



Eliot-Pearson Children's School Family Handbook 2025-26

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ELIOT-PEARSON CHILDREN'S SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

This Family Handbook includes our school mission, core values, educational philosophy, school organization, policies, and procedures, family and community involvement, and staff expectations.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

Eliot-Pearson Children's School (EPCS) is the laboratory-demonstration school associated with the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. Eliot-Pearson Children's School is also an early childhood education center with 65 children annually enrolled in Preschool and K-1 classrooms.

Eliot-Pearson Children's School has a multi-faceted mission. As a school for young children, it strives to provide high quality education and services to children and families and establish a community of learners comprised of children, their families, and our faculty and staff. As a model and demonstration facility, EPCS serves as a training and observation site for new and experienced educators and as a research facility for faculty and supervised students in the Department of Child Study and Human Development. As such, it is center for teaching, training, and research, and the development and dissemination of fundamental and new ideas in teaching and learning, and professional development for both in-service and pre-service educator education, that strives to develop collaborations and outreach with community schools and programs.

The Children's School is committed to providing appropriate inclusive education for all children. Our goal is to create a high quality, nurturing experience for all children and their families. The school actively seeks student populations that represent a variety of ability, racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, family, and socio-economic backgrounds. Community building and engagement is a core component of our community. Hence, the school inherently incorporates an anti-bias perspective in all our programs.

Ongoing professional development engages and encourages all faculty and staff to keep their practice fresh, remain open to new ideas, and commit to the highest standards in the field of early education and child development. Our faculty and staff expand and deepen their knowledge and skills in all aspects of their work with children, families, and colleagues, through the creation of a professional learning community, with emphasis on an inquiry-based and reflective practice, as well as thoughtful and authentic documentation. Offsite, educators attend and present at conferences as well as visit other programs to expand and enrich their professional lives. Everyone benefits directly from the staffs' continuing education.

Finally, creating communities with families and bringing them together as one vibrant community is a priority. We do this by forging reciprocal partnerships and expanding traditional notions of family-educator relationships. Family engagement is built on the premise that educators and families can learn from each other and work together to create a supportive and responsive community that enhances children's growth and development.

2. WHAT IS A LAB SCHOOL?

A laboratory or demonstration school operates in alignment with a university, college, or educator education institution and used for the training of educators, educational research, and professional development. It is also an innovation hub for new theories and methods, for experimentation and application of new discoveries, approaches and systems, and a place to have healthy discourse on challenges and solutions. A laboratory school is a facility where educators, students and families can learn about child development and education and observe children interacting with their peers, familiar adults, and the environment.

As a lab school for the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development, we have multiple missions to provide:

- Service to children and families
- A site for educator education
- A site for experimentation, research, and curriculum development
- Professional development for in-service and pre-service educators
- Collaboration and outreach to the community
- Dissemination of ideas through presentations and publications

Eliot-Pearson Children's School (EPCS) is a site that welcomes the faculty, student, researchers and curricular projects from the EP-Child Study and Human Development Department and other Tufts University departments, as well as colleagues from other research organizations and institutions. Each EPCS classroom is equipped with an observation booth. Visitors are welcome to observe our classrooms by making an appointment in advance with the administrative office.

All research projects to be conducted at our school and with EPCS students, faculty, and families must be approved by the school's Director with the assistance of the Research Project Coordinator. Research packets with all necessary materials for research permission and approval are available upon request. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Tufts is also required.

At EPCS, collaborative educator inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning is ongoing and integral to what we do. We work collaboratively to develop a model of educator inquiry that encourages continuing engagement in child study and invites the participation of and the support for children, educators, families, undergraduate and graduate students. Our endeavor in this process is inspired by the School-Wide Inquiry (SWI), a form of professional development that informs classroom practice and builds community through a shared focus and shared inquiry based on the collaborative action research models and the communities of practice literature from the Reggio Emilia Schools, and the Making Learning Visible work of Project Zero at Harvard University.

3. DESIGNATION PLAN FOR ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The designated individuals responsible for school administration and program development are:

Director, Hanna Gebretensae, EdD, is the responsible administrator for all aspects of administrative duties and the development, maintenance, and progress of the early childhood educational program of the school including staff development, supervision and training, parent involvement, social services, recruitment and admissions of children, budget preparation, parent outreach, and the direction of the summer program.

The Director also oversees the recruitment and admissions of children with disabilities, the coordination of educational plans for all children with disabilities in conjunction with therapeutic teams, team meetings and progress reports, the promotion of working relationships with families of these children, consultation with and training of educators, supervision of therapists, and leads the development and implementation of the special needs program.

Associate Director, Gabriela Herrera, M.A., partners with the Director in planning, developing, establishing, implementing, and communicating school programs, operations, policies, and procedures. She assists director in overseeing daily school operations and other administrative processes and procedures, that includes the areas of finance and human resources, admissions and enrollment, curriculum development, instruction, and assessment, marketing and outreach, collaborations within and outside of Tufts University, school accreditation and licensing processes, and our special rights program.

The Associate Director works closely with the administrative team to maintain and update our school handbooks, training materials, and our supplies inventory for our school and classrooms. She also supervises and supports educators in curriculum planning, development, and implementation, as well as the documentation and assessment of children's work and learning. She oversees the special rights program while working closely with the Program Administrator in coordinating and documenting special education processes, services, and meetings at the school. She assists the director in planning and implementing staff professional development, as well as reviewing, organizing, and documenting research projects and collaborations within and outside of Tufts University, including global projects.

School Finance and Operations Coordinator, TBD, works closely with the Director and the administrative team to plan, manage and monitor school and fiscal operations, including overseeing admissions and enrollment processes, open house and admissions school visits. She monitors and supports daily operations, policies and procedures, children and staff files and reports, licensing requirements, maintaining and updating records and documentation of compliance with EEC regulations and NAEYC accreditation standards. She manages the budget, inflow, expense accounts, tuition accounts, and staff and family contracts. She supports the Director and the administrative team in admissions and enrollment processes and execution, communicates with current and prospective families about enrollment and application requirements, and conducts school tours for interested families and visitors. She also manages the repair and maintenance of school facilities and grounds, serving as the point person between the school and the Tufts University facilities and maintenance

department. She supports the school's marketing, communication, and outreach, as well as local, global, and special collaborations or projects. They supervise the front desk staff in providing support to the administrative team.

Program Administrator, Alexander Sterling, B.A., oversees the admissions, coordination, and development of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and documentation for our enrichment programs. This includes our Extended Day, Life Project, and Summer enrichment programs that enhances children's learning experiences in the areas of the Arts, Literacy, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. She works closely with Educators to obtain educational resources and materials, and to integrate our enrichment program into classroom curriculum through projects that involve the visual arts, music and movement, nature connections, science investigations, and mindfulness practices. She works closely with the Director and Associate Director in managing our marketing efforts and serves as a communication representative and resource for the school, manage the school website, and the daily operations for the administrative office.

The Program Administrator works closely with the Director and Associate Director to develop, support, enrich, coordinate, and document special education processes and procedures. They will support families, teaching teams, classroom curricula, and integration of children with special rights through observation, documentation, assessment and collaboration with the school districts and service providers. They will organize, maintain, update, and secure children's files and records for children with special rights at the school.

ECE Program Specialist, Lynne May Lim, M.A.T., works closely with the Director and the Administrative team to support daily school operations and administrative systems, including curriculum, instruction, assessment, documentation, educator coaching at the school, the documentation of family engagement, assistance with marketing and admissions, planning collaborative learning and professional development.

Staff Assistants, Lindsey Isenberg, M.A. and Ryan Botsaris, B.A., help the Director and administrative team in managing daily operations of the school; maintain front desk reception, processes school forms, reports, and correspondence, maintain observation and school appointment calendars; collect and provide information to current and prospective families, students, faculty, other professionals; assist in record-keeping and maintaining website/social media sites; and help with buildings and grounds maintenance issues.

NOTE

In the event of the Director's temporary absence, the Director designates the Associate Director to act in her place. In cases where both the Director and the Associate Director are temporarily off-site for more than two hours or absent, a director-certified administrator will be designated in charge.

Eliot-Pearson Children's School Faculty and Staff List 2025-26

Administrative Staff

Hanna Gebretensae
Gabriela Herrera
Lynne May Lim
Alex Sterling
Lindsey Isenberg
Ryan Botsaris

Head Teachers

Fiona Prentice
Tyler McDowell
Anna Petti
John Levine

Assistant Teachers

Samantha Mei
Elizabeth Dowgert
Eleanor Antezana
Patrick Shea

Floating Teachers

Jordin Luxemberg

EP Fellows

Marian Woode-Eshun
Sara Skobak
Tvisha Doctor
Abdul-Soaboor Ibrahim
Zoe Nathan
Lina Penagos
Kizzy Thomas
Peace Ezeugwu
David Marin-Escobar
Abbey Muise

Life Project

Eleanor Antezana
Audrey Kim
Lauryn Alley
Ryan Botsaris

4. 2025-26 SCHOOL CALENDAR

FALL 2025		
August 25 to 29	Monday to Friday	Staff Orientation Week
August 27	Wednesday	Rainbow Room Orientation (Required for all Rainbow Room Families) 8:45-9:45a.m.
August 28	Thursday	New Families Virtual Orientation- Purple, Green & Orange Room 8:45-9:45a.m.
August 29	Friday	Family Visit Day 2:00-3:00p.m.
September 2	Tuesday	First Day of School (Rainbow Room follows phase-in schedule; extended day begins on 09/04)
September 10	Wednesday	Family Coffee Hour with PTAB 8:45-10:00a.m.
September 18	Thursday	All School Welcome Gathering 8:30-10:00a.m.
September 24	Wednesday	Curriculum Night - Rainbow & Purple Room 5:45-7:15p.m.
September 25	Thursday	Curriculum Night - Orange & Green Room 5:45-7:15p.m.
October 4	Saturday	Family Social Event 3:30-5:30pm <i>Rain-date 10/05</i>
October 10	Friday	No School for Children - All Staff Meeting
October 13	Monday	Entire School Closed - Indigenous People's Day Observed
October 15	Wednesday	Life after Eliot-Pearson - Wine and Cheese Social 5:30-7:30p.m.
October 16 & 17	Thursday & Friday	Special Rights Meetings 9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
October 22	Wednesday	Life after Eliot-Pearson- Wine and Cheese Social 5:30-7:30p.m.
November 4	Tuesday	Supporting Children, Supporting Families 6:00-7:30p.m.
November 7	Friday	Parents' Night Out/Childcare Evening 5:30-8:30p.m.
November 11	Tuesday	Entire School Closed- Veterans Day Observed
November 15	Saturday	Open House
November 26 to 28	Wednesday to Friday	Entire School Closed- Thanksgiving Break
December 5	Friday	No School for Children - Parent-Teacher Conferences / Staff Appreciation
December 10	Wednesday	Community Discussion Groups 5:30-7:30p.m.
December 18	Thursday	Last Day of Fall Semester for Students – School Closes at 4:00p.m./Winter Break Begins
December 19	Friday	No School for Children - All Staff Meeting
Dec 22 to Jan 2	Monday to Friday	Entire School Closed - Winter Break

SPRING 2026

January 5	Monday	All Children, Faculty and Staff Return to School
January 19	Monday	Entire School Closed- Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observed
January 24	Saturday	Family Service Day 1:00-3:00p.m.
January 29 & 30	Thursday & Friday	Mid-year Special Rights Meetings 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.
January 31	Saturday	Parent Social Event 7:00pm
February 7	Saturday	EPCS Family Arts Day
February 16 to 20	Monday to Friday	Entire School Closed- President's Day & February Vacation Week
March 6	Friday	No School for Children- Staff Planning Day
March 11	Wednesday	Community Discussion Groups 5:30-7:30p.m.
March 31	Tuesday	Supporting Children, Supporting Families 6:00-7:30p.m.
April 11	Saturday	Family Dance 5:00-7:30p.m.
April 20-24	Monday- Friday	Entire School Closed- Spring Break
May 1	Friday	No School for Children- Spring Parent-Teacher Conference
May 8	Friday	EPCS Significant Day
May 25	Monday	Entire School Closed- Memorial Day Observed
May 28	Thursday	All-School Spring Gathering 8:30-10:00a.m.
June 4 & 5	Thursday & Friday	End of the Year Special Rights Meetings 9:00-4:00p.m.
June 12	Friday	Last Day of School for Students/End-of-the-Year Celebration 12:30p.m. Dismissal for All
June 15 & 16	Monday & Tuesday	End-of-the-Year Staff Meetings & Clean Up Day
June 17	Tuesday	Summer Staff Set-Up & Orientation Day
June 19	Friday	Juneteenth Day Observed
June 22	Monday	First Day of Summer Program Session One
July 13	Monday	First Day of Summer Program Session Two
July 31	Friday	Last Day of Summer Program

5. DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Eliot-Pearson Children's School (EPCS) is an early childhood education center that serves sixty-five children ages 2.9 to 6 years old in our Preschool and K-1 classrooms. It is also a model and demonstration facility, providing a training and observation site for new and experienced educators and a research facility for faculty and supervised students in the Department of Child Study and Human Development.

Staffing Pattern

Each classroom consists of a Head Educator, an Assistant Educator and two EP Fellows, who are graduate students in the Eliot Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development (EP-CSHD). Together they form the classroom teaching team. In addition, they may be joined by undergraduate and/or graduate student educators and fieldworkers, who work in our classrooms on a part-time or full-time basis and concurrently take classes in early childhood education at the Department of Child Study and Human Development. The EP Fellows' work schedules follow Tufts University's academic calendar.

Early Education Programs

Preschool Program

Rainbow Room (2.9 - 3 years old)	Five mornings: M - F	8:30am - 12:30pm
Purple Room (3 - 4 years old)	Five mornings: M - F	8:30am - 12:30pm

PreK/K Program

Green Room (4 - 5 years old)	Five mornings: M - F	8:30am - 12:30pm
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Educators in our Preschool and PreK/K classrooms make sure children and families feel comfortable and knowledgeable about classroom routines, expectations, and range of activities. Children can explore ideas and materials as they engage in a variety of activities. Emphasis is placed on communication of ideas in a group, problem-solving, and individualized and collaborative learning. They are encouraged to use tools safely and productively, and to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and needs to educators and other children. Educators support children in establishing positive and enjoyable relationships with one another. They assist children in their attempts to initiate play, cooperate with others, and negotiate conflicts successfully. Classroom experiences promote and integrate literacy and math concepts and skills, science and social studies thinking, art appreciation and creativity, social-emotional, and physical development.

K-1 Program

Orange Room (4.5 - 6 years old)	Five days: M T Th F	8:30am - 3:00pm
	W	8:30am - 12:30pm

The K-1 classroom seeks to establish a community in which mutual respect for one another's backgrounds, experiences, ideas, and concerns are a priority. The cooperative learning atmosphere enables the children to productively work and play together. The curriculum integrates literacy, mathematics, science thinking, social sciences, and the arts. The rhythm of each day includes large

group gatherings, small study groups, independent work periods, outdoor play, and a significant blocks of time during which children pursue their own interests and develop friendships. Within the context of our developmental classrooms, each child is encouraged to experience the joy of productivity, creativity, mastery, social, and enhanced self-esteem.

Enrichment / Extended Day Program

Our extended day program is envisioned as an enrichment program that provides children with a nurturing and stimulating environment to meet their needs at different periods of the day. Children enjoy quiet time, balanced with ample time for outdoor play and free play activities indoors. They also have abundant opportunities to participate in fun and engaging projects, including learning experiences in engineering and robotics, storytelling and theater, music, art, and spoken languages.

An enrichment/extended day option is offered to children enrolled in the Preschool and PreK/K classrooms on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 12:30 – 4:00pm.

For children enrolled in the K-1 program, an enrichment/extended day option is offered on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 3:00 – 4:00pm. On Wednesday, an enrichment program option is available from 12:30 - 3:00pm that offers children an opportunity to learn new skills and expand their knowledge on high-interest subject matter. In previous years our offerings have included Spanish Language, Music, Engineering and Robotics enrichment programs.

EPCS Life Project Enrichment Program

The Life Project Enrichment Program runs from 4:00 to 5:30pm. and is an option available to children enrolled in our enrichment/extended day program. It offers children a cozy space and children-centered environment where they can relax and build relationships while exploring, learning, and developing a variety of life skills. It promotes creativity, problem solving skills and the development of a more intimate afterschool community within the larger EPCS community.

The start of our Life Project program intersects with the end of our Extended Day program as children enrolled in this program are greeted by their Life Project educators while some of their peers reunite with their families. Typically, the Life Project children and educators gather for a short community meeting to prepare for a smooth transition as they look forward to this homey, unhurried time of the day. A variety of project-based indoor and/or outdoor activities focused on life skills are offered, such as cooking & baking, connecting to nature, engineering & problem solving, creative arts, and storytelling. Best of all, relationships across age groups are fostered and nurtured, establishing a familiar and caring environment where everyone feels they belong.

Summer Program

The Eliot-Pearson Children's School Summer Program begins in mid-June and ends in July and comprises of two sessions lasting three weeks each. Rooted in our school's core values, our summer program provides a developmentally appropriate and children-centered curriculum within a safe, supportive environment in which children can enjoy the magic, recreation, and delight of the summer season. The program staff includes educators and students affiliated with the Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University, as well as from other settings.

Our program focuses on activities that promote cooperative problem-solving and confidence building through individual and group challenges. From children's interests and vigor, the summer program unfolds through curricula that reflect the interests and in-depth studies pursued by each group. Music, drama, art, literacy, math, scientific inquiry, social thinking, and problem solving are integrated into each study.

The campus includes an air-conditioned building, indoor pool, and two large play yards with water features, sand, mud, swings, tricycles, and scooters. Throughout the summer, we use Tufts University's Hamilton Pool (located next to Eliot-Pearson Children's School) three mornings and two afternoons each week. In addition to the program staff, there are always lifeguards at the pool who also engage in water play and activities with the children. Children may wear flotation devices provided by their families for recreational swimming based on their swimming abilities. Information about this program is available in March.

Guiding Principles for Learning

Our educational philosophy is based on a socio-constructivist model of teaching and learning where children are actively engaged in the learning process, with a focus on social and collaborative dimensions of learning. We focus on the whole child and support all areas of a child's development, i.e., social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical motor, creativity, and the arts. While each classroom at the Children's School has its own distinction, our school identifies five principles that consistently guide teaching and learning that takes place in the classrooms of the youngest group of children to the oldest. These principles are most influenced by the theories of educational practice based on an understanding of child development.

How Children Learn. Children learn best from self-initiated activity with concrete objects. They build on previous knowledge through repeated experiences. Through social interactions with peers, children learn to collaborate, cooperate and to understand another point of view. Children who are active in their own learning process make sense of the world for themselves and construct their own ideas. By having choices and making decisions, children learn to be in control of their own learning and to be independent thinkers, while actively recognizing their peers, teachers, and their environment as reliable partners in their learning. Presenting children with a variety of materials, strategies, and approaches is essential to their growth and development because doing so acknowledges that not every child learns in the same way.

How Curriculum Develops. We strive to have all children's learning be integrated, active and meaningful. Curriculum develops through an interactive process between the child, the educator, and the environment. It is based on inquiry, problem solving, and discovery and the application of key issues and concepts. Curriculum also points to connections within and across disciplines characterized by project-based authentic learning, which allows for more in-depth study of topics.

In each classroom, educators strike a balance between educator-planned learning experiences and those that emerge from children's interests, abilities, and needs. Careful attention is also given to balancing between individual, small group, and large group experiences.

Our educators are co-facilitators of learning. They act as mentor-companions, consistently engaged in the processes of observing, reflecting, collaborating, adapting, intervening, scaffolding, problem-solving, and building upon each child's questions or ideas, as well as assessing the level and interest of each child to make informed decisions. Assessment of learning is both a process and a tool to improve instruction and document children's growth.

Creation of Partnerships with Family. The family is an essential part of our community and crucial to our genuine understanding and appreciation of each child. We strive to build home-school partnerships that are collaborative, trusting, and respectful. Families and staff regularly communicate through frequent interactions, phone conversations, open houses, conferences, family workshops, written reports, school gatherings, home-visits, and family participation. Getting to know the values and cultures within families helps nurture the home-school relationship and contributes to the child's self-esteem. Having families participate in the goal-setting process is an important part of developing curriculum for the individual child.

