

Day Nursery Association



*Day Nursery
Association*

Guide to Quality Care

Edition #4 12/2017

WELCOME

Dear Family,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Day Nursery Association family!

We consider it a privilege to serve you and your child. This Guide to Quality Care is a collaborative effort between staff, parents, and the Board of Directors. The purpose of this guide is to answer many of your questions about the policies and procedures of Day Nursery.

This guide is always a work in progress, and any changes will be reflected in future updates or additions. Please feel free to contact the Director for any questions you may have that have not been answered for you in this guide.

Thank you for choosing Day Nursery Association. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching learning environment.

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About Us

History

Day Nursery is a non-profit organization that began in 1909 by the College Club of Scranton, a group of women committed to providing quality care to the children of working mothers. Though much has changed at Day Nursery, our basic goal has never wavered. Our commitment to providing quality care forms the cornerstone of everything we do at Day Nursery.

Day Nursery is governed by a Board of Directors, a group of community-minded volunteers who are interested in investing their time and energies in the future of high-quality early learning programs. The daily operations of the center are overseen by the Administrative team, which is comprised of the Executive Director, the Assistant Director, and the Administrator.

Philosophy

At Day Nursery, we believe that children are unique individuals whose ideas, interests and skills flourish in an environment where play is the primary context for learning, and daily activities are appropriate for each child's individual development.

Mission

The mission of Day Nursery is to provide high quality and affordable childcare to families.

Certification

Day Nursery is licensed by the **Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)** and accredited by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**.

NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for all types of early childhood programs. Day Nursery volunteers to undergo a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invites external professional review to verify compliance with the criteria for high-quality early childhood education programs, and has consistently been found to be in substantial compliance with the criteria.

Day Nursery also holds a **Four Star** ranking with the Pennsylvania Statewide Quality Education Initiative, **Keystone Stars**. Day Nursery is an agency of the **United Way of Lackawanna and Wayne Counties, and the Pennsylvania Association of Child Care Agencies**.

Staff

All Day Nursery teaching staff undergo a rigorous screening and interview process prior to being hired. Applicants take part in a minimum of 2 interviews, including classroom observations and assessments. All applicants must have a current health assessment including a TB screen prior to employment. All applicants must submit background checks through the FBI, a criminal record history, and a child abuse clearance, as well as character references. Additionally, all Day Nursery

teaching staff must maintain current Pediatric CPR and First Aid Certifications. All staff are expected to take a minimum of 24 hours of relevant early childhood education courses annually, to help them enhance their thinking and practice in various areas of child development.

All staff are expected to adhere to the NAEYC Code of Ethics, which provides a core set of values and ideals shared by early childhood educators in their professional relationships with children, families, colleagues and society. The Code of Ethics also offers guidelines for professional behavior when addressing the ethical dilemmas that occur in early childhood care and education.

Hours of Operation

Day Nursery is open 6:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday, 12 months a year.

Holidays

DAY NURSERY is closed for most major holidays:

President's Day

Spring Break (2 days)

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Fall Break (2 days)

Winter Break (December 24 through January 1)

Day Nursery reserves the right to close on other days as necessary. Parents will always be notified at least 2 weeks prior to any non-weather related closures.

Definition of Family

In this handbook, we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Admission & Enrollment

All enrollment forms must be completed and the security deposit needs to be paid prior to your child's first day of attendance. The security deposit is equal to one week's tuition and is refundable when your child is withdrawn, assuming withdrawal procedures are followed.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to five years of age. Enrollment at Day Nursery is an ongoing process and applications are accepted year round. Day Nursery will not permit discrimination based on race, color, culture, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, age, English proficiency, or disability in any aspect of service delivery to eligible beneficiaries, and will apply the principles of equal opportunity in all matters of employment and contractual agreements. Day Nursery does not discriminate based on special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Enrollment Procedures

Families are required to complete at least one pre-visit to the center prior to enrollment. During the visit, families will tour the center, speak with the child's teacher, and spend some time in the classroom. During the classroom visit, families will have the opportunity to view the classroom interaction, ask the teacher any questions they may have and get an overall feel for the program. Families can then place their child on the waiting list. Waiting lists are routinely updated, checked, and revised to assist families in placement of their children. Once an opening in the child's classroom becomes available, the parents will be notified and can begin the enrollment process, as follows:

1. Parents will schedule an intake appointment, during which all necessary paperwork will be completed, with the exception of the Child Health Assessment form, which must be filled out by the child's primary health care provider within 30 days of enrollment.
2. Parents should schedule several small visits to the center with the child so that the child becomes acquainted with the teachers and the other children prior to the start date.
3. Once all of the necessary paperwork is completed and returned to Day Nursery, the information can be stored in the **ProCare Center Management System**. Each parent/guardian, emergency contact and authorized pick-up person will be registered as an authorized user on the touch-screen computer with a fingerprint scan identifier.
4. Families are required to provide all items listed under "Your Child's Cubby" section of this handbook for the child's cubby and for rest time.

If your child has an identified special need, a Special Health Care Plan may need to be completed prior to enrollment.

Inclusion

The Day Nursery Association staff and board members believe that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. Staff members will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in the program based on his or her individual capabilities and needs. We are committed

to developmentally appropriate practice as defined by NAEYC, which means that there is not just one formula that will work for all children. Teachers must adapt their materials, experiences and strategies to meet children's individual needs. Developmentally Appropriate Practice also means that the Day Nursery Association provides a setting where play is recognized as the primary means of learning for all children.

Non-Discrimination

At Day Nursery Association, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Day Nursery Association employees, volunteers, and board members regard all information regarding children, families and staff at the center as confidential. Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential. All Day Nursery staff and volunteers receive training in the Confidentiality Policy and must abide by this strict policy regarding information gained about children, families, and other staff, which extends 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of where or how information was obtained. Within Day Nursery, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with staff members who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for the children. Confidential and sensitive information will not be shared with parents, as Day Nursery strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Parents/guardians may observe children at the center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate and may be curious or concerned about the child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. All staff of Day Nursery are strictly prohibited from discussing any information about another child with visitors.

In keeping with our Confidentiality Policy, Day Nursery staff are strictly prohibited from being employed by any family. Parents are banned from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment.

Legal Custody

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access to their child when in care at Day Nursery, as provided by Pennsylvania law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order such as a Custody Order, Day Nursery must have a certified copy of the most current order. In the absence of a court order on file, both parents shall be afforded equal access to the child as stipulated by law.

Communication & Family Partnership

Communication between families and the center is extremely important. The Day Nursery staff recognizes parents/guardians as the primary caregivers and the first educators of their children. Families are encouraged to spend time at the center as this builds open and honest communication. The goal is to work in partnership with families to achieve continuity of care for children, which is essential to the provision of high-quality childcare. Interaction and communication between children, staff and families is characterized by warmth, responsiveness, positive support and respect for one another. Children are valued as capable and competent learners, collaborators and decision-makers who are actively involved in the learning process.

Day Nursery staff recognize that sharing information is not always easy, since parents and teachers are often busy. Families are invited to share their ideas and insights on their child's development. There are several ways in which to make this a little bit easier for families and staff.

- Telephone:** Families are welcome to telephone at any time during the day. If the child's teacher is busy, a message will gladly be taken.
- Daily Communications:** Daily notes from center staff in the younger classrooms will keep families informed about their child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes from the teacher will be placed into each child's cubby at the end of the day. Notes from the office will be placed in each child's mailbox in the lobby. In the preschool classrooms, daily notes can be given if requested.
- Bulletin Boards:** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards and white boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc. The family resource boards provide a variety of community and early learning resources for families to increase their understanding of learning and development.
- Newsletters:** Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements and information regarding child development, as well as seasonally appropriate topics. The newsletters may be found on Day Nursery's website. If families wish to have a paper copy, they are able to ask for them in the office.
- Weekly Calendars:** Each classroom has a weekly calendar of daily curriculum activities posted in the classroom. The calendars are also found on Day Nursery's website.
- Email/ Text Messaging:** Families are encouraged to provide an email address as well as a cell phone number that is used regularly so that the staff members may communicate with announcements, event invitations, newsletters, and general updates.
- Family Conferences:** Conferences can be scheduled at any time by either the parent/guardian or the teachers to discuss any concerns about a child's development as well as future goals for the child. In addition, families are encouraged to feel free to discuss their child's development with his or her teacher at any time during the school year.

