Little Wreckers Preschool
Parent Handbook
2021-2022
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Table of Contents

Who we are & What we do 4
Positive Guidance & Challenging Behaviors 5
    Techniques to be used when teacher intervention is needed 7
Code of Conduct 8
    For Parents, Caregivers, Volunteers, & Visitors 8
        Please Do 8
        Please Refrain From 9
        Breach of this Code of Conduct: 9
Enrollment Procedure 9
    Interest Form 9
    Tour 10
    Decision 10
    Contract & Student Record Form 10
    CampDoc 10
    Tuition 10
    Provisional Enrollment Period & Withdrawal 10
    Withdrawal & Expulsion 10
Finance Policy 11
    Family Membership 11
    Non-Refundable Registration Fee & Contract Deposit 11
    Late payment fee 11
    Payment plans 11
    Bounced checks 11
    Tuition refunds 11
Negotiating Differences 11
Health & Wellness 11
    Outdoor play safety 11
    Toilet training 12
    Illness 12
    Missing school 12
    Exposure to a contagious disease 12
    COVID-19 & Symptoms of illness 12
    If there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in the preschool program 13
    Return policy after a hospital stay 15
    Medical Forms 15
    Flu vaccine 15
    Religious or medical exemption 15
Snacks for children with allergies and food intolerances

Medication
- Parent responsibility
- Individualized Healthcare Plans
- Medication Forms
- Prescription medication
- Over-the-counter medication

Staff Responsibility
- Training
- When medicine is received, the medication certified staff must
- Procedure for the administration of medicine and record-keeping

Abuse & Neglect
- Child abuse defined
- Child neglect defined
- Sexual abuse indicators
- Prevention of abuse and neglect outside of school
- In the event of suspected abuse and/or neglect
- Prevention of abuse and neglect in school
- Prohibited discipline techniques

Family Involvement
- Family-teacher partnership

Becoming Comfortable at School
- Home visits
- First day of school
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Parent volunteers
- Parent workshops

Communication Policy
- Communication structure
- Grievances & suggestions
- Confidentiality of child file
- Announcements each day
- CampDocs
- School Calendar
- Parent resources
- Weekly planning forms
- Sharing information with family and others
- Strategies for negotiating differences
- Translator
- Website

Special Needs
Lunch & Snacks
  Foods not permitted at school
  Suggested Foods

Clothing
  Our best days are the days when our clothes are the dirtiest!
    Change of clothes
    Play clothes
    Footwear
    Outdoor and weather appropriate play clothes

Birthdays and Celebrations
  Birthdays
  Birthday snacks - healthy and safe choices
  Birthdays at school - donate a book!

Toys from Home

Drop-Off and Pickup
  Late Fee Policy

Dismissal Forms
  Emergency Authorization Release Information
  Updating the emergency authorization release information
  Parents out of town

Child not picked up at closing time

Building Security & Safety
  Shelter-In-Place or Lockdown Drills:

Fire Drills

School Closure Due to Inclement Weather or Hazardous Conditions

COVID-19 Information & FAQs
  Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection Precautions
  Daily Health Screenings
  Enhanced Health and Wellness Policy

FAQ's
  What are the hours of operation?
  What will happen if there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in the preschool?
  Will tuition be refunded if the closure of the preschool is deemed to be necessary?
  Will there be distance learning in the event of a shut down?
Who we are & What we do

The Little Wreckers Preschool (LWP) provides children of active Westport Public School employees with a high-quality preschool experience that focuses on educating the whole child. Being housed at Staples High School provides working parents/guardians the comfort and convenience of having their child in a program that is in close proximity to their work environment. LWP is run by Earthplace Preschool and its staff. In the past, Little Wreckers has partnered with the high school horticulture class, children’s literature class, and high school student volunteers.

At Little Wreckers Preschool, we believe that children learn best in an educational program that is focused on the whole child. We strive to meet the social, emotional, cognitive, creative, and physical needs of our students using a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and engaging.

We provide hands-on learning experiences that allow children to make connections to the world around them. And, we believe that families and staff are partners in fostering a lifelong love of learning.

Positive Guidance & Challenging Behaviors

At Little Wreckers Preschool, we believe that it is important for our teachers and caregivers to:

- Listen to our students
- Allow our students to express opinions
- Encourage our students to discuss options
- Foster independence and reasoning
- Place limits, consequences, and expectations on behavior
- Express warmth and nurturing
- Act in a fair and consistent manner
- Set the tone for our students
- Lead by example

It is our policy to use positive guidance techniques as well as an authoritative style of discipline. Authoritative discipline is characterized by reasonable demands and high responsiveness. While authoritative teachers and caregivers have high expectations for the children in their care, they also give children the resources and support they need to succeed. Authoritative teachers and caregivers are flexible. If there are extenuating circumstances, they will adjust their response accordingly. Discipline, then, takes into account all of the variables, including the child’s behavior, the situation, and so on.

Children with or without special needs will exhibit challenging behaviors. It will become necessary for teachers and caregivers to redirect children when behaviors arise. It will also be necessary for teachers to intervene when interpersonal conflicts arise.
When interpersonal conflicts occur, the teachers will employ the **High Scope Method** of intervention and conflict resolution.

The **High Scope Method** includes the following steps:

1. Approach quickly and calmly; stopping any hurtful or harmful behavior
2. Acknowledge feelings
3. Gather information from all involved
4. Restate the problem as it was told to you
5. Ask for ideas and solutions and choose one together
6. Give follow-up support

The classroom teachers will, at all times, supervise and observe the children in their care. Teachers will, at all times, reserve judgment. Teachers and caregivers may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child.

- **Examples of physical punishment**: Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.
- **Examples of psychological abuse**: shaming, name-calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection.
- **Examples of coercion**: Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

*(Standard 1B.8 and 1B.10 ITPKS)*

We expect conflicts and challenging behaviors to arise as a normal course of the preschool experience. When challenging behaviors occur, the teachers will identify the events that precede the behaviors in order to determine if there is a pattern. If a detectable pattern exists, the teachers will make necessary adjustments to the classroom environment and or schedule. See below:

**Room arrangement**: The room is arranged with a number of different inviting areas of interest. These interest areas ensure that a variety of activities, such as drawing, painting, blocks, manipulatives, sand, housekeeping, and puzzles, are always available in the room. There are spaces for a small group, large group, and individual play. This includes a space for children to get away from the group.

**Materials**: All materials are in good condition in order to communicate to the children that they are to be taken care of in an appropriate manner. There are enough of each item so that a particular toy does not become the cause of difficulty within the group. Within each area, the materials are organized in a clear manner so that children can utilize and return the items to the shelf or area on their own. The materials in the interest area are kept “novel.” For example, books are changed on a regular basis; different accessories are added to the blocks; the housekeeping area is turned into a store, office, or post office; supplies on the writing table are changed, or manipulatives are rotated to go with a particular theme.

**Developmentally appropriate transitions**: Transitions are clear, fun, and quick and are planned to encourage children’s independent behaviors and decision-making abilities.

**Setting the tone**: The teachers set the tone of the classroom by welcoming all students and their parents.
Setting clear limits: Teachers set clear limits for the children through the routines they create in the classroom. These serve as an overall structure for the children's behavior throughout the day. The behaviors expected at group time, snack time, clean-up time, and dismissal are clear and consistent. Teachers also set clear limits with their directions for the use of materials in the classroom; they explain, discuss, demonstrate, and role-play the expected behaviors at group time and as individual incidents occur. For example, in the block area, the children learn that only those who have built a building may knock it down, that they may build as high as their heads, and that they take one block off the shelf at a time. The same methods are used to communicate the expected behaviors in interpersonal relationships. The children learn that they are to use words when they have a disagreement, include others who would like a role in dramatic play, and think of kind things to say when commenting on another child's artwork.

Presence: The teachers know that simply their presence and positive, nurturing manner promote cooperative behavior as they move about the room.

Modeling: The teachers model the behavior they expect from the children. This would include saying "please" "thank you," and "excuse me." It would also include washing hands at appropriate times, sitting on chairs, and using indoor voices.

Positive Expectations: The teachers state the behavior that they expect from the children. For example, "When I ring the bell, I expect everyone to stop, look, and listen."

Child-directed activities: The teachers honor the children’s interests and communicate a caring attitude by organizing the materials needed for the children to follow their ideas.

Teacher-directed activities: The teachers make sure that these activities are developmentally appropriate so that the outcome is a positive experience for all of the children. For example, group times are fun, active, and an appropriate length. Art experiences are creative and open-ended.

Techniques to be used when teacher intervention is needed

Positive redirection: The teachers redirect the children in a positive manner. For example, "Blocks are for building," or "Paint on the paper."

