

# Parent Handbook

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Rogers-Pierce Children's Center

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Rogers-Pierce Children's Center family. This handbook has been created with you in mind. Our goal is to make you comfortable and secure in our program by providing you with all the information you may need to know about our school.

We realize that we are engaged in a joint venture and welcome your participation. As you read this overview, consider how you may want to be involved at RPCC during these precious years in your child's development.

During the year, if any questions or concerns arise, bring them to our attention; the classroom teachers and I are here to help. There are no issues too small or too silly.

Robin Sagarin

Director

## Rogers-Pierce Children's Center

The Rogers-Pierce Children's Center (RPCC) is a non-profit, non-sectarian child-care center serving Arlington and neighboring communities in the Greater Boston area. Founded in 1969 as Creative Playmates, we have sought to bring together children and families from many different backgrounds with the common goal of high quality, educationally sound care in a secure and stimulating environment that helps all children reach their full potential.

### **Non-discrimination Statement:**

Our agency serves children and their families without discriminating on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status.

Children ages 15 months through 6 years receive full and part-time education and care in our classes. Small groups staffed by experienced, caring teachers enable each child to be accepted as an individual and progress at his/her own rate. The curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and covers the areas of: Mathematics, Science & Technology, Social and Emotional Learning. The curriculum is designed to provide children with multicultural, non-sexist educational experiences that will teach them about the world around them and build upon positive self-image as a basis for success in the future, school placements, and life in general. We work closely with the Arlington Public Schools and other area school systems to provide speech and language evaluations and cooperate with therapy given in our school when provided by the towns or early intervention programs.

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care licenses the Center. We were the first Center in Arlington to be accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. We also contract with Childcare Circuit to provide funding on a sliding fee scale for a maximum of three children a year. Tuition for the remaining children is paid privately.

### **Board of Directors**

A cornerstone of RPCC is its Board of Directors, comprised of volunteer parents, community members, and RPCC's Director. The Board meets monthly to bi-monthly and serves to advise and oversee the operation and growth of the center. The Board has several active committees including Personnel, Fundraising, Capital Improvements, and Technology, and is always seeking parents interested in participating. Parents may choose to become full board members or may simply volunteer their time and expertise for specific activities or projects at the school.

Upcoming Board Meetings will be advertised on the RPCC Calendar. We invite all parents to contact us with any comments, concerns, or suggestions that might help us as we work to continually improve our school and the development of our children.

## Parent Information, Rights, and Responsibilities

Chapter 28, Section 10 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates the Department of Early Education and Care with the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of child care centers (including nursery schools).

The licensee (child care center) is required to inform all parents of specific information about their rights and responsibilities at the time of admission of their child to the center. Section 7.04 of 102 CMR 7.00, the regulations that govern childcare centers, contains more information.

Parents may contact EEC for information regarding  
the program's regulatory compliance history at  
360 Merrimack Street, Bldg 9, Lawrence, MA 01843  
phone 978-681-9684

## **Parent's Rights**

### **Right to Visit**

You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present. Parents are welcome to observe and visit the school. The most successful visits have been those in which the parents have involved themselves in classroom activities such as doing an art project or cooking or reading a story. There may be a way to incorporate an activity to coordinate with a unit that is being explored by the class. Please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements for your visit.

### **Parent Input**

The program must have a procedure for allowing your input in the development of center policy and procedure. The program must allow you to make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not to implement any suggestions. See the section on Parent/Guardian Input on page 16 for more information.

### **Conferences**

You have the right to request an individual conference with the program's staff. The licensee has the responsibility to make the staff available.

### **Meeting Prior to Admittance**

The licensee shall assure that the administrator or his/her designee meets with you prior to admitting your child to the center.

At the meeting, the licensee, in addition to the information contained in this fact sheet, must provide you with: the center's written statements of purposes; types of services provided; referral policy; child guidance policy; termination and suspension policy; a list of suggested nutritious foods you could send for snacks and meals, if it is your responsibility; the policy for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect; the transportation plan; a copy of the health care policy (if you request it); the procedure for administration of medication; the procedures for providing emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; and a copy of the fee schedule. All of this information may be contained in the *Parent Handbook*.

You should also be given the opportunity to visit the center's classrooms either at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of your child.

### **Progress Reports**

At least every six (6) months, you should either meet with the Center's staff to discuss your child's progress or receive a written progress report of your child's activities and participation in the center. This report must become part of your child's center's records. If your child has disabilities, you should receive a written progress report every three (3) months. Center staff must bring any special problems or significant developments to your attention as soon as they arise.

