



POOH AND FRIENDS
Learning Center



Parent's Hand Book

149A Highland Ave Somerville MA
(617)718-1000

Parents' Hand Book

Our Mission

We focus on the development of a child's spirit, mind and body. We strive to recognize the unique character and temperament of each child and to support age-appropriate activities that promote social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

We are constantly stimulating our children with dance, music and activities involving math, science, art, health, history, and cuisine. We challenge the children with increasingly complex games in order to improve their energy, physical and cognitive abilities.

Our philosophy

Our philosophy encourages open communication between staff and parents in a safe and stimulating environment that enriches children through these important early years. Parents are always welcome in our day care to visit their children, to feed or nurse as their schedules permit.

Parent education is important, and we encourage you to ask questions regarding the activities of your child, as well as their nutrition, growth and development. The flexibility of our program is important, as the needs of babies are constantly changing and developing. We have a positive and happy staff, and strive to foster trusting relationships between the children and their caregivers. At Pooh and Friends Learning Center we have room to play in a safe and stimulating environment.

We are dedicated to providing an enriching environment where can children grow and develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Children learn through their work and activities with the age appropriate toys and materials we provide.

Each child is an individual and must be treated as such. They come to us in all shapes and sizes and in all stages of development. We will guide their coordination of fine and gross motor skills, social interaction and communication with peers in order to assist with their language and cognitive development.

Our goal is to provide all children in our care a clean, safe, and loving environment, where each can play and learn. They will learn to respect not only themselves but also others and the environment. We believe in the value of a structured yet flexible schedule. Structured activities will include the use of a program of studies like that of pre-school, with times of regular reading, arts and crafts, and musical activities. These will be complemented by less structured activities such as games, birthday parties, and outdoor play.

The most valuable provider...

- Understands the needs of infants and children;
- Responds appropriately to the needs of children, using discipline and positive reinforcement;
- Works to promote growth in the key areas of development (social, emotional, cognitive, physical, language); and respect for self and others by timely and skillful communication with children and their families.

The environment..

- Is safe and clean;
- Provides a comfortable home-like environment with a variety of toys and spaces; and with easy access to a stimulating outdoor space to play.

The program...

- Offers a variety of developmentally appropriate activities;
- Encourages active learning through games;
- Provides meals and snacks that are nutritious and appetizing;
- Follows a uniform sheet daily; follows routines and provides opportunities for individual activities, and also activities in groups to promote positive social interaction.

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Program Policies

Record Keeping: The law requires us to keep updated records. Please let us know immediately of any changes in your address, telephone numbers, place of employment or emergency contact information. We must also be informed of any information which may affect the care of your child. All information is confidential and will not be released without your permission in writing. Updated records are crucial.

This policy can be found by going to the EEC web site at

http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/1/20101124_eec_privacy_policy.pdf. Please let us know about any questions you have regarding your child's records.

Operation: Our hours of operation are from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. If a child leaves the day care after 6:00 pm for any reason, a rate of \$5.00 for every 15 minutes late will be due.

Payments: Payments must be made on Monday morning or afternoon. If payment is made after Monday, a \$10 fee will be due. Payments can be made by cash, check or money order. **The** no payment for more than two weeks implies the end of the contract and the position will be available for another child from the waiting list.

Hold position fee – to hold the position the day care charges a fee of 1/2 of the first week, which will be the **first** week of discounted child in daycare.

example-if the week is 350 the parent pays 175 to hold position and only 175 in the first week when the child begins ($175 + 175 = 350$).

If the parent giving up the position that money is not refundable.

Return of checks: A \$25 processing fee will be added to any returned checks. Afterwards we will ask that you pay with cash or money order.

Sign in/Sign Out: Children only will be released to persons other than the guardians with the guardians' written permission. Anyone who picks up children may be requested to provide ID.

Visits: Any parents or guardian of a child are strongly encouraged to visit. You will have unlimited access to the nursery during the hours of operation to evaluate the care provided by staff, or to evaluate the premises. Please feel free to join us for lunch, etc. If possible, please provide us with 24 hours' notice if you will be lunching with us, so we can make sure we prepare additional meals. Also, private areas will be available for mothers who need a place for breastfeeding.

