and their 55 families. Our staff has grown from one to a staff of four teachers and three assistant teachers. With growth sometimes comes growing pains.

In the spring of 1995 another group of dedicated people worked at addressing those growing pains and continue to do so as part of our Long Range Planning committee. In 1997 Child's Play hired an educational advisor on a part-time basis. The role of the educational advisor is to act as a communication liaison between the teachers and parents and to provide evaluation of our educational programs and teachers. We found the educational advisor to be very instrumental in providing continuity from year to year and by being an independent voice to the co-op. In 2000 the co-op voted in the educational advisor as a permanent position.

During the summer of 1998, we spent \$20,000 to make our facility lead-safe due to state regulations. Each year we undergo a lead inspection as required by the Rhode Island State Department of Health.

Changes to our Kindergarten classroom occurred during the summer of 1999. We enlarged the space to provide more flexibility within the classroom for large group meetings and activities, as well as better visual contact for the teachers and the children. The construction project cost over \$8,000.

In 2000-2001, Child's Play prepared for accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC grants accreditation to programs that have demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality educational programs for young children. Emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions between the staff, children and families in the program, with primary consideration given to the nature of the child's experience. Developmental appropriateness, health, safety, staffing, staff qualifications, communication with families, physical environment and administration are also reviewed during the accreditation process. Child's Play spent several months in the fall and winter of this year in self study, self education and the written application process.

The 2001-2002 school year was a busy one. Most notable was a positive NAEYC validation visit in the fall. As of December 31, 2001 Child's Play became a NAEYC accredited program. In addition, a Salary Review Committee was formed late in the 2001 school year. The committee met during the summer and fall to study the compensation structure for generic teaching positions at Child's Play and to evaluate the specific salaries of our current staff. Their recommendations were then presented to the Executive Board. Their work is invaluable to future Boards in making salary decisions. The kindergarten classroom experienced renovations in order for the school to pass inspection with the State Fire Marshall. One window was changed so that the children could exit freely by opening the egress in a single motion, and then a landing was created outside of the window. The entire project cost just over \$6700; Central Congregational Church contributed \$1000 toward this amount. Finally, changes were made in the Fundraising Committee. A co-chaired position became part of the Executive Board, and the committee was expanded to include at least eight co-op members. The committee established Child's Play's first Annual Fund campaign which was a huge success. The Auction, too, brought in more than expected. We hope to target some of this year's surplus to new playground equipment.

2002-2003

This year our board worked on several major changes. We refurbished our playground to make it safer and more updated for our children. The parents of the Child's Play community put a great deal of time and effort into this. We now have a playground that is structurally sound and physically challenging but safe for all of our students. Second, we have updated our record keeping and requirements for parent background checks. Because Child's Play is a cooperative, parents serve in the classroom. Prior to the middle of this year, we only required one parent in a family to undergo a background check, regardless of who would be serving in the classroom. Now, we require any parent who may serve in the classroom to have a CANTS clearance check, fingerprinting, TB test and rubella test (if applicable). In this way, we further insure the safety of our children.

During the 2005-2006 school year, the board worked on several issues. We continued the previous year's work on remedying violations cited by the State Fire Marshall. We went before the Fire Appeals Board and had the Kindergarten door granted a variance, put in new fire-safe stairs and installed lighted exit signs. Central Congregational Church assumed responsibility for hardwiring the alarm system. Also, the board continued to work on ways to develop the sense of community within the co-op, as well as encourage an understanding of all aspects of the cooperative school environment.

2007 – 2008

In the spring of 2007, we were one of the first two schools in Rhode Island to become reaccredited under the new requirements set forth by NAEYC. Also, our wonderful kindergarten teacher of 13 years, Andrew Thompson, moved to Philadelphia. We hired and welcomed back Elizabeth Callery Orton (who was our kindergarten teacher before Andrew) as our new kindergarten teacher. Unfortunately we were not able to fill a kindergarten class for the year but we kept Elizabeth on at a part-time basis. She worked in the preschool class for most of the time, working with the children in small groups on several different projects. The main focus of the board this year was to try and get the kindergarten class up and running again through outreach and advertising within the community. In addition, LRP is compiling a list of job descriptions and monthly duties of the co-op so that we can better utilize talents and energies within the CP community. The board is working towards revising the jobs for future years. Finally, our much loved toddler and nursery teacher, Danielle Dispagne Weiner retired from CP after 18 years. CP continues to strive towards maintaining and developing a sense of community.

2008-2009

Child's Play continues to be a high quality, well respected parent-run cooperative school. In our effort to keep looking for ways to improve the preschool experience of our children and their families, it was decided to add a teaching assistant to the toddler program. This would allow us to enroll more children in the toddler class, which is in high demand, and improve consistency in the classroom. The deadline of when families are notified of their admission status was changed to be more aligned with other nursery schools in the area. Due to lower enrollment in the additional and extended day options for preschool families, nursery families were given the option of adding or extending days. Long range planning was very active in several areas to include: gathering data regarding plans for the front room space vacated by the kindergarten program, developing/revising the Child's Play diversity statement, compiling and revising jobs and job descriptions and, beginning to work on the long range plan for Child's Play. Fundraising efforts were very successful in raising money (despite the economic downturn) and improving the sense of community at Child's Play.

As we approach our 30th year, Child's Play is as strong as ever. We anticipate full enrollment in all of our classrooms next year, and have consistently had waiting lists for most classes. We are glad to meet the needs of the community and appreciate the support of Central Congregational Church.

2009-2010

This year we celebrated an important milestone for Child's Play, our 30th anniversary. Our fundraising committee worked hard to commemorate this important anniversary and to make contact with as many alumni as possible. We began a "Friends of Child's Play" Facebook page, and we began data entry of all paper copies of the names and addresses of our alumni families. Electronically compiling all of these names and addresses has proven to be a larger project than anticipated, and we have decided to continue compiling the list over the next year.

We celebrated the 30th anniversary at our annual auction. The event was a big success where we celebrated not only the school's anniversary but also Head Techer Mona Braza's 30th year teaching at Child's Play. We were pleased that many alumni families, including a founding family joined us for this celebration.

This year the state of Rhode Island rolled out a new quality rating system called Bright Stars. In the spirit of always being at the forefront of new educational standards, we took the initiative to be one of the first preschools to earn the Bright Stars designation. We currently hold a four star rating. In addition, we were recently recognized by the state as one of only five programs (and the only cooperative school) to hold both the Bright Stars designation and accreditation by NAEYC.

We also worked hard on updating our website this year. A sub-committee was formed and a brand new, user-friendly website was launched in the Spring. One of the primary goals of the website was to include more information for both prospective and current families.

2010-2011

Child's Play had terrific year. We hit full enrollment for the first time in several years and ended the year in a financial surplus. This was also helped by our Fundraising committee which in addition to other projects hosted our first "Kindergarten Freakout" event. Parents from public, independent, and charter schools were invited to speak on a panel about the process of choosing a kindergarten. The event was well received by families throughout the Providence community.

We hired Joanne Nicholson as our new Teacher's assistant for Nursery and Tues/Thurs Preschool. She has had a fantastic first year and it's hard to imagine she hasn't been here forever. Our Buildings and

Ground committee worked hard this year improving the play yard. A beautiful new fence was installed at the beginning of the school year and the playground equipment underwent a safety inspection. All the work done on the play yard makes it a safe place for our children to play this year and in the years to come.

After much discussion we decided not to go ahead with the new Department of Education (DOE) licensing system. The voluntary licensing does not yet take into account the unique aspects of a co-op. We wrote a detailed letter to the DOE explaining our concerns and which we hope will help them to improve upon their current process. We continue to be licensed by DCYF and NAEYC and to offer a top notch early childhood education.

We continue on our path of digitizing and streamlining processes within the co-op. For the first year the Child's Play handbook will be available on-line with printed copies on request. Long Range Planning held initial meetings on our database and archiving options that will continue into coming years. We changed the Job Transition meetings to allow greater discussion and reflection upon how to improve things in the coming year.

Mission Statement and Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

Child's Play is a cooperative preschool whose educational philosophy is based on the developmental model. This model is based on the fact that children learn through play at a pace that is individual and appropriate to their age and development. Parents work with teachers to create a high quality early educational experience for our children and a safe, respectful, supportive, and nurturing environment and community for us all. In order to ensure success in this mission, we strive to follow the guiding principles below:

- **Parent involvement in the classroom is required and encouraged.** This involvement supports the teachers, broadens the parents' understanding of their children's education and developmental stage, and strengthens and deepens the relationship between children and teachers and between families and teachers.
- **The school's success is dependent on parents taking the initiative and maintaining their commitment to the varied tasks involved in running the school.** Each of us takes responsibility for understanding and executing our co-op job and abiding by and implementing the policies and procedures of the co-op.
- **Teachers, with input and recommendations from the Education Advisor and Executive Board, have ultimate responsibility for the educational program, including curriculum and classroom design.** Because of this, it is absolutely vital that our staff be highly qualified professionals who embrace the developmental education model and are fully supported and compensated appropriately.
- **Free and open communication in the co-op community is a priority.** This ensures a climate of trust and cooperation within the co-op, both between parents and between teachers and parents. It enables the school to function effectively and fosters the sense of community that we value. Except for matters involving family confidentiality, all committee and Executive Board meetings will be publicized and open to the general co-op community and the minutes will be made available. Parents are expected and encouraged to bring any ideas or concerns they may have, including classroom issues or their committee work, to their class rep, teacher, or member of the Executive Board. When necessary, the Education Advisor will act as a liaison within groups or between groups or individuals.
- **Although the cooperative ideal of consensus is not always practical or even possible, we strive for the most open and inclusive process possible.** Parents and teachers work cooperatively to make the decisions that affect and guide the school. Parents are required to attend their committee meetings and All Parent meetings and are encouraged to express their concerns and opinions. For the co-op community to function well and set a good example for our children, we must all speak and listen to one another with respect and an open mind.
- **We value the community created by being a cooperative and strive to encourage and maintain the sense of community.** All school community activities, whether formal or informal, welcome and include the most members of the co-op community possible. Less structured opportunities for families to interact, like visiting at the play yard fence at pick-up, are also valued and encouraged.
- **Child's Play is committed to the concept of diversity and to preparing our children to be successful citizens in a diverse world.** Diversity is an integral part of the curriculum in each classroom. Our work on the board, the committees and with policy development is reflective of our commitment to diversity.

Curriculum Philosophy

Child's Play is a parent cooperative school. The program is an inclusive, comprehensive developmental program that is committed to creating a sense of community for our children, families, and staff. Our primary goal is to create and maintain a warm, loving, enriching environment that fosters positive identity and values while enhancing the development of each child. We respect the diverse backgrounds of our program's families.

Our program provides a wide range of hands-on learning experiences designed to enhance the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of each child. The philosophy behind our program is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting through play activities, to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world in which they live. This is true of the infant who explores her world through her senses and it is true for the older child who is beginning to understand that words describe thoughts and feelings. Play enables children to achieve the key goals of our curriculum. Play is the medium through which children learn best.

Our program philosophy is reflected in the work of many great thinkers. Teachers are familiar with them and implement their philosophies as they work with children. The key foundation of the program is children's play. Play being experiential has been strongly influenced by Dewey. Teachers are familiar with the concepts of Maslow - they are aware of the concept of meeting children's basic needs before they can be encouraged to go forward. The beginning stages of Erikson's work (trust, autonomy and industry) are key to work with young children in the preschool years. Concepts of Reggio can be seen as the environment is used as the "third teacher", in the children's creative work and in the engagement of families.

Criteria for high quality early childhood programs, based upon accreditation guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of young Children (NAEYC) are implemented throughout our program curriculum. These standards include specific guidance in areas such as teaching, relationships activities, learning centers, scheduling, routines and physical environment. The program is accredited by NAEYC.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is the underlying concept upon which the accreditation criteria were developed. This information was developed using state of the art research information as well as practical based evidence from the field of Early Childhood Education. Developmentally appropriate practices result from the process of professionals making decisions about the well being and education of young children based upon three important concepts:

- Child development and learning
- Individual strengths, interests and needs of each child
- Cultural context of each family

Developmentally appropriate individual and group experiences enable each of our children to grow and progress at their won rate.

We use the "Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers" and the "Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers", a model curriculum used across the nation. This curriculum is aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. Domains in the RI Standards include: Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language Development and Communication, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Creativity, Physical Health and Development. The Creative Curriculum framework is based upon what we know about how young children best learn, what they should learn (goals and objectives), how teachers and families work together to enhance that learning and specifically what the physical environment in the classroom should provide for the children.

A learning center approach is used. The physical environment is considered the third “teacher”. There are various areas such as blocks, art, manipulatives, reading, writing, math, science, and dramatic play. Specific centers may vary slightly dependent upon individual classrooms. Teachers design the learning centers and select enriching materials for each center. Specific themes or concepts are selected during curriculum planning. These are then used in fostering goals for the children.

Curriculum includes everything that happens in a program or classroom, including the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, room arrangement, the outside environment, transitions between activities, the goals of the program for each individual, planned activities both inside and outside and the relationships between teachers and children.

Teachers play many roles as they implement an effective curriculum: environmental designer, nurturer, relationship developer, observer, facilitator, role model, co-player initiator, resource provider, provider of content. It is through utilizing these various roles at the appropriate time that the teacher delivers an effective, individualized curriculum.

We value diversity and respect differences among all children, families and staff. We are committed to an anti-biased curriculum and we work hard towards the following goals as stated in the Anti-Biased Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children:

1. Nurture each child’s construction of a knowledgeable, confident self identity and group identity
2. Promote each child’s comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds
3. Foster each child’s critical thinking about bias
4. Cultivate each child’s ability to stand up for him/herself and for others in the face of bias

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We welcome all children as full participants.