## **Your Child's Record**

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

### **Access to the Record**

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

### **Amending the Record**

You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to your child's records. You also have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record. Such requests shall be in accordance with the procedures described below:

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

### **Charges for Copies**

The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

### **Transfer of the Record**

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

## **Responsibilities of the Program**

### **Providing Information to the MA Department of Early Education and Care**

The licensee must make available to the Department of Early Education and Care any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes information in your child's records. Authorized employees of the Office are not to remove identifying case materials from the Center's premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

### **Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

All Center staff are mandated reporters—they are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Children and Families or to the licensee's program administrator. The licensee must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

### **Notification of Injury**

The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury that requires emergency care. They must also notify you in writing within 24 hours if any first aid is administered to your child.

### **Availability of Regulations**

The Center must have a copy of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask your center to show them to you.

## Daily Life at RPCC

### Classroom Goals

The school is divided into five classrooms in which children are grouped according to age and developmental level. Each teacher has formulated age-appropriate goals for the children in the group. In general, the youngest classes focus on developing social skills and sensory awareness. As the children grow older there is a continued emphasis on social skills and the senses and they are also exposed to letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and science and math concepts when appropriate. Our philosophy is to avoid pushing children to deal with material beyond their developmental level and abilities. Please feel free to discuss curriculum goals with your child's teacher.

### Daily Program

A typical day at RPCC provides children with a balance of active and quiet times that emphasize social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. Classroom activities may include block play, manipulative play, cooking, sand and water play, music, stories, and age-appropriate pre-reading activities. Outdoor play always adds to a well-rounded day, weather permitting; or gross motor activities are planned for in our indoor gym.

Morning and afternoon snacks are provided and include milk. Lunches are to be brought from home. Nap and rest time are taken on individual mats following lunch. Our classes frequently take field trips to parks, and various community businesses to broaden the children's awareness of the world around them.

A daily schedule is posted in each classroom, for example:

7:30 a.m.	Opening
7:30-9:00 a.m.	Free play
9:00-10:00a.m.	Meeting, calendar, and activity time
10:00-10:15 a.m.	Snack
10:15-11:00 a.m.	Outdoor play or indoor large motor play
11:30-12:15 p.m.	Lunch and story time
12:15-2:00 p.m.	Nap and rest time
2:00-3:00 p.m.	Snack and free play
3:00-6:00 p.m.	Afternoon groups; outdoor and indoor play in mixed age groups
6:00 p.m.	Closing

At the end of the day, teachers post a notice highlighting the day's activities outside the classroom door.

### **What to Bring to School**

Your child should come to school dressed in comfortable, sturdy, easy-to-laundry play clothes. A complete change of clothing, including socks and underwear, needs to be kept at the Center (two sets of clothes for toddlers). When children spill juice or paint or have a bathroom accident, this allows us to change them easily without inconvenience or embarrassment. Soiled clothes are bagged and put in your child's cubby.

**PLEASE LABEL all clothing clearly with your child's name.**

Since we believe that fresh air is important for raising healthy young children, we go outside at least once daily except when weather conditions are severe. You must ensure that your child's clothing is appropriate for the season and weather conditions of the day. If even one child does not have the appropriate outdoor clothing, that child's entire class is unable to go outside that day. Hats and mittens are often necessary from mid-fall through spring; boots and snowsuits are required in the winter, even when there is no snow on the ground.

During the late spring, summer, and early fall months, our children are vulnerable to insect bites and sun exposure. To prevent that, RPCC has parents sign permission forms authorizing RPCC to use bug spray and sunscreen. In addition, RPCC asks parents to apply bug spray and sunscreen in the morning before dropping off their child. You will see notices to this effect outside of classrooms when the appropriate time of the year arrives. Summer means daily water-play time. Children wear a bathing suit to school and bring water shoes and a towel.

Please send a crib-sized blanket and sheet for your child to use at naptime. These items need to be clearly labeled and brought home weekly to be laundered. Stuffed animals for naptime and books (everything labeled) are always welcome at school. Please leave violent toys (swords, guns) at home. Please also leave candy and gum.

Due to the severe health hazards they present, we prohibit balloons at school.

### **Lunch**

All children bring a lunch to school with an ice pack and water bottle. Please clearly label the lunchbox, containers and bottle. In an effort to help teach children about nutrition, we ask that items such as candy and soda be excluded from lunchboxes. As the possibility of choking is always of concern, please remember to cut round foods such as grapes and hot dogs in half lengthwise, and **do not send nuts**.

