

TCDN Family Handbook



Trinity Cooperative Day Nursery
301 N. Chester Road, Swarthmore PA 19081
610-544-4555 www.tcdn.org
Fall 2015 Version

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Welcome

Dear TCDN Families,

Welcome to TCDN programs! I am happy to have this opportunity to introduce you to TCDN and to the atmosphere of cooperation that is at the heart of TCDN's operation.

This *Family Handbook* is intended to help you become well acquainted (or re-acquainted) with our programs and to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with us. It includes information about TCDN, and our daily expectations as well as general policies, procedures, and practices. There have been several changes, so please be sure to read it carefully and bookmark it for ready reference. We will update you throughout the year if there are additional policies or procedural changes.

You are the primary educator of your child. I assume that in enrolling your child in TCDN you are in agreement with our general philosophy and that you are seeking our help in providing him or her with a strong educational background. Because of our shared responsibility, it is essential that we maintain clear and open communication. This handbook provides guidelines to aid that communication. Keep in mind, however, that any time you feel the lines of communication are unclear; I encourage you to contact your child's teacher, Site Coordinator or myself. We welcome your comments and suggestions about how to make this *Family Handbook* more useful to you.

I, along with a skilled, dedicated and caring staff, am honored to have the opportunity to engage your children in the daily joys of learning and the challenges that come as a result of immersing yourself in new experiences.

I value the trust you have placed in us in enrolling your child at TCDN. We take great pride in our work with children and families and look forward to an exciting and rewarding year ahead filled with exploration, growing friendships, and the joy of learning.

Sincerely,

Cindy Murray

Director, TCDN

About the Organization

Vision Statement

TCDN is a self-reliant, child-focused organization setting the standard of excellence in our community.

Mission Statement

TCDN is a non-profit, childcare organization whose mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for preschool and school age children. To express this mission, TCDN will:

- Provide an atmosphere where growth and learning take place
- Ensure that developmentally appropriate methods are used for each program
- Arrange programs so that family groupings (mixed age groups) are maintained

Philosophy

TCDN's philosophy of early care and education centers around the belief that in a homelike atmosphere of safety and trust, children take control of their learning. Through active engagement with materials in the environment, project work arising from interests, or relationships with others in the group, children make choices and teachers respond with caring, respect, and inquiry to guide new learning. Teachers play intentional roles in guiding children's development by responding to learning through play and by offering relevant experiences to stimulate new learning.

Core Values

TCDN is committed to supporting children's development by valuing individual differences, promoting self-esteem, helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively, and by fostering creativity, inquiry and critical thinking skills. All areas of development are valued as teachers respond to individual choices in physical, social, emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, and literacy learning. Both indoor and outdoor learning is valued.

Diversity Statement

At TCDN, we believe that early experiences with diverse communities and friends will lead to the development of cohesive, accepting communities in our future. We encourage diverse communities in our programs, allowing all children to experience a range of different cultures, appearances, language's and ways of life in a positive, affirming environment.

We incorporate gender-inclusive, multi-cultural and anti-bias learning experiences in our programs and curriculum. We continually strive to provide materials, activities, and an environment that reflects a respect for, and celebration of, diversity, race, physical appearance, ability, family composition, and lifestyle. Within the context of family grouping, TCDN helps

children understand and appreciate the differences and similarities among us all. Families are encouraged to share their cultural traditions with others in the program. Our goal is for every child and family to feel welcomed, respected and supported in our program.

Overview of Programs

TCDN operates the preschool program for children ages 1 through 5 years. Components of the preschool program include a young toddler group (Ducklings), 3 preschool age family groups (Squirrels, Kangaroos, Owls) and a pre-K group in the afternoons (Crickets). Summer programming incorporates the young toddler classroom, the preschool classrooms and a full-day pre-Kindergarten preparation camp (Cricket Camp).

TCDN operates four locations of out-of-school time programs. The Swarthmore After School Club (SASC) includes the Before School Club for children K-5th grade, the AM and PM Kindergarten complement programs (Explorers) and the After School Club for children K-3rd grade. The Wallingford After School Club (WASC) programs for children K-3rd grade from Wallingford Elementary School. The Nether Providence After School Club (NPASC) programs for children K-5th grade from Nether Providence Elementary School. The Older After School Club (OASC) programs for children 4th- 6th grades from all elementary schools and the Middle School. Families of school age children may enroll in any combination of out-of-school time programs. TCDN operates The Summer Club, a summer camp program for children entering 1st - 6th grades. The Summer Club operates from mid-June to end of August from the Swarthmore After School Club location.

Hours of Operation

The preschool and Before School Club programs open at 7:15am and all TCDN programs close at 6:00pm. Programs operate Monday through Friday. The TCDN office is generally open from 8:00am - 6:00pm. Please feel free to leave a voice mail message if no one is available to answer your call.

Calendar

The TCDN Calendar (including closings and special events) will be updated online on the TCDN website as necessary throughout the year at www.tcdn.org. You will also receive e-mail correspondence from the TCDN Office Administrator, Site Coordinators or classroom teachers outlining specific events.

TCDN Governance

TCDN is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of both TCDN families and community members. The TCDN Board of Directors is responsible for setting the organization's direction and policies. Directors are elected to serve 3-year terms and each serves on a committee (Governance, Finance, Personnel, and Cooperative) and attends monthly Board meetings.

Responsibilities include:

- Hiring and evaluating the performance of the Director
- Providing financial oversight by adopting an annual budget, setting tuition, and developing financial policies
- Developing and approving the Strategic Plan
- Developing and approving the organization policies
- Providing adequate resources to fulfill TCDN's mission

Licensing/Approach to Quality

All TCDN programs are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. All TCDN programs are in the Keystone STARS quality improvement program funded by the state of Pennsylvania, and are working towards STAR level advancement and/or accreditation. TCDN values the importance of continuous quality improvement and, as such, continually monitors feedback and assessments from staff, families, children, hosts, and research-based national and state standards of quality to make ongoing program improvements.

Ratio and Group Size

TCDN maintains the following minimum staff to child ratios and group size which complies with or exceeds Department of Human Services regulations:

Young Toddlers	1:4	maximum group size - 10
Preschool, family grouped	1:6	maximum group size - 12
Pre-Kindergarten	1:10	maximum group size - 18
Kindergarten	1:12	maximum group size - 24
OST Programs	1:12-1:15	maximum group size - varies

Staff Qualifications

Educated, experienced, nurturing, and committed teachers and substitutes are the heart of TCDN. Teachers model equity as they share responsibilities within a program. TCDN seeks teachers that have a BA/BS or AA in Early Childhood Education / Education, or two years of college in a related field with 30 credits in ECE or Education. Unrelated degrees with ECE/Education credits, as well as a CDA (Child Development Associate) or SAPC (School Age Professional Credential) is required at a minimum.

Contact Information

Administrative Office
301 N. Chester Road,

Swarthmore, PA 19081

- Cindy Murray, Director, 610-544-4555 ext. 223, cindy@tcdn.org
- Maureen Koch, Finance Manager, 610-544-4555 ext. 222, maureen@tcdn.org
- Michele Corbin, Office Administrator, 610-544-4555 ext. 221, michele@tcdn.org

Preschool

301 N. Chester Road
Swarthmore, PA 19081

- Kim Mills, Site Coordinator, 610-544-4555 ext. 224, preschool@tcdn.org

Swarthmore After School Club

100 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

- BSC Site Coordinator, Pat DeHaven, 610-544-1320, sasc@tcdn.org
- Explorer Site Coordinator, Beth Camagna, 610-544-1320, sasc@tcdn.org
- SASC Site Coordinator, Linda Healy, 610-544-1320, sasc@tcdn.org

Wallingford After School Club

Brookhaven & Avondale Roads
Wallingford, PA 19086

- Pat DeHaven, Site Coordinator, 610-566-5350 wasc@tcdn.org

Nether Providence After School Club

Nether Providence Elementary School
410 Moore Road
Wallingford, PA 19086

- Laura Watson, Site Coordinator, 610-892-3470 x8102 npasc@tcdn.org

Older After School Club

715 Harvard Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

- Linda Cornick, Site Coordinator, 610-328-0305- oasc@tcdn.org

General Policies

Non-Discrimination

As an Equal Opportunity Care Provider, TCDN admits children without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religious creed, ancestry, or national origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities, which it provides for or makes available to families.

Confidentiality

Within TCDN, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of TCDN who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about employees, other parents, and/or children will not

be shared with parents, as TCDN strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with TCDN.

