

School Handbook

Children's Preschool and Enrichment Center

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“Serving Essex area children and their families since 1987 ”

Children's Preschool and Enrichment Center is a licensed child care facility that offers a preschool curriculum to all children who attend. CPEC began in Essex Center in August 1987 and moved to Essex Junction in October 1988. In striving to provide the most appropriate care possible for children and their families, the school has embraced the principles of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, through which we hold our national accreditation. We are dedicated to being advocates for children and their families, as well as to providing early childhood educators with an environment that supports them as individuals and as professionals.

CPEC Mission Statement

To serve families by providing a supportive community where children and adults practice positive social skills, interact with a stimulating environment, explore creative ways of thinking, and deepen their respect for the differences and commonalities of people.

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Philosophy

- Children have an innate urge to develop continually and a strong need to learn and to succeed.
- Teachers in a preschool setting provide a safe, loving and stimulating environment, and support children as they learn about themselves and the world around them.
- Preschool expands on the foundation that has been established for learning in a child's home setting by parents or guardians and family members, and by the larger community and society, of which children are a vital part.

Goals

- ...Provide an environment that responds to the interests and needs of children, individually, and as a group.
- ...Act as facilitators for learning.
- ...Provide interactive, hands-on experiences.
- ...Offer enriching educational and social opportunities.
- ...Promote the development of a positive self-image in children.
- ...Respond to and support children as they learn to express themselves.
- ...Assist children in developing interpersonal communication skills.
- ...Model positive communication skills with children and adults.
- ...Foster communication between school and home.
- ...Encourage social relationships for school families during out-of-school time.
- ...Recognize all children and their family members as individuals and as partakers of our common humanity.
- ...Advocate for children and their families.
- ...Establish supportive working conditions for staff members.
- ...Maintain a commitment to high quality by continuing to evolve and grow as a school community.

Curriculum

- Implementation of the curriculum draws from the model of practices, referred to as developmentally appropriate practices, set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the professional organization through which we are accredited. This approach is designed to meet children at their level, both in groups and as individuals, while building on their interests.
- CPEC follows the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) to inform the depth and breadth of the curriculum across the domains of learning. A copy of the VELS is posted in the Family Resource room.
- As children at CPEC are exposed to the social and natural world around them, they are encouraged to learn more about themselves and to follow their curiosity. Children explore the well-supplied interest areas (art and science, dramatic play, literacy, math and blocks) that are set up in the classrooms. Early math and reading skills, creative outlets, and personal expression are woven throughout the study of a subject to contribute to the deeper understanding of a developing idea. Outside playground time and/or indoor gross motor activities are a part of the daily routine.
- Children's total development (physical, social/emotional, cognitive and language) is fostered through guided interaction with an appropriate environment. The acquisition of effective communication skills is encouraged through a balance of adult-initiated, child-initiated, and group or solitary activities that focus on problem solving, compassion, and cooperation.
- Computers, videos and technology are used minimally.
- As a result of having served families from many cultures and faiths, CPEC chooses not to introduce holiday and religious themes into the school's curriculum. Rather, each family presents them in their own way and society does so through events and advertising. If a child brings up these topics, we do converse about them, of course, as this gives us a window into the child's thinking. We have found that celebrating what is more common to all children such as a new tooth or writing names is more immediate.
- We do want children to know that while everyone eats, sleeps, dresses, and lives somewhere, these are done in all kinds of ways. Our books, puzzles, posters, music and other materials and conversations reflect these wonderful differences. Support of this policy is assumed by your enrolling at CPEC. We may, however, respond to a child's cultural needs to promote membership in the CPEC community.
- We also ask that you do not use the school mailboxes for distributing party invitations, Valentines, and other personal communications that do not involve the preschool.
- Throughout the year, staff and families sometimes do present small gifts to each other. This is totally optional, as gift giving should be.

Core Groups

- Children are assigned to a core group/core teacher. These multi-age groups allow children continuity of care and a group identity each time they are at CPEC. Children spend snack time, circle time and lunchtime in their smaller core group, and each child has a coat cubbie and mailbox in their core group room.
- The core teacher is responsible for exchanging information with families about a child's time at school and meets with families during the fall and spring conferences.
- While children may be in all parts of the school or cared for by any of the teachers during their day at CPEC, we feel this core group strategy provides another level of emotional security and a sense of order for everyone: children, families and staff.
- The multi-age model provides a natural grouping of children, which allows mentoring opportunities, scaffolding of learning to higher but reachable levels of learning, and varied-age friendships for all.
- Changes of group assignment are made only when the child's and/or child's family's best interest is served or when a change is in the best interest of the group or an individual child in the group. These changes may also take place from one school year to the next. Family input is taken into serious consideration when the director and staff make core group assignments.

