



**NEIGHBORHOOD**  
COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2023/2024**

**NEIGHBORHOOD COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL**

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# **Welcome to the Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School!**

Dear Families,

I want to extend a warm welcome to the Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School. You have joined a community of families dedicated to providing a positive and nurturing environment for our children.

At the Neighborhood Cooperative, parents participate in and help shape the magic of their child's first school experience. Parents are involved in every aspect of the school, from making snacks to making policy. Parents run our Leadership Team, help fund and maintain our facility, and work alongside teachers in the classrooms. In fact, we welcome parents to visit our school at any time.

The Neighborhood's cooperative nature bridges the gap between home and school. It offers parents the privilege of developing real relationships with their children's teachers and classmates. Children, in turn, become comfortable with more adults from diverse backgrounds. Our collaborative environment also allows parents to observe and learn from NCNS' creative, experienced educators.

Perhaps the most wonderful part of a cooperative is the sense of community that develops among parents as they serve on committees together, celebrate birthdays, welcome new babies and share their parenting successes and challenges. Many long-lasting friendships, among both children and adults, begin at NCNS.

At The Neighborhood, we continually evaluate our programs and adapt to our members' needs and input. Parent involvement, feedback, and leadership are crucial to making the school the best it can be. Our Parent Handbook is revised each year to inform parents of our most updated programs, policies, and procedures, as well as maintain compliance with current state regulations.

I invite you to visit us anytime and I look forward to working with you and your children.

Sincerely,

Heather Pacheco

Director, Neighborhood Cooperative

## **Mission Statement and Philosophy**

Massachusetts Reg 7.04 (17)a

*To provide a safe, nurturing environment in which each child can develop in his or her unique and special way.*

Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School's philosophy begins with our view of the child. We believe that children are filled with wonder and capable of deep cognitive exploration. Given a warm and supportive environment, a child's innate curiosity is the greatest impetus to learning.

We strive to nurture children's sense of wonder and to help them build a foundation for lifelong learning. We guide our children toward both self-expression and respect for others. We place special importance on the social and emotional development of each child, building a good self-image and confidence to work well with others. We strive to have each child feel happy and successful.

We believe that the process of learning is more important than the product. Our teachers' daily planning stimulates creativity and innovative thinking. Thoughtful questions and comments help children reach their next level of understanding.

At NCNS, our families are our partners. Together, educators and parents create a place where children can safely expand their boundaries while supported by a community that maintains a strong connection between home and school.

We honor individual differences in growth, culture, and learning styles while supporting the development of each and every child. We provide positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development.

### NCNS Non Discrimination Policy

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (17)(g)

NCNS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, marital status, political beliefs, national origin, gender and sexual identity or disability. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

# Goals of Our School Experience

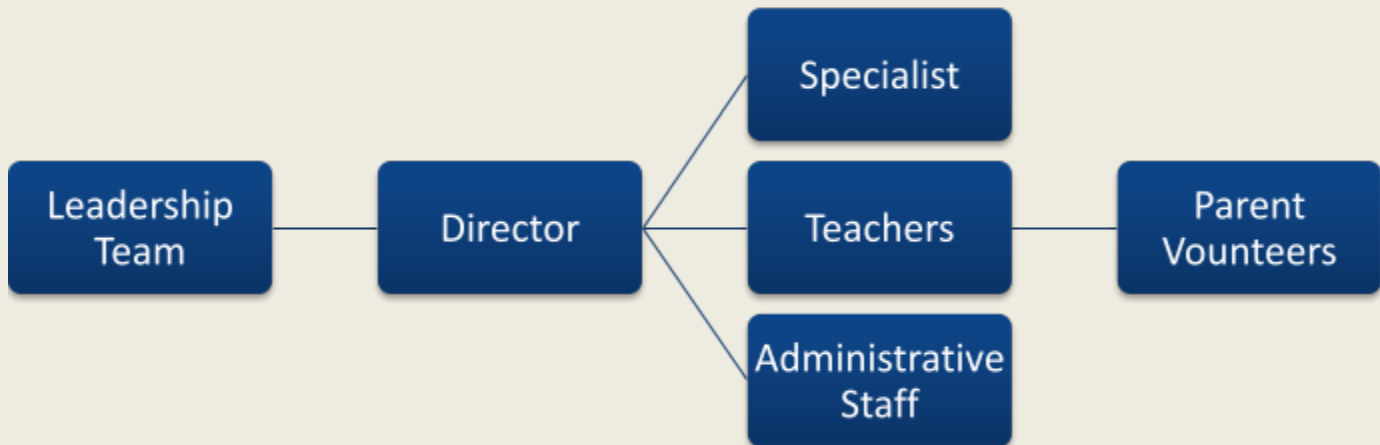
Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (17)(a)

- Value each child as an exceptional individual
- Provide opportunities for children to gain a healthy self-image and confidence
- Understand and meet the developmental needs of each child socially and emotionally, physically and intellectually
- Promote joy in learning music and dramatic arts with professional actors and musicians
- Encourage children as active participants in their learning process
- Teach and model conflict resolution, negotiation and respectful problem solving
- Encourage creativity and exploration, and inspire an excitement and love for learning
- Provide a nurturing and supportive environment in which each child can develop in his or her own unique and special way
- Partner with parents to provide the best learning experiences and growth opportunities in an environment that welcomes diversity and acceptance
- Foster positive relationships among peers and adults
- Embrace community involvement
- Support teacher professional development and growth



# Organizational Structure

Massachusetts EEC reg 7.04 (17)(c)



- Teachers at NCNS are certified and registered with the Department of Early Education and Care, the licensing authority for preschool programs.
- Parents are welcome to review the [Department of Early Education and Child Care website](http://www.eec.state.ma.us) at [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us)
- Parents may contact the Early Education and Care Regional Office for information regarding NCNS' regulatory compliance history. The EEC Regional Office responsible for our program is located at:

360 Merrimack Street, Building 9  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
(978) 681-9684

- Please call should you have any questions for anyone in our organization:

Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School  
21 Church Street  
Winchester, MA 01890  
(781)729-8081

# NCNS Application Process

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (17)(g)

The order of preference for enrollment at NCNS is as follows:

- Students currently enrolled in the school
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Siblings of children previously enrolled at NCNS
- Legacy
- Grow With Me Program participants
- New applicants

If any of the currently offered programs are over-subscribed, admission to the school will be determined by lottery.

## *Application Form and Fee*

An application form with a non-refundable application fee must be submitted annually for each child, new or returning.

