

Infant
Toddler
Children's
Center

PARENT HANDBOOK

Childhood Lives Here

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The Infant Toddler Children's Center (ITC) is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational corporation, licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (EEC).

The Non-Profit Childcare Model

ITC is a non-profit organization. What does this mean for you, as parents? First and foremost, it means you have chosen a center for your family that is mission-driven rather than profit-driven. It means our budget is constructed every year so that we can provide the highest quality care by hiring the best possible teachers and supporting their continued growth as professionals through job-embedded professional development and participation in offerings from the larger early childhood community. It means that our resources are carefully considered and put to work to maintain our facility and grounds, support our low teacher-child ratios, and assure that we keep on the cutting edge of the field by committing to a research-based, development-driven, child-centered education and care model. ITC is unique in its outlook and preparation, as well as in its carefully crafted practices and deeply held conviction that children are worthy of and deserve an exceptional childhood.

Federal I.D. Number

ITC is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational corporation. ITC's Federal ID number is 04-2734010.

Nondiscrimination

The Infant Toddler Children's Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or marital status in the administration of its admission, education, scholarships, benefits, financial aid or personnel policies.

Licensing

ITC is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (EEC). Our license is renewed every other year in January and our center is visited annually by our licensor.

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1 - Introducing the Infant Toddler Children's Center

ITC is a trusted, innovative early learning center that supports families and that collaborates with children as they learn about themselves, each other and the world.

Our Mission

To provide the highest quality, relationship-based care and early education reflecting our core values, while maintaining a well-managed and financially stable organization

Our Vision

To be a highly visible leader and advocate in the Early Childhood Community for responsive caregiving and early childhood education, while fostering a vibrant community that attracts and retains the best teachers and inspires parents and alumni to contribute their skills and resources.

Our Non-Negotiables

Chosen by Teachers and Parents, 2025

- We believe every child is unique, capable, curious, expressive, and competent.
- We listen to each other with all our senses, including our hearts.
- We nurture a sense of belonging to one community.
- We meet children, teachers, and families where they are and build trusting relationships across our community.
- We value parents as partners.
- We respect and value differences.
- We believe children learn through play; we honor the spirit of play.
- The Natural Environment is an extension of our classrooms. We cultivate a love of nature and joyfully explore it in all weather and all seasons.
- We provide an environment that ensures the health and safety of every member of our community.
- We foster curiosity and creativity.
- We value everyone's voice - Teachers, Children, and Parents.

Relationships Matter

- We believe that above all, children need to feel welcomed and known in our community. A teacher's first job with children is to establish a relationship with every child, getting to know each child's unique personality and approach to learning.
- We want every family and visitor to feel welcome and respected. From daily life in the classroom to center-wide events, we will provide meaningful opportunities for family involvement. We work together to create our community.
- We believe that we must partner with parents and consider the child in the context of their family.
- We value each person's unique culture and believe in sharing a diversity of perspectives. We believe that a learning community is created when staff, parents and children's diverse ideas, opinions and abilities are expressed, welcomed and respected.
- We believe that children are constructing knowledge from the moment of birth. Our approach to curriculum is influenced by the thinking of theorists and practitioners such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Howard Gardner, and Magda Gerber, as well as by the infant toddler centers and preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Our approach takes these values into consideration:
    - Children are competent and capable.

    - Children deserve time to play, explore, and re-visit experiences.
    - Children deserve the opportunity to be challenged to deepen their learning.
    - Learning takes place in the context of relationships and is enhanced in a social setting.
    - Social and emotional skills are as important as academic skills. We honor, interpret and respond to children's differing abilities and behavior through the lens of development.
    - The present counts - we enjoy and listen to children in the moment. Frequent and varied opportunities for free and unstructured play in the outdoors are an essential part of early childhood learning.
- ITC values childhood as a special time in life. We have a responsibility to advocate for the rights of children to be respected and noticed and to be given time to play and explore.
- ITC has a responsibility to hire and support professional early childhood teachers. We want ITC to be known as a workplace where staff are appreciated, rewarded and respected for their knowledge and skills, and where they are offered meaningful opportunities for long-term career development.
- The best teachers are those who are committed to establishing respectful relationships and are curious and reflective of their practice.
- A solid grounding in child development informs our practice and our practice, in turn, inspires our desire to know more.

Governance

ITC is governed by a Board of Trustees, which is comprised of current parents, parents of alumni children the Executive Director, staff representatives, and community members. The Board is elected annually by the Membership of the Corporation. Any parent/guardian of a child actively enrolled in the center is eligible to join the Corporation.. Further information is available in the Parent Involvement section of the handbook.

Through frequent interaction and consultation with the Executive Director, the Board guides long-range plans, policies, and fiscal matters at the Center. The Executive Director has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the overall program and policies.

Parent and staff committees provide support for the center by organizing events, parent education programs, and fundraising activities.

Administration

ITC has a fairly unique administrative structure that allows us to support a program as large as this one without losing intimate connection between program and families. We have an Executive Director who is responsible for the Center in its entirety and who hires all administrative and teaching staff. The Director is primarily responsible for teacher training and the tone of the program, in conjunction with the Assistant Director. Other areas of responsibility include enrollment, monitoring the budget, and keeping the Board fully informed about Center business. Additionally, ITC has an Assistant Director who can take over responsibility for the Center in the Director's absence, has primary responsibility for our licensing process with the state, and who collaborates with the administrative team on all levels. Our Director of Business Operations oversees business activities, financial planning, facilities and service contractors, procurement, HR, and payroll. Our Director of Development grows and diversifies our funding streams – strengthening ITC's long-term financial sustainability – including annual giving, foundation support, and community events, so ITC can continue to thrive well into the future. Families are welcome to reach out to the Director of Development to learn more about ITC's philanthropic priorities or ways to get involved.

Teaching Staff

Each of the Center's classrooms is staffed by a team of teachers, led by a Lead Teacher. Teachers are chosen carefully on the basis of EEC regulation requirements, credentials, training, professional experience, and congruence with our core values. Prior to being hired, all teacher applicants as well as other staff working with children must successfully complete

a Criminal Offenders Record Investigation in the state and federal database, a DCF record check (the state agency that investigates abuse and neglect allegations), fingerprinting through SAFIS (which provides state and national criminal history record information checks), SORI (Sex Offender Registry Check), have a personal interview, complete a 2-4 hour working interview, and provide at least two references.

Each of the center's classrooms is staffed by a team of teachers who work in that classroom for a full year. Additional "Resource" teachers move among the groups, making it possible to offer more individualized care, provide teacher breaks and lunch, and provide release time for weekly team and lead teacher meetings. In addition, ITC hires Resource teachers who fill in when regular teachers must be out. Our Resource Teachers are well known to the children and center, providing familiarity in the absence of a member of the classroom team.

In addition to our teachers and support staff, our team is fortunate to have a dedicated, full-time, Science and Nature Teacher who guides the children on fun and exciting nature walks, demonstrations, and explorations of our natural world. ITC is also honored to partner with the Concord Conservatory of Music to provide children with weekly music and movement classes.

Our 30+ person staff is supplemented by on-call substitute teachers and summer interns. Occasionally, the Center enjoys the help of volunteers, including parents, senior citizens, student teachers, older high school students and college students.

Programs

ITC offers full-time and part-time programs for children aged three months through preschool. The Center is open from 7:45 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, year round, with the exceptions noted on the yearly program calendar.

Classroom Groups / Placement

Groups are formed on a yearly basis in line with the start of the new school year. To allow significant relationships to develop between children and teachers, groups stay together for a full year regardless of birthdates.

Placement considerations include chronological age, developmental stage, group size, group configuration, specific parental concerns, and room and staff availability. The final decision on a child's placement is made by teachers and administrators, considering any parental input. The group age range can be as much as a full year, and ages may overlap between groups.

ITC is committed to providing care with lower teacher:child ratios than the state mandates. We feel that our ratios support a positive social climate, make individualized, responsive curriculum possible, and allow teachers to do their best work.

Groups are typically divided as follows:

Group	Ratio	Typical Age Range At the Beginning of the Year
Infants	1:3 (max 7 children in group)	3 months – 12 months
Toddler I	1:3 (under 15 months) or 1:4 (max 9 children in group)	13 months – 22 months
Toddler II	1:4 (max 9 children in group)	20 months – 30 months
Toddler III	1:5 (max 9 children in group)	25 months to 35 months
Preschool I	1:7 (max 15 children in group)	2.9 years – 4 years
Preschool II	1:8 (max 17 children in group)	4 years – 5 years

Continuity of Care

Children move to their next group once per year at the beginning of the school year; because we prioritize continuity of care and the relationships that children have with their peers and teachers, we do not allow mid-year enrollment or mid-year room changes Administrators and teachers work together to determine class groupings, giving careful consideration to the children's relationships and development and providing continuity from year to year. Beginning in June, teachers and children begin visiting the children's soon-to-be new classroom so that they can become familiar with the spaces where they will be for the next school year.