Importance of the Individual and the Community. Each child is unique. The curriculum focuses on supporting the growth of the whole child, that is, their social, emotional, language, cognitive, creativity, and physical development. We believe that children go through stages of development, that are marked by general characteristics, and we also recognize the range of individual and cultural variation. Yet each individual child is also a member of a community that includes the family, the classroom, the school, and the world at large. Building this sense of community takes conscious planning and ongoing effort. Our goal is for each child to feel valued as a member of the community and to develop a sense of empathy and caring for others.

Respect and Appreciation of Differences. Our school strives to create and maintain a classroom and school environment that respects and supports all dimensions of human differences, including cultural, linguistic, ability, learning style, ethnicity, family culture, gender, age, and socio-economic differences. This perspective is reflected in our school curriculum through the intentional use of materials and resources that support diversity and integrate similarities and differences into the daily life of the classroom. We also adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners by differentiating instruction for members of the group and integrating across developmental domains and sensory experiences. Activities have multiple entry points through which children can access information and work on the same activity with different materials, clear goals, and appropriate objectives.

Many of the same materials and activity areas are incorporated within each of our classrooms. These materials and activities may include unit blocks, hollow blocks, small manipulative such as connector bricks and puzzles, hands-on math materials, painting, clay, crafts, woodworking, dramatic play, sand and water, children's literature, writing, drawing, scrounge materials, music making/listening, movement, and physical and natural science exploration. There are plenty of opportunities for playing and working alone and with other children and educators, as well as several times a day for playing outside. In general, the level of complexity, problem solving, and the role of the educators will vary depending upon the developmental needs of the children.

Assessment Plan

Definition and Philosophy of Assessment. At EPCS, assessment is the process of gathering evidence about children's learning and development that is used to guide planning and instruction. Children's assessment is an on-going process. Educators consistently monitor, observe, and reflect on children's development within their program. Families are considered partners in the assessment process and have opportunities for input in the goals they have for their child each year, through formal meetings, intake forms and conferences.

Developing strategies for documenting and communicating this information in a professional and thoughtful way to families, students, and other professionals is a priority. When issues regarding a child's development are a concern to educators, they seek the input of the Director/Admin. Team. Families also work closely with the team and are involved in all aspects of the decision-making process.

There is a difference between authentic assessment and evaluation. Authentic assessment is an ongoing process and related to the child's learning, performance and understanding. Documentation is evidence of the child's learning. Evaluation involves a more formal and standardized process of looking at a child's development. Because variation in young children's development is normal, at the Children's School, standardized evaluations are not part of the routine assessment process. Formal evaluation is initiated when the child's team has questions about a child's learning. Parental permission is obtained prior to initiating formal evaluation.

What we Assess. At the Children's School, we have a holistic approach to assessment. We look at all areas of a child's development: social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical, sensory motor, and creative expression. Eliot-Pearson Children's School has developed curriculum frameworks that are aligned with the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines for early childhood. We also look beyond individual performance to include group functioning, documenting how the individual is a part of the group and community.

When we do Assessment. The assessment of each child at EPCS is a collaborative process for the teaching team, who work closely with families and elicit support from the Director, Administrative Team, and consulting specialists. This process ensures that interpretations and decisions are based on multiple professional perspectives. Teaching teams are expected to communicate regularly about their assessments of each child, including taking the time to discuss and interpret findings. Teams come to agreement regarding how and when to initiate a dialogue with families regarding areas of concern for their child. This may be during a formal scheduled conference time or at another time during the school year.

While an individual educator often takes the lead in authoring a particular developmental assessment report (e.g., narrative/portfolio) or leading a parent conference, all team members provide input into the assessment and writing process. Thus, the collaborative nature of documentation and assessment makes it necessary for the school to offer annual training to educators on principles of child development, the documentation and assessment process, and the Work Sampling System during staff orientation that takes place before the start of the new school year. Additional training on specific aspects and skill of documentation and assessment are offered during the school year as part of ongoing professional development for staff. Trainings are conducted by administrators or guest speakers/consultants.

Beginning of the School Year. Educators gather information about children to facilitate their transition from home to school, as well as from the current to the next classroom/level. Home visits and an initial family conversation or questionnaire are ways educators gather information about children and their families. The visits and communications provide educators with important information and insights regarding individual children and their prior experiences, family culture, and learning goals, and are used to guide the planning and implementation of the curriculum. Meetings with the children's educators from the previous year are conducted both formally and informally for the same purpose.

Procedures and routines established for children with identified special rights and needs (based on information obtained from families, public school liaisons, specialists, and or Admin Team) are reviewed and plans for implementing the IEPs are mapped out to ensure consistency of care for these children.

Ongoing Assessment of Children's Development. As the weeks progress, educators observe and document children's development as they engage in interactions with their peers, materials, and with their learning environment. Educators analyze the data collected to identify children's interests, gain insights into their thinking and learning process, and plan the curriculum accordingly to extend children's learning and make the curriculum accessible to all learners.

As a Massachusetts private school, EPCS does not screen vision and hearing. Families are asked to have their children screened for hearing and vision by their pediatrician and submit the report prior to the start of the new school year. In January, the school sends families reminder letters about annual physical check-ups, including screening for vision and hearing.

How we do Assessments. Educators at EPCS employ various methods of collecting data and documenting children's growth and development:

- ***Observations.*** Skillful, systematic, and constant observation of children engaged in play and activities throughout the year is central to our work at EPCS. Observations are often intended to identify children's questions and theories as the basis for developing curriculum investigations. Educators record anecdotal observations of significant interactions using various tools (e.g., clipboards, post-its, camera) and then transfer them to computer files, folders or notebooks organized according to curriculum areas for individual children. Observation checklists, arranged according to typical developmental pathways, are sometimes used as a shorthand way to collect specific developmental information regarding individual children.
- ***Direct Engagement with Children.*** Educators directly engage children in various ways to observe and assess their learning throughout the year. Children may be directly asked what they want to learn in school or what has been challenging for them. Children may be asked to convey their thoughts and feelings through verbal and non-verbal communication, such as drawings, story dictations, and various activities and/or projects that involve creativity, reflection, and hands-on, multisensory activities. The various modes of expression and communication allow children to be their authentic selves and provide useful insight into how they view themselves, including how their views change over time.

- **Concrete Evidence of Learning.** Documentation is more than collecting artifacts. It includes careful analysis by the educators to determine children's questions, strengths, and challenges. We collect a variety of documentation materials that show evidence of children's learning. These materials may include selected digital photos, audio or video recordings, children's work samples, and representations (e.g., drawings, photos of clay sculptures or block building), and transcriptions of key conversations. Often the focus is on collaborative efforts between children that provide us with insight into designing curriculum that is relevant to the children. Documentation (e.g., photos, dictations) is regularly shared with children to encourage self-reflection. Educators also create display panels and make portfolios available for families to review.
- **Shared Observations Via Classroom Teaching Team Meetings.** Shared observations, particularly through authentic assessment, allow a teaching team to build a comprehensive understanding of a child's development and learning by documenting their interactions and activities in natural settings. Classroom educators meet weekly, at the minimum, to discuss, analyze, and reflect on their ongoing documentation of children's learning and plan future curriculum. Educators often deliberate and decide on the focus of their observation and documentation for the coming week, e.g., area of development, specific skill set, which group, or specific children.
- **Individual Child Portfolios.** Portfolios are created for each child enrolled in the school to collect information regarding children's development across the year. A portfolio may be organized by areas of development, learning domains or classroom, and include representative samples of children's work and photographic documentation of learning collected throughout the year. In our older classrooms, children are often engaged in selecting examples of their best work. Portfolio entries may include written reflections by the educator, family and/or learner.
- **Gathering Family Input.** Family input on their child is crucial to the assessment process. This information is gathered through both formal and informal means. Each year, families share with the school the goals they have for their children. Home visits, parent-educator conferences, team meetings, informal conversations and correspondences are all ways that families are presented the opportunity to provide input on their child's development.
- **Consultation Meetings.** Educators, specialists, and administrative team meet at regularly scheduled times to share and discuss observations, information, approaches, and strategies towards supporting all children's learning.
- **Developmental Screenings and Diagnostic Testing.** Based on their ongoing informal assessments, educators, in collaboration with families and the Administrative Team, may identify the need for more formal assessments, evaluation and testing. EPCS Staff never diagnose a developmental delay or concern and are trained to identify indicators of developmental issues and variations from typical development. Specialists with the appropriate expertise from the school district or from other agencies conduct assessments and standardized testing (most often involving observation of children performing specific tasks). Recommendations are made based on the results from such assessments and tests, in conjunction with ongoing EPCS educator and family assessments. Children aged three years or older are eligible for free early childhood screening from their public school system.

- **Home-School Journals.** For families of children with special rights, notebooks or e-mail may be used to create a dialog with families, educators and specialists around questions, specific interventions or upcoming meetings or medical appointments.

How We Conduct Assessments of Children with Special Rights. EPSCS is an inclusive school committed to providing a quality education to all children, including children with special rights. A community, that is diverse in every which way, provides children an authentic and expansive learning environment that supports children's growing understanding of the similarities and differences between and among people, and the multiple ways one can interact with the world. As a center for research and educator-training, EPSCS views the complexity of diverse abilities in the classroom as important to our adult students' preparation, as well as a benefit for all children and families.

Our admissions policy provides for admission of children with identified special rights when we have the resources deemed necessary for a successful experience. Families seeking admission may submit their application throughout the year, and ideally by winter, for the following fall. The Administrative Team will meet with the family to discuss the application, observe the child, and review previous assessments provided by the family. The Director makes the final admissions decision. Families, whose children attend EPSCS and leave the school to participate in a special program as recommended by an IEP or another plan, are not financially penalized.

EPSCS's focus on "children's rights" is borrowed from the work of child development specialists and early educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy, where every child is believed to have the right and capability to participate and contribute. The Administrative Team has a number of important roles:

- Supporting the families and teaching staff to access local resources
- Establishing center policies related to special rights inclusion, such as transitions and assessment
- Developing relationships with agencies and school districts serving children with special rights
- Working in close collaboration with the therapists and specialists who provide treatment at EPSCS or outside of the school
- Maintaining documentation of the status of children with special rights at EPSCS, including IEPs
- Attending and participating in IEP meetings
- Scheduling consultation meetings for educators with specialists.

These activities and relationships support the excellent work of our educators, who work hard to advocate for the children in their classes as members of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and other interdisciplinary teams. The role of educators includes observation, documentation, researching, and educating themselves regarding strategies to assist children, families, and all members of the trans-disciplinary team (OT, PT, ST, etc.).

Progress Reports for Diverse Learners. Every year, parent-educator conferences occur near the end of each semester. Additionally, written reports, currently the Work Sampling System, are sent to families in January and June. Individual Education Plan meetings with the child's entire IEP team,

occur at least twice during the school calendar year. Most cities and towns require a spring meeting to determine the need for summer services. Our school's administrative and teaching team conduct check-in meetings with families of children with special rights at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Our school policy and process pertaining to assessment and communication with families our belief in the importance of home-school partnership in the growth and development of all children.

Communicating Children's Progress. The communication of children's progress is carried out in several ways including regular contact at pick-up and drop-off times, phone calls, e-mail, biannual progress meetings between families and educators, biannual developmental narratives, child specific portfolios, documentation panels, newsletters, home-school journals, IEP meetings and opportunities to observe children from the observation booths. Two of the formal methods to communicate progress to families include:

Progress Meetings. Twice a year, teaching teams meet with families to discuss observations and assessments of their child's learning and development and to share goals and aspirations. Photos, transcripts of children's comments, and/or portfolios are often shared at these meetings to structure discussion and provide anecdotal evidence. These meetings underscore the partnership of families and educators in supporting children's continuing growth and present an opportunity for educators to engage in conversations with families about observations and questions they have, to gain input and insights from families, and to collaboratively set goals for the child's development. The written developmental report is finalized after the meeting.

In addition, the Children's School believes that children with special rights thrive when the significant adults who have care for their well-being (i.e., families, educators, administrators, and service providers) work as a team to share updates on notable progress and areas of growth observed, and to set clear, appropriate goals and next steps based on the most up-to-date observations, assessments, and reports. The administrative team, teaching team, and families meet three times in the school year - at the beginning, middle, and at the end of the school year.

Progress Reports (Developmental Narrative Assessments). Educators are continuously observing children in their classrooms. EPCS educators will prepare two formal assessments during the year, based on modified Work Sampling System to share with families. The reports are intended to provide information on core areas of development and learning. In the late fall and spring, educators will use the modified WSS checklists and portfolios of samples of the child's work to form the basis for further discussion and sharing with families. These reports are authored by one of the child's classroom educators and result from a collaborative and consultative process of assessment by the teaching team. Upon request and signed permission from families, the modified Work Sampling System checklists will be provided to transfer schools and intervention teams.

Transition of Assessment Findings. EPCS seeks to create greater *continuity* for children and families by encouraging the sharing of assessment information from classroom to classroom and across time. Educators, the Director and the Admin. Team meet in early September to share information regarding the development of children who will be moving to a new classroom. As part of this transition process, teams review and discuss relevant developmental assessment reports, individual portfolios, curriculum documentation, classroom portfolios, and IEP/IFSP records for children transitioning to their classroom.

Confidentiality

Distribution of Records. Children's records are confidential and may not be released to anyone other than the family or the child's educator(s) without written consent of the family. Parents may have access at reasonable times, and such access may not be delayed more than two business days after the initial request of the parents. The entire record shall contain a log indicating any persons to whom information has been released. This procedure applies to the release of information to both public and private schools.

File Access. Teaching teams, consisting of Head Educator, Assistant Educators and therapists, may have access to children's assessments and records to gain more information to better serve the needs of the child's learning. Children's files are kept in a locked file cabinet and are maintained by members of the Admin. Team. Files are logged in and out and never leave the school.

The Work Sampling System, Developmental Guidelines (2004, Pearson Education, Inc.)

These guidelines are the Work Sampling System (WSS) developmental categories that each classroom curriculum will address. Each age group has a specific developmental checklist based on these categories. The WSS checklist reflects the common experiences and expectations in classrooms, structured around activities appropriate for most children of this age. The WSS checklist is used twice a year to record children's progress. Checklists will be distributed during the fall curriculum night.

I. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Self-concept
- B. Self-control
- C. Approaches to learning
- D. Interaction with others
- E. Social problem-solving

II. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- A. Listening
- B. Speaking
- C. Reading
- D. Writing

III. MATHEMATICAL THINKING

- A. Mathematical processes
- B. Number and operations
- C. Patterns, relationships, and functions
- D. Geometry and spatial relations
- E. Measurement
- F. Data collection and probability

IV. SCIENTIFIC THINKING

- A. Inquiry
- B. Physical Science
- C. Life Science
- D. Earth Science

V. SOCIAL STUDIES

- A. People, past and present
- B. Human interdependence
- C. Citizenship and government
- D. People and where they live

VI. THE ARTS

- A. Expression and representation
- B. Understanding and appreciation

VII. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH

- A. Gross Motor development
- B. Fine motor development
- C. Personal health and safety

6. ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

What is Anti-Bias Education (ABE)?

Anti-Bias Education is an educational approach that supports children and their families as they develop a sense of personal and group identity within a complex and multicultural society. It is an optimistic and affirming perspective of children that encourages them to be proud of themselves and their families, to respect a range of human differences, to recognize unfairness and bias, and to speak up for what is right (Derman -Sparks & Olsen, 2010).

At Eliot-Pearson Children's School, this means working to create an inclusive community that encourages conversations among children and adults about all types of human differences in the context of classroom life. Discussions may include topics relating to culture, race and ethnicity, language, abilities (physical, mental, and social-emotional abilities), learning styles, family structure, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, socio-economic differences, and our many ways of being. ABE supports children and adults to listen to each other with open minds, to recognize common grounds, to understand differences, and to reserve judgment when we encounter views with which we disagree.

Parent: "Anti-Bias Education gives us tools to talk about difficult topics. It's safe to disagree."

Educator: "ABE is a complicated, messy process. There is no right or wrong answer."

Why is ABE so Important?

Anti-Bias educators are committed to the principle that every child deserves to develop to their fullest potential and an ABE stance helps every child do that. ABE is important at all stages of development. Early childhood is a critical period, as it is when children first receive and perceive messages about who they are, as well as how others see them and their families. With ABE, we work to make sure that all children see themselves and their families reflected and respected in the early childhood classroom.

Parent: "If we fail to talk about our differences, all we are left with is to make assumptions about others that are often misleading or unfair."

Educator: "Children need language and experiences to broaden their understanding about diversity. The more experiences they have, the more easily they can take on an Anti-Bias approach themselves."

What do children learn in an ABE environment?

Children learn about similarities and differences in people and communities. They are encouraged to act in ways that reflect Anti-Bias values and to stand up for things they feel are unfair. ABE is integrated into the classroom activities. It is both planned curriculum within the structure of the day, as well as natural "teachable moments" based on children's social interactions, conversations and play. Anti-Bias curriculum topics come primarily from the children, as well as from families, and educators, and may reference historical or current events. When children ask questions about differences, adults listen to understand what they are curious about and the context of their inquiry, in order to facilitate meaningful conversations and learning opportunities.

Examples of questions and comments children might ask that pertain to differences:

“What color is my skin? Why does my skin look different?”

“He’s a baby because he can’t walk.”

“Why does she wear that scarf on her head?”

“They have two mommies.”

What is the role of families in ABE?

Families can play important roles to support ABE:

- 1) Be aware of the school’s approach to ABE and understand the ways that it may be manifested in the classroom.
- 2) Build relationships and engage in dialogue with educators, staff, other families, and your own children.
- 3) Share your wisdom and insights about your child with the school, including information about your home culture, values, and ways of being.
- 4)
- 5) Participate in classroom activities, school-wide activities, and adult learning groups.

Each family’s level of participation is unique and respected. As educators learn more about your child and family throughout the school year, they become better equipped to invite and facilitate rich discussions and learning opportunities for both the individual child and the classroom group. We value the ideas and perspectives of families and highly encourage them to share these – when concepts or topics make sense, and especially when topics are confusing or uncomfortable. We sincerely invite families to feel free to tell us about the ways in which their family interacts with the world.

Parent: “Families do and don’t feel like they fit in for a whole range of reasons. We want to be heard, valued, and included in ways that seem meaningful and valuable to us.”

How does ABE relate to bullying?

ABE is an example of an anti-bullying, pro-social curriculum because we proactively guide children towards developing empathy and understanding towards others when they encounter difference, and teach them ways they can genuinely respond to others and themselves with kindness and fairness. However, note that we do not use the word “bullying” in early childhood because young children are not bullies; children at this age are simply learning to understand themselves and others, and how to share the same space and resources so that everyone gets what they need to grow and develop optimally. Exploration of power and conflict are a natural part of this process.

Creating and maintaining a classroom community where everyone feels safe and respected is an essential part of the educator’s role at every age level. During the first weeks of school, educators and children develop ground rules or community agreements. These may include words such as “We take care of each other. We keep ourselves and others safe. We respect ourselves and others.”

Educators lead discussions and activities that promote children’s understanding and acceptance of multiple points of view and cultivate the critical thinking skills they need to do so. In addition, they learn problem-solving strategies they can use when they encounter challenging situations.

Where can I get more information about ABE at Eliot-Pearson Children’s School?

The Director, administrative team, and Head Educators can answer questions about ABE. Families who have been at the school in past years can also serve as great resources for new families. Also, a list of ABE readings and resources is available at the front desk and some of these materials may be checked out from the school library.

What are the specific goals of an Anti-Bias Education? (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2010).

ABE Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

ABE Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

ABE Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness and understand that unfairness hurts.

ABE Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

How do educators decide what to teach? What types of similarities and differences are discussed with the children?

Educators always follow the lead of children. At the heart of ABE is the child-centered curriculum we advocate, thus, Anti-Bias curriculum topics can come primarily from the children. Other members of the classroom community, such as families and educators, can also offer topics, direction, and/or context. Historical and current events that provide meaningful context and can enhance children's understanding may also be presented and/or referenced. Furthermore, we approach antibias education on three different levels: individual children and families; classroom and teaching groups; and school-wide focus and themes. Thus, every member of our school community is presented with the opportunity to broaden and deepen their understanding of themselves, others, and the world we live in, as we collectively support the continuing growth and development of the children in our school.