## *School Calendar and Available Classes*

NCNS hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 8:30a.m. - 3:30p.m.; Friday 8:30a.m. - 12:30p.m. A complete school calendar is given to parents prior to the start of the school year.

NCNS offers the following classes during each school year. Each class is led by a certified teacher who is assisted by a parent helper. In addition to the following classes, NCNS offers Enrichment programs to preschool age children. These may include French Club, Language and Literacy, Science and Nature, Storybook Workshop and more. For more detailed information please contact the NCNS school office.

<b>2 Day PS</b>	9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Monday, Tuesday
<b>PS 1 &amp; PS 2</b>	9 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
<b>PK 1 &amp; PK 2</b>	9 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
<b>K</b>	8:30-2:30	Monday through Friday

## **Tuition**

The school tuition is determined on an annual basis by the Board of Directors. Once the tuition amount has been approved for the upcoming school year, families are offered a payment plan with payment dates of March 1<sup>st</sup>, May 15<sup>th</sup>, September 15<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup>. If preferred, tuition payments may be paid in full at any time. A complete listing of class tuition is located in the NCNS office or can also be found on our website at [www.neighborhoodcoop.com](http://www.neighborhoodcoop.com).

**Note:** Payments received 30 days late will be charged a **\$25.00 late fee**.

A fee of \$25.00 will also be charged for each returned check.

### ***Non-Payment of Tuition***

If tuition has not been received within two weeks of the due date, a reminder notice will be sent, followed by a phone call. If another week passes, a meeting with the parents will be arranged to implement a tuition payment plan. If a tuition payment is late twice, the remainder of the year's tuition must be paid in full. The Board of Directors will meet to discuss any special circumstances. If payment is 30 days in arrears, the child's participation in extended day programs will be suspended until tuition payments are brought up to date.

### ***Withdrawal from School***

If your child withdraws from NCNS during the school year, you must notify the Director in writing at least one month prior to withdrawal. Parents are fully responsible for all tuition payments at the time of withdrawal.

### ***Tuition Refund Policy***

Once a child is accepted into a program at NCNS, any tuition paid is considered non-refundable. Any special circumstances must be presented to the Board of Directors in writing.

### ***Tuition Assistance***

NCNS offers tuition assistance, if needed. Requests for tuition assistance are reviewed by the Director, who presents them anonymously to the President of the Board of Directors and the Treasurer(s). The President and the Treasurer(s) make up the Financial Committee, which decides whether/how much tuition assistance to award. The names of the families receiving tuition assistance are known only to the Director and the Office Manager, who handles school billing.

**Note:** Confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

If a family is awarded tuition assistance, they will be responsible for the application fee and deposit, and the remainder of the tuition, according to the agreed upon schedule.

## NCNS Required Forms

Once your child has been accepted to attend NCNS, certain forms **MUST be completed before your child enters school**. This is in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) guidelines. Although we understand that completing forms can be tedious at best, it is **imperative** that each family do so as soon as possible. This ensures that NCNS is in compliance with the state guidelines that regulate the school.

Each parent and/or caretaker who parent helps in the classroom **must** provide the required forms as follows:

### *Annually*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| * Application Form and Fee              | * Authorization & Consent/Emergency Release |
| * Enrollment/Face Sheet                 | * Parent Agreement                          |
| * Financial Agreement                   | * Field Trip Authorization                  |
| * Developmental History                 | * Transportation Plan                       |
| * Child's Physical Exam & Immunizations | * Community Jobs Form                       |
| * Photo/video Policy and Consent Form   |   |

### *Application Form and Fee*

The first form a parent will complete when applying to NCNS. A non-refundable application fee accompanies this form.

### *Facilities Fee*

A \$50.00 facilities fee is collected annually per family. This fee covers the cost of professional weekly cleaning of the classrooms and the bike-room and bathrooms.

### *Enrollment/Face Sheet*

An information form completed for each child every school year.

### *Financial Agreement*

This form details the dates and amounts of the tuition payments due throughout the year. Each family's account must be kept current with regards to any additional school fees and/or charges, i.e. Enrichment Programs.

### *Developmental History*

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (14)(a)

A developmental history **must** be completed annually. The history includes information concerning the child's motor, speech and social development.

## ***Child's Physical Exam and Immunization Record***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11 (3)

Each child is required to have an annual physical exam and documentation of immunizations. All immunizations must be up-to-date. *The physical is valid for one year.*

*Note:* NCNS ***must*** be notified if there are any changes in the health status of your child at any point during the school year.

## ***Photo/Video Policy and Consent Form***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (18)(2)(a)

Parents are asked to indicate their preference regarding the usage of photos/videos taken of your child at school.

## ***Authorization and Consent / Emergency Release***

Parents are asked to provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers of **three** people, other than themselves, to contact in the event of an emergency situation. These individuals are also authorized to transport your child to and from school.

In addition, this form provides authorization for staff at NCNS, who are trained in the basics of first aid, to give your child first aid treatment when appropriate. This form also authorizes NCNS staff to call 911 in emergencies.

## ***Parent Agreement***

When you enroll your child in a cooperative school, in essence, you agree to fully participate in parent help activities, administration and maintenance of the school through the Work Bank. The Parent Agreement form ensures that each family understands this commitment.

## ***Field Trip Authorization***

By completing this form, you give permission for your child to accompany the class on any field trip.

During the school year, classes participate in walking and driving field trips. Parents of children provide transportation for driving field trips.

## ***Transportation Plan***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.13(1)(2)

All children must have a signed Transportation Plan indicating how the child arrives and leaves NCNS.

## ***Community Job***

As a cooperative school, NCNS has a list of jobs to help maintain the school called the "Community Jobs." Each family has a choice of Community Job that reflect their interests and lifestyle. In addition, a cleaning service during the school year, and other maintenance needs, are funded by a \$50.00 facilities fee.

## ***CORI Background Check***

Each parent or caregiver who plans to help MUST submit paperwork for a CORI background check. There is a \$25.00 fee for running each CORI Check.

## **Participating in a Cooperative**

We believe that you will find participating in a Cooperative a fun and exciting experience. The school relies on parents to run and maintain the school and its programs. In addition to your Parent Helper responsibilities, you are asked to participate in the following:

### ***Community Job***

The list of jobs and activities for which we need the help of the parents is called our “Work Bank”.