If families need to have a child's records sent outside of TCDN for any reason, staff should refer them to the TCDN office, where they will be provided with a Release of Confidential Information Form.

Mandated Child Abuse Reporting

State law mandates that all individuals working with young children be required to report any suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. TCDN employees are considered mandated reporters under this law. They are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. TCDN employees take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Director will follow the direction of the child protective service agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the Director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian.

Parent Code of Conduct

TCDN requires the parents of enrolled children at all times to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of TCDN is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of TCDN but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the program. **PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.** Specific conduct that not permitted includes:

- Swearing/Cursing
- Threatening of employees, children, other parents, or adults associated with TCDN
- Physical/Verbal punishment of your child or other children at TCDN
- Smoking
- Violations of the Safety Policy
- Confrontational interactions with employees, other parents, or children
- Violation of the Confidentiality Policy
- Taking photographs of children other than your own

Cell Phone Use

We ask that you do not use your cell phone once you enter a TCDN Site, and encourage you to settle or greet your child and be available to communicate with teachers.

Custodial Disputes

Custodial disputes between parents can result in difficulties for our teachers and administrators. TCDN follows all legal guidelines outlined by the PA family court system. ALL parents must have unlimited and immediate access to their child while in our program unless that access is restricted by law. When a court order restricting access exists, we are bound by its restrictions. We require a copy of any such court orders for our files. Likewise, the law states that we may not deny any parent access to his or her child unless there are specific custody orders in a child's file.

Referrals and Outside Evaluations / Special Needs Services

In the event there is a concern about a child's development or behavior, teachers will inform the Director and begin to document regular occurrences of the concern. A meeting with the family may be scheduled in which information is shared. If there is agreement that a referral to community services is needed, TCDN will provide information about community resources. For preschool children, an evaluation by Early Intervention (ages 0-3) or by the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (ages 3-5) can be set up. For school age children, the family will request an evaluation by their child's school district. Teachers will also complete questionnaires if requested by Early Intervention personnel or the school district.

With permission from the parents, a specialist from an outside agency may come to observe the child in his/her TCDN program. If it is realized that a child may be aided by ongoing support (speech/language, occupational therapy, play therapy, etc.) TCDN will accommodate such services. It is also appropriate to ask the parents for permission to speak with all services involved, to be included in service meetings, and to have a copy of the service plan (IEP, GIEP, etc.) **A copy of the child's IEP or GIEP is requested by TCDN to help teachers gather information to best support a child.** Copies are kept confidential and a release of information may occur only with the permission of families. TCDN will encourage services to be delivered within the child's normal, daily classroom routine.

Our goal is to work very closely with families of children who may need additional and/or outside support services. While the idea of early intervention may be frightening to many parents, experience shows that early intervention services for a child experiencing developmental delays enables that child to have access to the most appropriate educational programs and therapies.

Families whose children have diagnosed special needs at the time of enrollment must bring these to the attention of the Director. Consistent with a policy of nondiscrimination, TCDN will

provide reasonable accommodations to a child with a disability, as defined by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A meeting may be necessary to determine if any accommodations need to be made and/or if TCDN is able to make reasonable accommodations that do not constitute undue hardship on TCDN to serve a child.

English Language Learners

Teachers support the development and maintenance of children's home language whenever possible. We will help children to understand spoken language (particularly when children are learning a new language) by using pictures, familiar objects, body language, and physical cues and by establishing daily routines that the child can participate in even if they do not speak English.

If your child is learning English as a second language, It is very important that you communicate with teachers to be able to partner in developing strategies that support English learning while preventing the loss of the home language.

Positive Guidance, Discipline, and Behavior Management

TCDN expects children to learn and follow basic rules of respect:

- We respect other people in our actions (no hurting, pushing, fighting, screaming, throwing objects at others, biting, or mean gestures)
- We respect other people in our language (no threats, put-downs, inappropriate, aggressive or offensive language, lying)
- We respect other people's property (no stealing, damaging, or destroying any property)
- We respect and listen to the people who teach and supervise us

TCDN views discipline as a teaching experience and we use a positive approach to enable children to develop self-control and alternate behavior choices. Teachers observe children to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that might predict challenging behaviors. Teachers set a tone of respect for others and for the environment and focus on supporting children in learning social, communication, and self-regulation skills, along with conflict resolution strategies to support appropriate behavior. These could include:

- Expressing feelings and negative emotions clearly to each other ("I don't like it when you...", "Please stop saying...", "It hurts me when you..." etc.)
- Self-calming (taking deep breaths, counting to 10 before responding, walking away, etc.)
- Seeking adult help (giving children words to use or alternate behaviors to try, reminding children of rules, or reasons for rules, helping children with turn-taking or problem-solving techniques).
- Re-direction to a more appropriate activity

Teachers recognize that the development of self-discipline is a process, not a goal that is fully attainable. We attempt to minimize situations where conflicts arise, we respect different

behaviors from different age children, we describe behaviors and the impact on others, we reinforce appropriate choices and we establish logical consequences for behaviors that cannot be ignored. Teachers inform families of challenging behaviors to be able to work together to help children develop appropriate behaviors. Open, two-way communication between parents and teachers is important and parents should keep teachers informed about concerns or changes in the behavior of their child.

On occasion, children can display inappropriate behavior that can hurt or threaten other children, staff, or property. Teachers will clearly acknowledge to a child that certain behaviors do not conform to established rules and guidelines, are unacceptable, and need to stop. These behaviors include those which inflict physical or emotional harm on other children, require consistent one-on-one attention, hamper the smooth flow of the program, or physically abuse staff. In the case of a persistent or repeated problem, teachers will follow the following guidelines:

- Work with the child to develop strategies to change the behavior
- If behavior continues, it may become necessary to remove a child from his/her peers or an activity for a short period of time. Children are asked to “take a break” from other children or the activity until they are ready to rejoin the group/peer play and remember the rules of respect. When they have returned and are exhibiting cooperative/appropriate behavior or language, teachers will talk to them about what they should have done or said differently.
- If there is still inappropriate behavior or language displayed, parents will be asked for ideas on responding to children. We will work together on a collaborative plan to help children. On an occasion where inappropriate behavior is displayed, parents may be called and asked to pick their child up immediately. With family permission, school teachers or the school support personnel may be consulted to help develop a plan.
- For children with persistent, serious, challenging behaviors, teachers, families, and other professionals will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success.
- If the issue remains unresolved, or if a child is a risk to themselves or others, parents will be expected to keep the child home for a few days. Without parental cooperation, the child may be in jeopardy of permanent dismissal.

Teaching Children about Physical and Sexual Development

Children will experience many physical changes during their time in TCDN programs. We recognize and respect family members as the primary source of education in a child’s life. Children also need teachers to be accurate and honest about sexual development issues. The information that children will receive will be factual and developmentally appropriate. Teachers use correct names for all of the body parts and functions. Teachers also might explain differences between private and public behavior, appropriate touches such as back rubs at rest time and inappropriate touches. Teachers help children to establish personal physical boundaries and teach them that it’s ok to say “no” to touch.

At certain ages, it is developmentally appropriate for children to explore sexuality, sexual development and differences through touch, observation and play. Teachers respond to these situations in a respectful, open, and non-shaming manner. This may include answering children's questions, re-directing behavior as "private", bringing in resources such as books and visitors and confirming personal choice and boundaries. When appropriate, parents will be notified of these discussions and explorations.

Permanent Dismissal

TCDN reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

The Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to immediately leave TCDN property in a calm and respectful manner. TCDN will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to TCDN property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law by TCDN.

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are significant events in the lives of children. Please feel free to celebrate your preschool or Explorer child's birthday with his/her classmates if you wish. We ask that you consult with your child's teachers in advance to schedule the celebration and consult about any health and safety needs (food allergies, age-appropriate activities, etc.) We also ask for "simplicity" in birthday celebrations. A special snack or activity is suggested. In the further interest of simplicity, we ask that birthday celebrations exclude party favors, balloons or any other take home items, and we prefer that children do not exchange gifts.

TCDN asks that parents not distribute invitations to 'at home' celebrations via cubbies unless the whole class is invited. We also must respect TCDN's confidentiality policy in not sharing families' personal contact information.

Holiday Traditions and Celebration

At TCDN, we value the uniqueness of each child and his or her family. Our community is full of differences in culture, family structure, language, religion, tradition, and way of life.

Acknowledging and celebrating these differences is one of our core values.