Add novelty: The teachers add a novel element to the play. For example, colors, soap, baby dolls, and/or sponges could be added to the water table.

Explain your intervention: The teacher tells why he/she is intervening and what will happen if the behavior continues. "When you splash other people you are showing me that you don't remember how to play at the water table. Keep the water in the table or you’ll have to choose another place to play."

Accept children's feelings: The teacher demonstrates that she/he accepts the children’s feelings, but not necessarily their actions. Let the children know that they can be mad about something, but that they must work to solve the problem. The teacher explains to the children that she/he will not let them hit anyone and that she/he doesn't want anyone to hit them.

Help the child/children verbalize: The teacher encourages the children to say what they are feeling, or what they think happened, or what they want to do next, etc. The teacher discusses how to solve the problem next time.
Stop hitting or throwing: The teacher tells the child specifically what to do. “Put your hands down,” or “Put the block down.” The teacher may also put her/his arms around a child to stop him/her from hitting. The teacher lets go quickly and then discusses the situation.

Give choices: The teachers explain to the children what their choices are in the situation. For example, they could stay in the area (or with a friend) and play constructively, or they could choose another area or friend. Or the teacher could give the choice to move to one of two areas. The ideas that there are different choices to make in terms of behavior, areas being played in, or friends being played with, are important concepts to convey.

Time away from the classroom: The teacher removes a child from the room only if his/her behavior is dangerous or disruptive to other children. This would include continuing to throw objects, hitting other children, loud screaming, and a tantrum that does not calm down quickly. The child goes outside on the playground and/or takes a walk with the teacher. The teacher talks with the child about his/her feelings. The child is not kept out of the classroom for more than 10 minutes. The goal of the teacher is for the child to regain control. The teacher helps the child to reenter play or organized activity.

When behaviors are developmentally inappropriate, persistent, hurtful, or dangerous, an incident report will be completed by the classroom teacher. The Behavior Incident Report includes a written description of the behavior, the teacher's intervention, and the child's response to the teacher's intervention. The goal is to communicate clearly and openly with our families and to provide ongoing support. The report will be signed by the Preschool Director and the Parent(s). After three reportable incidents have occurred, we will schedule a meeting with the Lead Teacher, the Parent(s), and the Preschool Director to develop an Individualized Behavior Care Plan. The Behavior Care Plan lists appropriate support services including modifications to the learning environment, the equipment, the schedule, and the teaching strategies. It may also become necessary to refer the case to an outside specialist or agency such as a social worker, Birth To Three, or the child's home school district to conduct a screening and/or a comprehensive evaluation.

If, after we have exhausted all avenues of intervention, we determine we cannot meet your child’s behavioral or educational needs or if your child is a danger to self or others, we will refer you to another program. (Standard 1E.1 ITPKS)

Code of Conduct

For Parents, Caregivers, Volunteers, & Visitors
At Little Wreckers, our goals are to promote positive relationships between all children and adults; to encourage each child’s sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community; and to foster each child’s ability to contribute as a responsible community member. With that in mind, we have developed a Code of Conduct for all adults in our programs including parents, caregivers, volunteers, and visitors to ensure that we act as role models for our students.

The Little Wreckers Preschool Code of Conduct reads:

Please Do:

- Wear a face covering when dropping off and picking up your child at school and when closer than six feet to other people.
- Treat others with respect and dignity regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, disability, or any other ground.
• Protect the privacy and confidentiality of our parents, guardians, teachers.
• Share all concerns and comments with the teachers first before speaking to the Director.
• Understand that it is the parents’ responsibility to share this code of conduct with all caregivers, babysitters, or nannies.
• Understand that during school hours, Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM, the Preschool playground is for school use only.
• Use the parking lot in a safe and respectful manner and maintain a safe speed, below 5 mph, at all times
• Park only in designated areas.
• Adhere to drop-off and pick-up times.

Please Refrain From:
• All forms of corporal punishment
• Inappropriate behavior or harassment of any kind towards a student, parent/guardian, or teacher
  ○ Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to harassment or intimidation by written note, email, words, gestures and/or body language.
• Using inappropriate language or displaying aggressive or threatening behavior toward staff, children, or other parents while in view of our students or anywhere on our premises.
• Verbal attacks on other children and/or staff, which include racial or other discriminatory slurs, the use of threats, name-calling, as well as repeated profane or degrading language.
• Discussing sensitive issues within earshot of children.
• Idling in your vehicle on Staples property.
• Consistently arriving late to pick up your child.
• Attempting to pick up your child if you are impaired by alcohol or other substances.

Breach of this Code of Conduct:
• Will result in immediate intervention up to and including the family’s expulsion from the preschool.
• May result in the call for police involvement.

If an incident should occur in which the parent/guardian breaches the Little Wreckers Preschool Code of Conduct, the parent/guardian will be given written notice warning them of their inappropriate behavior. The second infraction will result in a written notice of immediate withdrawal. Certain serious infractions will result in immediate withdrawal from any and all programs under the Earthplace Preschool license without prior warning including:
• Little Wreckers Preschool
• Earthplace Summer Camp

Enrollment Procedure

Enrollment priority is given to currently enrolled students and siblings of children currently attending the preschool. Open enrollment for students not presently attending the school for the following year begins in January. Enrollment is offered to Westport Public School employees first and then it is open to the general public if any spots remain.

Little Wreckers Preschool welcomes students without regard to their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, ability, gender, or family structure.

Interest Form
Application for enrollment begins by filling out the Interest Form.
Tour
Once we have received the interest form we will contact you to make an appointment for a tour of the school. This is a great opportunity to see the classroom and students while in action as well as a time to ask any questions you may have regarding our philosophy, procedures, and curriculum.

Decision
Within a week of your tour of the school, we ask that you please email lwp@earthplace.org to inform us of your decision.

Contract & Student Record Form
A contract is sent after we have been informed that you have chosen to have your child attend our preschool. Included in this contract will be a response date; at that time we ask for a non-refundable $250 registration fee, $700 contract deposit, and an Earthplace family membership, which starts at $90 for the year. The Earthplace family membership benefits include free or discounted program fees, newsletters, and access to Natureplace, Animal Hall and the 62-acre open space wildlife sanctuary.

CampDoc
After your signed contract is received, along with your registration fee and contract deposit, you will be emailed a CampDoc account for your child. This CampDoc account, or profile, is required with portions of it helping the teachers get to know your child in advance, and the rest of it is for us to obtain state-required health information. You will also have to electronically sign off on our Positive Guidance Policy, Health and Wellness Policy, and our required Code of Conduct.

Tuition
Tuition is paid in ten monthly installments starting in August. Payment is due upon receipt: if payment is not received within 10 days of the invoice due date, a $50 late fee will be charged. Credit or debit card payments will be subject to a 2.25% convenience fee. If payment is returned by the bank for any reason, the customer is responsible for the payment as well as any fees incurred by Earthplace. If tuition payments have not been received in accordance with the contract, the child will not be permitted to attend.

Provisional Enrollment Period & Withdrawal
We do not have a set provisional period. We work with families to help make the transition a positive individual experience. We try a variety of techniques including our usual home visits, parent and child orientation, adding a teacher for an introductory period, and additionally having the parent stay. If after these and other possible techniques are used, and the family and teachers come to a mutual decision that the child is not benefitting from being in school, the child may then withdraw without owing for the upcoming year.

Another reason that a child may withdraw is that they have been accepted into a preschool for special needs. Usually, this has been done as a part of a process that involved a referral by the school. In this case, the families are also not expected to be liable for the yearly tuition.

Withdrawal & Expulsion
When children have challenging behaviors, the school and the families work together to design a plan that can support the needs of the child and the classroom. Some of these solutions may be referral to the public school, working with professionals that the family has chosen, referral to Birth to Three, use of the Early Childhood Consultation Project (for us this is Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance), and use of our social service consultant and/or our early childhood consultant. If after trying a variety of techniques, we find that our school
cannot appropriately support and manage the child within the classroom setting, we will ask that the child be withdrawn from the school. The families will not be expected to be liable for the yearly tuition.

Finance Policy

Family Membership
We require that each family have a one-year family membership at the time of registration. Membership must be maintained while your child is enrolled in Little Wreckers Preschool. As a non-profit nature center, Earthplace relies on the continuing support of our families.

Non-Refundable Registration Fee & Contract Deposit
A non-refundable registration fee of $250 is collected at the time of registration on CampDocs.

Late payment fee
If the tuition is not paid by the date indicated on the bill or during the two week grace period, a $50 late fee will be added.