Open Door Policy

The staff members are delighted to have family members participate in the program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the center any time during regular program hours. Day Nursery has an "open door policy." This means that family members have complete access to any

part of the facility, and are welcome to visit or observe in the classroom whenever desired. Non-custodial parents have the same rights of access to the program unless limited by a visitation, court order or custody decree that is on file at the center. All visiting family members and therapeutic staff must check in at the front desk and sign in at the visitor log at the front desk. The Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

The Day Nursery staff members invite family members to share their time and talents. Family participation can improve and enhance learning opportunities, provide support for teaching staff, and help the staff members to get to know the families better. There are numerous ways that families can enrich their child's experience at the center. Some parents volunteer to assist in the classroom or the play yard for a few hours. Others can collect materials for art projects or cooking activities. Special interests such as music, gardening or cooking can be shared as well. Visits to the center or presence on field trips can be a special treat for the children and their friends. Parents and guardians are encouraged to ask their child's teachers for suggestions of ways that they can volunteer.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs or videotapes of the children and families participating in our program may be taken from time to time. They may be displayed in the classroom, or used in brochures, newspapers or other publicity materials. The photos or videos may be used on Day Nursery's website, or other digital social media. The United Way and its representatives often use our center for publicity purposes.

Photography permission forms are signed during enrollment, and parents/guardians may choose not to sign the forms. Photographs may only be taken by authorized persons of Day Nursery to ensure confidentiality.

Daily Learning Experiences

In each of the programs at Day Nursery, activities that meet each child's emotional, social, cognitive and physical needs are provided. Developmentally appropriate and play-based learning experiences are emphasized. Daily learning experiences include a substantial amount of time outdoors. Activities conducted outdoors offer children exposure to new experiences and opportunities for exploration. Additionally, it promotes a healthy, active lifestyle.

Since children vary greatly in their development, prior experiences, abilities and interests, the teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and make decisions about what strategy to use in a particular situation. Many approaches to Early Childhood Education (ECE) can be considered both developmentally appropriate and play-based. The teachers use their creativity and expertise to integrate new and exciting elements of these approaches into their daily activity planning. Using a variety of methods allows the teachers to better meet the needs of each individual child. Parents and guardians are always encouraged to talk with their child's teachers about the daily activities and how they enhance their child's development and learning.

Day Nursery provides a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. A flexible daily routine allows children to advance at their own pace. The staff members strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. The Day Nursery program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. Openness to that which is different and the ability to work and play with others are encouraged.

The staff members at Day Nursery believe that curriculum planning emerges from both an understanding of child development and observations of the children interacting with the materials, other children, and adults. Teachers respond to and support each child's individual development with opportunities for both child-initiated and teacher-planned experiences. Teachers form attachment-based relationships with each child as the foundation for the child's learning and development. There is a strong emphasis on social-emotional growth and development.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally Appropriate Practice means that there is no "one" formula that will work for all children. Therefore, teachers must adapt their materials, experiences and strategies to meet children's individual needs. Developmentally Appropriate Practice also refers to a setting where play is the major activity. Play is a young child's natural learning mechanism. Play helps children understand the world, interact socially, and express and control their emotions. Play allows children to expand their language and symbolic thinking skills. Through play, children can take on new roles, attempt challenging tasks, and practice new skills. Play also gives adults insight into children's developmental level and interests.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice is based on the assumption that children will need to communicate effectively, work well with others, problem-solve, and gather and interpret information in increasingly complex ways. The development of these social-emotional competencies is fostered through modeling and facilitation of positive social exchanges. Children learn to express their feelings, understand the feelings of others, and develop a strong sense of self which creates a foundation for later relationships. Therefore, daily activities promote competence, self-worth, health and resilience, and self-awareness. As a proud member of the Healthy Way To Grow program, Day Nursery incorporates whole-body wellness themes throughout every classroom. We offer daily formal and informal learning opportunities that integrate nutrition and physical activities.

Diversity is honored and celebrated. Children are exposed to multicultural traditions and languages. Day Nursery strives to reflect diversity in its programs and respect the differences of all individuals and families. There are families with varying parenting styles, values, and beliefs. The children have daily opportunities to explore diversity through the curriculum, books, music, learning areas, dramatic play props, etc. The center serves and employs staff, children and families of varying needs, as well as mental and physical capabilities. Through the program, children gain valuable life skills as well as pre-academic competencies that help prepare them for the future.

Curriculum

Day Nursery teachers and staff have chosen **Mother Goose Time** an award-winning, research-supported curriculum to use in our classrooms used in combination with the **Creative Curriculum** philosophy. Through this curricular approach, each child will experience a well-rounded balance of learning activities and numerous opportunities to develop many important skills to be successful in school. Preparing a child for the world involves families, schools and the community. High Reach Learning supports the teaching staff by offering suggested content, ideas and activities that are adjusted to meet age and developmentally appropriate skills for each child, fun and challenging learning activities, information about what each child is learning, and a curriculum that is up-to-date on the latest in Early Childhood Education practices. High Reach Learning curriculum grows with the children. As each child matures and moves to the next age group, he or she develops more advanced skills encompassing the areas of:

- Social / emotional development
- Small and large motor development
- Color, shape and number recognition
- Sequencing, graphing, and prediction
- Character education
- Phonological awareness
- Letter recognition and beginning sounds
- Counting and one-to-one correspondence
- Problem solving

In addition to curriculum, Day Nursery follows the Pennsylvania Infant/Toddler and Pre Kindergarten Early Learning Standards. These standards are research-based according to age and development and form the foundation for curriculum, assessment, instruction and intervention within our program.

Infant Program (6 weeks to 12 months)

Day Nursery's Infant Program provides a warm, welcoming environment where your baby can grow from a bundle of joy to a bundle of curiosity. Your baby's primary caregivers are nurturing child development professionals who are focused on creating experiences and opportunities that invite exploration and support the rapid and important development that is occurring in a child's first year. More than just daycare, at Day Nursery we are focused on keeping your baby happy, engaged, and secure. We personalize care for each infant based on his or her unique schedule, nutritional guidelines, and any other special attention he/she requires. Warm and nurturing interactions with caregivers, days spent in a home-like environment for learning, individualized attention and experiences, and meaningful partnerships with parents are the cornerstones of our curriculum for infants.

Toddler Program (12 to 36 months)

Day Nursery's Toddler Program uses hands-on exploration and social interaction in safe, engaging surroundings to help your one to three year old learn about his or her expanding world. Through the guidance of our early childhood development teachers, toddlers enjoy learning experiences that promote their blossoming independence and social skills, and foster self-confidence.

Toddlers are striving for autonomy and independence. As their motor skills improve, toddlers are on the move, walking, jumping and running. At Day Nursery, the teachers create environments that are safe for toddlers to explore and exert their new-found independence. Language skills are improving rapidly as toddlers expand their vocabulary and comprehension skills. They are also developing their personal care skills, such as drinking from a cup, using silverware and learning to dress themselves. Cognitively, toddlers actively use their imaginations to imitate others and engage in pretend play. Opportunities are created for both individual and small group play under the guidance of teachers.

Preschool Program (3 to 5 years)

In preparation for formal schooling, opportunities are provided for preschoolers to learn and practice the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes. The teachers and staff also help prepare children emotionally and socially for this important transition. Exposure to school age experiences is incorporated into the curriculum. Small group times with similar ages are built into the day to allow children to explore developmentally appropriate skills. Preschoolers are also becoming aware of the cultural rules and standards and developing prosocial behaviors. Mixed-age group time is planned to give children opportunities to interact and engage socially in a variety of ways.