Many holiday celebrations share the values of family, friendship, giving, sharing, and togetherness. When we think about planning holiday activities at TCDN, we ask ourselves: Are the activities meaningful to the children? Are the children's needs and interests being met? Is the activity a valuable use of children's time? We want our curriculum to provide for opportunities to respectfully educate children about our different traditions. If children are observing different holidays at the same time, the values and traditions of each child's culture should be acknowledged. It is our hope this can lead to teaching practices that embrace our understanding of and respect for, the different cultures and beliefs of our children, our families, our teachers, and our community.

Your child's teacher may ask you at the beginning of the year to share holiday and tradition information (i.e., Christmas, Diwali, Kwanza, Passover, Ramadan, Lunar New Year, etc., or even secular traditions) so that they understand what is important to your child and your family. Our philosophy is that every holiday and tradition represented in the classroom (both children and teachers) should be honored. This does not mean that every holiday of every group must be celebrated exactly the same way, but rather that all can be celebrated or discussed in some way, with none treated as "unusual." In this spirit we believe children will recognize everyone's holidays are significant and meaningful.

As a community of children, parents, and teachers, we will come together for an Autumn, Winter, and Spring Gathering. During each Gathering, each classroom (Crickets, Kangaroos, Owls, Squirrels) will have an opportunity to share with the community their unique talents, including art, dance, poetry, song, and/or theater. Duckling teachers will decide, seasonally, what level of participation or non-participation in "gatherings" that they will pursue. After the performances, classroom parents will then coordinate an activity/snack sharing within the classroom, a time to connect with classroom families.

As a classroom, children and teachers will naturally explore holidays/traditions throughout the year as children express interest. Guided conversations will help the children explore the similarities and differences among family holiday celebrations – whether it is the same holiday or different holidays. The aim is for children to understand that families are different and each family's way of celebrating or observing traditions "works" for them.

Here are a few examples of how celebration and holiday activities could look in the classroom:

- Teachers might read a story about a holiday or a cultural celebration, particularly if they know it represents the cultural celebration of a child. If children have questions, the story might be followed up with an appropriate activity that illustrates the meaning of the holiday or cultural celebration. In this way, we can provide general information about holidays in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Teachers and children might have a discussion at group time about how children in the classroom celebrate the same holiday in different ways. In this way, children can share

their personal family traditions and we can validate children's and families' holiday experiences and traditions at home.

- Teachers might invite a parent to come in to share their family's cultural traditions. In this way, we can educate and inform children about the significance of celebrations, traditions, and religions different from their own.

Research

TCDN is occasionally asked by local colleges and universities to cooperate in early childhood research. A set of procedures is developed to ensure that no project will be approved without ample opportunity for parent response. Project proposals are made available to parents. No child may participate in an approved project unless parents sign the "informed consent" form.

Publicity

As part of our programs, we take photographs and videos of children in action as they participate in classroom activities, field trips, and other events. We use photos in newsletters, on the website, in marketing materials and occasionally to acknowledge TCDN in local/regional newspapers. In addition, photographic images are used to document learning activities for families. In any use of images, names and other personal information will NOT be identified unless first discussed with parents. A part of TCDN enrollment paperwork includes a Parent Agreement/Consent Form, which acknowledges your permission for TCDN to use your child's photograph for any of the purposes described. This permission will be kept in your child's file.

Admission and Attendance

Enrollment Procedures / Forms and Permissions

Preschool enrollment – Families can apply for enrollment of their child in the preschool program by completing the Preliminary Application Form for Preschool and paying the non-refundable application fee. If no openings are available, the applicant will be put on the waiting list. Families will be contacted as space becomes available.

Out-of-School-Time enrollment – Enrollment for Explorers, Before School Club, and After School Clubs is made on a rolling basis by contacting the Office Administrator in the TCDN office. Current enrolled families are offered priority for re-enrollment in March for the following school year, if re-enrollment is made by the registration deadline. As enrollment reaches maximum capacity, children are placed on a waiting list until space becomes available. Enrollment for the Summer Club is made beginning in February, using the registration form on the flyer. There is an early bird discount for registration made by a date in April. Enrollment is weekly, on a rolling basis throughout the summer as space is available.

Upon acceptance, enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the signed Fee Agreement, non-refundable registration fee, and completion of all enrollment forms. Continued enrollment at

TCDN is contingent upon providing updated emergency contact information, health assessment, adherence to the policies and procedures of TCDN as outlined in the Family Handbook, and timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Updating Contact Information

Families are required to notify the office and program teachers immediately should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment, or anytime thereafter, changes. The Department of Human Services (DHS) requires a signature updating contact information every six months.

Enrollment Changes / Withdrawal

For all enrollment changes or program withdrawal, thirty days written notice must be given to the TCDN office.

Absence / Vacation

Please alert your child's program teachers if he/she will be absent for illness or vacation. There will be no reduction of fees for days missed due to illness, vacation, emergency closings, scheduled holidays or closings. Fees are adjusted only for a serious or prolonged illness, if requested in writing and approved by the director.

Authorized Pickup

You are required to list on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form those individuals who are authorized to pick up your child. TCDN teachers will not release your child to anyone not listed on this form. Should you need, on occasion, to have someone whom you have not listed as authorized to pick up your child, you must call in advance and provide a name and physical description of the individual. The call will be documented by a teacher on a *Request for Release of Child Form*, and identification will be requested when the individual arrives.

Release of Records

If you need to have your child's records sent outside of TCDN for any reason, you must sign a release form (available in the office.)

Financial Arrangements

Registration and Tuition Payment

After enrollment is offered, parents secure a space for their child with completion of a Fee Agreement, including payment of a registration fee. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence is to be addressed.

Tuition is paid on a monthly basis, due by the first of each month. An invoice will be put in a child's cubby or delivered to a child's site each month as a reminder of the regular monthly tuition and any additional charges. Payment may be made by cash, check or money order.

Tuition payments may be mailed to the TCDN office or placed in the secure drop boxes at each location. Automatic withdrawal from personal accounts for tuition payments may also be arranged with the TCDN Finance Manager.

Late Payment Charges

There is a late payment charge of \$25 after the fifth of each month. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, however if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Finance Manager. Alternative arrangements for payment may be approved.

Early Dismissal / Delayed Opening / School Closing Day Fees

Eligibility and registration for additional care on these days is on a separate basis. These school district dates can be found on the TCDN calendar. Families are notified, in advance by the TCDN Office, and parents must register their child by the deadline to be assured a space.

Additional Fees

A late pickup fee of \$2.50 per minute is charged after 12:45pm, for part day, after 3:30pm for PM Explorers, and after 6:00pm for full day enrollment. A \$20 charge is assessed on all returned checks.

Subsidized Care

TCDN accepts children who receive child care subsidies by the state or other outside agencies, such as Child Care Information Services (CCIS). Families must pay the difference between the subsidy amount they qualify for and TCDN tuition. Families with multiple children enrolled in the program will pay the difference between the subsidy amount they qualify for and TCDN tuition for only the child enrolled in the highest tuition program. Additional children in a family will pay a minimum of the co-pay required up to a maximum to be determined on a case by case basis by the Director. In that the reimbursement from the outside agency is determined based on the number of days a child attends any particular program, preference will be given to families who commit to and attend TCDN programs on a full time basis. Assistance may also be available through TCDN's scholarship program. TCDN reserves the right to limit the enrollment of subsidized children based on space and financial resource availability. To secure an opening, the subsidy must be in place or the parents/guardians must pay the full tuition until the subsidy is in place. Parent/guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement accompanying the enrollment contract.

Scholarship Program

TCDN offers a scholarship program to families who meet our qualification guidelines. A copy of the scholarship application is available on the website, www.tcdn.org, or in the office. The committee meets in late September/early October. Parents must be prepared to pay full tuition

until they receive notification of their scholarship status. Scholarship awards will be retroactive to the start of the school year.

Cooperative Donation

TCDN has a long history of using a cooperative model where families contribute to the organization's operation, whether it is through goods or services, or donations that help keep costs down and tuition as low as possible to maintain safe, nurturing and enriching programs for children. An aspect of TCDN's cooperative model is the fulfillment of the Annual Cooperative Donation Agreement, which currently involves a commitment at the time of enrollment to choose from two options:

1. A one-time annual monetary donation per child of \$50 or more. A portion of the donation will go directly to programming, supplies, enrichment activities or quality improvement initiatives at YOUR child's site.
2. A donation of your time or resources to plan and implement TCDN's community-wide events or organized service projects, or to help with facility improvements. Our community-wide events are vital for building our relationships with one another and for raising funds for scholarships and other needs.