Assessment and Documentation of Children's Development

- While enrolled at CPEC, children's development is observed and documented in a variety of ways. Core teachers have been trained by the administrator and through other professional development about assessment procedures and the interpretation and use of findings to make programming adjustments.
- The child's core teacher is primarily responsible for observing, documenting, assessing, and utilizing the results of the findings. This information can be a part of the fall and spring conferences.
- All assessment methods take into consideration any influences by family culture, experiences, diverse abilities, and home language when decisions are made for implementation and interpretation of results. Assessments take place within the child's usual routines and activities at CPEC and within a group setting or one-on-one with a teacher while in the classroom, in the gym, or on the playground. The core teacher also seeks input from other staff members in trying to gain a complete understanding of a child's development.
- A portfolio containing evidence of development over time is maintained for each child during enrollment. Children's physical growth is documented twice a year and that documentation goes into a child's portfolio, along with anecdotal observations, photographs, work samplings, and could include a more formal web-based assessment tool known as Teaching Strategies GOLD.
- At the end of enrollment, the portfolio is given to the family to take with them to share with teachers in the child's next educational setting or as a keepsake of the child's time at CPEC.
- Traditional standardized testing is not currently part of CPEC's assessment procedures. Developmental screening may be completed for each child utilizing the user-friendly ASQ, a highly regarded system. We also welcome local school district personnel into CPEC to work with your child during their time here.
- *Note:* When a child has an established Individual Education Plan (IEP) through a school district, a copy of that document should be placed in the child's file at CPEC. Families and district staff are invited to meet with the CPEC staff so all parties share an understanding of the child's needs.

Child Guidance

- From the beginning of a child's enrollment, they are presented with the expectations and guidelines of the school. Generally, when a child's needs are met and their interests attended to, there will be little conflict between children. Teachers encourage and facilitate the use of verbal skills by which children express their feelings to talk out solutions, resolve problems among themselves, and to make more appropriate choices.
- The language used and the expectations held by staff are developmentally appropriate and consistent among all the staff. In cases where a child must be removed due to safety concerns, the child is allowed a calming down time during which he or she is given the option to decide how and when to become re-engaged. This is part of our work with children and quite acceptable as long as the child is making progress.
- When recurring challenging behaviors call for more intervention, families will be consulted. The school maintains relationships with community resources when outside help is found to be necessary. Families will be asked for permission for the preschool to make referrals or enlist consultants regarding their child. The CPEC Resource Room has additional written resources as well as pamphlets, videos and community resource references.
- The school will assist in locating consultants or services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Should the teachers and director find that a child's need for more individualized attention, a smaller group size or some other special service exceeds what we are able to provide in our program and/or in our physical space, we will work with the family to find a more appropriate setting. This is a time when the child's best interest must be the primary focus. To be appropriate, the relationship must work for all involved parties.

Parent/Guardian Feedback and Participation

- We encourage parent or guardian and adult family participation at all levels. We ask that you abide by the policies of the school when you are present and that you assist your child (and their siblings or guests) in doing so as well.
- One adult representative from each family is requested to attend the annual all-school meeting, held the evening of the September staff meeting day, during which many policies and procedures are explained.
- The most critical policies are: that children must be visually supervised by an adult at all times so keep your child and guests with you, and that adults and children must wash their hands upon entering the program or coming in from the playground.
- Throughout the year, families are invited to participate in a number of ways, including fund raising, community service, various committees, field trips, and classroom assistance. We hold school social gatherings during the year and want to offer parent nights with guest speakers when there is an interest.
- If you would like to share an interest or hobby with the children or have an idea for a learning activity, we welcome your input.
- We invite you to participate in whatever ways works for you and we want you to feel part of the CPEC school community.
- When an active CPEC Family Group exists, the coordinator's name and phone number will be available along with any of the group's activities and requests for involvement.
- You may opt in to being on the school email list by completing the consent found in the enrollment forms.
- Parents and guardians may be asked to complete a school evaluation form and a staff evaluation form as part of a whole school evaluation process. Your honest input is vital to keeping us on track as we try to meet the needs of children and their families. We welcome your comments at any time.
- We would appreciate you completing an exit survey at the end of your child's enrollment.
- We truly want to be in partnership with you in the care of your children.