Preschoolers are also becoming more independent in their personal care routines, so they are given time to practice brushing teeth, washing their hands, using the toilet and getting dressed on their own. Field trips to local sites such as the Children's Library, the Scranton Cultural Center and The University Rose Garden are incorporated into the curriculum weekly.

Assessment Procedures

All newly enrolled children will have a developmental screening, Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3), completed by the head teacher within 30 days of enrollment, which will be compared to the results of the ASQ3, which is completed by the family prior to enrollment. This comparison will aid the child's teaching staff in developing individualized learning plans for each child. In addition, teaching staff will complete three developmental assessments on each child yearly. Teaching teams will also compile anecdotal records and child's portfolios to assist teachers in monitoring children's developmental progress. This information is continually being compiled by teachers, and families will be apprised of their children's progress.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3

Watching a child grow and develop is very exciting for a parent. A child's development is important for parents and caregivers to follow but sometimes knowing what is or isn't a concern can be difficult. That is why Day Nursery offers a developmental questionnaire designed to help parents and caregivers follow and understand their child's development.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ3) is a great tool to help parents discover their child's strengths and uncover any potential areas of concern. It is a tested, valid and reliable instrument used by many health care providers to teach parents about typical child development. The questionnaire, which is filled out by the parent or caregiver, assesses the five major areas of development: gross motor, fine motor, communication, problem solving, and social-emotional development. The questionnaire does this by asking six questions about the child's behavior for each of the aforementioned areas of development.

Every child enrolled at Day Nursery will also have an ASQ-3 completed by the head teacher in the classroom, within 30 days of enrollment. After the parent or caregiver has completed the questionnaire and has returned it to Day Nursery, the results of both surveys are then compared to make an accurate assessment of each child. If there are any concerns, a staff member will contact parents/guardians with the results. If after receiving the results, parents/guardians have questions or feel that their child or family needs extra support, a knowledgeable Day Nursery staff member will help them connect to resources or information.

Assessments

The Teaching Strategies GOLD documentation and checkpoint assessment tool offers a meaningful way to evaluate and document children's growth, accomplishments, areas of difficulty, and temperament. It presents a highly reliable, criterion-referenced measure based on specific developmental standards. Teaching Strategies GOLD helps meet Early Head Start and federal assessment requirements, and allows teachers to gather information from multiple perspectives, giving a more comprehensive picture of the child's development. Teaching Strategies GOLD is unique in that it takes a natural, whole-child approach to observation, and helps educate parents so

that they can become more involved in decisions about their children. Teaching Strategies GOLD also supports early intervention for at-risk children.

This tool helps teachers:

- Collect information on the child's work and compare it to developmental guidelines
- Identify what children are learning, what they are beginning to master, and what they still need to work on
- Use their observations and simplify the process of recording and interpreting them
- Inform curriculum and instruction planning

Pennsylvania Early Learning Network

The Early Learning Network (ELN) is Pennsylvania's electronic data system for gathering information on early childhood programs and for studying the development of children in those programs. ELN combines information about the program including the quality and experience of the staff, with information on the children's development over time. This information is then used to build and maintain high quality early childhood programs.

ELN benefits parents, children, and the teachers or therapists by providing:

- Information on each child's development in his/her early childhood program;
- Information for the teacher to improve classroom instruction;
- Ideas on how to prepare children for school; and
- Strategies to help children who have different kinds of learning needs.

Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Programs also benefit from information in ELN. The information in ELN will be used to maintain a high level of quality across all early childhood programs, to provide information on the types of programs that work best for children, and to assure that OCDEL is accountable for state funding that is invested in early childhood programs.

Child Portfolios

As part of our early education program, Day Nursery uses portfolios to document evidence of each child's learning and development. Child portfolios are a collection of observations, evidence of children's work and achievements, and anecdotes of each child's experiences at the center. Child portfolios become a story of each child's life at Day Nursery, showing skills developed over time, telling stories of play situations, highlighting interactions and friendships being made, as well as a record of each child's interests, likes, dislikes, and other events or activities. These portfolios are used to plan experiences and make appropriate provisions to meet and extend upon the individual needs and interests of each child. Child portfolios can be made available to parents for review at any time, and become the property of the family when the child leaves Day Nursery.

Transition Process

The transition process between classrooms at Day Nursery is based on several factors:

- The child's age
- The child's developmental level, based upon assessments

- Family input
- Input from the teaching team

When a child is deemed ready to begin the transition to the new classroom, the procedure is as follows:

- 1)The head teacher from the child's present class and the head teacher from the new class will formulate a transition plan specific to the child. The transition plan will include:
 - The beginning date for the transition process
 - The suggested number of visits, the duration of the visits, and the time of day the visits occur
 - A written plan of what factors would determine the length of the visits
 - A written plan to determine who will be responsible for how the transition plan will be communicated to the family on a daily basis.
- 2)The current head teacher will discuss the transition process with the family.
- 3)The head teacher from the new class will schedule a time to meet with the family to discuss the classroom expectations, curriculum, assessment procedures, as well as any concerns.
- 4)Both head teachers will share relevant information about the child, including, but not limited to:
 - Developmental assessments
 - Special Health/ Nutrition Plans
 - IEP/IFSP as applicable

Family- Teacher Conferences

At Day Nursery, either the family or the teaching staff may request a conference at any time, for any reason. You may request a conference if you need to express any concerns you have regarding your child and his or her development or behavior. Your child's teacher may request a conference for the same reasons, or simply to touch base with you and give you a progress report. You will get the most out of this meeting if you approach it as an opportunity to build a partnership with your child's teacher.

Here are some effective questions to ask at your next family-teacher conference.

Start the conversation by talking about the most important topic: your child.

May I tell you about my child?

No one knows your child better than you do, so it's your job to help your child's teacher learn more. Day Nursery encourages parents to provide your child's teacher with more information on what motivates your child, likes and dislikes, special skills, strengths and weaknesses.

May I tell you about what is going on at home?

Situations like illness, divorce or a new baby may affect your child's school experience, so inform your child's teacher of such circumstances.

How is my child doing socially?

How your child functions socially in the classroom is a topic that should be addressed at a conference, so inquire about your child's peer relations.

How is my child doing emotionally?

It is also important to ask about your child's emotional health at school. For example, is your child generally happy?

In what areas does my child need improvement?

Your child's teacher sees him from a different perspective than you do. Ask the teacher what personal weaknesses your child needs to work on, and listen to the response with an open mind.

What do you think my child is particularly good at?

Find out about the good things, too. Ask about personal strengths that your child has, especially those that will extend beyond school.

Now move onto more school-specific questions.

Is my child performing at his or her developmental level?

At a conference, families should expect to see examples of their child's work. Families should ask how this compares to developmental expectations, but do not try to compare your child to other students. Each child is different and has different strengths and learning abilities.

What do the assessment results really mean?

When it comes to ASQ3's and other assessment results, families should not feel bad about asking 'What does this really mean?' Every child develops at his or her own pace, and it's best not to get too worked up about precisely interpreting every detail.

Does my child need extra help in any areas?

Your child's teacher can tell you if your child is developmentally lacking in a skill. Day Nursery will work with the family to make the appropriate referrals and get your child the assistance that he or she needs.

If your child has identified special needs, ask need-specific questions.

Have you read the IEP?

All students who receive special education or related services must have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in place, which outlines the goals for that child's schooling and how those goals are to be achieved. Families do need to make sure that the child's teaching staff has an up-to-date copy of the IFSP or IEP. Discussing the goals of the IFSP or IEP is an important topic during the conference.

If your child is having problems in school or with the teacher, address them head-on.

May I share a concern?

If you are worried about a situation at school, bring it up with the teacher. Teachers appreciate when families bring an issue to their attention, as long as it's done with respect.