We encourage families to commit their money or talents in the best and most feasible way possible for their families.

Cooperative Jobs for Tuition Reduction

Several co-op jobs are available in exchange for a decrease in tuition. These include: preschool food and milk shopper (weekly), SASC food shopper (weekly), WASC food shopper (weekly), OASC food shopper (weekly), preschool playground maintenance (monthly). As these jobs become available, notice will be provided to all families.

Preschool Program Information

Overview

We believe that our most important work with young children is to value and to preserve childhood. Our preschool classrooms build upon the excitement and curiosity that children bring to their earliest experiences in school. Designed to strengthen a young child's developing independence and social skills, we combine a focus on the individual with an increasing awareness of community. Our philosophy is based upon knowledge of the ages and stages of child development and on the understanding that each child's development is unique. Each child's experience is related to his or her developmental abilities.

Our emphasis is on the whole child; the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional aspects of each person. Our curriculum reflects the life of the classroom and respects the individual interests that children express through their play and through their interactions.

We believe that if we are successful in the implementation of our philosophy and goals, we are doing our part to create an individual love of learning and the foundation for building a better society.

Family Grouping

Central to our philosophy is a model of “family grouping”, or mixed-age grouping. Following the young toddler year (ages 1-2), classrooms are composed of children ages 2-4 years. We believe that children thrive in multi-age groupings. The younger children often follow the lead of the older children - using new language, practicing new routines and trying new skills. The older children develop leadership skills and practice skills such as helping, giving, explaining, teaching, and sharing behaviors. Multi-age classrooms also more closely resemble family units, where older and younger siblings learn from one another in natural ways. The children become a “family of learners” who support and care for each other.

Groupings and Class Placement

There are four classrooms that are part of the preschool program. One classroom is a group of 10 young toddlers, with three full time co-teachers who work with them. The other three classrooms are family-grouped, with 12 children and 2 co-teachers in the morning. In the afternoon, they are composed of children ages 2 - young 4 year olds. The pre-kindergarten children (ages 4-5) spend the morning in their family-grouped classroom and come together as a group of peers in the afternoon. This time focuses on specific kindergarten readiness skills.

Children are placed in a classroom based primarily on creating a multi-age grouping. Factors considered in the balance of classroom placement include age, gender ratio, keeping siblings together, and developmental issues. As it is already a complex balancing act, family requests for a specific classroom or teacher cannot be a factor in determining the make-up of the annual classroom lists. Classroom groups are determined over the summer and sent to families in the August family mailing.

Arrival/Departure/Parking

Upon arrival to the Preschool, parents or adults dropping off must first enter the security code to gain access and then sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet in the lobby. **Please to not share or teach your child or siblings the code. Please do not hold the door for someone who is unknown entering behind you. These practices will compromise the security of the children.** Children are required to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility. Parents should enter the classroom, help their child wash their hands, put away outerwear and belongings, and help their child get settled for the day.

Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for a parent to leave. TCDN believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, they will kiss, hug, and say goodbye to their child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The teacher present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents who are anxious can call to find out how their child has settled in. Teachers will discuss other options with parents if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

Parents should notify the teacher of any special instructions or needs for the child's day, before leaving. These special instructions include, but are not limited to medications, early pick up, alternative pick up person, health issues over the previous night, or general issues of concern for teachers to be aware.

TCDN does not provide breakfast in the morning. Parents should make sure their child has a nutritious and filling breakfast prior to arriving at TCDN, or may bring food from home for their child to eat upon arrival.

Preschool families should plan to park on College Avenue when dropping off or picking up children. **The driveway may be used only for very short periods of time and only if you park on the right and pull up as far as possible.** Emergency vehicles must be allowed to pass any car on the driveway. Please be respectful of others in following our policy.

Parents or another authorized adult are required to sign a child out of care on the sign-out sheet in the lobby. If you want someone to pick up your child whom you have not listed as authorized, and included them on the Emergency/Parental Consent Form, then you must call and give a detailed description of the person. Staff will retain written documentation of the call and ask for ID to confirm authorization. **No one who is not authorized by parent/guardian to pick up a child will be permitted to leave with the child.** Parents or other authorized adults should check the child's cubby before leaving for any incident/accident reports which require a signature. After signing your child out, you should leave the premises promptly.

Nutrition

TCDN encourages children to try a wide variety of nutritious foods in our snacks and lunches. Snacks are provided to all children mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Lunch is provided to children in preschool rooms and is prepared in the Church kitchen by the TCDN Cook. The TCDN Cook obtains Serv-Safe Certification in safe food handling and preparation. Children in the young toddler classroom bring lunch from home.

Menus are planned within the guidelines of dietary recommendations; meals and snacks balance nutritional requirements and appropriate portions throughout the day. Typical snacks include whole grain crackers/bagels, cereal, fruit or vegetables, cheese, and water. Typical lunches include a protein, fruit, vegetable, and whole-grain carbohydrate, along with 1% milk. **We may**

not serve children under the age of four, hot dogs (whole or sliced), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, raw carrot rounds, nuts, seeds, rice cakes, marshmallows, or hard candy. These all present choking hazards. 2% milk is provided at lunchtime for children in the young toddler classroom. Menus are posted on the Family Bulletin Board and in classrooms. If you feel your child will not eat what is on the menu, you may provide food from home however it must be in a labeled container and kept in your child's cubby.

The consumption of highly salted, highly sugared, and highly processed foods containing dyes and additives is kept to a minimum. While occasional sweet desserts can be enjoyed to celebrate a birthday or other occasion, families are encouraged to consider other nutritious special treats such as homemade muffins or strawberry-topped yogurt parfaits, fruit cobblers, etc. Please, no candy, gum, or sugary drinks.

For the safety of your child, families are required to provide written notification of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety policies for further information.

Families are also required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets). Families may provide food substitutions for specific foods their child is allergic to.

Families of children in the young toddler classroom provide lunch. All lunches are stored in a refrigerator in the classroom. Segmented containers labeled with your child's name work well. Teachers will keep any food not eaten by children in the lunch container for parents to see amounts eaten. Children are not permitted to share or exchange food items. Please do not send any food that needs to be warmed or reheated in a microwave. It is the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that microwaves not be used in school settings to heat food due to high incidents of uneven heating and children subsequently being burned. Please bring all cooked foods that you wish to stay warm in a thermos or in a heat-insulated container.

Items from Home

Certain articles of clothing and materials are needed by children at school. Please check the following list and be sure you have supplied and **labeled** these items:

- Two complete sets of clothing, including underwear and socks. Check often to see that these are season-appropriate and that they still fit your growing child. Replace clothes that are sent home to be laundered
- A pair of waterproof rubber boots to keep at school for rainy and snowy days
- A soft toy or stuffed animal for rest time (if this provides comfort to your child)
- Bedding for cots for children in young toddler and preschool rooms, to be brought in on Monday and taken home on Friday to be laundered
- A supply of diapers, which are clearly labeled and replaced as needed

Toys from Home

We ask that families help us adhere to our toy policy: one small soft toy for rest time or a book to share only! Learning to share and keep track of belongings can be difficult for young children. Toys from home can cause special difficulties as they frequently get broken and can cause disagreements and hurt feelings.

We have plenty of toys to play with and activities for children to do. Children are capable of understanding that there are “home rules” and “school rules”. Here are some suggestions for how to say “no” to your child in a positive way, when your child wants to bring toys to school:

- “School has a rule: only one soft toy for nap.”
- “There are lots of toys at school. This is a home toy.”
- “Can you tell me what your teacher’s agreement is about toys from home?”
- “I will keep this toy safe for you, at home or in the car, until you leave school.”

Nap / Rest Time

All full day children not in the pre-kindergarten group are expected to participate in a time of quiet rest or nap after lunch. Nap cots are provided and each child will have his or her own designated cot. Bedding for cots is provided by families, to be taken home on Friday for laundering. The schedule for napping depends on the individual child. Teachers will note the times each child slept on a chart in the classroom.