Payment plans
Please contact the preschool director if you would like to arrange a payment plan.

Bounced checks
If the bank charges us a fee, we pass the fee along to you.

Tuition refunds
Withdrawal of student: If a child is withdrawn from school before the end of the school year, a prorated refund of the tuition is given only when another child takes the withdrawn child’s spot. When the withdrawal is for medical reasons, or when a child leaves to attend a special services preschool, a pro-rated refund will be given even if the spot has not been filled.

Negotiating Differences
If we do find that there are routines, practices, or values that differ from family routines, practices, or values, we will work with the family to find a common ground and attempt a resolution. It is our intention to be respectful of all of our families’ practices, values, and cultures. For this reason we do not celebrate holidays, but do learn about those that our families celebrate. Different views of toilet training and eating or drinking habits could also be areas that might need to be discussed. We will always be guided by what is developmentally appropriate and what is a part of our ethical standards when attempting to resolve these differences.

Health & Wellness

Outdoor play safety
Children have a daily opportunity for outdoor play when weather, air quality, or environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk.

Based on the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the American Public Health Association as printed in the book Caring for Children: the National...
Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs, weather poses a significant health risk at 15°F or below, including wind chill factor, and at a heat index at or above 90°F. Therefore, as long as the temperature falls within those parameters, and in the winter months, the ground is not dangerously icy, our students play outdoors. We are able to get up to date weather information from weather underground and weathergov that will inform us of the current wind chill factor and weather conditions.

As previously mentioned in the curriculum area, when outdoor opportunities for large-motor activities are not possible because of the conditions then we are able to set up activities in the classroom.

Toilet training
Although we encourage your children to be toilet trained, this is not a requirement for attendance at Little Wreckers. This is in accordance with our understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We believe that we need to work with children at their level of development in all areas, including toilet training. We expect to help children in the class transition to using the toilet and collaborate with families in terms of the timing.

Illness
Staff members are knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of childhood illnesses, and they are responsible for the initial observation of each child upon arrival and continued observation throughout the day. If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, or if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities, then the child is made comfortable in the teacher's office, where new individuals will not be exposed and she or he is supervised by a teacher.

We will immediately attempt to notify the parent or legal guardian when a child has any sign or symptom that requires exclusion from the program. If the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached within 15 minutes then the authorized emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child.

Some of the symptoms that would indicate to us that a child was contagious or did not feel well enough to stay in school would be: a fever of 100.3 or greater, diarrhea, severe and persistent cough, vomiting, unexplained rash, or a cold that seems to be keeping the child from benefiting from school. Parents are required to both keep children home when they have these symptoms and consult with their healthcare provider. If the healthcare provider does not suspect COVID-19, then an alternative diagnosis must be documented and the child must be cleared in writing before he or she can return to Little Wreckers.

Missing school
Please email your child's teacher when your child will miss school letting us know the reason for your child's absence. We are then able to share information about possible exposures while always maintaining confidentiality.

Exposure to a contagious disease
When your child has been exposed to a contagious disease at school we will send an email to let you know the name of the disease and its signs and symptoms, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at school and that families should implement at home. We will also announce this information at dismissal time.

COVID-19 & Symptoms of illness
If your child becomes sick while at school or exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19 including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, the new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea we will notify the child’s parent or another
authorized adult.

- The child must be picked up within 30 minutes.
- The child must be evaluated by their healthcare provider in person. Telehealth visits will not be accepted.
- If the child is not evaluated by the healthcare provider, then he or she must stay at home for 10 days from symptom onset.
- If the healthcare provider does not suspect COVID-19, then an alternative diagnosis must be documented and shared with Earthplace Preschool in writing.
- If and when an alternative diagnosis to COVID-19 is provided please follow the applicable exclusion policy or consult with our COVID-19 response team.
- The child must be cleared in writing before returning to Earthplace, i.e. no longer infectious.
- Earthplace will contact the Westport/Weston Health District, and we will follow their instructions.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19, or other communicable disease, all parents in the program will be notified and will receive further instructions.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.

If a child becomes sick while at home or exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19 including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, the new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea:

- Earthplace Preschool must be notified immediately via email.
- The child must be evaluated by their healthcare provider in person. Telehealth visits will not be accepted.
- If the child is not evaluated by the healthcare provider, then he or she must stay at home for 10 days from symptom onset.
- If the healthcare provider does not suspect COVID-19, then an alternative diagnosis must be documented and shared with Earthplace Preschool in writing.
- If and when an alternative diagnosis to COVID-19 is provided please follow the applicable exclusion policy or consult with our COVID-19 response team.
- The child must be cleared in writing before returning to Earthplace, i.e. no longer infectious.
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19, or other communicable disease, all parents in the program will be notified and will receive further instructions.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.

If a child is exposed to a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 while at home:

- Earthplace Preschool must be notified immediately via email.
- Our COVID-19 response team will inform you of the mandatory quarantine period.
- Our COVID-19 response team consists of our Nurse Consultant, our Preschool Director, and state and local departments of health.

If there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in the preschool program:

- Earthplace Preschool must be notified immediately via email.
- Determine the date of symptom onset for the child/staff member.
- Our COVID-19 response team will inform the infected person of the mandatory isolation period.
- Determine if the child/staff member attended/worked at the program while symptomatic or during the
two days before symptoms began.

- Identify what days the child/staff member attended/worked during that time.
- Determine who had close contact with the child/staff member at the program during those days.
- Notify anyone who had close contact with the child/staff member at the program during those days.
- **Exclude the children and staff members who are determined to have had close contact with the affected child/staff member for 5 days after the last day they had contact with the affected child/staff member.**
- **If no symptoms emerge, close contacts may be tested for COVID-19 on day 5 and return on day 6. Acceptable testing methods are PCR test, rapid antigen test, at-home rapid antigen test. Documentation of a negative test must be provided in order to return to school.**

In order to reopen the classroom, the following conditions must be met:

- There must be available staff who have tested negative after quarantine.
- Teacher to child ratios must be met. For Infants and Toddlers there must be a 1:4 teacher to child ratio and for Preschoolers there must be a 1:10 teacher to child ratio.
- If reopening conditions are not met, then the classroom will remain closed for 5 additional days or until conditions have been met.

Exclusion & Returning to School

Below, please find our guidelines based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. **All exclusion and return dates are subject to change.**

- **Chicken Pox (Varicella):** Until all sores have dried and crusted (usually six days)
- **Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis):** After three treatments with medication prescribed by a physician for this occurrence and completely asymptomatic for 24 hours. You must provide a note from the health care provider to certify that the child is not infectious.
- **COVID-19:** 14 days
- **Diarrhea:** Until 24 hours have passed with no diarrhea and cleared by a healthcare provider. *Please note that diarrhea is defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics as an illness in which an individual develops more watery and more frequent stools than is typical for that person.*
- **Diphtheria:** Until two negative cultures were collected 24 hours after completion of medication.
- **Difficult or rapid breathing:** Until cleared by a healthcare provider.
- **Fever 100.3 F:** Until fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 72 hours and cleared by a healthcare provider.
- **Fungus or ringworm:** Excluded at the end of the school day. May return when certified by a health care provider that the patient is under adequate treatment and no longer infectious.
- **Hepatitis A:** Until one week after onset of illness, jaundice, or as directed by the health care dept. when passive immunoprophylaxis has been administered to appropriate children and staff.
- **Impetigo:** Until 24 hours after treatment began.
- **Influenza:** Until clinically well and cleared by a health care provider.
- **Measles:** Four days after the rash appears and the child is well.
Meningitis* (all forms): Until certified by a physician as cured and not infectious.

Mumps: Until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)*: From the end of the day until after the first treatment.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough): After five days of appropriate antibiotic therapy.

Poison Ivy, Oak, Sumac: No exclusion.

Poliomyelitis*: Ten days from the onset and certified as not infectious by a physician.

Rash*: Until diagnosed by a physician plus certification that the patient is under adequate treatment or is not infectious.

Rubella (German Measles): Until six days after onset of rash.

Scabies*: Until certified by healthcare provider that adequate treatment has been given to prevent transmission.

Strep Throat or other strep infections: Until 24 hours after initial antibiotic therapy and cessation of fever without fever suppressant medications for 24 hours.

Tuberculosis (active)*: Until the healthcare provider states the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare.

* These illnesses require a doctor’s note in order for your child to come back to school.

Return policy after a hospital stay
If your child has been admitted to the hospital for any reason, we require a doctor’s note which states:

- that the child may return to school
- whether or not there are any restrictions on the child’s activities.