The Work Bank jobs cover the many tasks that need to be completed each year for NCNS. **Parents must sign up for one Community Job per family.**

**Note:** Parents are asked to sign up for their Work Bank job in the spring for the following school year. *Those parents who do not sign up for a specific community job will have a job assigned to them.*

### ***Fundraising***

The operating expenses of the school (salaries, rent, insurance, supplies and fees) are paid with the monies raised from tuition and registration. To maintain a quality program for the children and to provide the school with additional needed funds, the school depends on a fundraising program. Fundraising proceeds fund our scholarship programs and support school maintenance and special projects. Although participation in the fundraisers is not a requirement, family participation at any level is strongly encouraged and greatly appreciated!

### ***School Events***

During the school year, several social events are planned that are fun for the whole family! Check the school calendar and newsletter for specific dates and times for all special events.

### ***Communication***

Each child/family has a mailbox (folder) located in the hallway outside the classrooms. In addition to school emails, *please check your mailboxes daily* for updated classroom and school information and invoices.

**NOTE:** Mailboxes are to be used for *school related communications ONLY*. Any additional items **must** be approved by the Director before distribution in the mailboxes.

Also, if you are unable to invite the entire class to a birthday party, please distribute invitations *outside of school* to prevent hurt feelings.

NCNS also publishes a newsletter on a monthly basis. The newsletter includes information regarding upcoming events, important messages from the Board, the Director, the Teachers and any classroom news. Please speak with the Director to submit information for the newsletter.

## ***NCNS School Directory***

A Directory of family names, phone numbers and email addresses will be published each school year. This information is only made available to the currently enrolled families. It is a great resource for those times when the children request a play date or you need to find a substitute parent helper, etc.

Note: If you do not wish to have your family included in this Directory, please notify the Director in writing and your request will be accommodated.

## ***Leadership Team***

At NCNS, parent volunteers help lead the school as members of its Leadership Team. Leadership Team members work closely with the school's Executive Director in developing policies and procedures, maintaining a sound fiscal plan, coordinating and managing the Work Bank, raising funds, organizing social activities and communicating with members of the Cooperative and the Winchester community.

Parents are encouraged to consider joining the Leadership Team. It not only provides an opportunity to get to know other parents, but also allows you to participate in the decision-making that shapes the school.

The Leadership Team meets on the third Tuesday evening of each month at NCNS, unless otherwise posted. All parents are invited to attend. For your information, minutes of the Leadership Team meetings are available in the office.

The Annual Meeting of NCNS is held in mid-April. Members of the Cooperative vote each April on Leadership Team members for the following school year. For those parents who are interested in the Leadership Team, job descriptions are available in the office.

The Cooperative and the Leadership Team are governed by the school's By-Laws. The By-Laws are available in the office to any member of the Cooperative.

## Parent Helping

Parent helping at NCNS is a cornerstone of our program and can be one of the most rewarding experiences of a cooperative learning experience! Parent helping affords the chance to meet your child's classmates and see the wonderful things that the children are learning! We believe that being a part of your child's classroom experience provides a unique opportunity to enjoy firsthand your child's early education.

*Note: New State Fingerprinting Regulations require that all teachers and anyone being left alone with children in a school setting be fingerprinted in addition to having a CORI/SORI background check. This means that all children in the care of NCNS must be supervised by a teacher at all times. As a parent helper, you will not be left alone with children.*

When it is your parent help day, relax and enjoy! However, remember that you are there to help in the classroom, not to do for the children! Please keep the following guidelines in mind on your assigned day.

***Please be prompt.*** Arrive 10-15 minutes before the start of class to meet with your child's teacher.

Discuss the teacher's plan for the day and how you can best facilitate this plan. If you have any questions, the children will be happy to help you!

Help supervise the children in whatever capacity is needed such as: supervise play in the classroom and bike room; facilitate cooperation and discussion; assist with building, puzzles and putting toys and items back in their place; provide and set up the snack; assist with clothes, shoes and jackets.

Stay 10-15 minutes after the end of class to ensure that the classroom is clean and tidy for the next class.



## ***Working with Children in the Classroom***

- Listen to the children; they have important things to say!
- Get down to the child's level physically by sitting, stooping, or kneeling.
- Help children to help themselves.
- Praise children for their efforts: "You are working hard", "Good thinking".
- Stimulate thinking: "I wonder why?" "How do you think it happened?" "How can we do it differently?"
- The value is in the activity rather than the finished product – "Tell me about that," rather than "What is it?"
- Build the child's confidence by not shaming or making them feel guilty if, for example, a drink is spilled or a toy is accidentally broken.
- Reading to children is always encouraged.
- Treat children with respect and follow "Behavior Management Principles" outlined within this handbook.
- **Our Fall Orientation Meeting will provide additional training from the Director and Teachers to all parent helpers. Attendance is strongly encouraged.**

## ***Daily Classroom Clean-up***

Because NCNS classrooms are shared it is essential that the classrooms be cleaned at the end of each class. Each parent helper needs to participate fully in this activity.

Some of the initial straightening of the classroom can be done while the children are still in the classroom. However, you will need to stay after class to ensure that the following tasks are completed:

- Cover all paints and wash brushes
- Place play dough in a covered container, clean and put away tools
- Wipe clean all placemats
- Return toys to storage areas in classroom and bike room
- Wash all tables, chairs and sink area, trying to remove dried glue and paint
- Vacuum the classroom and wash uncarpeted floor space
- Empty the trash bin and recyclables and bring to the outdoor shed
- Drain water table and wash clean when used
- Cover sand table and put toys away

Check with the teacher to ensure that everything is properly in its place.

## ***Hand Washing Procedure***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(10)(b)(c)

Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness or disease at home or in a childcare setting.

At NCNS, all adults and children are required to wash their hands:

- Upon entering the bike room on arrival to school
- Upon entering the classroom on arrival to school
- If moving from one child care group to another
- Before and after food preparation, handling or serving
- Before and after giving medications
- After toileting or assisting in toileting or changing of diapers
- After touching body fluids and discharges (blood, mucus, stool, urine, vomitus, etc)
- After handling pets and their equipment
- After cleaning activities
- Before and after playing in water that more than one person is using
- After playing in sandboxes

A description of proper hand washing techniques are posted at all sinks. Hands should be washed with liquid soap and warm running water for 15 to 30 seconds. Disposable towels should be used to dry hands and turn off the faucet. Disposable gloves should be used in cleaning body fluids or areas where body fluids have been spilled. Used gloves and blood-contaminated materials are disposed of immediately. Diapers and pull-ups are disposed of immediately. Stained clothing from body fluids should be sealed in a plastic bag, labeled with the child's name and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

## ***Toileting/Diapering Procedure***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(12)

NCNS accepts children in diapers. We ask parents of untrained children to be working on training at home. We discuss with parents their procedure for training and their child's vocabulary for bowel movement and urination and follow through with these at school. Teachers will report bathroom successes to the parents.