Can you fill me in on this situation?

When your child has complaints about what is going on at school, we advise parents to ask for clarification from the teacher; often your child's side is the only side you have heard.

Can you tell me about your teaching method?

If you have an issue with the teacher's method, ask her to help you understand it. Ask your child's teacher for more information about the teaching method, how it can help your child and what the teacher can and will do if the method does not work with your child.

Do you have any advice?

If you need help with an issue your child is having, ask the teacher for input. Teachers have worked with many children and may have perceptive advice to share. Teachers also have the advantage of observing your child in the classroom setting, with classroom-specific rules, and peer interaction.

Referrals

Day Nursery will aid families in obtaining assistance for a variety of issues including health, developmental concerns and social services using referrals. Please inquire at the office.

What to Bring/ Your Child's Cubby

Please label ALL items brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. Day Nursery is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Each child has a cubby in which to store his or her belongings while at school. The cubby can be personalized with items such as family photos. In addition, each child should have the following items in their cubby AT ALL TIMES:

- 2-3 **seasonally appropriate** changes of clothing
- diapers/pull-ups if necessary
- baby wipes if necessary
- a crib-sized sheet for rest time
- pillow, blanket or soft toy* for rest time
- sneakers, as per DNA's shoe policy
- sun hat from May-October
- winter hat, gloves and snow boots from October-March

While at Day Nursery, children should wear comfortable play clothes, since developmentally appropriate play can be messy. Also, please consider dressing your child in clothing that he or she can easily remove to help promote independent toileting skills. Day Nursery has a very strict SNEAKERS ONLY policy. All children need to wear sneakers both in the classroom as well as outside. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home as well as for notes from your child's teacher. Please remember to replace the clothing in your child's locker as necessary.

***Children under the age of 12 months will never be allowed these items in the crib.**

Preparing for Your Child's First Day

The first day of childcare is an exciting day. Each child is embarking on a journey that will lead him or her on many roads of discovery and learning. As wonderful as the new experience may be, it can also be quite stressful. New situations and change can, at times, be unsettling for everyone. For many children, this may be their first experience of separation from parents or caregivers at home. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of school. We have provided a few suggestions for assisting children during this time. Remember the Day Nursery staff will be available to provide support and assistance, making every child's first days at Day Nursery a positive experience.

Suggestions for Families:

- Prepare your child for the new **experience** by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions directly and honestly.
- Make a few **visits** to the center with your child at different times of the day so that your child gets a feel for the program and begins to recognize a few of the other children and the teachers.

- Convey a **positive** attitude. Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure your child that Day Nursery can be a fun and exciting place.
- Establish a **routine** involving both the night before a school day as well as morning preparation. Rituals and routines will add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations
- Bring something from **home**. This is acceptable and often reassuring in helping with the initial adjustment to school. This item may be treasured blanket or a photo from home.
- Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return.
- Maintain a clear **goodbye routine**. This may include letting your child know that you are leaving in three minutes, a hug and kiss, or a wave from the window. Once you tell your child that you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the goodbye with "just one more kiss" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking out, as this seems to encourage children to become less trusting and makes the next days much harder. Day Nursery staff will be more than happy to assist you with the separation process.

Sign-in & Out Procedures

Parents/Guardians, or those responsible for drop-off and pick-up, must sign in on the **TIME CLOCK** in the lobby by using their individual identification codes or fingerprint scan. The Time Clock will generate a ticket to give to each child's teacher. **Sign In and Out** is crucial for several reasons: for safety and liability purposes, this gives the staff an accurate attendance at any time throughout the day. For financial purposes, it is utilized to track the number of hours each child is in attendance, as well as assisting in the correct completion of forms.

Parents are to accompany their child into the classroom to assist him/her with removing and putting away outer clothing, assist with hand washing, and make sure that he/she is under the care of the teacher before leaving. Please take time to verbally communicate any pertinent information to the teacher.

When picking up children, parents/guardians need to sign out on the TIME CLOCK, give the child's teacher the ticket, check his or her cubby for artwork, dirty clothes, and any updates or notices, and review the Parent Zone Bulletin Board for any relevant information. Once the child has been signed out, parents/guardians are solely responsible for supervising their children at the center. Parents may not allow their child to wander through hallways, classrooms, bathrooms or the playground. Parents should handle all business issues before signing the child out and must exit the building once they have signed the child out of care. Once the child is ready, please monitor and reinforce the policy that children stay with an adult at all times. Children should never run out of the center or gate unaccompanied by an adult. Please make sure to keep the play yard gate closed at all times. Cars are constantly arriving and departing, and we do not want any child to be at risk of a serious accident. Please guide your children safely to your vehicle and **please remember to use proper safety seats and seatbelts.**

MORNING ARRIVAL

Day Nursery asks that you arrive no later than 9:30am. Mornings are an important learning time for children. Teachers carefully prepare a variety of activities to stimulate children's development and expand their interests. Free play offers children a way to ease into the day and to make independent decisions about what and whom to play with. When children arrive later than 9:30, they will be missing out on crucial learning time. Teachers need to focus on the needs of the whole class during learning activities and are often unable to spend individual time with parents and children who are dropped off later than 9:30am.

Day Nursery understands that there will be days when your child has a doctor's or other appointment that means arriving late or leaving early. We strongly urge that you make your appointments for early or late in the day. Speak with your health care provider and request appointments at the end of the day to make your child's day easier.

When children arrive at transitions such as morning clean-up, lunch or nap time, or are taken out and returned in the middle of the day, it often negatively affects the rest of their day. They are aware of what they have missed and often have difficulty with the rest of their day. On days when preschoolers are going to the library or other event that takes them out of the room or the center, we ask that children arrive a little early so that they have time to settle in and transition with the rest of the group. If you arrive after the activity has begun, you must stay in the classroom with your child until the rest of the class returns to the room. *

****In compliance with DHS Regulations, signing in and out is a legal requirement that authorizes us to care for your child for that time period and, when you pick up, acknowledges the transfer of care back to you. Not signing your child in or out not only impedes our ability to account for your child's whereabouts in an emergency but can also result in legal penalties for our center and put our license at risk. Therefore, once your child has been signed in to Day Nursery, he or she must be under the supervision of a Day Nursery staff person always.***

Cell Phone Usage

The times spent in the center dropping off and picking up children are the primary windows of time that the Day Nursery staff members have to communicate with families about their children. The staff members ask that parents and guardians do not use their cell phones while visiting the center to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to their children and other children.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Children will only be released to parents or others who are listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If parents want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up a child, they need to notify the staff in advance. Children will not be released without prior authorization. The person picking up each child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify all pick-up people of this policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from the child's family, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents/guardians, and the contacts listed as

Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with the child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour of not being able to reach anyone on the phone, a call to the local child protective services agency will need to be made.

Right to Refuse Child Release

Day Nursery staff members may refuse to release children if they have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect each child, Day Nursery staff members may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or a call to the police may be made to prevent potential harm to the child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of the child from the program.

Illness Guidelines

Day Nursery's responsibilities for providing group childcare include taking care to limit the spread of illness. While the staff members cannot prevent all illnesses, they can reduce incidences of illness and severity, and families can help by encouraging good health and hygiene habits, as well as keeping children at home when he or she shows signs of possible illness. It is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; sick children may not be brought to the center. The center staff members have the right to refuse a child who appears ill.

Daily Health Check

Upon entering the center each day, Day Nursery staff will make an informal "well child check" of each child. Staff members will assess each child for obvious illness such as drainage from eyes or nose, rash, fever, cough, or general lethargy, which could signal illness. Parents will generally be the first ones to observe signs of illness in their child, and are encouraged to help look out for the welfare of ALL the children by keeping children home at the signs of illness. Parents and guardians are asked to let the staff know of any changes in their child's behavior, eating or sleeping habits. In accordance with PA OCDEL requirements, children cannot be accepted into our center if they exhibit obvious signs or symptoms of illness.