Once teaching teams for the following year have been established, teachers begin to share information with one another about the children with whom they have spent the previous year, providing important context for the upcoming transition and making children feel welcomed and known upon entering their new space.

Matriculation to Kindergarten

For children who will be moving to kindergarten, we offer a variety of support systems for both parents and children. A parent evening opens discussions between parents and teachers about the process of transitioning to kindergarten. Preschool teachers file evaluation forms with the child's expected kindergarten program. Evaluations are filed in the spring and discussed at the respective parent-teacher conference.

Children with Special Needs

ITC welcomes children of all abilities in its programs whenever possible. We believe that all children and families benefit from the inclusion of children with varying abilities, gifts, and approaches to learning. Our goal is to be resources for one another and to develop an awareness of and a respect for human differences.

Currently Enrolled Children - Occasionally, teachers and/or parents may feel a child would benefit from evaluation and assistance in physical or emotional development or with medical issues beyond what we can provide. Teachers work with parents to share resources on other services or specific specialists. If a child seems to be having difficulty in the classroom, the following steps will be followed:

- Teachers will observe and document the child's activity in the classroom. The Lead Teacher, after consulting with their team, will meet with parents to share observations and get more information.

• The Lead Teacher will also share information with the Director. The Director will observe the child as well.
• The Center employs the help of child development specialists who work with teachers on classroom dynamics. One of the consultants may also be asked to observe in the classroom to give additional feedback on general teaching strategies and group dynamics.

Children New to ITC - If a child is receiving services from Early Intervention, the Public Schools, or has an identified developmental delay or disability for which accommodations may be necessary, parents should contact the Director prior to starting the program. ITC works with parents to review possible accommodations and developmental and medical assessments and/or educational plans that are already in place. When a child is already working with Early Intervention or the Public Schools, ITC staff (with parental permission) work with the agency involved to ensure the child's optimal growth and development.

If questions or concerns continue to persist after some interventions have been initiated and additional support and guidance is needed, the Director may decide to further engage with the child development consultant and with parental permission, the development consultant will specifically observe the child and provide help to teachers on further intervention strategies and possible recommendations for further referral.

Referral Meeting - If the staff feels that an outside referral for further evaluation is warranted, we will meet with parents to share our observations and to make a referral. At the meeting with parents, the Lead Teacher and the Director will provide parents with a written summary of the staff and consultant's observations, interventions, and accommodations made and reasons for referral. Referrals may be made to the child's pediatrician, specialists, Early Intervention, or the public schools. Parents will be informed of their right to services under Chapter 766 if their child is 3 years or older or Early Intervention if their child is under 3 years. They will receive names and numbers of the resources available to them.

The Lead Teacher or Director will follow up with the parents to make sure that suggested referrals are acted upon within two weeks after the referral meeting and to offer assistance in getting an evaluation. ITC may require that an evaluation take place and recommendations be followed in order for the child to remain enrolled.

Conditions for Continued Enrollment at ITC - If a child's developmental needs or behavior are of ongoing concern to teaching staff, the teaching team will keep notes on classroom observations and on interventions and behavioral changes. The Lead Teacher will keep the Director up to date on progress. After all the previous steps pertaining to currently enrolled children have been followed, ITC's ability to continue caring for the child will be assessed. It is our belief that we have an obligation above all to do no harm to children. The following criteria will be used to decide if attendance at ITC is in the child's best interest:

• The child does not present a serious physical or emotional danger to themself or others.
• ITC has the necessary staff, resources, and classroom environments to meet the child's needs
• The child is making effective progress toward successfully participating in the classroom.
• Necessary modifications in teaching style and programming have a positive benefit for all children and are consistent with ITC's philosophy.

• Parents are willing to cooperate in following up on referrals and recommendations. If a referral has been made and evaluations scheduled, the ITC will make every effort to support the child's continued enrollment through this period as long as the child's developmental needs are being met or the child isn't presenting a serious danger to him/herself or others. Once an evaluation is complete, ITC will participate in meetings with parents and the public schools or Early Intervention to develop an education/service plan.

Termination and/or Suspension from the Program - If it is determined that the conditions for continued enrollment have not been met, ITC reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment. In these instances, ITC will work with parents to help determine a more appropriate placement for the child. Teachers will work with the child to help them prepare for the transition from the program in a way that is appropriate with the child's age and level of understanding.

If a child is in the process of being evaluated or services have just begun for the child, ITC reserves the right to suspend or reduce the child's enrollment until it is determined that the child can safely and successfully attend ITC on the child's regular schedule. Suspensions or reductions in enrollment will be reviewed at least every six weeks.

2 - Getting Started

Orientation for New Families

For newly enrolled children, ITC organizes a two- to three-day orientation period at the beginning of the school year where the child and their parents or significant member of the household make their initial adjustment to the Center together For some children, particularly infants and/or children with shorter daily schedules, a fourth orientation day may be scheduled.

The orientation process is designed to give families an opportunity to spend time in their child's classroom, become familiar with the teachers, and get to know the space and daily routines. Throughout these first few days together, parents, teachers, and children begin to build a foundation of trust and mutual respect as they spend time together, share information, and learn about one another.

The first day of orientation consists of a two-hour visit where parent(s) stay with the child and help them to acclimate to their new space. During subsequent visits – which vary in length and parent involvement depending on a child's age and transition – parents are encouraged to leave for periods of time, giving their child an opportunity to explore their classroom and experience the Center alongside their teachers and peers. Parents are encouraged to check in as needed in order to ensure a comfortable transition for both the parent and child. Each transition is different, and as such each orientation period will look slightly different for each family. Investments made during orientation have many positive impacts for parents and children throughout the year.

Required Forms

Prior to the first day of care, each family completes and returns up-to-date information through the UpBup database portal. The following forms must be completed:

- a physician's medical examination record (examination must have been given within the past 11 months) including immunization records and an annual lead test for children between the ages of one and four years
- a child and parent information form with all requested information completed
- a family information and developmental history form
- a first aid and emergency medical care consent form
- a transportation release form
- a permission and consent form for field trips, sunscreen, insect repellant, and photo/video agreement
- an Individualized Healthcare Plan form (when applicable)

3 - Daily Happenings

Curriculum

Throughout ITC, from Infants to Preschool II groups, the curriculum takes shape week by week and day by day, with teachers thoughtfully making plans that draw on the children's interests. This type of planning reflects our belief that children learn best when they are exploring questions that are relevant to them and developing skills in a meaningful context. This means that we give each child time to make choices of activity from among many possibilities and that teachers are carefully observing each child's choices and listening for what children are talking about and wondering about.

Teachers plan and facilitate a wide variety of play opportunities drawing on the children's interests. It is through this play that the children will explore and expand their knowledge and skills. The ITC curriculum helps children master age-appropriate tasks at each stage of individual development. Activities to help children develop emotional, social, physical, and cognitive skills, as well as artistic expression, are integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. These activities reflect the broad range of growth and development among the children. Children's development is encouraged through play and exploration of process-oriented rather than product-oriented activities. A truly appropriate curriculum will not look the same from one classroom of children to the next nor from one year to the next, even though it is carefully tailored to address the skills children are developmentally ready to acquire at each age and stage. By committing to a truly emergent curriculum, we are best able to address the interests and specific talents and challenges that particular children present year to year. This is a more complex way of building curriculum (from more traditional, top-down models of prescribed activities on a predetermined timeline) which takes careful observation, team collaboration, time for reflection and access to ample resources. ITC has honed these skills in its teaching staff and we continually stretch ourselves to ensure that we meet all children where they are in their development, capturing each opportunity to both wonder and inspire.

Much of what happens in daily life at ITC provides the context for first learning experiences: hellos and good-byes, eating, resting, keeping clean and comfortable, enjoying nature, being with friends, coping with emotional experiences, taking turns, and respecting others. Daily life is both the backdrop for and the catalyst of much of the curriculum that unfolds each day. As children move through the daily routines, they are encouraged to be active participants in their own care – from sweeping up to scrubbing tables to sorting blocks and folding laundry. Each task offers opportunities for acquiring skills across all developmental domains. Even our youngest babies feel like active agents in their own care (and rightly so!) as they partner with the teacher through eating, napping, dressing and even diapering routines.

During the preschool and kindergarten years, children gain skills in logical thinking, problem solving, information gathering and acquisition of a body of common knowledge through daily activities. At any time, one group may be exploring birds through artistic expression, books on birds, and observations of birds in nature. Another group may be experiencing kings, queens, and castles while another is experimenting with all the qualities of color. School readiness skills are acquired through exposure to high quality children's literature, numbers, letters, categories, size, shape, sequence, identification of objects, cause and effect, how things work, seasons, and ways to use materials to express ideas.

The curriculum at ITC is always new and fresh. It has an innate enthusiasm that is contagious. Curriculum is a growing experience for everyone. Ultimately, the goal is for each child to develop positive self-esteem and a joy of learning in preparation for a happy and productive life among peers, colleagues, and loved ones.