Home/School Communication

- * The family resource room contains a wide range of useful community resource materials, handouts, and pamphlets, plus a lending library for families. This area may be used for visiting with others, especially at transition times, and for private conversations.
- * Important notices are posted near the front door; more information is posted on the bulletin boards in the hallway.
- * School news postings can be found on the school website: childrenspreschoolsexjunction.com
- * Each family has a mailbox for notes from teachers, notices for special events, book orders, and such. These mailboxes should be used only for communicating within the school. Use the postal service for mailing invitations and other such correspondence. Solicitation materials are prohibited.
- * Each child has a mailbox in their core room for items to take home or to keep things safe while at CPEC.
- * Each core group teacher is responsible to communicate regularly with the parents or guardians of their group.
- * *From Home* and *From School* forms or journals may be used for the exchange of child-specific information.
- * Families should be respectful of each other's privacy and be mindful of confidentiality issues outside of CPEC.
- * Notices of any current health concerns at CPEC will be posted in the entryway.
- * Families may present health-related information, such as epipen use, during a staff meeting.
- * Forms for notification of absences and for changes in information can be found at the entryway. Once completed they can be placed in the tuition box.
- * Email is not for immediate questions or concerns or conveying same day information. Please call 878-1060.

Expressing Concerns

- Concerns regarding your child should first be directed to your child's core teacher or to the teacher directly involved in the concern.
- If you feel you have not gotten an appropriate or satisfactory response from the teacher, you should notify the Director.
- We encourage you to work with us to resolve differences between your family values and practices and those at CPEC that are of concern to you.
- Issues regarding enrollment, policies, school conditions and other items dealing with the daily operation of the school should be brought to the attention of the Director or acting director.
- Matters of tuition payments and receipts should be taken up with the Director, either through a note left in the tuition payment mailbox or directly by telephone or email.

Conferences/Conversations

- Conferences are offered in the fall and spring. Requests for conferences at any time will be honored within seven working days.
- The fall conference is a "getting to know you" meeting where teachers and parents or guardians can share thoughts, concerns and goals. Forms for the fall conference are distributed to families to complete and bring with them to the conference.
- Spring conferences are for checking in about a child's progress before the end of the school year and particularly in anticipation of Kindergarten entrance.
- Each conference is documented for the child's confidential file and a copy of the documentation is given to the family.
- Messages for staff members may be placed in their core room mailboxes or you may ask that a message be written on the daily information sheet if there is not an opportunity to speak to the teacher directly.
- Arrangements can be made for teachers to be available to speak to parents or guardians on the phone during naptime, or by other arrangements with the individual teachers.
- Ideas or concerns shared by parents or guardians will be discussed at staff meetings when deemed appropriate to that setting.

The Director should be informed about enrollment issues such as vacations and changes in scheduling, utilizing the available forms. The forms may be placed in the tuition box or given to your child's core teacher.

Remember that the staff's primary purpose is to tend to the children in care.

Conversations may need to be postponed unless they are critical to the immediate care of your child.

Social conversations between families during busy transition times may be continued in the family resource room so that teachers and children can follow the school's daily routines.

Access and Confidentiality Policy

- Parents or guardians have access without delay to their children and their caregivers during the normal hours of operation.
- On a rare occasion, if the staff feels the children's safety is at risk or during a true emergency, access through the front entrance can only be gained by utilizing the doorbell. Responses to the doorbell will be as immediate as the safety of the situation allows. The door may also be locked during the mornings.
- The interior hallway door will generally remain unlocked and access may be gained through the Church Street side entrance, unless an emergency protocol is in effect.
- Without the appropriate legal paperwork, CPEC must release children to either parent or legal guardian. Copies of legal documents such as court orders, restraining orders or custody papers must be in a child's file when such circumstances exist.
- Children's files are available to parents or guardians upon request.
- All conversations, files and records are confidential unless otherwise required by law or emergency.
- Staff members are required to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of children and families at all times.
- Families are requested to also protect the privacy and confidentiality of CPEC staff, children and families.

Code Numbers

- As a protection mechanism, each family will be assigned a code number, which will be required from anyone not familiar to the staff or not listed in the child's file and who is requesting to pick up the child.
- A valid form of identification may be requested. A phone call, if at all possible, from a parent or guardian is also requested.

Cell Phones

- We request that cell phones be turned off or silenced while you are in the classrooms, hallway, gym, or on the playground at CPEC.
- If you need to make or receive a personal cell phone call, we ask that you go outside or up into the resource area, and be as quiet and discreet as possible.
- You may use the school phone for short personal calls, remembering that it is a business phone, on which other families may be trying to reach us.
- Telephone conversations should take place outside of the classrooms to ensure confidentiality as well as not to interfere with the classroom activities.