In the classroom, educators, working in partnership with families, start by creating a classroom environment in which the children and families within the classroom feel they belong and represented, and where they can expand their knowledge and appreciation of the world we all live in and share. Songs and books, in languages that are spoken by families in the classroom, are often used as a starting point of building an inclusive community. Children and families also participate in learning activities that promote communication and sharing about self and family such as making self-portraits with materials that match the colors of their skin, hair, and eyes; experiencing stories about different types of families; and participating in "share days" for each child and family. Classroom materials such as books, dolls, play props, puzzles, music, and images on the wall reflect people from various racial and cultural groups, gender roles and differing abilities.

Educators make decisions on what to teach based on the interests, questions, and issues that children show through their play and conversations. Curriculum topics often emerge from the prevailing social issues children in the classroom are grappling with, e.g., sharing and taking turns, names they want to be called and who are in their families, who can and cannot play with them. Educators discuss and plan activities that encourage children to consider how we are alike and how we are different, including our lived experiences, physical characteristics, gender, language, culture, religion, ability, and family make-up. For example, if children are excluding others based on gender, ("This is a game

for boys only") discussions, books and "problem stories" related to gender differences and exclusion become part of the curriculum.

When the school embark on school-wide themes that focus on resisting stereotypical characterization of people and behaviors that can discriminate against individuals and groups of people, classroom teams adhere to best practices that are appropriate for the children's ages and experiences as they facilitate their participation and learning about such topics. For example, when the school launched a school-wide inquiry featuring stories, discussions, and role-playing related to Ruby Bridges and school segregation, with a goal of cultivating in children a beginning awareness of unfairness and power based on differences between people, classroom educators planned and implemented how this topic is addressed, based on what is developmentally appropriate for the group of children they teach. Therefore, the specific ways in which a single school-wide theme is explored will vary greatly from classroom to classroom.

How is Anti-Bias Education integrated into the school day? What is the relationship between play, academics, and ABE?

Anti-Bias Education occurs through both proactive, planned curriculum as well as natural "teachable moments" that arise in children's social interactions, conversations, and play. Educators also carefully think about what children need in terms of individual and group development throughout the year. Balancing these aspects of curriculum development leads to activities that integrate into the classroom's daily schedule and physical environment, as well as with the social, emotional, cognitive, motor, and academic goals that we have for the children. Educators develop activities that support many learning goals at once, such as in the following example:

In the preschool classroom, children liked talking about what food they have for lunch. For several days, they compared the kinds of fruits they brought from home and talked about fruits they like to eat. Several children liked grapes. Where do grapes come from? How and where do they grow? Who grows them? The educators decided to introduce a Person of Power for their social studies connection to the topic. Through books and oral narratives, the educators told the children about Cesar Chavez, a labor leader and civil rights activist who co-founded with Dolores Huerta the National Farm Workers Association, which later merged to become the United Farm Workers. Through the story of Cesar Chavez, the children learned about the unfair wages and work conditions grape farmworkers faced for about sixty years. They learned how Cesar Chavez helped the grape farmworkers by leading an activist movement involving a



vast network of activists who urged people to boycott grapes to bring attention to the plight of the grape farmworkers. At the time the children were learning about Cesar Chavez, they also learned about the current plight of tomato farm workers. Their eyes widened as they connected what happened sixty years ago to the present time. As consumers of products that grew from the work of tomato farmworkers, the issues came alive and felt relevant to the children. Four large fast-food corporations, namely Burger King, MacDonald's, Taco Bell, and Subway, have agreed to join the Fair

Food Program that calls for fair wages, and for better and safe work conditions for tomato farmworkers. One fast food corporation, namely Wendy's, refused to join the program. The children learned about the Boycott Wendy's Movement that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) launched with the support of their consumer allies to pressure Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program. The children, with the support from educators, wrote to Wendy's and staged a protest march around the school and the EP Department of Child Study and Human Development to raise people's awareness of the issues faced by tomato farmworkers and their call for concerned consumers to act.

Is Anti-Bias Education appropriate for young children? Will my child learn or acquire biases about others?

Three aspects inform early childhood educators' thinking about developmental appropriateness: what we know about the individual child, the sociocultural context (such as communities, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic groups, or national context), and what researchers have learned over time about children's development. In most cases, children in our program are exposed to diversity daily from their neighborhoods, all forms of media, and schools. From infancy on, children are constantly deriving meanings from their experiences, regardless of whether adults are supporting them in this process. Anti-Bias educators believe that it is the responsibility of adults to scaffold children's learning about diversity so that messages children take away are positive and truthful, and that they are encouraged to become empathetic and effective citizens in a diverse democracy (see ABE goals in question 7).

Some families may worry that talking about biases might foster bias in children and choose to avoid discussing the topic. However, studies show that tolerant children do not become prejudiced after talking about race, while prejudiced children show greater tolerance after such discussions. Moreover, children have trouble predicting adults' attitudes about diversity unless adults have communicated their attitudes directly to them.

Learning is a process. As a child learns to spell the word "school", the word may take different forms, including "s-k-l", to "s-k-o-o-l". These forms are important steps in the learning process. We would not discontinue writing instruction because a child temporarily uses unconventional spelling. Anti-Bias learning is also a journey and a process, made even more complicated because society has yet to agree on all the "right answers" about how to be unified in diversity. It may appear that a child who has begun to spontaneously point out racial diversity is acquiring bias. Instead, if we view this behavior as a step in the process of learning to recognize and appreciate human diversity, we can use it as an opportunity for a teachable moment!

Will children experience moments in which they feel included and/or excluded?

Yes, such moments are possible. As with all explorations of the world, children bring themselves to their learning. When they explore similarities and differences, they are quick to connect and compare images and words to themselves. "How about me?" As children are learning about who they are and then testing out and refining these ideas and perspectives, at times they may perceive their similarities as being "included" and their differences as being "excluded." Because our society uses distinct affinity groupings to discuss cultural identities, it is easy for a child to perceive that, "If I am a member of one group (i.e., girls), then this means that I am not a member in another group (i.e., boys)."

As children work to understand what a particular identity means to them, they may even temporarily segregate themselves into distinct groupings. This allows them to observe and test out ideas about

what it means to be a "boy" or a "girl," for instance. In these cases, educators consider the careful balance between providing children space to consider and test their ideas while also asking children to expand their thinking and embrace a wider and more inclusive lens. Educators also help children to understand the emotional impact of including and excluding, while guiding them towards striving to create a space of respect and acceptance. They help children become better able to articulate their questions and ideas in ways that do not hurt the feelings of others.

How does the school discuss similarities and differences between families, in terms of their parenting styles, beliefs and values? Is there room for discussion when a family's approach is different from that of the school?

Families come from diverse cultural, religious, socioeconomic, linguistic, and geographic backgrounds, and this wealth of diversity contributes to the overall health and vibrancy of a school. Every family offers expertise, resources, and opportunities to enrich all children's learning. Within this diversity, it is inevitable that there will be varying viewpoints, cultural conflicts, and differences in values, goals for children, and expectations of schools. People will not always agree. While Anti-Bias Education does not offer simple solutions for when such conflicts or differences in expectations arise, it prepares us with the confidence that these conflicts are a healthy part of the process of learning from one another. Anti-Bias Education supports open dialogues and opportunities to engage with differences rather than ignoring or minimizing them.

Some foundational principles or core values guide us in our efforts to make every family feel respected, valued, and included within the school culture. We have the four goals of Anti-Bias Education stated above; we also have the school's published philosophy, guiding principles, and commitment to inclusion. Families are always welcome and encouraged to share their experiences, questions, and concerns with educators and administrators. These fundamental principles provide

the scaffolding necessary for the school and families to approach differences with mutual respect, a spirit of generosity, and trust in the process that we are partners in working for solutions that consider the needs of individual children and families as well as the good of the community.



How is Anti-Bias Education related to special education inclusion?

Special education inclusion is the practice of educating children with physical and/or learning challenges together with typically developing peers. Special education inclusion is supported and regulated by state and federal laws. Anti-Bias Education is a voluntary approach that encompasses special education inclusion and extends it to address differences in culture, race, language, gender, economic class, and family structure. The goals of Anti-Bias Education and special education inclusion are very similar in that they place positive value on differences and treating all people with fairness and respect.

Educators use a variety of language to support children in learning about their own and another's unique learning needs. Children are invited to share their strengths and expertise, as well as their challenges and skills that they are working on. Children also are exposed to the idea that "fair is not always equal." This means that what one child may need to do their best learning may be different from what another child needs. Children learn to express their own needs as well as understand and support the needs of others. In practice this may mean that some children require specialized seating, additional sensory breaks, or distinct writing tools to work to their highest ability. In addition, children learn that all classmates have contributions to make to the community. These contributions are acknowledged, and children are encouraged to seek one another out for their strengths and contributions.

How can I stay informed about the work my child's class is doing regarding Anti-Bias Education?

There are many ways to stay informed about ABE in your class. Some of them include:

- Most important: ask your child and your child's educator
- Read the classroom newsletter. This will give you a regular window into the ongoing Anti-Bias work that occurs in your child's class. Several classrooms have explicit ABE updates in their newsletters.
- Find out about the books that educators are using in class to address Anti-Bias issues. Check these books out or ask your child's educator if you can borrow the book from the class for a night!
- Let your child's educator know you are interested in observing Anti-Bias work. Find a time to observe during explicit Anti-Bias discussion.
- Volunteer in the classroom. Find out from your child's educator if it possible for you to take part in an ABE lesson.

How are the educators trained to use Anti-Bias Education? How can educators teach Anti-Bias Education in a responsive and sensitive way to children whose identities are different from their own?

The role of the educator is to provide an equitable education to all children, and a safe and nurturing learning environment in which children are encouraged to question and challenge exclusionary and unfair practices. This means supporting a child's identity development, pride in family and community, respect for a range of human differences, ability to recognize unfairness and bias, and empowerment to speak up for what is right. Educators do this work by developing curriculum, and by generating questions for themselves, their colleagues, and their students.

Educators at Eliot-Pearson have spent years developing their skills as Anti-Bias Educators and recognize that it is a continuing learning process. Coursework, reading, and ongoing discussion enable educators to have a philosophical and theoretical understanding of Anti-Bias Education. Educators also develop a high level of self-awareness that informs their own practice through a cycle of reflective self-examination, questioning, and discussion of their own perspectives, along with those of the children and families. Educators are actively engaged in their own on-going professional development to provide them with the knowledge and support they need to be an effective Anti-Bias Educator.

Louise Derman-Sparks, Maria Gutierrez and Carol Phillips, *Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias*. NAEYC. 1989 Copyright © 2004 by Eliot-Pearson Children's School, Medford, MA Updated 2012

Special Rights Program

The Children's School is committed to providing quality education to all children. At the heart of our philosophy is the belief that all children come to us with their unique needs, and within our population of children, there will be some who require more focused, consistent attention in particular areas of development.

We believe that children with special rights should not be taken out of their classroom for the delivery of their special services. Children do not need to be segregated from their friends, educators, and familiar room to get the quality of assistance they need. Rather, we believe that it is every child's right to be fully included in the classroom, and whenever possible, the approaches and strategies need to accommodate the individual therapeutic requirements of each child. This is at the heart of developmental education.

All children have the right to develop to their full potential. They are competent, vibrant, powerful, and not needy. Using the term "rights" over "needs" emphasizes the significance of children in our immediate and larger communities, and the special qualities each child brings. While studying the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we learned about their use of the phrase "special rights" to describe children with special needs or "children with disabilities," the term used by the MA and US Departments of Education. We are using the term "special rights" at the Children's School, as it captures our beliefs about children with learning differences.

To the greatest extent possible we attempt to deliver the therapies in the classroom, so that the skills acquired are functional for the child instead of isolated skills that are practiced in the therapy room and nowhere else. At the Children's School it is common to observe a therapist in the classroom engaged in a highly motivating activity with a child identified with special rights as well as several of their classmates. This model of including the support in the classroom is a conscious departure from traditional models of mainstreaming and integration. It also requires a carefully orchestrated collaboration between all individuals involved with any given child. This teamwork approach enables us to support the full inclusion of children with special rights in the classrooms.

Occasionally, therapeutic interventions may need to occur outside the classroom. This is most often due to equipment needed for therapy (such as a swing or large therapy ball) or the need to address a sensory, motor, or specific speech or language issue in a less stimulating environment than the classroom. In some instances, a classmate of a child with special rights may be invited to participate in a therapy session. For children without special rights, this is a voluntary opportunity to spend time with a skilled occupational, physical, or speech and language therapist and a classmate. The activities are fun and engaging and children are usually eager to participate. The sessions usually last about 30 minutes. If not in the classroom, the therapist will work in Room 118, the Therapy Room, located near the K-1 classroom.

In addition to our teaching staff, we are fortunate to have a team of specialists, who collaborate with the educators, families, and all others who may be involved in setting goals for the children identified with special rights. Coordinating the team is our Special Rights Coordinator. The coordinator serves as liaison with public school systems that may refer children to the Children's School, and meets regularly with parents, therapists, and classroom educators around the programming needs for the children with special rights. Specialists include occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, physical therapists, and a mental health consultant. At times there is also an educator of

the vision impaired/orientation and mobility instructor, a behavioral specialist, and other specialists. Whenever possible, every attempt is made to coordinate with school systems to secure the services required for children and families.

Children with special rights are enrolled in all our programs. Some are referred to us through public school systems. Sometimes families enter the Children's School with questions and concerns about their child's development or with findings from an outside evaluation. They can share their questions and concerns with their child's educator and can request additional input from the Inclusion Specialist. Sometimes a child's educator raises questions about the progress of a particular child. In this case educators will bring their questions to the Inclusion Specialist and/or the Director.

When questions and concerns are raised about a child's development, the Children's School will:

1. Conduct observations of the child over a period of a week or two and at different times of the week and school day. Observations will be conducted by the child's special rights team consisting of the classroom educators, the special rights coordinator, a child development specialist, and/or the school director.
2. Document the observations using tools that may include, and not limited to, written narratives, timed/event samplings, checklists, work samples, video and/or audio recordings.
3. Convene a meeting of the child's special rights team to discuss the observations and evaluation reports, if any, share pertinent information, and consider possible explanations and accommodations and/or instructional strategies.
4. Call a meeting with the child's family, the classroom educator, the special rights coordinator, and the director. If a decision is reached that there are concerns, which warrant further analysis, these will be shared with the child's family. If an outside referral is recommended or required, this will be communicated to the family.
5. Provide information about resources pertaining to child development relating to the concerns raised and observed, as well as resources for diagnostic evaluation and support services.

Our commitment to children and families with special rights is an important part of our effort to serve diverse populations. It is our hope that everyone will acknowledge and honor the range of human differences and equitably serve all children and families. We know this is an important value to promote and one that is essential for children to recognize as the world we live in is inherently diversified and complex. Appreciation and respect for all people, regardless of the differences and similarities that exist, is at the heart of our program.

As a private program, we receive no state or federal funding to support our special rights program. If a child requires special services or regular monitoring, there are additional fees to cover the cost of the therapeutic services. Whenever possible, we encourage families to work with their community school system to get the special services available through the public school. If that is not possible, families will assume the cost of agreed upon services. We are not making any profit from the special rights program. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas share them with the Special Rights Coordinator or Director.

NOTE: We are not considered an approved private school for special education, because we are an inclusion setting -- not a school exclusively for children with special rights. Therefore, if you seek funding from your public school system you may run into difficulty, especially for children eligible for kindergarten or older.

Frequently Asked Questions by Families About Inclusion of Children with Special Rights

What is inclusion? How is it defined at EPCS?

At the Children's School, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our efforts and beliefs. We define inclusion to mean the creation of a classroom and school community that respects and supports all dimensions of human differences, including culture, linguistic, ability, learning styles, ethnicity, family culture, religion, gender, age, and socio-economic. We do this by valuing our similarities as well as our differences. Inclusion of children with learning differences is one aspect of inclusion.

This noble goal is not always easy to put into practice in a school. It is not enough to just bring people together in the same building from different walks of life; it involves creating a community culture that supports a range of differences including different opinions, values, and perspectives. It involves listening carefully to others, learning from each other, and being able to agree to disagree in non-judgmental ways.

What is it like to have a child attend an inclusion school?

An inclusion school can provide a safe environment where questions can be both asked and answered. Children are encouraged to take notice of their peers' strengths and expertise and at the same time to learn that everyone is working on doing something better. It is a place where differences are normalized, and families and children can be proud of their uniqueness. Exposure to differences and open discussions can lead to greater acceptance of the unfamiliar and build a strong community. Our team approach to supporting children and families emphasizes our intentionality in placing children at the core of our collective work.

In an inclusion school, families help to ensure that the needs of all children are met, not just those of their own child. They make extra effort to learn about the unique qualities of other families at our school. Such an inclusive setting brings life-long benefits for children and their families.

What types of special rights do children have at EPCS?

There are children in each classroom at the Children's School who have both "visible and invisible" special rights. A child with identified special rights has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) written in conjunction with the child's school district. The IEP includes strengths, goals, and therapeutic interventions that will help the child to attain the learning goals. Some of the visible special rights may include cerebral palsy, blindness, hearing impairment, or Down Syndrome. Other special rights such as communication delays, behavioral or emotional needs may not be as visible to the greater community. Some children's learning differences are identified after they enroll at the Children's School. We work closely with families and their local public school for evaluations and services.

Why do you say "special rights" rather than special needs?

All children have rights and are full of potential. They are competent, full of life, powerful, and not needy. Using the term "rights" over "needs" emphasizes the special qualities each child brings. While studying the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we learned about their use of the phrase "special rights" to describe children with special needs or "disabilities," the term used by the MA and US Departments of Education. We are using this term at the Children's School as it captures our beliefs about children with learning differences.

How many children with special rights are in any given class?

There is no designated number of children in each class with special rights. We feel there is value in all children learning together and we feel well-equipped to serve children with special rights due to having many years of experience, specialists on staff, educators who have had coursework and experience with children with special rights, and a consultant for this program. Each classroom team comprises of a Head Educator, an Assistant Educator, and two EP Fellows throughout the year. Tufts University students often join the team during specific times. At times, a child may have an Individual Education Plan that calls for an Instructional Aide. The Instructional Aide typically interacts with all the children in the class to support inclusion.

Can I find out about which children have special rights and what their differences are?

State and federal laws that protect people's right to confidentiality protect children with special rights. Staff members discuss a child's learning issues only with the child's family. Families often have strong ideas about how and when they want to share information about their child's special rights. At times, some parents have written a letter to the other families in their child's classroom to give them information that will support friendships, classroom interactions and play dates outside of school. The letters may address dietary restrictions, facilitating peer interactions, safety issues and general medical information. The letters are appreciated and have been excellent resources for the school community. Other families prefer to keep information about their child private, until they are ready to share more openly with the classroom or school community. It is our policy to take the lead from families and support them in their decisions about disclosing individual needs. Classroom educators and school administrators are good resources for helping to share information when families are ready to do so.

What can I do as a parent when my child asks questions about children's differences?

Children are taught through concrete experiences coupled with emotional events. To demystify differences, provide children with simple, straightforward answers to their questions in a direct, matter of fact, and brief manner. Listen carefully to what children are asking and what they are feeling. While it is important to not over respond, don't ignore their questions, sidestep, change the subject, or admonish the child for asking a question. Be aware that, quite often, children are asking how the difference will affect them. Feel free to discuss this with your child's educator.

How are children with special rights identified?

Some children enter EPSCS with an IEP (Individualized Education Program), that states specific learning goals for children and provides them with specific therapy and/or special education services. Other children may have unidentified learning differences. Educators work with families and the Director to decide if additional information is needed to best support children's growth and development in a classroom environment. At times, implementing instructional support services such as adjusting teaching methodologies or materials may be all that is necessary. At other times, requesting an evaluation through the school district or the pediatrician may be recommended. Following our school's evaluation process, we hold one or more of team meetings that are attended by the child's family, the child's classroom educator, a Special Rights Consultant, the Associate Director, the Director, as well as those who evaluated the child.

Can I be sure that my child will receive attention from the educator?

All children need special attention at different times of the day, for varying reasons, and for different areas of the curriculum. The educator-student ratio allows children to receive attention when they need it. In addition, there are specialists such as occupational, physical and speech/language

therapists who work in the classroom with children, who have identified special rights, and their peers.

How can educators meet the needs of diverse learners? How can educators structure activities so that children with varying abilities can participate?

Educators have extensive training and ongoing professional development. The process of meeting the needs of a wide range of learners in the classroom is called “differentiated instruction.” In this kind of classroom, learning environments are carefully and deliberately designed to address the diversity of learning styles, levels of readiness and interests within any group of children. The curriculum is varied with multiple entry points, and multiple learning materials to address a range of learners. Flexibility is a hallmark of a differentiated classroom; what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed are done in different ways depending on the strengths and needs of the learner.