For young children learning is occurring in every area of development. Education occurs for children at every age. From birth onward the foundation is laid for each new experience. Each new experience builds upon the child’s past experiences

Child’s Play reflects the following beliefs:

- We believe that childhood is a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- We appreciate and support the close ties between child and family
- We recognize that children are best understood in the context of family and society
- We respect the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual
- We are dedicated to helping children achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on knowledge of child development, as well as on what we know about the strengths, interests and needs of each individual child
- We recognize that children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experiences as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understanding of the world around them
- We recognize play as an important vehicle for children’s social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

Communications

There are several systems in place to help you keep in touch with everything that's happening at Child's Play. The following will give you a quick glance at our communications network and how to best take advantage of it.

School Phone

The school has one main telephone in the Preschool classroom. Our number is (401)331-8443. Please call if you need to reach a teacher or aide, or let us know if your child is ill and won't be attending school. During the summer, an answering machine picks up and forwards all calls regarding Child's Play. If there is an emergency and you cannot reach anyone at school via the school phone, call the office of Central Congregational Church at (401)331-1960.

School Directory

Each family receives an all-school address and phone directory ("Class List"). Please keep yours handy! In the event you need a duplicate copy, please contact the secretary or Vice President of Admissions.

Telephone Tree

We use a telephone tree system to get urgent or very time-sensitive news spread throughout the school. For example, we activate the phone tree on matters such as emergency school closings, illness (e.g. chicken pox) alerts, and last-minute cancellations of events. You must participate in the phone tree. Please be sure you have access to your class list during school hours as well. If you receive a call, please do the following as quickly as possible.

- Take careful note of the message to be relayed.
- Refer to your class list and immediately call the person after you on the list with the message. If you do not reach that person or get an answering machine, leave the message on the machine and call the next person on the list with the message, so the tree can continue.
- If you do not get an answer or there is no answering machine, you must keep trying to reach that person until you succeed.
- If you are the last person on the class list, please call the first person on the list to confirm that the phone tree has been completed.
- If you are at all unsure of the message, call the first person on your class list for clarification

Communication with Teachers

Please feel free to talk directly with the teaching staff on any matter. You can also contact them at home if you'd like to talk privately. See your all-school directory for the teacher's phone numbers. During the rush of the morning when the children are settling in, it can be hard for even the best of teachers to stop to talk and remember everyone's special needs and/or arrangements for the day. Please drop a note to the teacher if you want to pass along information about such things as a special situation they should be aware of, or special needs for your child. Carpool arrangements should be submitted in writing to the teacher.

Class Representatives (“Class Rep”)

Each class has a Class Rep whose child is in your class. Their primary job is to help you keep in touch with all school activities, field any questions you have about school, and to be your representative to the Executive Board of the school. Your Class Rep is the person to talk to about any class-specific issues, such as ideas for activities, thoughts on how the class is running, any concerns that you may have, or input you’d like conveyed to the Executive Board. Class reps will notify you prior to Board meetings and report back to the class after each meeting as a means of helping you keep up on Board activities. The Class Rep also works with the parents and teacher to set the agenda for the classroom meetings that occur after the All Parent’s Meetings.

Post Office

Child’s Play has its own “Post Office” located in the rear cupboards of the Preschool classroom. The Post Office has mailboxes for the Co-Presidents, admissions, treasurer/assistant treasurer, tuition collector, secretary, the newsletter editor, class representatives, committee heads and our educational advisor. Please use these boxes to send messages, leave information, or pay your tuition. Special boxes are established on an as-needed basis for such things as special events and surveys. Pad and paper are provided in the post office for your convenience in sending notes. Admissions applications are also located in the post office.

Children’s Cubbies

Each child has a classroom cubby. Cubbies are used to send home your child’s school projects, and get information to you in a timely fashion. This is how you’ll get information about upcoming field trips, book clubs, and get notices and news from committees. Please be sure to check your child’s tote bag or back pack each afternoon so you don’t miss important notices sent home this way! When you are on duty, remember to fill the kids’ bags with items/papers in the cubbies at the end of the day.

Child’s Play News

Child’s Play has its own newsletter for parents and friends which is published five times a year. Child’s Play News is written and produced by us, for us, about us. Inside you’ll find news from the teachers about class activities and upcoming plans, calendars of school and community activities, letters from the Co-Presidents and committee heads, and general news stories of interest about Child’s Play families. Some issues include articles from parents. Please send any story ideas or comments directly to the editor through e-mail. Also, we will run At the Fence in the newsletter. If you have something to buy or sell, or a need to fill, please submit!

Bulletin Board

We maintain a bulletin board directly inside the main school entrance for general news of interest, community activities, and reminders of upcoming events and meetings. Parents are welcome to use the bulletin board to post events, meetings, or notes of interest to the school. Please check regularly.

Child’s Play E-mail

E-mail is an important method of communication. The school may contact you by e-mail (if available), and this may be a way for the co-president to reach the entire school. Many committees have found e-mail to be a helpful and quick means of communication. Please notify your class representative if you don’t have an email account or check your email regularly.

Child’s Play Website

Our website childisplayri.org is continually updated with current information for not only the school community but for parents in their search for programs.

Meetings

As a member of the Child's Play cooperative, you will be attending meetings throughout the year pertaining to your committee's work and the general operation of the school. Some committees meet more frequently than others; some meet on an as-needed basis to plan and talk.

The Executive Board of the school meets approximately once every four – six weeks. The Executive Board consists of the Co-Presidents, Vice President of Admissions and Vice President of Long Range Planning as well as Class Reps, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising Co-chairs and Communication Co-chairs. Agendas for these meetings are posted one week in advance. The first half hour of every board meeting is open to all who want to attend. If you are unable to attend but would like to have input in the meeting, speak with your Class Rep, the Co-Presidents or any board member. Remember, this is your school, and you should be as active as possible in the running of it. If you have a topic or issue of concern you'd like brought before the board, please feel free to contact the Co-Presidents or your Class Rep one week before a Board Meeting.

All School Meetings

The entire school meets formally five times a year at our All School Meetings. All School Meetings are held to give everyone a broad look at the school and its direction, and often, to vote on important school issues. Either before or after the All School Meetings the parents break out into the classroom meetings with the teachers, as necessary. The Class Reps work with the parents and teachers to set the agenda for the classroom meeting. The last meeting of the year is our Annual Meeting at which we vote on a proposed slate of officers for the following school year. Your school calendar has the dates of these very important meetings so you can plan well in advance to attend. If you cannot attend, you must notify your Class Rep or a Co-President. You are allowed one excused absence. If you have more than one absence you will be forfeiting your child's and/or his/her sibling's priority status on the roster for the following year.

Parents as Public Relations

Finally, we hope you enjoy Child's Play so much that you want to tell your friends and family about our wonderful, nurturing school philosophy and atmosphere. You are the best ambassadors for Child's Play – better than any advertising or brochure could be.

If you would like to introduce someone to Child's Play and are unsure of how to proceed, please contact the Co-Presidents, VP of Admissions or Tours.

What Does A Duty Parent Do?

One of the primary obligations of Child's Play parents is the duty day. Duty Days are when parents act as assistants to the teachers in the classrooms. They provide a wonderful way for you to become involved in your child's preschool experience. You get to see and share as your children play, learn, grow and form relationships with others. You also have a chance to grow yourself in your parenting skills as you learn from the teachers, each other, and from the children. Primarily, you are in the classroom to help the teachers maintain a safe and warm atmosphere by providing the children with the emotional well-being necessary to maintain their intellectual development.

In order to be on duty in the classroom, acting as a teachers' assistant, at least one parent in the family is required to complete CANTS clearance, fingerprinting check, TB test and, for women 35 and younger, a rubella test. The other parent may opt to sign a waiver indicating their intention to forego being on duty unless they go through the CANTS clearance, fingerprinting check, TB test and rubella test (if applicable).

Parents will be provided with a Duty Day schedule and a more detailed listing of responsibilities from the teachers. The following gives a brief overview of responsibilities. On Duty Days, parents should arrive at school by 8:40am in order to help the teachers set up the classroom, get an overview of the day's activities and be ready to help the children (who are dropped off between 8:55am and 9:05am) get their things put away when they arrive in the classroom or escort children to the classroom. During the morning you'll be asked to help supervise activities, interact with all children, help with snack and do some general clean up as needed. Parents are encouraged to bring something to share with the class: a story to read, song to teach, instrument to play, special project, etc. (Please check with the teacher beforehand for appropriateness and fitting into the day's schedule.) Parents should refer to the Child's Play Discipline Policy for guidance in their interactions with children. Parents are finished with their Duty Day when all the children in their class have been picked up and when the classroom is in order and equipment is put away. Please refer to the Arrival and Departure Procedure for more details.

Each class has a Classroom Representative who makes out the Duty Day schedule. For safety and other reasons, please do not bring siblings with you to school on your Duty Day. Please make other arrangements for them. The children and the teachers need your full attention in order for the classroom to run smoothly. If for any reason you cannot do your Duty Day, it is your responsibility to find another Child's Play parent in your class to take your place. You may not send baby-sitters, grandparents, relatives or anyone other than another Child's Play parent to take your place. The teacher should be informed when substitutions or switches are made.

On your Duty Day please bring in fruit, cut-up vegetables, cheese and a healthy carbohydrate. (See snack policy.)

SUBSTITUTE SCHEDULE

A substitute schedule is prepared for the toddler, nursery and preschool classes by the class rep. The substitute duty parent is needed if the **teacher or teacher's assistant is unable to attend** school due to illness or emergency. If you are unable to make your duty day, you are responsible for finding a replacement other than the substitute parent.

PLAYGROUND POLICIES and SAFE PLAYGROUND HABITS

POLICIES

1. No child is allowed outside or in the playground without an adult.
2. Children are not allowed out of the playground except when accompanied by an adult.
3. An adult must accompany children when going to the bathroom or into the building for any reason.
4. Parent/person who is taking the child home must tell the teacher or assistant teacher when a child is leaving.
5. Gates must be closed at all times.
6. PLEASE KEEP THE PATHWAY CLEAR AT ALL TIMES - No one is allowed to congregate on the pathway from the playground fence to the building door. If parents/guardians must wait for children, they must do so along the fence parallel to the street or wait in their cars.
7. Children in the playground are the responsibility of the staff until formal dismissal time (12:00/1:45). If you'd like to stay longer with your child you must come into the playground with your child. He/she is now your responsibility.
8. ***When parents pick up their child and leave the playground, they must keep safety in mind.*** Children shall not be allowed to run or play on the sidewalk, in nearby driveways, on neighbors' lawns, etc. This creates a very dangerous situation as well as disrespectful to our neighbors.

SAFE PLAYGROUND HABITS

GENERAL

- We play and run in a safe manner, always being considerate of others.
- No climbing on/over fences, trash bins, kindergarten windowsills, fire stairs, etc. or outside any climbing structures.
- All adults on the playground (staff and duty parents) are there to supervise all areas of the playground and assist as needed - especially the monkey bars, slides, cargo net and climbing wall.

SLIDES

- Wait your turn. Give the person ahead lots of room.
- Slide down feet first, sitting up, one at a time.
- Spiral slide is only for sliding down.
- Small slide shall be used for climbing up and/or sliding down.

CLIMBING APPARATUS – Climbing Wall & Cargo Net

- Only one person at a time.
- Use both hands.
- Stay away from other climbers

MONKEY BARS/OVERHEAD BARS

- Only one person at a time.
- Everybody starts at the same end and goes in the same direction.
- Keep a big space between you and the person in front of you.
- Drop down with knees bent. Try to land on both feet.

SAND BOX

- Sand is for digging and building.
- Sand stays in the sand box, wood chips stay on the ground.

Safety and Security

It is important to ensure the safety and security of all children. Please tell your children never to leave the classroom and or playground alone. The teachers remind the children of these same rules.

Please follow these safety and security protocols for duty days and during drop-off and pick-up:

As a Duty Parent

- Make sure the doors to the classroom are always closed tightly, especially the Toddler/Nursery classroom and front room.
- Make sure the gates to the playground are also closed tightly at all times.
- Remember that children are not allowed to play outside the playground area.
- Keep track of the number of children in the classroom/playground at all times. You should always be counting the children in your head. Ask the teacher which children are absent so you have an accurate count.
- If you take a child to the rest room or to another location at Child's Play, let the teacher or teacher assistant know where you are going and who is going with you so that the teacher or teacher assistant can adjust their count.

At Drop-off and Pick-up

- If you drop-off and/or pick-up your child in the classroom, always close the door behind you when arriving and departing.
- Make sure children don't leave the classroom at these times. If you see a child leave the classroom, tell the teacher immediately or go after the child yourself.
- If you happen to notice an unattended child in the hallway or bathroom, please help the child back to their classroom or stay with the child until the child finishes in the bathroom and then escort the child back to their classroom.
- If you enter the playground during drop-off or pick-up, always close the gate behind you.
- Always have a watchful eye for children who may get out of the play yard.
- If you see a child wander from the pick-up lines, please guide them back to their teacher.

SAFETY and HEALTH POLICIES

I. SAFETY POLICIES

The staff is informed of safety rules, special hazards and commonly occurring accidents. They receive instruction on evacuation procedures, use of fire extinguishers and how to report an accident.

A. PREVENTION

1. SUPERVISION POLICY

The children are under direct adult supervision at all times. The teaching staff supervise primarily by sight and sound.