Phone calls: We will respond to phone messages quickly, but please bear in mind that sometimes we cannot return a phone call immediately. Feel free to leave us a message.

Vacations: If you are going to be away on vacation, please let us know. Tuition must still be paid to ensure your child's space in the program is maintained.

- For vacations of less than 30 days, tuition must be paid in full (the full value of the week)
- For vacation of more than 30 days the parents can choose on the day of registration whether to:

Pay US\$100 dollars to hold space and the child does not come or

Pay US\$ 40 daily for the child to come at minimum 2 days per week with days and hours pre-defined at the time of registration.

Illnesses: We can only accept children who are healthy. If your child is sick, please report it as soon as possible. If your child is sick, you will be contacted and expected to pick him or her up. If your child has vomited, has had diarrhea, a fever of 101 F orally, or has an unusual rash, please keep them home until all the symptoms have been clear for twenty-four (24) hours. Medications, including over-the-counter drugs, will be given as directed as per the medication policy.

Medicines: There are times when a child may need medication. After notification by the child's doctor, medication will be dispensed as ordered. No medications, including over-the-counter drugs, will be dispensed without a written doctor's order (EEC rule). Please make sure the order includes the medication name, the dose of the medication to be given, and the time of day it is to be given, as well as the name and date of birth of your child. A current record of all of your child's medications must be up to date at Pooh and Friends before the medication will be administered by the day care staff as required by 606 CMR 7. 04(7)(a)3 – 12.

Vaccines: Every child must be up to date in their vaccinations. Please provide a copy of your child's immunization record prior to his or her enrollment. If your child receives new vaccines, please report this to the day care.

Security policy: No child is ever alone or without supervision.

Clothing: As children will be children, we understand that there will be some accidents. Please bring extra clothing that can stay here clearly marked with the name of your child for those times. Also, as the climate changes, make sure that your child has an appropriate coat, jacket, hat, gloves, etc. to according to the season. Parents must bring diapers and wipes in case children use them.

Toys: Toys from home will be removed and put aside until the child goes home. Please keep these at home. We provide a variety of toys to play with your child.

Lunch/break: All children need a nap after lunch. We provide beds/ cribs and follow the State health guidelines. (The child takes a nap in same bed every day.)

Pooh and Friends is a peanut free school!

Holidays Closings: We Will be closed for the following holidays and special days:

January - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February-President's Day

April-Patriot's Day

May-Memorial Day

July-Independence Day

September-Labor Day

October-Columbus Day

November-Veteran's Day

November-Thanksgiving Day and Day after

December-Christmas and Day after

**Christmas Eve and New Years Eve we will be closing at 12:00pm.

Curriculum: We use a Creative Curriculum. Every week we work with a theme that supports the development of the child and his/her learning. We teach letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and take part in activities that involve mathematics, music, art, dance, science, cooking, computation and language. We carry out activities in and out of the Day Care Center.

Withdrawing your Child If you plan to withdraw your child from the day care, we require that you notify us in writing giving **two weeks notice**. Payment will still be expected for the child's last two weeks from when you notify the day care.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICY

Pooh and Friends shall protect children from abuse and neglect while they are in our care and custody.

Report Section 51A of Chapter 119 of the Massachusetts General Law requires every day care worker, family counselor, social worker, administrator, and other people paid to care for or work with children in any facility to report physical or emotional injury of any child suspected to be caused by abuse and neglect.

Department of Children and Families The director of Pooh and Friends shall make a report to the Department of Children and Families immediately after receiving any verbal reports about neglect or abuse. A report indicating the facts known and action taken shall be placed in the child's file.

Notification to Parents The decision to notify parents/guardians of a child that Pooh and Friends has made a report to DCF and EEC as to the possible abuse or neglect of such a child

shall be made by the director on a case by case basis and based upon the best interests of the child. The licensee shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the school.