Please note that the Center is a **nut safe environment**. This means that ***lunches and snacks may not contain nuts of any kind (not just peanuts)***. Many food labels indicate that the food product may contain traces of peanuts or peanut oil even

though the food product does not actually contain nuts. In many cases, these kinds of food products are permitted at the Center. **Soynut or sun butter is an approved alternative choice, however, we ask that you send this item labeled to avoid any questions regarding its contents.** If you have any question about whether a particular food item is appropriate, please ask your child's teachers or the Director. You will be advised of food allergies in your child's classroom, which may further affect the lunches you send to school to ensure the safety of any children with allergies.

### **Snacks**

We serve nutritious snacks at mid-morning and following afternoon rest. We provide milk at snack accompanied by a wide variety of healthy foods such as fruits, cheeses, yogurts, cereals, breads, and crackers. A snack menu is posted outside the office and also online at My Classroom Connection under "other things."

### **Drop-off and Pick-up of Children**

When you arrive at the Center, escort your child to the classroom, and inform the teacher in charge that you have arrived. This ensures the safety of the children in the Center and lets you and your child's teacher share information.

Please be sure to inform the Center if your child has shown any symptoms of illness the previous night or morning, or received any medication that morning. The Center reserves the right to ask you to take your child home if he/she appears unwell upon arrival at the Center. If a health screening determines your child to be in good health, please obtain written authorization from the health care provider so that your child can be admitted to the Center for the day.

When you pick your child up at the end of the day, inform the teacher in charge that you are leaving. Please make sure that anyone other than the parent/guardian who may pick up your child is listed on the pick-up and consent forms. Additionally, they ***MUST BRING A PICTURE I.D. so that we can verify their identity prior to releasing the child.*** An I.D. is also required from any parent that the staff person(s) has not met. Please let us know in writing to expect another pick-up person, even if that person is listed on the forms.

Please note that we cannot prohibit anyone listed as parent or guardian on enrollment forms or other forms from picking up a child without a signed court order prohibiting it on file at the school.

### **Transitions**

Children are not asked to wait for long periods of time when transitioning between activities. Age appropriate explanations are provided as well as transition to activities such as timers, clean up songs, finger plays and chants.

RPCC makes every effort to have a smooth transition to the late afternoon program. Should a child be assigned to a different teacher, collaboration and pertinent information sharing will take place between educators.

Transitions for moving up from Toddler to T/PS or Pre-K are gradual; a short visit after snack, morning until after lunch, after rest etc. until the child is ready for a full time switch. With parent permission, teachers share pertinent information regarding health, special interests and any areas of concern. PK2 teachers may complete public/private school readiness questionnaires on individual children as requested, with parent's authorization.

## Policies & Procedures

### Attendance

We provide a full staff and all other services each day whether your child is present or not. Therefore, no reduction in tuition or credits can be made for absences. We are also unable to substitute a day if your child will be absent on a regularly scheduled day, although an extra day may be arranged with additional payment. Regular tuition during the academic year must be paid even if your child is absent for a vacation, regardless of the duration of that vacation. One month each year, however, you may withdraw your child and hold your spot by paying 30% of your regular tuition. The exception is July and August, when you may withdraw your child for two months.

### Tuition and Billing

Tuition rates are published on the Center's website, <http://www.rogerspierce.org/> under Enrollment. Rates change once a year, on July 1st, to coincide with our fiscal year. Tuition bills are issued monthly on or around the 1st and payment is due in full by the 15th of each month. If tuition is not remitted, reminders are issued the last week of the month. Chronic late payments may result in late payment fees of \$20 per day late, refusal of service to your child until payment is made, or termination of services.

### Hours of Operation

Rogers-Pierce Children's Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our staffing is planned in accordance with the hours for which families contract at enrollment. If a child is not picked up regularly at the scheduled time, the Director will adjust the Hour and Fee Agreement. Please notify the school if your child will be picked up earlier or later than the usual time. This helps us prepare your child for what he/she should expect and smooths the transition from school to home. Although it is not a regulation, we feel that it may be difficult for a child to be at the Center for more than ten hours a day.

\* \* \* PLEASE CALL THE SCHOOL IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT \* \* \*

The doors to the center open at 7:30 a.m. Children may begin to arrive at Rogers-Pierce after this time. All children must be at school by 9:00 a.m. when our developmental program begins. A late arrival risks missing the initial excitement and bonding of the group and this may create a more difficult transition for the child. Pleasant transitions are an important goal of the teachers. The smoother the transition, the more successful the experience is for the child and the classroom. Late arrivals disrupt the experience for all of the children and teachers and so frequent late arrivals may be addressed by the Director.