Toileting

TCDN believes children develop a readiness to use the toilet at their own pace. Toilet learning is a process and it will ultimately lead to your child developing an important self-help skill, as long as he/she is ready. Our toilet-training practices are based on the following philosophy:

- This should be a non-stressful experience that is appropriate to each child’s individual development and should involve the child as well as be a partnership between parents and classroom teachers.
- We respect the child’s readiness to begin to use the toilet
- Toilet learning should be consistent between home and school. Communication between parents and the teachers is critical to ensure that your child is comfortable and confident about using the toilet.
- We will never force a child to sit on the toilet.
- We will never bribe a child to use the toilet.
- Accidents are part of the learning process. We will never punish or shame children in any way for accidents or require them to clean up after themselves. They will be asked to remove soiled clothing and put on clean clothes with as much independence as they are capable of.
- Children will not be allowed to remain in wet or soiled clothing following accidents. Please ensure that there is an adequate supply of clothes during the process.

- At least two successful weekends in underwear at home helps develop the confidence for a child to try wearing underwear at school.

TV / Computer Access

TCDN supports the philosophy that children learn best through active exploration of their environment. As television is not an interactive medium, we do not provide open television viewing for children. Occasional, short computer video that relates to classroom curriculum may be shown to children, and as children grow, they may be offered the opportunity to access technology for curriculum purposes.

Curriculum

We believe that learning is relevant to everything that happens in TCDN programs. Every day consists of a balance of active play, quiet play, fresh air, meals, nap, and diapering/toileting needs. Teachers view both planned and spontaneous learning activities as opportunities for children to acquire knowledge and skills, and foster a sense of wonder, curiosity, and discovery. Hands-on, experiential learning is valued through actions, relationships, inquiries and repetition. Within their play and exploration, children develop social skills, cognitive abilities and physical awareness.

In the preschool classrooms, we follow an Emergent Curriculum approach and, accordingly, our themes, projects and studies most often come from and follow the ideas and interests of the children in each class. Children and teachers together develop questions to explore and activities to extend and enrich learning. You will seldom see all the classrooms engaged in the same study at the same time. The theory of the Emergent Curriculum is that children will be far more interested in a topic that is meaningful and important to them. Teachers watch and listen to children, document their play with observations and photos, and offer ideas and resources to support and extend the topic. The goal is to inspire delight, curiosity and inquiry in each child. We believe that this approach builds intrinsic motivation and a long-term love of learning.

Within an Emergent Curriculum exploration, teachers will emphasize a developmentally appropriate approach, acknowledging the unique development of each child in the “family group” as they plan activities.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a valuable part of the preschool daily schedule. Research and reflection has led us to understand the importance of not only times of gross motor play, but also connecting children to the natural world for their intellectual, social and physical development. Weather-permitting, children go outside at least twice, daily. An hour of outdoor play each time is preferred, and teachers are encouraged to conduct curriculum learning activities outdoors, as well as indoors.

We ask that you provide a change of clothing in case children get muddy, and a pair of boots to be able to enjoy gentle rain and splashing in puddles.

Field Trips

Field Trips are permitted and encouraged in TCDN programs. TCDN's focus is on the safety of children when providing opportunities for them to learn through community environments or when beneficial to enhance a curriculum strand. Field trips are categorized into trips within walking distance (at the discretion of teachers and requiring a notification form to be completed and given to the director), trips within walking distance where children have extensive contact with the public, and trips that require transportation (the latter two requiring approval from the Director in advance and permission from families). When taking a trip of any type, teachers follow established procedures of safety and precaution at all times. Families are always welcome to accompany classrooms on field trips and should inform teachers when interested, however the Department of Human Services requires us to obtain State Clearances from chaperones.

Child Observations

Teachers are responsible for observations of children in all developmental domains. Observations are used as documentation of children's play, behaviors, and interactions to assess developmental progress and to guide curriculum. Methods of observation include checklists, written anecdotes, photographs, and collections of children's work.

Assessment / Family-Teacher Conferences

Information from child observations is used to prepare child developmental assessments three times a year. The first assessment period occurs after the first 45 days of the school year (mid-late October). The second and third assessment periods occur in February and May. Each assessment period is followed by a Parent/Teacher Conference opportunity to share information with families. TCDN uses Work Sampling and/or Ounce assessment standards as a tool and enters assessment information into the state Early Learning Network system.

Connection between Child Observations, Assessments, Curriculum

To develop an excellent early learning program for children, TCDN teachers link child observation, child assessment, and curriculum activities to maximize a child's growth and development. Using various observation techniques, ongoing documentation of a child's developmental progress will be carried out throughout the year. Observation information will be used to assess a child's strengths, needs, and interests. Assessments will be used for creating individual goals for children, to plan curriculum activities, to provide information for family/teacher conferences, and for referral to community resources. Curriculum will reflect opportunities for teachers to foster developmentally appropriate practice and for children to acquire knowledge and skill along with a sense of wonder, inquiry, and desire to learn. This process will combine to form an individualized learning program for all children.

Communication

A variety of methods are used to communicate information to families. Communication vehicles include brief face-to-face opportunities at drop off or pick up times, individual notes in cubbies, phone calls, daily emails of curriculum highlights, the Duckling Daily Report for young toddlers, flyers and memos throughout the year, information posted on Family Bulletin Boards, email messages from Administration, Open House opportunities, articles in the seasonal newsletter, *Stepping Stones*, and the website.

In addition, families have conference opportunities to express feedback to teachers and an annual Family Survey opportunity to express feedback to Administration. At all times, parents are encouraged to contact the Director or a Board member to discuss relevant issues.

Family Work Day

Each fall and spring the Preschool schedules a Family Work Day to clean, repair, build, etc. both the indoor classrooms and outside playground. We encourage attendance/ participation in at least one of the two scheduled work days. A sign-up sheet is posted identifying the various jobs we need help with. Family Work Day is not only beneficial to your child's program but is a wonderful opportunity to meet other families.

Transitions

TCDN encourages and implements a variety of transition activities to prepare children and families for transition into TCDN programs, between TCDN classrooms and programs, and exiting TCDN into the community.

Families new to TCDN are encouraged to visit the program they are enrolling their child in before enrollment begins. Families are asked to read the Family Handbook as a requirement of initial enrollment, and should meet with the Program Coordinator or the Director, if necessary, to ask any questions regarding TCDN policies or procedures. Open House opportunities are scheduled late summer, prior to the start of the school year.

Families with young toddlers will receive an Intake Conference prior to enrollment to share information about routines.

Families with preschool children may visit with their child and spend time in the classroom prior to enrollment. Individual arrangements can be made to ease transition according to specific, individual needs.

Young toddlers transitioning into preschool classrooms will visit the classroom with a current teacher several times prior to the transition. Young toddler teachers prepare children for changes in routine, such as use of paper cups, placing trash in trash can, etc. and prepare *Graduate Notes* to share with preschool teachers. Children will also spend time in the larger playground with

close supervision by current teachers. The goal is for the child to have familiarity with the new classroom, teachers, and playground prior to the change.

Preschool children transitioning to the pre-kindergarten Cricket program will be prepared by their preschool classroom teachers. Following lunch, they will move into the Cricket classroom for the remainder of their day. There is not a scheduled nap time for Crickets, however if children need a period of rest an opportunity is provided. Families receive assessment information from both morning classroom teachers and afternoon Cricket teachers during this year.

Pre-Kindergarten children transitioning into Kindergarten and the Explorer program make several visits to the Explorer program site towards the end of the school year. The Cricket Camp program in the summer is offered to further increase a child's familiarity with transition into kindergarten and the TCDN Explorer program. Open House opportunities during Kindergarten registration time and before the school year starts are important opportunities for parents to learn about changes to their child's TCDN programming, responsibilities (packing a lunch, etc.), varying schedules on school closing days and modified schedule days, transportation arrangements, and connection between school and TCDN.

Out-of-School-Time Program Information

Overview

TCDN's goal in the various OST programs is to meet the individual needs of school age children by enriching their experiences outside of school. We enable children to feel as though the program is their place to develop relationships, be physically active, pursue interests, or work on homework. We provide a unique opportunity within an informal learning environment, for children of varying ages to learn together.

In close proximity to WSSD schools, our programs offer a convenient location, extended programming on early dismissal and many school closing days, and quality programming to support families.

Notification of Absence

It is extremely important to let program staff know if your child will be absent. In an effort to maintain accountability for the safety of children, teachers need confirmation of an absence. Without this notification, valuable time away from children is taken by teachers to follow up on absences. **It is not sufficient to only notify school district personnel of your child's absence** or to assume a school teacher will tell TCDN of a change in pick-up. All locations have email addresses, telephone answering machines, and message books for your convenience.

