



Parent Handbook

2013/2014

www.durhamcommunitypreschool.org, 304 E. Trinity Ave, Durham NC 27701, (919) 688-7667

Dear DCP Families,



Welcome to the start of another great year at Durham Community Preschool – DCP for short. This handbook is a living document that is revised annually. Please keep it in a safe spot at home to reference through-out the year. It is your best tool for knowing the school policies for DCP. Each written policy has grown out of our experience as a school and the experience of other schools like ours. If you ever have a question (or want to know how or why these policies came about), please feel free to approach the Executive Director to get your answers.

Please take some time to read the history of our school located in the back of the handbook. Our founding Board members worked hard to create a framework for this school that has an emphasis on community, on warmth, on openness and the close relationship between parents, staff and Board. Your commitment and presence here at DCP is joining into this legacy. It takes the effort and involvement from all of us to nurture this relationship. Every time I read our history, it inspires and excites me to be a part of such a fun and dynamic community! I hope it will inspire you as well.

Sincerely,

Rose Volponi

Executive Director

durhamcommunitypreschool@gmail.com

(919) 688-7667



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1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Mission

Durham Community Preschool's mission is to provide high-quality, affordable, part-time care for children aged 6 months to 5 years in a safe, enriching, and developmentally-appropriate environment where children can learn, create, and explore. We are committed to retaining knowledgeable and nurturing teachers; to welcoming families of every race, ethnicity, religion, family structure, income, and background; and to building a partnership that, by example, teaches our children to participate in and care for the greater community.

1.2 Our Philosophy

Children are naturally creative, possessing an innate curiosity and taking delight in discovering the world around them through active exploration. We support these attributes by:

- engaging our young people to learn through play, creativity, and hands-on activities;
- providing them with a comfortable and enriching environment; and
- allowing them to develop their ideas and freely express themselves.

Experiences in early childhood also shape how young people view the world and their connection with it. At DCP, we encourage our children to become compassionate and mindful members of their community by:

- recognizing that each child is a capable individual;
- giving our children a solid foundation of confidence and self-worth to support their journey through childhood;
- emphasizing the value of community;
- modeling peaceful conflict resolution and respect for one another.

1.3 Governance

DCP is governed by its Board of Directors. The Board is composed of DCP parents and other members of the DCP community. Board members are elected annually by DCP members. The Board makes decisions regarding DCP's policies, bylaws, maintenance of facilities; balances the school budget; and evaluates the performance of the Director. Meetings are held monthly. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings. Meeting time and location are sent out to all parents prior to each meeting.

1.4 Enrollment Policy

DCP welcomes families of all cultures, traditions, families of different genders, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital status and social class.

Enrollment is open to all children ages 6 months to 5 years. Enrollment will be granted without discrimination in regard to race, ethnic origin, religion, nationality, national origin, family structure or beliefs.

1. Children enrolled at DCP are assigned to one of four classrooms, as determined by the Executive Director:

a. *Lily Pad Lagoon*

i. The Lily Pad Lagoon is designed for children from six months of age through 24 months of age.

ii. A child must be at least six months of age before s/he may begin attending the Lily Pad Lagoon. A child may be moved up to the Tadpole Room when they turn two years old, if there is space available and all waiting list requests have been fulfilled, as determined by the Executive Director. Note that this may mean that a child will stay in the Tadpole Room for more than one regular attendance year should s/he continue at DCP. Otherwise, enrolled children must remain in the Lily Pad Lagoon until the next

enrollment year, regardless of their second birthday date.

iii. Children may attend the Lily Pad Lagoon anywhere from a one-day per week schedule to a four-day per week schedule (i.e., Mondays through Thursdays).

iv. Because of the flexible attendance schedule permitted in the Lily Pad Lagoon, DCP may not be able to guarantee an enrollment spot to all children moving from the Lily Pad Lagoon to the Tadpole Room in a given year. While every effort will be made by DCP to accommodate all families re-applying for enrollment in consecutive years, enrollment spaces will be assigned during the priority enrollment period on a first come-first serve basis by receipt of a physical application form. If there are more applications than spaces in any given year, DCP will do an internal lottery at the end of the priority period to determine acceptance. Families not receiving enrollment spots during the priority enrollment period will be granted top spots on the Tadpole Room waiting lists.

b. Tadpole Room

i. The Tadpole Room is designed for children two to three years of age.

ii. Unless as allowed by the Executive Director, a child must be at least two years old on or before August 31st of the attendance year before s/he may begin attending the Tadpole Room. Children remain enrolled in the Tadpole Room throughout the school year (i.e., August through May) unless withdrawn.

c. Pollywog Room

i. The Pollywog Room is designed for toilet-trained children three to four years of age.

ii. A child must be at least three years old on or before August 31st of the attendance year before s/he may begin attending the Pollywog Room. Children remain enrolled in the Pollywog Room throughout the school year (i.e., August through May) unless withdrawn.

d. Leap Frog Room

i. The Leap Frog Room is designed for toilet-trained children four to five years of age.

ii. A child must be at least four years old on or before August 31st of the attendance year before s/he may begin attending the Leap Frog Room. Children remain enrolled in the Leap Frog Room throughout the school year (i.e., August through May) unless withdrawn.