Signing In and Out and Absences

- Parents or guardians are required to sign-in and sign-out children, noting times of arrival and departure, utilizing the sheet provided for each core group, in accordance with licensing regulations.
- Children should be escorted all the way into the school. Everyone - children, siblings, and adults - must wash their hands upon entering the school each time they arrive at CPEC.
- Outside footwear worn by children and family members should be taken off by the in the hallway before entering the classrooms to avoid bringing in dirt and worksite materials or snow and water.
- Students and their siblings and child guests must be with an adult and visually supervised at all times when they are in the building. Be sure to indicate to a staff member when you are actually leaving the school so they can take over supervision of your child.
- To avoid undue stress on other children, arrivals and departures should be completed as quickly and as smoothly as possible. You may use the family resource area if it would be helpful.
- We are here to help so feel free to ask for assistance if you would like help during these transition times. Some children and families find it helpful to use the windows for waving/saying goodbye.
- Do not leave children of any age in vehicles while you come to drop-off or pick-up your child. This building is highly utilized by many groups and the parking lot is very busy. Your children are welcome here and we prefer you bring them in to leaving them unsupervised.
- We request that you do not leave your vehicle running during the drop-off and pick-up routine for safety and environmental reasons.
- If your child will be absent, will be late arriving or will be picked up late, kindly call the school to inform the staff. Remember you must wait until 9:00 if you miss the 8:30 arrival time, that full-day children should arrive by 11:00 unless otherwise approved by the Director or acting director, and that no children may regularly arrive during nap/quiet time between 12:30 and 2:30. Please be mindful of this when scheduling appointments for your child. These policies are for the benefit of your child as well as all the other children in our care.

Emergencies

- The immediate health and safety of a child will be the top priority in an emergency. Parents or guardians will be notified as promptly as circumstances allow.
- Staff members present in the group shall hold current certification in CPR and First Aid training.
- Fire and/or emergency procedure drills are held monthly and are scheduled so that all children will experience the drill training. It is helpful if you alert your child about the need for these drills so our explanation of them might be more readily received. This is also an important home procedure to practice with your child, and we encourage you to do so, especially designating a safe meeting spot.
- In staffing emergencies or evacuations, families will be notified as soon as possible with information and requests for action.
- A copy of CPEC's Emergency Response Plan (ERP) will be kept in the Family Resource Room for your information.
- In community emergency situations, CPEC will participate in the locally established emergency plans.

Reporting Abuse or Neglect

- Suspected abuse or neglect will be brought to the attention of the Director who may contact the family to discuss the concern, depending on the advise of the Vermont Child Development Division, will be contacted to determine if a situation requires Division involvement.
- Individual staff members are also legally bound to notify the Division if they feel it is warranted. A written record of dates and concerns will be maintained in the child's file.
- Other concerns or complaints regarding the welfare of the children, including suspected abuse or neglect by staff members, should be brought to the attention of the Director.
- Concerns involving the Director can be made directly to the Child Development Division (CDD) at 1-800-649-2642. The consumer concern line telephone number is also 1-802-649-2642. The CDD Internet address is: dfc.vermont.gov/cdd

Health Policy

- For the health of all, compliance with our health policy is mandatory.
- If you are notified that your child is ill, pick-up must be made within one hour of notice. Your child will be kept comfortable and supervised by a known staff member, but away from others to the degree possible to eliminate new exposures.
- The list of excludable conditions from the Vermont State Child Care Regulations serves as a guide for our policy and the regulations are posted in the Family Resource Room.
- Additionally, CPEC asks that children be fever free for 24 hours without medication or have a doctor's permission before returning to school.
- CPEC always retains the right to determine if a child would be more comfortable out of group care for the health and safety of all children, their families, and staff.
- If your child or a family member becomes sick or contracts a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, notify the school so we may inform the other families in the school of any possible exposure.
- Families of children susceptible in such cases will be notified immediately and staff members will work to protect the child from further exposure until the child is able to leave the premises.
- CPEC policy requires children and adults to wash their hands upon first entering the school. It is the responsibility of the adult who brings the child into the school to make sure this occurs. Hand washing is considered the first barrier against germs and is seen as the number one aid in stopping the spread of illness. Children will be continually instructed in proper hand washing. Utilize the appropriate hand washing procedure, posted near each sink, especially regarding using one paper towel and turning the water off with a paper towel. One paper towel to turn off the water and another to dry hands is also acceptable.
- Perfumes and other scents are prohibited due to a possible allergic reaction in children and adults.
- A current immunization record form (or statement of exclusion) and recent health examination results form are required for the child's file upon, and updated throughout, enrollment at CPEC.
- Parents or guardians are responsible to inform the school of all health concerns they have for their child, such as allergies or special medical conditions.
- A child's health provider should share an individualized health plan for children with special health care needs, food allergies or special nutrition needs when deemed appropriate.
- Parents or guardians are responsible to notify CPEC of any changes and/or updates in the medical information set forth in the child's file.
- Unless otherwise authorized, the school will only share a child's medical information with parents or guardians.