Arrival / Departure / Parking

Upon arrival to the Before School Club and the AM Explorer programs, adults dropping off must sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet in the parent information area. Children who arrive to programs on school district buses (PM Explorers, WASC and OASC), who arrive escorted by school district personnel (PM Explorers), or who are released from school to meet in the cafeteria (AM Explorers, SASC) are greeted and attendance is taken by TCDN staff. Children who depart TCDN programs to attend school (BSC, AM Explorers) are escorted to the bus or to school by TCDN staff. **All families are responsible for signing their children out at the end of the day. TCDN teachers will only release children to persons authorized to pick up your child and listed in the Emergency Contact and Permission Form. To authorize a person to pick up your child whom you have not listed as authorized, you must call the site and provide a name and detailed description of the person. The call will be documented and teachers will ask to see identification when the person arrives. Without following these procedures, we will not release your child.**

Please be aware of the late pick-up additional fee. To avoid this \$2.50/minute charge, we suggest you list someone who is authorized to pick up your child that TCDN staff can call when there are traffic or train delays.

To avoid ticketing when parking, please make sure you are aware of any areas where you are prohibited from parking.

Transportation to and from Programs

The Wallingford-Swarthmore School District provides bus transportation to and from TCDN programs for children enrolled in the district. Bus schedules are available in late August each year.

WSSD Delayed Opening, Early Dismissal, and School Closing Days

On scheduled delayed openings, school will not begin until 10:45, and there will be a modified AM and PM Kindergarten schedule. TCDN will extend the BSC to operate until 10:45. There will be busing 2 hours later than usual for the children going to NPE and WES. Prior enrollment is required; extra charge and form available on TCDN website. The Explorer programs will operate on a modified schedule. The AM Explorer program will not start until 10:30 on these days, but will extend until 1:45 (at the latest). The busing will be in place approximately 1 hour later than usual. The PM Explorer program will not start until 12:30 (at the earliest) and end at 3:30.

On weather-related 2-hour delays, TCDN will open 1-hour later, at 8:15am. BSC children may come an hour later. Explorer children will follow the modified schedule explained above.

On scheduled early dismissal half days, all after school programs will operate at their individual location, beginning at dismissal time. The Middle School will dismiss at 11:05am and the elementary schools will dismiss at 12:30pm. Registration and payment for these days must be made in advance. Extra charge amounts and the enrollment form is available on the website. You must register and pay by the due date for your child to have care on these days. We are unable to offer the option to trade 3:30-6:00pm care for 11:05 am/12:30pm – 3pm care. (Kindergarten children have regular operation hours on these days.)

On scheduled school closing days, one or two sites (usually SASC and/or WASC) will be open for families who need care. You must register and pay by the due date to be guaranteed a space as staffing is planned on the due date. Extra charge amounts and the form is on the TCDN website. You may choose to enroll your child for their regularly scheduled time, in which case there is no additional charge.

Nutrition

TCDN provides snacks for children enrolled in all OST programs. Explorer children bring lunch from home. Menus are planned within the guidelines of dietary recommendations and balance USDA nutritional requirements, along with appropriate portions. Typical snacks include whole grain crackers/bagels, cereal, fruit or vegetables, yogurt, and cheese. Water is always available. The consumption of highly salted, highly sugared, and highly processed foods containing dyes and additives is kept to a minimum. Please do not allow your child to have gum, sugar drinks, or candy accessible.

For the safety of your child, families are required to provide written notification of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety policies for further information. Families are also required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets, religious restrictions, etc.)

Curriculum

Explorer Program

The TCDN Explorer Program provides an alternate learning space which complements the WSSD Kindergarten program. The curriculum focus is on facilitating children's self-initiated play, developing relationships with staff and other children, understanding others, and exploring thematic topics that emerge from the interests of both staff and children. Learning activities incorporate Pennsylvania Learning Standards and include the following:

- Literacy development with reading, writing, dramatic theater and poetry
- Math skills, making charts and graphs, counting, number recognition, weighing, measuring, estimating and money
- Science and nature exploration

- Arts & crafts, dramatic play, music and culture study
- Listening and critical thinking skills

Explorers have a foreign language lesson once a week and end their year with a culminating production, shared with families. Families are always encouraged to share activities, photos, recipes, games, etc. as it relates to an exploration. Monthly theme activities are posted and periodic letters of information are sent home.

Before / After School Club Programs

In TCDN OST programs, children have a voice in curriculum activities. The role of teachers is to provide activity explorations and learning experiences in areas that are of interest to children. We try to provide a variety of choices to meet the needs of all children, and meet as many interests as possible. To ensure a variety of activities, teachers work together to plan activities that are coded to PA Learning Standards. Group games and outdoor play, self-selected play that offers children the opportunity to build relationships and develop socialization skills, and opportunities for children to learn new skills in project activities, are all offered on a daily basis. Children should always feel they can talk to a teacher if they would like to explore something that has not been offered.

The Summer Club

As a summer camp for children entering 1st through 6th grades, The Summer Club balances the freedom of choice and play with a variety of enriching thematic activities, guests and field trips. Children experience art, music, theater, science & nature, woodworking, sports & games, and a variety of other special activities. Field trips and community explorations give children the opportunity to enjoy parks, museums, musical theater, environmental centers, and recreational venues. The Summer Club includes abundant water play throughout the summer.

Service Learning

TCDN believes in the value of involving children in meaningful community service activities to teach civic responsibility and strengthen a sense of community. Various projects have included contributions to Chester Children's Chorus, the SPCA, and Canine Partners for Life.

Homework

A quiet place and opportunity is provided for children to spend some time working on homework. A teacher is available for assistance, if necessary. Families who would like to request their child spend some time on homework, may discuss this with program teachers.

Developmental Progress Reports

Program staff is assigned children to observe throughout the year, and developmental assessments are completed twice, annually, three times for Explorers. Families receive a copy of this assessment and are offered the opportunity to meet with staff for a conference. Families are encouraged to arrange a conference with teachers at any time when it is helpful to share information about behavior or challenging issues.

Electronic Devices

TCDN does not allow the use of personal electronic devices within our programs. Although access to the internet is a rich source of information and communication, it also has the potential to be abused in a learning community. TCDN cannot be responsible for the safety of personal devices and prefers that children use their time to engage in physically active, social or creative activities. On occasion, it can be acceptable to use the internet for research or educational use. TCDN has lap tops available for this use with children.

Transitions

Kindergarten children in the Explorer program may transition to an after school program as part of their day. The increased group size and numbers of older children may be overwhelming to younger children, at first. It is recommended that families bring their child to visit the after school program at the end of the previous school year, or prior to enrollment, to introduce children to the program.

Swarthmore After School Club (SASC) and Wallingford After School Club (WASC) children transitioning into the older After School Club (OASC) after their 3rd grade year, are offered the opportunity to visit the OASC in June prior to the end of the school year. In addition, families may visit the OASC with their child during an Open House opportunity late summer prior to the start of school.

Children aging out of the OASC are offered several transition activities, preparing them for being home alone, including a visit from a police officer to discuss best safety practices. Information is also provided to families as a way to address safety issues with their children.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety Regulations

TCDN will maintain compliance with all local and state health and safety regulations including but not limited to reporting communicable diseases in children, universal standard precaution practices of hand washing and use of gloves to control blood borne pathogens, site safety checks, proper storage and service of food items, promoting nutritional snacks, and ongoing training in Red Cross Pediatric First Aid/CPR and Fire Safety.

Pre-enrollment Requirements

Each family is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information and return it to the TCDN office before the child's first day of attendance. Licensing requirements require that this information include a Child Health Report, including a physical examination completed by a licensed healthcare professional and a record of all immunizations.

If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, please ask the Director for an immunization waiver and discuss the waiver allowances.

Asthma and Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the Asthma and Allergy Action Plan form (part of the pre-enrollment packet), detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, and corresponding physician's orders and procedural guidelines related to the prevention and treatment of the child's asthma or allergy. This form must be updated every six months.

If your child requires treatment for asthma or allergies, parents must provide the medication and complete a Medication Log, which provides specific instructions for administering medication and releases TCDN from liability for administering treatment to children. If teachers need to be trained in the use of any device to administer medication, parents should arrange a meeting to train teachers prior to your child's enrollment.

Due to the extreme nature of child allergic reactions to some foods, TCDN may need to restrict a certain item (i.e. peanuts) from entering the premises. These allergies can be so severe that exposure can result in an anaphylactic reaction. Parents will be notified of the particular restrictions as needed.

Communicable Diseases / Illness

TCDN follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the *Caring for Our Children Manual* of model health policies and procedures, written by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. A copy of this Manual is at all locations .available upon request for review, and is also available online.