Children Behavior At Pooh and Friends we are committed to understanding the needs and development of each child. We manage children's behavior by redirection, distraction, and separation. We teach children how to share, and how to use their language to express themselves. When children have difficulty controlling their behavior, we guide them to find a more appropriate and safe play opportunity. We use vocabulary that is easy for children to understand. We feel it is important for the teachers to explain why and what the child is doing or that how they are acting is not acceptable. We also use positive reinforcement for behavior that is acceptable.

We want to ensure the safety of all children while at school. We do not use aggressive actions such as hitting, yelling, shaking, pushing, spanking, denial of food, force-feeding, or humiliation by children or teachers.

If your child is displaying aggressive behavior on a daily basis, the teachers will document the behavior and share it with the parent/guardian during pick up time or by placing a phone call. A meeting may be called to discuss the issues with the parent/guardian as well as the teacher. We will give feedback as well to the parent/guardian to see what we can do to support the child while he/she is in our care. No child will be terminated until all these measures are taken because our goal is always education not punishment.

As stated in 606 CMR 7.05 (8) Department of Early Education and Care Regulations: the following practices are strictly prohibited:

- (a) Spanking or other corporal punishment of children
- (b) Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory marks.
- (c) Depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence
- (d) Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting
- (e) Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in *lieu* of supervision
- (f) Excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within the educator's view.

Conferences Educators meet will meet with parents/guardians every three months for infant evaluations and every six months for toddler and preschool evaluations. During these conferences educators will share how the child is progressing and any concerns that they have can be addressed at this time. Creative Curriculum, which is the progress measuring tool that we use, has a developmental continuum that the teachers use in order to track and follow the progression of each child. Every child also has a portfolio which the educators use to observe the developmental progress of each child by keeping notes and samples of their work. When the educators meet with parents/guardians they will discuss the progress reports and portfolios and parents are encouraged to give feedback and other information about their child so that we can keep open communication between the child's home and school environment. The educators are always available for individual conferences at the parents/guardians request.

Sleeping Infants (SIDS) Every infant 12 months of age or younger must be placed on his/her back for sleeping, unless the child's health care professional orders otherwise, in writing in their program policies and procedures. No child under 12 months of age shall be placed in a crib containing pillows, comforters, stuffed animals, or other soft padded materials. Cribs will have firm properly fitted mattresses with clean coverings and no places to trap small heads. If a baby has an alternate sleeping position other than their back a written and signed physician's note explaining the medical reason must be kept in the baby's file and posted by the crib. All child care providers and substitutes/assistants will be informed. All educators will be trained to follow the infant sleep procedure to reduce the risk of SIDS. Information regarding SIDS risk reduction practices, including the practice of sleeping infants on their backs as required by 606 CMR 7.11(13)(e).

Outdoor Play We believe that children should be provided with a daily outdoor activity. According to EEC children will have physical activity for 60 minutes a day inside and/or outside. Children will be playing outside at the discretion of the educator except when:

- *It is raining or the ground is extremely wet from rain, snow or slush
- *The temperature is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit or above 80 degrees.
- *The wind chill factor is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit
- *When the air quality alert is on.

Parks will be inspected by the educators for any hazards before they are allowed to play.

Photography Parents sign permission slips every year in regards to photography in the classroom. The educators reserve the right to photograph and video tape the children for educational/curriculum purposes. Parents will be notified if videotaping does take place. Photography from outside companies will be allowed only with parental permission.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Department of Early Education and Care

617-472-2881

Somerville Hospital

617-591-4500

Department of Children and Family (DCF) Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline

1-800-792-5200

Childcare Resource Center (CCRC)

617-547-1063

Poison Control

1-800-222-1222

Somerville Public Schools Early Childhood Integrated Program

Special Education Department

617-625-6600 Ext. 6824 or 6167 25

Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention The Guidance Center Inc.

617-629-3919

Somerville Public Schools The Special Education Parent Advisory Council

617-625-660 Ext. 6800

Somerville Mental Health Child and Family Therapy

617-623-3278

The Family Center Parenting Classes Child and Family Therapy

617-628-8815

Vision, Hearing, Dental and Health Care Cambridge Public Health

617-665-3826

Transportation Pooh and Friends Learning Center does not provide transportation.