Medication

- Written permission from a parent or guardian specifying content, dosage, method of administration, and schedule must be on file before a staff member gives any prescription medication to a child. You will find the necessary form near the entryway. When completed, it and the medication should be given to the child's teacher.
- The medication must be in the original container clearly indicating it is for that child. Most pharmacies are willing to split prescriptions into two containers for this purpose.
- All medicine must be locked in our medicine box and not left in backpacks or lunch boxes.
- If your child requires an epipen, inhaler, or other emergency medication, you may leave it in the locked medicine box with the medicine form for the duration of your child's enrollment. It is the family's responsibility to be mindful of the expiration date of all medicines.
- We do not administer over-the-counter products that might disguise symptoms that indicate a child is too ill for group care unless the product is accompanied by a doctor's order.
- Special soaps, sunscreen, chapstick, and lotions may be brought in by families and may be locked up with or without a warning on the product which requires that it be kept out of the reach of children. Containers for these items must be labeled with the child's name and removed or replaced at the request of the staff.

Non-smoking Premises

- Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the property. Do not leave evidence of such on the property.
- Personal or nap items that smell noticeably of smoke must be laundered or replaced with clean items.

Nutrition

- The school provides healthy morning and afternoon snacks as well as skim milk at lunch.
- Water is available to children in all classrooms.
- A weekly snack menu is posted on the refrigerator. A copy of the menu will be provided to families upon request.
- When necessary, a child's family must provide special diet foods.
- Food allergies should be noted in your enrollment papers and will be made known to the entire staff. When permission is granted from the family, a child's food allergy will be posted in the food preparation area as well as in the other eating areas at CPEC.
- For the safety of children with health threatening allergies, CPEC strives to be a peanut and tree nut safe space. None of these products or those that state such a warning from the manufacturer should be brought into CPEC for lunch or for any all-school events. If your child has consumed these products before attending for the day, be sure that their bodies and clothing are cleaned completely to prevent any allergic reactions.
- Families are to provide packed lunches (in insulated bags with a cold pack) for their child that are nutritious, well-balanced, and absent of, or low, in fat, sugar, salt, artificial flavors and artificial colors. We encourage you to include lots of fruits and vegetables!
- Candy, cookies, candy sprinkles for yogurt, chocolate products and other such items should not be included in lunches and will be sent back uneaten in the child's lunch bag.
- "Fruit gummies" are discouraged as they stick to teeth, even during rest time.
- All food should be prepared and ready to eat.
- These items are not allowed: (whole or rounds of) hot dogs, whole grapes, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels. Carrots and meat must be cut so that the pieces can be swallowed whole.
- We do not microwave children's food; a wide-mouth thermos can be used for warm foods.
- Additionally, at the discretion of the staff, some items, such as "Gogurts" are not allowed because of their "messy" factor.
- The staff will send home a note about items that do not comply with our policy or for assurance about products that are not individually labelled.
- "Treats" sent in for birthdays should be healthy items, such as muffins, breads or fruits or all fruit popsicles. No cakes or cupcakes, please. Kindly notify the staff ahead of providing such a treat.
- Before snacks and lunch, children at CPEC follow a tradition we call "squeeze" which consists of all children counting to a selected number in a selected voice or sound and ending by saying "squeeze" together.
- Snacks are served "family style" so that children can practice table manners and work on self-help skills such as pouring milk.
- Staff members sit with the children to supervise this learning and to facilitate conversation.
- Family members are also welcome to join us any day for snacks and lunchtime.

*** Prevent choking information: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/supplementA.pdf>

Toilet Learning

- Children may attend preschool at any stage of their toilet learning.
- The CPEC staff will work with the family to help the child during this time, following the inclination of the child and the appropriate requests of the family.
- To help a child feel most successful during toilet learning, dress children in clothing that is easy for them to manage on their own, such as elastic-waist pants.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for keeping an adequate supply of labeled disposable diapers or pull-ups at preschool for children with this need.
- Additional changes of clothing must also be supplied when appropriate during the learning process.
- When no longer in diapers or pull-ups, all children must wear underwear.
- Diapering shall be in accordance with the licensing regulations.
- When diapering your child at CPEC, please comply with our diapering procedures, including disposal of soiled diapers.
- Latex-free gloves are available for use during diapering and for blood spills or other exposures.
- Diapering and toileting surfaces and contaminated surfaces are cleaned with a bleach solution or another acceptable disinfectant solution.