Acknowledging there may be times in which your child will need to arrive late due to an appointment, contacting the school is required. If, upon arrival, your child's class has left the premises, you are responsible for bringing your child to the destination after first signing in at school.

### **Late Pickup Policy**

All children must be picked up promptly at the end of their program (either the 3 PM or the 6 PM pickup). Prompt pick-up assures the child s/he has not been forgotten or abandoned. Parents will be charged a late pickup fee if they arrive past their scheduled pick up time. The policy is as follows:

- First Offense - will be forgiven
- Second Offense - the parent will be charge \$20 for each 10 minute increment that they are late
- Third Offense - the parent will be charged \$50 for each 10 minutes increment that they are late
- Fourth Offense - the child will not be able to attend school on their next regularly scheduled day
- Fifth Offense or any thereafter - the Director will bring the information to the school's board to determine the next appropriate action.

The number of times a parent is late will counted within a sixth month period and will reset itself on July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>. (see Tuition and Fee Schedule at <http://www.rogerspierce.org/>)

### **Storm and Emergency Closings**

We will make every reasonable effort to remain open on stormy days. The safety of the children and staff is always our first consideration. In the event of a major snowstorm or other extreme weather condition, *we will follow the Arlington Public School closure. If the Arlington Public Schools are Closed; RPCC is Closed. When the Arlington Public Schools have a delayed opening due to weather conditions, the Center opens at 9:00 a.m.* On days when APS are closed but the Center is open, such as MLK day and February vacation, among others, the Director will decide whether or not the Center will close. An email will be sent announcing the closing and the answering machine message will be changed to announce the status for the day. Additionally, the school may close early in the case of a storm that develops during the day; please keep work and emergency numbers current so that we can contact you.

For storm or other emergency closings, no refund or credit in tuition will be applied.

## Holidays & Staff Days

The Center has an established calendar for holiday and other closures. In exceptional situations, the Director may decide to close on days other than those on the schedule. We will provide as much notice as possible when we must close for dates not included on the calendar. A yearly calendar with scheduled closings is published for your information, and a copy is kept posted on the hallway bulletin board.

## Visitor Policy

All visitors to RPCC are greeted at the secure front door. Picture identification is required from all unfamiliar visitors. A visitor listed as an authorized person to pick up a child must still show picture identification if the director and/or staff does not know him/her.

## Plan for Dispensing Medication

Medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, with the exception of topical non-prescription medication, may be administered to a child only with written parental authorization *and* written order of a physician (for prescription medication, this may include the label on the medication). Parents are informed of the policy prior to their child's being admitted to the center. Authorization forms are maintained in the child's file:

1. For prescription medications, we accept as the written order of the physician, a signed statement listing the medication(s), dosage and criteria for its administration. The statement is valid for no more than one year after it was signed.
2. For non-prescription medications, we accept as written parental authorization, a signed statement authorizing the school to administer non-prescription medication in accordance with the written order of the physician. This statement is valid for no more than one year after the day it was signed.

Topical non-prescription medications such as sunscreen, petroleum jelly, or other ointments may be administered to a child only with written parental authorization. The signed authorization forms must list the specific topical non-prescription medication and the criteria for administration. Also, this form is valid for no more than one year from the date it was signed.

Medication will not be administered contrary to the directions on the original container unless so authorized by a written order of the child's physician.

All medication is kept labeled in its original container with the child's name, the name of the drug, and the directions for its administration and storage.

A written record is maintained of the administration of any medication, prescription or non-prescription, including topical non-prescription medications, to each child. The written record includes the time and date of each administration, the dosage,

the name of the staff person administering the medication and the name of the child. The completed medication record shall be made part of the child's file. Parents will be notified daily that the medication has been given.

All medications are stored under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety, if needed in the refrigerator in the Director's office.

All unused medication shall be disposed of, or returned to the parent, when no longer needed.

All staff with authority to administer medication must complete an annual evaluation of the ability to administer medication according to the Five Rights. According to regulation 7.11(2)(i), no 1st Dose of Medication may be administered at a child care center.

Parents, with the written permission of their child's health care practitioner, may train staff in the implementation of their child's individual health care plan.

Example: epi-pens, feeding tubes, inhalers.

### **Accidents**

Staff members have been trained in first aid. In all cases of injury, an accident report is written up and must be signed by the parent or guardian. If your child sustains a minor injury at school, the wound will be treated and you will be notified either at that time or at pick-up. For more serious accidents that may require medical attention (such as stitches), you or the emergency contact person will be called to take the child for medical attention. For very serious injuries that require immediate medical attention, we will take the child via ambulance to the nearest hospital. You will be called at once and directed to meet your child and accompanying staff member at the hospital.