Child: staff ratios are always in compliance with licensing regulations and NAEYC standards. These standards are:

<u>AGE/CLASS</u>	<u>NAEYC</u>	<u>CHILD'S PLAY</u>	<u>GROUP SIZE</u>	
	<i>Child: Staff Ratio</i>		<i>C.P</i>	<i>NAEYC</i>
2's/Toddlers	4:1	<4:1	10	8
3's/Nursery	8:1	5:1	15	16
4's/Preschool	10:1	5:1	20	20
		(EXT. DAY 8:1)	15	

The play yard is fenced, and no child is allowed outside to play unless there is a staff member or other adult present.

Any time the children leave the building as a group, they are required to walk in an orderly fashion and are accompanied by the staff (and other adults if deemed necessary). Parents are required to bring their children into the building if not using our drop off system with the teacher assistants escorting children into school. No child is allowed to go out to a car alone.

B. EMERGENCIES

1. PHONE TREE

The phone tree is critical to our emergency plan. To make sure we can communicate in case of an emergency, parents are expected to have access to their class list at all times, including during school hours.

2. FIRE OR OTHER BUILDING EMERGENCY

- a. Child's Play conforms to all the fire regulations as designated by the State Fire Marshall. A fire evacuation plan is drawn and posted in each classroom.
- b. The 911 emergency number and exact address of the building are posted by the telephone.
- c. In the event of fire or other building emergency, the building shall be immediately evacuated. The Head Teacher or staff member in charge shall phone the fire department or other appropriate authorities from within the building if it is safe or from another phone. In the event of fire, a designated staff member may attempt to extinguish the fire while the building is being evacuated. All other staff members

are to remain with the children and see them safely to the designated emergency area.

- d. A staff member or duty parent will initiate the phone tree as soon as possible to notify parents.
- e. Our offsite evacuation area is the Wheeler School gym, at the corner of Angell Street and Brook Street. Staff and students would gain access to the gym through Wheeler's main entrance at 216 Hope Street. If possible, a staff member should contact Gary Espisito at the school before coming over at 421-8100 or check in at the main desk (usually staffed by JoAnn Donahue) and ask for him.
- f. There is an exit from the gym onto Brook Street (about 100 feet from the intersection at Angell Street) where the children can be picked up. The process would work in the same manner as pick-up at Child's Play, where parents stay in their cars, pull up to the curb, and a teacher or duty parent brings the child to the car.

3. FIRE DRILLS

- a. Fire drills are regularly held as required by our licensing agencies. The fire alarm system, emergency power pack lights and fire extinguishers are checked yearly for proper function. All staff members know how to use the fire extinguishers.
- b. The staff conducts fire drills. The drill procedure is in the fire drill folder located in the school file cabinet and will be gone over with all staff members at the beginning of the school year or at time of employment. By law we must have 15 drills per year:
 - 8 drills during September, October and November; 2 of the 8 must be obstructed (at least 1 or more exits and stairways are blocked off and not used) and must be conducted during September and October
 - 7 drills (2 of which must be obstructed) must be conducted during the months of December to June at the discretion of the person in charge.

4. NATIONAL EMERGENCY (such as terrorist incident)

- a. Co-president(s) will notify head teacher of emergency. Group will decide whether to dismiss school or maintain regular dismissal time, and initiate phone tree.
- b. Parents should call school only if they can't pick up their child and need to give pickup instructions. Otherwise, parents are asked to wait for phone tree for updates. Of course, they can pick up their child at any time.

5. SHELTERING IN

- a. Child's Play maintains emergency supplies in case students and staff are detained at school by a snowstorm, bioterrorism, or other event.
- b. Supplies include water, food, paper goods, hygiene supplies, first aid supplies, blankets, pillows, flashlights, lanterns, radio, extra batteries and toys.
- c. In the unlikely event of bioterrorism, Child's Play will follow all government instructions including complete building lockdown. To protect children, staff and parents from hazardous exposure, parents should not come to school for their children until the government declares an all clear.

6. POWER FAILURE

Two flashlights in working order are kept in an accessible place. Power pack emergency lights are installed to light each exit.

7. MISSING PERSON

Should a child be missing, staff shall search the immediate Child's Play area and grounds completely. If the child is still not found, the police and parent/guardian shall be notified while staff begins searching the immediate surrounding area.

8. TRANSPORTATION

- a. While transporting children on a field trip, each child is securely buckled into a child's safety device appropriate to his/her age and weight.
- b. If there is more than one vehicle, the drivers should watch out for each other as much as possible. Drivers will have appropriate directions to the destination and a phone number to call if there's a problem.

II. HEALTH POLICIES

Teachers are responsible for insuring that all health policies are met.

A. STAFF HEALTH

1. Prior to employment, each employee must obtain a physical which includes a Mantoux tuberculin skin test by current standards performed not more than six months before the start of employment. The physical and results of the Mantoux must be submitted to the school.
2. If the Mantoux test is positive or a previous one is known to have been positive, the physician's written statement that the tuberculosis is not communicable shall be required.
3. Employees who have a negative Mantoux test at the time of employment and are free of symptoms suggestive of tuberculosis need not have further testing.

B. CHILDREN'S HEALTH

1. HEALTH CARE SUMMARY

Each child is required to have on file a physical exam and health record which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations. The physical should include whatever information the reporting physician deems appropriate, and reporting the presence of any condition or handicap affecting the child's general health. A lead-screening test shall be done annually.

Children cannot enter Child's Play without an immunization record that shows the child has been age appropriately immunized in accordance with the current *Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule* approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)/American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)/American Academy of Family Physicians.

The immunization form is distributed each year in June with the packet of other forms. These forms must be completed and returned to Child's Play before the start of the school year.

Effective August 1, 2005, all students are required to have received one dose of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine on or after his or her first birthday, in accordance with ACIP recommendations.

Exclusions, Waiting Periods and Exemptions

A child may only be exempt from the immunization requirements for one of two reasons:

- A physician, a physician assistant, a certified registered nurse practitioner, or other licensed practitioner signs the Rhode Island Department of Health's "Medical

Immunization Exemption Certificate” (provided by the Child's Play) attesting that the student is exempt from a specific vaccine for medical reasons, OR;

- A parent or guardian completes and signs the Rhode Island Department of Health's “Religious Immunization Exemption Certificate” (provided by Child's Play) attesting that the immunization conflicts with their religious beliefs.

A copy of both forms can be obtained from Child's Play.

The Head Teacher and Co-Presidents will maintain a list of all children who have not completed the minimum vaccinations.

If an outbreak of vaccine -preventable disease should occur, the exempt student will be excluded from school for a period of time as determined by the Medical Advisor, to assure that the exempt child is not at risk. If your child cannot attend school due to an outbreak of the illness you are still financially responsible for tuition.

2. EXCLUSION OF A SICK CHILD

- a. No child who arrives noticeable ill, with a rash or with a fever over 100 shall be admitted for that day. Should a child become ill during the day, he/she will be kept separate from the other children until a parent or authorized person arrives to take the child home.
- b. In the event a child contracts a communicable disease and exposes the other children, notice of such exposure will be posted and parents will be notified when they pick up their children. The sick child will not be allowed to return to school until the contagious period has passed or with a doctor's note.

3. EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION

The school must have on file for each child a signed *Emergency Treatment* form authorizing emergency care and transfer of medical records to the local hospital. Emergency numbers for reaching the parent or guardian and another authorized person must be on file.

4. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- a. The child's parent, guardian or authorized person shall be notified immediately in the event of a serious injury/accident or illness requiring emergency care. A qualified staff member shall administer first aid.
- b. The 911 emergency number is posted by the phone. The local rescue squad or ambulance service shall provide emergency transportation; the local hospital shall provide emergency care.
- c. In the event that a child is transported to the hospital, his/her health record and signed *Emergency Treatment* form shall be sent along. A staff member shall accompany the child until the arrival of parents, guardian or authorized person.
- d. An *Injury-Accident Report* shall be completed for each injury/accident except minor scratches and abrasions. The report shall be made as soon as possible following the injury/accident and no later than the same day. The original report shall be filed in the child's file and one copy shall be filed in the *Injury-Accident Log*. The parent shall be made aware of the injury/accident when picking up his/her child, can discuss it with staff and is given a copy of the report.

5. MEDICATIONS

- a. Any nonprescription medication to be administered at school such as acetaminophen, cough syrup, etc. must be accompanied by the parent's written permission and instructions for use.
- b. Any prescription medication to be administered by a staff member must be in its original container and be labeled. The label is to contain the child's name, physician's name, pharmacist, medication, dosage, frequency, starting date and expiration date if applicable. This information is checked when receiving the medication from the parent. An *Individual Child's Record of Medication Given* is signed by the parent/guardian authorizing its administration.
- c. A schedule of medications is posted on the teacher's closet door. A staff member shall triple check the label before administering the medication – once before opening, once after opening and once after closing the container.
- d. After the medication has been completed, the *Individual Child's Record of Medication Given* shall be filed with the child's health record.

6. GENERAL CLEANLINESS

CLEANING/MAINTAINANCE OF BUILDING

Child's Play maintains a clean, hazard free environment. The facility will be maintained and cleaned according to licensing and NAEYC guidelines. Daily maintenance will be done by staff and parents. Bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized daily and floors vacuumed/swept as part of duty day requirements. Tables are cleaned/disinfected with a bleach solution before serving food and as needed throughout the day. Toys and materials are kept clean as required by licensing and NAEYC standards. Toys that have been placed in the mouth or otherwise contaminated by bodily fluids are washed/disinfected before use by other children. All cleaning materials are used with caution around children and kept out of the reach of children. A cleaning service does the overall, heavy duty cleaning weekly.

Use of hazardous products including pesticides is not allowed when children are present and all precautions are taken to protect children from environmental hazards. When renovations are done to the building the rooms will be adequately ventilated before use of children. Child's Play complies with all regulations and inspections regarding lead, radon, fire code, etc.

HANDWASHING POLICY

All staff and children are taught proper hand-washing procedures. Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Signs are posted at each sink showing the proper hand-washing procedure.

Children and adults wash their hands: when they arrive at school, when coming in from ring or using the toilet, after handling body fluids (blowing/wiping nose, coughing/sneezing on hands, etc), before meals and snacks, before preparing/serving food, after handling pets or other animals or any other activity where hands may get dirty/germs.

Adults also wash their hands after diapering or helping a child with toileting, before and after administering medications, after handling garbage or cleaning, etc. Staff wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.

DIAPERING POLICY

Disposable diapers are to be provided by the family. Diapering will only be done in the designated area (bathroom with the changing table). Surfaces in diapering area will be kept clean and are not used for other purposes. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled and disposed of in a lidded, hands-free container. Diapering procedures are posted in the bathroom as well as cleaning/disinfecting guidelines.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Staff/Parents will follow the universal precautions recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in handling any fluid that might contain blood or other body fluids. Universal precautions require treating all blood and fluids that may contain blood or blood products as potentially infectious. Instructions include: Spills of body fluids, etc should be cleaned up immediately; wear nonporous gloves unless the fluid can be easily contained by the material being used to clean it up; clean and sanitize any surface on to which body fluids have been spilled; discard fluid contaminated material in a plastic bag that has been sealed, wash hands after cleaning up any spill.

PETS POLICY

Each class may have classroom pets during the year or may have times throughout the year when animals may be brought to school. Pets/animals will be safe to have in school, free of disease and properly cared for as stated in licensing and/or NAEYC guidelines. They will be kept in their cages except under direct supervision of the teaching staff. Reptiles/amphibians are not allowed as classroom pets because of risk for salmonella infection or other disease. Program staff make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal. Children and staff will follow proper hand-washing procedures after handling animals.

III. CHILD ABUSE

- A. Should staff suspect possible child abuse or neglect, observations and dates must be documented and reported to the Department of Children, Youth and Families (1-800-RICHILD) in accordance with state law.
- B. Any suspicion of abuse by staff or parent volunteers must be documented and reported immediately to the Head Teacher, Co-Presidents and /or Ed. Advisor. They in turn will confer with the staff member, and then report it to DCYF and the Board of Directors if it's determined that abuse is a possibility.
- C. Procedures outlined by DCYF/State Law must be followed. The staff member will have the opportunity for defense before the Board of Directors.

School Hours

Please make every effort to arrive and depart on time. Coming too early or late to school is hard on children and a disruption to the classroom.

In the event of an emergency that delays you or changes your drop-off/pickup schedule, please call the school immediately to notify the teachers.

If a parent is chronically late for drop-off or pickup, they will be contacted by the teacher and/or Co-Presidents to discuss correcting the problem. Remember, our first priority is ensuring your child's safety and protection.

If you wish to converse with other parents, please remove yourselves from the classroom. It adds to the noise and confusion of the classroom.

Toddler Class

Hours for the Toddler Class are 9:00am to 12:00pm. Parents are asked to walk their child into class any time between 8:55 and 9:05am and pick them up from the classroom any time between 11:55am and 12:05pm.

Nursery and Preschool Classes

Hours for the Nursery and Preschool are 9:00am to 12:00pm. For children enrolled in the Extended Day Preschool, hours are 9:00 to 1:45. Parents may drop children off between 8:55 and 9:05am and pick them up between 11:55am and 12:05pm. Pick up for extended day children is from 1:40 to 1:50pm. (See "Procedures for Arrival and Departure" section for details.)

According to resolution No. 6079 adopted by the Zoning Board of Review 7/24/85, Child's Play, Inc. agrees to drop off children attending the school on Stimson Avenue only. And that we will have a Duty Day parent and/or teachers stationed at the Stimson Avenue entrance to the Central Congregational Church in order to make arrivals and departures as quick and efficient as possible.