2. Applications for Enrollment

a. Applications for enrollment are accepted throughout the calendar year for the current school year (i.e., August through May). Children are enrolled as spaces are available, and waiting lists are maintained by desired room and attendance schedule for full rooms/schedules. Children on waiting lists are offered enrollment spots in the wait-listed order as spaces become available or as determined by the Executive Director.

b. A one-week priority enrollment period for the upcoming attendance year is given for families of currently-enrolled children and families of DCP alumni. This means that DCP families (current and alumni) will be granted enrollment spots prior to the general public. While every effort will be made by DCP to accommodate all families re-applying for enrollment in consecutive years, enrollment spaces will be assigned during the priority enrollment period on a first come-first serve basis by receipt of a physical application form. Families not receiving enrollment spots during the priority enrollment period will be

granted top spots on waiting lists. Once the one-week priority enrollment period is over, DCP families will no longer be granted priority for enrollment spots over the general public, and applications received after the end of the period will be included in the lottery process as described herein. There are no exceptions to this process.

c. Applications for the upcoming attendance year may be submitted by the general public beginning January 1st of each year. Applications may be submitted by mail, e-mail, or hand-delivered. The Executive Director will assign a lottery date during the first quarter of the year, following the one-week priority enrollment period. The purpose of the lottery will be to assign remaining enrollment spots to the general applicant pool. Children not offered enrollment spots following the lottery will be placed on a waiting list by room and attendance schedule.

1.5 Parental Involvement and Responsibilities

DCP encourages parents to take part in every level of the school from the classroom to the Board of Directors. Parents are required to fulfill their on-call day assignments. A representative of each family is expected to attend the Annual General Meeting, held each April. At this meeting, parents and other General Members elect the Board of Directors and approve changes to DCP's bylaws. Some other ways to become involved are:

Joining a committee, being a room parent, coming out for a work-day, participating in a fundraiser, decorating a bulletin board, taking home laundry for school, sharing a special skill or interest in the classrooms, substituting for teachers in the classrooms, or helping with parties and celebrations.

Please read the parent involvement form for more information. All families are encouraged to fill out and return the parent involvement form to the Executive Director. We appreciate everyone's help and contribution!

1.6 School Closure Policy

1. Inclement Weather
 - a. As a general rule, if the Durham Public Schools (DPS) are closed, DCP will be closed. There are times, however, when DCP does NOT follow the public schools' inclement weather policy. This occurs when the DPS decisions are made primarily due to busing concerns, which do not affect our families. Families are encouraged to make their own decisions involving driving in adverse weather conditions.
 - b. The decision to close DCP for the day will be made by 7:00 AM. Closures will be posted on WTVD, and families will be notified by e-mail. If widespread power outages occur, getting closure information from WTVD or email may be difficult. Under those conditions, in all likelihood, DCP will be closed.
 - c. If inclement weather begins suddenly or after 9:00 AM, the Executive Director will make a decision regarding canceling the remainder of the school day and will notify families to pick up children accordingly. In this case, families or their designee must return to DCP to pick up their children as soon as possible.
2. Acts of God
 - a. In the event of an act of God (e.g., fire, power outage, absence of running water or heat, etc.), DCP will be closed until the situation is resolved.
 - b. The decision to close DCP for the day will be made as soon as DCP staff is aware of the situation. Families will be notified by e-mail of the closure decision.
 - c. If an act of God begins suddenly or after 9:00 AM, the Executive Director will make a decision regarding canceling the remainder of the school day and will notify families to pick up children accordingly. In this case, families or their designee must return to DCP to pick up their children as soon as possible.

3. Extended Closure
 - a. If DCP is closed for more than five days during the school year due to inclement weather or acts of God, the DCP Board of Directors may adjust the calendar to add make-up days at its discretion. No tuition refunds will be granted.

2 COMMUNICATION

Parents are responsible for reading and understanding the policies in the Parent Handbook.

If you have any questions about the information in the Parent Handbook please contact the Executive Director. DCP reserves the right to add, change, amend, or delete policies at will. Parents will be notified of any changes to the Handbook. The Parent Handbook is updated annually.

