



Parent Handbook

2019/2020

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



Dear DCP Families,

This handbook is a living document that is revised annually. Please keep it in a safe spot at home to reference throughout the year. It is your best tool for knowing the school policies of DCP. Each written policy has grown out of our experience as a school and the experiences 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 talk with the preschool Director to get your answers.

DCP is a dynamic and inclusive preschool. Our founding Board members worked hard to create a framework for this preschool that has an emphasis on community and the close relationship between parents, staff and Board. Your commitment and presence here at DCP means you are joining into this legacy. I urge you to be involved. When everyone gives a little, each child here receives a lot. Join me in making these preschool years the best possible experience for your child and family!

Sincerely,

Rose Volponi

Preschool Director

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Mission

Durham Community Preschool, a secular non-profit, offers play-based, part time child-care that welcomes families of every race, ethnicity, religion, family structure, and background.

1.2 Our Vision

Our vision is to nurture the potential of each child through innovative strategies that foster social-emotional development and creative exploration. We are unwavering in our commitment to providing families with a high-quality educational experience within our inclusive, socially responsible community.

1.3 Our Values and Philosophy

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

- engaging children 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.

Durham Community Preschool strives to create an open, inclusive and warm environment for our children to learn within. To support this endeavor, we encourage families to address teachers and staff by their first names (Mrs. Rose, Mrs. Laurie, etc.) We have found that this simple informality contributes to a close and special bond between children, families and employees. It reminds us that we are part of a greater community that is working for a common goal – giving our children the best possible preschool experience that we can offer.

1.4 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 preschool budget; and evaluates the performance of the preschool Director. Meetings are held monthly. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in any open sessions during the school year.

1.5 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.

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

- **Lily Pad Lagoon**, designed for children ranging 12 months to 24 months. Because of the flexible

attendance schedule 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 any given year. Tadpole spaces will be assigned during the priority enrollment period on a first come-first serve basis by an online 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.

- **Tadpole Room**, designed for children ranging two to three years of age.
- **Pollywog Room**, designed for toilet-trained children ranging three to four years of age.
- **Leap Frog Room**, designed for toilet-trained children ranging four to five years of age.

Applications for Enrollment

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 through the online 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.

1.6 Parental Involvement and Responsibilities

DCP encourages parents to take part in every level of the school from the classroom to the Board of Directors. A representative of each family is expected vote once a year to elect the Board of Directors and approve changes to DCP's bylaws. Please read the parent involvement form for more information. All families are encouraged to fill out and return the parent involvement form to the preschool Director. We appreciate the help and contribution of everyone involved!

We do ask parents to follow some recommendations when they are in the classroom and attending school events. They are:

1. Please **refrain from using your cell phones** for personal use when in the classroom either as observers, substituting, or participating in a special activity.
2. During special presentations, we ask that parents be cognizant that we have an internet permission form for all of our families. While it's exciting to record and share special school events, please ask permission of other families before posting or sharing any pictures or videos featuring children other than your own in them. Teachers and the preschool Director will also keep a record of those families that wish to refrain from having their child's name and image on the internet.

1.7 School Safety Policy

Durham Community Preschool promotes a safe learning and working environment for all students, staff, parents, and visitors. At no time is any person permitted to possess any type of weapon or ammunition in the building. Weapons include, but are not limited to guns, knives, explosives, electric weapons, and billy clubs. This policy also applies to any person legally licensed to carry open or concealed weapons (excluding law enforcement acting in their official capacity). Families violating this policy will be subject to termination of enrollment.

1.8 School Closure Policy

Inclement Weather

Please know that when we make the decision to close the preschool we are balancing multiple factors of safety and staffing (and staff getting here safely!)

1. As a general rule, if the Durham Public Schools (DPS) are delayed or closed, DCP will be closed. There are times, however, when DCP does NOT follow the public schools' inclement weather policy. This occurs when DPS is closed for several consecutive days and their decision to close or delay is made primarily due to busing concerns, which do not affect our families. In this case, DCP may decide to reopen its doors sooner than the DPS system. Families are encouraged to make their own driving decisions in adverse weather conditions.
2. The decision to close DCP for the day will be made by 7:00 AM. Families will be notified by Remind and emailed when a decision to close is made. *Families must opt into Remind to be notified by text*. If widespread power outages occur, in all likelihood, DCP will be closed.
3. If inclement weather begins suddenly or after 9:00 AM, the preschool 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 within 15 minutes of notification.