How does the school support subtle or invisible differences?

The adults in our classrooms value diversity and comfortably support and interact with children, whether their differences are apparent or subtle. There are children in every classroom with invisible learning differences. Children usually find it easier to recognize and understand people whose differences and disabilities are apparent, such as a person in a wheelchair, or a person who is blind or deaf. A simple explanation often makes sense, such as, “their legs do not work like yours, so they use a wheelchair to move around.” Other kinds of differences, such as children needing emotional or behavioral support, or children who find sitting still and listening to be challenging tasks, are often harder for children to understand. Educators use simple language to explain all kinds of differences. They talk openly about the best way to support each child’s learning, e.g., “Maia uses the bean bag chair so she can listen better to the story,” “Tom is taking a break now to relax his body and will come back when he is ready to join the group.” When explanations are given as a matter of fact and in natural, reasonable ways, children learn to accept each other for who they are, for the similarities and differences they share, and for how each one learns best. They learn that this is what we all need to do to live up to the basic rules of respect that children and educators generated together and agreed upon at the beginning of the school year.

Who can answer my questions about inclusion at EPCS?

Parents can raise questions with the classroom educator, the Director, and the Special Rights Coordinator. They may e-mail, leave a note, or call to set up a time to talk, if finding a time after drop-off or before pick-up seems challenging. There are also resources available through the Parent Educator Advisory Board (PTAB) and the *Supporting Children Supporting Families* group.

Where can I get more information about inclusion?

The parent resource library near the front desk is a good place to begin. There are books that are about specific diagnoses such as ADHD, Asperger’s Syndrome, cerebral palsy, language development and sensory processing disorder. Parent Educator Advisory Board meetings often focus on inclusion. The *Supporting Children Supporting Families* group meets monthly and invites participation from the EP community. Some families welcome inquiries about their child’s special rights and are wonderful resources to the school community. Families who have been at the school in previous years may also be good resources.

7. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Children's School needs the involvement of every family! Every involvement contributes to the quality of the school environment and experience we offer to each child, family, and staff member. It is crucial to the establishment of a positive school-home partnership.

At the Children's School, we engage families in two important ways: by providing supportive, ongoing communication between educators and families, and by hosting school events designed to inform families and foster social interactions.

A third and equally important way is by inviting parents to assume various volunteer responsibilities. At the Children's School, we expect each family to volunteer their time and energy in a variety of ways at their own pace and time.

The Children's School invites families to participate in the following ways and events:

Home Visits

At the beginning of school, each educator will arrange a home visit for each child. The purpose of the home visit is to provide an opportunity for educator, child, and family to get to know each other in a safe setting and to help ease the transition from home to school. Some educators may set up visits before the start of school while some may wait until school has begun to coordinate their visit.

Curriculum Night

In October, all classrooms hold a Curriculum Night for families. This is an opportunity for families to visit their children's classroom and learn about specific program plans and goals for the year.

Parent-Educator Conferences

Twice a year, once in the fall and another one in the spring, educators conduct individual conferences with each child's family. This is an opportunity for educators and parents to exchange information about their children's growth and development. Twice a year, families will receive a Progress Report on their children. Parents and educators can request more than the minimal two conferences a year as issues come up. Families may also address concerns directly to the Director.

Family Visits

Families are always welcomed in the classrooms. Simply speak with your child's Head Educator to coordinate your visit with the classroom schedule. We also welcome parents to observe their children's classroom from our observation booths. Please see the *Observation, Research, and Evaluation* section of this handbook for detailed information on scheduling an observation.

Plan to Communicate with Multilingual Families

Eliot-Pearson Children's School has open, ongoing communication with all families. The school uses various means of communication, e.g., in- person meetings, home visits, written newsletters and notices, telephone, e-mail, websites, posters, flyers, bulletin boards featuring classroom curriculum information, videos, and other forms of documentation. The school makes accommodations for families who are multilingual speakers or who require alternative communication methods. We obtain interpreters and/or translators to help with parent-educator conferences or written materials.

Parent-Educator Advisory Board (PTAB)

PTAB help build meaningful and effective home and school relationships. It facilitates communication and discussion about policy and planning issues relating to the school. The board serves as an advisor and support service to the Director. PTAB is not a decision-making board nor is it a vehicle for handling complaints or grievances. PTAB communicates with members of the school community on issues raised in meetings as well as organizes activities for the school community under four categories: educational, social and community building, fund-raising, and community service. Meetings are open to all and will be held throughout the year in the evenings and weekends.

Parent Education

The Children's School sponsors several forums for ongoing parent education. First, in conjunction with the Department of Child Study and Human Development, the school sponsors a series of evening workshops that are open to families and educators from our school and in the larger outside community. In addition, there are seminars with the director of the school that are open to EPSC families. Topics for these forums vary and include parenting issues and subject matters of interest to the school community. In the past, topics included children's art, sibling rivalry, positive ways of dealing with negative behavior, learning through play, and television myths and realities.

Since 2004, the school community has offered parent-educator learning groups. In recent years, these groups have evolved into the Community Discussion Groups. Families and staff gather in small groups to explore together a topic of interest to all of them. Groups meet twice over the course of the year. In past years, groups have covered a wide range of topics, such as Children's Friendships, Special Rights, Creativity in Children, Diversity (e.g., race and gender), Balancing Family and Work, Technology and Young Children, Healthy Living, and Mindful Parenting.

Supporting Children Supporting Families (SCSF)

This group, co-chaired by parents, was formed to provide families with a support system within our community. An administrative staff, often represented by the administrator managing the Special Rights Program, offers guidance and resource support to the group. The SCSF addresses a variety of topics including parenting children with special rights, children's learning, child development, parenting and self-care, as well as the wonders, uncertainties and challenges that come with parenting. The group is open to all families and friends.

The Co-Chairs facilitate the meetings. Meeting topics are planned based on the interests of the participants. Information and insights are exchanged among parents based on their own experiences. The group also invites guest speakers and/or family experts to share information on topics of interest and spark lively conversations. In the past, topics have included Family Advocacy, Sensory and Emotional Regulation, Inclusion, Peaceful Parenting, and Connecting Children with Nature. The group meets 2-3 times a semester, including Mothers' Group, Fathers' Group, and Parents' Group meetings in the fall or spring.

Fundraising Efforts

The Children's School depends upon our families to help with fundraising efforts to support our Scholarship Fund. Money raised through fundraising activities goes towards scholarship and financial assistance to families whose children would otherwise be unable to attend the school. Occasionally fundraising efforts are directed towards specific goals for meeting programmatic needs.

The Parent-Educator Advisory Board coordinates fund-raising activities. Past activities include a Performance Arts event at the Cohen Auditorium hosted by EPCS and open to our school families and the larger community; a Family Dance/Online Auction fundraising event; and specialty merchandise sold through the EPCS School Store.

We need all families to get involved and help with fund-raising efforts. We always welcome new ideas. Please ask your Class Parents or PTAB for more information.

Family Socials

Each year, there are several opportunities for families to get together, e.g., all-school picnics, class events, sing-alongs, meet/greet event. These social events provide families a chance to meet each other, and mingle with Head Educators, Assistant Educators, EP Fellows, and student interns in a social setting. Social events foster familiarity and help grow relationships.

Other Ways to Participate

If your interests lean towards the areas of working with or making curriculum materials, we also welcome your help! From time to time, our educators enlist the help and talents of our families with classroom projects. These range from the creative arts, to woodworking, to engineering, storytelling or constructing playhouses or compost bins. They usually require a limited amount of time and are hugely appreciated. Whatever your particular interest may be, we need your help and invite to contribute whatever you can to the richness of our school resources and community. We thank you in advance!

8. PARENT TEACHER ADVISORY BOARD (PTAB)

Family involvement is the key to successful school events and we need every family's help to make that happen. We ask every family to volunteer for one event or task during the year. There are many ways, big and small, to get involved. Events are scattered throughout the year and entail differing commitments, allowing families to select something that suits their schedule and interests. Volunteer Tasks & Descriptions will be shared in the sub-sections below, including the various roles, responsibilities and committees that members of our school community can sign up to lead and engage in for the year. They are also listed on a blog or posted in the lobby at school. Please read the descriptions and let the school and PTAB know how you wish to engage and participate in school events and in your children's classroom events.

PTAB Purpose and Function

PTAB helps build meaningful and effective home and school relationships. PTAB also facilitates communication and discussion about policy and planning issues relating to the school. The board serves as an advisor and support to the Director. PTAB is not a decision-making board nor is it a vehicle for handling complaints or grievances. PTAB communicates with members of the school community on issues raised in meetings, as well as organizes activities for the school community under four categories, namely, educational, social and community building, fund-raising, and community service.

Composition

PTAB is comprised of Parent Co-Chairs who are responsible for coordinating family engagement/activities at the school with the Director, Associate Director, and the School Finance and Operations Coordinator.

Implementation

PTAB will work with the Director to set up committees to fulfill the mission of the Board. All members of the school community will be highly encouraged to serve on at least one committee. Meetings are open to all and will be held throughout the year in the evenings and weekends. Committee meetings will be held as necessary and will be organized by committee chair(s). The first part of committee meetings will consist of a brief review of the event followed by the event organization. PTAB Co-Chairs, the fund-raising committee, and the Director will establish the goals and mission for fundraising at the beginning of the school year.

PTAB – Role as Advisory Board

PTAB Co-Chairs along with Committee Co-Chairs make up the leadership team of PTAB for family engagement.

PTAB Co-Chairs: PTAB Co-Chairs have oversight of the various PTAB activities and volunteers and act as liaison to EPCS administration.

PTAB Communications Co-Chairs: The Communications Co-Chairs handle posting PTAB info and announcements to our social media sites (Facebook, blog), creating/posting flyers for events and announcements, and composing & sending PTAB Digests to front desk for distribution to the community.

Events & Tasks

Class Parents

The Class Parents are the liaisons between the PTAB and their individual classroom families and between the families and the educator. Class Parents also provide educator support as needed. Each classroom has two Class Parents.

Class Parents' Roles. Class Parents are responsible for the following:

- Coordinate an informal class get together in neighborhood parks to connect families before the start of school
- Support committee chairs in the implementation of the mid-year school service day
- Inform families of the end of year class gift
- Attend at least one family event a semester and encourage family participation

Beyond those responsibilities, the role of each Class Parent depends upon the needs of each classroom and educator. It is most important to check in with the Head Educator to see what would be helpful and possible. Some examples of Class Parents' support include class-family breakfasts, Family Service Day and/or field trips. There is a brief Class Parent Orientation in the beginning of the school year.

Community Discussion Groups (CDG)

EPCS Community Discussion Groups exist for conversation, learning, and fun. The purpose of the groups is to bring together adults from the EPCS community to explore a topic of mutual interest. Each group is co-facilitated by a family member and EPCS educator/staff. Groups meet twice over the course of the year. In past years, groups have covered topics such as Children's Friendships, Special Rights, Creativity in Children, Diversity, Balancing Family and Work, Technology and Young Children, and Healthy Living.

Topics each year are suggested by the EPCS community via a survey and selected by the PTAB Co-Chairs, event chair and EPCS Director. Discussion Groups can meet as often as they like outside of the two dedicated PTAB meeting nights scheduled during the fall and spring semesters.

Community Discussion Groups Coordinator: The event coordinator finalizes discussion topics with the Director, acts as the liaison to the groups, plans the fall and spring discussion nights with co-facilitators, and shares meeting notes with the community.

Supporting Children Supporting Families (SCSF)

This group was formed to provide families with a support system within our community. The group addresses a variety of topics of interest to families. Meeting topics are planned based on the interests of the participants. Information and insights are exchanged among parents based on their own experiences. The group also invites guest speakers and/or family experts to share information on topics of interest and spark lively conversations. The group is open to all families and friends. The Parent Co-Chairs facilitate the meetings, supported by an administrative staff who offers guidance and resources. The group meets 2-3 times a semester, including Mothers' Group and Fathers' Group meetings in the fall or spring.

Family Literacy & STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) Day

This event is an opportunity for families and children to gather and play a variety of games set up for

the enjoyment of people of different ages in a collaborative, developmentally appropriate, and fun way. The Family Literacy/STEAM Committee works together to set up and facilitate the activities for the event. Each year, we alternate the focus between Literacy and **STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math).

Family Dance

This family event is both a fundraiser for the EPCS Scholarship Fund as well as a fun-filled evening for the school community. Families are encouraged to invite relatives and Children's School alumni to this wonderful event, which features our Grand Raffle, delicious food, face painting, kids' crafts, and plenty of dancing!

The Family Dance Team solicits sponsorship, makes food arrangements, organizes children's activities, plans music, coordinates event volunteers, and helps with event publicity and ticket sales for the school's annual spring dance. The committee also handles advertising for the raffle and coordinating & cataloging donated items. The Family Dance Co-Chairs coordinate with the School Finance and Operations Coordinator on facility and equipment rental needs.

Parents' Night Out / Child Care Evening

Parents' Night Out is a fun evening for our families. Families will be able to drop off their children at EPCS, head out for a few hours, knowing that their children are safe and happy, all for a small fee. Our Enrichment Program Coordinator oversees this event. Assistant Educators and EP Fellows organize childcare, food and activities for the evening. They donate their time to provide childcare for the evening. All proceeds go to the Scholarship Fund.

School Store Committee

Various Eliot-Pearson items are sold at different times throughout the year.

Coffee Hour for Family

PTAB will hold community coffee hour at the beginning and the end of the school year, in the EPCS lobby, as a social gathering for families and to benefit the Scholarship Fund with the sale of baked goods and drinks. *These coffee hours will be hosted by PTAB Co-Chairs and EPCS administrative staff.*

EPCS Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee's goal is to raise funds for our Scholarship Fund and enrichment programs. These efforts include soliciting funds within and outside of the immediate EPCS community. If you have experience in long-range fundraising strategies, building alumni relations/donations, or are interested in helping EPCS expand its fundraising capacity, please join this group! *The Director will support and work closely with the committee and attend all meetings.*

Staff Appreciation Committee

We realize that all families want to show their gratitude and appreciation for their children's educators. Typically, there are two times each year when families and classrooms like to collectively express their appreciation for their educators--once at the end of the first semester, and the other at the end of the school year. For the first semester gift, we ask families to participate in a Mid-Year School Service Day by donating their time to clean and reorganize the classrooms. For the end of the year gift, Class Parents, along with the School Finance and Operations Manager, support committee members in gathering monetary gifts to be shared with the classroom team. PTAB also provides two

Staff Appreciation Breakfasts and Luncheons, one in the fall and one in the spring, on Parent-Educator Conference Days.

- **Breakfast & Lunch for Parent-Educator Conference Days:** The Staff Appreciation Committee organizes volunteers for the two breakfasts & lunches in the fall and spring semesters. These delicious, homemade meals are always a big hit! As always, heartfelt individual notes of thanks from families and children are encouraged--and deeply appreciated.
- **Mid-Year School Service Day:** This gesture is a gift of time. We ask families to participate in a classroom clean-up day on a Saturday in January by donating an hour or two of their time. Families do a thorough cleaning and, sometimes, reorganizing of the classroom based on a list of needs the educator prepares. Often, there are a few take-home tasks, too. The Mid-Year School Service Day Committee organizes snacks for families participating in the service day. This simple action provides a great service to the educators and is always very much appreciated!
- **Educator Gift Fund:** Families can give monetary donations to appreciate teaching teams that worked with their children for the year. The School Finance and Operations Coordinator will collect all donations from families for all of the classrooms. Consistent with our school values, we ask families to put their donations in sealed envelopes to keep the process anonymous and hand them to our School Finance and Operations Coordinator. Families should feel comfortable to give what they can. The money will be divided among the educators in each classroom. Class Parents sometimes choose to coordinate an additional gift, such as something handmade by the parents or kids. This latter gesture is welcomed but not required.

Please Note: We strongly discourage individual gifts from families and strongly encourage collective giving in keeping with the principle of equity, family engagement, and community.

Parent Talents/Expertise and Classroom Support

From time to time, our educators enlist the help and talents of our families with classroom projects. These range from creative arts to woodworking to engineering or constructing playhouses. They usually require a limited amount of time and are hugely appreciated. Classroom support can also be in the form of volunteering time as a classroom helper or field trip chaperone.

9. SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SCHOOL POLICIES

Policy on Admissions

The goal of the admissions process is to determine whether Eliot-Pearson Children's School can meet a child's needs and the family's expectations. We make every effort to inform families about the educational philosophy of our program and about our expectation that families become involved in school-sponsored activities. We strive to develop a collaborative relationship with every family to nurture a strong home-school-child connection.

All Admissions Decisions Are Based on The Criteria Listed Below:

- ***Commitment to Diversity:*** Eliot-Pearson Children's School actively seeks a student population that represents a wide range of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. We seek and value diversity within our family population, and do not discriminate based on race, ethnic and national origin, cultural heritage, color, political beliefs, marital status, religion, disabilities, sexual orientation, or family structure in the administration of the Children's School admissions and educational policies, financial assistance programs, or any school administered program. All benefits and privileges are available to every child and family. Appreciation and respect for all people is at the heart of our program.
- ***Re-Enrollment:*** Our first obligation is to the children already enrolled in the school. Families of currently enrolled students are asked, in January, to express their enrollment preferences for the following school year. At that time, Enrollment Contracts will be offered to those families. However, due to physical space limitations in each classroom, we cannot guarantee re-enrollment from year to year. The number of openings remaining in each group will be determined from the base of returning children. A non-refundable Enrollment Deposit is required to hold a spot for each child. A check for the deposit should be turned in along with the Enrollment Contract.
- ***Siblings:*** Whenever possible, priority is given to applicants who are siblings of children currently enrolled; however, acceptance is not guaranteed.
- ***Special Rights:*** The Children's School is committed to providing quality education for all children, and therefore, children with special rights are enrolled in all our groups. In a model of inclusion, children who need therapy services receive them in the context of their school day whenever possible. We have a team of specialists who collaborate with educators, families, and others who may be involved in setting goals for children with special rights. Every attempt is made to collaborate with school systems to secure the services required for children and families. The Children's School serves a wide spectrum of learning differences, and all decisions are made on an individual basis.
- ***Tufts Faculty, Staff, and Students:*** Consideration is given to families who are a part of the Tufts Community.

- **Class Composition:** Applicants who will add to the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the school's population are given priority whenever possible. Age and gender are considerations as they relate to the overall composition of each class.

Age Guidelines. The minimum age for enrollment is 2 years, 9 months by September 1st.

General age guidelines for groups include:

- Rainbow Room - 2.9 to 3 years old
- Purple Room - 4 years old
- Green Room - 4-5 years old
- Orange Room - 4.5 to 6 years old

Dates/Deadlines. While applications are accepted throughout the year, families interested in enrolling their children at our school should submit an application in the fall, and not earlier than one year in advance of the first month of the school year that they want their child to begin school. A non-refundable application fee of \$25 is requested to support our Scholarship Fund. Most admissions decisions are made in March, but openings may occur during the school year when families move or change their plans.

Tours and Observations for Prospective Families. We encourage all prospective families to visit and tour the school to begin the application process. Families are welcome to schedule their visit to the school after Indigenous Peoples' Day (mid-October). Following the tour, families have an opportunity to observe the classroom in which they are seeking admission for their child. If a family is unsure about which class to request for placement, they are welcome to observe more than one classroom. Please call the school at least one week in advance to schedule a tour. Because observation booths are not soundproof, we request that families do not bring their children to the school tour.

Financial Assistance. Admissions decisions are made separately and apart from financial aid decisions. Financial assistance is based on need and the availability of funds. Our policy is to support as many families as possible rather than award large amounts to a few families. It is expected that every family contribute something toward their tuition. To be eligible for an EPCS Scholarship your household income must fall under the 100% Massachusetts State Median Income (100% SMI). Instructions to apply for financial aid can be found on our website www.ase.tufts.edu/epcs under the admissions tab. The Scholarship Committee will keep all information confidential. Financial aid decisions are finalized during the admissions process and awards are itemized on Enrollment Contracts.

Final Decisions. Final admissions decisions are made by the Director after close consultation with the Scholarship Committee, School Finance and Operations Coordinator, the Admin. Team, and Teaching Staff.

Acceptance Procedures. Once accepted, families sign & return an Enrollment Contract, along with a non-refundable Enrollment Deposit, to secure their child's space in the program.