2.1 Disclosure of Information

DCP shall not disclose information concerning an individual child or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to persons other than DCP staff or government officials acting in the course of their duties, unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) grant written permission for the disclosure, or unless disclosure is necessary in an emergency situation.

2.2 Parent/School Communication

Parents are strongly encouraged to speak with their teachers and/or the Executive Director at any time. If you have any questions, concerns, ideas, or suggestions for your classroom, you should first address your child's teacher. Please send all messages to teachers in written form or speak to the teacher directly. If, however, you are unable to resolve any concerns with the teacher, please contact the Executive Director. Any questions or concerns regarding facilities, operations, or policy should be addressed to the Executive Director. Notices will be posted on the bulletin boards and sent to all parents via email. Parents are responsible for making sure DCP has a valid email address for their family.

2.3 Parent and Emergency Contact Information

Parents are expected to review and update their personal and emergency contact as needed. If your address, email, or phone numbers change, please contact the Executive Director with your updated information as soon as possible. State rules mandate that in part-time childcare facilities, such as DCP, a child's parents or their designee must be available to pick up children within 15 minutes should there be an emergency, natural disaster, or sick child. Please plan accordingly.

2.4 Parent Orientation/Open House

This event at the beginning of the school year is for the whole family. It is a time to meet other DCP families. It is also an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and see your new classroom! You may also choose to sign up for school activities, classroom parties, and to learn about other volunteer opportunities at DCP.

2.5 Conferences and Consultations

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled for the Leap Frog and Pollywog classes twice a year. The Tadpole and Lily-pad Lagoon classes do not have parent-teacher conferences; however, we are always available to discuss your concerns and encourage you to contact your teacher any time as needed. If you wish to have a consultation with your child's teacher, please contact him or her and he or she will make him/herself available. We prefer that conversations about the child do not take place in the presence of the child.

2.6 DCP Google Groups list-serve

All families enrolled in DCP will be automatically added to the DCP Google Groups list-serve. The DCP Google group is a low-volume list that is a great way to keep abreast of DCP happenings and share topics of interest to the community. The Google group is a forum that is open to any DCP member and is not regulated nor endorsed by the school. Parents, staff and Board members (including Alumnae) are welcome to use this as a forum for discussion, questions (not pertaining to staff), community event notices, and networking among our school community. We strongly encourage families to remain a part of our online community; however, if you wish to be removed from the list you may do it manually from a list message or you may contact the Executive Director.

2.7 Labeling

Please label, with your child's name, all items that you bring to DCP such as coats, bags, containers, cups, comfort items, etc.

3 HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Clothing and Skin Protection

We do not administer sunscreen, insect repellent, or medication at DCP. If you wish for your child to wear sunscreen, insect repellent or if your child needs medication, please handle these issues at home before bringing the child to DCP for the day.

Please provide one complete change of clothing, including socks and underwear, in a clearly marked plastic bag to be kept at school. As the seasons change and your child grows, you will want to update these items. Parents find they usually do this three times a year even if there are no accidents.

Please dress your child in weather appropriate clothing that you do not mind getting soiled and that is easy for your child to play in. **Please do not bring your child to DCP in flip-flops or crocs.** Closed-toe shoes that do not allow playground mulch to enter are most suitable.

3.2 Food

Please send your child's snack and lunch, along with a drink, in a lunch bag. The lunch bag and food containers should be clearly marked with your child's name. **DCP promotes healthy eating habits.** Please do not send sodas, candy, gum, or junk food for snack or lunch.

Teachers would appreciate if **no messy foods** were sent to eat. All classes have at least 7 children eating at a time and one messy food (i.e. yogurt, pudding, applesauce, rice) with one child can really make cleaning up after snack or lunch difficult. Thank-you for being sensitive to this!

Mealtimes at DCP are important learning times! DCP Teachers are keeping in mind that typical kindergarten programs have anywhere from 14-30 children in each classes. Kindergarten teachers will not have time to teach each child how to open their crackers, self-feed, close lunchboxes, etc. We'd like to send off each child to elementary school knowing how to get their lunchbox, open food containers and feed themselves. We cannot do this without your help as parents! It's important to provide your child with child-friendly lunchboxes, food containers, and (when in preschool) a back pack that fits all these items in comfortably. Our small class sizes help our teachers begin the process in the Tadpole room.

Lily-pad Lagoon (Infant/Small Toddlers): Breast milk and formula will be promptly refrigerated. Please send spoons for caregivers to feed your child, or for your child to feed himself or herself if the child is self-feeding.