Transportation is solely the responsibility of the parent/guardian. If trips are taken to nearby parks the children will either be pushed in a buggy or they will hold onto a “safety rope”.

Missing Child Procedure Staff conduct head counts on a regular basis, especially when entering and exiting the building and playgrounds. Should a child not be accounted for, staff members will immediately alert administration. If a child is not found after an initial search of the facility, an administrator calls the Somerville Police and alerts the child's parents.

Tooth brushing Per EEC all children's teeth must be brushed after lunch. Families will need to supply a toothbrush. Children in the infant room need to supply a cloth. Toothbrushes and cloths need to be replaced after a child is sick and after every three months. The educators will keep families updated when they need to be replaced. If families do not wish to have their child's teeth brushed at school they can sign a waiver form in the office.

Potty Training If a child is being toilet trained at home we will work with the family during this transition. Accidents are a part of children being toilet trained and patience is a big factor. We ask that during this transition you bring in extra clothes and underwear in addition to what is in the child's cubby.

Transition of Children When children are developmentally ready to transition to a new classroom the child will visit that classroom at different times throughout a week period so that they can start to get acclimated with the educators, children and their new classroom. With parental permission, the educators will share the child's development with the other classroom teachers. A Kindergarten night will be held at the end the summer for parents and children who are leaving to move up to kindergarten in order to inform them of what to expect and how they can prepare themselves appropriately for this change.

Emergency If we are in a state of emergency for the City of Somerville, program closings will be announced on Channel 4 & 7. Pooh and Friends will remain closed until the state of emergency is officially lifted. In the event that we need to close during the day due to weather, we will call parents or the emergency contact person to come and pick-up the child.

Evacuation Plan Evacuation procedures are posted at each exit. Fire drills are conducted every month by the educator. The date, time and effectiveness of each drill are documented. If the children need to be evacuated, the teacher in charge will take attendance, take the first aid bag and do a head count and exit the building. The children in the main building will go down the ramp and out the door. The preschool class will go up the driveway and take a right onto Highland and also meet at the corner of Central St. The educator will do a final walk through the building and meet the rest of the group at the emergency site. In case of a power outage, loss of heat or water leakage during regular school hours we will try to keep the program open and maintain a regular routine. In the event that one or more of the above circumstances persists for more than 1 hour, parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. If this occurs first thing in the morning the director will call parents and notify them that the school is closed. In the case of flooding when the water levels reach a level that may create an unsafe environment, the Educator will determine if the School should be evacuated. In case of fire, natural disaster, or extreme situations such as a bomb threat the children will be evacuated immediately to Somerville Public Library at 79 Highland Ave Somerville, Massachusetts 02143 (617) 623-5000. Parents will be notified by cell phone. All staff will stay with the children until each child is picked up. Parents/guardians will always be notified when these situations arise and a notice will be hung on the door explaining the situation and the children's whereabouts.

Anti-discrimination Policy Pooh and Friends Learning Center does not discriminate in providing service to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or national origin. The program director will make every effort to accommodate disabled children. Children are admitted provided that there is no undue financial burden on the program and that the nature of the program will not be altered. Placement decisions will be made in consultation with parents and parents will be informed in writing.

Parents no Speak English Pooh and Friends Learning Center values the importance of effective communication with all parents and students, including those who are not proficient in the English language. For this purpose we have professionals who speak English/Spanish, English/Portuguese. We always provide information/brochures in these 3 languages.

Special Needs Children with special needs will be included at Pooh and Friends Learning Center. The director will schedule an appointment with the parent prior to admission and a plan for inclusion will be developed. We are very glad to receive special children in our Center.

Early Education and Care Pooh and Friends Learning Center is licensed by Early Education and Care (EEC), located in Quincy Massachusetts. Ellen Foley is our licensor and she can be reached at 617-472-2881. Parents have the right to contact EEC to obtain information in regards to the program history.

Policy Changes Parents will be notified in writing at least seven days prior to the implementation of any change in program policies and procedures.