### **Teeth Brushing Policy**

All children who attend RPCC for 4 hours or more during the day and or consume a meal will brush their teeth while at RPCC.

Toothbrushes will be provided by RPCC and labeled with the child's full name and date of issue. Toothbrushes will be replaced at a minimum of every 3 months or sooner if needed.

Children will brush with fluoride toothpaste; should the child have difficulty rinsing and spitting then we may opt to have the child practice using just water and the toothbrush.

### **Safe Sleep Policy**

RPCC does not offer childcare for infants. As such the children are not at risk for SIDS.

The children at RPCC sleep on mats and enough light is provided to assure that we can see the children. Music is kept at a low volume to assure that we can hear the children. Throughout the rest period RPCC teachers/staff will periodically check on the children.

### **Transportation**

No transportation is provided to/from school. On field trips, we use public transportation (bus, subway train). The Lead Teacher will serve as transportation coordinator for his/her classroom; the classroom cell phone number used as contact information. Behavior management and medical emergencies will be the teacher's responsibilities, handled in accordance to RPCC policies.

### **Toilet Training**

Toilet training is a major step in maturation for children. Our staff is experienced in helping children through toilet training and we are glad to help make the process a positive one for you and your child.

Parents/guardians of children in diapers provide their own supply, as well as wipes. Our toileting and diapering policies are posted in the bathrooms. We do not discriminate, at any age level, based on toilet training eligibility requirements; being toilet-trained is not a requirement for attendance.

### **Illness**

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts at prevention, illnesses can spread rapidly among groups of young children. We recognize the difficulty faced by working parents/guardians whose children become sick, but we do not have facilities or staff to care for sick children at school. Children who are ill must remain out of school to recuperate and to prevent further spread of infection. When your child is sick, please call the Center to inform us of the nature of the illness so that we can advise other families to watch for symptoms.

To avoid confusion about whether your child is too sick to attend school, we have developed the following policy:

*If your child is too ill to participate fully in a daily curriculum and/or falling asleep during activity times (including active outside play) he/she should not come to school.*

If your child has had any of the following symptoms, she/he cannot attend school until *symptom-free for one complete day of school or as otherwise noted*:

- Fever of over 100 degrees
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe cough
- Thick, colored mucus from nose
- Scabies or lice (after thorough treatment)
- Inflammation of the eyes (conjunctivitis) (after 1 dose of medication)
- Unexplained rash
- Abscess or draining sores

Thus, if your child is sent home from school with a fever, for example, he or she *cannot return to school the next day as 24 hours will not yet have elapsed since the fever was present*.

Please feel free to consult the Health Care Policy in the Center office for policies regarding chicken pox, etc.

If your child is being treated for an illness with antibiotics, he/she must have had 24 hours of medication before returning to the Center.

*In all cases, the Director or teacher in charge makes the final decision about whether a child may attend the Center.*

Should the Director feel that a child is being repeatedly brought to school when he/she should not be in the school due to illness, the Director may require the child to remain absent from school for a longer period and/or require a doctor's note before the child can return to school.

### **Procedures for Identifying and Protecting Children with Allergies**

Before a child's first day of school, teachers review each child's medical record to identify allergies and/or emergency medical information. The needs of each child are discussed with school personnel.

The plan for meeting the specific health care needs of each child includes:

- A. Identification of child and the specific allergy.
- B. Identification of areas where potential exposures may occur.
- C. Education of teachers.
- D. An action plan for treating potential allergic emergencies.
- E. Having appropriate emergency medications readily available.
- F. Education regarding proper techniques for administration of meds.

### **Parent/Guardian Input**

You are encouraged to make suggestions regarding Center policies and programs. You can do so at a Board Meeting in one of three ways:

- You can ask to appear at the meeting to make suggestions verbally;
- You can ask a Board Member to present the suggestion on your behalf;
- You can submit suggestions in writing to any Board Member to read at the Board Meeting.

If you would like a written response to a suggestion, please identify yourself when providing it. In June of each year, we ask all parents/guardians to help improve the program by completing an evaluation. However, the Center greatly values your input at any time.

### **Parent/Guardian Conferences**

Twice a year, teachers arrange to meet individually with each parent/guardian to discuss the child's progress and present a written report. If your child has a disability, we will provide progress reports every three months. You may request additional conferences at any time to discuss questions or concerns, or you may call during the day to talk with teachers or convey a message through the Director.