Medical Forms
Connecticut State Law requires that children who attend our school must have had a physical examination by the family doctor within one year. The results of the current medical exam must be completed, state-approved Health Assessment Record Form. We recommend that parents keep a copy of the current, completed medical form at home for their records. As per state licensing regulations, if a current, completed medical form is not in our files on the first day of school; your child CANNOT be permitted to start school. Children must be current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule listed on the State of Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record.

Your child’s medical form may expire during the school year. We will contact you a month in advance so that you will have time to make an appointment for a physical. In accordance with Connecticut State Law you now have a 30-day allowance from the date that it expires. Please help us by scheduling an appointment in advance for the needed physical. When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents/legal guardians must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child may attend school.

Flu vaccine
The Connecticut State Department of Health requires that all children enrolled in childcare programs have a flu shot. The shot needs to be given before December in the school year the child is attending. A record of the shot needs to be on the Health Record or on a separate form.

Religious or medical exemption
If you have a religious or medical exemption from immunizations your child must still have an annual physical indicated on the medical form, and you must fill out a State medical exemption certification statement.
This document states that "Children with medical (religious) exemptions shall be permitted to attend school except in the case of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak in the school. All susceptible students will be excluded from school based on public health officials' determination that the school is a primary site for disease exposure, transmission and spread into the community. Students excluded from school, for this reason, will not be able to return to school until (1) the danger of the outbreak has passed as determined by public health officials, (2) the student becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers, or (3) the student is immunized".

For example, for measles, the complete incubation period is 18 days from the onset of symptoms for the last case in the community. Outbreaks like measles may last for several months.

If after reporting to and consulting with our nurse consultant and the Westport-Weston Health District, it was decided that we did have an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease and that we were a primary site for disease exposure, transmission, and spread into the community, the families whose children were not immunized would be contacted. Under the direction of our nurse consultant and the Westport-Weston Health District, we would exclude the children who had not been immunized for the appropriate length of time.

Snacks for children with allergies and food intolerances
All families will be providing lunch and snacks, please note that children may not bring peanut, sesame, or tree nut products for snack or lunch. All children will wash their hands at the beginning of the school day and before eating their snack or lunch.

Medication

Medications prescribed by a physician will be administered to children by staff trained in medication and Epi-Pen procedures. These may include Benadryl, EpiPens, antibiotics, and asthma drugs such as a bronchodilator via an inhaler or nebulizer.

Medications will only be administered if and when all forms and medications have been received in compliance with the State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health Regulations for Daycares.

Parent responsibility

- **Allergy/Food Intolerance Care Plan**
  For children with food allergies or food intolerances, this form must be signed by the health care provider and the parent. It outlines the signs and symptoms of the allergy or intolerance and the provisions that must be followed at snack and lunch, and outdoors. The form also asks permission from the parent to post information about the child’s allergies and/or food intolerances where those preparing snacks and supervising lunch can view the information.

- **Asthma Action Plan**
  For children with asthma, this form must be filled out by the health care provider to alert the staff to the child’s triggers to help us better plan activities to lessen any asthma attacks.

- **Authorization for the Administration of Medication Form**
  The parent/guardian is responsible for having their health care provider complete the Authorization for Administration of Medication form. The health care provider who fills out this form should be the same
person as the prescriber on the medication’s pharmacy label. The parent authorization (on the same form) must also be completed in its entirety.

- **Emergency Health Care Plan**
  For children with allergies, this form must be completed by a health care provider to indicate the procedure to follow when a child is exposed to an allergen, including the order in which to give the prescribed medications, such as Benadryl and an Epi-Pen. The parent/guardian must also sign and date this form.

- **Individualized Healthcare Plans**
  Each child who has a diagnosed medical or developmental condition that requires individualized care will have an individual plan designed and written by the health care consultant, the preschool director and the child’s parents. The plan needs to be signed by the parent or guardian.

- **Medication Forms**
  The parent/guardian must provide all medications as well as the required forms.

**Prescription medication**
- Must comply with all State of Connecticut regulations;
- Must be in the original child-resistant safety container;
- Label must contain the following: Child’s name, the name of the medication, dosage, directions for the administration of the medication, the prescription number, whether or not it is a controlled drug, the date of the prescription, the expiration date, the prescriber’s name, the pharmacy, the pharmacy’s address and phone number;
- If a medication is soon to expire, the parent is responsible for providing the school with a new medication before the expiration date;
- The parent must provide all equipment necessary for the dispensing of the medication, including spacers, nebulizers, and calibrated dispensing utensils.

**Over-the-counter medication**
- Must be in the original packaging, unopened, with the safety seal intact;
- Must be labeled with the child’s name.

**Staff Responsibility**

**Training**
- The staff is responsible for maintaining certification for the administration of medication for oral, topical, and inhalant medications every three years and for the administration of injectable medications every year.
- The training must be received from a physician, physician’s assistant, advanced practice registered nurse or registered nurse who follows the guidelines set forth by the State of Connecticut Health Department’s regulations.
- The trained staff must receive written approval from the trainer that indicates that she/he has successfully completed the training program to administer medications.
- A staff member trained in medication administration must be on-site whenever a child who might need medication is in attendance.
When medicine is received, the medication certified staff must:

- Fill out the Medication Administration Record;
- Check that all forms are filled out correctly and completely by the health care provider and the parent;
- Verify that the medication matches what is ordered on the authorization, that the medication has not expired, and that the orders for the administration are clearly understood. If there are any questions, the parent should be asked before leaving. If still unclear, the health care provider or pharmacist should be contacted for clarification. No medication should be administered until all forms are completed correctly and until the medication trained staff clearly understands the orders.
- Proper storage of medication: Medication must be stored in the original child-resistant container with the label requirements, as described above, attached. Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet inaccessible to the children. EpiPens must be stored in a dark place where the temperature will not go below 56°F or above 86°F.
- Emergency medications such as epipens will be kept in an UNLOCKED area that is accessible to teachers and AWAY from the reach of children.

Procedure for the administration of medicine and record-keeping:

- Any time an EpiPen is administered 911 will be called.
- Only staff trained in the administration of medications will be allowed to administer the medication and fill out the MAR (Medication Administration Record) after giving the medication.
- All staff may fill out Injury-Illness Forms explaining what happened. This is also signed by the person picking up the child.

Abuse & Neglect

All of our staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our preschool.

Child abuse is defined as a child who has had:

- any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
- any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
- emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child’s psychological growth)
- at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse of neglect)
- injuries which are inconsistent with the explanation given.

Child neglect is defined as a child who has been:

- abandoned
- denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally, for example a child who has not been provided appropriate food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care and supervision.
- allowed to live under circumstances, conditions, or associations injurious to his/her well being (CT GS 46b-120).

As defined in the Connecticut General Statutes, an abused child or youth could be anyone eighteen years of age or younger, who has been inflicted with physical injury or injuries other than by accidental means, has injuries which are at variance with the history given them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment.
such as but not limited to malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment. Teachers are informed of and are required to know the indicators of different forms of abuse and neglect.

**Physical abuse indicators:**
- The child has bruises, broken bones, lacerations, puncture marks, swollen areas, missing hair, bites, or burn marks
- The child has frequent signs of major or minor injuries
- The child has different injuries in various stages of healing
- The parent or child gives odd or impossible explanations for the child’s injuries
- The child is frequently tardy or absent
- The child receives overdue, unsuitable, or no treatment for injuries

**Emotional abuse indicators:**
- The child cannot interact well socially, has very low self-esteem, or is listless, apathetic, or depressed and cannot respond to normal adult behavior.
- The child has a parent who treats the child in unusual or abnormal ways, such as refusing to care for or talk to the child, treating the child as an object, keeping the child from normal social experiences, punishing the child for his/her normal behavior, and/or thinking or feeling in a consistently negative way about the child.

**Sexual abuse indicators:**
- Physical signs: Pain or injury in the mouth or the genital areas, irritated, reddened, or itching genitals, urinary infections, difficulty with urination, and/or unusual orders.
- Behavioral signs: Fear of a person or of certain places, clinging, anxiety, a sudden interest in the genitals of others, unsuitable sexual activity for the child’s age, and a return to infantile behavior.

**Neglect indicators:**
- The child is anxious about his or her survival.
- The child lacks energy or is overactive.
- The child is unable to concentrate or to play.
- The child often seeks attention.
- The child is hungry and/or dirty.
- The child’s clothes are inappropriate for the weather.

**Prevention of abuse and neglect outside of school**
Earthplace has a responsibility to prevent the abuse and neglect of the children enrolled in our school. Teachers are informed of and are required to know signs of suspected abuse.