Procedures for Arrival and Departures

We have a system for dropping off and picking up your child at Child's Play. *This arrangement is part of our Zoning variance* allowing us to have a school here, so please follow this procedure to the letter!* **Please communicate these procedures to anyone who might be picking up your child.**

Nursery and Preschool Classes

1. The teacher assistant for each class will be stationed on the sidewalk by the play yard on Stimson Avenue between 8:55 and 9:05am. Stay in your car, pull over as far to the right as you can, get in line behind other waiting cars, put on your flashing hazard lights, then pull up when your turn comes. The assistant will then take your child out of your car and into school.
2. For pick-up, the same system holds with a slight variance. The children will be brought outside to wait for dismissal. Stay in your car and your child will be brought to you. Morning dismissal is 12:00p.m. For extended day children in the preschool, dismissal is 1:45pm.
3. Do not park on the left side of Stimson Avenue. Pull as far to the right as possible and leave enough room for traffic to go around you.
4. If you want to go into school yourself or walk your child(ren) in, you must find a *legal parking space*. We do get parking tickets for parking illegally in this area.
5. Do not block anyone's driveway even slightly, even for a minute.
6. Do not position your car in any way so that it obstructs the flow of through traffic on Stimson Avenue or Diman Place. This is for safety as well as courtesy.
7. No double parking and leaving your vehicle!
8. If you come into Child's Play, make sure you take your valuables and lock your car.
9. You may park in the School Loading Zone on Stimson Avenue for 15 minutes only. Put on your flashing hazard lights. However, on Tuesday and Thursday the Toddler Class uses the loading zone between 8:55 – 9:05am and 11:55 – 12:05pm. Preschool families are not to use the loading zone during these times.

Toddler Class

Parents of children in the Toddler Class are asked to park legally and escort their child to and from class. Follow steps 4 through 9 above.

The neighbors in this area are sensitive to the parking and congestion caused during drop-off and pickup times at the school. Also, please be courteous about walking with your child(ren) on the sidewalks and not on adjacent walls and lawns.

*According to resolution No. 6079 adopted by the Zoning Board of Review on 6-24-85, Child's Play agrees that children attending our school will be dropped off on Stimson Ave. only. We will have someone stationed at the Stimson Ave. entrance in order to make the arrivals and departures of the children as quick and efficient as possible.

What to Bring to School

Each child will need a tote bag to transport school papers and projects home safely. Choose one which your child can open and close easily and is big enough to hold lunch or extra wintertime gear. Label it clearly with your child's name.

Please supply an extra change of clothing wrapped in a big ziploc bag or in a shoebox. If your child wears diapers or pull-ups, place a few of these along with the extra clothing. These will be used if your child gets wet or dirty.

Please dress your child every day in comfortable shoes with rubber soles. Remember to apply sunscreen to your child before coming to school. We do spend a lot of time outdoors. If you would like staff to apply sun block when your child is at school please send it along with a note giving permission to put it on your child. A raincoat with a hood is especially helpful on those rainy days in the spring and fall. Teachers try to get the children outside to play even in the winter, so send your child to school in a warm coat, hat and mittens on cold days. Place shoes in the tote bag if your child wears boots to school, and pack ski pants if it is really cold and snowy. One child who is under dressed can keep the whole group inside.

It is helpful to sew a ring or a strip of material onto the inside top of your child's jackets so that the jacket will stay on their coat hook. Jackets placed on the hooks tend to end up on the floor.

*Remember to label everything: coats, hats, sweaters, mittens, boots, ski pants, lunches, everything!

Snow Days

Child's Play follows the Wheeler School snow day cancellations. Listen to WPRO-AM for cancellations. However, as they sometimes are not in session when we are, we will be utilizing the phone tree (see Communications) if you need to be notified of a school cancellation. Child's Play will be cancelled if Wheeler School announces a closure or delayed start due to inclement weather or if there is a Providence Parking Ban in affect.

Fair Weather Dismissal

Preschool will end their day on the play yard when the weather is good. At dismissal time all children will line up and leave the play yard together, even if the parent or caregiver has said that they can stay longer. All children will be delivered to their parent or caregiver. If you would like to linger and let your child play longer, you must then accompany your child into the play yard and are then responsible for their safety.

Please be respectful of class that may still be in session (Preschool Extended Day). Please be extra careful in monitoring younger children. Our equipment is designed for 2-6 year olds. It is only safe for younger children if they are very carefully supervised. Please cover the sandbox and put away all toys if you are the last to leave the play yard.

Winter Outdoor Play

Please send your children to school dressed for outdoor play whenever the temperature is above 30 degrees. Our intention is to have outdoor play if the weather conditions allow for it. The teachers will use discretion to determine whether outdoor play is appropriate based upon the conditions of the playground (wet/icy) and other weather factors (wind chill). The Nursery children need to be wearing hats, mittens, winter coats, snow pants and boots when they arrive at school so they can start their day on the playground. The other classes should also have these items in their tote bags or should wear them into school.

Policies and Operating Procedures

General Information

Child's Play, Inc. is a non-profit, nonsectarian play school located in the Central Congregational Church building at 296 Angell Street in Providence, RI 02906. It is a cooperative school. The administration of the school is accomplished by parents who are elected to a Board of Directors and an Executive Board. Parents are required to assist the teachers in the classroom, provide transportation for field trips and serve on at least one of the committees organized by the Board of Directors to do the work necessary to run the school.

The school facilities include two fully equipped classrooms, an outdoor play yard and a basement recreation room.

School hours are as follows: Toddlers meet on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00am – 12:00pm. Nursery meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Preschool meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00am – 12:00pm.. In addition to that schedule, there is a 4 or 5-day Preschool Class option and an extended day option available on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday where the children stay until 1:45pm.

The school calendar approximates that of the Providence Public School System.

In accordance with the report of the Building Inspector's Office from 9/16/85, there will be no night time classes at our school as long as we are located at 296 Angell Street.

Child's Play, Inc. will comply with the requirements of the General Education Law 16-48 for the Education of Very Young Children, including the mandated fingerprinting, criminal records check, employment history, DCYF check and tuberculin skin test required of anyone who works or assists at the school as required by state law.

Open Door Policy

Although our door is locked for security reasons, parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom anytime throughout the school day.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Child's Play does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of gender, race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Tuition

Tuition is determined annually by the Executive Board and is payable either annually, semi-annually, or monthly. Please refer to the **Withdrawal Policy/Tuition Payment Schedule** for further details. Families who are chronically late with tuition will jeopardize their child's position in the school.

Teachers

Child's Play employs two teachers and three assistant teachers for the Toddler, Nursery and Preschool classes.

Educational policy is determined by the teachers and the Board of Directors in compliance with Standards for Approval for Educational Programs for the Very Young set by the RI State Department of Education and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Our teaching staff encourages parents to speak with them at any time about issues concerning their children. Open and direct communication between parents and teachers benefits everyone – parents, teachers, and most importantly, the children! Any concerns or sensitive issues can be referred to the Co-Presidents.

Orientation/Training of New Staff and Duty Parents

All new staff and families will attend orientation which includes reviewing the goals and philosophy of the program, policies and procedures, NAEYC accreditation guidelines, tour of facility, and duty day guidelines. In addition, parents receive a packet of information pertaining to their child's classroom which includes more guidelines for working in the classroom and more training as needed. Staff receives additional training with the head teacher and/or educational advisor as needed.

Parent Duty Days

Parents will be provided with a Duty Day schedule and a more detailed listing of responsibilities while assisting the teacher in the classroom. The following gives an overview of responsibilities. On Duty Days parents should arrive at school by 8:40 a.m. in order to help the teacher set up the classroom and help escort children into school (who are dropped off beginning at 8:55). Parents are finished with their Duty Day when all the children in their class have been picked up and when the classroom is in order and equipment is put away. Please refer to the Arrival and Departure Procedure for more details. Each class has a Classroom Representative who makes out the Duty Day schedule. For safety and other reasons, please do not bring siblings with you to school on your Duty Day. Please make other arrangements for them. The children and the teachers need your full attention in order for the classroom to run smoothly. If for any reason you cannot do your Duty Day, it is your responsibility to find another Child's Play parent in your class to take your place. You may not send baby-sitters, grandparents, relatives, or anyone other than another Child's Play parent to take your place. The teacher should be informed when substitutions or switches are made.

Confidentiality

Student's records are open only to the particular student's teacher and/or assistant teacher, the head teacher and/or educational advisor, an authorized employee of the licensing agency, the co-presidents, or other authorities (health dept, NAEYC assessors, etc) as deemed necessary by the teacher; and to the child's parent or legal guardian. No information will be given to outside resources, programs, etc, without written consent from parent.

Staff personnel records are open only to that staff member, the head teacher, educational advisor, an authorized employee of the licensing agency or other authorities (health dept, NAEYC assessors, etc) or the co-presidents.

Insurance

The school has liability insurance in accordance with state law. However, neither the school nor the Central Congregational Church will be held liable for any injury to a child or an adult above the amount of the liability insurance. Neither will the school or the Church be responsible for loss or damage to personal property.

Section 7-6-9 of the RI General Laws is the statute that protects volunteers and Board members of non-profits from liability for conduct in the execution of their duties, except for malicious, willful or wanton misconduct and for claims arising out of operation of a motor vehicle.

Finances

The financial support of the school comes from tuition, fees and fundraising. Child's Play, Inc. is a non-profit organization and all of its resources go toward the running of the school.

Forms

The Board of Directors will determine the content of all forms necessary for the school (application, health, tuition, etc.).

Field Trips

Parental permission must be obtained before any child may go on a field trip. Prior to each field trip, a permission slip will be sent home for the parent to sign and must be returned to the teacher before the trip. Parents will be notified in advance of all field trips so that those who do not wish to participate can make other arrangements for their child for that day. When driving or riding on a field trip, parents should make other arrangements for siblings unless they are specifically invited. Parents transporting children on field trips must have liability insurance and there should be two parents in the car with the exception of short local trips.

Articles of Association and By-Laws

The Board of Directors will keep an updated copy of the Articles of Association. All Parents are issued a copy of the by-laws in the handbook.

Expense Reimbursement Policy

If you incur any costs related to Child's Play business, please follow our Expense reimbursement Policy, as follows:

- Complete the **Request for Payment Form** in the School Post Office, and attach all receipts to it including a description of the expense. You **will not** receive reimbursement if the paperwork is not completed properly. Place the completed form with attached receipts in the Treasurer's mailbox in the School Post Office. The Assistant Treasurer is responsible for preparing and distributing any checks for reimbursement.
- **All expenses over \$100 must be approved by the Co-Presidents.** Please place completed forms in the Co-Presidents mailbox for all expenses over \$100. All other completed forms go in the Treasurer's box.
- Please use the sales tax exempt letter for Rhode Island to avoid paying sales taxes.

Admissions

Admission is open to all without regard to race, creed or nationality. Children are accepted according to date of application with the exception that an attempt will be made to maintain a balanced ratio of girls and boys. Priority is also given to the siblings of children already enrolled in the school as well as to alumni families.

Currently, there is a maximum of 10 children in the Toddler Group, 15 in the Nursery class, and 20 in the Preschool class. Class sizes may be enlarged or reduced at any time at the discretion of the teachers, the Board of Directors of the school and the Board of Education. There is a limit of ten children in the preschool on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4-day option and 5-day option, respectively. There is a maximum of fifteen children in the preschool for extended day option.

As part of the admissions process, all new and alumni family members who plan to perform duty days must complete a complete background check, fingerprinting, and a TB test. Alumni families are those that have been away from Child's Play for at least one year.

Pregnancy does not exempt a parent from TB test requirement. This test is necessary in order for Child's Play to be fully compliant with DCYF and RI Department of Health Requirements. As part of the TB test, you are injected with only a protein and not the bacteria into your skin to see if there is a reaction. You cannot get TB from the skin test. If a parent is unable to complete the TB Test, they will be excluded from Duty Days until they have successfully taken the TB test (revised 2011).

Exceptions to Age Requirements

Teachers may determine if a child currently enrolled in Child's Play should be placed in a class not appropriate for their age for educational reasons.

Application

Parents of children wishing to apply may visit the school by appointment with the Tour Director. Applications can be downloaded from the school website (childsplayri.org), obtained at the time of the tour or requested by calling or writing to the school.

Completed applications and a \$40.00 non-refundable application fee should be sent to:

Child's Play, Inc.
c/o Central Congregational Church
296 Angell Street
Providence, RI 02906
Attn: Vice President of Admissions

Application fees are waived for siblings of current families when registering for the next school year and alumni families. Effective 2010-2011, the application fee will also be waived for families opting to reapply their child for the school year immediately following a year in which they had been placed on a waiting list.

Upon notification of your child's acceptance to Child's Play, a deposit is required to reserve your child's place. This deposit is non-refundable if your plans change, but otherwise is applied toward tuition.

Entering After the School Year Begins

The Admission Procedure for a child entering Child's Play after the school year is as follows:

1. Admissions will notify family on waitlist of an opening, subject to child's visit day in the class.
2. Family will tour facility with Tour Director and meet with teacher and class representative.
3. Child will spend a day in the classroom. Teacher will determine whether the child is compatible with the existing class and how the child will make the transition.
4. Teacher will notify Admissions after the child's visit day to determine whether child will be accepted.
5. Admissions will notify family of acceptance and contact tuition collector to coordinate tuition payment with new family. Admissions will coordinate all other necessary paperwork with new family and update class list.