Beginning the Day

Upon arrival, parents are expected to accompany their child into the classroom, sign in, and let a teacher know of their arrival. During the drop-off period, parents are asked to help their child wash their hands and put away their child's belongings (hats, coats, lunchboxes, etc.) in their designated spaces.

Teachers and parents take a few moments to check in with one another and share information concerning the child's morning, their previous night, or any special events or "news" that might be relevant. Parents are welcome to spend the first few minutes in the classroom helping their child to acclimate before separating. Occasionally, children may have difficulty with separation from parents. Most often, children respond best to a decisive and clear good-bye with the reassurance that parents will return at the end of the day. If parting seems to be difficult for a child, the teachers and parents will discuss ways to work together to make the transition successful. ITC strongly encourages parents to say good-bye to their child before they leave, even though it may seem more difficult in the moment. Failure to say good-bye can undermine basic trust and leave children feeling more worried or upset. Our teachers are available to help support parents and children through this transition, and parents are encouraged to call the classroom if they are concerned about their child.

Telephone Contact

It is important for ITC to be able to get in touch with parents at all times. If a parent needs to be reached by a number not specified on their emergency contact form, that information should be noted in the sign-in book. If parents have voicemail or extensions, they should provide clear instructions on how to make direct contact. If parents need to contact the ITC, their call will be answered by one of the administrative staff and their call will be transferred to their child's classroom if needed.

Daily Schedule

Daily schedules and routines differ from group to group. The infants follow individualized schedules, with caregivers responding to their needs and interests as they arise. As children grow older, schedules naturally become more uniform. Each group has a general schedule which includes time for play and socializing (both inside and outside), clean up, hygiene, eating, and resting.

Routines are very important and reassuring for young children. Classrooms tend to follow the same overall routine each day, giving children a sense of comfort and security as they begin to predict what will happen next. Occasional surprises and special days (i.e. pajama days or themed days) are planned by teachers and add depth and excitement to the overall curriculum.

Age-appropriate music and movement experiences are woven into the daily curriculum by classroom teachers. In the youngest age groups, teachers sing with children during times of transition (going outside or waiting together in the hallway), during daily routines (washing hands, diapering, etc.), and during free play. As children get older, more formal circle times are offered. Teachers adapt their musical experiences and expectations to accommodate the needs of the children in their specific group.

In addition, ITC partners with the Concord Conservatory of Music to provide enriched music and movement experiences each week for toddlers and preschoolers from September through May.

Outside Play

ITC values time spent outdoors and view our outdoor spaces as an extension of the classroom. Each classroom is connected to a shared playground that is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children it serves. Children also regularly explore the Little Woods (a wooded trail behind the school) and the Big Woods (conservation land trails behind the nearby cemetery). ITC understands the importance of outdoor play in child development, putting an emphasis on taking full advantage of our outside spaces. While exploring the outdoors children are able to practice using their large muscles through running, jumping, and climbing, practice using their small muscles while collecting various materials (rocks, sticks, plants, etc.) they find while outdoors, strengthen their relationships and trust with their peers and teachers, and develop more confidence in themselves and their physical abilities.

Because outdoor experiences are valued as an essential part of ITC's program, children are brought outdoors in all weather conditions. Parents are asked to provide your child with appropriate clothing for all weather (including comfortable, washable clothes, jackets, hats, and shoes/boots that are appropriate for the season). For specific advice about proper seasonal attire, please consult your child's classroom teachers. For extreme weather circumstances we follow these guidelines in bringing children outdoors, as written by the EEC:

> "In cold weather, children should wear several layers of loose-fitting, warm clothing. Caregivers should check young children's hands and feet at least every 15 minutes when they are outdoors in cold weather to be sure they are warm and maintain their usual color. Children should wear a hat, scarf or knit mask to cover the face and mouth, sleeves that are snug at the wrist, mittens, and a water-resistant coat and shoes. Their clothing must be kept dry. The outer layer of clothing should be tightly woven and wind resistant, to reduce body heat loss caused by wind. Children should not play outdoors in cold weather if they do not have appropriate clothing. In extremely cold weather, and especially if there are high winds, children should play indoors. Trips outside should be kept very brief. Any combination of wind and cold that results in a wind chill at or below 15° Fahrenheit poses a significant health risk.
>
> Extreme heat can be as hazardous to children as extreme cold. When playing outdoors in warm weather children should wear lightweight cotton clothing. Drinking cool beverages, especially those with low sugar content (like water) also helps the body to maintain a comfortable temperature. The Heat Index is an indication

of how the temperature “feels” and is a combination of actual heat and relative humidity. A heat index of 80° Fahrenheit or below is considered comfortable, and safe for children to play outdoors. A heat index between 80° F and 90° F means that children should be closely observed while outdoors, and outdoor play time should be limited. When the heat index is above 90° F, young children should not play outdoors, and older children should only play outdoors for very short periods of time.”

Food at ITC

ITC views mealtimes as opportunities to socialize and connect with children, making these moments an important part of our daily routine. Staff are trained in USDA nutrition requirements and recognize that growing children thrive when their nutritional needs are met. ITC serves a variety of nutritious foods which encourage children’s development of healthy eating habits and behaviors that promote positive long-term health outcomes.

Infant Feeding - In the Infant room, feeding times are a true partnership between the parent, teacher, and child. Children are fed by their teachers following a schedule that is communicated by parents and respectful of the child’s needs. We feed children based on routines and practices that have been established at home and foster these routines as children grow and develop. Teachers take note of individual preferences and reactions to foods and document the amount of food and milk that each child consumes during their time at ITC. This information will be supplied to parents at the end of the day through conversation as well as written documentation.

Breast Milk or Formula - Parents provide all breastmilk or formula for younger infants, which must be labeled with the child’s full name and date. We offer freezer space for a back-up supply of frozen breastmilk. Bottles will be warmed in warm tap water from the classroom sink (no hotter than 120F) for no more than 5 minutes and/or with a bottle warmer as allowed by EEC regulations.

Solid Foods - Once solid foods have been introduced at home, parents can send them in for their child to enjoy at ITC. Children who are eating solid foods will be fed either in a lap, high chair, or low chair at a table, depending on their age and developmental needs. We ask that any new foods be introduced at home prior to bringing them to ITC so parents can note any reactions that may occur. As children begin bringing in foods from home, we ask parents to send it in a labeled insulated lunch bag with a cold pack. Warm foods should be packed in thermoses as EEC licensing regulations prohibit the use of microwaves or the reheating of foods.

State Licensing Requirements:

- Commercially made foods should be sent in to ITC in their original unopened containers
- Homemade foods should come in a sealed container
- All containers of food (commercial or homemade) should be labeled with the child’s full name
- If parents send juice for their child to consume, it must be 100% fruit juice and be limited to no more than four ounces daily.

Snack

Each day, ITC provides children with both a morning and afternoon snack. The snack menu consists of items that meet the USDA and EEC standards for healthy and nutritious snacks including a fruit or vegetable, dairy items such as yogurt, cheese, and milk, and multi-grain carbohydrates wherever possible.

Lunch

Parents supply lunch for their child, brought to ITC in an insulated lunch box, labeled with the child's full name. As children are able, they begin to share responsibility of mealtime preparations by opening up their own containers, selecting their foods, and packing up any uneaten foods. All food given to children will be prepared and handled in a way that is safe and sanitary. Staff wear food service gloves when directly handling food. ITC provides water and milk to children.

Water Bottles

Beginning in Toddler I, children are asked to bring a water bottle for use throughout the day. Water bottles are sent home each day in order to ensure cleanliness.

Some suggestions for healthy lunches

- Small containers of finger foods: meats, cheeses, vegetables, fruits, hardboiled eggs, cut to bite size.
- Containers of spoon foods: yogurt, cottage cheese, meat pies, rice, noodles, pasta, plain tuna, cooked beans, dinner leftovers, stew or soup, potatoes
- Sandwiches: cut small, not made with nut or sunflower butter
- To the extent possible, parents are encouraged to send foods in their original forms rather than in a pouch
- Please do not send candy, gum, or soda

Choking Hazards and Prevention - Popcorn, pretzels, fruit leathers, or roll-ups are not allowed for children under three. Foods should arrive at school ready to eat, requiring no further preparation. Raw carrots and baby carrots, whole grapes, whole hard boiled eggs, whole cherry tomatoes, or meat must be cut into small bite sized pieces. Avoid cutting foods such as hot dogs and carrots into "rounds." Raw carrots should be cut lengthwise, no thicker than 1/2" and grapes should be cut into fourths.