### **Social Services**

The Director is trained in child development and is glad to consult with you concerning any of your child's needs. Please feel free to call upon the Director at any time. The Center also consults with a licensed social worker (LCSW) regarding children and/or classroom issues (please ask the Director for more information).

### **Referrals for Additional Services**

If the RPCC staff feels your child may need additional services, they will inform the Director of their concerns, observe and record your child's behavior, and review any records. The staff will then ask to meet with you to discuss the situation. Teachers may recommend that children be referred for vision or hearing screening, speech and language assessment, neurological evaluations, physical therapy, or counseling. If necessary, the Center staff will help you to find specialists to support your child's development.

When appropriate, the staff may also recommend to parents/guardians that the child be evaluated by the public school system. If teachers recommend such an evaluation, you will receive a written statement explaining the reason for the referral, a summary of our observations, and efforts that have been made to meet your child's needs. We will refer you to the Early Intervention Coordinator (if your child is under 3 years of age) or the preschool coordinator in your town of residence, and we will ensure that you are informed of your rights to services for your child (including

appealing under Chapter 766, the Massachusetts special education law). Any referrals for additional services are made only with permission by parent or guardian.

We will follow up any referrals, with parental permission, by contacting the agency or service provider. If it is determined that the child does not need services, we will review the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

The following resources are always available to staff and parents:

Dept. of Children and Families:	(781) 641-8200
Arlington Public Schools: Early Childhood Coordinator: Joyce Schlenger	(781) 316-3698
Child Care Circuit	(978) 686-4288
Dr. Sarah B. Sheldon	(781) 641-5800
Early Intervention (birth-3)	1-800-905-8437

### **Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

In Massachusetts, child care providers are "mandated reporters" which means that they are legally required to report any suspected indications of child abuse or neglect to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. Prior to filing a report, the Director or designated teacher will, if appropriate, call the parents/guardian to inform them of the allegations. The staff in the Center is available to assist families in cooperating with the Department and scheduling any necessary services from Department referrals. We are also experienced helping children deal with any issues they may have.

### **Children's Records**

Forms and records that are on file at our office are treated confidentially and will not be released without parent/guardian permission to anyone except our own staff, Department of Early Education and Care, or if subpoenaed. These records are available to you at your request. You have the right to discuss the material in your child's file and to meet with the staff members to discuss the records.

We maintain records that are legible, dated, and signed by the individual making the entry. We continually update all information in the child's records. These records will be maintained for a period of five years after the child has left the school, unless the record has been transferred to the parent/guardian as provided for in State Law 102CRM 7.05(22). See the attached Parental Rights as required by the Department of Education and Care (this document is also posted on the bulletin board in the hall).

### **Availability of Regulations**

The Rogers-Pierce Children's Center has a copy of the Department of Early Education and Care Regulations, which is available for parents/guardians to review upon request. The regulations are also available online at:

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/department-of-early-education-and-care-eec-laws-and-regulations>

### **Positive Guidance and Discipline**

Our Guidance and Discipline Policy supports the goals and philosophy of the program which is to guide the children to develop into independent, thoughtful and sensitive individuals, maximizing awareness of self and awareness of others without compromising positive feelings of self-esteem. Our approach is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of young children and aims to protect the group and the individuals within it. We use discipline techniques to help children change inappropriate and unsafe behavior. Positive Guidance is used in a consistent, reasonable, and appropriate manner.

RPCC is an enriched and nurturing environment, one that provides each child with the resources and materials in a safe setting in which to develop socially and developmentally appropriate behavior. We see ourselves as facilitators in this setting. We familiarize the children with the routines, expectations and limitations of our program and help guide them through it. Our aim is self-control and self-discipline. We encourage the children to "use words" to express themselves to us and to their peers. We offer choices and guidelines to acceptable behavior. We offer understanding, warmth, and comfort to neutralize anger and frustration. Our efforts are aimed at focusing or redirecting energy as a means of modifying behavior. Our goal is to instill healthy self-images and self-esteem and confidence in handling school and peer relationships. We emphasize positive reinforcement!

If a child consistently exhibits unacceptable and troubling behaviors, we meet with parents/guardians to discuss the situation and agree upon a plan of action. The plan may involve consultation with outside specialists, including screening by the town School Department.