Acts of God

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. If an act of God begins suddenly or after 9:00 AM, the preschool 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.

Extended Closure

DCP has built in five inclement weather make-up days into its yearly calendar. We cannot control the weather and our make-up days may not perfectly correspond to the closure days. For instance, if we are unexpectedly closed on a Thursday and the next make-up day is a Wednesday, we can't adjust the attendance for the make-up day to mirror the closure. This affects families in the Lily Pad Lagoon and Tadpole rooms who have different days of attendance. We reserve the right to match up closures with designated make-up days regardless of attendance day preferences.

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 preschool 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 preschool 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 with the teacher directly. If you have a concern that has not been resolved or adequately addressed by your child's teacher, please contact the preschool Director.

For any questions or concerns regarding facilities, operations, payment or policies, address the preschool Director.

Parents are responsible for making sure DCP has a valid email address and phone numbers for their family.

If your child is unable to come to school (due to a planned or unplanned absence), please call or email the school to let them know your child will be absent.

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 addresses, or phone numbers change, please contact the preschool 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 Information Night and "Meet the Teacher" morning

- Parent Information Night is a great way to acclimate to the DCP school culture. Returning and new families will get a chance to receive important information from the school. The school does not provide child-care during the Parent Information Night as all teachers and classrooms will be busy during this event.
- Our youngest classrooms – Lily Pad Lagoon and Tadpole class – will host a "Meet the Teacher" morning. This is a great way for your child to meet their teacher, see the classroom and make friends. DCP classrooms will be open on a "Meet the Teacher" morning from 10 a.m. until 12 noon for parents to stop by and stay with their child in their new classroom for fifteen to thirty minutes. **Please note that this will be a time that teachers will need to engage with your child and the other children in the classroom. Any questions or concerns for the teacher will need to be brought to Parent Information night or during a separate time. Thank you!*
- Our oldest classrooms – Pollywog and Leap Frog classes – will start the school year with half the class attending Tuesday and the other half attending Wednesday. The full class will attend on Thursdays. This allows the teachers extra time with each child on their first day to get to know them and share the morning schedule. Lead teachers will email their classes the week before school starts to let them know which day their child will be attending (Tuesday or Wednesday).

2.5 Conferences and Consultations

We prefer that conversations about the child do not take place in the presence of the child. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled for the Leap Frog and Pollywog classes twice a year. The school will provide child-care during the 15 or 20 minute conference time. The Tadpole and Lily-pad Lagoon classes do not have scheduled parent-teacher conferences; however, the school or parent may request a conference with the teacher. The preschool Director will be present at any Tadpole or Lily Pad Lagoon meetings.

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 be informed about 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 officially 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 preschool 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. In each class, we have multiple children and many cups and school items look the same. Labeling helps to circumvent conflict around these items and ensures that the correct items go home with the appropriate child.

3 HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Clothing and Skin Protection

We do not administer sunscreen or insect repellent at DCP. If you wish for your child to wear sunscreen, or insect repellent please apply them before the start of the school day (preferably outside instead of in the school halls).

- 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 and that won't fall off with running and climbing are best.

3.2 Food

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 class. 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 each child off to elementary school knowing how to sit in a seat at the table, feed themselves, get their lunchbox, open food containers and put their things away. 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 capable of fitting all these items comfortably. Our small class sizes help our teachers begin the process in the Lily Pad lagoon room.

- 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.
- Please remember to send in any needed eating utensils for your child's food.
- A great lunchbox will fit all food containers in it easily, be easy to open and close (no broken zippers,) and fit into a student's bag. Please do not send glass food containers.
- DCP promotes healthy eating habits. Please do not send sodas, candy, gum, or junk food for snack or lunch.

Lily-pad Lagoon (One- and Two-Year Old): Please send finger foods for snack and lunch. Our teachers 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. Teachers would appreciate if parents keep in mind that this class has ten children every day. Keeping messy foods to a minimum is very helpful!

Tadpoles (Two- and Three-Year Old): Please send finger foods for snack and lunch. Our teachers 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-, Four- and Five-Year Old): Please send snack and lunch in easy to open containers that the children can learn to open themselves. Remember to send a spoon or fork if one is needed 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 (One- and Two-Year Old):** 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- and Three-Year Old):** 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-, Four- and Five-Year Old):** 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. This rule is to keep special toys safe and to not create an environment where others feel left out. 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

Lily Pad Lagoon (One- and Two-Year Old):

1. 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 preschool Director.
2. 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.