According to the American Red Cross, teachers may suspect abuse when:
- The child shows sudden behavior changes or erratic behavior.
- The child becomes withdrawn.
- The child is hostile or extremely aggressive.
- The child is suspicious or watchful of others’ actions, as if fearing them.

Given our adherence to a Zero Tolerance Policy with abuse and neglect, it is our plan to ensure that the staff is aware of the signs of abuse or neglect. The staff at Little Wreckers Preschool must take immediate action to help the child whom they suspect is being abused or neglected. As mandated reporters, the director and teachers of Little Wreckers Preschool must report actual or suspected abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of
serious harm of any child to the Department of Children and Families as required by section 17a-101 to section 17a-101e, inclusive of the Connecticut General Statutes.

In the event of suspected abuse and/or neglect staff actions are as follows:

- **Treat injuries.** The teachers treat any immediate injury that is within the scope of their first aid training.
- **Provide clothing.** The teachers provide appropriate clothing for a child who needs it.
- **Increase nutrition at school.** The teachers provide extra snacks or lunches for a child who is hungry.
- **Emotional support of a child.** The teachers provide emotional support within their role as the child’s teacher.
- **Access to community resources.** We as a staff must become familiar with the students’ families and view our role as a support system. We, our Social Services consultant, and community resources could be called in to help give families guidance. The director of the preschool utilizes contacts in the community to set up needed resources for the child and family. These include medical, social service, financial, and nutritional resources.
- **Call 911.** If the teachers witness the physical abuse, or suspect a child’s life is in danger, then 911 is called immediately.
- **Call the Department of Children and Families.** Next, or at the same time, the teacher or the director will call the Child Protection Careline at the Department of Children and Families (DCF), open 24 hours a day, 1-800-842-2288. The reporter’s name is required but may be kept confidential. The call is made within 12 hours of the suspected abuse. The person calling describes the reason for his/her suspicion of abuse and/or neglect and the indicators that have been observed.
- **Reporting abuse.** After the call to DCF, a written report (DCF-136) is sent to the Department of Children and Families at P.O. Box 882, Middletown, CT 06457, within 48 hours of the suspected abuse or neglect. The report is also given to the Director of Earthplace and the Chairman of the Board. All reports to DCF shall be documented and kept in the child’s file at Little Wreckers. A copy of all statements from staff and DCF shall also be kept on file.

This report includes the following

- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of the child and his parents and/or guardians;
- The age and gender of the child;
- Relevant information such as physical or behavioral indicator, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect;
- Exact description of what the reporter has observed;
- The approximate date and time of the injury, abuse, or neglect;
- Any information about previous injuries, maltreatment or neglect to this child that staff knows about;
- A description of the circumstances under which the reporter learned of abuse/neglect;
- The names of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for the abuse/neglect;
- Any information the reporter believes would be helpful;
- Descriptions of the actions taken to treat, provide shelter, or otherwise assist the child;
- Medical attention given to the child if necessary.

**Policy protection of staff as mandated reporters:**
Earthplace will not discharge, discriminate, or retaliate against any employee who, in good faith, files an abuse or neglect report, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Section 17a-101e. The staff also knows they are immune from any liability civil or criminal when making a good faith report.
Prevention of abuse and neglect in school

It is also the responsibility of Little Wreckers Preschool to prevent any abuse or neglect that could happen at our school. In order to prevent abuse and neglect at our school the following are done:

- Review the approved and prohibited disciplinary techniques on a yearly basis;
- Brainstorm to help teachers figure out ways to deal with disruptive behaviors;
- Review the indicators of abuse and neglect on a yearly basis;
- Conduct a thorough check of the references of new staff;
- Orient new staff using the above policy;
- Supervise new teachers on a close and consistent basis;
- Do a background check on all teachers, including fingerprinting;
- Parents and volunteers from organized middle and high school programs are directly supervised by the teaching staff. Little Wreckers Preschool does not utilize other adult volunteers.

Prohibited discipline techniques:

Teachers and caregivers may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child.

- Examples of physical punishment: Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.
- Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection.
- Examples of coercion: Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

In accordance with the *State of Connecticut Department of Health Regulations* the following discipline techniques are prohibited from being used at Little Wreckers:

- **Inappropriate removal**
  - The teachers may not keep a child out of play for more than three minutes in the room or 10 minutes out of the room.
- **Physical restraint**
  - Teachers may not use physical restraint unless the child is in danger of hurting himself or others. The restraint consists of the teacher wrapping his/her arms around the child.
  - The director and staff may not tie or bind children and shall not physically restrain children except for the protection and safety of the child or others, using the least restrictive methods.
- **Abusive or neglectful punishment**
  - Teachers may not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances.

If a teacher, administrator, or parent suspects a staff member of any of the above actions, the following steps, reflecting a Zero Tolerance Policy for abuse and neglect, would be taken:

- Report suspicion to the director of the Preschool, director of Earthplace, and chairman of Earthplace board.
- Call the Child Protection Careline (1-800-842-2288) to report the suspicion of abuse or neglect. Again the call must be made within twelve (12) hours of the suspected abuse.
● Notify the child’s parent or legal guardian responsible for the child’s care that a report has been made. One of the above administrators calls the parent to explain that a report has been made, what the report says, and what further action and investigation will be taken.
● Suspend the staff member with pay until an investigation by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is completed. The staff member is not allowed in the building when the school is in session. The staff member is only allowed in the facility at other times when requested to be there by the Earthplace board.
● Submit a written report within 48 hours of the suspected abuse. Follow the same criteria as for the reporting of an individual who is not a staff member.
● Additionally a call must be placed to the Department of Public Health at 1-800-282-6063 or 1-860-509-8045.
● Convene the Earthplace board to oversee the internal review, which includes:
  1. Interviewing the adults who witnessed and/or reported the abuse or neglect;
  2. Reporting any findings to the DCF;
  3. Recommending either continued employment or termination, based on DCF findings.
● Protect the child during the investigation. The child’s teachers receive advice from our Social Service consultant for working with the child in the classroom.

Family Involvement

**Family-teacher partnership**

Our main goal for students and families is to create a community in which each family, regardless of its family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious and/or cultural backgrounds, gender, abilities, or preferred language is included in the process of early childhood education and meeting the cognitive, social, emotional, health and developmental needs of their child.

As listed in our guiding principles, families are the primary caregivers and educators of their young children. We use this principle to guide us in our relationship with our families here at Little Wreckers. In planning our conferences, activities in the classroom, and family events we also base our decisions on our ethical responsibilities to families as stated in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct which says, “Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that will enhance the child's development.”

Parents are encouraged to regularly contribute information that guides the teachers in making decisions about the child's goals, plans for activities, and services. This communication can take place via email, at parent-teacher conferences, and via phone calls.

**Becoming Comfortable at School**

For many children, preschool is their first big step away from parents and home. Some children need to separate by initially developing a relationship with the teacher. Others may need to find other children or materials that they are comfortable playing with before the parent leaves. Then there are those children who will really not get started until their parents have left. We work with all of the different separating styles. Saying goodbye once is a good technique for a parent. This communicates to the children that you trust the teachers to take good care of them. These are your child’s first steps towards becoming an independent, happy individual. We will collaborate with each family to make this a successful and positive experience.
Home visits for all classes  
Home visits are suspended during the current state of emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Family Orientation 2021  
Our teachers will offer a “getting to know you” activity for their students and their families. This orientation will be held outdoors and will be an opportunity to meet the teachers and the other families in your child’s class.

First day of school  
The first day of school can be exciting for some and troubling for others. We expect children to respond to the first day of school differently. We ask families to reassure their children by letting them know that you will be back to pick them up soon. Children are very perceptive and can sense your emotions. It is best to remain calm and friendly but authentic. If you feel nervous, say that you are nervous. If you are excited, say that you are excited. It is important to know that when you label and express your emotions, you are modeling helpful behaviors for your child.

Parent-teacher conferences  
We have two parent conferences during the year, one each in the fall and one in the spring. A parent may request a third conference if he or she has any additional concerns during the school year. At the first conference, we like to hear about the child so that we have a wider frame of reference for making his/her experience at Little Wreckers a positive one. The teacher will ask about things that are important to the family in order to help the child grow and learn. The teacher will share a short written form in the fall. We will also discuss the child’s first experiences with the standards-based assessments using the Teaching Strategies Gold Child Profile Form. In the spring, we further discuss the child’s individual progress, strengths, and areas of need.

Parent volunteers  
We encourage parents to participate in a variety of ways. Teachers design different ways to involve parents in the classrooms; for example, parents may be invited to read to the children or to come to help in the classroom. Teachers or room parents contact parents to volunteer for classroom events. We have also started using online sign-up for volunteering in order to make sure that everyone is able to sign up for classroom activities.