Tadpoles (Two- and Three-Year Olds): Please send finger foods for snack and lunch. Our caregivers emphasize independence and make every effort to allow the child to feed him or herself. A lunchbox that is easy to open and close is recommended.

Pollywogs and Leap Frogs (Three- and Four-Year Olds): Please send snack and lunch in easy to open containers that the children can open themselves. Remember to send a spoon or fork if they need one to eat their food. A lunchbox that is easy to open and close is essential in learning meal-time skills at school.

Birthdays: We are happy for you to celebrate you child's special day at DCP. You are welcome to provide a special birthday snack for the day. Please coordinate this with your child's teacher. The teacher will also be able to tell you whether there are any food allergies you should be aware of before bringing in a snack. If cupcakes or other sweets are sent, we will have the birthday celebration after lunch instead of at snack time. Parents are welcome to join us!

3.3 Toys from Home

For most classes, we recommend that children do not bring "home toys" to school. For items that are allowed at school, they should be clearly marked with the child's name. See below for particular classroom rules.

1. **Lily-pad Lagoon (Infant/Small Toddlers):** Comfort items, such as pacifiers, stuffed animals, and blankets are expected and encouraged to help make for a smooth transition to school. Comfort items should be clearly marked with the child's name.
2. **Tadpoles (Two-Year Olds):** In general, we recommend that children in this class do not bring toys from home. However, in some cases, these children will still need a comfort item while at school. In these cases, the item can be brought to school with the child. Please clearly mark any comfort items brought to school.
3. **Pollywogs and Leap Frogs (Three- and Four-Year Olds):** In general, children in these classes should not bring toys from home to school. If the child does bring a toy to school, the child will be asked to leave the toy in his or her bag during school time. The exception to this rule is for specific and scheduled show and tell days. Your teacher will inform you of these events.

3.4 Diapers and Potty Training

1. Lily Pad Lagoon (Infant/Small Toddlers):

- a. Teachers in the Lily Pad Lagoon are not able to assist with infant potty training or early potty training efforts.
- b. For health and safety reasons, only disposable diapers are allowed in the Lily Pad Lagoon. Should it be medically necessary for a child to use cloth diapers, a note from a medical doctor must be submitted to and prior approval must be received from the Executive Director.
- c. Parents are expected to provide a supply of diapers to be kept in the room or to provide enough diapers for expected changes during a particular day on a daily basis. If cloth diapers are medically necessary, a bag or some other receptacle for returning dirty diapers should be provided. Dirty cloth diapers are expected to be removed by parents on a daily basis.

2. Tadpole Room (Two-Year Olds):

- a. Teachers in the Tadpole Room will assist a child in potty training upon request of parents. Teachers will prompt a potty-training child for bathroom breaks at regular intervals during the school day; however, it is appreciated if parents allow their child to use the potty immediately prior to the start of the school day.
- b. For health and safety reasons, only disposable diapers and trainers are allowed in the Tadpole Room. Should it be medically necessary for a child to use cloth diapers or trainers, a note from a medical doctor must be submitted to and prior approval must be received from the Executive Director.
- c. Parents are expected to provide a supply of diapers/trainers to be kept in the room or to provide enough diapers/trainers for expected changes during a particular day on a daily basis. If cloth diapers/trainers are medically necessary, a bag or some other receptacle for returning dirty diapers/trainers should be provided. Dirty cloth diapers/trainers are expected to be removed by parents on a daily basis.
- d. A child should not be sent to school in underwear unless he or she has been successfully dry and clean during awake daytime hours for at least two consecutive weeks.

3. Pollywog Room / Leap Frog Room (Three- and Four-Year Olds):

- a. Teachers provide potty breaks at regular intervals during the school day; however, it is appreciated if parents allow their child to use the potty immediately prior to the start of the school day.
- b. A child must be completely potty trained and cannot begin to attend school in either of these rooms unless he or she is consistently wearing underwear and has been successfully dry and clean during awake daytime hours for at least two consecutive weeks.
- c. Should a child not be successfully potty trained by the beginning of the school year, parents may continue to secure the child's place in the room by paying monthly tuition.

- d. Should a child regress with respect to potty training during the school year, teachers will work with the child/parents to resolve the regression at school until such time as the Lead Teacher and Executive Director decide that the regression needs independent attention at home; is disruptive to the conduct of the classroom; or that the child is being harmed by having continued accidents in a school environment. The child may be requested to remain home by the Executive Director until the regression is resolved. Monthly tuition must be paid to continue to secure the child's place in the room.

3.5 Playground Safety

The following rules are to ensure the safety of all children at DCP. Please reinforce these rules with your children and continue to follow them whenever you are on the DCP playground during DCP school hours or at DCP special events and activities.