Children with Allergies or Special Food Requirements

ITC protects children with food allergies from contact with problem foods in a manner that is discussed and approved by parents and the child's health care provider. If a child has a food allergy, parents are required to provide a written allergy management plan and meet with their child's teachers to discuss the management plan for their child. Written plans are kept in the child's folder, put on ITC's "Special Considerations" list, and posted on an allergy alert sheet in the child's classroom. Teachers alert parents of other children to allergies present in their child's classroom and are given notification and instructions should the elimination of certain foods from the classroom be required.

IMPORTANT: ITC prohibits nuts and sunflower seeds. No foods containing nuts or sunflower seeds are allowed in your child's lunch, snack, or anywhere else at ITC. This restriction includes peanuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio nuts, walnuts, and sunflower seeds. Always check food ingredient labels, and avoid foods with labels that say "contains nuts" or "may contain nuts."

Naps and Rest

Napping routines vary with each age group. In all rooms, we set the stage for rest by dimming the lights, playing soft music, and having teachers available to sit with children as they unwind and rest. Teachers are respectful of each child's sleep process and we aim to keep children's sleep routines consistent with their routines at home, when possible.

For older children, parents are invited to send a favorite "snuggly" along with their child's crib sheet and blanket, which will be sent home weekly to be washed. Preschool children settle in on their mats for a quiet rest time after lunch. State regulations mandate a minimum of 45 minutes of quiet or rest time for each child who is in care for over four hours. Children who do not fall asleep after resting may play quietly at an activity. Requests that a child not sleep (or be allowed to sleep only for a specified amount of time) will be considered individually and reviewed regularly by teachers and parents.

Infants – Safe Sleep

Infants each sleep in an individual crib that has a firm, properly fitted mattress. ITC provides tightly fitted sheets that do not contain potential entrapment areas. Our cribs conform to the latest recommendations of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. ITC follows the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that infants (children 12 months and under) be placed down for sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). ITC only puts children to sleep on their back. State regulations require that children under the age of one not have blankets, stuffed animals, or other soft, padded materials in the crib with them while they are asleep. Pacifiers may be used to help an infant fall asleep, though pacifiers must not have any attachments or additional components. ITC encourages families to send in a sleep sack for their infant to keep them warm and snuggled as they nap. Any blankets or sleep sacks will be sent home weekly to be washed.

Toileting

Diapering and toileting are important parts of our classroom routines. For the youngest children, ITC utilizes diapering times as moments to interact and connect with children. Children are encouraged to be active participants in the diapering process, which often makes diaper changes a moment that children embrace rather than resist. Parents maintain a supply of diapers (disposable), wipes, and creams for their child. Soiled clothing is sent home soiled and un-rinsed as required by health regulations.

As children get older, "toilet learning" becomes a major milestone in a child's (and family's) development. It is usually a slow process, with a wide variation as to when and how a child is ultimately successful. Discussion between parents and teachers about timing, attitudes, and methods of training is important so that a consistent effort is made for the child's success. To ensure confidence and success for everyone, toilet training is a partnership between the child, caregivers, and family. Please inform the team prior to sending a newly potty-trained child in underwear for the first time. ITC's teaching teams are experienced in supporting the transition from diapers to potty and want to honor and support this goal. Children are not required to be toilet trained in order to enter any group. Toilets are available in the Toddler II, Toddler III, and Preschool classrooms.

Child Guidance

ITC provides children with the opportunity to learn about themselves and others in the context of a group. ITC believes that in the first years of life, children are in the process of discovering who they are and how they fit into a group. ITC works with parents to support children as they learn about emotions, respecting others, and negotiating play in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Since this is an important and ongoing developmental step, parents and teachers share their perceptions of the child in various contexts in order to best understand how to support each child's unique social and emotional learning.

ITC encourages an atmosphere where children feel safe and respected. Teachers establish relationships with every child in the group. ITC believes that when a child feels known and welcomed, that child will be comfortable learning and making the mistakes that come with learning. The teacher's job is to help children to navigate the social and emotional challenges that are inevitable as they learn to become members of a community. Teachers orchestrate the environment and carefully pre-plan space, group configuration, activities, and adult interaction with the children to minimize barriers to children's ability to be successful in a group. ITC works to provide a predictable schedule and environment with clear boundaries so that children can know what to expect and what is expected of them. For example, the idea of sharing may be a foreign concept to a young child. Teachers encourage children to share, help them find ways to take turns, work together, find an alternative, or make a simple choice. ITC always sets realistic expectations in the context of children's age and developmental capabilities.

Infants - Infant care is a partnership in every sense of the word. Through our relationship with each child, we read signals, interpret wants and needs, and partner with the child in managing the routines and transitions of the day. Building successful relationships with each child is facilitated by our primary caregiving system in which individual teachers on the team work particularly closely with two or three of the children enrolled to know them well and advocate for their needs with the rest of the team. Our goal is to build a predictable, responsive, consistent environment that offers the child security and a sense of trust. From there, the child can begin to organize and make sense of the world, expectations, and social conventions. In this partnership, the child and teacher are in constant communication, sharing control and building an understanding together. This co-regulation of emotion serves as the building block for the development of self-regulation, a life-long skill that only begins to emerge in toddlerhood.

Toddlers - ITC believe that teachers are models for social behavior. How we comport ourselves is one of the most important ways adults influence children's learning of social skills and appropriate behavior. Providing good role models of social behavior is critical when we are dealing with the very young, especially as toddlers begin to test their environment, people, objects, and "rules." Toddlers operate best with simple choices within clear boundaries. A predictable routine that the toddler can depend on offers a sense of security and control; our consistent response and guidance with limits supports that further.

Preschoolers - Preschoolers continue to be very interested in their peers and in testing their environment as they learn about the physical and social world. This can sometimes mean that children find themselves in conflict with their peers or disrupting the rest of the community or classroom. Teachers carefully orchestrate the environment so children can work together easily and can understand what they can do in the environment. When possible, the children contribute to a list of simple class guidelines so that children can know what is

expected. This kind of activity can contribute to a sense of community and shared responsibility and a clear understanding that there are boundaries that help us all to feel safe and to get along with each other.

Self-discipline is encouraged through the problem-solving approach and a growing understanding of natural consequences of behavior. Children are assisted, according to their developmental stage, in making appropriate choices by encouraging good decision-making and thoughtful reinforcement of positive behavior.

Preschoolers often feel and express emotions intensely. As they are negotiating social situations, feelings may be strong. Sometimes taking a break from a conflict situation helps. Teachers support the children in regaining composure by offering a drink of water, moving to another part of the classroom or Center, or encouraging an alternate activity.

Encouragement is given for efforts to be cooperative, to use self-control, to be thoughtful, and to try one's best. Hugs, smiles, pats, and encouragement of cooperative group behavior build group spirit and children's pride in themselves and in the group. Teachers model cooperative and appropriate social behavior. At all times, teachers are aware of their tone of voice. Shouting is never necessary. Before teachers talk to children having difficulty, they consider the best way to be helpful based on what they know about that particular child. Teachers go to where the problem is and talk with the child or children, talking at their level – bending or sitting down to make eye contact and physical contact. Teachers give children a chance to explain what they did and why, without being judgmental. Understanding often helps disperse anger. Simple statements describing realistic consequences are most effective. Some useful phrases are: "Let me try to help you." "Let's figure out what went wrong.", "Now it is time to..." "I want/need you to ...", "This is ready for you to..." "They want you to ...", "Next we are going to ...", "Your job is to ..., his job is to ..." "I cannot let you ..."

In accordance with our beliefs and requirements of the EEC, the following practices are strictly forbidden:

- Yelling in anger at a child, spanking, or other corporal punishment.
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks.
- Depriving a child of outdoor time, meals, snacks, force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence.
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet, forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or use any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.
- Confining a child to a swing, highchair, crib, playpen, or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision.
- Excessive time out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view. (Time-out is not used at ITC.)

Release of Children / End of Day

When it is time to pick your child up, parents are encouraged to spend a few minutes observing, joining their child in an activity, and/or chatting with the teachers. However, lingering for too long can cause confusion for children, so parents should plan to depart within 5-10 minutes. Before leaving, parents must sign-out and notify their child's teacher that

they are leaving. This is a great time to check your child's mailbox and cubby area to ensure that they have their necessary supplies (extra clothes, diapers, wipes, etc.).

It is important to pick up children on time. Late pick-ups confuse the child, inconvenience the classroom routines, and put constraints on compliance with licensing regulations. Parents should call if they will be late with as much notice as possible.

Prior to the beginning of each school year, parents fill out a form designating people who may pick up their child. For a child's safety, they will not be released to anyone not named on this form. If someone on a pick-up form will be picking up a child, parents must notify the child's teacher so they can help prepare the child for a change in routine. If another caregiver will be regularly transporting a child or providing a link between home and the Center, parents should introduce the caregiver to the teachers and inform them of all drop-off and pick-up procedures. The caregiver should be familiar with ITC policies and must be listed on the child's signed emergency contact and transportation release form.

In an emergency, a child will be released to someone not designated on the pick-up form only if:

- the parent has given the teacher a signed note or written email along with telephoning the Center and speaking with an administrator
- the person picking up presents photo identification.