How to Decide When to Keep Your Child At Home

Although everyone tries their best to prevent children from becoming ill, it is not uncommon for children to share illnesses. The center is for well children. Children who are sick have a difficult time functioning because they do not have the energy to cope with other children and the activities of the program, and the staff cannot care for the sick child without interfering with the needs of the other children. The Day Nursery staff members realize that parents do not want to miss work or school, but expect that parents make their children their main priority, and remember that it is important for an ill child to stay home, rest, and get well.

If a child becomes ill during the day, parents/guardians will be contacted and must immediately make arrangements to pick up their child, within an hour. Listed below are the guidelines that Day Nursery uses for the exclusion of ill children. Parents/guardians are asked to follow these guidelines when determining when to keep a child at home. Please note this is not an all-inclusive list, simply guidelines.

- Illness that prevents a child from participating in activities
- Illness that results in greater need for care than staff members can provide
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms; child may return when fever-free for 24 hours
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet; child may return when stool returns to normal
- Vomiting –2 or more times during the previous 24 hours; child may return when he or she has not vomited in 24 hours

- Mouth sores caused by drooling; child may return when his/her physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious
- Persistent abdominal pain; child may return when pain-free
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease; child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless the child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to the center is required.

Sending Children Home for Illness

Families will be contacted by the center staff members to pick up their child when he or she exhibits any of the above signs during the day. The parent will have one hour to pick up the child. In order to protect the health of all of our children, it is appreciated when parents cooperate in picking their child up quickly. When a child is sent home, he or she must remain at home for at least one full day to rest and recover, or until symptoms resolve with or without the assistance of a health care professional. Children must be illness- and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of pain relievers or fever-reducers.

Notice of Communicable Disease

When the center staff learns that a child or staff member has a communicable disease, it is Day Nursery's legal responsibility to notify the Department of Health. The center staff will also notify families about exposure as appropriate.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to inform Day Nursery staff regarding any allergies that children may have, food allergies as well as any environmental allergies such as pollen or dust. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide Day Nursery with documentation from the health care professional regarding the allergy. A list of all children's allergies is posted in each classroom so that all staff members are aware of them. Day Nursery staff is trained to familiarize themselves with potential allergens to avoid the potential risks to children.

Day Nursery is a NUT-FREE center. No nuts of any kind are allowed on the premises.

Special Health Care Plans

If a child's health care professional indicates special health or nutritional needs in any area, a *Special Health Care Plan* will need to be filled out. The development and implementation of a care plan for a child with special health needs will be determined by each child's unique needs in coordination with the child's parents, primary health care professional, medical specialists, Day Nursery staff, and other relevant support personnel. The care plans that Day Nursery currently utilizes are: **Asthma Care Plan, Special Nutrition/Feeding Plan, Seizure Care Plan, and a Special Health Care Plan.** Each form defines the members of the care team, details the strategies for appropriate treatment, identifies necessary treatment, identifies necessary accommodations for the child, and demonstrates team member communication methods, as well as necessary updates and/or revisions.

Injuries

At Day Nursery, it is understood that children commonly experience bumps, bruises and scrapes in an active play environment. Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed both inside and outside the center in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained staff member in the event that a child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). Parents/guardians will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a completely stocked first aid kit meeting the state regulations, as well as the Emergency Contact information for each child. These portable first aid kits are taken on all field trips, walks, and on the playground.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while a staff member from the center will contact the child's parents or designated emergency contact. In the event that a child needs to be transported to a hospital, a Day Nursery staff member will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives. It is extremely important that all Emergency Contact information is kept current so that each child can receive immediate care as necessary.

Medication Administration

Medications can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any prescription medication
- Any over the counter medication
- Any kind of medicated "strips"
- Any kind of medicated lollipop
- Nasal spray
- Cough drops or throat lozenges
- Any lotion, Vaseline, ointment, Chapstick, Neosporin or diaper cream
- Any inhaled substance
- Any "natural" or homeopathic remedy

Day Nursery follows NAEYC procedures regarding ANY medication administration, which is as follows: Staff may only administer both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child ONLY if a parent /guardian provides written instructions from a licensed health care provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that specific child. All medications must have a label with the following:

- the child's first and last name
- the child's date of birth
- the date the prescription was filled or prescribed
- the name of the health care provider who prescribed the medication
- the expiration date of the medication
- the manufacturers label or original prescription label

Day Nursery absolutely will not administer ANY medication unless it adheres to all guidelines. A parent /guardian should not ask for their child to given any medication unless it adheres to these guidelines.

Nutrition

Day Nursery participates in the federally funded **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**, which ensures that all children are served nutritious meals and snacks, as well as milk and 100% fruit juice. A diet with a wide variety of foods that are low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol is stressed. Children receive a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grain bread and pasta. Day Nursery does not serve foods containing artificial sweeteners, and foods containing processed sugars are severely limited. Wise food choices and healthful eating are encouraged. The meals and snacks that Day Nursery serves are influenced by many factors; taste, culture social situation, religious beliefs, ethnic background as well as food sensitivities and allergies. This helps children to get the nourishment and energy that they need to learn and grow. Many studies have shown that there is a critical relationship between nutrition, health, and learning.

Weekly Menu

The weekly menu is posted in the lobby, outside the kitchen, and on the Day Nursery website. Children are served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack, at no charge to the family. All meals are served "family-style", in which children take turns passing food and serving themselves and pouring their own milk. The staff members sit at the table with the children, and eat the same food that the children eat. The staff members model appropriate table manners and mealtime conversation, and encourage children to utilize self-help skills to gain independence. The children will be served the correct portion of food as per CACFP guidelines, and are encouraged to try a small bite of each. Children are never required to eat a food that they don't like, and food is never used as a reward or punishment.

Food Allergies/Religious Restrictions

Children with documented food allergies or religious dietary restrictions must have a Nutrition Plan as well as a CACFP Food Substitution Form on file. Once this plan is on file, staff member will work with families to ensure that all CACFP and USDA guidelines are being met. Parents may offer a substitution or supplementation based upon the CACFP Food Substitution Form. All food and beverages brought from home for a child's personal consumption must be labeled with the child's name and the date to be used, and will be stored according to USDA guidelines.

Food from Home Guidelines

At Day Nursery, we ask that children do not bring ANY outside food or drink into the center. As a proud member of the **Healthy Way to Grow Program**, Day Nursery is committed to promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging an active, healthy lifestyle. Day Nursery serves nutritious meat and meat-alternatives that are minimally processed as well as low in fat and sodium. At least 3/4 of all grains served for meals and snacks are whole grains. Foods that are high in salt, sugar or fat are offered once or less per month. Fruits and vegetables are served as close to their natural state as possible. We encourage families to serve a healthy breakfast at home if your child's arrival time is prior to 8am.

Families are welcome to help celebrate birthdays or other special moments in their child's life with a special meal or treat. To reflect on Day Nursery's health and wellness policies, it is required that the foods that are chosen to be brought to the center be a healthy option, or a non-food treat such as stickers or crayons. Day Nursery can not accept any high-fat, high-sugar or otherwise unhealthy options such as cupcakes, cookies, or cake, and the following guidelines need to be adhered to:

- Day Nursery is a nut-free facility. No products containing nuts may be consumed on the premises.
- All food and beverages brought from home for the children's personal consumption must be labeled with each child's name and date to be used.
- Program staff will supplement food brought from home if necessary to ensure that the meal conforms to USDA and CACFP guidelines.
- Food brought from home will be stored in a manner that conforms to USDA and CACFP guidelines.
- All food brought from home for sharing among children and/or Day Nursery staff members must be either whole fruits or vegetables, or commercially prepared and packaged food with the original manufacturer's label, in the original sealed packaging.