While we always try to work towards a positive resolution of any behavior issue, it is our primary responsibility to ensure the safety of everyone at the Center at all times. Therefore, if a child's behavior threatens their own safety or that of other children or staff, the parent/guardian will be required to come immediately to the Center to discuss the situation and remove the child for the remainder of the day. (Under such circumstances, we prepare the child consistent with their ability to understand.) Suspension of more than one day, if necessary, will be at the discretion of the teacher(s) and the Director and is not used as a form of punishment, not intended to

circumvent referrals, and not used in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In compliance with the Department of Education and Care regulation 7.05(6) the following practices are strictly prohibited:

1. Spanking or other corporal punishment is never used.
2. No child is ever subjected to cruel and severe punishment, shaking, threats, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
3. No child is denied outdoor time or food as a form of punishment. No child is force fed or made to eat against their will; in no way is food used as a consequence.
4. No child is punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet, or forced to remain in soiled clothes or on the toilet.
5. Excessive time out; time out (if used) may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.
6. No child shall be confined to a swing, high chair, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision.

#### **Termination and Suspension Policy**

The Rogers-Pierce Children's Center Director and staff will make every effort to work cooperatively with parents when their child presents challenging behaviors.

Steps to work with the family will include:

1. Meeting with the parents to discuss options that would allow the child to stay at RPCC.
2. RPCC will provide referrals for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services.
3. RPCC will pursue consultation and educator training for the program as appropriate
4. Develop a behavioral intervention plan at home and in the program.

If plan to avoid suspension or termination fails, program must inform parents of:

1. Specific Reasons (in writing)
2. Conditions for return, if any (in writing)

Either the parent or the Center may initiate termination of services. For example, the Center may require termination for non-payment of tuition fees. Other issues determining termination would include inability of the Center to meet the child's individual needs and failure of parent/guardian to seek out services/resources for the child at the request of the Center. Since the safety and well-being of the entire school body must always be our main consideration, the enrollment of a child whose behavior poses a danger to his/herself and/or others will be terminated.

Parents/guardians will be notified of termination in writing, at a face-to-face meeting if possible, including the reasons for termination. A copy of the letter will be kept in the child's file. The Director will inform the parent/guardian of the availability of information as required by the Department of Early Education and Care and will offer referrals for other services through the Child Care Resource Center or through other resources as necessary. The child will be prepared for termination by the Center in a manner consistent with their ability to understand.

Parents terminating services are required to give the Center at least 30 days' notice. Giving notice of less than 30 days may result in the application of tuition deposits to that period.

### **Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct**

To help parents/guardians successfully address any issues that arise, the Center observes the following Code of Conduct.

1. All parties are expected to be aware of their surroundings and hold sensitive or age-inappropriate discussions in a private setting, such as the office.
2. All parties are expected to treat one another with respect.
3. Discussions of classroom experiences are best held with the child's teacher, who works with the child every day.
4. If parents/guardians and the teacher(s) are struggling to resolve a matter, they should bring the Director into the conversation for further assistance.
5. For questions or concerns about Center policy, parents/guardians must speak with the Director, not the classroom teacher(s).
6. If the parents/guardians and the Director are unable to resolve a matter, they should bring it to the attention of the Board of Directors.

## Evacuation Plans & Procedures in the event of an Emergency

### 7.24 (2)(C)

1. Evacuation plans are posted at each classroom door and at each exit door.
2. School attendance is kept daily. The attendance log is taken by each classroom teacher when evacuating. A list of emergency telephone numbers is also taken when evacuating. Attendance will be taken before and after evacuation, along the route and upon arriving at temporary destination.
3. Evacuation drills are conducted monthly. Drills will be held at different times of the day and use alternative exits. Classes will meet on Maple St. near the park entrance along the Verizon parking lot fence. The Director will document date, time, route, number of children and effectiveness.
4. In the event of loss of power, heat, or water, the school will contact the local or state authorities to determine when service will be restored. If the lost utility cannot be restored within the hour, the Center will close.
5. In case of a natural disaster, the school will follow the procedure recommended by national or local civil authorities. The school will keep the children in a safe location within the building and will call parents or person(s) authorized by parents to pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible. If staying in the building is unsafe, students and staff will seek shelter at the Robbins Library or Arlington Children's Center (17 Irving St). When leaving the premises, a cell phone will be brought with each group of children for communication with the director, local authorities, fire departments and parents. When possible, an email will be sent, as well as change of voice mail message, indicating our current location and any instructions, followed by calling individual families. EEC will be notified about any emergency relocation.