Car Seats/Field Trips

- Field trips utilizing vehicles will be announced in advance of the day and a parent or guardian's signature will be required for participation.
- CPEC utilizes hired school buses for field trips. They may or may not have seatbelts.
- Procedures required by the licensing regulations will be followed.
- Walking field trips within the village may occur, and consent is given in the enrollment papers.

Weekly Schedules and Arrival Times

- Our experience tells us that it is easier for children to bond with the teachers, as well as to successfully form relationships with other children, if they attend more often. This also allows them to understand the schedule, routines and expectations more readily. The more they are here, the more comfortable they become. Therefore, we require a minimum schedule of two mornings.
- There are four basic options for attendance: full-time, multiple full days, preschool mornings from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. or 7:30 – 12:30 when enrolling for just 10 hours based on public Pre-K funding. You may also choose a combination of mornings and full days.
- If we can accommodate your request, we will.
- Occasionally, the staff may suggest to a family that they adjust a child's schedule, if possible, to better meet the needs of the child or the program.
- All day children may arrive any time after the school opens but in time to be ready for core group time by 8:30. Morning only children should arrive in time to get settled with their hands washed and ready for core group time.
- If the 8:30 time is missed, the next opportunity to enter the program for the day is at 9:00.
- No children should arrive later than 11:00 unless by prior arrangement with the director.
- No arrivals should take place between 12:30 and 2:30 due to nap and quiet time.
- Enrollment at CPEC implies agreement to adhere to these arrival times.

General Daily Schedule "Guideline"

School year hours: 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m./Summer hours: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

opening to 8:00	Children arrive. Choice of activities.
8:00	Pick up time and children divide into core groups.
8:30	Morning program begins. Core group circle/meetings. Arrivals closed until 9:00.
9:00	Second opportunity to enter the program for the day.
9:00 to 9:55	Continuation of core group time. Hand washing and snack, core group activities.
9:55 to 10:40	Gross motor activities (gym, playground or neighborhood walk)
10:40 to 11:30	Learning centers/interest area time.
11:30 to 12:30	Lunch with core group. (Morning children leave by 12:30.)
12:30 to 2:15	Quiet time for resters, naptime for sleepers. Quiet activities.
2:15 to 3:00	Wake up/bathroom/snack
3:00 to closing	Gross motor activity and/or indoor choice of activities.

Nap/Quiet Time

- During nap/quiet time, the lights are turned off, the shades are lowered, soft music is played and a teacher generally reads a chapter book for part of the time.
- By state regulations, children in care for more than 5 hours are required to have an opportunity for resting; sleeping is not required. Children are expected to rest quietly on their mat for a reasonable period so that the nap room is conducive for sleeping for those who choose to do so.
- Children who stay all day may bring a small soft item, a *small* pillow and *small* blanket to be kept in their sleeping cubbies. Label all items. *No sleeping bags, please.*
- Everything for napping must fit neatly into the napping bin provided.
- Pacifiers, allowed only at naptime, need a small storage container and must be replaced with a clean one daily.
- The school supplies a mat and mat cover to each napping child.
- The mat cover, blankets, pillows, and "friends" are to be taken home weekly for laundering and then be returned to the sleeping cubby.

Appropriate Clothing/Extra Clothing

- At this level, children's "work", commonly known as play, can be a very messy business.
- Children should come to school dressed so they are not afraid to get up to their elbows in fun!
- Please send them to school in clothes they can manage on their own and that are okay to get dirty - both inside the school and on the playground.
- A complete change of the proper size and season of indoor clothing, including socks and underwear, is to be kept in your child's extra clothes bin. Extra shoes are also helpful to have.
- **Write your child's name on everything!**
- Weather in Vermont can also be a very messy business. Children should be prepared seasonally for the ever-changing weather.
- Footwear is especially important, as we try to get outside *everyday* unless the weather is too wet or bitter. Sneakers are required for the gym and are best for everyday inside wear. Mud and snow boots, seasonally, are necessary.
- During wet and snowy weather, children and adults must remove footwear in the hallway before entering the classrooms.
- Coats, hats, snow pants and mittens are required daily in the winter.
- The temperature cut-off for outdoor play is 10 degrees or wind chill to that effect, or by mutual decision of the staff on duty.
- In spring and fall, raincoats/jackets, hats and gloves are required.
- Summer wear should include shorts, a short-sleeved top and a light jacket or sweater. Sandals and flip-flops, both of which require back straps, are not appropriate outside footwear for preschool. Bring sneakers.
- Shorts or tights must be worn under dresses or skirts.
- When not in diapers or pull-ups, all children must wear underwear.