When parents are temporarily out of town, they must designate, in writing, the authorized adult to be fully responsible for the child's care. If parents are separated and sharing custody of a child, ITC is not responsible for deciding which parent picks up the child unless there is a court order that provides specifications. We will follow written instructions from parents whenever possible. Many parents bring (an) older or younger sibling(s) to the Center during drop-off and pick-up time. Please remember it is the parents' responsibility to supervise siblings to guarantee everyone's safety. If a family has multiple children enrolled at the Center, the older child should be dropped off first at the beginning of the day; at the end of the day, the younger child should be picked up first.

If we feel a driver's ability to operate a vehicle safely is impaired, ITC reserves the right to not release the child to this person. In this case, we will offer to arrange for alternate transportation. All children must use appropriate car seats or seat belts when traveling to and from the Center and may not be left in cars in the parking lot. Cars should never be left running and unattended in the parking lot. Parents with more than one child are asked to escort older children to the car and help them climb in before buckling the younger child in their car seat. Children should never be permitted to walk around a car without the assistance of an adult.

Celebrations

Holidays, traditions, and birthdays are always enjoyable and are part of the experience of learning about each other. At ITC, the meaning of various cultural traditions and holidays are experienced through simple exposure to foods, music, stories, dress, and crafts. ITC does not espouse any particular religious or political beliefs. Religious messages are avoided, but questions are answered honestly. Families are invited to share their traditions and celebrations at the Center, making appropriate plans with the teachers ahead of time.

Birthdays are joyous events. Teachers will help to celebrate children's birthdays in a manner that is appropriate for each age group. Children may wish to have a crown or hat made for them, while others may find the celebration

overwhelming and may choose to not have a special celebration with the group. Each child's comfort level is respected. If parents would like to bring in a special snack for this day, it is welcomed as long as they notify their child's teacher in advance that they are doing so. Many families choose fresh fruit or the birthday child's favorite snack instead of traditional birthday cake or cupcakes. Smaller mini-muffins are helpful in minimizing sugar consumption. If you wish to not have your child's birthday recognized at ITC, please let your child's Lead Teacher know.

In regard to home birthday parties, we ask that party invitations be sent to children's homes or to other parents via email rather than distributing invitations at ITC to avoid disappointment among children. When asked, we will provide parents with a class list that includes home and/or email addresses. It is suggested that when planning home birthday parties, the number of children invited does not exceed the child's age. Large groups can be overstimulating for young children and stressful for families.

Field Trips

Formal field trips requiring transportation in vehicles are not part of ITC's regular program. However, frequent walking trips are planned, with children carted in wagons or on foot to see natural and community surroundings. Parents sign a general field trip permission form annually for off-grounds excursions.

Special walking field trips or occasional outings involving public transportation are planned periodically. Parents are invited to accompany the group as helpers. Field trip permission forms are signed by parents for each of these special trips.

Toys from Home

Guidelines on bringing toys, books, and games from home differ from group to group. Teachers use their discretion in deciding how items from home are affecting the child, the other children, and the program. If you have questions about something your child would like to bring in from home, consult with your child's teachers. As a general guideline, toys with batteries or electronics with screens are not part of the classroom environment and should be avoided as a choice to bring to school.

4 – Enrollment, Tuition and Financial Policies

New and Current Families

Families who are interested in enrolling submit an application and a one-time, non-refundable application fee. If space is available for the requested schedule in the appropriate group, the family is notified of acceptance into the program and sent an enrollment offer letter. Their place is reserved when a one-time, non-refundable enrollment deposit is paid and the offer letter is signed and returned. Enrollment contracts are issued following the receipt of the deposit and completed offer letter.
Enrollment occurs on a yearly cycle, with programs starting each year in the fall with new classroom and group assignments.

Re-enrollment for currently enrolled families is held in December for the following year. Families who are interested in enrolling for the following year submit a re-enrollment form and a non-refundable re-enrollment fee. Offers of

enrollment for new families are made in the late winter and early spring after current families complete the reenrollment process. Enrollment priority is given to: (1) current enrollees; (2) siblings of current enrollees; (3) children of employees and, (4) new families. Families who do not receive an offer of enrollment automatically stay on the waiting list for subsequent program years.

Schedules, Program Length, and Attendance

Families choose a full-time (30 or more hours per week) or part-time (20-29.5 hours per week) schedule and billed according to the Tuition Rates and Policy sheet. Infants are only enrolled on full-time schedules. Arrivals and departures are on full or half hour increments with the exception of the 7:45 dropoff. Preschoolers must arrive by 9:00 AM, and no arrivals or departures are allowed for children of any age between 1:00 – 3:00 PM. Families are expected to start their dropoff no earlier and complete their pickup no later than the schedule specified on their enrollment contract.

Families may choose a full-year (12 month) or school-year (10 month) program length. ITC is closed for two weeks in August and for the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Parents should notify their child's teachers by calling the Center when children will be late, picked up early, or be absent.

Terms of Enrollment

Occasionally families need to change their schedules mid-year. Requests must be made by submitting a Permanent Change in Schedule form. Schedule changes may go into effect as soon as approval is granted. Associated billing changes for increases in hours may go into effect as soon as approval is granted, and billing is adjusted for decreases in hours after a two-month waiting period.

Ending Enrollment

Families who wish to withdraw their child from the Center before the last day of the contract year must give a minimum of two months' notice and are financially liable for the tuition associated with those months, regardless of attendance. If a family departs prior to the end of their contract, their deposit is forfeited.

ITC reserves the right to terminate a family's enrollment contract without cause or if the Center, in its sole discretion, determines that continued enrollment is not beneficial to the child or the Center. In the event of contract termination, a family's enrollment deposit will be applied to any outstanding tuition bills covering the period attended, and any tuition payments made for periods of service not attended will be refunded.

Prior to receiving a termination notice, parents will have had meetings with teachers and administrators to discuss the continued enrollment of their child and to try and come up with solutions to allow a child to continue. If a child's enrollment is ended, teachers will work with the child to help them transition from the program.

Tuition and Financial Policies

During the application and/or the re-enrollment process, families choose their preferred schedule and program length for the upcoming year. Yearly tuition rates for each family are calculated by multiplying the number of scheduled hours by the number of billable weeks in their program term and by the hourly rate for their program group, less any discounts. Yearly tuition is divided into 10 or 12 equal monthly payments, depending on program length, and paid one month in advance. Families enter into a yearly contractual agreement with the Center and are liable for all tuition

obligations unless otherwise amended. Please refer to the Tuition Rates & Policy sheet, updated annually and attached as an addendum to this Handbook, for specific rate, fee, and policy information. New hourly rates are set annually by the Board and go into effect at the beginning of each school year. ITC reserves the right to change tuition rates with thirty (30) days' notice.

5 - Operating Schedule Hours

ITC is open year-round, Monday through Friday, from 7:45 AM – 5:00 PM.

Calendar

A yearly program calendar is included in the summer mailing listing the exact dates of the national holidays and Center closures.

Scheduled Closings

The Center is closed the following holidays: Labor Day, Columbus Day, the day before Thanksgiving (noon) Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Patriots' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day. The Center is also closed for two weeks in August (before the start of the new school year), the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, and for one Staff Development Day(the last Friday in June). When a national holiday occurs on a weekend, ITC will observe the holiday on the closest weekday.

Emergency Closings

Weather Emergencies - ITC typically follows the Acton public schools' decision regarding closures for poor weather conditions. Parents will be notified via e-mail by 6:30 AM if the Center will be closed or operating on an adjusted schedule. If conditions require the center to close early, parents are notified by e-mail or telephone with as much notice as possible. The decision to open or remain open is contingent on maintaining EEC mandated ratios, utilities working, getting our parking lot plowed and maintaining safe access to critical building exits.

Closing Due to Loss of Water, Heat or Power - As directed by the EEC, the Center will close if we will be without water for more than one hour. Waterless hand cleaner or alcohol-based wipes are available for emergency clean-ups. In summer, the Center will close due to loss of power if power is not restored within four hours. The Center will close if the indoor temperature falls below 65°F or when loss of natural light creates a safety hazard. After dark, the Center will close if power cannot be restored within one hour. Emergency lighting will last for one and a half hours.

No refunds, exchanges, or credits are granted for partial or full-day closures due to weather or other emergencies.

6 - Health and Safety

Consultant

ITC is fortunate to have the consultation services of pediatric physician, Dr. Chris Cooper of Acton Medical Associates. In addition, the Center consults with several mental health professionals to provide guidance to teaching staff on classroom dynamics. A complete copy of our approved Healthcare Policy is available upon request from the office.