Each classroom will be equipped with an emergency evacuation kit which will include, at a minimum, the following:

- diapering necessities (diapers, changing pads, wet wipes, latex gloves, Ziploc plastic bags)
- first aid supplies
- a list of children with allergies (and the specifics) and Epipens/meds as indicated
- flashlight/batteries
- water/cups/books

Should it be necessary to evacuate RPCC, emergency phone lists and attendance books will be taken along. RPCC will cross-reference the number of children to the classroom attendance sheet to insure that all children are accounted for. Should a child be discovered missing, we will first call 911 and then the parents (see missing children's policy below)

1. Office and "extra" staff will provide added support to the toddler classrooms and if applicable to any handicapped children
2. Children with disabilities will be assisted by whatever means necessary

\*\* Please note that in all emergency situations the primary concern will be keeping the children safe. The RPCC Director and or Designee will make every effort to notify the families of the situation in an effective and timely manner.

### **Missing Children**

If a child is found to be missing, one teacher will begin the search and one teacher will stay with the children and continue with activities. The search will begin in the classroom and continue through the hallway, other classrooms, storage areas and bathrooms. Accessible areas within the church would next be searched. The Director and assistants will join in the search as available.

After an initial search, if we confirm a child is missing at RPCC, the RPCC Director of Designee would first call 911 and then the parents. If a child is missing during off-site activities, the above procedure would be implemented taking into account available staff, supervision of remaining children and surroundings. We will have a copy of the child's file available for the emergency personnel and will provide photographs if available. EEC will be notified.

### **Sheltering in Place**

Lockdown is a protective action employed to safeguard people when there is an armed perpetrator or a natural disaster approaching the school, on the school grounds, or inside the building. There are two major types of lockdown, one where the threat is INSIDE the building, the other where the threat is OUTSIDE the building. In light of not having an intercom system, a repeated series of five short whistle blasts will be our warning to initiate lockdown.

Events that may require lockdown: armed intruder, police activity in proximity to school (e.g. chasing a suspect), violent incident occurred, natural disaster, or imminent act of violence.

Director: The Director will establish contact and communication with Police and Fire. If an intruder is believed to be inside the school, the Director will instruct anyone outside to go to another school or the library. If intruder is outside, she will instruct everyone to go inside to the nearest safe school or shelter.

Teachers: Close and lock or secure all doors and windows, close shades, turn off lights, and silence cell phones. All cell phones and computers should remain off unless otherwise instructed. Take attendance, account for all children and staff. Direct the children to sit/play quietly on the floor away from windows and doors. Explain to students that this is a procedure taken to keep everyone safe. Maintain calm and reassure students. Prevent students from leaving the room.

If threat remains OUTSIDE your building, do not leave the building. Perimeter doors remain locked and secured. Escort children to the bathroom as needed, continue activities while remaining in your classrooms. Rest mats, blankets, lunch boxes, flashlights, food and water, clothing, diapers and other necessities are available on site. If the Fire Alarm sounds:

- Evacuate only if there is visible signs of fire.
- Await instructions if no sign of fire.

Parent Communication: Once everyone is safe inside the building, power and service available, send email to parents, with an update. Update hourly, if possible. Once police have given the "All Clear", send out email for parents to pick up students. Remain in lockdown and do not communicate with anyone at your door until you hear official instructions from the Administration or Police.

\*\* Please note that in all emergency situations, the primary concern will be keeping the children safe. The RPCC Director will make every effort to notify the families of the situation in an effective and timely manner.

# Enrollment

## Admissions Requirements and Intake

Families are encouraged to attend an Open House or schedule a private tour when in the decision-making process. The Director is happy to provide tours of the facility, explain our philosophy and policies, and let you observe the classrooms. Families wishing to enroll are then asked to complete an Application for Enrollment. The family will be contacted by the Director if a spot for the desired program is available. In order to hold a spot once it is offered, families must submit the following:

- \$100 registration fee and \$500 tuition deposit (to serve as payment for the last week a child attends school). Both these fees are non-refundable. (see Tuition and Fee Schedule for additional fees)
- Registration forms, including emergency release and pick-up names and developmental history
- Health form completed by a physician, including all state-required immunizations and tests (such as chicken pox vaccine, lead test)
- Tuition contract

The Department of Early Education and Care requires that all forms including the medical form be completed and returned to the Center before a child attends. Forms must be updated annually.

## Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is held each winter for the following fall. Current families wishing to continue enrollment are asked to submit a request for their child's anticipated summer and fall schedule. New families are then invited to fill remaining slots. Slots also become available throughout the year, so families are encouraged to be in touch with the Director about availability. RPCC maintains an active wait list if your child is interested in attending and no spots are currently available.

## RPCC Calendar for School Closings

A calendar of school closings is issued annually and is available on our website at <http://www.rogerspierce.org/>.