Items From Home

- It is school policy that commercial toys may not be, and other precious personal belongings should not be, brought from home.
- Difficulties for the children arise when items become lost or broken.
- You may talk to the staff about wanting your child to share something from home that is relevant to the current theme, or to ask if the group has established share days for items such as books, music, findings from nature, pictures, and photos.

Staff Qualifications

- Staff members meet all the requirements as set forth in the licensing regulations by the State of Vermont.
- Our team of professional educators is dedicated to being partners with families in the care and education of young children.
- We continue our professional development through workshops, in-service training, college courses, and conferences.
- We are an equal opportunity employer.
- Volunteers, high school or college students, and substitutes may be present at the school. They will meet the requirements of the licensing regulations.

Off-Premise Child Care

As recommended by the State of Vermont Child Development Division, CPEC policy prohibits staff from being engaged by school families for off-site private child care services.

Non-Discrimination Policy

- The Children's Preschool and Enrichment Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, language, ability, age, language, gender, or the child's parents' marital status, family structure, background or sexual orientation in providing child care services to children and their families in compliance with Vermont licensing regulations and/or NAEYC accreditation standards, nor in CPEC's hiring practices as set forth in federal and state employment law.
- Children with diverse abilities may be enrolled at CPEC, if care is appropriate in our space/setting, and within the ability of the current staff and their training.

Licensing and Liability

- The school is fully licensed by the State of Vermont. A copy of the Child Care Licensing Regulations is kept in the family resource room for your reference.
- The school carries the required liability insurance and non-owned auto insurance.
- Families are responsible for the safe transportation of their children to and from CPEC.
- Do not leave children of any age unsupervised in vehicles or leave vehicles running while at CPEC.

Hours of Operation

**** CPEC closes at 4:30 on the second Wednesday of each month for staff meeting. ****

- The school is open Monday through Friday, 7:15 – 5:15 during the school year session and 7:30 – 5:00 during the summer session.
- Mornings only hours are 8:30 a.m. (or 7:30 a.m. for only 2 public pre-K mornings) to 12:30 p.m.
- Please be on time at both ends of your child's daily schedule.
- Children should arrive in enough time to get settled with hands washed and to join their core groups by 8:30 a.m. in order to fully participate in their core group meetings.
- If you miss the 8:30 a.m. drop-off time, you must wait until 9:00 a.m. to come into the program.
- Morning-only children must be picked up before 12:30 p.m.
- A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged after 12:30 and after 4:30 on staff meeting days. These fees should be paid to the school upon arrival on the next scheduled day.
- At the end of the day, arrive with enough time for gathering up items and leaving by 5:00/5:15.
- Teachers' paid hours do not extend past closing. After 5:00/5:15 late charges of \$1.00 per minute should be paid, at that time, directly to each of the teachers present, as two staff members are required to be on duty at that time for safety concerns. Willing compliance with this policy is much appreciated.
- We will ask you to find another situation that better meets your family's scheduling needs if it becomes clear that our hours do not work for you.

Enrollment

- * Children must be at least 3-years-old to attend CPEC.
- * Enrollment may begin at any time of the year as space in the preschool permits.
- * Minimum enrollment is 2 mornings per week
- * Enrollment indicates agreement to abide by CPEC policies found in this handbook, in the enrollment papers, or which are otherwise conveyed through written materials, email, conversations, or on the website.
- * A parent or guardian and the child must have completed a tour of the school.
- * To guarantee enrollment, the full completed and signed enrollment package must be returned to the Director with a one-time, non-refundable \$65.00 *registration* fee and a non-refundable *deposit* equal to a week's tuition. The deposit will be applied as the first week's tuition. Yearly renewal enrollment paperwork and immunizations will be required for continuation of care. All paperwork should be returned within the time frame established by the Director.
- * A certificate of immunization or statement of exclusion must be in the child's file before attendance begins.
- * Together, the parent(s) or guardian(s) and Director will review school policies, the responsibilities of the family, and the content of the child's file. All paperwork must be completed and in order for attendance to begin.
- * Families may work out a plan with the Director for the gradual introduction of a child into the school.
- * Attendance by at least one parent from each family is required at the annual September All-School meeting.
- * Completion of student registration required by school districts for participation in public Pre-K funding is the responsibility of the family. This is a separate process from enrollment at CPEC.