Children may use the bathroom when needed and teachers may ask several times during the day if anyone needs to use the bathroom.

Sanitation and hygiene procedures for toileting/diapering are posted in the bathrooms. Parents are asked to supply a change of clothes to be left at school in case a need arises. Parents are also asked to have children wear tear away diapers for easy changing and supply the teacher with extra diapers and wipes. Only the pink bathroom should be used for diapering. Soiled diapers and wipes **must** be placed in a sealed plastic bag and brought directly to the outside shed for disposal. Soiled clothes are placed in a sealed plastic bag with the child's name and returned to the parent at the end of the day. As always, both children and adults are required to wash hands before leaving the bathroom.

The following procedures must be followed by Teachers and staff:

- Each child's diaper is changed when wet or soiled.
- A supply of clean, dry diapers and associated supplies are maintained at the changing area. Please immediately inform the Office Manager when supplies run low.
- Use a disposable covering on changing surfaces and change this after each child has been diapered. Wash and disinfect the surface after each child has been diapered or changed.
- Dispose of soiled diapers in a sealed plastic bag and immediately bring to outside shed.
- Children and teachers/volunteers must wash their hands after diapering/toileting.
- Place soiled clothing in a sealed plastic bag labeled with the child's name and staff will return to the parent at the end of the day, reminding parents to re-stock the school with clothing.
- Never change a diaper in any area other than the changing area which cannot be used for any other purpose.

### ***Tooth Brushing***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(11)(d)(e)

Children attending NCNS for more than four hours and/or have a meal while at NCNS must brush their teeth while at school. Parents may choose that their child not participate in tooth brushing. If families opt out, a record of this decision will be placed in the child's file. If they decide to participate, such children will have a labeled toothbrush in his/her lunchbox on a daily basis. Under the supervision of their teacher, the child will brush his or her teeth after their meal with water only. Toothpaste will not be provided by NCNS and will not be supplied by students.

Participation will be assessed on an annual basis.

## ***Safe and Healthy Snacks***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (12)(1)

Providing safe and healthy snacks for our children is of utmost importance at NCNS. **If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, parents are required to provide detailed information prior to the start of school so they may inform teachers and staff members.** NCNS's Health Care Consultant will review allergies and medication administration with parents of children with allergies, and with staff, at the start of each school year.

Children require ***a healthy snack*** to provide them with the energy to learn and play. Snacks that contain a great deal of sugar and provide empty calories are **not** appropriate. Please consider healthy choices when you provide your snacks.

***IMPORTANT:*** We do our best to maintain a **NUT FREE** environment! Please check ingredient labels on all food items for snack time since products and packaging may change. Some product labels may indicate that the food item was processed in a facility that may not be nut-free.

Tables must be cleaned and hands washed before serving and eating snack. Polite, self-help from the children is encouraged. Also, upon arrival at school, hands should be washed when entering the class rooms. This will keep children with contact allergies safe and decrease the amount of transmittable illness.

***Let's work together to provide the healthiest and safest snacks possible for our children.***

## **Confidentiality**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (12)

As a Parent Helper, you will see various behaviors and hear many different conversations in the classroom. Please respect each family's privacy by not discussing personal information outside the classroom. Your adherence to this policy is very much appreciated!

## **NCNS - General Information**

### ***Drop-off***

Parents must accompany their child(ren) to drop off. Children are not to be let out in the parking lot unattended. Parents/caregivers must be sure that the teacher acknowledges their child's arrival before leaving. Teachers will record arrival time on the attendance sheet. Teachers will report any absences to the Office Manager.

### ***Pick-up***

The teacher will dismiss each child to the parent or caregiver. The teacher will **only** release a child to a parent/caregiver approved for pick up by the parent. A teacher will ask for identification if the individual picking up a child is unknown to

the teacher. Anyone picking up a child must acknowledge with the teacher, the dismissal of the child. The teacher will note dismissal time on the attendance sheet.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD SIBLINGS BE LEFT UNATTENDED IN VEHICLES WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION.** Please feel free to call the office if you need a staff member to escort your child to or from class. This staff member will ensure that attendance sheets are completed for the child's arrival and dismissal.

### ***Parking***

Try to park on the Dix Street side of the church first. If no parking spot is available, then proceed to the Vine Street parking lot. The parking lot can be a very busy place. Do not park even temporarily in handicap designated parking spots, in front of the exit doors, or around the islands, as this can pose a safety risk. Please supervise your children closely!

### ***Notification of Absence***

Timely communication between parents/guardians and NCNS promotes the safety and welfare of children and ensures that each child is accounted for as soon as possible. Parents/guardian must notify NCNS of absences according to the following plan:

- Parents/guardians are strongly urged to promptly notify NCNS that their child will be absent or will arrive later than scheduled that day, via phone call or email to the NCNS office.
- NCNS will note on the attendance sheet the absence or late arrival of the child on the appropriate day as well as the name of the person who notified the program of the absence or the late arrival.
- When a child enrolled at NCNS does not arrive within thirty minutes of his/her scheduled arrival time and the parent/guardian has not provided notification of absence or delay, NCNS shall immediately notify the parent/guardian that the child has not arrived. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached directly by telephone, i.e. if the provider does not directly speak with a parent, NCNS shall then contact the child's emergency contact person(s). NCNS must speak personally with the parent or emergency contact person; leaving a message or sending a text is not sufficient.
- Once the provider reaches a person who can confirm the location of the child, the provider shall log the location of the child, the name of the individual spoken to and the time on the attendance sheet.
- If NCNS cannot reach any of the individuals identified above within a reasonable amount of time, and the location of the child cannot be determined definitively, and there is worry for the child's safety, the local police department will be notified.

Recurrent failure of a parent to notify NCNS of a child's absence may be the grounds for dismissal from the program.

### ***School Closings***

NCNS follows the cancellation policy of the Winchester Public Schools. If the Winchester Public Schools declare:

- **a one hour** delayed opening, the morning classes at NCNS will be delayed by one hour
- **a two hour** delayed opening, the morning classes will be cancelled, but the afternoon class and Enrichment Programs will be in session unless otherwise informed via email.