Breast Feeding

We support and encourage the breastfeeding mother's decision to continue to breastfeed her child. In keeping with this philosophy, our program will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere that encourages mothers to initiate and continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school.
- Train staff on the benefits of breastfeeding and on the practices that support a breastfeeding mother.
- Train staff to provide accurate basic breastfeeding information and referrals for breastfeeding support when necessary
- Train staff on how to store, handle and feed breast milk
- Provide a designated space for mothers to breastfeed their children on site (such as a rocking chair)
- Feed infants on demand and always hold them during feedings.

To assist the breastfeeding mother and infant in the transition from home into the childcare setting, Day Nursery staff will:

- Work with parents to develop a process for familiarizing the infant with bottle feedings prior to starting childcare.
- Develop a feeding plan with the parents.
- Ask the mother to bring in her expressed breast milk in an unbreakable container.

Handling and Storage of Breast milk

- All breast milk will be labeled with the infant's full name (first and last name) and the date it was brought to the program.
- Breast milk will be stored in a designated space within the refrigerator and freezer.
- Frozen breast milk will be stored for no more than 2 weeks.
- Storage containers will be rotated so breast milk with the earliest date is used first.
- Frozen breast milk will be thawed in the refrigerator, under running water or in a pan of warm water.

- Frozen breast milk will be stored at 10 degrees Fahrenheit or less.
- Breast milk will not be re-frozen once thawed.
- Staff will wash their hands using proper hand washing technique before handling breast milk
- Breast milk will be warmed under running water or placed in a container of water that is no warmer than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Breast milk will not be microwaved. Microwaving can destroy protective factors present in breast milk and can create hotspots in the milk that can burn the baby's mouth.

Wellness Policies

Hand Washing

Frequent and proper hand washing prevents the spread of many germs. All Day Nursery staff members, as well as visitors to the center are instructed in the proper hand washing techniques, and are required to wash their hands upon arrival, as well as when moving from one classroom to another. All staff members and children are required to wash their hands upon arrival each day, as well as before and after eating and/or handling food, after using the toilet or diapering, as well as any time he or she comes into contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or mucous. All children are required to wash their hands before and after communal water play, and may be excluded from water play if open sores are present. Parents will be asked to wash their hands prior to joining children's activities.

Tooth Brushing

All children enrolled at Day Nursery will have the opportunity to brush their teeth daily. During the enrollment process, you will have given permission for your child to participate in daily tooth brushing, and have indicated if you would like your child to use a fluoride or non-fluoride toothpaste. Daily tooth brushing habits are important to establish at an early age to promote good oral hygiene. Every child has an individually labeled toothbrush for his or her own sole use. All children are supervised during tooth brushing, and may be assisted as necessary to ensure proper brushing technique.

Sun Safety

At Day Nursery, we recognize that too much sunlight may increase a child's risk of getting skin cancer in the future. The first level of sun safety protection is wearing dry clothing of a tightly woven fabric, such as lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and hats with brims, bills or flaps that shield the face and neck from the sun. With parental consent at enrollment, Day Nursery staff will apply sunscreen to children according to the manufacturer's instructions before outdoor play.

Families are strongly encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child prior to arrival at Day Nursery. The sunscreen should be applied liberally at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure between 9 am and 4pm during the months of March through October. Sunscreen may be applied to exposed skin, including, but not limited to, the face, tops of ears, back of neck, bare shoulders, arms and legs, but not to eyelids or areas of skin touched when rubbing the eyes.

Parents will need to provide a labeled bottle of sunscreen of 40 SPF or higher for their child's use during this time. Parents will also need to make sure that their child has a labeled sunhat to be used outdoors. The labeled sunhat may be kept in the child's cubby. Children may wear child-safe sunglasses that block UV radiation to prevent injury to the structures of the eye that lead to age-related cataracts and skin cancer around the eyes. Children will be provided with fresh drinking water while playing outdoors in warm weather.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are always put to sleep on their backs. To reduce to risk of SIDS, cribs will be supplied with a crib sheet only, never with a pillow, soft toys, bumpers or other soft items.

After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Toddlers and preschoolers must get enough sleep to support the rapid physical growth and brain development that is occurring during this phase of life. They learn a tremendous amount of information during the day and must have regular rest periods. Many studies show evidence that classroom naptime supports learning in preschool children by enhancing memories acquired earlier in the day, compared with equivalent intervals spent awake. Helping each child have consistent daytime naps also helps them to sleep better at night.

Children may choose to nap or rest quietly on individual nap mats while soothing music plays. Families will need to provide a crib-sized sheet for the nap mat. They may also supply blankets, pillows and soft toys, if they so choose. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities such as books, puzzles, or other quiet manipulatives. Children may also choose stories to read from the bookshelf to read or have read to them.

Screen Time

At Day Nursery, we follow the recommended guidelines set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics in regards to screen time for children under age 5. Children under the age of 2 years are not exposed to any screen time while at school, and children ages 3-5 may have 15 minutes per week of screen time. Screen time for preschoolers consists of quality approved computer programs or educational software. Preschool teachers may occasionally use an educational video, no more than 15 minutes in length, which aligns with the monthly curriculum.

The following is an excerpt from the AAP guidelines; families may find the information helpful when it comes to thinking about screen time at home, "While the new technologies give children some learning opportunities, there are known drawbacks. Not all technology is good, nor is it all bad. If screen time cuts into time for active play or time socializing with others, this may impact health and emotional growth. The overall goal of the AAP guidelines is to balance between screen time and other critical aspects of life. While electronic media are important in today's world, it is still not essential. We can all survive quite nicely without it, so we need to determine how to fit it into our lives and our children's lives."

"Parents need to monitor how much time is spent in front of a screen, what their children are watching, how they are interacting with each other on social media, and make sure that essentials such as meal times, bed times, school work and active play are included in their child's daily life. The guidelines suggest that we, as parents, are going to have to work harder to make sure our kids get what they need in this electronic universe."

Exercise/Outdoor Play

Physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle and must begin in infancy and extend throughout adulthood. Regular physical activity increases lean body mass, muscle, and bone strength and promotes good physical health. Exercise fosters psychological well-being, can increase self-esteem and capacity for learning, and can help children and adolescents handle stress.

The dramatic rise in pediatric obesity in recent years has increased health care professionals and parents' attention to the importance of physical activity. Along with a balanced and nutritious diet, regular physical activity is essential to preventing pediatric overweight conditions. At Day Nursery, children engage in a multitude of gross motor activities. Outdoor playtime is never withheld for misbehavior.

Outdoor play is essential to children's health and well-being. The time that children spend outdoors every day is just as important to their learning as the time spent in the classroom. Following NAEYC Weather Guidelines (see below), children play outdoors every day, weather permitting. Families must supply the proper weather-appropriate clothing for outdoor play, defined in the "Your Child's Cubby" section of this handbook.

Children who are too sick to go outdoors and/or are not able to participate in all daily activities, which include outdoor activities, should be excluded from care until they are well enough to participate in all daily activities. Getting outdoors daily, even in the winter, helps children develop healthy minds and bodies. Many adults believe children will get sick from playing outside in cold weather. Children are actually more likely to stay healthier if they play outdoors during winter months. Germs are not contained and concentrated outdoors.

Preschool children also take part in **Kidsercise**, a preschool exercise program created by the University of Scranton Occupational Therapy Department, in which OT Majors lead the children in a series of fun exercises during the weekly class. When outdoor play is not feasible for weather-related reasons, the teachers engage the children in gross motor activities within the classroom.

Weather Guidelines for Outdoor Play

At Day Nursery, it is the goal to take the children outside every day, with the exception of rainy days. Weather guidelines are utilized to ensure that there is limited outdoor play during extreme weather.

The following guidelines have been established for healthy outdoor play:

Cold Weather

Temperatures/Wind Chills Between 50 – 30 degrees F..... outdoor play as scheduled.
Temperatures/Wind Chills Between 30-15 degrees F..... 15 to 20 minutes maximum.
Temperatures/Wind Chills 15 degrees F or below.....no outdoor play time.