Tuition, Payment, and Financial Arrangements. Eliot-Pearson Children's School has partnered with Smart Tuition (Blackbaud), a third-party invoicing and payment service. Our partnership with Smart Tuition will allow us to offer payment options for our school families. All EPCS families will need to register with Smart Tuition after the enrollment process is complete, as all tuition related

payments are processed through them. As online enrollment site has been created for Eliot-Pearson Children's School's families. Instructions for account registration will be given once students are enrolled at EPCS.

Enrolling your child in the Children's School for the school year obligates you for the full year's tuition. No refunds or credits will be given for withdrawal or absences (see enrollment agreement). Please contact the School Finance and Operations Coordinator for information regarding tuition, billing, or payment arrangements.

Delinquent Tuition. It is a policy of Tufts University not to permit students, in any of the University programs, to start the school year if there are outstanding financial obligations. Your child will not be able to attend school if your tuition account becomes delinquent. Please note, Smart Tuition charges a \$40.00 late fee, directly to families' accounts, if payments are not made or received by the scheduled due date.

Policy on Attendance

Children are expected to attend school regularly and to be present for the entire program, arriving and departing promptly.

Arrival time is from 8:30 to 8:45 am for all classrooms. Families may drop off and say goodbye to their children during this time, allowing children ample time to transition to school and the classroom to smoothly begin their day as a community. Children and families who find saying goodbye a difficult process will be supported. In such cases, families and educators will work together on a plan that first and foremost considers the needs of the child.

Children may be dismissed and picked up at 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., or 5:30 p.m. depending on the specifics of their enrollment contract. Any changes in the pick-up routine, be they temporary or permanent, must be promptly communicated to the classroom teachers and to the administrative staff to ensure children's safety and sense of security.

Policy on Absences

Please notify the school office if your child is going to be absent and the reason for the absence, especially when the absence is due to illness. The school has a responsibility to send e-mail notices to families in the school community in the event of a communicable disease.

Policy on Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are acknowledged a little differently in each classroom. Families can check with the Head Educator regarding birthday celebrations in their child's classroom. As a school that advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion, we strongly encourage educators and families to consider non-food related ways of acknowledging birthdays so that all children can fully participate. When bringing food items to school, be sure to consider food allergies in the classroom. While we recognize every family's right to make decisions for their own family, we ask families to refrain from distributing birthday invitations to private birthday parties via the school mail pouches unless the entire class is

invited. Many children's and families' feelings have been hurt because a child was not invited to a particular party. Please be sensitive to the feelings of others regarding parties and invitations.

Policy on Childcare

Employees, Assistant Educators or EP Fellows of the Children's School may not provide childcare for, nor tutor any children, who they are currently teaching. Assistant Educators and EP Fellows may provide childcare for children who are not enrolled in their current classrooms. Over the years, we have found this policy helpful in maintaining positive, professional relationships between home and school. *Due to licensing regulations, childcare cannot be provided inside the EPCS school building and EPCS facilities (bathrooms, water cooler) will not be available after dismissal time.*

Some ways to find a childcare provider:

- Place an ad in the Tufts Daily. Many families have reported great success with this method. You might even try chipping in with other families to place an ad so you can save money and share the list of respondents. The Tufts Daily is published daily, Monday through Friday, from the beginning of September until the end of April. The Daily is in Curtis Hall, the building on the corner of College Avenue and Boston Avenue that also houses the Post Office. You can call the Tufts Daily at (617) 627-3090 or view their website at tuftsdaily.com.
- Place an online advertisement with Tufts Student Employment. Here is the link: <http://tufts.studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com>
- Ask other families if they would like to trade childcare duties with you. This is a double help in that a person who you know will be in charge and it will also allow your child to have a play date while you are gone!
- Ask other families for the names of childcare providers they use. If the provider seems capable, perhaps you can suggest hiring the provider to come to either one of your homes one evening and watch both children while the adults go out. Everyone benefits: the provider gets more pay, the children can play together, and you and the other adults get a night out!
- Make a request to display a poster in the school and/or the EP Department of Child Study and Human Development. All requests and posters must be submitted to the School Finance and Operations Coordinator and subject to approval by the Associate Director before posting.
- Call the Red Cross. The Red Cross offers names of people ages 11-15 that have been certified through the Red Cross childcare course for those aged 11 to 15 years. The Boston Headquarters/Central Area Office can be reached at (617) 375-0700 or (800) 564-1234. The North Area/Melrose Area Office can be reached at (781) 665-1351.

Policy on Communication

Between School and Families. Eliot-Pearson Children's School has open, ongoing communication with all families. The school uses a variety of communication means: face to face, in person meetings; home visits; written newsletters and notices; telephone; e-mail; websites; posters/flyers/photographs on bulletin boards; videos and other forms of documentation.

The school uses e-mail and postings to our website for most school communication. Please be sure to contact the School Finance and Operations Coordinator if your e-mail addresses change. A paper copy of most notices will be available by request at the front desk. To reduce paper waste, we are fully

putting our “let’s go green” initiative into effect by utilizing electronic communication whenever possible.

The school makes accommodations for families whose first language is other than English, or who require alternative communication methods. We obtain interpreters or translators to help with parent conferences and in translating written material when needed.

Between Families and School. EPCS families’ most direct and consistent experience of the school is with their children’s educators. Educators are ready and available to discuss children’s progress and family concerns with parents at times other than the beginning and the end of class periods. They are eager to set-up face-to-face appointments or talk by telephone for this purpose. Parents may contact the Director if they have unresolved concerns about their children.

Policy to Address Family Concerns

The engagement of families is critical and central to children’s development and learning and embedded in our school’s philosophy. Establishing a policy and procedures to address families’ concerns fosters positive relationships with families and strengthens home and school partnerships. This policy is consistent with the Department of Early Education and Care regulations.

Purpose. The policy for addressing families’ concerns is intended to ensure that Eliot-Pearson has fair, consistent and responsive procedures in place to address minor to moderate conflicts as they arise. The policy is based on the school’s fundamental values which include providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for children, building healthy and trustful relationships between children, families and staff, and providing a safe working environment for staff where families’ concerns are raised and addressed in a professional manner. These issues may involve children’s learning and behavior, policies and procedures, family communication, and general administrative matters. This policy does not cover existing rights and appeal processes indicated in the family handbook.

Managing Family/Educator Concerns. EPCS will make every effort to resolve concerns raised by our school’s families. All concerns will be noted and acted on right away by the staff person or persons involved in the matter and referred as needed. If a family brings a concern directly to administrators, the school will determine whether the concern or complaint should be managed through the educator or staff person involved in the issue, the school administrators, or other processes led by the EP department. This policy requires any person raising a concern to act immediately after an issue arises, document all pertinent information about the concern, maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved, act in a professional manner, and remain open to negotiating differences in values and perspectives.

Communicating with Parents and the School Community. Families should raise with their child’s educator any concerns or complaints in relation to their child’s education. Educators will make time to address the issue at their earliest convenience within one to five school days (in person or over the phone). The educator will discuss the matter with the family and record the facts, action plans and timelines developed to resolve the concern. The educator will also document the outcome if/when the concern is addressed. In the case when the concern is not resolved, the educator or the family may refer the issue to the Director. The Director will review the documents, listen to both parties, and take responsibility for addressing the concern and following up with families within agreed-upon timelines.

Any family concern received by a staff member in relation to another staff member or an issue outside their responsibility or beyond their authority should be referred to the Director. The staff member should also advise and direct the family to the appropriate administrator.

The Director will address concerns about general school-wide matters as they arise. Members of the Admin. Team will assume responsibility in the absence of the Director. Educators or administrators who are contacted with a concern should adhere to the procedures below and document the following:

- Name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern
- The date and format in which the concern was raised (in person, phone, in writing)
- A brief description of the concern, action taken on the concern and the resulting outcome
- A timeline for resolving the concern sent in writing, for all issues raised and brought forward in writing
- Any written or verbal concern that contains inflammatory or disrespectful statements, verbal abuse, comments of a threatening nature, or intent to intimidate will be referred to the Director and not addressed by the intended educators or administrators. In such cases, the family will be advised accordingly.
- In cases where a family requests that their identity remain confidential, they should be told that their request will be honored; however, the solution to the concern may be limited as a result.
- A family may withdraw a concern at any time during the negotiation. The staff member managing the concern must notify, in writing, all involved parties if a concern is withdrawn.

The school will monitor all family concerns to identify common or reoccurring issues requiring attention.

Policy on Confidentiality

Conversations about children are held in confidence between families, educators and administrators. Conversations are held in private locations and are respectful of the need to protect families' and children's confidentiality.

Distribution of Records. Children's records are confidential and may not be released to anyone other than the family or the child's educator(s) without written consent of the family. Parents may have access at reasonable times, and such access may not be delayed more than two business days after the initial request of the parents. The entire record shall contain a log indicating any persons to whom information has been released. This procedure applies to the release of information to both public and private schools.

Teaching teams, consisting of Head Educator, Assistant Educators, and therapists, may have access to children's assessments and records to gain more information to better serve the needs of the child's learning. Children's files are kept in a locked file cabinet and are maintained by members of the Admin. Team. Files are logged in and out and never leave the school.

State and federal laws protect the confidentiality of children with special rights. Staff members discuss a child's learning issues only with the child's family. Families often have strong ideas about how and when they want to share information about their child's special rights. It is our policy to take the lead

from families and to provide support in their decisions about disclosing individual needs. Classroom educators and school administrators are good resources for helping to share information when families are ready to do so.

Policy on Holidays

At EPSC, we acknowledge that holidays and celebrations are an important part of many lives, in different ways and for different reasons. Because of our personal experiences growing up, holidays can also become an emotionally charged issue. Our goal is to find a balanced approach to holidays without exaggerating the experience or ignoring it. For one thing, curriculum should not be holiday driven. Any holiday experienced at school needs to be meaningful to the children, developmentally appropriate, and intentionally planned to foster people's understanding and respect for one another. We strive to recognize our similarities and celebrate our differences. Some ways to integrate holiday celebrations into the curriculum is to look for parallels across cultures, group them according to the seasons or origin stories, and set holiday activities in the context of people's daily lives and beliefs, and especially by connecting their significance to children, families, and staff in our community.

We welcome families to share their special traditions with us. We also listen carefully and respond to children's comments, questions, and feelings about holidays. Each classroom educator will formulate more specific policies and plans for holiday related activities and share them with families at opportune moments.

Policy for Late Pick Up

Children need to be picked up at the specified dismissal time for the regular and Extended Day Program. The school does not have available staff to supervise children after school. When a educator or staff member must supervise a child until a family arrives, it is a logistical and financial burden to the school. In this light, *we ask all families to respect dismissal time and pick up their children in a timely fashion.* The number of late pick-ups in the past has prompted EPSC to implement a policy if repeated lateness occurs. The Director, Associate Director, or School Finance and Operations Coordinator will request a meeting with the family to resolve the issue. It will then be up to the discretion of the school to take measures. This could include a payment to the staff, who needs to stay late to take care of the child after school hours, in the amount of \$5.00/child for every 15 minutes past dismissal time. Payment will be due at the time of pick up.

Policy on Nut-Free School Environment

Eliot-Pearson Children's School continues to adopt a nut-free policy to protect its students and staff. We have children and staff in the community who have potentially life-threatening allergies to nuts. Even the tiniest amount can cause an anaphylactic reaction or death within minutes in an allergic child or adult. Some are so sensitive that even the smell of peanut butter or nuts can cause problems.

To ensure a safe environment, Eliot-Pearson Children's School is asking students and staff to avoid bringing nut products to school. *This includes all nuts, peanut butter and/or traces of nuts or nut oils in lunches, snacks, or school event's refreshments.* Please read the ingredient labels for packaged foods carefully such as oat bars, granola bars, cracker sandwiches and other prepackaged foods. If children or staff has peanut butter or any product containing nuts before coming to school, simple and thorough hand washing with soap and warm water can eliminate any potential contamination.

In addition, when bringing food to school for any school or classroom event (e.g., community picnics or potluck breakfast), all food must be nut-free. Please also label and indicate all ingredients. This will make it easier for everyone to choose foods that they are able to eat.

We appreciate your cooperation and support in this matter. While it may be challenging for some families to follow this policy, it is good for children to eat a wide variety of foods. The Tufts School of Nutrition has found through its research that healthy eating habits develop early and it is beneficial for children to be exposed to a variety of foods at an early age.

Please note: This policy applies only to Eliot-Pearson Children's School. The entire Eliot Pearson building is not nut free - just the Children's School.

If you have any questions about this policy, please see the Director.

Policy on Snow Day

The Children's School occasionally needs to be closed for an entire school day or to close early in the event of severe weather conditions. As soon as a decision is made regarding the school closing, the Director will send an e-mail to the school wide community, therefore, it is very important to check your e-mail regularly for correspondence from EPSC. The School Finance and Operations Coordinator will record a message on the school voice mail system and will list the school's status on the **WHDH 7News website: <http://www.whdh.com>** where parents can also sign up to receive text message alerts for school closings and delays. To sign up for text message alerts go to www.whdh.com then type "School Closings" in the search bar. Next, click on the link for "Sign up for School Closing Alerts". You will need to create an account and choose Eliot-Pearson Children's School from the "Private Schools" list to receive text messages.

Supervision of Children Policy

(Excerpted from DEEC regulations)

In addition to interacting with children, all educators must exercise appropriate supervision of the children in their care to always ensure their health and safety. Such supervision must include, but not be limited to, indoor and outdoor activities, mealtimes, naptime, transportation, field trips, and transitions between activities.

1. Educators must always use good judgment and must consider the following factors when determining the appropriate level of supervision:
 - a. The chronological age and developmental needs of each child
 - b. The behavioral characteristics of each child
 - c. The number of educators supervising each group and their qualifications
 - d. The environment and its impact upon the educator's ability to see and/or hear children
 - e. The nature of the activity and the materials and equipment used.
2. Educators must be always in sufficient proximity to children to be able to intervene quickly when necessary.
3. Educators must be positioned to maximize their ability to see and/or hear children in their care.
4. Educators must be always aware of children's activities.

5. Educators must not engage in any other activities or tasks that could unnecessarily divert their attention from supervising the children.
6. No child may be outdoors without appropriate adult supervision.
7. A child must never be left unattended in a vehicle.
8. Except when attending to their personal hygiene needs, educators must be actively engaged in childcare and education activities during all times when children are in care.
9. The educator must visually observe napping children at least every 15 minutes. When children are placed in a separate room for naps, the door must remain ajar.

Behavior Management Policy

Every new staff orientation includes Behavior Management Policy and Plan for Positive Discipline.

- Head Educator and/or Assistant Educator observes and records consistent challenging behaviors to assess the function of the behavior, and Head Educator communicates their concerns with the Director.
- Each classroom sets clear and consistent expectations and reviews them with their students the expectations of the school and develops classroom rules with the children.
- Educators anticipate situations that are likely to lead to frustration and aggression.
- Educators identify the child's areas of strengths and build on them to redirect children and encourage positive behavior.
- Educators refer to strategies to promote positive behavior as outlined in EEC Early Childhood Guidance documents.
- Educators provide close supervision and remove children from tense situations.
- Feelings are described to the children in words, through circle time activities, role play, and during activity times (e.g., sad, happy, angry, hurt).
- Educators encourage children to use words to express their feelings. They provide alternative outlets for expressing feelings, e.g., tactile activities, some time and safe space to have their feelings, drawing or writing, pushing against a wall.
- Educators give children two options of appropriate choices.
- Educators redirect children towards more appropriate activities.
- Educators meet with parents/guardians and discuss experiences and share observations. Together they develop a plan, including positive behavior support strategies, to address the behavior both at home and at school.
- If further support is necessary, a meeting with the administrator, educator, parents/guardians and outside professionals will be held to formally develop a plan to address the child's behavior.
- If applicable, EPCS may refer parents/guardians to outside agencies for additional support services.

Plan for Positive Discipline

The plan for discipline at the Eliot-Pearson Children's School is in accordance with the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and NAEYC as well as federal and state civil rights laws. At all times, discipline procedures will be used which maximize growth and development,

protect each group and the individuals within the group, set reasonable and positive expectations, offer choices, provide an opportunity for children to verbalize their feelings, and encourage self-control through understanding. As often as possible, children will participate in the development of rules. By using this plan, we aim to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures (*seclusion).

***Seclusion:** “the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include a time out.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

EPCS educators:

- Are responsive to children’s individual needs and support the development of self-esteem, self-expression, autonomy, social competence, and school readiness
- Are nurturing and responsive to children
- Support children in the development of self-esteem, independence, and self-regulation
- Support children in the development of social competence
- Provide guidance to children in a positive and consistent way based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of children
- Have a method of communicating effectively with each child
- Direct child guidance to the goal of maximizing the growth and development of children and protecting the group and the individuals within it

In all cases, discipline will be consistent with the developmental and emotional needs of the child.

The following guidelines for positive discipline will be used:

1. If a child is attempting to injure another child or themselves, the educator will enforce the termination/exclusion of the behavior, if necessary, by removing the child from the activity, removing the activity from the child, or in extreme cases, holding the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back so no injury will occur.
2. In other cases where discipline is deemed necessary, the educator will first talk to the child and, if necessary, with warning, ask the child to play in another activity area. If the child refuses, physically escort the child to another area.
3. In all cases, explanations will be given to the child in language they can understand to explain why the behavior is inappropriate and to reinforce the concept that, even if the activity is inappropriate, the child is not a “bad child.”

The following rules for discipline will be strictly followed, specifically:

- Staff may never use *physical punishment, *psychological abuse, or *coercion when disciplining a child.
- No child shall be denied food or force fed as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
 - Examples:
 - **physical punishment:** Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.

- **psychological abuse:** shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, **seclusion**.
- **coercion:** Rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); **physical restraint** (forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down) except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).
- **NOTES:**
 - The use of a **physical escort** as defined below and properly used when necessary to protect the child or others from harm is NOT coercion.
 - **Physical escort:** “the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)
 - **Mechanical restraint:** “the use of devices as a means of restricting a student’s freedom of movement.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)
 - **Physical restraint:** “a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual’s arms, legs, torso, or head freely, except that such term does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)
 - **Seclusion:** “the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include a time out.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Termination/Exclusion Policy

If a child needs to be terminated/excluded from the program due to challenging behaviors, procedures to avoid termination/exclusion will include the following:

- Providing an opportunity to meet with parents to discuss options other than termination/exclusion
- Offering parents referrals for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services (See Referral Services)
- Pursuing options for supportive services to the program including consultation and educator training
- Developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program

If EPCS has gone through all the steps above and, as a team, feel all options have been exhausted to meet the needs of the child, and that the safety and health of the child and the other children are so seriously compromised, the Director will notify parents of the decision to terminate the enrollment of the child. The Director will provide written documentation to the parents with the reasons for termination/exclusion, the actions taken by the center prior to termination/exclusion, and referral information for other services and an alternative placement. When any child is terminated/excluded from our program, initiated by the Children’s School or the parents, it is the school’s responsibility to come to the agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child, and to prepare the child for termination/exclusion from our program in a manner consistent with the child’s ability to understand. Decisions about how to best handle termination/exclusion will be made in consultation with the Head Educator, the family and the Director.

Policy on Transportation

The school does not provide regular transportation for children. Parents must arrange transportation for their children to and from school. Each school year, parents are asked to complete an Eliot-Pearson Children's School Permission Form that specifies how their child will be transported to and from school each day. The school maintains lists of adults who are authorized to pick up children. Educators must call a child's parents if someone who is not expected arrives to pick up the child. For this reason, families should notify their child's educator if someone new is coming for pick-up or if their child is going home with another child's family. Each classroom has forms posted for this purpose. One is for a daily change in pick-up the other is for an on-going change. See section on *Procedure for Parent Information Updates*.

Transportation for Field Trips. EPCS will provide transportation that will take children and adults to and from field trip sites. Occasionally, family members volunteer to drive for field trips when such mode of transport is needed for specific field trip locations. Hence, every year, families are asked if they are interested in driving for field trips for their class. The people, who are interested, are required to undergo a background check and fingerprinting when the need arises. They will need to:

1. Fill out a Background Record Check application. You may need to do a SORI/finger printing done if you will be driving children unsupervised.
2. Provide a valid driver's license.

A list of approved parents is kept for educators' use. Before planning field trips, the educators will:

1. Check the list to confirm eligible drivers.
2. Accompany parents, in their car, that wish to drive and do not have a completed background record check or are fingerprinted.
3. Educators or administrators may never drive children or families.