NCNS does not schedule make up days due to weather cancellations. NCNS may also be closed at the discretion of the Board of Directors and/or the Director, in which case the families will be notified by phone and/or email.

### ***Children's Belongings/Clothing***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(11)(c)

Parents are encouraged to label their child's clothing and belongings (backpack, lunch box, etc.). This helps if items get misplaced at the school or on the playground. Parents are also encouraged to send extra clothing in a labeled bag to be stored at school for those extra messy situations.

Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for play and school activities (including outdoor play). Smocks are available in each classroom, however, this is a nursery school and some activities such as painting and water play will be messy. Therefore, it is best to have the children save their fancy clothes for special occasions.

### ***Siblings at School***

Though we love siblings and friends, for safety reasons we ask that **only** school children use the playground. Also, siblings **MUST NOT** be left unattended at the school.

Siblings **MAY NOT** be in the classroom while you are parent helping. Your responsibility is to your child enrolled at NCNS and his/her classmates.

### ***Parent Teacher Conferences***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(7)

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled during class time twice a year in November and May. Parents receive Progress Reports during their conferences, and a portfolio at the end of the year. All records are kept on file at NCNS. A parent may also request a meeting with their teacher at any time during the school year. Teachers and parents should contact one another whenever problems or significant developments arise.

### ***School Evaluation***

On an annual basis, the parents are encouraged to evaluate the school. The evaluation form allows for an honest assessment of the school environment, the staff, the program and the administration. Results of this evaluation will be utilized in confidence by the Board of Directors and the Director of the school for further program planning, program development and administration.

### ***Concerns about the Classroom***

Parents are encouraged to bring any concerns about the classroom to the teacher FIRST. If either the teacher or the parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting, the Director will then mediate with all parties to formulate a solution. NCNS promotes a cooperative model with parents, teachers and all staff at the school. We support open communication involving all parties when possible. We also understand that there may be times when a parent has a sensitive concern and prefers a private conversation with the Director. When this is the case, we would ask parents to express this preference to the Director. Following this conversation, the Director together with the parent will determine best next steps in an effort to reach a respectful resolution for all.

### ***Health Care Policy***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11

At NCNS, we do our best to provide a safe environment for our students to learn and play. As with all schools, inherent risks exist in the classroom and playground settings and, given the wide range of students' ages and interests, we expect our staff, teachers and parent helpers to be cognizant of this issue and be vigilant about watching our children.

This is especially important in our younger classrooms where teacher discretion is used when determining the appropriateness of certain activities and readiness of the class to participate. If parents/guardians have any concerns about general health and safety issues at our school, please inform the classroom teacher and school director. Likewise, if you have particular concerns about your child that may affect his/her safety at school, please bring it to the attention of the classroom teacher and school director.

A detailed manual is maintained in the office and is available for your review. It contains all the Department of Early Education and Care regulations and procedures for health and safety adopted by NCNS. You may also request a conversation with the Health Care Consultant at any time to discuss your child's medical needs.

### ***Emergency First Aid***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.03(5)(a)(2)

The NCNS staff is certified in First Aid and CPR. A complete First Aid Kit is readily available in the office and a mini-kit is available in each classroom. If any first aid is given to a child, parents will be notified in writing within 24 hours of the incident. In the event of an emergency requiring medical attention, the child will be given care and treatment as outlined on the Authorization and Consent Form and the family will be contacted immediately.

### ***School Evacuation***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(2)

An Evacuation Plan is posted in each classroom. The teachers will review this plan with the children during the school year. Monthly fire drills are held during the school year. As a Parent Helper, please familiarize yourself with the Evacuation Plan in the event you may need to assist during an evacuation.

## **Transportation**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.13 (2)(e)

### ***To and From School***

Children are transported to NCNS in personal vehicles or they are walked to school by family members/caregivers. During transport to and from school, family members/caregivers are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children.

NCNS requires that all children have a signed Transportation Plan indicating how the child arrives and leaves NCNS. When a child is to arrive or leave NCNS with someone who has not been approved by the parent, the parent must call NCNS in advance. The teacher will **only** release a child to a parent/caregiver approved for pick up by the parent. A teacher will ask for identification if the individual dropping off or picking up a child is unknown to the teacher.

### ***Field Trip Safety - Walking***

The teachers plan some field trips that are within walking distance of the school. In prior years, the children have walked to the library, fire station, police station, bank and more. As indicated under NCNS Required Forms in the Parent Handbook, all children must have a signed Field Trip Authorization Form which gives permission for their child to accompany the class on any Field Trip. Prior to walking field trips, notification will be given by the teachers.

When the class is on a walking field trip, the following procedure is utilized to ensure the children's safety:

- The teacher prepares the children in the classroom by reviewing safety rules and expectations.
- Before leaving the classroom, children will be counted and called out by name to assure all children are accounted for.
- Children's emergency contact information and medications must be carried by the teacher.
- A cell phone for making emergency calls must be carried by the teacher.
- One adult leads the children during the field trip while the other adult stays in the back of the line.
- When crossing any streets, the entire class must stop on the sidewalk. The teacher steps into the street to stop traffic and remains there until all the children have crossed. The class then regroups on the opposite sidewalk, repeating as necessary.
- During the field trip as safety dictates as well as at the return to NCNS, children will be counted and called out by name to assure all children are accounted for.
- If there is a concern at any time during a field trip, NCNS should be contacted immediately.

### ***Field Trip Safety – Driving***

Some field trips are also planned when parents are asked to drive their own children to a field trip location which is typically no more than 5-10 minutes away from NCNS, and in the Town of Winchester. Local field trips may include Wright-Locke Farm and Kidstock!. During transport to and from field trips, parents are fully responsible for the supervision and safety of their children. Drop-off and Pick-up procedures will remain the same. Please refer to "NCNS General Information; Drop-Off and Pick-up".

## **Emergency Transportation Procedures**

If an emergency situation arises for your child, either at NCNS or on a school field trip, emergency First Aid may be administered by a trained staff member. If the situation is more serious, a call will **immediately** be placed to 911. In either case, the following procedures will be adhered to:

### ***Notification of Parents***

Parents will be notified **immediately**. If a parent cannot be reached, NCNS will call phone numbers provided on their Emergency Card. In an emergency, a NCNS staff member may accompany the child to the hospital. The staff member



will stay with the child until the parents have arrived and call NCNS with updates so it is clear where to guide the parents when they are located. Staff will bring child's full health file when possible.