Tadpole Room (Two- and Three-Year Old):

1. 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.
3. 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 preschool Director.

4. 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.
5. **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.**

Pollywog Room / Leap Frog Room (Three-, Four- and Five-Year Old):

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 School 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 socially by having continued accidents in a school environment. The child may be requested to remain home by the preschool Director until the regression is resolved. Monthly tuition must be paid to maintain the child's spot in the classroom.

3.5 Playground Safety

The following rules are designed 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 the 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 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; only three children on the tire swing at a time
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 pushing, shoving, hitting, spitting, or rough play
15. Only one child on the bridge at a time
16. Keep rocks in the rock river

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 support your child during the school day.

3.7 Discipline Policy

In early childhood, we tend to separate punishment and discipline. Punishment is seen as a physical, mental or verbal painful repercussion to stop misbehavior. Punishment is not used by our preschool. Discipline is seen as coming from an intention to teach children (without harm) to self-regulate and learn social skills. We use the term discipline as a way to capture the strategy of teaching children how to self-regulate, learn impulse control, learn self-control, practice conflict resolution and practice positive social skills for school settings. The underlying intention is to model and support acceptable social behaviors that give children life skills that they can use.

Teachers and DCP staff will be using language and conflict resolution skills as created by Dr. Becky Bailey and Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline is a brain-based, trauma-informed social-emotional learning program that DCP started implementing in August 2017. Conscious Discipline is a multi-disciplinary approach based on three distinct brain-body states in adults and children that drive behavior. Our focus is on safety, connection, assertiveness, self-regulation and building life-skills within children that they can use for the rest of their lives. We offer and build on these skills in every classroom at DCP.

We start with creating a welcoming, age-appropriate, engaging classroom for each age group. We build routines and the school morning schedule so that children know what to expect at preschool. We practice and develop skills of self-regulation (breathing exercises, two positive choices, and more) in every classroom. We love and nurture children and families through starting preschool and being away from their primary caregivers. We work to create a conflict-free classroom. To us, this means having more than one kind of toy, engaging activities are planned every day, there is time to play freely outside, each classroom has a play-based structured morning, and there are opportunities to work through social conflict with trained and supportive teachers.

In the event that a child's behavior is challenging our ability to create a safe space for everyone, the teacher, parents and school Director will meet to create a support plan for the child. We may involve free community resources – EchO, Community Partnerships – that offer trained support staff to work with teachers and families to assist in helping a child learn the needed skills to thrive in a social setting. In the event that the Director recommends a shadow in the classroom, this would be paid for by the family.

If despite all of the best efforts of the teachers, parents and DCP staff, a child is unable to thrive in the preschool setting or a family is unwilling to work in partnership with the preschool, the school Director reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program.

Our goal, at all times, is to provide a safe environment in which all our children can thrive in.

3.8 Policy on Health and Immunizations

Health and Safety Form

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.

1. **Allergies:** 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 regarding emergency medication's proper administration.

2. **Medical equipment and supplies:** 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 potential loss or damage.
3. **Immunizations:** 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.

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 preschool Director immediately and providing an updated health and safety form to be kept in the child's school record.

- Only the preschool 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 preschool Director.
- The preschool 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 preschool Director will determine when the child may return. In this instance, no reimbursement of tuition will be provided.

3.9 Policy on Sick Children

Children should be kept at home if:

1. They have been exposed to contagious diseases
2. They have had a fever within 24 hours preceding the school day
3. They have experienced vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours preceding the school day
4. They clearly do not feel well (lethargy, glazed eyes, etc)
5. There is discharge from the eye(s)
6. 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.

In case of contraction of contagious disease or infestation (e.g. lice, intestinal worms):

1. Immediately notify the preschool Director. Your child's identity will be protected. This can be done either via email or by phone
2. 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 and a physician deems them well enough to return to school.

3. Remember that DCP staff will not administer medication to children.
4. Return your child to school when she or he has been naturally free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours.
5. At the discretion of the lead teacher or School Director, a child may be deemed too sick to remain at school. Parents will be contacted and are expected to pick up the child within 15 minutes. 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 in which 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 accident report will be kept in the school records, in the child's file, and a copy will be given to the parent.

3.11 Animal visits to the classroom

DCP likes to maintain an open environment to occasional animals either parents or staff sharing an animal experience or as a pet in a classroom. There are several things that need to happen in order to keep everyone safe during these visits.