Hot Weather

Temperature/Heat Index 90 degrees F or higher and/or Code Red Air Quality..... no outdoor playtime.

Families must provide seasonally –appropriate clothing for outdoor play time, so that all children may participate in outdoor play. This includes winter coats, boots, snow pants, hats and gloves in the winter and sunhats in the summer. The labeled clothing may be kept at the center, in the child’s cubby. Except for the winter months when there is snow on the ground, **sneakers** are the only acceptable footwear allowed at Day Nursery for both indoor and outdoor play. In the winter, if there is snow on the ground, children will be allowed boots to travel to and from school, as well as for outdoor play.

Tuition Information

Parents/guardians of a child enrolled at Day Nursery are signing a contract for a certain number of days per week for your child. All parents/guardians are required to sign a **Fee Agreement** prior to enrollment of their child at Day Nursery. All contracted fees are due in their entirety on a WEEKLY basis, regardless of whether the child attends, and regardless of scheduled or unscheduled closings. Tuition includes fees for all meals, snacks and drinks, but does not include fees for field trips, and other extracurricular activities. There is no credit given for vacations, child illness, school holidays, or for closings due to emergencies, inclement weather or acts of God. Tuition is expected to be paid prior to the performance of childcare services. Tuition is due on every Friday by 5:30 pm for the following week.

A security deposit, which represents 1 week's tuition, is due at the time of enrollment. As long as the family follows all **Withdrawal Policies** (see page 27), the security deposit is refunded. Tuition rates change on a yearly basis and for that reason are not published in this handbook. A fee schedule is included in your application packet.

Full Time care is more than 4 hours and 45 minutes and less than 9 hours per day.

Part Time care is less than 4 hours and 45 minutes.

Extended Time is more than 9 hours and 1 minute. A \$5/hour fee will be charged for child care services provided **and/or** contracted for more than 9 hours/day.

An **Early Drop-off Fee** of \$1.00 per minute will be billed to the parents/guardian's account in accordance with the Early Drop-off Policy outlined in the **Contract for Child Care Services/Fee Agreement**. A child is considered early if the child is dropped off 5 minutes or more before the time indicated above. Early Drop-off fees are due within 10 calendar days of lateness.

A **Late Pick up Fee** will be billed to the parents/guardian's account in accordance with the Late Pick-Up Policy outlined in the **Contract for Child Care Services/Fee Agreement**. The Late Pick up Fee is as follows: \$2.00 per minute after the scheduled pick-up time, and \$5.00 per minute if a child is picked up after Day Nursery closes at 5:30pm. A child is considered late if the child is not picked up within 5 minutes of the time indicated by the family on the Contract. Late Pick-up fees are due within 10 calendar days of lateness.

When a child turns 13, 25, or 36 months, the new tuition rate will be assessed at the beginning of the following month.

A **Late Tuition** fee of \$5.00 will be assessed if tuition is not received on or before the Tuition due date and childcare services will be suspended until the tuition and any assessed late fees are paid in full. A **service charge** of \$50.00 will be charged for each check/ACH/ CC payment returned for insufficient funds. If two checks/ACH/CC payments are returned, all subsequent payments must be made in cash, money order, or certified bank funds.

Families who participate in subsidized childcare services are also required to sign a fee agreement, as well as the **CCIS Co-pay Tuition Agreement** agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition in the event that they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies as defined therein.

The **Contract for Child Care Services/Fee Agreement** may be cancelled by Day Nursery Association at any time with or without notice, in its sole discretion. Any unused tuition paid by the parents/guardians will be refunded within 30 days of cancellation. Any security deposit held will first be applied to any unpaid account balance. If there is any remaining security deposit monies, that remaining amount will be refunded to the parents/guardians within 30 days of cancellation. The Security Deposit will be forfeited if Child Care Services are suspended or terminated by Day Nursery Association for failure to pay tuition and/or violation of Parent Handbook Policies.

The **Contract for Child Care Services/Fee Agreement** may be cancelled by the PARENTS/GUARDIANS with two weeks written notice. Written notice of cancellation must be submitted to the Executive Director by parents/guardians. Any unused tuition paid by the parents/guardians will be refunded within 30 days of cancellation. Any security deposit held will first be applied to any unpaid account balance. If there is any remaining security deposit monies, that remaining amount will be refunded to the parents/guardians within 30 days of cancellation. The Security Deposit will be forfeited if the Parents/Guardians fail to give two weeks written notice of cancellation of this contract.

Family Grievance and Dismissal Policy

Day Nursery administration and staff are committed to maintaining an open-door, open-forum approach to problem-solving and conflict resolution. If a family has a concern regarding the behavior of any staff member, the concern should be addressed with the director. If they feel that their concerns have not adequately been addressed, they should present their grievance in writing to the Board of Directors. The Board will respond in writing to the parents and schedule a meeting to address the concerns and attempt a resolution.

Day Nursery reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the center if it is deemed by the director that the relationship between the center, child and family is not mutually beneficial for all parties concerned. The most important factor is assuring that the child is in an environment that best meets his or her needs. A two week written notice with the appropriate referrals will be given to the family should the center exercise the right to terminate care for a child or a family.

In extreme circumstances, the immediate removal of a child or family may be necessary. Reasons may include health and safety issues for the child, center or employees.

Dismissal Policy

Day Nursery reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the center if it is deemed by the director that the relationship between the center, child and family is not mutually beneficial for all parties concerned. Families will be refunded any unused tuition within thirty days of dismissal. Any unused tuition and the security deposit will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within thirty days of withdrawal/dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file; if not paid within thirty days, it will be referred for collection.

The center director will assist the family in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and families are required to leave agency property in a calm and respectful manner. A dismissed child and their family are required to call and request an appointment with the center director if they wish to return to agency property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the director and are not a right of the dismissed child or family.

Reasons for Dismissal (may include, but are not limited to)

- The child or family's needs cannot be met by the center.
- The child appears to be a danger to himself, other children or staff; behavioral issues cannot be resolved through a support process of:
 - Documented concerns
 - Meeting with child's family to develop a behavioral plan
 - Follow through with action plan which may include bringing in an outside specialist
 - Follow-up meeting to discuss child's progress and subsequent actions
 - Continued enrollment or dismissal.

- Not completing and/or returning required enrollment forms promptly
- Failing to notify center of necessary changes on forms, or falsifying information on forms
- Physical or verbal abuse or intimidation of staff or children
- Habitual late pickups or other blatant disregard for center policies.
- Nonpayment or habitual late payment of tuition or fees

Withdrawal Policy

Day Nursery's withdrawal policy states that a two week's written notice should be given to the center prior to your child's last day of attendance. Either the family or the center may terminate enrollment (See "Family Grievance and Dismissal Policy" on the previous page). Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition and deposit will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks and the deposit will not be refunded.

Any unused tuition and the security deposit will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within thirty days of withdrawal/dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file, if not paid within thirty days will be referred for collection.

Parent's Rights

Parents and families of children enrolled at Day Nursery have certain rights, including:

- The right to enter the center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
- The right to review, at the center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints made against the center within the previous three years.
- The right to receive from the center the name, address, and phone number of the local licensing office.
- The right to file a complaint with the local licensing office without fear of discrimination or retaliation against your family.
- The right to request that a parent not be allowed to visit or remove a child from the center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order, including but not limited to, a custody agreement of a protection from abuse (PFA) order.

Day Nursery Association is licensed through the **Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare** (PA DPW), **Office of Child Development and Early Learning** (OCDEL).