### ***Method of Transportation***

The child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital. The child **will not** be transported to the hospital in a staff member's vehicle under any circumstances.

### ***Accident Report***

After any emergencies or accidents that require hospitalization, NCNS will immediately notify the Department of Early Education and Care via phone. A written accident report will be submitted to the Department within 48 hours. Copies of this report will be placed in the child's folder and provided to the parents.

## **Behavior Management Principle**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.05(5)(8)

The Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School understands that positive reinforcement for good behavior is more effective than punishment for misbehavior. We believe that the key to disciplining children is teaching appropriate behavior before inappropriate behavior has a chance to occur. Since this is not always possible, we will deal with misbehavior consistently, based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of the child.

Staff members will adhere to the following behavior management principles:

- Interrupt inappropriate behavior.
- Explain in a positive manner why behavior was inappropriate.
- Offer appropriate ways to resolve problem using concrete examples for the child.
- Take time to praise child when appropriate behavior occurs.
- Educators will work one on one with children and their peers to assist in resolving conflicts.
- Parent communication is most important to help improve behavior. If a child has been ill or if any changes have occurred at home, the parent should inform the Teacher.
- When possible, children will participate in setting up classroom rules.
- If on a particular day, the Staff and Director feel that a child is not responding to attempts to help regulate behavior, and he or she is not being safe at school, the Director may request that a parent come pick up the child. Every attempt is made to help a child stay at school.

The following manner of discipline will ***not be tolerated***:

- Corporal punishment shall not be used, including spanking, slapping, and other physical interventions.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.

- No child shall be denied outdoor play as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- No child shall be force fed.

## **Referral Procedure**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (17)(h)

- Any staff member who is concerned about a child's development or behavior will report her concerns to the Director.
- The Director and the classroom Teacher will observe and document the child's behavior in an accurate and factual manner indicating the date, time, and duration of the observations made.
- If it is determined that there is reason for further action, a conference will be scheduled by the teacher with the child's parent(s) to inform them of the concern and to develop a plan to address the child's needs.
- The Teacher with the help of the Director may refer to other resources in the community for children and/or parents in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services.

Every effort will be made to meet the child's needs at school. If appropriate, parent(s) may be asked to consult their child's pediatrician for various reasons including hearing and/or vision testing. We may also suggest that parents contact the Winchester Public School Early Childhood Team, or the Early Childhood Team in which the child resides, to request a developmental screening. Teachers will support and act on all recommendations made by the Public School Early Childhood Team.

## **Termination Policy**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (17)(i)

NCNS makes every effort to work with parents to avoid termination from the program. The Director and the Teacher meet with the parents to discuss options including referrals for evaluation, diagnostic and therapeutic services. NCNS will pursue the use of supportive services to the program including consultation and educator training. When possible a plan will be developed for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

There are times when it is determined that a child must leave the program at NCNS. If termination does become necessary, parents will receive information in writing stating the reasons. Every effort will be made to have the child remain until the end of the school year. The circumstances under which a child may need to leave NCNS include, but are not limited to, the following:

### ***Parental Choice***

- moving, financial considerations, or dissatisfaction with the program

### ***Inappropriateness of the Program for the Child***

- the schedule or program is not a good match for the child
- the child needs more hours or days than are available

### ***Parental Inability or Unwillingness to Conform to Program Policies and Practices***

- failure to provide updated medical information
- tuition payments are three months behind schedule
- unwillingness to obtain needed services for the child
- failure to abide by the Behavior Management Policy

### ***Safety of the Other Children in the Program***

- severe behavioral problems which cannot be controlled and may endanger the child or other children

Families and children will be given a minimum of two weeks' notice in order to prepare the child for termination. It will be emphasized that the reason for leaving the program is not the child's fault. Parents, upon request, will be provided with any needed resources (other schools, state benefits, and support services, etc.) as part of the termination process.

As circumstances change, the family will be encouraged to re-enroll the child whenever possible. The family and the child will be treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.

## **Plans for Mildly Ill Children**

**Note: In addition please see 22/23 Covid 19 Addendum**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(8)

Parents of children who become ill in the program will be notified immediately. Children who become ill in the program will be allowed to rest in a separate area until the parent arrives. One staff member will be assigned to observe the child and be sure of his or her comfort and safety. The child will be offered water and food if it is snack time and if it is appropriate. The staff will use disposable plastic covers on thermometers if the child's temperature is taken. The child must remain in a situation which maintains the staffing requirements as determined by the Department of Early Education and Care and may not be left alone or unobserved at any time. Staff must wash hands after attending an ill child.

## **Guidelines When Your Child is Ill**

Children attending NCNS are expected to be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. If a child becomes ill at the program with symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, a staff member will call the parent or emergency contact person to pick up the child as soon as possible. Children with symptoms of other contagious diseases, including strep throat, conjunctivitis, or impetigo should be excluded from the program until 24 hours after prescribed treatment has begun. In addition, they should be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to the program. A child with symptoms of a contagious disease should be given a place to rest, separate from other children until he or she is picked up by the parent. NCNS's Director and Health Consultant will inform parents whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program. Our Health Care Policy is located in the NCNS office and will be sent via email to all parents. This Health Care Policy provides more detail to help guide you should your child become ill.

## **Guidelines of Head Lice (Pediculosis)**

NCNS' goal is to provide effective management of head lice infestation in school and minimize student absences due to head lice.

- Parents are expected to inform the NCNS Director if they discover that their child has lice.
- NCNS will recommend treatment at home and the family can consult with their pediatrician or other medical personnel regarding best treatment for their child.
- In alignment with the Winchester Public School policy and in adherence with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, any NCNS child with identified lice may return to school after appropriate treatment. Most experts believe that children can return to school after one treatment with insecticide or first wet-combing session.
- NCNS Director will inform the membership of all active head lice and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the identification and treatment process. NCNS will recommend that all families check for both nits and active lice at home and keep the Director informed. All siblings should be checked as well.
- In alignment with the Winchester Public Schools and most experts, NCNS does not have a “no-nits” policy that would require a child to be free of nits to remain in school or before they can return to school.
- NCNS will provide parents with educational information as needed.