Policy on Use of Space

(Use of Children's School space for other activities)

Physical space for meetings is very limited at the school. Priority is given to school related events. Families may not use any space in the school or the EP Department of Child Study and Human Development without a staff member present. In rare incidences, children's school staff members have requested to use space for their own personal use (course related project, tutoring, etc.). Requests must be made to the school director (in writing) for their approval. Tufts University does not allow the space to be used for programs that compete with already existing programs, or when school is not in session.

10. PLANS AND PROCEDURES

Introductory Report

Parents of newly enrolled children need to complete an Introductory Report Form that provides educators with helpful developmental and other information about each child. For re-enrolling children, families need to complete the Update Report Form.

Health Forms

The Children's School is licensed by the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and is subject to their regulations. As a licensed childcare facility, the school is required to have on file the medical information on each child. This file includes proof of an **annual** physical examination, up-to-date immunizations, and a lead test with normal results (the actual date and level number of the lead test must be indicated). A lead test must be done annually through age three and, depending on residence, through age four. We are required to have written documentation of these health information. The following are acceptable documentation of the required medical information:

- A copy of your child's physical examination summary. This can be obtained at the time of the annual visit, from the office of your child's pediatrician, or from your healthcare provider's online portal.
- Standard "Massachusetts School Health Record Form" and "Certificate of Immunization" forms, completed & signed by your child's physician. These forms are included in the e-mail sent to all families before the start of each school year regarding required school forms.

We also recommend that all children have annual hearing exams. As a private school, vision and hearing screenings are not conducted at the school. Please inform your pediatrician.

In addition, a current copy of your child's health insurance card must also be in your child's file.

There is a deadline for providing this information to the school. **If this updated information is not received, your child will not be permitted to attend school.** This is a regulation set by The Department of Early of Education and Care (EEC), our state-licensing agency. We will have our license suspended if we are not in compliance; therefore, **if we do not receive your child's health information by the first day of school, your child will not be allowed to attend our program.**

If you have any concerns or questions about this deadline, please contact the School Finance and Operations Coordinator.

Illness and Health and Safety Guidelines

Communicable diseases pose health and safety risks for young children and for staff in school settings. It is important for all families to heed these essential guidelines for health and safety:

- Please keep your child at home at the first signs of a cold, fever, or cough.
- Children must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication before they may return to school. **A fever is an elevated body temperature with these readings: Rectal, Forehead or Ear temperature: 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher. Oral (mouth) temperature: 100° F (37.8° C) or higher.**

- We assume that children who are well enough to be at school can play outside and participate in all classroom activities. If your child cannot yet play outdoors and participate fully in all classroom activities, please keep them at home. This may be an indication that their bodies need more time to recover, and the school does not have the personnel and resources to care for individual children who are unable to be with their group through the entire school day.
- When children become ill at school, families will be notified immediately to allow them time to make arrangements to take their children home.
- In case of an emergency during school hours where medical advice is needed, Tufts University Health Services is available for consultation.
- A detailed Health Policy is included in the Appendix, which covers policies related to specific illnesses. Be sure to read it before your child starts the school year.

School Arrival and Departure

The classes at the Children's School are organized so that educators use the time immediately before school starts for team meetings and set-up of the classroom. Therefore, classroom doors are closed until educators are ready to greet entering children at 8:30 am.

Please make sure your child is on time to school. Morning classroom drop-off begins promptly at 8:30 am. It can be very disruptive to both children and educators when individual children arrive late. Families are expected to drop-off and say good-bye to their children between 8:30-8:45 am.

At dismissal time, family promptness is critical. Please be on time when picking up your child. Picking up on time has been challenging in the past couple of years, especially for our Extended Day and Life Project programs. As a result, educators and/or admin staff had to delay meetings or stay beyond their work hours. If there is a pattern of lateness (either school arrival or departure) families will be asked to meet with the Director, Associate Director, or School Finance and Operations Coordinator to discuss reasons, and it will be up to the discretion of the school to take measures. For late pick-ups at dismissal time, this could include a payment to cover the educator or staff member, who needs to stay late to take care of the child after hours, in the amount of \$5.00/child for every 15 minutes past dismissal time. Payment will be due at the time of pick up or added to the family's Smart Tuition account.

Safety is most important at arrival and dismissal times. We ask parents to be especially vigilant at arrival and dismissal times and while attending classroom events/socials because these are the times when accidents are most likely to occur. Please make sure the children for whom you are responsible do not climb railings on the wheelchair ramp, run in the school lobby, go in and out of the front door (the door is very heavy), climb trees in the yard, or leave the building unattended.

Release of children to authorized people only. Parents must notify the Head Educator of anyone other than themselves who will be picking up their child. There are two forms, posted in each classroom, to note the name of the person picking up the child. The "*Child Pick-Up*" form is to be used if you are granting permission for someone, other than the regular pick-up person, to pick your child up from school **just on that specific day**. The other form, "*On-Going Child Pick-Up*" form is to be used if you are granting permission for someone, other than the regular pick-up person, to pick your child up from school, **as needed, for the entire school year**.

No release of children to adults appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances. If the adult picking up a child appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances, EPCS will contact another authorized person to pick up the child.

Note: In addition to completing the above-mentioned forms, families should always inform their child's educators of any changes in their child's pick-up arrangements.

Parents are asked to call the front desk to inform us if they forgot to make note of a change in the person picking up their child for the day. The front desk staff will notify the educator and make note on the *One-Time Approval for Daily Pick-Up* form. If for any reason a parent or caregiver is delayed or anticipates a delay, they are asked to notify the school office.

First Days of School - Phase-In Schedule for Rainbow Room

The Rainbow Room at Eliot-Pearson Children's School has a Day One Phase-In Schedule on the first day of the school year. During this time, the children come in small groups and stay for a shortened period.

Families are welcome to spend part of the first few days of school nearby in the school reception area, where coffee is available. After a few weeks, most of the children have settled in and can easily let their parents leave. (See "Eliot-Pearson Children's School Separation Guidelines" in the Appendix.)

Community Gatherings and Shared Classroom Activities

There are many times throughout the year that children are together as members of a school community. Once a month starting in October, all the children are gathered for a Community Gathering outdoors atop the hill to sing songs and play games together and share classroom news. On the playground or sometimes in each other's classrooms, children mingle and engage in shared activities and connect with one another on multiple levels. One favorite activity is All-School Choice in which children can have a choice time in another classroom. This allows for siblings to check in on each other and provides an opportunity for educators to meet children who may come to their rooms in the future.

Transition to the Next Classroom

Eliot Pearson Children's School provides many ways to support children's transition from their current classroom to their next one, be it within our school or their next school. At the end of the school year, educators meet to share information about children they have taught, unless a written or e-mail notification is sent by a family and received by educators indicating that permission to do so has not been granted. Progress Reports are available to incoming educators through the school files kept in the School Finance and Operations Coordinator's office. Individual Education Plans are maintained and kept by the Education and/or Special Rights Specialist and shared with educators in the class in which the child is enrolled.

End of School Year & Life After EPCS

For many children the last week of school may be their last week at EPCS. Educators are mindful of what this time of year means to children, individually and collectively, and plan their curriculum

around supporting them through this transitional period. For families, there are resources for help with transitions throughout the school year, including our fall event, *Life After Eliot-Pearson*. The PTAB invites alumni families to come to EPCS to share their transition experiences with current families. Topics covered include families' experience with the process of searching for the next school, questions to consider when observing, and thinking about the values that are most important for families when deciding about school placement.

Parking and Tufts University Parking Regulations

If you plan to park at the school to drop your child off in the morning or to pick your child up at dismissal time, you may park in front of the school for 30 minutes without parking fees.

For purposes of drop-off or pick-up only, cars may be parked on the fire lanes for 15 minutes or less. Tufts Police monitor our parking lots. Cars without parking permits or illegally parked may be ticketed and/or towed at the owner's expense. The back lot is reserved for Tufts employees and requires a Tufts Faculty/Staff Parking Permit.

EPCS discourages idling vehicles (buses, families' automobiles) in its parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

For Family Events, parking information will be shared with families.

Carpooling

It is advisable for children to become comfortable in school before they carpooled with other families. Families are responsible for notifying their child's Head Educator of their carpool arrangements and any subsequent changes in these arrangements. Educators are not authorized to dismiss children to adults who have not been identified in advance by the child's family. Any last-minute changes in carpooling must be reported to the Staff Assistant at the Front Desk or recorded on pick-up forms located in each classroom.

Clothing

Please dress your child in easily washable play clothes. Some of the most enjoyable school activities are also the messiest. A complete change of clothing, clearly marked with your child's name, must be always kept in their cubby. Please bring the extra set of clothing on the first day of school and regularly check your child's cubby to make sure the essentials are available and appropriate. Clearly label all your child's outdoor clothing, including shoes and boots. The lost and found box, in the school lobby, often contains unmarked children's clothes.

Our educators take children outside in all weather (except heavy rain/lightning and bitter cold). If a child is not well enough to play outside, they should be kept at home. Children's outdoor times are essential for their continuous growth and development. *Outdoor activities are planned as part of the curriculum.* Except in case of weather change, we encourage children to wear whatever clothing they wear to school for outdoor play. Please provide your child with appropriate outdoor clothing for all types of weather conditions on school days, including footwear and accessories.

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found box is in each of the classrooms and in the school lobby. Please check periodically for lost articles. PLEASE label the inside of your child's coats, hats, mittens/gloves, scarves, etc. to help reduce the number of items placed in the Lost and Found, thanks.

Food

Families are responsible for providing their children with nutritious lunch and snack every day. Due to licensing regulations, EPCS cannot refrigerate or heat any food items; therefore, we encourage families to use a thermos or cold packs in their child's lunchbox to keep food items at their targeted temperatures. The following food items are suggested for a nutritious lunch: meat, poultry, fish, cheese or egg sandwich, a vegetable (e.g., carrot, celery, zucchini sticks), and 1 or 2 fruits (e.g., apple, orange, banana, peach, plum, nectarine, grapes). Foods from home cultures are welcomed and encouraged.

Educators will follow family or physician's orders in preparation or feeding of special diets to children and will follow the directions of the family regarding any food allergies of a child or where vitamin supplements are required. No child will be denied a meal for any reason other than written medical direction. Children should be encouraged to eat a well-balanced diet, but no child shall be forced or otherwise coerced to eat against his/her will.

Cooking and baking projects take place in all the classrooms at EPCS. Because many families and educators share concerns regarding the amount of sugar and salt in young children's diets, efforts are made to provide cooking experiences with reduced sugar and salt. It is also because of the concerns over the amount of sugar and salt children consume that we encourage educators and families to consider non-food alternatives to acknowledge and celebrate special occasions at school. If families plan to bring in small food treats as part of their children's birthday celebration at school, please let the educators know in advance. Please see section on our Policy on Birthday Celebrations for additional guidelines.

IMPORTANT: If your child is allergic to any food requiring a special diet, or regularly takes medication, please directly inform their educator, and make sure to indicate it on the Introductory Report Form or the Update Report Form that you received in the e-mail regarding required school forms.

IMPORTANT: If you are bringing food to school for an event, holiday, or birthday, please label and indicate all ingredients. This will make it easier for everyone to choose foods that they are able to eat. All food or treats must be NUT FREE. See the section on *Nut-Free School Environment Policy*.

Toileting Plan

- Children who are not toilet trained may attend school. We believe the toilet training process should occur at the time that is most developmentally appropriate for the child.
- All phases of toilet training occur in consultation with families.
- Educators will respond to families' wishes about reminders to children.
- Children are never punished or ridiculed for soiling or wetting clothes.

- The bathroom is available for children's use at any time during the day.
- During outdoor time, a child is allowed indoors to use the toilet with an educator's supervision.
- Children are reminded to use the bathroom during the transition from outside to inside time. Educators are sensitive to the individual needs of children, and periodically remind individual children to use the bathroom, as necessary.
- Children are reminded to flush the toilet and to wash their hands in the classroom sinks after toileting and before eating.
- Educators are available to help children with the toileting/handwashing process as necessary.

Diapering Procedures

- Diapers shall be changed regularly when soiled or wet.
- Staff shall check for and change wet or soiled diapers or training pants when a child wakes up from a nap.
- During each diaper change, children shall be washed and dried with individual washing materials, such as single use disposable washcloths.
- Liquid soap is to be used for handwashing purposes.
- Children's hands shall be washed thoroughly with soap and running water after the child has been changed. Staff members shall wash their hands thoroughly with soap and running water after changing each child. Individual towels shall be used to dry hands. Children and staff must wash hands after contact with bodily fluids or discharges.
- The changing table or diapering surface shall be used for no other purpose.
- The changing surface shall be smooth, intact (no cracks or tears), easily cleaned, and impervious to water (waterproof). This surface should also be cushioned.
- A disposable covering shall be used on the changing surface.
- The covering shall be large enough to adequately cover the surface.
- The disposable covering shall be changed after each use.
- The changing surface shall be cleaned with soap and water and sprayed with a bleach solution. The bleach solution must be freshly made daily and consist of 1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water.
- Clothing or cloth diapers soiled by feces, urine, vomitus, or blood shall be double bagged in sealed plastic bags and stored apart from items. (This is a practical interpretation of the covered, waterproof, container required by 7.07(26)(c)(6).) Soiled disposable diapers must be placed in a plastic bag, sealed, and put into a waterproof hands-free container with a tight-fitting cover and a disposable plastic liner. The container must be emptied, washed, and sanitized at least daily.
- A change of clothing shall be available for each child under 2.9 years of age or not toilet trained. Extra, center-owned clothing shall be available for changing purposes in addition to clothing brought from home for children under 2.9 years of age. Center-owned clothing must be laundered after being worn by a child.
- Running water shall be adjacent to the diapering area for handwashing.
- Diapering areas and hand washing facilities shall be separate from facilities and areas used for food preparation and service.

Currently there are no children in EPCS with a request for cloth diapers. However, if this were to happen, our **policy for cloth diapers** is as follows:

- For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer cover made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.

- Diapers are checked every two hours, and when the child awakens from naps.
- Children's diapers are changed when wet or soiled. Solid matter will be disposed in the toilet.
- Used diapers will be returned to families on the same day they were used.
- Families are asked to bring several sets of absorbent cloth diapers and outer covers, as well as Ziploc plastic bags, to contain the used diapers and covers that will be placed in double bags.
- Extra center-owned clothing shall be available for changing purposes in addition to clothing brought from home by each child. Center-owned clothing must be laundered before they are returned to school.
- Staff members wash their hands before putting gloves on and shall also wash their hands with soap and running water after assisting the children with toileting.
- The diapering and hand washing facility shall be separate from the area used for food service and preparation. Running water will be adjacent to the diaper area for hand washing.

Tooth Brushing

In January 2010, EEC (Dept. of Early Education and Care) issued new regulations for childcare programs that include a requirement that educators assist children with brushing their teeth if children are in care for more than four hours or if children have a meal while in care [606 CMR 7.11(11)(d)]. This regulation is intended to:

- Help children learn about the importance of good oral health
- Provide information and resources on good oral health to childcare programs and families
- Help address the high incidence of tooth decay among young children in Massachusetts, which is associated with numerous health risks.

EEC licensed programs must comply with this regulation. However, parents may choose that their child (ren) not participate in tooth brushing while present at the childcare program. (There is a specific form that needs to be completed for non-participation in the oral health program, included on the back of the Eliot-Pearson Children's School's Permission Form).

Play Dates

Many families like to have their children get together outside of school for a play date. Some children benefit from one-on-one time with another child outside of the school setting. Playing together a few times outside of school often gives the children a level of comfort with one another that can carry over to their time in school.

Some Tips for Successful Play Dates:

1. Keep first play dates short; usually the younger the children, the shorter the time. One to two hours are good for a first play date for a 3-year-old.
2. Frequency of play dates should be based on whatever works for your family. It is important to set limits. Some children will want to have play dates every day. Too many play dates can be overwhelming for the child and exhausting for the family. Pay special attention to your child's needs and be realistic about what works for your family.
3. The role of the parent varies during the play date. The first responsibility of the parent is to provide a safe environment/area, in which children can play together. Sometimes adults need to help initiate play to get the children started (e.g., set out play dough on a table with some toys and play with them for a few minutes). The goal is to allow the children opportunities to interact together without constant adult supervision, to learn to get along, and develop the skills to navigate social situations. Depending

on the age and developmental stages of the children, adults may need to facilitate the situation from time to time. The rule of thumb is to stay out of it or get out of the way if you can.

4. Some families invite the other family along on the play date. Some families are comfortable having their children go alone with them and some children are comfortable going alone without their families around. It is important to do what is comfortable for both families and for their children. It is best to communicate and agree upon expectations with one another and clarify any questions or concerns either family may have.
5. Play dates do not have to occur in the home. Meeting at a local playground for an hour of play or taking a trip to the science museum are also fun outings to do on a play date.
6. Who to invite? Some children will know right away whom they want to invite for a play date. Sometimes the families are friends, and their friendship is extended to their children. If you are looking to figure out who to invite for a play date with your child, ask your child's educator. Educators are comfortable suggesting which children may do well together outside of school.
7. Be particularly attentive to your child's needs and be mindful of every family's right to decide what is best for their child(ren) and family. Our school expects everyone to respect one another and values the principle of equity and community. If you feel as though your child is the only one who is never invited for a play date, reflect on whether this is about your child or about your own needs and wants as a parent. Feel free to talk to your child's educator and remember that you can also initiate the first play date.
8. For young children, it is helpful to set play dates for them with different friends. Be careful of encouraging exclusivity and only having play dates with the same child.
9. Having a play date is about establishing and strengthening connections and relationships between children and between families. Families have shared anecdotes about how they have grown as individuals and as a unit through play dates. By being open to new experiences, they have learned from others about languages, cultures, child-rearing practices and family traditions. It is always good to ask another parent to share anything you may need to know for a successful play date (allergies, health concerns, dietary restrictions, safety issues, etc.).
10. Remember to work on the transportation logistics - don't forget to exchange car seats, if necessary.
11. Keep play dates low key and have fun, and keep it focused on the children!

Etiquette and Safety on School Premises

Front Courtyard. The front courtyard is a wonderful place for families to congregate after school, to meet other families and let children play freely. We want all children to play safely and have a good time. The courtyard is a small space. It is also a space for children of ALL ages and sizes. Safe and fun informal play happens best when children are well supervised. Children often need help negotiating unstructured play situations. For some children, the atmosphere and setting can be overwhelming. It is important for each family to pay attention to the needs of their children and their interactions with the group. Families have different parenting styles, and this can sometimes cause some tension. It is helpful when families can discuss or share their expectations and support each other. Please enjoy your time in the courtyard and keep the safety of children first and foremost.

Please Note: Children and families should take note at their classroom's scheduled dismissal time, ensure that they have all their children's belongings, including their snack from home, drinks & water bottles, and, if needed, use the classroom restroom **BEFORE** exiting the school building. Due to licensing regulations and liability concerns, once a child is dismissed, the child/family may not re-enter the building for any reason, e.g., use of bathrooms, getting a drink. If necessary, families may use the bathrooms located in the EP Department's Connector hallway. Children must be always accompanied by an adult.

Courtyard Safety Rules:

1. Play Safely. (Don't hurt yourself, others, or the environment)
 - No running with sticks, waving sticks in the air, or pointing them at others. Otherwise, leave sticks on the ground.
 - No throwing objects (rocks, pinecones, snow/ice balls, etc.). Leave them where they are.
2. Shared space, shared supervision.
 - If your child plays in the courtyard, you are accepting that other caregivers may speak to your child if they feel the situation is unsafe.
 - Our courtyard is close to the main road and driveway. Each caregiver should always have a close sight supervision of their child.
 - If a child is outside of the fenced area, the caregiver should be outside of the fenced area as well. The area outside of the fenced area is NOT school property.
 - Our building is a part of the larger university with people and vehicles coming and going all the time. Each family should be always aware of the whereabouts of their child.
 - Due to Tufts University insurance regulations, tree and bush climbing in the front yard are not permitted.
 - Rules should be reviewed each year. Having written rules should not preclude families' desires to discuss and communicate these ideas with the community.
3. Support creative play. Some ideas to suggest to children are:
 - Digging for worms and exploring nature
 - Pretend play such as camping or taking a pretend trip
 - Group games, such as "What time is it Mr. Fox?" or Simon Says.