TCDN cannot care for sick children. We do not have the facilities, the space, nor can we endanger the health of other children or our teachers. We ask that you respect this and do not bring sick children to school.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you and request that you come for him/her as soon as possible. In the event that you cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency name

you have provided. It is important that you explain our procedure to the emergency person you have chosen to act for you before giving us the name.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if:

- They exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be able to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations found in the Caring for our Children Manual. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the staff so that the parents of the children in the program may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Only the communicable disease information will be shared. TCDN will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.
- They have a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 101° Fahrenheit or more as taken under the arm. Children excluded due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours. If your child is sent home with a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum.
- They have loose bowels or diarrhea, which occur 3 or more times in a 24 hour period of time. Children wearing diapers with loose bowels as a side effect of medication must follow the same rule of exclusion.
- They are unable to participate in the normal routines of the daily schedule and the staff believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the program. (See the Notification of Absence / Vacation Policy).

Medication

TCDN will only dispense medication that is prescribed by a physician and in its original, labeled container (including inhalers). Parents must give medication to teachers to be refrigerated or put in a locked container and must complete a Medication Log, detailing dates, time and amount to be given. Any over-the-counter medication necessary must be accompanied by a physician's note with explicit dosage and administration instructions, and must be in an original, labeled container. For ongoing treatments, parents are responsible for making sure that all prescription medication is replaced prior to the expiration date.

Please DO NOT send any medication in with your child (i.e. in a backpack).

Pediculosis (Lice)

When a case of Pediculosis (commonly referred to as head lice) is identified, the following measures will be taken to minimize further spread and assist in the elimination of the problem.

- The infested child will be sent home from TCDN to receive treatment by the parents, who should consult with their pediatrician.
- TCDN teachers will check other children if symptoms are noticed.
- Written notice will be posted to all parents notifying them that a case of head lice has been identified in their child's program. Parents will be asked to inspect their child's head and to report any findings of head lice.
- Any sources of potential infestation such as "dress-ups", sofa cushions, mats, bedding on cots, will be disinfected or removed from the classroom.
- Treatment of head lice at home must include removal of all lice and their associated nits before returning to school.
- Upon return to school, the child will be reexamined by TCDN staff. If the child still has lice, he or she will again be sent home to have the treatment repeated. Periodic reexamination will continue, as needed, to determine that no re-infestation has occurred.

For additional information: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsheet_head_lice.htm

Biting

TCDN recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 1/2 year old ages. Parents with children this age should expect that their children may be bitten, or will bite another child. The teachers understand that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. Teachers will not punish or harshly discipline children for biting behavior, but instead will put a response plan in action. This includes practicing prevention, limiting frustrations, using appropriate words with children involved, accentuating the positive, and recording circumstances in an effort to identify reasons for biting. Parents and teachers will work together to identify methods and strategies to curb the behavior. Although acknowledging that parents may be upset, uncooperative parents or requests to have the biting child removed from the program will not be tolerated.

If there is a biting incident, the bite will be washed thoroughly with soap and water. Ice may be applied to reduce swelling. Parents of both children will be notified with a phone call or by incident report. The staff will not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by the child's family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

Outdoor Play / Sunscreen / Insect Repellent

TCDN strongly believes in the value of outdoor play and schedule it as an integral part of our day. In addition to supporting physical movement, sensory stimulation and allowing an

opportunity for fresh air and experiencing the sense of freedom playing outdoors can bring, outdoor play can also provide a valuable connection between our curriculum and the natural world. As an extension of the classroom, outdoor spaces allow for a focus on environmental science, sustainability and daily opportunities for children to observe elements of nature and develop a sense of respect and appreciation for the natural environment.

TCDN teachers follow weather watch alerts to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play. To ensure that children are protected against cold, heat, sun and insect injury, we ask families to follow these guidelines:

- Parents are asked to send clothing to allow layering for cold weather outside play. Children enrolled in the after school programs must have appropriate clothing for teachers to allow them to play outdoors.
- Boots/hats/hoods allow children outdoor play opportunities to experience the joy of rain and/or snow. It is recommended that preschool children leave a pair of boots in their child's cubby.
- Parents are asked to apply sunscreen in the morning with UVB and AVA protection or SPF 15 or higher. TCDN staff will reapply later in the day with our supply and you will need to sign a permission form available in the classroom/program. Families who prefer a different product must supply this product, clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Similarly, we must have a permission form signed to apply insect repellent. You must bring in the repellent, labeled for staff to apply
- Hats, long-sleeved shirts and long pants in cool, light-weight fabrics in the summer can provide additional protection from the sun and from biting insects and ticks.
- Appropriate footwear in the summer provides increased safety from blocks or other heavy objects that might fall on feet, and allows children to run, climb, kick, jump, etc. without fear of shoes falling off. Shoes without open toes and with closed backs are recommended.

Seat Belts

Injuries suffered while riding in cars are the number one preventable cause of death in young children. The state of Pennsylvania requires the use of seat belts in cars for all riders. As mandated reporters, TCDN teachers consider observing the lack of seat belt use to be neglectful and will report those observed as such.

TCDN will obtain bus transportation with seat belts for preschool children when on a field trip. Rental buses for field trips that are part of Summer Club/Cricket Camp will not have seat belts; however strict rules regarding behavior on busses will apply.

Supervision/Accountability

Children on the facility premises and on facility excursions off the premises are supervised by a staff person at all times. Site Coordinators will ensure that appropriate staff/child ratios are maintained at all times. Staff is assigned a group of children to maintain compliance with the appropriate staff/child ratio. A system assigning children to staff that ensures supervision during times of transition is developed at each Site.

Facility Security

TCDN is committed to the safety and security of all children enrolled and is working to provide a secure environment at all sites.

The TCDN preschool facility is secured with coded entry. The code is changed four times a year and an alert to the change will be emailed to families. Preschool families are asked to respect this important security measure and not share the code with anyone, allow siblings to access the code, allow anyone to enter following them, and make sure the security door is closed when leaving. If you do not recognize an individual entering behind you, we request that you do not hold the door open for them. If someone does not know the code, they are to come up to the office where an Administrative employee will welcome them and assist. Contractors who need to access the preschool program will be given a separate security code which will be dissolved after completion of their work. When contractors need to work during program operation hours, they will be supervised.

Both the SASC and OASC have added enhanced security on the doors to the programs, requiring either an individual key code or a security card to be used to gain entrance to the facility.

In all TCDN programs, community police are aware of TCDN as a program that serves young children and are provided with TCDN Emergency Operations Plans. Procedures of security include lock-down measures and routine drills to prepare for an emergency alert in the area, annual practice to move to an alternate location, and an internal code phrase to alert a staff member to call 911 if help is needed.

Incident / Accident Reports

Minor injuries:

Should your child be involved in a minor incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete a report in the “Boo-Boo” book (carbon copy book) after attending to the child. If First Aid was required by staff, the procedure will be described in the report. Parents are required to sign the report at pick up, and will receive a copy. If you wish to discuss the incident further, please arrange a meeting with the Site Coordinator.

Minor injuries requiring parental notification and possible medical treatment:

A parent will be notified of any seemingly minor incident that involves their child's neck or head, immediately after the child is attended to by the teacher. It will be the parent's decision whether or not to seek medical treatment for the child. Should your child be involved in a minor incident/accident that requires a visit to a physician or ER, the parent will be notified to come pick up the child to take them to the appropriate medical care. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact persons will be called. The person picking up the child must sign the Incident Report and will receive a copy to take to the medical provider.

Major injuries requiring parental notification and immediate medical attention:

Should your child be involved in a major incident/accident that requires immediate medical attention, the staff will call 911 and a parent will be notified to meet the child at the ER. An attempt to wait for a parent will be made if safe or at parent request. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called. A staff person will accompany the child to the ER and take a copy of the Incident Report and Emergency Contact form. A parent must sign the original copy of the Incident Report within 24 hours. If this is not possible, an administrator will initial the form with an explanation as to why the parent was not available. TCDN is required to notify the Department of Human Services (DHS) within 48 hours of the incident.

Injuries are tracked monthly to identify any safety issues that may need remediation.

Emergency Plans and Closings

Emergency Plan / Alternate Safe Location

TCDN has a detailed Emergency Operations Plan that defines our response plans for a variety of types of emergencies.