- 1) Stay off the black metal steps other than sitting on the bottom step
- 2) Stay away from concrete steps other than to go in and out of the building
- 3) Feet first down the slide
- 4) Go up the stairs or climbing wall and down the slide (no climbing up the slide)
- 5) Sticks can be used with sound play (then encouraged to be left on the ground there) or put over/through the fence. Sticks may not be used as guns or used to poke other children. No running with sticks.
- 6) Sand stays in the sand box.
- 7) No standing or twisting on the swings.
- 8) No throwing sand or mulch
- 9) Ride-on toys need to stay on the ground (not up in the playhouse or fort)
- 10) No balls or other toys in the fort above the slide
- 11) No hiding under the small stair/slide equipment (the one with the steering wheel)
- 12) If you need to use the bathroom, you must go inside
- 13) Please do not pick the flowers. They are for everyone's enjoyment.
- 14) No swinging kids on top of hand swings
- 15) No monkey bars for kids
- 16) No pushing, shoving, hitting, spitting, or rough play

3.6 Changes at Home

Please let us know if your child is experiencing significant changes or stresses at home. Children sometimes act out during times of change or stress. A basic understanding of what is going on will help us to better help your child during the school day.

3.7 Discipline Policy

1. Discipline in the classroom

DCP uses positive discipline and redirection to encourage appropriate behavior. We, as teachers, are here to teach positive social skills to the children in our care. We emphasize teaching children how to use their words in navigating social conflicts (e.g. I am still playing with that, when you are done may I have a turn? Please stop pushing me.). When conflict occurs (and it will!), it's important that we get down on their level and help children work through the behavior that is occurring (sharing, taking turns, hitting, pushing).

If a child becomes physical or aggressive towards his/her classmates or the teacher, he or she will be immediately removed from the group. If a time-out is needed, it will last one minute per number of years old. If the physical or aggressive behavior persists, teachers will engage the parents to help come up with

a suitable behavior plan. Serious (and/or reoccurring) problems need to be discussed with the Executive Director.

If any child leaves a mark on another child (by biting, hitting, scratching, etc.) the parents of both children will be notified (without using children's names).

If the Executive Director deems all possible avenues of behavior modification have been exhausted, the Executive Director reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program.

3.8 Policy on Health and Immunizations

1. Following acceptance for enrollment and prior to attending school, a health and safety form must be submitted for each child for retention in the child's school record. The health and safety form, provided to families by DCP and seeking information regarding allergies, mental or physical disabilities, and vaccination history, is intended to ensure that children are safe and comfortable while under DCP's care. Note that DCP cannot accommodate children with severe mental or physical disabilities.

- a. DCP will make reasonable accommodations for children with food and other allergies. However, DCP is unable to administer any medication to children except in emergency situations (e.g., Epi pens, etc.). It is the responsibility of the family of the enrolled child to provide and maintain such emergency medication. It is also the responsibility of the family to provide written instructions and training to DCP staff as to the emergency medication's proper administration.
- b. DCP will make reasonable accommodations for children with chronic non-communicable illness (e.g. diabetes) or physical disabilities (e.g., prosthetic, hearing aids, etc.). However, DCP is unable to administer any medication or perform diagnostic testing. It is the responsibility of the family of the enrolled child to provide and maintain any medical equipment, supplies, etc. It is also the responsibility of the family to provide written instructions and training to DCP staff as to proper care and use of any medical equipment, supplies, etc. DCP is not financially-responsible for any loss or damage to any medical equipment or supplies that occurs at school. Therefore, it is highly recommended that families properly insure medical equipment and supplies against such loss or damage.
- c. A child enrolling at DCP must comply with State of North Carolina immunization requirements as set forth in NCGS § 130A-152 prior to attendance. Medical exemptions from vaccinations or the established vaccination schedule are permitted as provided for under NCGS § 130A-156 and as certified by a Board-certified medical physician licensed to practice in the State of North Carolina. DCP does not recognize any religious or other philosophical exemptions from this immunization requirement. Any children of families enrolled at DCP prior to January 1, 2012 shall be exempt from complying with this requirement; however, these families must still provide documentation of vaccination history or the absence of vaccinations.

2. The completeness and accuracy of the information provided in the health and safety form is the complete responsibility of the family of the enrolled child. Should information originally provided in the health and safety form change at any time during the school year, the family of the enrolled child is responsible for notifying the Executive Director immediately and providing an updated health and safety form to be kept in the child's school record.