Policy for Filling a Vacancy After the Start of the School Year

If there is a vacancy after the start of the school year, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The family that is withdrawing will notify Vice-President Admissions immediately of the withdrawal date.
2. Vice-President Admissions and Tuition Collector will determine whether the family is entitled to any tuition refund in accordance with the Withdrawal Policy. The Co-Presidents will confirm the refund amount and authorize the Assistant Treasurer to prepare a check. The check will be prepared two weeks before the withdrawal date.
3. Communication to the class affected by the vacancy will come from Vice-President Admissions.
4. Vice-President Admissions will follow procedure for child entering after the start of the school year.
5. Vacancies that occur after March 1 will not be filled. Any exceptions will go to the Board.
6. Vice-President Admissions will exhaust the wait list by starting with the date of application and balance within the existing class after consulting the appropriate teacher.

Health Policy

At the beginning of the year parents will be informed about the school's health policies, via this notice and discussion during parent orientation sessions. In order to maintain a healthy environment, we ask that you do not bring your child to school if he/she is showing signs of illness. Some symptoms to look for are:

- A temperature of over 100 degrees
- Runny/red eyes
- Vomiting
- Unexplained rash or severe itching
- Two or more cold symptoms, cough, runny nose, congestion, sore throat, sneezing.

The child should also be kept home when he/she has any contagious disease or condition. A chart of contagious diseases is posted at the school. But some common ones are:

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Symptoms</u>
Chickenpox	fever, rash consisting of blisters
Gastroenteritis	stomach ache, nausea and diarrhea
Conjunctivitis	red eyes with thick, crusty discharge
Strep Throat	fever, sore throat
Scarlet Fever	fine, red rash 1-3 days after sore throat

The school should be notified if any child develops a contagious disease so that other parents can be warned.

If the child is at school and becomes ill, the parent (or designated alternate) will be telephoned. This will be done for any contagious disease and for fever, vomiting, diarrhea or if the child just doesn't seem like his/herself (e.g. cranky, lethargic, etc) as determined by the teacher. If we are unable to reach the parents or designated alternate, or while waiting for that person to arrive, we have an isolation room we can use to separate the sick child from the group (with a duty parent present).

A child found to have lice will be sent home. Two teachers will verify seeing evidence on a child's head. The treatment will be selected and administered by the parents. Children must be nit free to return to school. If the problem is first noticed at home, parents must notify the child's teacher. The teacher will notify all parents and head checks will be done on all students until the issue has been resolved. Classrooms will also be thoroughly cleaned as needed.

Policy on Administering Medicine

No medicine of any kind will be administered to any child during the school without the express, written consent of the parent. This must include written instructions (signed note or prescription label) from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that child and the medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's first and last name, dose, frequency, method to be used, duration of administration and date of expiration or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it. All medications are kept in a locked container.

Children with known serious allergies that require the use of an EpiPen or other health risks/chronic conditions that need special care (asthma, diabetes, etc.) must have written documentation from a licensed health provider and written guidelines as to how to care for that child.

AIDS Policy

Adopted by vote of Board of Directors May, 1996

The Board of Directors of Child's Play, Inc. recognized the social issues and health concerns presented by the AIDS virus. In order to protect the welfare of all children and school personnel, to safeguard the privacy of any child who tests positive for HIV, and to prevent discrimination against any person with positive HIV, the Board adopted this policy:

1. All teachers and parents will use surgical gloves whenever treating an injured child who is bleeding.
2. Kleenex or other material with blood on it may be disposed of in ordinary waste containers.
3. The parents of an infected child shall notify the Co-Presidents of the child's condition. The Co-Presidents shall be the only people informed.
4. Any incident of biting or possible contamination shall be reported to the Co-Presidents who will take such action as is necessary to protect the parties involved.
5. Child's Play, Inc. does not discriminate against any child or employee on the basis of that individual having tested positive for the HIV virus.

Nutrition Policy

Food Preparation, Serving and Storage

Snack is provided daily by duty or snack parents in keeping with our nutrition policy and allergy guidelines when needed. We also keep a reserve of crackers, raisins, peanut butter, etc to supplement as needed. We provide bottled water as the beverage and as needed throughout the day. Children staying for lunch bring lunch from home. We do not prepare meals or serve a hot lunch. We do make recommendations to parents as to healthy lunch suggestions and ways to package it using thermos, ice packs, etc to keep it hot/cold.

As part of our curriculum we do cooking projects with children during the year. We follow good health/nutrition and food safety guidelines including proper hand-washing before working with foods and keeping hot foods and liquids out of the reach of children.

Snacks are an important part of our children's diets and daily experience at school. We always try to provide healthful snacks which promote good eating habits. The following guidelines should be used when bringing in snacks from home, on special occasions or duty days.

Snacks Should:

- Represent a range of food groups and have some variety (i.e. not graham crackers every day).
- Be quick and easy to prepare for duty parents and teacher (unless preparation of the snack is a special activity).
- Juice should be 100% fruit juice.
- Be available for children with specific allergies such as milk, eggs, peanuts, etc. In these cases parents will suggest snacks for their children so they feel included in the group.
- Contain whole grain products whenever possible (i.e. whole wheat, oats, etc.).

Snack Should Not:

- Contain synthetic sweeteners (aspartame, saccharin or sorbitol).
- Contain additives, preservatives or artificial colors.

Please Keep to a Minimum:

- Excessive amounts of sugar (special occasions are an exception).
- Cottonseed or tropical oils.
- Chocolate.

Foods Not Allowed For under 4 years old:

- Hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds
- Whole grapes
- Nuts
- Popcorn
- Hard pretzels
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter
- Chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole

Snack Ideas:

For Duty Parents: fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, perishables which can't be served as everyday snacks due to spoilage.

For Snack Coordinators: fruit juice sweetened cookies, low sugar cookies, peanut butter, trail mix, dried fruits, seeds, popcorn, pretzels, goldfish crackers, grahams.

Food Allergies and/or Other Dietary Requests:

If your child has a known food allergy, please alert your child's teacher and the Co-presidents prior to the start of the school year. Severe allergies may require the initiation of a restricted snack list for a particular class, classroom or for the entire school. The health and safety of all children is our first priority.

Please discuss any other special dietary requests (vegetarian, religious, etc.) with your teacher prior to the start of the school year. You and your teacher will create a plan that enables your child to follow his/her special diet while at school. This might include reasonable accommodations to the snack routine, educating families about your child's diet so they may provide appropriate snacks when practicable, and/or providing your child's own snacks from home.

Procedures for Implementing Any Dietary Changes

A more detailed request for information on any dietary restrictions will be placed in the Teacher Information Package sent with registration materials. When a parent informs the school of a request for dietary modification on the Teacher Info Form:

1. The teacher and parent will discuss the implications for accommodation of the restriction in practice (i.e. how it will affect the class) prior to the start of school and create a proposed plan.
2. The teacher will take the plan to the Head Teacher, Co-Pres., Class Rep, Ed Advisor and discuss and approve. If there are changes, these will be discussed and agreed to with the parent.
3. If necessary, the teacher will send home information to the class prior to school about how snack will be handled in the class (i.e. if school will purchase the snack, list of appropriate snacks, etc.)
4. The accommodation plan is presented and discussed with the class at the Orientation Meeting and Open House.

Discipline Policy

The purpose of discipline is to teach children acceptable behavior. All adults supervising the children are to be models of non-violent and courteous behavior, and any child's misbehavior will be dealt with in a prompt brief and problem-solving way. Child's Play does not allow its teachers or any adults helping in the classrooms to use physical punishment, verbal or emotional abuse against any child attending the school.

Rules of the room are discussed with the children at the beginning of the year. Daily reminders are given as well. These rules are

1. Playing safely to avoid hurting self and others, such as not pushing carriages and trucks fast around the room, not raising long blocks over one's head.
2. Showing respect for other people's productions, such as being careful not to damage other people's buildings or art work.
3. Asking for turns rather than using force to get a toy. It is emphasized that adults will try to prevent anyone from getting hurt or hurting someone else.

Reminders in the form of discussions are given to individuals and/or the group when necessary. The approach is one of problem solving; e.g. "it's not much fun to play if you are always afraid someone is going to take away what you are playing with, or knock you down, or break your building." "What can we do to keep play fun?" Children are taught to talk out their problems, to use words instead of actions. For example, to say "I don't want to be chased" or "I'm angry because you knocked down my building" – instead of hitting or using physical means.

Reprimands are brief. Shaming and guilt inducements are never used. Alternative modes for acting are suggested. Children are taught to deal directly with others when possible, rather than using teacher/adult mediation. They are taught to turn to the teacher/adult when their own efforts are unsuccessful.

When Specific situations occur, the teacher will assess the child's individual needs for guidance and use the most appropriate technique for the situation. Some may need conflict resolution, guidance in sorting their feelings and thoughts, or redirection; others may need time alone to refocus. Examples of situations and possible techniques are as follows:

Children who are behaving in a disruptive but not necessarily aggressive way are usually led to a table and engaged in a quiet activity for a short period of time. This gives the child a chance to settle down and focus on an activity. When this activity is completed, the child is usually ready to go on to an activity of his/her choice.

Sometimes a child will become quite angry or upset about a situation and is unable to be reasoned with or to discuss the problem. After the teacher has tried to calm the child and discuss the problem, the teacher may suggest that the child go off to a quiet place in the room such as the book corner to sit and get him/herself together and that when he/she is ready to join in the activities then he/she may do so.

Occasionally a child is aggressive towards others. Any such problem is dealt with promptly. The rules of the room are reviewed and it will be explained to the child that he/she needs some time away from the group and/or activity to calm down. A short period of time (2 – 4 minutes) is sufficient to give the child a chance to get control of him/herself. At that time, the teacher will discuss the incident with the child. If the incident resulted in injury to another child, the teacher will inform the parents of both children involved. It will be made clear that the teacher is dealing with the problem in the classroom.

If a child continues an aggressive or disruptive behavior (such as biting, pinching, hitting, kicking, abusive language ...) beyond what is deemed acceptable by the teacher, the following steps will take place:

1. The teacher will contact the parent. They will talk about the issue to gather information, discuss some strategies to use and work together to resolve the issue. The Head Teacher will be informed. If the aggressive behavior repeatedly involves a particular child, the teacher will contact the child's parent(s). Appropriate strategies for comforting and self-defense will be discussed. The parent(s) of that child will be informed that the school is working with the other child's parent(s), and they will be updated periodically on progress within the classroom.
2. If the behavior continues and/or escalates, the teacher will consult with the Head Teacher and the Educational Advisor. The parent(s) will be asked to meet in person with the teacher to a) review the behavior, b) develop a plan of action, and c) set appropriate goals. If appropriate, the Head Teacher or Educational Advisor will sit in on this meeting. The teacher will address the issue in the classroom using developmentally appropriate practices and possibly at the parental level (i.e., classroom meeting, articles/handouts, letter sent home...)
3. If the plan of action developed by the parents and staff in Step 2 is not working, a meeting between the teacher, parent(s), Head Teacher and/or Educational Advisor will be arranged. This meeting will include a thorough review of the situation and may lead to recommendations for screening, counseling, and/or contact with other outside resources. Once these screenings occur, recommendations may be made by specialists and implemented in the classroom.
4. If after these steps we are unable to meet the needs of the child, a recommendation will be made to the Board by the teacher and Educational Advisor to remove the child from the school.

Advertising, Promotions and Information Sharing Within the Co-op

Child's Play has always been a place where different ideas can be shared. Each family brings a unique perspective and background to the co-op. To encourage community building and information flow, there are a number of ways to disseminate information among families in the school.

*Current Child's Play families: Ways to inform the co-op of upcoming events **you're involved in**, seek support for races/walks/swims to benefit other non-profits, or to promote your own business/service, include:*

- Posting a flyer, business card, or other material on the bulletin board in the lobby entrance or placing flyers on the table outside Mona's room.
- Stuffing cubbies with printed information (please double check with the teachers—they may choose to include the information with the week in review or find a more appropriate time to send it home).
- Emailing the entire co-op is permissible. If the email is related to co-op events or activities, the co-presidents can send it out. If it is from you personally, you may send it to all or portions of the co-op.
- Submitting an item to the "At the Fence" column, which runs in the Child's Play newsletter.

Child's Play Alumni and Friends of Child's Play: A good place to advertise a business/restaurant/program you care about, share a babysitter, etc. is in the "At the Fence" column. The newsletter editors are usually looking for tidbits and input is appreciated. Please do not use the cubbies or email for this type of information sharing. However, you may post non-Child's Play information on the bulletin board in the lobby entrance or place flyers on the table outside Mona's room.

Non Child's Play activities (i.e., individuals, businesses or organizations who contact Child's Play directly and do not have a Child's Play connection) will not have access to cubbies or the email list, which is confidential. However, they may post non-Child's Play information on the bulletin board in the lobby entrance or place flyers on the table outside Mona's room.

Please use your discretion. Though we are happy to share ideas we do not want co-op families to feel burdened or pressured by too many solicitations.

This system can be reviewed and revised at any time if the co-op determines that members are not acting responsibly.

Surplus Policy and Procedures

Pursuant to the Long Rang Planning Surplus Proposal approved at the 2004 January All School Meeting, the following policy outlines the procedures for calculating the co-op's surplus, as well as allocating and disbursing the surplus monies, on an annual basis

I. Annual Surplus Calculation

At the close of each fiscal year (July 31), the Treasurer shall calculate the surplus. The surplus shall equal the difference between the assets (which equal the amount of cash in all of the checking and money market accounts) and 75%, or nine months, of the projected annual operating expenses for the following fiscal year.