Waiting List

- The Director will maintain a waiting list.
- Priority will be given to currently enrolled families who wish to change their schedule.
- Priority may also be given to families who may be affected by agreements that CPEC has with outside agencies or organizations.
- Others should periodically notify the Director of their on-going interest and of any changes in information to keep their waiting list status in force.
- A financial commitment is the only guarantee for a place on the waiting list or in the enrollment queue.

What to Bring the First Day:

All paperwork needed to complete the child's file, a complete change of clothing, lunch that complies with CPEC's nutrition policy, appropriate outside clothing and footwear, tuition, napping items (if needed), diapers (if needed), and any questions. Check the website for more helpful hints and ideas.

Tuition Policies

- * Contracted tuition is payable on the first day of the week that a child attends school unless another payment schedule, such as bi-weekly or monthly ahead, is pre-arranged with the Director.
- * Tuition should be placed in the tuition mailbox that is just inside the door of the largest room. Payments should not be left in lunchboxes, napping buckets or children's backpacks.
- * Please write the dates for which the payment is being made on the memo line of the check. This will assist in clarifying any differences between your records and the school's records.
- * Tuition is payable for all days for which your child is scheduled and for which staff is paid, including:
 - Three in-service days (one day each in fall, winter and spring as set forth in the school calendar)
 - Snow days and/or emergency closing days
 - Other closings: Memorial Day, Independence Day (or the preceding Friday if it is on Saturday or the following Monday if it is on Sunday), Labor Day, Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday, half days before holiday breaks and other closed days as set forth in the school calendar.
- * After a 10-day grace period, tuition will be considered late. A late fee of \$5.00 per day will be levied every day after that until the account is brought current.
- * A current school calendar will indicate which days CPEC is closed and for which days tuition is payable.
- * If two children from the same family are enrolled full-time, one child will be charged at 80%.
- * If one child is enrolled full-time and another child from that family is enrolled part-time, the second child will be charged at 90% of his or her program rate.
- * Families receiving state financial assistance funds must pay the difference between tuition and state payments unless other arrangements are made with the Director. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to keep their status current. Failure to do so which results in non-payment could lead to end of services by CPEC. The parent or guardian will be held responsible for payment of any amounts left unpaid.
- * Families eligible for public Pre-K money must complete all required paperwork in a timely manner to receive such funding. These funds will generally be in the form of a tuition reduction, which is only valid for the school-year session and for only as long as CPEC has such an agreement with the school district in which the child lives. Additional hours or days will be charged at the regular tuition rate. These funds are established by the Agency of Education or the various school districts.
- * Snow days will be called for only in the most adverse conditions and will be by decision of the Owner, who will notify the Vermont Association of Broadcasters for posting on television (Channels 3 & 5) and radio (98.9 FM and 105.1 FM). Families may also opt into a text messaging system for emergency communications. A decision to close will be made by 6:30 a.m. on such days. Tuition is charged as the staff members are paid.
- * One week of vacation per each family's enrollment year will be given at no charge with a two-week notice. The vacation week will be equal to the contracted week. Notification forms are available and may be put in the tuition box when completed. The child's core group teacher should be informed as soon as possible.
- * Summer enrollment requires payment of tuition for 8 out of the 9 weeks, regardless of attendance.
- * Two weeks' notice is required to terminate enrollment or to make a change in a child's schedule.
- * The registration fee and first week's tuition received in the enrollment process are non-refundable. Refunds for tuition paid ahead of a notice to withdraw will be made after deducting for a two weeks' notice.
- * Families need to have a reliable back-up plan in place for their child's care should CPEC be unable to continue care in the case of health or facilities emergencies, staff shortages, and other "worst case" scenarios.
- * CPEC is committed to remaining open until the situation is beyond our control. At that point, we will request your understanding and patience.

Schedule and Tuition

There are four basic schedules available for children at CPEC:

- * Full-time
- * Full days (minimum of two)
- * Preschool mornings (8:30 to 12:30, minimum of two)
- * Preschool public pre-K mornings (7:30 to 12:30, two required)

Families may also opt to do a mix of schedules. For example, two full days and a morning would be possible as long as we had space to accommodate that need.

Tuition rates are presented on a separate form, which may be obtained from the Director.

A written explanation of participation in the Public Pre-K Funding at CPEC is available from the Director.

- We do not offer general drop-in services, but you may contact the staff to see if there is space should you need an extra day or half-day on occasion.
- We are happy to accommodate additional days for additional tuition when possible, but substituting days is not allowable.
- If you need extra time on a contracted day, the charge is \$7.00 per hour.

When it becomes necessary to raise tuition rates, the Director will give families at least one month's notice that an increase is about to take place.

***If you have decided that our school matches the needs and hopes of your family -
welcome to CPEC!***