3. Only the Executive Director has the discretion to determine whether reasonable accommodation for a child's allergy, mental or physical disability, or vaccination status can be made. If such accommodations cannot be made or cannot continue to be made, a family may be requested to withdraw a child's enrollment. The enrollment deposit may or may not be returned, as determined by the Executive Director.

4. The Executive Director may exclude children from DCP who are not immunized or are under-immunized if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within the DCP community, including enrolled children, their families, and their siblings as well as staff and their families. The Executive Director will determine when the child may return. In this instance, no reimbursement of tuition will be provided.

3.9 Policy on Sick Children

1. Children should be kept at home if:
 - a. They have been exposed to contagious diseases, such as Hand-Foot-Mouth disease within 24 hours of the school day.
 - b. They have had a fever within 24 hours preceding the school day
 - c. They have had vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours preceding the school day.
 - d. They clearly do not feel well (lethargy, glazed eyes, etc.)
 - e. There is discharge from the eye(s).
 - f. They demonstrate symptoms of illness including but not limited to fever above 100 degrees; conjunctivitis (pink eye) or "cold in the eye"; flu; unusual rash; severe cough; rapid breathing or labored breathing; severe cold; vomiting; yellowish skin or eyes; diarrhea; head lice; intestinal parasites; or contagious illness of any sort which results in child being too ill to participate in daily activities.
2. In case of contraction of contagious disease or infestation (e.g. lice, intestinal worms):
 - a. Immediately notify the Executive Director. Your child's identity will be protected.
 - b. Once the child has contracted the disease or parasites, keep the child at home for the maximum number of days required. The child should return to school only when the contagion is gone.
3. Remember that DCP staff will not administer medication to children.
4. Return your child to school when she or he is naturally free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours.
5. At the discretion of the lead teacher or Executive Director a child may be deemed too sick to remain at school. Parents will be contacted and will be expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. If the parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact will be called and expected to pick up the child as soon as possible.

3.10 Emergency Procedures for an Injured Child

All DCP staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. If an emergency arises, staff will administer first aid care, call the parent, and if necessary call emergency medical personnel. Should a child need to be transported to an emergency room, a staff member will accompany the child to the nearest hospital where emergency treatment is administered. The staff will remain with the child until the parent arrives. In the event neither parent can be reached, the child's physician will be contacted. It is essential for parents to provide information on where they can be reached, physician's name and phone number, and updated emergency contacts. An accident report with detailed information will be completed. The incident report will be kept in the school records, in the child's file, and a copy will be given to the parent.

4 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

4.1 Arrival and Drop-Off

- a. To enter and leave the building, please use the Elizabeth Street door. Press the buzzer located next to the door, identify yourself and tell us which child you are dropping off or picking up. Please be especially vigilant about allowing only people you know to enter the building with you.
- b. DCP's operating hours are from 9 AM – 12:30 PM. When staff arrives early, they are preparing to welcome your child at 9 AM. **Please wait until 8:55 AM to enter the building.** We do not offer before- or after-school care, however, we understand that there can be a wait to wash hands before going into the classroom. To help relieve the lines at drop-off, families can enter the building as early as 8:55 a.m. Staff will have their doors closed until 9 a.m. when they are ready to welcome children for the day.
- c. All children, parents, siblings, and visitors must cleanse their hands by washing with soap and water upon arrival and before entering the classrooms.

4.2 Pickup

Pick-up time is 12:30 PM. Since staff members have their own duties and schedules, it is essential that all children be picked up on time. Children notice when their parent or caregiver is late. It creates anxiety and stress for them.

Please call DCP if you find that you are going to be unavoidably late. **12:35 and after is considered late pick-up.** Families are given one warning – either verbally or in an email – when they are late. Any other subsequent late pick-ups incur a \$10.00 late fee per late pick-up. Payment is due the next school day

- a. **Third-Party Pickup:** If your child is going home with someone other than the usual person (e.g. with a friend, relative, or other DCP family) please notify your teacher and/or the Executive Director and write the information on the sign-in sheet under special instructions. Photo ID may be required for persons not familiar to the DCP staff.
- b. **Emergency pickup:** State rules mandate that in part-time childcare facilities, such as DCP, a child's parents or their designer must be available to pick up children within 15 minutes, should there be an emergency, natural disaster, or sick child.