II. Accounts for the Surplus Monies

If a surplus is calculated in any year, the Treasurer shall calculate the percentage share of the surplus to be deposited in each of the surplus accounts, as follows:

- (a) Facility/ Classroom Improvements Account = 20% of surplus
- (b) Enrichment Programs Account = 10% of surplus
- (c) Surplus Investment Account = 20% of surplus

The remaining 50% of the surplus shall be used for Teacher Benefits, as set forth in Section IV, below.

III. Withdrawals from Surplus Accounts

(a) Facility /Classroom Improvements

The monies in this account, per the LRP approved proposal, are for extra supplies and materials for the classroom, or classroom equipment. These monies are for items *not* already included as part of the itemized and designated in the budget as "Teacher's Budget" and/or "Teacher's Supplies."

Withdrawals from this account require Head Teacher approval, after consultation with the Ed Advisor. Any withdrawals made during a month shall be reported to the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting. Any withdrawals for an expenditure of greater than \$500 for a single item shall require prior approval of the majority of the Board.

(b) Enrichment Programs

The monies in this account, per the LRP approved proposal, are for programs to enhance professional development, diversity awareness, and special classroom programs and projects.

Withdrawals from this account require Head Teacher approval, after consultation with the Ed Advisor. Any withdrawals made during a month shall be reported to the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting. Any withdrawals for an expenditure of greater than \$500 for a single program, or item, shall require prior approval of the majority of the Board.

(c) Surplus Investment

The monies in this account, per the LRP approved proposal, have been deposited at with Citizen's Investment Services Corporation, a brokerage company, into mutual funds. In an emergency, the monies in this account may be used to fund other surplus account programs upon prior approval of the majority of the Board.

IV. Teacher Benefits

The total amount of 50% of the surplus calculated toward Teacher Benefits shall be allocated to each teacher based on that teacher's yearly earnings for the prior school year (the prior fiscal year total). The Treasurer shall divide each teacher's yearly earnings by the total salary expense to calculate each teacher's respective benefit percentage share. A teacher's benefit share shall be calculated and designated for that teacher, even if that teacher is not returning to Child's Play in the next school year.

Head Teacher

DCYF and DOE require schools to “have at least one head teacher who shall be responsible for the development and implementation of the educational/developmental curriculum and program, the organization of children’s groups and staff performance. In centers with a total maximum capacity of more than 40 children this position shall be a full-time position.” At Child’s Play this position will be defined as in the listed responsibilities and job description.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Head Teacher will perform his/her required duties within a 30 hour work week as follows:
 - The Head Teacher will be present on site during most school hours; not less than 20 hours per week.
 - The Head Teacher will be out of his/her classroom not more than 1 hour per week and only when required adult/child ratios can be maintained.
 - The Head Teacher will provide regular supervision and annual evaluations of all staff with the opportunity for and consideration of parent feedback. Evaluation summaries will be made available to the Co-Presidents.
2. The Head Teacher will be responsible for disseminating, and relaying all regulatory/licensing guidelines to the Board. The Head Teacher will inform the Board of any instances where the Co-op is not in compliance with DCYF or DOE regulations.
3. While an environment of constructive input from Co-op parents is encouraged, the Head Teacher will have the authority and responsibility for developing and implementing the educational/developmental curriculum of the program.
4. The Head Teacher will follow the educational/developmental philosophy stated in the Child’s Play mission Statement and Guiding Principles. The Head Teacher will notify the Board of any curriculum changes that differ from our play-centered philosophy.
5. The Board maintains the right to designate the Head Teacher for the Co-op, as well as the right to hire or terminate any staff member including the Head Teacher.
6. The Head Teacher will be compensated based on experience, qualifications, hourly commitment and responsibilities.

Head Teacher Job Description

PROGRAM

1. Ensure the educational philosophy of the school is maintained including educating parents and staff in that philosophy
2. Supervise educational programs of and curriculum planning for all classrooms
3. Has input in and final approval of educational policies
4. Responsible for licensing renewals
5. Schedule and meet with licensing inspectors
6. Ensure that regular emergency drills are conducted

ENVIRONMENT

1. Oversee and monitor classroom design (make sure classroom environments are appropriate) and environmental safety
2. Guide and monitor building and playground committee
3. Order all school equipment and materials

STAFF

1. Participate in the recruitment, selection and, if necessary, termination of staff
2. Oversee staff files (medical, criminal record check, CANTS, professional development)
3. Assist with staff orientation
4. Observe, supervise, evaluate and provide guidance for staff
5. Facilitate staff meetings

RESPONSIBILITIES TO BOARD

1. Attend board meetings
2. Participate in planning meetings and committee work as necessary
3. Serve as educational advisor for administrative issues
4. Work with co-presidents on administrative jobs which have impact on the educational program

Educational Advisor Position

In 1997 the Co-op hired an Educational Advisor on a part time basis. The structure of a co-op creates unique and very real challenges:

- Parents are “administrators” in an educational environment
- “Administrators” change from year to year
- Parents are both employers and co-workers to staff

Understanding that parents play these dual and occasionally conflicting roles, the Co-op decided to hire an advisor with professional expertise in early childhood education to serve as a resource and objective third party.

The Ed. Advisor is a source of continuity and an invaluable facilitator of communication. This provides an objective voice to the Co-op and facilitates positive change. Teachers, parents and students are all served by the expertise of the advisor.

The Ed. Advisor job description has evolved into a core set of responsibilities that are essential to providing this kind of support to the Co-op. This was voted in as a permanent position in 2000.

Core Competencies

- Credentials in early childhood education
- Experience in a variety of early childhood settings
- Broad knowledge in the field of early childhood education
- Communication/facilitation skills
- Accreditation facilitation
- Teacher and curricula evaluation
- Supervision skills
- Skills in working with parents

Educational Advisor Job Description

Head Teacher Support:

1. Mentor – act as a sounding board/professional resource to Head Teacher as needed
2. Act as a resource for professional development
3. Supervision and evaluation of Head Teacher

Staff Support:

1. Attend bi-monthly teacher meetings at discretion of Ed Advisor and/or Head Teacher
2. Attend all full staff meetings (approximately 4/year)
3. Perform staff training twice per year
4. Establish familiarity with, and understanding of, each classroom’s dynamics
5. Attend classroom meetings at end of each All School meeting

Educational/Developmental Consultation/Expertise:

1. Provide educational/developmental perspective for specific classroom issues (i.e. behavioral and developmental issues).
2. Advise parents of outside resources for individual special educational needs.
3. Mediate and/or facilitate communication between staff and parents, or parents and parents, around classroom issues if necessary.
4. Assist in communicating Child's Play Philosophy:
 - a. "Child's Play Philosophy" (on early learning) presentation at fall orientation
 - b. "Play and Learn" presentation at 1st All School meeting

Co-op Support:

1. Support Co-Presidents as requested on issues related to the educational program; and administrative and co-op issues.
2. Attend Board, Long Range and Finance meetings
3. Attend other committee meetings at the discretion of the Co-Presidents and/or Head Teacher
4. Attend All School meetings:
 - a. Be visible at meeting as resource for parent questions
 - b. May have opportunity to present information, staff training updates, relevant community events, etc.

Continuity/Transition:

1. Work with out-going and in-coming Co-Presidents to assist in transition.
2. Develop and implement Class Rep Training.
3. Attend Orientation Planning Meeting
4. Attend Board/Transition Meeting

Accountability:

1. Ed. Advisor will maintain on-going communication with the Co-Presidents
2. Ed. Advisor will periodically meet with the Co-Presidents
3. Ed. Advisor will present summary of work-to-date at December Board Meeting and a written summary at May Board Meeting providing accounting of specific job tasks
4. Ed. Advisor will notify Co-Presidents at mid year if all stated goals are at risk of not being completed for any reason
5. Co-Presidents will solicit input from Head Teacher, Staff and Committee Chairs (having direct contact with the Ed. Advisor) and will provide evaluation and feedback to the Ed. Advisor in December and June

Withdrawal Policy/Tuition Payment Schedule

Upon notification of your child’s acceptance to Child’s Play, a **non-refundable registration deposit (one month’s tuition)** is required to reserve your child’s place. This registration deposit is non-refundable, if you withdraw your child at any time, but otherwise applies toward tuition.

If your child is withdrawn from Child’s Play before June 1, this registration deposit is non-refundable.

If your child is withdrawn after June 1, a minimum of two months of tuition is non-refundable in addition to the aforementioned registration deposit. Families who withdraw after June 1 will also be accountable for as many months of tuition as transpire between June 1 and the notification date of withdrawal.

For example, if you notify the school on August 1 that a child will not attend, you are responsible for four months of tuition payments (this include the registration deposit). The chart detailed below demonstrates the months of non-refundable tuition based upon your child’s withdrawal date, if any.

MONTHS OF NON-REFUNDABLE TUITION DEPENDING UPON WITHDRAWAL DATE

Withdrawal Date	Months of Non-refundable Tuition
March – June 1	1
June 2 – June 30	3
July 1 – July 31	4
August 1 – August 31	4
September 1 – September 30	5
October 1 – October 31	6
November 1 – November 30	7
December 1 – December 31	8
January 1 – January 31	9
February 1 – February 28	10
March 1 – March 31	10
April 1 – April 30	10
May 1 – May 31	10
June 1 and after	10

Please note this policy applies to all members of the Child’s Play cooperative regardless of when you notify the school of withdrawal, or the reasons for withdrawing. Unfortunately, we cannot grant exceptions for situations such as when a family is transferred out of state, or chooses to apply or transfer to another school. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, however, for reasons such as if severe illness of the child results in withdrawal. If you are faced with such a situation, please contact the Co-Presidents as soon as possible.

Tuition Payment Schedule

A non-refundable registration deposit of 10% (one month’s tuition) is due on or about March 10 (or upon acceptance to the school) to hold your child’s place. Our tuition is based upon a ten-month school year. The monthly tuition rate is determined by dividing the total tuition rate for the year by 10 months and rounded to the nearest dollar.

If tuition rates for the upcoming school year are not finalized by the March registration period, then a retroactive adjustment will be assessed to later payments (April, May or June) as necessary. If necessary, revised tuition bills (including the necessary retroactive adjustment, if any) will be forwarded as soon as final rates have been determined.

You may then select one of three tuition payment plans: Annual, Semi-annual or Monthly. The payment schedule is detailed below, as follows:

TUITION PAYMENT PLANS

Payment Due Date	Annual Plan	Semi-Annual Plan	Monthly Plan
Feb/March Registration Period/Acceptance Date to School	1 month	1 month	1 month
April 1			1 month
May 1	9 months	4 months	1 month
June 1			1 month
July 1			1 month
August			1 month
September 1		5 months	1 month plus \$20.00 fee*
October 1			1 month
November 1			1 month
December 1			1 month
Total number of payments	2 payments	3 payments	10 payments

All payments are due on the first of any month. Reminders will not be sent out so mark your calendars with the due dates and amounts due or enroll in your bank’s auto payment plan.

A grace period of 10 days is given, however, if your payment is not received by the tenth of any month (during April, May, and June), then your child’s spot will be offered to the next family on the applicant list. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.

*If you have selected the Monthly Payment Plan, an \$20.00 surcharge is added to the September payment, as detailed above for those not on the auto-payment plan.

If your payment is made **after the tenth of the month** (September through February) for the semi-annual or monthly plan, you will be assessed a **\$15.00** late fee which should be included with that month’s payment.

Additional Preschool Options

As the preschool year progresses, many children wish to increase their attendance by staying into the afternoon for lunch or by adding additional mornings to their schedule, if space is available. As these routines change for the children, many families pay this added fee monthly throughout the remainder of the school year. For example, the amount would be based upon the full rate for one extended day divided by ten months multiplied by the number of months remaining in the school year that the child will attend the extended day program. Payment can be made at the time the additional days are added or monthly.

When adding extended days in the preschool class, a full month's tuition would be due once your new schedule is started, regardless of missed days within that month. The exception to this is if the date started is past the mid-month period, in which case partial (or half) payment would be required.

Payments

Payment can be mailed directly to the **Tuition Collector** or dropped at the School in the Tuition Collector's mailbox in the Post Office (in the Preschool class). **We do not send payment reminders.** We encourage enrollment in auto payment when your bank issues checks automatically at the time and for the amount you predetermine. If payment is not received by the due date, the Tuition Collector will contact you regarding collection. If a tuition payment check is returned to Child's Play due to insufficient funds, the individual family responsible will be assessed any and all additional bank fees. (The Tuition Collector will inform the family of the added charge.) If it is necessary to place any overdue balance on an account for collection, parents agree to pay the cost of collection and/or attorney's fees.

A Brief History of the Current Tuition Payment Plan and Early Withdrawal Policy

In an effort to help current and future parents of Child's Play understand the history of some of the policies that are in place, the following is a description of how the existing tuition payment plan and early withdrawal policy came about. Because the school's population changes from year to year, this piece is being written as a reference piece. It in no way suggests that what was created in the 1992-1993 year is appropriate for all future years. However, it would be unfair to you and to the school if changes were made without the benefit of having access to this information. Hopefully this will facilitate discussion and decision making about how to ensure the policy's effectiveness and appropriateness for the school, as well as its acceptance by all the members of the Cooperative.