Highlights of the Plan:

Depending on the circumstances of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- Building Evacuations - Children will be evacuated to a safe area on the grounds surrounding the building in the event of a fire, etc.
- In-Place Sheltering - Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- Evacuation Away from the Building - Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the immediate area. In this case, children will be taken to a safe location.
- Modified Operation - May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These activities are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building

problems that make it unsafe for children (such as utility disruptions), but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

If we move children to any other location in the event of an emergency, teachers will take the classroom emergency books, which include parent emergency contact numbers, medications, a bag of emergency materials, etc.

Communication:

In an emergency, our power sources may be shut down. Every effort will be made to keep parents informed rapidly as to what we are doing and where we are to be found. The Director, Office Administrator, and Site Coordinators will implement the communication plan.

- Telephone - we will call each family's home, work, and/or cell phone, talking in person or leaving a message. Please be sure we have correct and updated contact information at all times
- TCDN voicemail - will be updated
- TCDN Email - brief messages will be sent to our entire email list and on the TCDN home page
- Signs on the main doors will be posted

We ask that you not call during an emergency. This will keep the main telephone lines free to make emergency calls and relay information, if we are able. We specifically urge you to not attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

Unfolding Events:

The Director will be in contact with the Board President and will continue to evaluate information provided by police, radio and internet sources and will follow the public emergency broadcast system guidance, if available, to be able to respond to events as they unfold.

Fire / Emergency Drills

Fire drills are held at each TCDN location once each month. Evacuation routes for fire drills and other emergencies are posted near the exit doors in each location. If the fire drill occurs while you are present, follow the lead of the teachers and evacuate with us. Do not re-enter the building until we have been cleared to do so. Do not remove your child from the premises without notifying a teacher.

Snow or Emergency Closings

Announcements of the closing or altered operation hours of TCDN will be made over major Philadelphia radio and television stations, the TCDN website at www.tcdn.org (on the home page), and via your e-mail.

TCDN plans follow the WSSD decisions regarding school closings, late openings and early dismissals, and include the following:

- If the WSSD closes all schools, TCDN will also be closed. Announcements are occasionally posted the night before and are usually posted by 6:30 am.
- If the WSSD opens 2 hours late, TCDN preschool and Before School programs will open 1 hour late, and the Explorer program will operate on a modified schedule.
- If the school district dismisses early, the TCDN Explorer program will close along with the school district and the preschool programs will close 1 hour after the school district closing time.
- If the school district dismisses early and/or after school activities are canceled, the after school programs will not operate.

See the TCDN Emergency Closing Severe Weather Policies posted on the website for more detailed information.

Families and TCDN

Website:

www.tcdn.org

Please be sure to regularly visit the TCDN website. Current news/events and the fiscal year calendar can be found on the home page. All information regarding registration, early dismissal and school closing days, and enrollment forms, can be found on the Parent Tab. Board minutes can be found under About Us, Board of Directors.

Communication

A variety of methods are used to communicate information to families. In addition to our detailed Family Handbook and web site, we have family-teacher conferences, quarterly TCDN newsletters (Stepping Stones), frequent e-mail communication from the administrative office to remind families of various program/center events, daily e-mail communication from classroom teachers at the preschool site, communication books at all out-of-school program sites. A family bulletin board and posted signs at each program site provides information about events and other resources. We work hard on creating an environment where teachers work in partnership with families establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing two-way communication. We encourage families to raise any concerns and work collaboratively with teachers or administration to find mutually satisfying solutions.

We ask that families carefully and thoughtfully complete the Family Questionnaire that you will receive each year in the late spring. This is an opportunity for you to provide feedback on many aspects of TCDN operation.

Please remember that the classroom is not an appropriate place for conversations about child behaviors as we do not want to discuss children in front of them, or have conversations among parents. While we love parents to make connections with one another, we ask that such conversations take place in the hallways or outside.

Family Grievance Procedure

In our day-to-day communication with families, we strive to resolve issues as they come up, however, from time to time a parent may feel that an issue has not been satisfactorily addressed or resolved and may wish to pursue the matter further. It is essential that parents are heard when they raise a concern. All parent concerns should be addressed initially at the level closest to the event in an effort to achieve a resolution. The levels through which a grievance resolution should proceed are:

- The classroom/program teachers
- The Director (cindy@tcdn.org 610-544-4555 x224)
- The Board of Directors

Family Surveys

To ensure that we are always meeting our mission and the needs of the TCDN community, parents will be given a survey each year in the late spring. Please take advantage of this opportunity to provide your feedback. Many changes are made in policy and operational procedures as a result of information gained in family surveys. This information is vital to maintaining the quality of our programs. If your child(ren) participate in multiple programs you will receive one for each program.

Family Involvement / Volunteering

Families are integral to the cooperative spirit of TCDN and are encouraged to play an active role in their child's program. You can play an active role by communicating with teachers, attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in curriculum-related activities, and by sharing talents, skills, professions and unique aspects of your culture to help educate others in the group.

Additional ways of contributing to a cooperative atmosphere of involvement at TCDN includes donating materials, participating in social and fund-raising events, and joining Committees, Task Force groups, and the Board of Directors.

Staff Employment by Families

Families of TCDN are strongly discouraged from offering any employment to TCDN staff. TCDN is not responsible for actions of any employee who accepts employment from any parent of TCDN children. If employment is offered to any TCDN employee, arrangements are to be made on personal time and NOT during TCDN work hours. **TCDN employees may not transport a child to or from TCDN and may not accept employment from a family for whom they provide direct care.**

Resources That Might Be Helpful

TCDN Families,

Below is a list of school and community stakeholders whom we work with or use as resources. If you know of anyone to add, please let us know.

Stakeholders for TCDN

Schools

Wallingford Swarthmore School District (WSSD)
200 S. Providence Road,
Wallingford, PA 19086.
610-982-3470

Wallingford Elementary School
20 S. Providence Road
Wallingford, PA 19086
610-565-7845

Strath Haven Middle School
200 Providence Road
Wallingford, PA 19086
610-892-3470

Swarthmore Rutledge Elementary School
100 College Ave
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-544-5700

Nether Providence Elementary School
410 Moore Road
Wallingford, PA 19086
610-892-3470

Community Resources

Delaware County Intermediate Unit – If you think your child is not growing and learning the same way as the other children, contact:

Delaware County Early Intervention (Birth to Two): 610-713-2406

Delaware County Intermediate Unit (Three to Five): 610-565-0618

CONNECT: 1-800-692-7288

Child Care Information System (CCIS) - assists eligible parents with their child care costs. The program serves children from birth to 13 years. CCIS administers the funding for subsidized day care. For further information contact CCIS, 110 S. 69th Street, Upper Darby, PA 19082, 1-800-831-3117 or 484-461-6400.

PA Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – If you are a working family, but do not have health insurance for your children, you may have your children enrolled in the CHIP program, a free or low cost Commonwealth program. Call 1-800-986-KIDS for more information.

Department of Public Welfare – If you feel that you have been discriminated against, contact the Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Equal Opportunity, Room 223, Health & Welfare Building, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105, 717-787-4592.

Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) – ECELS provides health professional consultation, training, and technical assistance to improve early childhood education programs in the Commonwealth. If you are seeking information regarding health, including vaccines and immunization, call 1-800-24-ECELS or 484-446-3003.

Limited English Proficiency – It is TCDN’s responsibility to ensure that all clients have meaningful and equal access to services. If you need translative or interpretive services, TCDN will contact the corresponding appropriate agency.

Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-328-8000

**Swarthmore Fire
Department**
121 Park Ave
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-544-2732

Swarthmore Library
121 Park Ave
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-543-0436

**Swarthmore College Scott
Horticultural Foundation**
500 College Ave
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-328-8496

**Swarthmore Police
Department**
121 Park Ave
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-543-0123

Pediatricians and Hospitals

The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

CHOP Pediatric & Adolescent Care Media
176 S. New Middletown Rd., Suite 202
Media, PA 19063
610-284-0200

**CHOP Pediatric & Adolescent Care
Springfield**
196 W. Sproul Road
Crozer Keystone Healthplex, Suite 205
Springfield, PA 19064
610-604-0888

Crozer-Keystone Health System

[Crozer-Chester Medical
Center](#)
One Medical Center
Boulevard
Upland, PA 19013
610-447-2000
610-447-2969 TDD

[Taylor Hospital](#)
175 East Chester Pike
Ridley Park, PA 19078
610-595-6000

[Springfield Hospital](#)
190 West Sproul Road
Springfield, PA 19064
610-328-8700
610-328-8725 TDD

Main Line Health Systems

Riddle Hospital
1068 West Baltimore Pike
Media, PA 19063
484-580-1000