Our Neighbors – EP-Dept. of Child Study and Human Development. Eliot-Pearson Children's School is the laboratory-demonstration program of Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. We are very fortunate to be housed in the same building where undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members and other professionals work and learn because it gives all of us greater access to resources and to each other. *It also means we must respect each other's spaces for all our daily work and learning.*

Please always supervise your children - when you exit and enter the building, in the courtyard, parking lots, connector lounge or in other public areas of the building. We want to keep children safe and maintain good relations with all our "neighbors." If you have any questions, please see one of the administrative staff.

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the licensing authority for the school. A copy of the EEC Regulations is available at the front desk. A Family Information Board, displaying EEC licensing required information, is located outside each classroom near the classroom door. Here is the contact information for the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC):

Department of Early Education and Care

360 Merrimack Street, Bldg. 9 3rd Floor
Lawrence, MA 01843
978-681-9684

Referral Procedures and Services

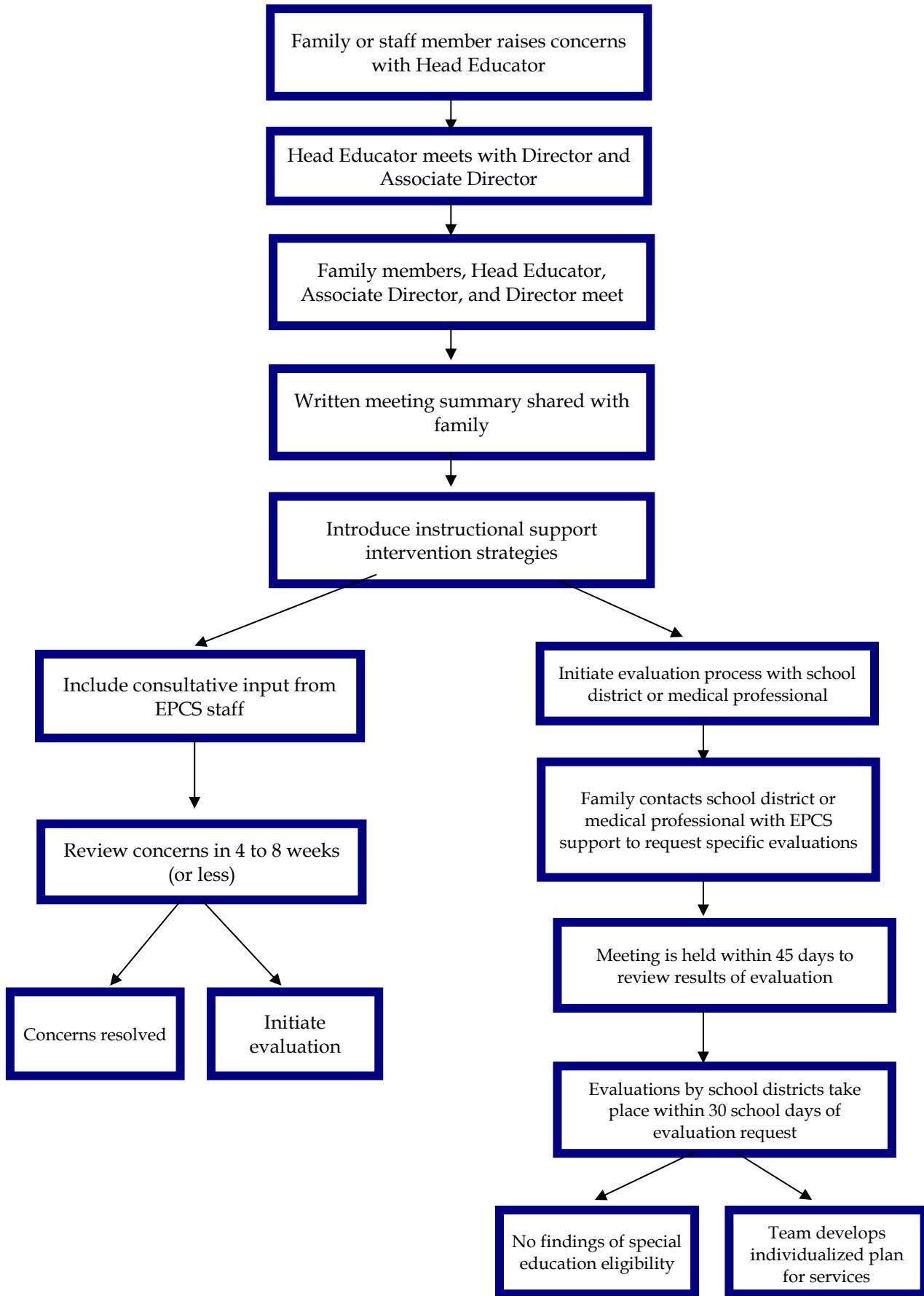
If educators have concerns about a child's progress, including ongoing demonstration of challenging behavior, that raise questions about any aspect of a child's growth and development the following guidelines need to be followed:

1. Members of the child's teaching team, consisting of Head Educators, Assistant Educators, EP Fellows, fieldworkers, student educators, and volunteers, should document their observations using appropriate and available observation and documentation tools, including and not limited to, written narratives and anecdotes, timed/event sampling, checklists, work samples, video and/or audio recordings.
2. The child's teaching team will meet to share and discuss their observations and questions. Document and compile the data shared and always respect the confidentiality entitled to all children and families.
3. Head Educators should inform the Director of the questions and concerns about the child's growth and development. This can happen in writing or in weekly supervision sessions.
4. If needed, additional observation will be conducted by the special rights coordinator, the child development specialist, and/or the school director. Observations will be documented.
5. The special rights team, consisting of the classroom Head Educator, the special rights coordinator, the child development specialist, and the director, will convene to discuss the observations and evaluation reports, if any, share pertinent information, and consider possible explanations and accommodations and/or instructional strategies.
6. If it is decided that instructional support strategies should be tried, parents will be informed. Instructional support strategies, including positive behavior support strategies and adjustment of teaching methods, materials or curriculum will be tried to see if modifications will help the child. It may take 4-8 weeks to observe, try different strategies and/or adjustments, and see if they work for a child. Educators may consult with specialists regarding modifications or strategies. Parents may bypass this instructional support/pre-referral process and request an evaluation from their school system or through their pediatrician. Because of time constraints we may recommend a referral take place sooner.
7. If the educational question(s) remain unresolved after instructional support strategies have been tried, a follow-up meeting with the Director, and/or Head Educator will be scheduled to discuss the issue with the family and make a formal referral. Families are encouraged to observe their child in class.
8. Following the conference, parents will receive a written summary from the school describing the major points in the meeting as well as the recommendation for a referral. Included will be

a brief summary of the strategies that were used and observations made. If warranted, a follow-up conference will be planned as soon as possible.

9. Parents will be given assistance in making the referral should they choose to do so themselves and need such assistance. Parents will also be informed of the availability of services through their public school system and their rights under Special Education Regulations.
10. With parental permission, the evaluating agency or service provider will provide EPCS with reports and recommendations for meeting the child's needs as well as include EPCS staff in the conference. EPCS staff will participate in the conference whenever possible. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services, we shall review progress at the school at least twice each year to determine if another referral is necessary.
11. Written records of any referrals, including the parent conference and results, are filed and maintained in the School Finance and Operations Coordinator's Office.
12. EPCS staff will participate in future meetings with the school district with family's permission.

Referral Process



EPCS as a Site for Observation, Research and Evaluation

Observation. Children who are "old hands" at the Children's School take for granted the fact that they are being observed. The observation booths facing each classroom are often occupied by quiet watchers whom the children see, occasionally recognize, and usually ignore. Any child enrolled at the Children's School must have parental permission on file for participation in the observation process as described in this section.

Observation of Classes by Families. We welcome families' visits to the classroom at any time. The observation booths provide a unique opportunity for parents to observe their child's class. While we value this opportunity, we are also aware and mindful of the tensions it can create for children and educators. Thus, we have established the following guidelines for parental observations from the booth and ask for your cooperation:

1. Children and educators need time to settle into the classroom at the beginning of the year and a private time to say good-bye towards the end of the school year. Therefore, booths are not open for family observation until mid-October and are closed as of the last Friday in May.
2. Please discuss a suitable time for observation with your child's educator at least a day in advance and then contact the front desk personnel to schedule your observation time. Families need to follow the same protocol we have for all other observers to ensure that space is available.
3. Frequent observations are disruptive to your child, the educators, and the class. Therefore, we recommend a few observations spread over the school year, e.g., prior to parent-educator conferences in the fall or spring.
4. Parent observations are limited to a maximum of 45 minutes. As a lab school, the number of observations per semester will be determined based on observation-related activities at the school, the specific classroom, and the needs of the children.
5. Fire code regulations require that everyone, including parents, sign in at the front desk when in the school building to observe from the booth.
6. Children and/or babies are not permitted in the booths at any time.

Research. The Child Study and Human Development Department faculty and students, under faculty direction, engage in research at the Children's School. Research projects are often related to courses taught in personal, social, emotional, and intellectual/cognitive development of young children. Projects may involve observing and recording children's classroom behavior, asking children questions regarding their notions of friendship and competence, or inviting children to perform perceptual and motor tasks, in the form of games, to assess levels of development. Studies in child-rearing are another area of child development research in which interested Children's School families may become involved. Many of these studies are undertaken in the form of surveys, which families complete anonymously. The aggregate results of such research are available to the families who participate.

The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Child Study and Human Development Department must approve all the studies undertaken at the school. The Associate Director, in cooperation with the Director, also review them with the educators. If the study has been approved, families will receive information about the research project and asked to complete a permission form that allows parents to decide whether their child can participate in the study (children participate in no more than three studies per semester). Children with parental permission are then invited to take part in the study. They are always free to refuse.

The Associate Director serves as liaison between the Children's School community (families, educators, and children) and those individuals interested in conducting studies at Eliot-Pearson. They will assign subjects to approved studies, coordinate the developmental evaluation program for CD 120 (Evaluation of the Young Child), and organize children to participate in creative movement groups. They will also give field workers their initial orientation to the Children's School. If families have questions concerning the research or evaluations, please contact the Research Project Coordinator or the Director.

Policies Regarding Observation and Research. Per EEC regulations, no licensee shall conduct research, experimentation, or unusual treatment involving children without the written consent of the affected child's parents or guardian for each occurrence. In centers where observations of children occur; observation shall mean that there is no interaction between the child and the observers and no identification of the individual child. In no case shall the licensee allow physical harm of the child to be carried out during research, experimentation, or treatment. Research and experimentation shall not mean program evaluation or data collection for purpose of documenting services of the facility, which do not identify individual children.

Safeguarding the rights and welfare of subjects at risk in activities that are not supported by grants and contracts and approved by the Tufts University Institutional Review Board is primarily the responsibility of the department. To provide an adequate discharge of this responsibility, it is the policy of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development that no activity involving research with human subjects shall be undertaken unless the Eliot-Pearson Committee on Human Subjects has reviewed and approved such activity, in accordance with the requirements of Public Law 93-348, as implemented by part 46 of Title 45 of the code of Federal Regulations, as amended (45 CFR 46).

All faculty and students who are planning to undertake a research project, thesis or dissertation are required to submit a Request for Departmental Review of Investigation Involving Human Subjects. Exceptions to this requirement are made for those with sponsored research projects that will be submitted for review to the University Institutional Review Board. Students who are engaged in some form of research activity to fulfill a course requirement are not required to submit a request for review to the committees. However, individual faculty members who assign a research project are responsible for reviewing the purposes, methods, and ethical considerations for student course projects.

Evaluation. Twice a year (in the fall and summer) a course is offered in the Department of Child Study and Human Development entitled "Evaluation of The Young Child". The course instructs students in the administration of developmental evaluations, which examine aspects of a child's growth often overlooked in regular physical examinations. Developmental evaluations assess growth in small and large muscle control, hand-eye coordination, language acquisition, and the development of reasoning, and early mathematical skills.

During the course the professor demonstrates the administration of the evaluation instruments with children from the Children's School. Then each of the students in the class is assigned a child to evaluate. Families are invited to observe their child being evaluated in the observation room. They

may be asked to participate in an interview with the evaluator to answer questions about their child's development. Parental permission is required for children to participate in the evaluation program.

11. Appendix

A Brief History of the Eliot-Pearson Children' School

(Compiled from A Heart of Grateful Trust: Memoirs of Abigail Adams Eliot, transcribed and edited by Marjorie Gott Manning, 1983.)

In 1922, Abigail Adams Eliot established one of the first nursery schools in America. Through the encouragement of Elizabeth Ware Winsor Pearson (a.k.a. Mrs. Henry Greenleaf Pearson), a philanthropically minded Bostonian, Abigail Eliot became interested in the work of Margaret McMillan, the founder of the nursery school movement in England. In 1921, Miss Eliot worked and studied at the McMillan Nursery School in Deptford, a low-income district of London. In the McMillan Nursery School, children were provided with an educational setting that emphasized good nutrition, adequate rest, open air and daily health inspections. Upon her return to Boston in 1922, Abigail Eliot became Director of the Ruggles Street Day Nursery in Roxbury. Day nurseries, such as Ruggles Street, were available to parents who worked outside the home or were incapable of providing adequate supervision of their children. The nurseries, for the most part, enrolled children of immigrant families and emphasized health, nutrition, and cleanliness. Their educational components, if existent, were meager. When Miss Eliot took over the directorship of Ruggles Street Day Nursery, she emphasized educational activities for children and encouraged parents to observe their children in the educational setting she provided. She also limited the amount of time children attended the nursery from twelve to seven hours a day.

Reflecting its change in focus, the name of the Ruggles Street Day Nursery was changed to the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center. Parents who were not in need of childcare but were interested in the educational setting of the Ruggles Street School began enrolling their children. Also, individuals interested in learning how to provide an educational program for young children came to The Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center, which moved to Marlborough Street in Boston and changed its name to the Nursery Training School of Boston. Miss Eliot and the Nursery Training School of Boston played a major role in educator training during the 1930's when the Federal Government, through the Works Progress Administration, provided funding for nursery schools across the country.

The Nursery Training School of Boston had affiliations with several local colleges, permitting students to obtain a college education while receiving educator training. In 1951, Miss Eliot decided a more formal relationship with a university would be beneficial, and she selected Tufts University. The Corporation of the Nursery Training School voted to change the name of the center to the Eliot-Pearson School when it became one of several professional schools affiliated with Tufts University.

In 1964, the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study was developed, with the Eliot-Pearson Children's School as its laboratory/demonstration facility. Together, the Department and the School developed as a center for educator training and research on child development. Fundamental principles of Miss Eliot's Nursery Training School continue to guide the philosophy of the Eliot-Pearson Children's School today:

- Children are persons.
- Education should always be thought of as guidance (teaching), which influences the development of persons (personalities).
- Maturation and learning must go hand in hand in the process of development.
- It is important that personalities be well balanced. Some of the balancing traits considered are security and growing independence, self-expression and self-control, awareness of self and social awareness, growth in freedom and growth in responsibility, opportunities to create and ability to conform.

Health Care and Safety Policy

Tufts University Department of Public Safety is responsible for the safety and security of the Tufts community, to which the Children's School belongs. It oversees Transportation, Parking, and ID Card, Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Safety, Threat Assessment and Management, and the University Police. It puts in place general rules meant to safeguard the safety and security of university buildings and properties, including our school building and grounds.

Emergency Telephone Numbers:

Health Care Consultant: Dr. Peter Doyle, Associate Medical Director, 617-627-3350, Tufts University

Designated Adults: Educators and the Admin. Team 617-627-3434

Fire Department: 781-396-3900

Police: 781-395-1212

Poison Control : 1-800-222-1222

Ambulance: 781-321-1555

Campus Police: 66911 (in case of emergency) or **617-627-6911** from a campus phone, extension 617-627-3030 (business)

Emergency Health Care Facility:

Mount Auburn Hospital*

330 Mt. Auburn St. Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: (617) 499-5025

*Requests for different hospitals will be honored when listed on the emergency form.

Procedures for Emergencies and Illness Including Field Trips

Notify Campus Police (x66911 or 617-627-6911 from a campus phone)

- Campus police calls for ambulance
- Transport to hospital by ambulance-educator will accompany if parent requests
- Notify parent-call from front desk
- If parent cannot be reached, notify individuals listed as emergency contacts at front desk
- Emergency contact forms located at front desk
- Educator or administrator will take child's emergency information file
- Notify EEC if EMT or hospitalization is required

Field Trip Procedures

Educators take a special backpack, which includes copies of children's emergency forms, a first aid kit and a cell phone on all off-site excursions. All children also wear a tag with the name, address and phone number of the school. In the event of an emergency during a field trip, parents will be contacted, and an ambulance will be called.

Notification of Death or Serious Injury

The school will notify EEC within 24 hours following:

- The death of any child which occurs while such child is in care
- Any injury to, or illness of, any child that occurs during the hours while such child is enrolled in care and which requires hospitalization or emergency medical treatment.

Procedures for Utilizing First Aid Equipment

The First Aid Kit is located on a shelf, out of children's reach, in the reception area.

- The First Aid Manual is in each classroom and in the reception area.
- First Aid is administered by a Head Educator certified in First Aid, or, if a Head Educator is not available, by an Assistant Educator also certified in First Aid.
- All Head Educators and administrators are certified annually in Infant/Child CPR and all staff is certified in First Aid.
- The Director and/or School Finance and Operations Coordinator maintain the First Aid Kit.
- Each classroom is equipped with adequate first aid supplies in a backpack that contains all required emergency medications and goes with the class on any field trips away from the school.

Plan for Evacuation of Center in an Emergency

- Separate evacuation plans are posted for each classroom area.
- The Head Educator of each class leads the children out of the building.
- The Director, Associate Director, and the School Finance and Operations Coordinator check for stragglers and take children's emergency forms and allergy list out of the building with them. The Head Educator takes the attendance list and checks the number of children that came to school that day, against the number of children that have been safely evacuated. The Director asks the Head Educator, "How many children came to school today? How many children are here?" Parents are then called.
- The Director and/or Head Educators are responsible for assuring that fire/evacuation drills are held every month.
- A logbook is kept that records the date, time, and location of the evacuation, and the effectiveness of the drills.

Plan for Meeting the Individual Needs of Mildly Ill Children

- If a child feels unwell, but is not ill enough to require automatic exclusion, we will contact the child's parents and decide together whether the child should go home or remain for the rest of the day.
- If the parent and educator decide that the child should be removed, s/he will wait in a separate, quiet area.

Plan for Administering Medication

- Head Educators and administrators are trained in the proper administration of medication, in accordance with EEC regulations. Each year all Head Educators and administrative staff view the Administration of Medications Guidelines online presentation, on the EEC website, and receive a certificate.
- Prescription and non-prescription medication will be administered only with prior written permission of the child's parent and physician. This note will be kept in the child's file. All prescription medications must be in the original container with the original Rx label affixed.
- Even with a standing order for dispensing medicine, the school must attempt to call a parent before administering such medication.

- The medication will be in a locked drawer in the School Finance and Operations Coordinator's office. Emergency medications will be kept in the classroom backpack as required (the original Rx label must be affixed and the medication needs to be labeled with the child's name, name of the drug, and directions for administration and storage) any unused medicine will be returned to the child's parents.
- Non-prescription, topical medicine (not applied to open wounds or broken skin) and sunscreen can be administered by written permission and signature of the parent only.
- Non-prescription, topical medicine (applied to open wounds or broken skin) requires BOTH parental and physician's written permission.
- When special plans are required (i.e., EpiPen) the protocol is part of the allergy list provided to each classroom. An administrator will review this with each teaching team.
- The five guidelines for Administration of Medication are posted in the School Finance and Operations Coordinator's office.

Administration of Medicine at School Protocol

When preparing to leave medicine at the school to be administered during the school day the following guidelines must be followed:

These are based on the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Childhood Regulations 7:11(2) 906 CMR

- A doctor's signature is required on all medication except non- prescription, topical medication that is only applied to non-broken skin or open wounds.
- When consulting with your doctor, be sure that you get a signed note to authorize any medication. This can be a faxed note to 617-627-2630 for the School Finance and Operations Coordinator or a hand carried note by the parent.
- Complete Medication Consent Form (available at front desk of school)
- Parent's signature is required for all medication (including non-prescription topical medication)
- Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name. Prescription medication must have the dosage, directions and the doctor's name on the original container and the original Rx label must be affixed.
- All medications will be stored out of reach of children
- Check the expiration date even if the medication is new.
- No staff member will administer the first dose of any medication, except under extraordinary circumstances.
- All medication will be labeled with the child's name, both on the container and the plastic bag holder. The plastic bag with the medication and signed permission slip will be kept in a locked drawer in the School Finance and Operations Coordinator's office. The exception to this is any medicine that is needed by a child in the event of an emergency will be kept in the classroom first aid backpack, which will accompany the child everywhere and an Individual Health Care Plan Form is completed.
- Any medication that needs to be refrigerated will be kept in a locked box in the kitchen refrigerator.
- All unused medications will be returned to the parents for disposal.
- Each time medication is administered the staff member must document on the back of the child's medication permission slip, their name, the dosage given, the time and method of administration.