Health Guidelines

The basis for all policies concerning illness is the protection of the ill child as well as the other children entrusted to ITC's care. When an infectious disease is present in the Center, we make every effort to inform parents via e-mail and through postings in the classroom which include the type of illness, the date in which the child was last at the Center, the extent of exposure, and symptoms for which to watch. Parents may not send their child to the Center when they are sick or have signs of possible contagious diseases (new cold, sore throat, fever, rash, and/or diarrhea). In addition, if a child is not well enough to participate in all the activities of the group, including outdoor play, they cannot be at the Center. Per EEC guidelines, children must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication to return to care. If children become ill at ITC, a teacher calls the parents to request that they pick up their child.

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Center should emergency numbers or contacts change during the year.

Handwashing

As recommended by the EEC, we ask that parents wash their child's hands upon arrival in the classroom every day. Children also wash their hands throughout the day.

Emergency Care

All injuries requiring first aid will be recorded on an Injury Report. A copy must be signed by parents at pickup. Parents may request a copy of the injury report, if desired. Parents will be informed immediately if any emergency care is needed or of any injury requiring more than minor first aid. If a child needs immediate medical attention, ITC staff will call an ambulance and have the child transported to Emerson Hospital or as otherwise directed by the EMTs. Staff will remain with children at the Hospital until parents or emergency contacts are notified and arrive to be with children. All teachers and administrators receive a first aid certification in Early Childhood Health and Safety and an annual certification in CPR.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellents

During warmer months when children are spending a great deal of time outdoors, ITC encourages the use of sunscreen and insect repellent. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen and/or repellent before coming to the Center or upon arrival (bottles are available in every classroom). Teachers will re-apply sunscreen and repellent as necessary during the day. As recommended by Dr. Chris Cooper ITC will use and provide "Waterbabies" (sunscreen) or "Ranger Ready" no DEET (repellent). All repellents will be applied to hats and clothing instead of skin. If desired, parents are able to send in another sunscreen or repellent from home, labeled with their child's name, for teachers to apply. All sunscreen and/or repellents, whether from home or provided by ITC, require written authorization from parents.

As recommended by Dr. Cooper, we will wash off these lotions regularly in order to avoid the possible negative effects of cumulative absorption.

Immunization

Every child must be examined by a licensed physician prior to annual enrollment as required by the EEC. Each child must be immunized against the following and all others as specified by the Department of Public Health prior to entry at ITC:

- Diphtheria
- Polio Myelitis (IPV)
- Varicella vaccine or physician certified chicken pox vaccine (19 months or older)
- Pertussis
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- Haemophilus influenza tyop B (Hib)
- Tetanus (DPT)
- Hepatitus B

Under rare circumstances – and only after consultation with the Director – a child who has not received standard immunizations will be allowed to attend ITC. In this event, the child's file will be modified to reflect his or her status as not immunized. An explanation for this status will be documented. Under-immunized children will also be excluded promptly if someone in the Center is diagnosed with a vaccine-preventable disease to which the child is susceptible.

All children between the ages of one and four years must receive an annual lead test. Proof of a lead test should be provided by the child's doctor and will be placed in the child's file. The results of these tests must be reported to the Center.

Parents must submit documentation of an annual physical exam and immunizations to the Center annually. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in suspension of care, with full tuition obligation. Care resumes when the form is complete and on file.

Medication

In accordance with the EEC regulations, ITC's policy on administration of medication is as follows:

- Prescription medication must arrive in the original prescription container with date, dosage, and the doctor's name. All medications must be accompanied by an IHCP/Medication consent form signed by the child's doctor and guardian.
- For short-term use of an over-the-counter medication, a parent must sign the non-prescription medication permission form on a weekly basis, writing the purpose of the medication, the date and times of administration, and the amount to be given.
- Medication must be handed directly to the teacher in charge or an administrator, and may not be left in lunch boxes, school bags, children's clothing, or in a child's cubby.
- Medication may not be disguised in the child's food or beverage unless specifically ordered by the child's physician, since this may be a hazard to the child and may compromise the exact dosage.
- When a medication must be given at both the Center and at home for several days, parents may ask the pharmacist to put the prescription in two containers, one for home and one for the Center.

• Medication will not be given in any amount exceeding the dosage indicated on the prescription container.
• Non-prescription drugs or herbal medicines will be administered only when authorized with a form signed by a physician and parent. Conditions of administration and typical types of non-prescription medication are enumerated on the authorization form which is available from Lead Teachers.
• Non-prescription topical ointments will be administered with parental authorization only.
• Long-term prescription medication for conditions such as asthma or heart disease may be prescribed for up to three months and require a physician's signed authorization as well as an IHCP form.
• All medications given are logged in the "Medication Log Book" in each group.
• To avoid a child experiencing side effects at the Center, any new medication must be administered at home for 24 hours before the child can return to ITC.

Pesticide Use

ITC incorporates Integrated Pest Management procedures for control of structural and landscape pests. Non-chemical control methods and agents will be used first if a pest problem is identified. If chemical pesticide must be used outdoors or if any pesticides are used indoors, ITC will provide notification to parents and staff if the Center is in session 2 days prior and 3 days after the application. Treated areas will be posted with clear and conspicuous warning signs. No pesticides classified as known human carcinogens or containing inert ingredients categorized as "List 1: Inerts of Toxicological Concern" by the U. S. EPA will be used.

Suspected Abuse and Neglect

All ITC staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. Whenever there is suspected child abuse or neglect, teachers will alert their Lead Teacher. Lead Teachers will consult immediately with the Director to evaluate the situation. The Center may consult with parents if appropriate. A report may be filed with Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the EEC.

All persons regularly on the premises who have the potential for unmonitored contact with children are required to grant ITC permission to conduct a criminal record check. Anyone suspected of abuse and neglect on ITC premises will immediately be released from classroom duties and/or will not work directly with children until a DCF investigation is completed and for such further time as required by the EEC.

Emergency Safety

In the event of an emergency that requires immediate action, the administrator in charge will determine whether evacuation or sheltering in place is the appropriate response. Our building is alarmed and equipped with smoke and heat detectors and a sprinkler system. All alarms are wired to the Acton Fire Department. We practice emergency evacuations monthly so that children and staff know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. Escape routes are posted in each room. We also practice, at least annually, sheltering in place drills, which would be used in response to some severe weather emergencies or other threats to children's safety. Our classrooms are connected by an intercom system so that simultaneous communication to the entire building is possible. All practice drills are handled in a matter of fact, upbeat manner so that children can feel confident that we all know how to keep ourselves safe. All staff are trained in procedures for counting children before and after leaving the building as well as what emergency kits should be carried out. The administrator in charge checks with each group to ensure that all children and adults are accounted for once the evacuation has been completed. If we need to evacuate the grounds of ITC, the children will be taken in

walking carts, strollers, or by staff vehicles to the Mt. Hope Cemetery to regroup and then on to the West Acton Baptist Church on the corner of Central St. and Mass. Ave. unless otherwise advised by emergency personnel. Children will remain at the off-site location supervised by staff until parents are contacted and arrive to pick up their children. In the event of any building evacuation, emergency contact numbers and emergency medical care permissions are carried outside the building in our "emergency bags" located in each classroom.

It is essential that parents leave accurate contact information with the staff whenever their child is in attendance. If parents are on the premises during a practice drill, we ask that you participate with us.

Building Security

All visitors and parents are asked to only use the Center's main entrance. All other entrances to the building are kept locked except when children are on the playground. Visitors check in at the office and receive a visitor's tag to wear while in the building. The door from the lobby to the classroom building is kept closed and locked at all times. Parents and staff are informed of the keypad access code, which is changed periodically throughout the year. Only those persons who regularly pick up or drop off children or who regularly work with children will be given the access code. All others such as visitors, vendors, delivery or repair people, or those picking up children on an occasional basis are required to check in at the office and will be granted access by an ITC staff member. Please do not give the access code to enrolled children or siblings.

7 - Parent Involvement

ITC believes that education is a collaborative journey between educators and families. Parent involvement is essential to maintaining our vibrant community. ITC values parent partnerships and recognizes that childcare is a shared process. We encourage parents to become involved as they are able.

Parent Involvement and Volunteering

We offer a variety of opportunities for parent involvement throughout the year:

- Visit - Enrolled parents are welcome to visit the Center and their child's group at any time.
- Classroom Support - Serving as a room parent, reading to a class, or sharing a special cultural tradition or profession. Any parent who has a particular event or skill that is appropriate to share with the children is most welcome to do so by prior arrangement with the Lead Teacher.
- Parent Evening Discussion Groups - ITC periodically sponsors educational programs to discuss issues concerning parenting, child development, and other relevant topics.
- Social Events - There are opportunities to get together with other families and the teachers at several social gatherings and fundraising events held throughout the year (family potlucks, the ITC Gala, etc.)
- Membership in the ITC Corporation - Membership in the ITC Corporation is open to ITC administrators and staff, all parents and legal guardians of children enrolled at ITC, and all members of the Board of Trustees. Members vote on by-law changes, elect the Board of Trustees, and vote on special issues brought before membership. Membership is renewed annually. To become a member, eligible individuals sign the member registration form distributed by the Board Chair. The membership enrollment period is September 1 to September 30 each year. The Annual Meeting of the Membership of the Corporation is held each winter. At this meeting, annual committee reports are presented and nominations to the Board of Trustees are confirmed. Monthly Board meetings are open to all Members of the Corporation.