Parent workshops  
We plan workshops that are of interest to our parents, often utilizing our early childhood consultant to conduct them. Past themes have been Building Self-Esteem, Transitioning to Kindergarten, and Setting Limits. We have also co-sponsored speakers with other schools in the area.

Communication Policy

Communication structure  
Your child’s Lead Teacher is the primary point of contact for all cognitive, social, emotional, health and developmental concerns. Assistant Teachers are able to speak to you about classroom activities, but we ask you to address all concerns with the Lead Teacher. If you would like to converse with or share a concern with your child’s Lead Teacher, please send an email, and the lead teacher will get back to you within 24 hours to schedule an appointment. To best meet your child’s needs, we encourage families to raise concerns and work collaboratively to find mutually satisfying solutions that the staff can incorporate into classroom practice.
Grievances & suggestions
If you have a concern related to your child in the classroom setting, please speak with the lead teacher. If this approach is not satisfactory, then please contact preschool director Amee Borys. We find that the solutions to issues can be positively resolved by working together. When speaking with the lead teacher and the director has not worked, please contact the executive director of Earthplace. If the problem is not resolved, you may contact the CT Office of Early Childhood. In cases of abuse, neglect, or life-threatening situations, please contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-842-2288.

Confidentiality of child file
At Little Wreckers Preschool we make sure that information about your child and his/her progress is kept confidential. Our child files are locked and can be opened only by the lead teacher. Teachers and parents can be given access to the files by the preceding staff. The child file contains the Child Record Form; the Medical, Illness, and Injury reports; and plans of action. Information about who can look at the Child File is on the form parents fill out before school begins. Parents and those who have been designated as legally responsible for the care and well-being of the child may have immediate access to the file.

Announcements each day
Our teachers will be able to share daily announcements using a variety of platforms.
- Poster outside classroom door highlighting the days activities
- The preschool teachers will use the Creative Curriculum Cloud to communicate with families

CampDocs
CampDocs is our online portal for program registrations and paperwork, including general and emergency contact information; health history and assessment records; and more. Please make sure your child’s account is accurate, up to date and complete at all times.

School Calendar
You can find the 2021-2022 school calendar on our website.

Parent resources
The Little Wreckers Preschool teachers, consultants, and administrators are happy to help to locate, contact and use relevant community resources to support the needs and interests of the children and families at Little Wreckers Preschool.

Weekly planning forms
The preschool teachers will share their weekly plans with families using the Creative Curriculum Cloud.

Sharing information with family and others
Program staff provides support and information to family members who have been designated as legally responsible for the care and well-being of the child as indicated on the Student Record Form in your CampDoc account.

Before sharing information about a child with other providers, agencies, or programs or allowing the child to be observed, teachers obtain written consent from the family.

Strategies for negotiating differences
If we do find that there are routines, practices, or values that differ from family routines, practices, or values, we will work with the family to find a common ground and attempt a resolution. It is our intention to be respectful of all of our families’ practices, values, and cultures. This is why we do not celebrate holidays but do learn
about those that our families celebrate. Different views of toilet training, or of eating or drinking habits, could also be areas that might need to be discussed. We will always be guided by what is developmentally appropriate and what is a part of our ethical standards when attempting to resolve these differences.

Translator
The school will contact a translator to help communicate about a child’s progress or any other information such as the Parent Handbook, that the parent wishes to be explained in their language. This will be done with the help of the International Institute of Connecticut at 203-336-0141. 670 Clinton Avenue, Bridgeport, 06605, iiconn@aol.com. In addition, we can use the website freetranslation.com to instantly translate a conversation, a flyer, or a letter.

Website
The Little Wreckers Preschool website contains information about us, our educational philosophy, our teaching staff and our support staff.

Special Needs
When the school and/or the family of a child has concerns that a child needs special attention for developmental or other reasons, a series of steps in which the family and the school work together are followed. Sometimes the family brings their concern to us before school begins or during the first fall conference. At other times it is the teacher who realizes during the assessment process that is linked with our curriculum that a child may need special resource attention. We share this information with the family and then work toward getting the help that together we think is necessary.

The preschool staff helps the family to identify and contact the necessary resources in the community. This could include further screening and assessment and contact with public and private special education programs. This is handled in a sensitive, supportive, confidential manner. Documentation will be provided with an explanation for the concern, and suggested next steps with information for resources will be included. Teachers meet with and work with whomever the parent selects to guide them in working with their child. This could include the public school system or private agencies. If an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed through the public school system, the teachers will work with the specialists to provide the plan in the classroom.

Lunch & Snacks
We ask that parents please provide a daily lunch and snacks for their child. Because we sponsor a lunch program, the State of Connecticut has asked us to recommend a nutritious lunch for your children. We want to make Little Wreckers a happy, successful experience for your child. We have found that there are a few guidelines that help with this process.

- Please use a soft-sided insulated lunch box with an ice pack. An ice pack is a State Regulation that must be adhered to. Please do not send a plastic or paper bag.
- Please remember to pack all food items in ready-to-eat condition (for example an orange that is peeled and divided into sections, or meat that is cut into bite sized pieces)
- Please send all necessary utensils and napkins with your child’s lunch each day
• If your child prefers certain foods hot or warm, please prepare it and put in an insulated thermos. We
are not equipped to heat up everyone’s food. Here is a [great thermos that keeps food warm for up to 12
hours](#).
• Single-serving, ready to eat, child appropriate portions in easy to open containers will give your child
the opportunity to develop confidence through self-sufficiency

**Foods not permitted at school**

Peanuts, peanut butter, peanut products, and also no tree nut products such as Nutella, other hazelnut
products, and almond butter. **Sunflower butter and soy butter are fine. If you send in either of these please
label them.**

The following foods are either not developmentally appropriate for children to handle in a group situation
and/or can pose a choking hazard. This is based on the recommendation of the American Academy of
Pediatrics and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. **Please no** Candy, Carrots/Baby
Carrots (unless sliced thinly lengthwise), Grapes (unless cut in half), Hard Pretzels, Hot Dogs (unless cut
lengthwise or in semi-circles), Large pieces of meat (needs to be cut into bite-sized pieces), Nuts, Raw Peas,
Popcorn, Squeezable Yogurt.

We do not use “sippy” cups, as we have found that school is a safe place for children to transition to using small
cups. Many local speech therapists have advised us to promote using cups at school.

**Suggested Foods**

Half of a sandwich, apples or oranges cut into sections, applesauce cups with a spoon, bananas, cheese,
crackers in a baggy (a few works better than a whole bag of crackers), cold cuts-rolled, on a sandwich,
Meat-cut into bite sized pieces according to your child’s chewing and swallowing capability, dry cereal, yogurt
in a cup with a spoon, soy butter, sunflower butter, veggies (carrots sliced thinly lengthwise), cookies (one or
two, not a bag full), juice boxes, small drinkable yogurts with a straw.

**Clothing**

Our best days are the days when our clothes are the dirtiest!

**Change of clothes**

We require a complete change of clothing to be left in school. Please include socks. Place in a clear ziplock
type plastic bag clearly labeled with your child’s name. If your child is still in diapers or pull-ups, please provide
extras along with wipes. Please let your child’s teachers know if your child is in transition from diapers to
pull-ups or to underpants.

**Play clothes**

We will be working with paint and other messy materials. Even with smocks (which we provide) children still
get paint and glue on them. Please send children in clothing that is appropriate for active play and learning.

**Footwear**

**STURDY SHOES** or **SNEAKERS WITH SOCKS** are the most appropriate footwear for preschool. Our playground
is lined with wood chips, which makes it uncomfortable to play in sandals. Because the children are active on
the playground running, jumping, and climbing, we ask that children not come to school in crocs, sandals,
clogs, jellies, cowboy or cowgirl boots, platform shoes, or water shoes. We want them to feel free to run,
jump, and play in a safe manner.
Outdoor and weather appropriate play clothes
Since we try to get outdoors whenever we can in ALL kinds of weather (rain, snow, and cold weather 16º and above), play clothes are the order of the day and any clothing that the children can handle on their own promotes independence and a sense of accomplishment. We ask that children always have weather appropriate clothing depending on the day’s weather. For rainy days, we ask that you send in your child with a raincoat with hood and rain boots, (pack socks and sneakers for indoor play). In the winter we ask that families send appropriate clothing for outdoor play, including snow pants, snow boots, warm winter jacket, hat, and mittens (waterproof mittens when there is snow). Please label all of your child’s clothing. The children do not always recognize their hats, mittens, jackets, boots, etc. when the seasons have just changed. We prefer that children wear mittens because they are easier for them to manage than gloves. And please remember, bring seasonal clothing in a canvas, mesh, or vinyl bag. We do not think that it is safe to have plastic bags in the classroom.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays
We ask that parents talk with the child’s teacher before sending in a birthday snack. We can then communicate with the parents of those children who have food allergies or food intolerances, so that they can bring a similar snack for their child that they know is safe to eat. The children are given the special birthday snack at their normal morning snack time.