### ***Preventing Head Lice Spread***

The following home procedures are recommended for families who have a diagnosis of lice in their homes:

- Anyone who sleeps in the same bed should be treated for lice, even if no lice or eggs are found.
- Clothing, bedding, towels, pillows and stuffed animals used within 48 hours before treatment should be washed in hot water and dried in an electric dryer on the hot setting.
- A vacuum can be used to clean furniture, carpet and car seats.
- Items that cannot be washed or vacuumed can be sealed inside a plastic bag for two weeks.
- Items that the person used more than two days before treatment are not likely to be infested because head lice cannot survive off the body for more than 48 hours.
- Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Routine cleaning and vacuuming is all that is needed to remove lice.

The following school procedures will be followed at NCNS:

- Appropriate classrooms will be vacuumed before children return to class.
- If affected child was in a classroom in the last 48 hours, smocks or other communal clothing should be laundered in hot water and dried on the hot setting in the dryer before use.
- Dress up clothes should be sealed in plastic bags for two weeks unless they can be washed.
- If there is a concern that the affected child had contact with stuffed animals, pillows, etc. in the classroom, they should be laundered as stated above or sealed for two weeks.

# Parent Information, Rights and Responsibilities

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(1)(10)

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of child care settings.

These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00 and 606 CMR 7.08(10), establish standards for operation of child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (program owner) in regard to their work with families. A summary of the required parent information, rights and responsibilities are identified below. The licensee must support and encourage a partnership with and the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children.

## ***Parent's Rights***

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(4)

Right to Visit: You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's classroom while your child is present.

### Parent Input and Communication:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(3)

We welcome parent input and feedback in the development of NCNS's policies and procedures. Parents are invited to attend monthly Board meetings, and share ideas and suggestions at any time with the Director, teachers, staff and Board members. It is up to the Director and the Board to decide whether or not to implement your suggestions. We will make necessary accommodations for families whose primary language is not English or who require alternative communication methods.

### Enrollment Meeting:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(5)

NCNS provides an opportunity for parents to meet with the Program Director or his or her designee at the start of each school year, and anytime during the school year at the parent's request.

- The Director and staff will meet with parents at a scheduled Orientation Meeting prior to the start of the school year. At this meeting policies and procedures will be addressed as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- Tours of the school are offered routinely.
- NCNS requests that parents complete a Development History form on each child annually. Teachers will discuss each child's developmental history with parents prior to the start of the school year. Some areas that will be discussed include:
  - Child's and family's interests and needs.
  - Other therapeutic, educational, social and support services received by the child in order to support transitions and coordinate with services offered by other providers.

### Your Child's Records:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (7)

Information contained in your child's records is privileged and confidential. NCNS staff may not distribute or release information in your child's records to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for your child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to the Records:

You should be able to have access to your child's records. NCNS must provide access within two business days, unless they have your permission to take longer. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is located in more than one location. NCNS must have procedures regarding access, duplication and dissemination of children's records. They must maintain a written log that identifies anyone who has had access or has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the staff maintaining the records.

Amending the Records:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (10)

Parent(s) have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to their child's record. Parents also have the right to request deletion or amendments of any information contained in their child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

- If you are of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to have a conference with the NCNS Director to make your objections known.
- The Director shall within one (1) week after the conference, give you a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If this decision is in your favor, the Director shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

Transfer of the Record:

Upon your written request, when your child is no longer in care, NCNS can give you your child's record or transfer them to any other person that you identify. NCNS will ask you to sign a form verifying that you have received the record.

## ***Responsibilities of the Program***

Confidentiality and Distribution of Records and Information:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (12)

Information pertaining to children and their families is privileged and confidential. NCNS will not distribute or release information about a child or his/her family to any unauthorized person or discuss with any unauthorized person information about a child or his/her family without the written consent of the child's parent.

Reporting Abuse or Neglect:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(4)(d)

NCNS staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to the Director. NCNS has written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment. NCNS will inform parents immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving their child while in our care.

Notification of Injury:

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(8)(a)

NCNS will notify you immediately of any injury that required emergency care. They must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to the child.

Availability of Regulations:

NCNS will maintain a copy of Standard for the Licensure of Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask the Director to show them to you.

*NCNS Non-Discrimination Policy:*

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.04 (17)(g)

NCNS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, marital status, political beliefs, national origin, gender and sexual identity or disability.

*Reporting Change in Educators:*

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(8)(c)

NCNS will inform our membership as soon as possible following any change in educators.

*Notification of Change in Program Policy:*

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(8)(h)

NCNS will inform parents in writing approximately 7 days prior to the implementation of any change in program policy and procedures.

*Notification of Pets:*

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.08(8)(i)

NCNS will inform parents prior to the introduction of pets into the program.

## **Child Abuse Reporting Policy**

Massachusetts EEC Reg 7.11(4)(d)

According to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 119, the following people are among those mandated to report suspected child abuse: family counselors, social workers, educational administrators, teachers, daycare workers, and other persons paid to care for or work with a child in a public or private facility. NCNS interprets this mandate to include all workers providing services to children and/or families.

Therefore, an NCNS staff member who, in his or her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering from serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, inflicted upon him or her by a caretaker or from neglect, including malnutrition or who is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth must:

- Notify the Director immediately that she or he believes a report needs to be filed. No worker should call the Department of Children and Families directly. The Director will contact the appropriate authorities to determine what actions should be taken.
- With the approval and assistance of the Director, the worker who becomes aware of the possible abuse will participate in the immediate filing of oral and written reports with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In discussions with the Director a decision will be made regarding who will complete and forward the 51A report and who will make the oral report. The worker in consultation with the Director will decide who shall notify the parents that a report is being filed.
- DCF daytime number is (617) 520-8700. If the child is outside the area you will be directed to another number. After 5 PM the Child-At-Risk Hotline is 1-800-792-5200.

- A written report (51A) must be filed within 48 hours of oral communication. The 51A form is on file in the school office and should be filled out prior to making the telephone call since it covers information needed for the oral report.
- Staff will keep reports and outcomes confidential.
- Director shall inform the Department of Early Education and Care after filing the 51A Report.
- Staff must cooperate with the DCF investigation. DCF may request interviews with the staff. Employees may also be asked to testify at a hearing. Supervisors can provide support throughout this process.
- Staff will be periodically trained in the assessment of potential abuse and the reporting procedures.
- Staff will receive support and guidance from the Director on maintaining relationships with the family.