5 PAYMENT POLICY

5.1 Fees

- a. **Registration Fee:** A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of application for enrollment. One registration fee is required per enrolling child. Families of currently-enrolled children are exempt from the registration fee in back-to-back enrollment years.
- b. **Enrollment Deposit:** One-month's advance tuition must be paid for each enrolled child. The enrollment deposit is due within two weeks of a family's notification of acceptance for the school year or prior to starting school, whichever occurs first. This deposit is non-refundable should a child withdraw or be terminated from the school. This deposit is also non-refundable should parents opt not to enroll a child following notification of acceptance for enrollment.
- c. **Supply Fee:** A non-refundable supply fee is charged on an annual basis for each enrolled child. The supply fee is due within two weeks of a family's notification of acceptance for enrollment for the school year or prior to starting school, whichever occurs first. This fee is used by teachers for classroom specific needs and craft supplies.

5.2 Tuition

- a. **Tuition:** Tuition based on the fee schedule for the current school year is due on the first of every month. Tuition received after the 10th of the month will be considered late.
- b. **Late Payment:** A late payment fee of \$15 is due for all tuition payments made after the 10th of the month and should be added to the monthly tuition check or payment.
- c. **Continued Enrollment:** Monthly tuition must be paid to secure a child's continued enrollment during a school year, regardless of sickness, prolonged leave of absence, suspension, or vacation/holiday.
- d. **Financial hardship:** Any family unable to pay tuition by the 10th of the month that the fee is due should contact the Executive Director as soon as possible to make payment arrangements. The Executive Director will consider requests for payment plans from any families experiencing unforeseen financial hardships. Families unable to pay monthly tuition or adhere to payment plans may be requested by the Executive Director in writing or by e-mail to withdraw enrollment of all children when the monthly tuition fee and late payment fee are late by one month or more. At that time, the affected child's enrollment deposit will be retained and the enrollment space will be offered to the first family on a waiting list or marketed to the public. The family requested to withdraw enrollment may reapply for enrollment following satisfactory resolution of their financial account.

- e. **Returned Checks:** A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for all returned checks. The return check fee will be due with the tuition fee of the month following e-mail notification by the Executive Director that a check has been returned to the school.

5.3 Withdrawal

In order to withdraw a child from the school, two weeks' written notice is required. If the two weeks' written notice is not given, the family will be charged for two weeks of tuition beginning after notice is given or the child ceases to attend.

5.4 Tax Information

The Executive Director will provide the school's tax identification number, letters, or receipts for cash payments upon request.

Durham Community Preschool Calendar 2013-2014

Aug 24th Parent Orientation/ Meet the Teacher (10 a.m. – 12 noon)

Sept 3rd First Day of School (full day from 9-12:30; make sure to send your child with a healthy snack and lunch, a change of clothes and diapers if appropriate). **All forms for the office are due this week!**

Sept 26th Parent/Teacher conferences for Pollywogs and Leap Frog classes. No school in session for these classes, however, child-care will be provided during your conference time. *Lily Pad Lagoon and Tadpole classes will have a regular school day.*

Sept 23-27th Scholastic Book Fair

Oct 12th School workday (playground and classroom) 9-12 noon

Oct 17th DOPA Conference for all staff; **no school**

Nov 25th – 29th Thanksgiving Holiday; **no school this week**

Dec 19th Last day of classes before winter break

Dec 20th – Jan 6th Winter Holidays

Jan 2nd Teacher workday; **no school**

Jan 6th Classes resume

Jan 20th Martin Luther King Day; **no school**

Feb 3rd – 7th DCP priority period for fall 2014-2015 enrollment. *Enrollment will open to the general public on February 10th.*

March 20th Teacher workday; **no school**

March 25th – 28th DCP priority period for summer 2014. *Enrollment will open to the general public on April 1st.*

March 29th School workday (playground and classroom) 9-12 noon

April 4th Annual meeting in the evening! Treat yourself to a night out at DCP while we get our yearly business done – child-care will be provided. All families need to have a representative attend for voting. *Look for more details in March 2014*

April 14th – 18th Spring Break; **no school this week**

May 1st Deadline for Early Bird summer registration

* Some dates, other than holidays, are subject to change. Changes will be communicated promptly via email *

Board meetings will be happening monthly. Look for communication from the Board to tell you when they will be meeting. Most meetings are open. This is a great way to see what goes on behind the scenes!

May 15th Parent/Teacher conferences for Pollywogs and Leap Frog classes. No school in session for these classes, however, child-care will be provided during your conference time. *Lily Pad Lagoon and Tadpole classes will have a regular school day.*

May 26th Memorial Day; **no school**

May 28th LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

May 29th Teacher workday

HISTORY OF OUR SCHOOL!

You have just joined into an amazing and exciting history of Durham Community Preschool. Founded in 2009, a dedicated group of parents and staff came together to save the school that the church was closing. Before we go into this story, let's back up a bit to the very beginnings of our preschool...