For a one-time experience:

1. Teachers and parents must get approval from the preschool Director before bringing an animal to the preschool. Animal owners should be prepared to bring information about the type of pet, the needs for the pet during the visit (food, cage, etc.), and the health and vaccination history of the animal. Pets are allowed to visit in the Tadpole, Pollywog and Leap Frog classrooms.
2. There are a few species of animals that will not be allowed at the preschool as visitors or pets (unless they are a part of a museum outreach presentation.) They are snakes, lizards, turtles, amphibians, ferrets, venomous insects, wild or stray animals, live poultry and unpredictable wild or domestic animals. Special allowances may be made for frogs or live poultry if it's a no-touch, non-contact situation.
3. After approval has been issued by the preschool Director, parents need to be notified of an animal visit one week in advance. Parents have a say whether or not the animal comes to visit. If anyone is not comfortable or is allergic to the specific species, the animal will not be allowed to visit. **Teachers and parents must not tell the children in their class about the visit until it has been cleared by the preschool Director and all the attending families.**
4. During the visit, children must be supervised at all times when visiting with the pets. Instructions as to how to pet/handle the animal must be clearly communicated beforehand and during the visit. All children must be watched that after petting any animal, they do not put their hands in their mouth, nose or eyes. All children must wash hands after the experience. Hand sanitizer cannot be used as a substitute for washing with soap and water. No food should be present during or after the experience, and all children must wash hands after petting an animal and before eating.
5. Any areas that have been in contact with the animal must be cleaned and sanitized after the visit (tables, chairs, etc.) Any bathroom accidents by any animal must be cleaned up promptly. If any animal is visiting the classroom (and roaming freely for a short period of time,) they must be supervised carefully so that no bathroom accidents go undetected.

4 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

4.1 Arrival and Drop-Off

To enter and leave the building, please use the Elizabeth Street door.

1. Press the buzzer located next to DCP name, 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.**
2. 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.
3. 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. We recommend that parents program the school phone number in their cell phones. **12:35 p.m. and after is considered late pick-up.** Children not picked up by 12:35 will be escorted to the preschool office.

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 when pick-up occurs between 12:35 and 12:45. **Any pick-up made after 12:45 p.m. is a dollar a minute.** Payment is due on the spot.

1. **Third-Party Pickup:** If your child is going home with someone other than the usual person please notify your teacher and the preschool Director. The office needs to have a written note of who is authorized to pick-up your child even if it's just for one day. The written note (or email) should include the date, the child's name, the name of the person picking up the child and the parents signature. We ask that you tell your child's teacher and write this information on the sign-in sheet under special instructions. Photo ID may be required for persons not familiar to the DCP staff. Employees are instructed NOT to release a child unless this protocol has been followed.
2. **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

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of application for enrollment.

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.

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.

Elementary School Referral Fee

DCP teachers are happy to accommodate families needing referral paperwork for elementary school acceptance. There is a **\$15 fee per form** for any family that is needing more than two forms per child. To ensure that your paperwork is filled out in a timely manner we ask parents to do the following:

- Submit any paperwork **two weeks** (or more) in advance of any deadlines
- Include an **addressed envelope** with appropriate **postage** for the forms
- For more than two forms, there is a **\$15 fee** per form per child. Payment is accepted in the office in the form of check or cash

5.2 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.

DCP calculates a yearly tuition amount for a child to attend. That yearly amount is then divided by nine to make a monthly tuition payment fee. Some months (November and December specifically) will be shorter than others; However, the tuition amount stays the same.

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.

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.

Financial hardship: Any family unable to pay tuition by the 10th of the month that the fee is due should contact the preschool Director as soon as possible to make payment arrangements. The preschool 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 preschool 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 effected 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.

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

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 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!

As time continued, the program remained small and began to shift from volunteers to paid employees. 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 preschool Director, Traci Adams, went to inform 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 c3 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 timelessness of a seed. Amy Buchanan 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 worked tirelessly to start-up our marketing – including creating documents, brochures, flyers, PR blurbs – all out of thin air! David Berberian put together a functioning website in record time before the start of our first summer session. Charlene Reiss took on the enormous task of fortifying the school finances – starting from negative \$60 to building a solid financial footing for the school by year three. Amanda O'Briant in collaboration with the Board created and authored our by-laws and mission statement – effectively capturing the heart of our program. Janice Jones 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 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. We truly are a preschool for parents created by parents. Welcome to this new chapter in our preschool's history!