Giving

Tuition alone does not cover the full cost of providing our exceptionally high standard of early childhood education. We rely on a partnership of time, talent, and philanthropic giving from our entire school community to bridge this gap.

The Annual Fund - The Annual Fund is our most critical fundraising initiative of the year. It is a structured campaign that bridges the financial gap between tuition revenue and the actual cost of operating the preschool. Tax-deductible gifts to the Annual Fund have a direct impact on program by directly funding enhancements that tuition does not cover, including:

- Continuous professional development and competitive salaries for our exceptional teachers.
- Specialized classroom materials and high-quality children's literature.
- Upgrades to our indoor and outdoor physical play spaces.

Our Goal: 100% Parent Participation - ITC strives for 100% participation from our current families. Gifts of any size make a difference. Every contribution, whether $5 or $5,000, is deeply meaningful. High parent participation is a powerful indicator of a healthy, united community. Every family is invited to contribute to the Annual Fund at a level that is financially comfortable for them.

Corporate Matching Gifts - Many corporations offer matching gift programs that can double or even triple individual contributions. Because ITC is a registered non-profit organization, an employer's foundation may match an Annual Fund gift or even provide financial grants in exchange for volunteer hours. Parents are encouraged to check with their human resources department to see if their company participates.

8 - Parental Rights

Right to Visit

Parents have a right to make unannounced visits to their child's classroom while their child is present. We welcome parents' involvement in the life of the classroom.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Regular parent conferences are offered at least twice a year and every three months for infants and children with identified special needs, though parents are welcome to request a meeting at any time. Conferences are a great time for parents and teachers to connect (without the presence of their child or siblings) to discuss their child's activities and participation in the classroom. Teachers prepare a written narrative which encompasses developmental domains and parents are given the opportunity to ask questions and understand their child's experience from the teacher's perspective.

We will provide a translator in a home language if that enables family members to better participate in a conference with a Teacher. When parents are separated or divorced, two conferences may be arranged if preferred.

Communication

ITC values the partnership between a child's home environment and the Center and are continually seeking ways to communicate our mission, values, and daily happenings:

- Group log stories are emailed to families daily and typically include pictures as well as anecdotes about the day's events. Infant log stories are generally sent out one time per week.
- Each family has a mailbox for daily memos, notes, "take-homes," newsletters, and artwork.
- Bulletin boards announce on-going and special events and display important information about curriculum, child development, and the Center.
- Children's work is regularly displayed throughout the Center.
- Newsletters are distributed monthly, and the Center's Facebook and Instagram pages are regularly updated.

Of course, nothing can replace direct communication. As such, we make every effort to put aside time to speak with families daily. Daily chats build connections between parents and teachers, support continuity of care for children, and help parents have a deeper understanding of their child's time away from home. If a parent is not regularly at the center, phone calls can easily be arranged to maintain frequent communication.

Suggestions and Concerns

From time to time a concern or problem may arise which requires special attention or further discussion. Please feel free to approach a Lead Teacher or the Director to set up an appointment to meet. Every effort is made to arrive at a satisfactory solution. Please refer to this handbook to help clarify policies and procedures.

Knowing what is working well is also useful to the teachers and administrators. Positive feedback is equally as important as constructive criticism.

This program is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The Regional Office responsible for ITC is located at 324-R Clark St., Worcester, MA 01606. The phone number of this office is 508-461-1440. Parents may contact this department at the above address for information regarding the program's compliance history.

Confidentiality

Children's records and family information are kept in locked files in the administrative office of the Center. ITC will protect the child's and the family's right to confidentiality. ITC does not distribute or release information about a child or their family to any unauthorized person or discuss with any unauthorized person information about a child or their family without the written consent of the child's parent(s) and/or guardian(s). ITC does not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone who is not employed by ITC and is not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).

Disclosure of the child's records and family information beyond a child's parents/guardians and program personnel requires written consent by the family. In the case of abuse or neglect it is permissible for the Center to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child's interest. If your child's records are subpoenaed by a court, ITC notifies parents of the release of those records. The Center is required to make all forms and information including a child's records available to EEC licensing personnel. Authorized licensors who have access to records are not permitted to remove identifying materials from the Center and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records. ITC respects the family's right to privacy and does not enter into relationships with

family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children. ITC does not use its relationships with families for private advantage or personal gain.

Amending Children's Records -

- Parents may add information, data, or any other relevant materials to their child's record in UpBup.
- Parents may request that information in their child's file be amended or deleted.
- If, after changes to their child's records have been made, parents or guardians are still not satisfied with the clarity or correctness of the records, they may schedule a conference with the Director. Within one week after such a conference, the Director will provide the parents or guardians with a written decision regarding their child's record, which includes the reason for the decision. The decision will be acted on immediately.

Transfer of or Access to Records -

- Parents and guardians are entitled to access their child's records upon written request. Record requests are granted within two business days after the request is received.
- When a child leaves ITC, parents or guardians may request, in writing, that the child's records be given to them or to another person of the their choosing.
- ITC does not charge a fee for copies of information contained in a child's record.

The Center has a copy of CMR 102.700, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School-age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. These written regulations are available to parents upon request.

Questions

Do you still have questions? Stop by the Farmhouse, email, or call. We are happy to help!

- Barbara Carlson, Executive Director: bcarlson@itcacton.org
- Evan Merck, Director of Business Operations: emerck@itcacton.org
- Anne Dugan, Director of Development, adugan@itcaton.org

Reference - Specific Illnesses and Conditions

AIDS/HIV Infection

In June 1989, Secretary of Human Services Philip Johnson announced a ruling that “children testing positive for the HIV virus which can lead to AIDS will be allowed to attend day care programs if they have no symptoms of the disease or a history of biting. Otherwise there is no reason to exclude children from day care.” However, “child care would not be appropriate for a child with open sores that cannot be successfully controlled; a child who bites with unusual frequency and severity (draws blood); or a child with bloody diarrhea.” Additionally, the Center “can only be given information regarding a child’s HIV status with a parents’ consent, and regulations forbid the testing of children for HIV infection as a condition for admission to a child care program.” A Center is “prohibited from letting other parents know if a child in (the) program has tested positive for HIV infection.” ITC consistently practices universal precautions for infection control. Teachers are trained in regard to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B.

ITC follows the Massachusetts medical policy that children “with HIV/AIDS have the same right to attend...school programs and activities as any other children,” as long as universal precautions are in place.

Allergies/Chronic Medical Conditions

Allergies and chronic medical conditions are identified on the family information sheet at the time of admission to the Center, or when detected. ITC protects children from allergens by (a) clearly posting the child’s name, allergy causing material, and allergic response; (b) alerting all teachers to allergic conditions and c) in some cases, asking that certain allergens not be brought into the classrooms. Parents of children with allergies or chronic medical conditions should speak directly with teachers concerning their child’s specific condition. ITC will maintain an Individual Health Care Plan for children with a diagnosed medical condition that may require medical treatment at ITC. The plan will describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is at ITC, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered. Written parental consent and licensed health care practitioner authorization is needed if an ITC staff member is to administer medication or treatment to the child. We will make an effort to notify parents if the need arises for an unanticipated administration of medication or treatment arises prior to or as soon as possible after administering such medication or treatment.

Biting

Biting is not atypical in young children. Most biting situations can be managed in a group program, with appropriate support. If a child is deemed by the Center to have an unusual or threatening habit of biting (e.g., draws blood while biting) the child may be excluded from care temporarily while a plan of action is developed. Therapeutic intervention may also be recommended in extreme cases.

Bumps

Teachers will let parents know immediately if any unusual incidents occur while their child is at the Center, including treatment that was provided. Parents should notify the teachers if their child has fallen during time away from the Center, since bumps and bruises often appear after the fact.

Colds

Children should be kept home if the cold is new and is accompanied by fever >100 degrees, productive cough, chills, lethargy, or irritability. Many children have chronic runny noses with no other symptoms; this alone does not justify being excluded from care. Children can return when they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and they are feeling well enough to participate in class activities.

Conjunctivitis

A child is not allowed to come to the Center with untreated conjunctivitis, regardless of the type. Since conjunctivitis is very contagious, children must stay home until 24 hours after the first administration of prescription antibiotic eye ointment.

Coughs

Children with congested, productive coughs should not be at the Center. Persistent coughs should be checked by a physician.

Coxsackie Virus. (Hand Foot and Mouth)

Symptoms include fever, sore throat, stomach pain and diarrhea, and a rash of tiny blisters on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and in the mouth. It is most common in the summer and fall. If children have a rash and fever >100 degrees or are clearly not feeling well, they should stay home. Children can return when they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, blisters are healed, and they are feeling well enough to participate in class activities.