Birthday snacks - healthy and safe choices
In accordance with our food policy we encourage all families to pick healthy alternatives to traditional large cupcakes. For example, small muffins and fruit with yogurt are favorite birthday snacks.

To create a safe environment for children with food allergies, we ask that you NOT send birthday snacks and/or holiday party snacks made with items not on our snack list. Items we do not include in snack are: Peanut butter, nuts, candy, popcorn, carrots or “baby” carrots (unless cut in thin strips lengthwise), hot dogs (unless cut lengthwise or in semi-circles), grapes (unless cut in half), raw peas, and hard pretzels.

Birthdays at school - donate a book!
Instead of bringing in goodie bags we ask that families choose a book from our Book Wish List to donate to the class. We also invite families to come in to read the book to the class.

Holidays
Holiday celebrations are limited to food and crafts. We do not allow children to dress in costumes on Halloween.

Toys from Home
We ask that children leave toys at home. In a group environment the introduction of children’s own toys can cause complications with the process of learning to share. This is a major developmental goal for preschoolers, and they are able to master it more successfully using the items at school.
This does not include “loveys” such as special blankets or stuffed animals that children use to help them transition to new environments. These are always welcome at school, however we do limit it to one and it must be small, washable, and it is recommended that it stays in your child’s nap bag at school.

Drop-Off and Pickup

Parents are required to wear a mask or approved face covering and maintain physical distance from one another during drop-off and pickup times.

- When dropping off or picking up your child, we ask that you do so at the outside classroom door from the playground. Parents are asked not to enter the classroom at drop-off or pickup because we foster independence, responsibility for their own belongings, and three step instructions for their routines in the morning and afternoon as preparation for kindergarten and have found that it works best when parents aren’t in the classroom.
- After parking your car in one of the designated parking spots on the North side of the building, please walk down the ramp to door number 8, cross the hallway and go out to the playground through door C17 (directly across from door 8 you entered in) and to the classroom door. If for some reason any of the doors happen to be locked, please call the classroom at 203-341-1344.
- When parking please fully turn off your vehicle. Westport and Staples High School is an idle-free zone.
- Anyone who comes to our school to pick up a child, including the child’s mother, father, grandparents, other relatives, babysitter, nanny, or family friend MUST be listed on the Student Record Form or the Authorization Release Form and MUST have their photo identification with them. If we have not met this person before we will check the information to verify that it is consistent with the information that you gave us authorizing someone other than yourself to pick up your child.
- Drop-off and pickup are from outside, so please be prepared to deal with the elements for that day.
- Please be prepared for pickup to take an average of 5 to 10 minutes and plan accordingly. We foster independence and responsibility for their own belongings as preparation for kindergarten, so it may take a few minutes for children to gather their belongings from their cubby and put on their jackets and backpacks.
- We will not be accepting phone calls ahead of picking up your child to get them ready. Please see the above bullet.
- If you need to pick up your child early, please inform the teacher at drop off in the morning so we can have them ready for you.
- If your plans change for any reason during the school day and you need to pick up your child early, please either email us at lwp@earthplace.org or call the classroom at 203-341-1344

Late Fee Policy

- All children attending Little Wreckers Preschool must be picked up by 4:30 p.m. On staff development days all children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m.
- For any child not picked up by 4:30 p.m. (or by 5:30 p.m. on staff development days), a late fee will be charged as follows:
  - Pick-up within the first 15 minutes incurs a $25 late fee, each 15 minutes thereafter (or portion thereof) incurs an additional $25 late fee. Three or more late pick-ups will result in a $50 late fee in addition to the fees described above as well as possible dismissal from the program.
These procedures are for the safety of the children and for a smooth transition at drop-off and pickup. Please remember that traffic safety is a priority on school grounds. Traffic signs and speed limits into and out of the school parking lot must be observed (10 mph) at all times.

**Dismissal Forms**

**Emergency Authorization Release Information**

This information is required by the State of Connecticut and is now a part of the Student Record Form that is filled out when you enroll your child at Little Wreckers. At least one local contact name must be listed on the emergency portion of the form. These are people we could call if a child became ill, and we were unable to contact the families.

Some children may be picked up regularly by other adults. Please include these names on the portion of the Student Record Form that is the emergency authorization pick-up portion. We ask that families introduce us to nannies or grandparents who will be picking up on a regular basis. If any of the authorized people should change during the school year, we ask that families inform us in writing on a new form that your classroom will be available.

**Updating the emergency authorization release information**

If you want your child to go home with a classmate’s parent, or anyone other than the people on your original emergency form, we need authorization in writing. Please fill out the Authorized Release Form (also available in the classroom from the teachers). It must be signed by a parent in ink, dated, and should specify who is going to pick up your child.

These authorization forms may be used to designate someone to pick up your child on a specific day or as a change or addition to the original form. Please bring the form to the lead teacher. Here we make a copy of the form if it is a permanent change.

We then add this to the child’s permanent file and we put a copy in the class notebook.

If we do not know the person who is picking up your child, we will ask to see his or her photo identification (driver’s license).

**Parents out of town**

Also, we ask that parents let the teachers know in advance when your child will be in the care of another adult, should both parents be going out of town or out of the country. We will need a note that explains who you have designated to be your child’s caretaker. Please refer to the COVID-19 Appendix for details about the governor’s Executive Order Regarding Travel on page 48 of this document.

**Child not picked up at closing time**

When a child is not picked up as planned, two staff members who are 18 years or older, will wait with the child on the school premises. First we call all of the parents’ home, work and cell phone numbers. If we are not able to reach a parent to clarify the situation, we then begin calling the emergency authorization numbers that are listed in the child’s file. The parents have given these individuals permission to make decisions as to the health and welfare of their child and to transport their child. If we are unable to contact one of these individuals to pick up the child, we would retry all of the parents’ phone numbers. If we are unable to reach a parent or an authorized emergency person one hour after the scheduled pick-up time, we call the Westport Police Department and follow their instructions.
If an adult who arrives to pick up a child appears to be impaired or intoxicated, we will refuse to release the child to the impaired or intoxicated adult. We will contact the emergency authorization numbers that are listed in the child’s file. If we are unable to reach a parent or an authorized emergency person, we will call the Westport Police Department and follow their instructions.

Building Security & Safety

Shelter-In-Place or Lockdown Drills:
In the classroom, we practice Shelter-In-Place or lockdown drills. We explain to children that when there is an unsafe situation in the building, we have to leave the building to be safe. When there is an unsafe situation outside the building, we have to stay in the building to be safe.

Fire Drills

We practice our evacuation procedures on a monthly basis in accordance with the Staples High School administration. We are given a heads up on the day and approximate time the alarm will sound so we can explain to the children beforehand. The children stay together in their designated spot outside of the building and wait until the all-clear is given. We have found that practicing this helps the children better be able to respond in a quick and more comfortable manner.

School Closure Due to Inclement Weather or Hazardous Conditions

In the event of any closure of Little Wreckers/Staples High School or any interruption or suspension, temporary or permanent, of classes resulting from causes beyond our reasonable control, including, without limitation, acts of God, fire, power outage, pandemic, epidemic, government action, war, threats or acts of terrorism and insurrection, Earthplace shall not be liable for our inability to provide services.

If inclement weather or hazardous conditions make it necessary for us to cancel, delay, or close school early, we will post an announcement on our website, email parents/guardians, and put an announcement on Channel 12. Any decision to do so is made with the safety of all in mind.

However, if the entire preschool is ordered to close for a period of time lasting longer than two weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other hazardous conditions beyond our reasonable control, a prorated refund of 50% of the unused portion of your tuition will be offered.

COVID-19

The Earthplace Preschool has been an integral part of Earthplace, Inc., our parent organization since 1967. The Director of Early Childhood Education is a member of the Earthplace, Inc. Senior Leadership Team. (SLT) The members of the SLT along with input from members of the Board of Trustees, the Earthplace Preschool Staff, and Preschool Families, have worked diligently to develop our plan to operate safely during this pandemic.
Continued cooperation is vital to our success. We are all in this together.

COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies at Earthplace Preschool:

Cohorting
● Students will not interact with other groups of children indoors or outdoors.
● Each group has an assigned bathroom, and bathrooms will be sanitized in between each use.
● Teachers and staff must wear a face covering while indoors and may remove their face covering while outside regardless of vaccination status.
● Children age 3 and older must wear a face covering while indoors (Chickadees are excluded).
● Earthplace classroom will maximize their time outdoors during the school day

Outdoor Time
Within our 62 acres, we have identified nine Nature Zones for play and exploration in addition to the fenced playground areas. Each group will be assigned daily areas and movements. They include:
1. Goldenrod Meadow, climbing trees and Frog Hollow Pond
2. Stoney Brook from the Wolf Trail balance beam, downstream to the platform bench
3. Big Rock Junction, Discovery Trail and Amphitheater
5. The Bear statue Field for lawn games and running around
6. The Parkour Playground and Pine grove for arts and crafts
7. The Newman-Woodward trails and Jurassic Junction
8. The Wadsworth trail, vernal pond and Arboretum
9. Birds of Prey Exhibit

Indoor Time:
Every group will have a dedicated homebase classroom with an outside entrance. A newly installed ventilation and air filtration system will run at all times to promote airflow and dilute any sources of the virus in the building.

Social Distancing and Mask-Wearing
Appropriate social distancing strategies shall be implemented. Social distancing is required and will take many forms including wearing masks, reduced group sizes, staggered drop-off and pick-up times to ensure groups of students remain isolated from one another indoors and out.
● Teachers and staff must wear a face covering while indoors and may remove their face covering while outside regardless of vaccination status.

Vaccination
● On or before September 27, 2021, school boards and child care facilities shall require that any worker (1) is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, (2) has received the first dose and has either received a second dose or has an appointment for the second dose in a two-dose series vaccination, such as Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or has received a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine, (3) is exempt from this requirement because a physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse determined that the administration of COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be
detrimental to the covered worker’s health. See Gov. Lamont’s Executive Order No. 13D

- Children age 3 and older must wear a face covering while indoors (Chickadees are excluded).

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection Precautions
Earthplace, a licensed and accredited preschool and summer camp program, is held to the highest standards of safety and cleanliness for all classrooms and public spaces. Our program spaces are sanitized, and disinfected daily in accordance with the state Office of Early Childhood (OEC), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines.

Enhanced Health and Wellness Policy
If someone becomes sick or exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19 including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea while at Earthplace Preschool:

- The child must be picked up within 30 minutes
- The child must be evaluated by their healthcare provider in person. Telehealth visits will not be accepted.
- If the child is not evaluated by the healthcare provider, then he or she must stay at home for 10 days from symptom onset.
- If the healthcare provider does not suspect COVID-19, then an alternative diagnosis must be documented and shared with Earthplace Preschool in writing.
- If and when an alternative diagnosis to COVID-19 is provided please follow the applicable exclusion policy or consult with our COVID-19 response team.
- The child must be cleared in writing before returning to Earthplace, i.e. no longer infectious.
- Earthplace will contact the Westport/Weston Health District, and we will follow their instructions
- If there is a positive case of COVID-19, or other communicable disease, all parents in the program will be notified and will receive further instructions
- Confidentiality will be maintained

Travel Policy
Connecticut residents and travelers to Connecticut should follow travel-related guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH). Mandates and requirements are not currently in place in Connecticut. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all individuals delay travel until they are fully vaccinated because travel increases the chance of getting and spreading COVID-19.

- Preschool Students who are unvaccinated and who travel out of CT for a period of time greater than 24 hours must present written documentation of a negative COVID-19 test in order to return to school after traveling. Acceptable testing methods are PCR test, rapid antigen test, at-home rapid antigen test. Documentation of a negative test must be provided in order to return to school.
COVID-19 Policy FAQs

Updated 01/31/2022
Policies are subject to change without notice.

Will the Earthplace building be open to the public during the 2021-2022 school year?

As of Wednesday, January 5, 2022, the Earthplace building will be closed to the public on weekdays. This is due to the recent surge in positive COVID-19 cases.

We ask parents to drop-off and pick-up at your designated outdoor location. Please wear your mask at drop-off and pick-up. Please refrain from entering the building to drop-off or pick-up your child.

What is the mandatory quarantine period after exposure to COVID-19 outside of school?

If notified of a close contact with a COVID-19 case outside of school, please quarantine for 5 days after the last day of contact with the affected individual. If no symptoms emerge, close contacts must be tested for COVID-19 on day 5 and can return on day 6. Acceptable testing methods are PCR test, rapid antigen test, at-home rapid antigen test. Documentation of a negative test must be provided in order to return to school.

What is the rationale for this decision?

Recent data show that, within five days of exposure to a positive case, most people will begin to exhibit symptoms or will test positive if they are infected with COVID-19.

What is the mandatory quarantine/classroom closure period after exposure to COVID-19 inside the school?

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and the class is determined to have been in close contact with the individual, the classroom will be closed for a minimum of 5 days from the last date of contact with the positive case.

If no symptoms emerge, close contacts must be tested for COVID-19 on day 5 and return on day 6. Acceptable testing methods are PCR test, rapid antigen test, at-home rapid antigen test. Documentation of a negative test must be provided in order to return to school.

In order to reopen the classroom, the following conditions must be met:

- There must be available staff who have tested negative after quarantine.
- Teacher to child ratios must be met. For Infants and Toddlers there must be a 1:4 teacher to child ratio and for Preschoolers there must be a 1:10 teacher to child ratio.
- If reopening conditions are not met, then the classroom will remain closed for 5 additional days or until conditions have been met.

What is the mandatory isolation period following infection with COVID-19?
For a person who has a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, the mandatory isolation period after infection will be 10 days. The start and end date of the mandatory isolation period will be determined by the Earthplace Preschool COVID-19 response team. Typically, the start date of the isolation period is the test date or the first day the individual was infectious.

**What is the rationale for this decision?**

The majority of the healthcare professionals, parents, and teachers we consulted prefer the 10 day isolation period after COVID-19 infection to ensure that an individual has had time to recover fully and return to normal function.

The CDC guidance states that:
- People with COVID-19 should isolate for 5 days and if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving, follow that by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others to minimize the risk of infecting people they encounter.

This statement assumes that we all have the same definition of asymptomatic and that all people who have been infected can wear a mask at all times while around other people. Our students are unmasked indoors during snack and lunch and while napping. We also serve vulnerable populations such as children with chronic life-threatening illnesses and infants and toddlers who do not wear a mask in school.

**If my child has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days, does he or she still have to quarantine after an exposure in school?**

Yes. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and the class is determined to have been in close contact with the individual, the classroom will be closed for all staff and students for a minimum of 5 days from the last date of contact with the positive case.

**If my child has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days, does he or she still have to test before returning to school?**

No. If the child has a documented positive case of COVID-19, he or she is exempt from testing requirements for 90 days.

**What are other schools doing?**

Only a handful of preschool program directors in our area have decided to adopt the new CDC guidance. The majority of preschools are sticking with a 10-day quarantine after exposure and a 10-day isolation after infection.

**Will tuition be refunded if the closure of a particular classroom in the program or the entire program is deemed to be necessary by the Earthplace Board or a local, state, or federal government agency?**

In the event of the temporary closure of one or more classrooms due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no tuition refunds.

**What is the Travel Policy?**
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all individuals delay travel until they are fully vaccinated because travel increases the chance of getting and spreading COVID-19.

- Preschool Students who are unvaccinated and who travel out of CT for a period of time greater than 24 hours must present written documentation of a negative COVID-19 test in order to return to school after traveling. Acceptable testing methods are PCR test, rapid antigen test, at-home rapid antigen test. Documentation of a negative test must be provided in order to return to school.

**FAQ’s**

**What are the hours of operation?**

Our hours of operation will be from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm and 7:30 am to 5:30 pm on faculty meeting days.

**Will tuition be refunded if the closure of the preschool is deemed to be necessary by the Earthplace Board or a local, state, or federal government agency?**

- In the event of a temporary closure of one or more classrooms lasting 14 days or less due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no tuition refunds.
- If the Little Wreckers Preschool is ordered to close by the Earthplace Board, a federal, state, or local government agency for a duration longer than 14 days due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other hazardous conditions beyond the reasonable control of Earthplace, a prorated refund of 50% of the unused portion of tuition payments will be offered.

**Will there be distance learning in the event of a shut down?**

- In the event that there is a short-term closure of the program lasting two weeks or less, curriculum materials will be provided.
- In the unlikely event that Little Wreckers is ordered to close by the Earthplace Board, a federal, state, or local government agency for a duration longer than 14 days, teachers will conduct distance learning and curriculum materials will be provided.