In 1994, Calvary United Methodist Church began a Parents Morning Out (PMO) Program, with senior members volunteering their time to care for the children of younger families several mornings each week. In the beginning, all care was on a volunteer basis and was really meant to reach out to young families and caregivers – hoping to give them some much needed relief from the rigors of child rearing. In subsequent years, interest grew and what was once just a nursery, expanded to include a toddler room.

Things were very relaxed in these days. Families could choose one to three mornings of care. As time went by, the PMO program decided to start charging families a small fee and used this money to begin paying some of their caregivers. At one point, the program was so care-free and relaxed that families whose children were sick on their scheduled day of care, did not need to pay for attendance that day! A wonderful idea indeed for families, but a very poor model of business for the program's financial security. Staff who cared for the children never knew if they were going to be needed or not until the last minute. Some would even arrive ready to work but ended up going home if there were no children to watch.

As time continued, the program remained small and began to shift from volunteers to paid employees. The school seemed to be doing pretty well until 2008/2009 when the church reviewed the school's accounts. The Executive Director at the time had been requesting access to the financial statements of the school for two years. She had a business plan for the school and wanted to move forward. Because all payment and

payroll went through the church, she'd been operating the school budget in the dark. I am sure you can guess what happened next! The church realized it had been subsidizing the school more money than they had thought. Staff and parents sought to create ways to help the school be more financially solvent but in March of 2009 after much deliberation (heartache! tears!), Calvary's members decided to focus on other areas of the Church's mission...and close the Parents' Morning Out program.

When the Executive Director, Traci Adams, went to inform her parents of the church's decision, the most unexpected reaction occurred. There were tears and laments...but there was also a resolve to not let this decision close our school's doors forever. A dedicated group of parents came up with a plan to keep the school. This meant some serious sweat, tears and time from this group of parents! A founding Board was created; they filed for our 501 c 3 non-profit status (a two year process) and created a last minute summer session that began in June of 2009. This coupled with the gift of very low rent from the church enabled DCP to begin its new life. It was an exciting time! Parents and staff collaborated to come up with a name for our new school – Little Acorns, Community School and others were tossed about over the listserv. Everyone liked the image of a tree and the timeless of a seed. Amy Buchanan (mom to Sadie, class of 2010) whipped up a logo with the image of a tree and our new name creatively wrapped around it. Staff and Board voted on which image they thought best represented this new and emerging school.

Amy Buchanan along with Joanne Grosshans (mom to Vivian (class of 2010) worked tirelessly to start-up our marketing – including creating documents, brochures, flyers, PR blurbs – all out of thin air! David Berberian (dad to Cody (class of 2010) and Jacob (class of 2015)) put together a functioning website in record time before the start of our first summer session. Charlene Reiss (mom to Vivian H (class of 2010) and Lela (class of 2012)) took on the enormous task of fortifying the school finances – from negative \$60 to building a solid financial footing for the school by year 3. Charlene dedicated enormous hours to budgeting and payroll so that we would never have to close our doors again because of money issues! Amanda O'Briant (mom to Liam (class of 2012) and Hazel (class of 2014) and Corinne (class of 2017☺) in collaboration with the Board created and authored our by-laws and mission statement – effectively capturing the heart of our program. Janice Jones (mom to Owen (class of 2010) and Simon (class of 2013)) led the founding Board as President. She was the fairy godmother of our school - from painting rooms, getting much needed supplies (air conditioners!), fixing things, researching and purchasing insurance for the school, negotiating leases for the school, getting incorporation papers and every other blessed thing you can think of to birth a successful school.

It's to this amazing founding Board of parents that we owe our gratitude for our wonderful preschool! They met for marathon Board meetings with Executive Director, Traci Adams and later Rose Volponi, to build our school from the ground up. They were committed to creating a Board, staff and school where the focus is on our middle name – community. From parent involvement to service projects, our preschool strives to nurture this philosophy and put into practice our carefully crafted mission statement:

Durham Community Preschool's mission is to provide high-quality, affordable, part-time care for children aged 6 months to 5 years in a safe, enriching, and developmentally appropriate environment where children can learn, create, and explore. We are committed to retaining knowledgeable and nurturing teachers; to welcoming families of every race, ethnicity, religion, family structure, income, and background; and to building a partnership that, by example, teaches our children to participate in and care for the greater community.

As staff and parents, your time and commitment to our program builds on this fairy tale of a preschool. We are so proud of our school and glad that you have become a part of it!



Founding Board of Directors: Janice Jones (Chair), Amanda O'Briant (Vice-Chair), Amy Buchanan (Secretary), Charlene Reiss (Treasurer), David Berberian (At-Large)

Our current logo was designed by Jason Toth in 2011