1. Situation/School Climate in 1992-93

In 1992-93 there was a serious sense of insecurity about the financial health of Child's Play. In fact, each monthly budget report was subject to big fluctuations in the tuition income projections. This was due to the schedule of tuition collection and the degree of commitment that people were asked to make to the school. An initial "deposit" was collected from families in the Spring to hold a place for their child. No further tuition was due until September, at the beginning of the academic year. This resulted in a particularly unpredictable Kindergarten enrollment, and placed an unnatural and awkward burden on that class. Preschool also experienced this, but to a lesser extent. Simply put, it was too easy to withdraw your child, because there was nothing in place to make a family think twice about pulling their child out.

From the school Treasurer's perspective, it was a logistical nightmare. From the Board's perspective, it was frustrating and counterproductive. Too much energy was being spent on worrying about the bottom-line, rather than on other more optimistic matters. Most importantly, it was having an adverse effect on the teachers and children. Consequently, we needed to create a system that would:

- a. Provide a financially secure and professional environment for the teachers.
- b. Guarantee that the four programs would in fact exist for the children.
- c. Have a realistic projected budget for the following school year as early as possible; late February – early March was ideal given the important decisions that had to be made around that time (teachers' contracts, tuition levels, program viability, etc...).

2. Research

The Co-Presidents and other Board members canvassed other schools, both private schools and cooperatives, to see how they managed their tuition collection and early withdrawal policies.

Private Schools were quite rigid. Essentially 2 to 3 lump payments were due, the last being in the fall/early winter. Early withdrawal always meant losing substantial amounts of money, in most cases a semester's worth. To help the parents, there were Tuition Insurance options.

Other Co-ops were as relaxed as we were, but in the process of rethinking their policies for the same reasons we were. In addition, their programs were smaller and exclusively preschools. They did not have a kindergarten program, which does have its own unique considerations.

3. Policy Change:

After digesting all the information, and keeping our three initial goals in mind, we agreed to create something that was somewhere in the “middle”. We did not want to be as extreme as the private schools, most definitely were not ready to consider tuition insurance, and yet we could not continue to be as relaxed as we had been. The result was the following:

- a. Change the schedule of tuition payments.
 - b. Preserve the monthly payment plan option (very important to CP).
 - c. Increase the level of commitment by the families when they enroll their child.
- a & b. The timing of the initial deposit in Feb/March would stay the same but the amount due would reflect exactly 10% of the annual tuition, which conveniently represented one month’s tuition. In all cases this was an increase from the previous amounts. This deposit would be non-refundable.

Nothing would be due again until June. Two month’s tuition would be due at that time. The rest of the payments would continue through the summer and fall, ending in January. So even though families could opt to pay annually, or semiannually, or monthly, this system was really based on a monthly model, successfully preserving the monthly payment option.

Feb/Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
1	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1 = 10

c. Level of Commitment...

In order for Child’s Play to plan for the existence of a particular program for the following academic year, it needed to have a realistic picture of how many children would be participating in that program. Requesting a higher degree of commitment from prospective families would certainly help the school with its estimations.

With an estimate in hand, the board would project out a conservative tuition total that it could expect from a particular program. It might take a class that has a full enrollment for the next year (based on the Feb/March deposits made) and even though the class capacity is 15, budget for 13 full tuitions to be collected that year. That would allow for four withdrawals, if they took place in September. At that point, the school would have collected 6 month’s tuition from each of the 4 families. The math: $15 - 4 = 11$ students left, 11 full tuitions plus the 6 months x 4 (equaling 2 full tuitions) = 13 full tuitions. This puts the total tuition collected at the original budget estimate. The program stays financially intact, no burden is placed on the school or the teacher. – The loss (4 tuitions) is split between the school and families.

This new plan, intended to be more lenient than the private schools’, allowed for families to withdraw on a month to month basis. We hoped that this would encourage people to make their decision in a timely way so that Child’s Play could still have access to its waiting lists. Come September, these lists diminish, if not evaporate entirely.

In Summary:

The intent behind this new policy was to ensure the complete financial soundness of Child's Play. Once that was established and the school could feel confident then perhaps, the school would have to make changes to this plan. We had hoped that since each year is so unpredictable, that the gains of one year would help offset the losses of another. We wanted to keep the big picture in mind, especially after having experienced such insecurity.

Certainly, a pattern of gains would result in a discussion of what should be done with the "surplus". Returning the money to the families is one of many options.

In closing, the following are some questions that Child's Play may want to ask itself each year, as it strives for a policy that the whole cooperative can live with:

1. Is the school financially sound?
2. Can the board focus on other issues other than money issues?
3. Do the teachers feel that they have a secure professional environment within which to work?
4. Can we confidently plan ahead and guarantee the next year's programs?
5. Can we preserve the monthly tuition plan option?
6. If the answer to #1 was yes, then examine why it is so.

During the fall of 2000 the Board recommended a slight modification of our Tuition Payment Schedule. The Board found that the most withdrawals occur between March and June when families are hearing about acceptances at other schools. The Tuition Payment Schedule prior to this review allowed enrollees to hold their spot for a 10% deposit throughout the spring without making any further financial commitment until June 1st. Our plan at that time had a 10 day grace period but no penalty for those who chose to delay the payment further. If a family were still considering options on June 1st, they could theoretically hold back payment well into June. This put the Tuition Collector in an awkward position and resulted in Child's Play not being sure of its true enrollment at the end of the school year.

The March through June time frame is when our waiting lists are the longest, and it is the best time for Admissions to refill openings left by early withdrawals. In addition, the school lost not only two months tuition that was due in June, but would also lose a full year tuition if the spot could not be refilled.

The current Tuition Payment Schedule now considers the following:

- Tuition is collected in a more timely way and payments are spread out more to make it easier for families to budget and remember to pay.
- The Withdrawal Policy remains the same so families who are considering other options are not penalized as long as they make their decision before June 1st.
- By limiting the grace period to the 10th of the month in April, May and June, Admissions is given the best possible chance to refill openings when our applicant lists are the longest.
- Those on the annual and semi-annual plan now have a simplified payment system with one and two additional payments, respectively, after the initial 10% deposit.
- With the incurring use of auto payments which are easily scheduled by each family to have payments issued when and for whatever amount selected throughout the year, it is now easier to adhere to the payment plans. A \$20 processing fee is now only for those who continue to make monthly payments that are not auto payments.

- All families on the monthly payment plan will pay in 10 consecutive monthly payments, ending in December of the school year. This provides a clear period of time between the end and start of the tuition year payments as the payments for the following year begin in March.

Policy Review Procedure

Policy is established by majority decision of the cooperative's voting members present at a meeting at which there is a quorum, unless explicitly stated otherwise by another policy.

Policy is executed by those entities within Child's Play that have jurisdiction over the policy (i.e. Executive Committee, Co-Presidents, staff, etc.).

The Guidelines below are meant to help define the process by which Child's Play as a co-operative deals with initiating and changing policy. In general the process is one of presentation, reflection, revision and voting. The process itself is meant to encourage co-op members to fully participate in the development of policy and to provide different types of opportunities for people to be involved. The intention is that Child's Play Policies are brought forward in a democratic and open manner with the knowledge and consent of the entire co-op. The Guidelines for establishing new policy or modifying existing policy are:

Proposals for new policies or policy revision can be made by any co-op member. Typically an initiative for a new or request to revise policy will be remanded to a committee for study recommendations and the drafting of a formal proposal. The Co-Presidents will have the authority to either form an ad hoc committee or move that the issue be taken up by already standing committees. Members of the co-op who are interested in the issue would be invited to participate in the committees activities.

Policy proposals are to be formally presented to the co-op at all co-op meetings. Major policy proposals are to be presented at the All School Meetings for discussion and voting. It is important that all members of the co-op have the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding co-op policy and the All School Meetings provide a good forum for open discussion. In addition, mandating that a proposal be formally presented to the co-op.

A period of time would be established after a policy proposal had been submitted for review and comment. The standard procedure for presentation and review of a formal proposal is:

1. They be distributed just prior to an All School Meeting in order that co-op members can review the proposal that is to be presented.
2. At the All School Meeting there is a period of discussion regarding the proposal for comments and dissenting opinions.
3. If the proposal is being presented at the All School Meeting for voting, a motion is made to either vote on the proposal as is, vote on the proposal with minor revisions or move that the proposal go back to committee for revision.

Modifications to a proposed policy could be made during this review and comment period. Co-op members are encouraged to provide their opinions and comments regarding proposals at any time to those who are on the committee drafting the proposal.

Policy is accepted or rejected by a majority vote at an All School Meeting. Policies are voted on by co-op members who are in attendance at All School Meetings. This underscores the importance of the co-op members' attendance at these meetings.

Decision Making Guidelines

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to describe the various administrative and working bodies within Child's Play and to outline a set of guidelines that address their responsibilities and decision making roles. This document is not a set of rules and regulations mandating how the school and its different bodies are to operate. Rather this document puts forth a set of general guidelines which illustrates the range of responsibilities for the different administrative officers, teachers, and committees within the co-op with the intention that these guidelines serve as templates to address issues of responsibility not dealt with explicitly here. It is hoped that this will help in the development of a common understanding of how the organizational components of Child's Play operate.

The Long Range Planning Committee is developing this guidelines document with two goals in mind, 1) To provide a general set of guidelines that can be applied to the evolving administrative organization of Child's Play and 2) To provide the Child's Play community with an overview of the operation of the Co-op. Many of the guidelines are based on how the school currently operates and reflect its historical evolution and lessons learned from previous Child's Play members. Others represent an attempt to clarify issues that have recently been brought to the attention of the Co-op's members. This document does not attempt to explore all possible decision making aspects of running Child's Play. It would take entirely too much time to do so and would certainly be incomplete. Instead the different groups within Child's Play along with their most important roles and responsibilities are summarized providing an overview of their part in the decision making process. Based on these summaries and general examples, the scope of the different bodies' roles and responsibilities are defined.

Child's Play Administrative and Decision Making Bodies:

There are five different administrative and decision making bodies in Child's Play, these are: the Co-Presidents, the executive board, the teachers, the committees and the parents.

1. The Executive Board

The executive board consists of parents who, for the duration of the school year, have been voted in the position of Co-Presidents, Vice Presidents of Admissions and Long Range Planning, Secretary, Treasurer, 4 Class Representatives, Co-Chairs of Communications (Newsletter and Publicity respectively) and Co-Chairs of Fundraising. Each member of the Executive Board has responsibilities for their positions outside of the separate responsibilities of the Executive Board itself.

Responsibilities:

- Meets monthly, publishes an agenda one week prior to its meetings, makes minutes of its meetings available for viewing.
- Makes decisions on matters that are not central to the aims and aspirations of the community as a whole.
- May be involved in decisions on issues of confidentiality.

2. Co-Presidents

The Co-Presidents are responsible for the good and efficient management of the school. They must be people-oriented managers who are organized and willing to act as sounding boards for parents' and teachers' ideas and complaints. Their most important task is to establish a relationship of mutual trust with parents, children and teachers in order to cultivate and boost the morale of the co-op.

Responsibilities:

- Preside over all meetings.
- Serve as official representatives of the co-op.
- Oversee overall effectiveness of the program.
- Supervise, coordinate, assist and advise the members/committees in carrying out their responsibilities.

3. Committees

The list of committees stands as follows:

Building and Grounds
Finance
Fundraising
Long Range Planning
Communications
Special Events
Community Outreach

Each committee consists of a committee head and any number of committee members who may be parents or members of the staff.

Responsibilities:

- Each committee has its mission to accomplish and is responsible for carrying out the duties linked to such mission.
- Each committee maintains a committee binder which contains a statement of its mission, a description of its duties, a list of all committee members, the minutes of meetings, documentation relevant to the tasks of the committee and the end of year report.
- Each committee meets as necessary.
- Each committee takes minutes at any of its meetings and forwards copies to the secretary and Co-Presidents.

4. Teachers

The teachers are professionals who with the parents in the co-op are partners in the education of the children attending Child's Play. The teachers articulate the educational component of the co-op.

Responsibilities:

- Implement the philosophy of Child's Play, that is provide a loving, safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate place of learning.
- Keep the classroom records and health safety records.
- Maintain the Department of Education Regulations.
- Establish goals and objectives for programs.
- Direct teacher's assistants and duty parents.
- Attend All School Meetings, staff meetings and open sessions of the Executive Board.
- Carry out with the Co-Presidents overall operation of the program.
- Schedule parent/teacher conferences semi-annually.
- Maintain inventories of classroom supplies and equipment and requesting the purchase of supplies and equipment when needed.

5. Parents

The Child's Play parents play a fundamental role in the operation and administration of the school. They have oversight in their various roles as Co-Presidents, committee members and executive officers of all aspects of the running of the school. In addition with the teachers they are involved in the classroom activities.

Responsibilities:

- Attend All School Meetings.
- Serve as members of committees.
- Participate as Duty Parents in the classroom.
- Governing body of the school.
- Form the administrative body of the school.
- Responsible for the fiscal operation of the school.
- Voting body of the school.
- Contributing to the well-being of the school through support of school sponsored activities.

The Executive Board's Authority and Structure

The Executive Board and the Community as a Whole

Child's Play has an Executive Board (EB), consisting of the Co-Presidents, vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, 4 class representatives, and the heads of standing committees (Communications, Diversity and Fundraising). The EB gets its authority from the CP community as a whole, and is given authority to make decisions on matters that are not central to the aims and aspirations of the cooperative as a whole. Authority on those fundamental matters is always under the authority of the whole CP community of parents. A few examples of such fundamental matters include decisions affecting: a) the decision making structure of the school; b) work and involvement responsibilities of parents; c) personnel structure (how many teachers, whether to have aides, etc.); d) broad tuition policy (raising tuition vs. admitting more students, no-refund policy for withdrawing students, etc.). In specific cases, the EB and the community of parents can always make use of committees to study and recommend actions, and they can even turn fundamental matters back to the EB if this is determined at a community meeting after due notice and discussion.