Communicable Diseases (i.e. chicken pox, mumps, measles, rubella, etc.)

Families are expected to report exposure to any communicable diseases so that the information can be passed along to other parents and guardians. If a child contracts the disease, they may return to the Center after the incubation period, when all contagion has passed. Although different physicians may present slightly different numbers, ITC bases its policy on the following assumptions:

- Chicken pox: incubation period 7 to 21 days, contagious until all scabs are dry or gone and no new pustules are erupting
- German measles (rubella): incubation period 14 to 21 days, contagious seven days before symptoms appear to five days after symptoms appear
- Measles: incubation period 10 to 15 days, contagious four days before rash appears to 5 days after symptoms appear
- Mumps: incubation period 12 to 24 days, contagious seven days before symptoms appear until all swelling subsides

Diarrhea

No child with acute diarrhea should come to the Center. Acute diarrhea is defined as an increased frequency of watery or loose stools that cannot be contained in a diaper or by the child's ability to use the toilet. Exceptions will be discussed for individual conditions, such as reactions to medication. Children may not return to the Center until they can tolerate their regular diet and have not had diarrhea for 24 hours. Soiled clothing from an episode of diarrhea or loose bowels is placed unrinsed into a plastic bag. Health experts advise handling feces and soiled clothing as little as possible in order to prevent the spread of disease. Children may not be at the Center if producing bloody stools or bloody diarrhea.

Ear Infections

A child may be at the Center if they have no fever, if the infection is being treated by a physician, and if they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours. If a child is susceptible to earache and infection, or if a child has tubes in their ears, please notify teachers so that they can ensure that they wear a hat when outside. Parents are notified if a child is tugging at their ears or rubbing them excessively.

Fever

A child with a temperature of >100F when taken inside the ear or mouth or an axillary temperature of 99F or fever with behavior change should not be at the Center. A fever is an indication of infection or illness and should be monitored for other signs of illness. If a child has unusual reactions to fevers or if there is a family history of such, please inform the teachers and make an indication on the child's medical form. Children may return to the center when they have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin. If the fever is accompanied by any type of rash, it is best to consult a physician. If a fever is directly attributable to a DPT injection, the child may be given acetaminophen and brought to the Center. The child will be monitored closely and sent home if they are uncomfortable.

A child who develops a fever while at the Center will be given liquids and made comfortable by removing layers of clothing and by sponging if appropriate. Parents or guardians will be called, and the child will need to go home.

Fifth Disease

Fifth Disease is also called "slapped cheek" disease because after the early appearance of the symptoms (low fever, aches, sore throat), the cheeks get a rash and it appears as if the cheeks have been "slapped." This is the conclusive evidence for the disease. Unfortunately, at this time the child's communicable stage has passed and contact with others will already have occurred. A diagnosis by a physician is still required so that other parents of children can be notified.

HIB Disease

Haemophilus influenza type B infection poses a serious threat to children under the age of five. Immunization is required for children born after January 1, 1992. This disease spreads through the air and by close personal contact.

Impetigo

The same guidelines for conjunctivitis apply to impetigo. Please be aware of any new or unknown scabs, rashes, pustules, or sores and have them checked and cultured as necessary. Impetigo is extremely contagious but can be cleared up quickly when treated promptly.

Influenza

Listlessness, rubbing eyes, poor appetite, interrupted sleep, poor disposition, poor color, fever aches, pains, and congestion are all indicators of the "flu." The doctor should be seen, and rest at home is required.

Insect Bites

If a child has an allergy or unusual reaction to insect bites, or if there is a family history of such, teachers should be informed and this information indicated on the medical form. Insect repellent, if desired, should be applied before the child arrives at the center (see section on sunscreen and insect repellants for more information).

Lice

ITC will notify parents if head lice are present in the ITC population. Lice are easily treated and are not a sign of unhealthiness or unsanitary conditions. Procedures regarding lice include:

1. Children with nits and lice will be sent home for treatment with shampoo and removal of all nits and lice.
2. Children may return to ITC after treatment and removal of all lice and all nits.
3. Children with confirmed cases of head lice will be checked daily for the presence of new nits and lice for a 10 day period. (Please be assured that routine head checks are done discreetly.)
4. When there are three or more known cases of head lice in a particular group, teachers will regularly conduct head checks on all children in the group.

Pneumonia

Children who have been diagnosed with bacterial pneumonia may return to the Center after they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours and are fever free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen. Children diagnosed with viral pneumonia may return when they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen.

Rashes

Parents should notify the teachers if their child has an unusual rash anywhere on the body. Any rash should be checked for possible contagious disease. Many contagious diseases are associated with rashes.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

SARS begins with a fever greater than 100.4F, followed by respiratory illness such as a cough or shortness of breath. Children and adults entering the Center who have been exposed to SARS or who have traveled to areas in the world with documented high transmission of SARS must notify the Center. Those exposed who are asymptomatic may attend the Center. Staff will check a child for fever upon arrival for 10 days after Center is given notification. If symptoms develop within 10 days of possible exposure children must seek immediate medical care for diagnosis. Children may not attend the Center and should isolate themselves from contact with others until well and until a diagnosis of SARS has been ruled out.

SIDS Prevention

The American Academy of Pediatrics has determined that placing a baby on their back to sleep reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). If your infant does not usually sleep on their back, please contact your pediatrician immediately to discuss the best sleeping position for your baby. ITC will put children to sleep on their backs.

Sore Throat/Strep

Strep infections are most contagious the day before any symptoms appear, so once diagnosed please inform staff so other parents may be notified. A child may return to the Center once they on the appropriate medication for 24 hours, is fever free without acetaminophen, and is feeling well.

Vomiting

Children must stay at home if persistent vomiting occurs. A child may not return to the Center until they can tolerate their regular diet and have not vomited for 24 hours.

Infant Toddler Children's Center

Tuition Policies & Rates
2026-2027 Program Year

	FULL TIME 30 or more hours per week	PART TIME 20-29.5 hours per week
INFANTS	**$21.21**	**---**
TODDLER I	**$19.17**	**$21.09**
TODDLER II & III	**$18.17**	**$19.99**
PRESCHOOL I	**$16.81**	**$18.49**
PRESCHOOL II	**$16.29**	**$17.92**

The Infant Toddler Children's Center reserves the right to change tuition rates with thirty (30) days' notice.

TUITION	Tuition is calculated using the hourly rates above multiplied by a child's schedule and the term length, less any discounts. Charges are figured in full and half hour increments, with the exception of the 7:45 arrival time. The required orientation for new families is included as part of the tuition obligation.
SIBLING DISCOUNT	10% rate discount for the oldest child's tuition
APPLICATION FEE	$50.00 one-time fee per family; non-refundable, not applied to tuition
RE-ENROLLMENT FEE	$50.00 per family, billed each year of re-enrollment; non-refundable, not applied to tuition
ENROLLMENT DEPOSIT	$500.00 per child, due at the time of enrollment offer acceptance, applied to the tuition of the last month of attendance
TERM LENGTH	**SCHOOL YEAR**: 42 billable weeks from August 31, 2026 through June 24, 2027 **FULL YEAR**: 49 billable weeks from August 31, 2026 through August 13, 2027; 1.25% rate discount The number of weeks for each term length may vary from year to year depending on the number of weeks the Center is actually open.
HOLIDAYS + CLOSURES	Tuition is charged for all holidays the center is closed. Tuition is not charged for the week of December 28, 2026 and the weeks of August 16 and August 23, 2027. No refund, exchanges, or credits are given for weather related or other closings whether the Center is not open for all or part of the day.
PAYMENT	Contracted yearly tuition is divided into 10 or 12 equal payments depending on program length and billed on the 10th of each month, with payment due 10 days from bill issuance. Failure to pay tuition in full by the 1st of the following month will result in a $50 fee assessed on the next tuition invoice.
ABSENCES	Tuition payments must be made in full each month regardless of absences.
EXTRA HOURS	Care beyond a child's normal schedule can be requested in writing and approved by the child's teacher, providing that space is available. Extra hours are charged at the regular hourly rate in full or half hour increments and billed on the following month's tuition invoice. Reserved hours will be billed unless canceled at least 48 hours in advance. No charge will be incurred if a cancellation is due to a child's illness. Permanent schedule change requests may be made and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
LATE PICK-UPS	Late pick-ups can be disruptive to staff schedules and confusing to children. In the event of a late pick-up that occurs with less than 24 hours notice and approval, a fee of $10.00 for every five minutes or fraction thereof will be assessed and added to the next month's tuition invoice.
WITHDRAWALS	Two-month written notice is required to withdraw. Full tuition is due for those two months, and the enrollment deposit will be forfeited.
SCHOLARSHIP	Tuition assistance is available through grants made by the Center Scholarship Fund. For more information, contact Evan Merck, Director of Business Operations, at emerck@itcacton.org.