339 State Office Building
 100 Lackawanna Ave Scranton Pa
 Telephone (570) 963-4371 or 1(800) 222-2108
 Fax (570) 963-3006

Children's Rights

Day Nursery will ensure that each child enrolled at the center is accorded personal rights including, but not limited to:

- The right to be treated with dignity in his or her personal relationships with staff and other facility persons such as volunteers
- The right to safe, healthful, and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his or her needs
- The right to his or her own personal belongings
- The right to be free from corporal or frightening punishment including, but not limited to: humiliation, infliction of pain, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse
- The right to be free from any other action of a punitive nature including, but not limited to: interference with functions of daily living, including but not limited to: eating, sleeping, toileting, withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning

Guidance

Guidance (discipline) is a complex topic, which everyone defines differently. At Day Nursery, guidance is defined in positive terms, as a structure through which children learn social competence. Guidance is to guide and teach, and to help each child develop his or her internal controls to behave in a socially acceptable and respectful manner.

Each classroom at Day Nursery has developed classroom-specific rules for the children to follow to ensure a positive and caring environment. All staff use positive behavior management techniques to help children understand expectations for behavior, to anticipate possible conflict situations, and to intervene in a timely manner to prevent problems from occurring or escalating. Socially acceptable behavior is taught by providing and modeling an environment that is responsive to the needs of the children. Materials and activities are age-, culturally-, and developmentally appropriate. Adults model respectful behavior and provide positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Clear and consistent limits are set which protect everyone physically and emotionally. Ongoing observations allow teachers to re-direct and reinforce appropriate behavior for a group of children in order to maximize the success of children playing together in learning centers.

Day Nursery staff will never use corporal punishment or frightening methods of control; isolation, humiliation, or the withholding of food or sleep. Emphasis is placed on the teaching of alternative, acceptable behaviors, and giving children situations to practice and establish new, acceptable habits. Day Nursery staff may utilize a "cooling off" time-out as a last resort when a child is in danger of hurting himself or others. This brief period is intended as a time for the child to regain his or her self-control in order to better communicate and listen to the needs of all involved. When necessary, a parent-teacher conference will be requested to employ future strategies for all involved.

If a child's behavior is of grave concern, communication will begin with the family as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. The Day Nursery staff and family will work

together to evaluate the needs in the context of our program. On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need for a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances are:

- A child appears to be a danger to himself/herself or others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child as determined by medical, psychological or social service personnel.
- A child's continued enrollment places an undue burden on Day Nursery resources for the child's accommodations for participation and success.

See "Dismissal Policy" on page 32.

Family Code of Conduct

Day Nursery is committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and caring environment. Staff members speak with all children and families respectfully and never use any form of belittling, improper language, or corporal punishment. Day Nursery a smoke-, drug-, and alcohol-free environment. Day Nursery requires the families of all enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect at all times. Achieving the ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the staff; it is the responsibility of **every** adult who enters our center. Families are required to behave in a manner that fosters this environment. **Families who violate the Family Code of Conduct will not be permitted on Day Nursery property thereafter.** Engaging in any of the following behaviors while on Day Nursery property is considered a violation:

Swearing/Cursing:

No one is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on center property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated.

Threatening of Staff, Children, Parents or Other Adults Associated with Day Nursery will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

Physical or Verbal Punishment (of your child or other children at Day Nursery) is not permitted at the center. Day Nursery does not support or condone corporal punishment; such acts are not permitted in the center. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not acceptable for parents to verbally abuse their child. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about another parent's child as reported by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the teacher and/or director.

Further, it is completely inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss his or her child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the attention of the teacher or director, who will discuss the concerns with the child's family. All center staff are prohibited by our Confidentiality Policy to discuss the outcome with the child's parents.

Smoking

For the health of all Day Nursery staff, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on the center property. Smoking is expressly prohibited in the building, the play yard, front steps, the grounds or the parking lot. Families who choose to smoke in their vehicle must dispose of the cigarette before leaving the vehicle. The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to

infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Violations of Safety Procedures

Families are required to follow ALL safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the staff, children and associates of Day Nursery. Please be particularly mindful in regards to entrance procedures. Families should never hold the door open for the person following you into the building. For the safety and security of all, it is absolutely imperative that anyone entering the building be visually identified by a Day Nursery staff member. Everyone is asked to be alert and mindful and to report any security breaches immediately.

Confrontations with Staff (or other parents or associates of Day Nursery)

While it is understood that families will not always agree with the staff of Day Nursery, or the other families and children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Violations of the Confidentiality Policy

Day Nursery takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the center. Families must understand the implications of this responsibility, and recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their family, but to all children, families, and staff associated with Day Nursery. Any person who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures staff or other families for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

Firearms and Weapons

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type or firearm, ammunition and/or weapon on center property for any reason. A dangerous weapon may be, but is not limited to: a gun, a knife, a razor or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program. In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to both visible and concealed weapons, with or without a permit to carry such.

Reporting Child Abuse

Under the **Child Protective Services Act**, *mandated reporters* are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The staff of Day Nursery is considered mandated reporters, under this law. The staff of Day Nursery is not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required or encouraged to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behaviors or conditions prior to making a report. Under this act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. Day Nursery takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. The Child Protective Service Agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure that the child's needs are met.

Day Nursery will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of abuse or neglect. As mandated reporters, the staff of Day Nursery cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services, which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made "in good faith". Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect may include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness or season
- Transporting a child without the proper restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until the symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation.

Emergency Operations

Day Nursery's **Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)** has been compiled in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), the Scranton Chief of Police, and the Scranton Fire Chief. The EOP is reviewed by these offices annually, and is updated as often as needed.

The EOP is kept on file in the office, and can be made available to any family upon request. All Day Nursery staff members participate in several emergency training sessions initially during new staff orientation, and update annually including:

- EOP reviews
- Fire Safety training
- Emergency drills
- Pediatric CPR and First Aid

Fire drills for children and staff are held every sixty days, and emergency evacuations drills and shelter-in-place drills are held every month. The safety and welfare of the students at Day Nursery is our highest priority. Day Nursery's EOP provides for rapid response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstances of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective responses:

- IMMEDIATE EVACUATION:** In the event of a smoke or fire alarm discharge, or suspected gas leak, all children and staff are evacuated to a safe area on the nearby University of Scranton grounds. If unable to return to the center within a few minutes, we will relocate to the relocation site at Moses Taylor Hospital.
- IN-PLACE-SHELTER:** In the case of impending threats such as sudden severe weather or hazardous material spills, circumstances may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- EVACUATION:** Total evacuation of the center may become necessary if there is an immediate danger in the area, or if it is not feasible to remain in the center. In this case, all staff and children will relocate to our relocation site of Moses Taylor Hospital, 700 Quincy Ave.
- MODIFIED OPERATIONS:** May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions may be necessary in a variety of situations including, but not limited to, a severe storm or building problems that would make it unsafe to continue daily operations (such as power failure or water main break).

For information regarding any incident or emergency, families can stay informed through the following sources.

- TV: WYOU or WBRE
- Web: www.pahomepage.com
- Text: via cell phone to set up for text messaging during the enrollment process.
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/DayNurseryAssociation

We ask that families not call Day Nursery during the course of an emergency. This will keep the phone lines free for emergency personnel. Please be assured that we will make every effort to keep families informed.

Operation Snowflake

Day Nursery makes every effort to remain open during the course of severe winter weather, or loss of utilities, but, for the safety of our children, it may become necessary for the center to close early, or to close for the day. The center's director will make all final decisions regarding closures, and parents will be informed accordingly.

If Day Nursery will be opening late, or will be closed for an entire day, parents will be informed through these sources:

- TV: WYOU or WBRE
- Web: www.pahomepage.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/DayNurseryAssociation

If Day Nursery is closing early, parents will be informed *at least 2 hours* prior, through these sources:

- Web: www.pahomepage.com
- Text: via cell phone to set up for text messaging during the enrollment process
- Phone: Day Nursery staff will call the emergency contact numbers that families have provided during the enrollment process, in the order that has been indicated. Day Nursery will make every effort to insure that a family member has been notified verbally.