### ***Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect While in the Center's Care and Custody***

If formal allegations of abuse or neglect have been made against a Neighborhood Cooperative Nursery School staff member, the individual will be immediately relieved from his or her responsibilities until the Department of Children and Families' investigation is complete. The investigator's outcome will determine said person's employment status at the center. Immediate termination of all job responsibilities may occur. The Director will immediately report suspected abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the center or during a program related activity, to the Department of Children and Families and shall notify the Department of Early Education and Care immediately after filing a 51A report or after having learned one has been filed. All staff members are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families and to the Director. All staff members shall cooperate in all investigations. Failure to cooperate will result in immediate suspension and or termination.

### ***Indicators of Child Neglect***

#### *Lack of Supervision*

Very young children left unattended  
 Children left in the care of other children too young to protect them  
 Children inadequately supervised for long periods of time or when engaged in dangerous activities

#### *Lack of Adequate Clothing and Good Hygiene*

Children dressed inadequately for the weather  
 Persistent skin disorders resulting from improper hygiene  
 Children chronically dirty and unbathed

#### *Lack of Medical or Dental Care*

Children whose needs for medical or dental care or medication and health needs are unmet

#### *Lack of Adequate Nutrition*

Children lacking sufficient quantity or quality of food  
 Children constantly complaining of hunger or rummaging for food  
 Children suffering severe developmental lags

#### *Lack of Adequate Shelter*

Structurally unsafe housing or exposed wiring  
 Inadequate heating  
 Unsanitary housing conditions

#### *In identifying neglect be sensitive to:*

Differing cultural expectations and values  
 Differing child rearing practices  
 Issues of poverty versus neglect. Neglect is not necessarily related to poverty; it reflects a breakdown in household management, a breakdown of concern for and care taking of the child.

### ***Physical Indicators of Child Abuse***



The following injuries and conditions are often seen in cases of abuse or neglect. These warning signals or indicators should be considered in light of the explanations provided, medical history (especially if inconsistent), and developmental abilities of the child to engage in activities that might have caused the injury.

#### Bruises and Welts

Bruises on any infant, especially facial bruises

Bruises on the posterior side of a child's body

Bruises in unusual patterns that might reflect the pattern of the instrument used or human bite marks

Clustered bruises indicating repeated contact with a hand or instrument

Bruises in various stages of healing

#### Burns

Immersion burns indicating dunking in a hot liquid. "Sock" or "glove" burns on the arms or legs or "donut" shaped burns of the buttocks and genitalia

Cigarette burns

Rope burns that indicate confinement

Dry burns indicating that a child has been forced to sit upon a hot surface or has had a hot implement applied to the skin

#### Lacerations and Abrasions

Lacerations of the eyelid, eye, or any portion of an infant's face

Any laceration or abrasion to external genitalia

#### Skeletal Injuries

Rib fractures

Fractures of the mandible, sternum or scapulae

Skull trauma

Spinal shaft fracture or spinal trauma

Recurrent injury to the same site

Injuries caused by twisting or pulling

Metaphyseal or corner fractures of long bones

Epiphyseal separation

Periosteal elevation

Spiral fractures

#### Head Injuries

Absence of hair and/or hemorrhaging beneath the scalp due to vigorous hair pulling

Subdural hematomas – hemorrhaging beneath the outer covering of the brain (due to shaking or hitting)

Retinal hemorrhages or detachment due to shaking

Jaw and nasal fractures

Loose or missing teeth

#### Internal Injuries Caused by Blows to Midline of Abdomen

Duodenal or jejunal hematomas

Rupture of the inferior vena cava

Peritonitis - inflammation of the lining of the abdominal cavity

Laceration of liver, spleen or pancreas

Renal injury

Rigid abdomen; tenderness in abdomen

### ***Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse***

Children who are abused physically or emotionally display certain types of behavior. Many of these are common to all children at one time or another, but when they are present in sufficient number and strength to characterize a child's overall manner, they may indicate abuse. More than simple reactions to abuse itself, these behaviors reflect the child's response to the dynamics of the family. Children learn to deny, suppress or exaggerate parts of themselves as they struggle

to get their needs met the best way they can in a disturbed, stressful household. These learned survival mechanisms become a child's "mode of operation" used to cope with the world at large. The behaviors which characterize abused children fall into four categories:

Overly compliant, passive, undemanding behaviors aimed at maintaining a low profile, avoiding any possible confrontation with the parents which could lead to abuse. The child has adapted to the abusive situation by trying to avoid any behavior which the abusive parent notices.

Extremely aggressive, demanding and raging behaviors, sometimes hyperactive, caused by the child's repeated frustrations at not getting basic needs met. The child has adapted by seeking to provoke the needed attention with whatever behavior it takes to get the attention.

Role-reversed "parental" behavior or extremely dependent behavior. Abusive parents have been unable to satisfy certain of their own needs appropriately and so turn to their children for fulfillment, which can produce two opposite sets of behavior in the children. If a parent needs parental attention, the child may be expected to assume this task, and become inappropriately adult and responsible. Other parents, with a need to keep their child dependent, will produce clinging, babyish behavior in the child long after a child in a healthy family would become more self-reliant.

Lags in development. Children who are forced to siphon off energy, normally channeled toward growth, into protecting themselves from abusive parents, may fall behind the norm for their age in toilet training, motor skills, socialization and language development. Developmental lags may also be the result of central nervous system damage caused by physical abuse, medical or nutritional neglect or inadequate stimulation. There may, of course, be organic or congenital causes for such lags in development.

Most abused children live in uncertain environments where requirements for behavior are inconsistent and unclear. Frequently, discipline is meted out arbitrarily in response to the parent's needs and feelings at the moment rather than to punish a child for transgressing limits. Children may receive some love, affection and security from their parents but are also often frustrated in attempts to fulfill their needs. This inconsistency creates anger and frustration in the child, which is frequently expressed indirectly with the parents or by explosions with others outside the home.

Other abused children have learned to do what the abusive parent wants or expects. At the other end of the spectrum from overly aggressive children, some adapt quickly to others' expectations. Unlike children who act out their frustration and rage, these children have learned not to expect anything in the way of love or support. Their best efforts are directed at avoiding conflict which, in the context of the abusive family, can be triggered by expressing almost any personal need, curiosity, anger or playfulness.

Ultimately, a list of specific behaviors to identify child abuse is useful only if the family dynamics that produce those behaviors are clearly understood. The behaviors, verbal and physical, indicate the survival techniques the child has learned in order to exist in the family and attempts, frequently inappropriate in kind or intensity, to get from others what the parents do not provide. The greater the abuse, the less the child will trust other people and the greater the child's difficulty in responding to love and care.