No "General Board"

There has been a General Board, differing from the Executive Board mainly in including as members the heads of all committees. For simplicity, this should no longer be a separate body, though the group including committee heads should continue to meet at the beginning of the year, and as needed.

Committees

There are several standing committees serving the EB and CP community as a whole (Finance, Long Range Planning, Fund Raising, Communications, Building and Grounds, Special Events, Community Outreach, and Diversity). In addition to these standing committees, the EB may designate one or more Ad Hoc committees consisting of board and/or non-board members. The functions and authority of these committees shall be determined by the EB.

Confidentiality

At the discretion of the Co-Presidents, decisions which involve issues of confidentiality or privacy of individual members or families may be resolved either within one of the standing committees, or, if more fundamental issues are at stake, by the EB as a whole. Confidential questions should be decided by as few members as possible so long as no larger issues of policy are raised. A few examples of larger policy issues include (but are not limited to) family financial matters, child behavior or health, and some personnel matters. Interests in confidentiality must always be balanced by the possible need for a democratically authorized decision.

The Executive Board, the Co-Presidents, and the Teachers

The Co-Presidents and the meeting facilitator of the co-op are responsible for covering and structuring the meetings of the whole co-op; the Co-Presidents are responsible for meetings of the EB. The Executive Board normally meets monthly, and so cannot be consulted on the myriad and literally daily list of actions and decisions. In the interim period, the Co-Presidents, in conjunction with the teachers and other relevant co-op members, make decisions regarding the co-op. Thus the Co-Presidents are entitled to some discretion in their judgment as to which issues call for EB or whole community discussion or decision.

Executive Board Meetings

EB shall meet monthly, publish an agenda one week prior to its meetings, accept agenda entries from members up to one week prior to publication of agenda, and minutes will be available on request. EB meetings should include a portion open to participation from any co-op members, for the purpose of commenting on agenda items and/or bringing issues to the attention of the EB, asking their advice on

how to proceed with some proposal, etc. For reasons of efficiency, the voting portion of the meeting shall be open only to EB members and others specifically asked to attend by the EB, which will include the teachers. Teachers are typically considered voting members of the community.

Child's Play, Inc. By-Laws

ARTICLE I: Name, Purposes and Seal

Section 1. Name.

The name of this corporation, which is a non-business and nonprofit corporation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of Rhode Island, is Child's Play Nursery School and Kindergarten Inc.

Section 2. Purposes.

The corporation is constituted for the purpose of operating a school in the interest of young people.

Section 3. Seal.

The seal of the corporation shall, subject to alteration by the Board of Directors, consist of a circular die with the words

“CHILD'S PLAY, INC., INCORPORATED 1979, RHODE ISLAND” embossed thereon.

ARTICLE II: Members

Section 1. Membership.

The membership of the corporation shall consist of the parent or parents of each child enrolled as a student and the teacher or teachers employed from time to time by the corporation.

Section 2. Student Policy.

Child's Play, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

ARTICLE III: Meetings of Members

Section 1. Place of Meetings.

All meetings of the corporation shall be held in Rhode Island at such place as is stated in the call of the meeting.

Section 2. Annual Meetings.

The annual meeting of the members shall be held on the fourth Thursday in May of each year, or at such other time as may be designated by the Board of Directors and stated in the call of the meeting. If such annual meeting is omitted on the day herein provided for, a special meeting may be held in place thereof, and any business transacted or selections made at such special meeting shall have the same effect as if transacted or made at the annual meeting. Purposes for which the annual meeting is to be held, in addition to those prescribed by law and these by-laws, may be specified by the Board of Directors or by written notice delivered to the Secretary and signed by the President or a majority of the Directors or one third (1/3) or more members of the corporation.

Section 3. Special Meetings.

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the President, the Board of Directors or one third (1/3) or more members of the corporation, stating the time, place and purposes of the meeting.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings.

Notice of the time and place of the annual and of each special meeting of the members shall be given by the Secretary at least five (5) days prior to such meeting by written notice. Such written notice may be made by publication in the schools newsletter, by hand delivery at the school or by United States mail. If the meeting is a special meeting, the notice shall specify the business to be transacted thereat. In the absence, disability or failure to act of the Secretary, notice shall be given by the President or by any other officer or person designated by the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Quorum and Voting.

The presence in person of one fourth (1/4) of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and, except as otherwise provided in these by-laws, at any meeting at which a quorum is present, the vote of a majority of the members present shall decide any question brought before such meeting. The members present at a duly classed or held meeting, at which a quorum is present, may continue to do business until adjournment notwithstanding the withdrawal of such members to leave less than a quorum.

Section 6. Nominating Committee.

The President of the corporation shall, not less than sixty (6) days prior to the date of the annual meeting of the members, appoint a nominating committee consisting of not fewer than three (3) members. This committee shall at the annual meeting of the members report its recommendations for Officers and Directors to be selected at such meeting. Additional nominations may be made at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE IV: Directors

Section 1. Directors.

The Board of Directors shall consist of not fewer than nine (9) and not more than seventeen (17). Directors as determined in the first instance by the incorporators and thereafter within the limits specified above by the members at any annual meeting or at any special meeting held for the purpose or by the Board of Directors. The co-Presidents shall be members of the Board of Directors, ex officio, during their term of office.

Section 2. Selection of Directors.

Members of the Board of Directors shall be selected as follows: Following the adoption of these by-laws and the determination of the number of Directors by the incorporators, the Directors shall be selected by the incorporators and thereafter, except as otherwise provided herein, they shall be selected annually by the members of the corporation at the annual meeting.

Section 3. Vacancies.

The Board of Directors may fill any vacancies in the Board however arising. Any vacancy existing in the Board of Directors may be left unfilled. The Directors shall be members of the corporation at the time of their election.

Section 4. Terms of Office.

The term of office of the members of the Board of Directors shall be one (1) year. Members of the Board of Directors may be elected to consecutive terms.

Section 5. Powers of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall have and may exercise all the powers of the corporation except such as are conferred upon the members by law, by the Articles of Association or by these by-laws. The Board shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the activities of the corporation, including, but not limited to, its educational policies and practices; its properties and buildings; planning and administration; the employment of teachers; determination of the budgets and managing and expending funds.

Section 6. Meetings of the Board of Directors.

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors may be held without notice at such places, either within or without the State of Rhode Island, and at such times as the Board may determine. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be called by the President, or in his or her absence, disability or failure to act, by the Secretary or a majority of the Board of Directors in office and shall be held at such time and at such places within or without the State of the Rhode Island as may be designated in the request for the call of the meetings. Notice of all special meetings of the Board shall be given at least three (3) days prior to the date of the meeting to each director, stating the time and place of the meeting.

Section 7. Quorum.

The presence in person of a majority of the Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a lesser number may adjourn any meeting. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of the members in attendance thereat shall, subject to any conflicting provisions of these by-laws, decide any question brought before such meeting.

ARTICLE V: Officers and Agents

Section 1. Officers.

The officers of the corporation shall be two Co-Presidents, one or more Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary and such other officers or assistant officers as the Board of Directors may deem appropriate or necessary. All officers shall be Directors. One person may hold two or more offices except the offices of President and Secretary.

Section 2. Election.

The officers shall be elected initially by the incorporators and thereafter, except as otherwise provided herein, annually by the members of the corporation at the annual meeting.

Section 3. Vacancies.

A vacancy in any office may be filled by the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Co-President.

One or both of the Co-Presidents or, in their absence, a Vice President, shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors. The Co-President shall be, ex officio, members of all committees and shall have the general powers and duties usually vested in the office of the president of a corporation and shall have such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or by these by-laws. As used herein, the term "President" shall mean one or both of the Co-Presidents.

Section 5. Vice President.

In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice President shall perform all the duties of the President and when so acting shall have all the powers and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The Vice President shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or in the by-laws.

Section 6. Secretary.

The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, a book of minutes of all meetings of Directors and members, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at Directors meetings, the number of members present at members meetings, and the proceedings thereof.

Section 7. Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall generally be in charge of the financial books and records of the corporation, shall report to the Board of Directors and members on the financial condition of the corporation and shall receive and disburse funds on the direction of the President, the Board of Directors or in accordance with the provisions of any operating budget approved by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI: Committees

The Board of Directors may at any time appoint such committees and agents as it may deem necessary, may prescribe their powers and duties, and may revoke such appointments at pleasure.

ARTICLE VII: Amendments

Section 1.

These by-laws or the articles of association may be amended, altered, or repealed by two-thirds of the members of the corporation present in person at any annual or special meeting of the corporation at which a quorum is present, provided that written notice shall be given of any annual or special meeting at which such action is taken, which notice shall either specify the subject matter of the proposed alteration, amendment or appeal, or the articles to be affected thereby. Members shall receive written notice of the proposed changes at least one (1) week prior to such meeting.

Section 2.

These by-laws may also be altered, amended, or repealed at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors by two-thirds of the Directors then in office, provided that members shall receive written notice of the proposed changes at least one (1) week prior to such meeting. The Board of Directors shall notify each member in writing of any such changes.

Diversity at Child's Play

Child's Play is committed to the concept of diversity and to preparing our children to be successful citizens in a diverse world. Developing a respect for all human beings is a cornerstone of valuing diversity and is a key element in our curriculum. Our teachers provide a curriculum and use strategies which help a child to understand diversity by looking at themselves, their classmates, the families in the school and other people. There are many opportunities for this as children develop a classroom community. Children are taught to value both similarities and the differences. As individuals there are many ways in which we are similar and in which we are different (Ex: We all have eyes: You have brown eyes, I have blue eyes; I like pizza, you like sushi; I celebrate Christmas, You celebrate Hanukah, etc). Diversity curriculum in the classroom includes the materials (books, dolls, posters, puzzles, puppets, games, foods, etc); the activities planned by the teacher, teacher-child interactions and classroom discussions. Parents as well as outside resources often bring various aspects of diversity into the classroom. In addition, teachers have had training in the area of diversity and are always looking for ways to integrate these concepts in the classroom.

While this has been done in the classrooms for many years at Child's Play, a number of years ago it was decided to take the issue of diversity beyond the classroom to the larger Child's Play community. Many schools were making a commitment to diversity and we believed that the issue needed to be brought to the attention of the Child's Play parents. Child's Play has always been a community leader in bringing new initiatives to the co-op. The issue was brought to the attention of the board in 2003 and the board charged the Long Range Planning Committee (LRP) with addressing the issue. LRP began looking into the issue by polling the admissions chairs for the past five years to see if diversity had come up in conversations, tours, etc. with prospective families and then discussing the issue in committee meetings. An intensive study was lead by LRP in the 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 school years. The committees had intense discussions, reviewed the classroom curriculums in the area of diversity, spoke to parents and added some diversity questions on the long survey. The results were pulled together in a committee report prepared by Amy Silvia in November, 2005. A number of important concepts were addressed in the report. These included the following:

- A definition of diversity for Child's Play was drafted:
"The LRP Committee suggested using the broader definition of cultural diversity which would include socioeconomic status, nationality, profession, language, education, religion, geographical background, sexual preference, family structure, disabilities, etc. along with race."
- Child's Play may or may not be diverse depending upon who is defining diversity and what their definition is;
- Diversity is a large and complex issue;
- There are many ramifications for the co-op around diversity;
- It is critical we do not engage in "tokenism" diversity;
- There may be problems that would change key components in the co-op if it were to focus on some aspects of diversity;
- Work around diversity needs to be integrated thoughtfully; and
- Diversity work should be a process.

The following comments summarize the beliefs of the committee: "Although no consensus was reached, the committee seemed to agree that diversity within CP would indeed be a benefit to the families currently at CP (and to the families that would contribute to its diversity), but that we do not want to make major changes to the structure of the school (i.e.: schedule offerings, co-op requirements) to this end, and hope that more minor measures will help."

The recommendations made by the committee for future work are listed below:

Some ideas/actions to take

- Effort to publicize the school in areas of town that are more diverse;
- Group discussions/create a committee on the subject to explore issue more deeply;
- Ensure our "front people" (admissions, especially, right on down to parents chatting at the park) are aware of the desire to "broaden" our population and are friendly and encouraging to all prospective families;
- To counteract the "dynasty" effect by leaving a couple of spots open for last-minute families;
- Possible financial assistance;
- Support teacher training and/or provide materials and activities to increase children's understanding of other cultures; and
- Workshops or speakers for parents as an opportunity to have a safe, productive forum for discussion.

LRP facilitated a discussion on diversity at an All School Meeting in Jan, 06 as well as again including diversity questions on the school survey. As suggested in the Nov 05 report, a recommendation was made to form a Diversity Committee at CP for the 2006/2007 school year. This was done and the committee continued work on the issue of diversity. Parent education around the issue was a major focus of this committee. There were newsletter articles, handouts, and brochures that were collected and given to parents. Information was shared at All School Meetings. An investigation was done of possible speakers on this issue for our families. The committee began to gather documents from other schools in the community that included statements about diversity. The committee agreed that this was important work for the co-op and that it should continue. They also acknowledged that it was a process for the community and that the work on diversity should be continued.

After the 06/07 school year it was determined that the work on diversity should go back to LRP. There were two reasons for this. The co-op structure was changing due to loss of the kindergarten and that meant fewer parents to do the work of the co-op. An even more important reason was that the work of diversity should be integrated within all the work of the co-op. Therefore LRP was charged with ensuring that this would happen. Work continues on integrating diversity at many different levels within the co-op.