PLEASE NOTE: WE CAN ADMINISTER MEDICATION AT SCHOOL ONLY WHEN COMPLETE ADHERENCE TO THE ABOVE GUIDELINES IS FOLLOWED.

Plan for Meeting Specific Health Care Needs

- We will meet specific health care needs for all children with and without disabilities.
- Parents and pediatricians are required to complete a medical form that indicates allergies and health concerns that educators should be aware of.
- Each classroom has a confidentially posted list of children with allergies, and/or other specific health-related procedures that need to be followed, and a list of children who have medications and where those medications are stored.
- For children with chronic problems parents and healthcare providers are required to complete an Individual Health Care Plan Form. This form will be kept with the allergy list in each classroom. The parent is required to meet with their child's educator and someone from the administrative staff to review and discuss training and implementation of their child's Individual Health Care Plan.

Plan for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

As professionals who work directly with young children, we are by law required to be mandated reporters of possible child abuse or neglect. If staff members have seen any indicators--physical, behavioral, emotional--which suggest the possibility of physical or sexual abuse or neglect they will:

Document concerns and observations and speak with the director. Together, a decision will be made to do one or all the following:

- Call our mental health consultant.
- Continue to observe and collect information.
- Make a report to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCF) within 48 hours of suspected abuse as mandated by law (DCF phone 617-321-0130).
- Communicate with the family about filing a report.
- Staff who report suspicions of child abuse/neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone, unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm.

If A Staff Member is Suspected of Child Abuse or Neglect

- In the event that a 51A report has been filed alleging abuse or neglect of a child at Eliot-Pearson Children's School, the EEC, and Department of Child and Family Services will be notified immediately.
- The staff member will be removed from contact with children and given other duties until the DSS investigation is completed and for such further time as EEC requires.
- If the staff member is cleared of charges, former duties will be reinstated.
- If the staff member is found guilty of child abuse or neglect, termination procedures will result.

Injury Prevention Plan

Head Educators and teaching assistants monitor the classrooms and playgrounds daily for the repair/removal of hazards- Director, Associate Director and/or School Finance and Operations Coordinator monitor the remainder of the building.

- A central injury log is kept at the front desk and is monitored periodically to identify problem areas.

- When a child is injured, parents are notified of the time and nature of the accident. Parents are notified in writing, within 24 hours of the incident, and the documentation is filed in the child's folder.
- Parents are immediately informed of any injury, which requires emergency care beyond minor first aid.
- All toxic substances, sharp objects, poisonous plants, first aid supplies, matches and medications are kept out of the reach of children and no smoking is allowed in the building or on its grounds.
- First Aid kits with emergency lists will be taken to playground and on fieldtrips.
- Injury Reports will be filed for any injury requiring first aid.
- Eliot-Pearson very seldom has food or liquids that are hotter than 120 degrees. When there is a need, liquids and foods that are hotter than 120 degrees are kept out of the reach of children. Tufts University Facilities periodically checks the temperature of the hot water plumbed to the school.

Plan for Managing Infectious Disease

- Our Health Care Policy is developed with and approved by our health care consultant.
- For serious illnesses, we follow exclusion policies recommended by the CDC and Department of Public Health: a child who has a fever must remain at home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever reducing medication. A fever is an elevated body temperature with these readings: Rectal, Forehead or Ear temperature: 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher. Oral (mouth) temperature: 100° F (37.8° C) or higher.
- The school notifies all parents in the instance of any communicable diseases (chicken pox, strep throat, etc.).
- If a child in care exhibits symptoms requiring exclusion, the child's parents will be contacted, and they will be removed from the group to wait in a separate, quiet area with a educator or qualified staff member until a parent arrives. Every effort is made to make the child comfortable.

Plan for Infection Control

- Hand washing procedure signs are posted in all bathrooms and kitchen. Staff and children wash their hands at least at the following times:
 - upon entering the classroom
 - before and after water play
 - before and after eating or handling food
 - after toileting or diapering
 - after coming into contact with bodily fluids, including sneezing and coughing
 - after handling animals and/or their equipment
 - after performing cleaning tasks, using cleaning product, and handling trash and cleaning equipment.
- The importance of handwashing is routinely discussed at staff meetings and all staff is trained in infection control techniques.
- Facilities and toys are cleaned regularly and thoroughly with soap & water and disinfectant and water solution. A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or is otherwise contaminated by body secretion is either washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized and air dried, or washed and dried in a dishwasher.

- Educators wear disposable gloves when changing children's diapers or when blood or other bodily fluids are present. Used gloves are thrown away in a lined, covered container and bloody clothing is sealed in a bag and returned to parents at the end of the day.
- Every evening, custodians clean and disinfect every room, floors are mopped and vacuumed, toilets, sinks, sink faucets, and all surfaces are thoroughly cleaned, and garbage is removed from the site.

Plan for When a Child Should Stay Home from School

Please let us know when and why your child is not going to come to school.

- A child should stay home until he/she feels well enough to participate in all activities, including going outside.
- Children must stay home until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. A fever is an elevated body temperature with these readings: Rectal, Forehead or Ear temperature: 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher. Oral (mouth) temperature: 100° F (37.8° C) or higher.
- Chickenpox- must remain home until all lesions are crusted over or for 6-7 days, whichever is first.
- Strep throat or scarlet fever- must have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever reducing medication, must have been on an antibiotic for 48 hours. Fever-free means temperature under 100° F (37.8° C).
- Conjunctivitis- children may return to school after treatment has begun.
- Gastroenteritis- if a child is vomiting or has diarrhea they must be kept home from school until they no symptoms for 24 hours
- Impetigo-child must stay out of school until they have no symptoms for 24 hours.
- Measles or mumps-follow the recommendations from your pediatrician.
- Respiratory virus illnesses – follow school isolation and exposure guidelines based on Tufts University and CDC/DPH recommendations

Plan for Handwashing

Staff members and children are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.

- Hand washing procedure signs are posted in all bathrooms and kitchen, and staff and children wash their hands at least at the following times:
 - upon entering the classroom
 - before and after water play
 - before and after eating or handling food
 - after toileting or diapering
 - after coming into contact with bodily fluids, including sneezing and coughing
 - after handling animals and/or their equipment
 - after performing cleaning tasks, using cleaning product, and handling trash and cleaning equipment.
- The importance of hand washing is routinely discussed at staff meetings and all staff members are trained in infection control techniques.
- Facilities and toys are cleaned regularly and thoroughly with soap + water and disinfectant + water solution. A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or is otherwise contaminated by body secretion is either washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized and air dried, or washed and dried in a dishwasher.

- Educators wear disposable gloves when changing children's diapers or when blood or other bodily fluids are present. Used gloves are thrown away in a lined, covered container and bloody clothing is sealed in a bag and returned to parents at the end of the day.
- Hand sanitizer is available for adults outside each classroom

Plan for Sanitizing Tabletops / Food Prep Areas

Sanitizing Preparation Procedure

We follow both National (NAEYC) and State (MA Dept of EEC) regulations when using diluted bleach in spray bottles. Diluted bleach needs to be freshly prepared each day as it has only a 24-hour shelf-life after which it is not effective. Bleach is also weakened by heat and sunlight.

Each morning at 8:00am, a staff is assigned to prepare the diluted bleach solution as follows:

1. One Teaspoon Concentrated Bleach to 1 Gallon of cool water freshly made EVERY DAY in the kitchen. (Note: more bleach can cause skin or inhalation burns, less bleach is ineffective for disinfecting.) There are disposable gloves and aprons, a safety eye guard, and a funnel for making the bleach solution.
2. Fill all spray bottles left in the kitchen.
3. If classroom bleach spray bottles are in the kitchen at 8:00 in the morning, the preparer will fill them. If spray bottles are brought to the kitchen when preparing snack after 8:00 am, they can be filled with the premade solution at that time.
4. Store bleach out of reach of children. The straight bleach, with the measure spoon attached and the freshly made solution will be kept above the refrigerator.
5. Store spray bottles out of reach of children. Classroom spray bottles must be kept on a high shelf out of reach of children. Surfaces cleaned with diluted bleach need not be rinsed but need to air dry for at least two minutes.

Plan for Water Play Precautions

Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease.

1. Children will wash their hands before and after water play.
2. Children are urged not to drink the water.
3. Communal water play is not available to children with sores on their hands.
4. Fresh potable water is used to fill the water table.
5. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. The table is washed, disinfected, and dried.

Plan for the Exclusion of Under-Immunized Children and Staff

1. There is in Massachusetts a plan for excluding under-immunized children or staff during disease outbreaks per EEC 105 MR 300.000.
2. The School Finance and Operations Coordinator maintains a list of under-immunized children.
3. The School Finance and Operations Coordinator maintains the state regulations and policies for exclusion in a file named IMMUNIZATIONS.
4. Families of children who are under-immunized are notified and asked to take the children out of the school promptly if a vaccine preventable disease occurs.
5. This Policy is found in both the Health Care Policy and the Staff Handbook under its own heading.

Plan for Animals and Pets

1. Classroom pets or visiting animals must appear to be in good health.
2. Pets or visiting animals have documentation from a vet or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.
3. Educators supervise all interactions with the children and instruct children on safe behavior when in proximity to animals.

4. Any child who has a known allergy is not exposed to that animal.
5. Children and staff are instructed to wash hands after handling pets.
6. Parents will be notified of introduction of pets into classroom.
7. Children will wash hands before and after handling animals.

Plan for Tooth Brushing at School

In January 2010, EEC (Dept. of Early Education and Care) issued new regulations for childcare programs that include a requirement that educators assist children with brushing their teeth if children are in care for more than four hours or if children have a meal while in care [606 CMR 7.11(11)(d)]. This regulation is intended to:

- Help children learn about the importance of good oral health
- Provide information and resources on good oral health to childcare programs and families
- Help address the high incidence of tooth decay among young children in Massachusetts, which is associated with numerous health risks.

EEC licensed programs must comply with this regulation. However, parents may choose that their child (ren) not participate in tooth brushing while present at the childcare program. (There is a specific form that needs to be completed for non-participation in the oral health program, included on the back of the Eliot-Pearson Children's School's Permission Form).

Building Security and Access

Only staff with authorized access and recognized visitors are allowed entry to our school building and grounds. Tufts University Department of Public Safety is responsible for granting card access, handling all key requests, and locking/unlocking the school doors at preset hours of official workdays. The doors remain locked when school is not in session and monitored by the Department of Public Safety. For this reason, staff who wish to enter the school building when school is not in session need to inform the director and obtain permission. The director and school operations Coordinator communicate and coordinate with the Department of Public Safety on security concerns relating to our school building and property.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Emergency Phone Numbers:

Campus Police from Tufts phone:	x66911
Campus Police from other phones:	617-627-6911
Medford Police:	911
Medford Fire:	911
Ambulance:	781-321-1555
Mount Auburn Hospital:	617-499-5025
Poison Control:	800-222-1222

If a fire or other danger starts in your classroom, notify the front desk to call the Fire Department and ring alarm, located in the lobby of the school.

Then:

- Assign adults to children in greatest need
- Check room for children (office, booth, cubbies, bathroom)
- If no danger to life, close windows and doors
- Instruct observers in booths to leave through emergency exit doors
- Cell phones will be used to contact families with details of the emergency

ALL HEAD EDUCATORS MUST BRING ATTENDANCE SHEETS AND EMERGENCY BACKPACK. ATTENDANCE WILL BE TAKEN OUTDOORS.

Evacuation Procedure for RAINBOW ROOM and RAINBOW ROOM EXTENDED DAY:

Alert your group of children and exit through the primary exit door located next to the cubbies. Proceed to the Preschool Playground via the Rainbow Room Playground gate and then onward to the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Line up the children on the edge of the mulch and wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: Purple Room exit door leading to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: the front doors in the lobby area that exits to the Courtyard.

Evacuation Procedure for PURPLE ROOM and PURPLE ROOM EXTENDED DAY:

Alert your group of children to exit through the primary exit door located next to the cubbies. Proceed to the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Line up the children on the edge of the mulch. Wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: Rainbow Room exit door next to the cubbies and proceed to the Preschool Playground via the Rainbow Room Playground gate.

Third exit: the front doors in the lobby area that exits to the Courtyard.

Evacuation Procedure for GREEN ROOM and GREEN ROOM EXTENDED DAY:

Alert your group of children to exit through the primary exit door located next to the cubbies. Proceed along the path next to the brick wall of the building located on the right. Turn right at the end of the corner of the building and continue past the Tire Swing area towards the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Line up the children along the far edge of the Tire Swing area away from the school building. Wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: exit door located at the far end of the classroom that leads outdoors to the sand pit of the Play Yard. Proceed to the bike/walking path and head to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: exit the classroom door and through the Emergency Exit doors on the right-hand side and exit to the Courtyard via CSHD building doors.

Evacuation Procedure for ORANGE ROOM and ORANGE ROOM EXTENDED DAY:

Alert your group of children and exit through the primary exit door located next to the cubbies. Proceed towards the Preschool Playground, going past the Tire Swing towards the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Line up the children along the edge of the sandpit and wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: exit door located at the far end of the classroom that leads outdoors to the shed area and proceed to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: exit through the classroom door down the hallway, up the ramp, exit through the Emergency Exit doors and exit to the Courtyard via CSHD building doors.

Evacuation Procedures for

**DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, SCHOOL FINANCE & OPERATIONS COORDINATOR,
PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR, STAFF ASSISTANT, & THERAPISTS:**

Director

Take keys, check staff bathroom and Orange Room Observation Booth and instruct any occupants to exit through the nearest exit door. Exit the school via primary exit door next to the Orange Room cubby area that leads out to the Preschool Playground. Proceed along the path next to the school building and go towards the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Take attendance and wait until further notice.

Secondary exit: exit door located at the far end of the classroom that leads outdoors to the shed area and proceed to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: exit through the classroom door down the hallway, up the ramp, exit through the Emergency Exit doors and exit to the Courtyard via CSHD building doors.

School Finance and Operations Coordinator

Call Campus Police x66911 from a school phone or 617-627-6911 from all other phones. Take keys and copies of the children's emergency forms. Check Rainbow Room and Purple Room Observation Booths and instruct any occupant to exit through the nearest exit door. Exit the school via the primary exit door next to Purple Room's cubby area and proceed to far right-hand corner of the playground near the sandpit and the metal fence. Wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: Rainbow Room exit door next to the cubbies and proceed to the Preschool Playground via the Rainbow Room Playground gate.

Third exit: the front doors in the lobby area that exits to the Courtyard.

Program Administrator

Take keys; check the Preschool Office and the Green Room observation booth and instruct any occupant to exit through the nearest exit door. Exit the school via the primary exit door in the Green Room cubby area. Proceed on the path to next to the brick wall of the school building, turn around the corner to the right and head towards the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: exit door located that the far end of the classroom that leads outdoors to the sand pit of the Play Yard. Proceed to the bike/walking path and head to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: exit the classroom door and through the Emergency Exit doors on the right-hand side and exit to the Courtyard via CSHD building doors.

Associate Director

Take keys. Check the hallway bathroom, kitchen, and the Therapy Room and instruct occupants to exit through the nearest exit door. Exit the school via the Therapy Room primary exit door. Proceed along the path next to the school building and continue towards the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: exit door located at the far end of the Orange Room classroom that leads outdoors to the shed area and proceed to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: exit through the classroom door down the hallway, up the ramp, exit through the Emergency Exit doors and exit to the Courtyard via CSHD building doors.

Staff Assistant

Take keys; check the lobby area, copy room, and school library and instruct any occupant to exit through the nearest exit door or to remain outside if in the courtyard. Exit the school via the primary exit door in the Purple Room cubby area. Proceed on the path to right of the school building and head towards the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. Wait there until further notice.

Secondary exit: Rainbow Room exit door next to the cubbies and proceed to the Preschool Playground via the Rainbow Room Playground gate.

Third exit: the front doors in the lobby area that exits to the Courtyard.

Therapists

If therapists are in the Therapy Room, exit through the primary exit door in the room and proceed to the far right-hand corner of the Preschool Playground near the sandpit and metal fence. If children are with the therapist, therapist will bring the children to their classroom educator upon arrival at the playground. If therapists are in the classroom or in other rooms at the school, therapist will follow the evacuation procedure for that area. Wait in the designated area until further notice.

Secondary exit: exit door located at the far end of the Orange Room classroom that leads outdoors to the shed area and proceed to the Preschool Playground.

Third exit: exit through the classroom door down the hallway, up the ramp, exit through the Emergency Exit doors and exit to the Courtyard via CSHD building doors.

Emergency Plan for Eliot-Pearson Children's School

Tufts University on the Medford Campus is protected by a 24 hour, 7-day per week police force. In addition to this department on campus, the university has the resources of the Medford and Somerville Police and Fire Departments available to mitigate emergency situations. Tufts also has a buildings and grounds staff of plumbers, electricians, and carpenters that can be called to location to make repairs in a timely fashion.

IN CASE OF A FIRE, NATURAL DISASTER, OR SITUATION REQUIRING THE EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING: The University has a standing agreement with Joseph's Bus of Medford to provide buses for transportation of students, in an emergency, to a safe haven. If the children must be moved to a different location, upon the direction of Tufts University officials, the children will be escorted as a group, with all staff, to a nearby building. Depending on the circumstances, this could be Gantcher Gym's indoor track, next door to the school or Cousens Gym also next door. Parents will be called and notified by use of cell phone of the changed location. University Police will also be on site to notify parents of the new location of the children. Cell phones will be used to contact local officials for details of the emergency.

IN CASE OF A POWER OUTAGE: If the estimated time of the power outage is to be under an hour, a stay in place protocol will be used. The building's fire alarm system is fully compliant with the NFPA 72 for standby power. NFPA 72, the National Fire Alarm Code, is a standard published by the National Fire Protection Association. If weather conditions permit, the students could be moved to the outdoor play area. If the outage is going to be prolonged or conditions in the building warrant their removal, the students will be transported to the above-mentioned safe havens.

IN CASE OF A LOSS OF HEAT: If the minimum temperatures for heat and hot water cannot be maintained due to mechanical failure or the effects of weather, the students would be evacuated to the listed safe haven locations. If this is a mechanical problem that occurs prior to the start of the school day, school will be cancelled.

IN CASE OF A LOSS OF WATER: A temporary loss of water will be handled by bringing in bottled drinking water, non-potable water, and cleaning water.

As a reminder, Eliot-Pearson Children's School is not a stand-alone facility; the school has the full backing and support of Tufts University and its resources. If the scope of the incident is beyond the abilities of Tufts University, outside emergency agencies are contacted to assist. A listing of emergency numbers to contact parents to come and pick up their children will be transported with the children. If you have any questions regarding this plan, please contact the Tufts Fire Marshal at (617) 627-2745.

Missing Child Protocol:

The first course of action is prevention. At all times, it is important for the educators to know where all of the children are in the classroom and on the playground. If a educator cannot find a child who came to school that day, an AMBER ALERT (missing child) will go into effect:

1. In the classroom where a child is missing, the Head Educator will secure the safety of the remainder of the children in the group, by assigning one educator to monitor that group.
2. The Head Educator will then use a cell phone or leave the classroom to notify a member of the administrative staff that a child is missing. If possible, it will be useful for the administrative staff to have a description of where the child was last seen, and the clothing worn by the missing child. A photograph will be useful for the police.
3. The administrator first notified would note the time of the reported missing child, contact all other administrative staff in the building and begin the search. The administrators will generally search for the child in their assigned areas of responsibility during a fire drill:
 - The Director will check the Orange Room's classroom and Observation Booth, the Play Yard, double checking the locked gates, and the single equipment shed.
 - The School Finance and Operations Coordinator will check the Rainbow Room and Purple Room observation booths and classrooms; the Preschool Playground, and the double-gated bike shed.
 - The Programs Administrator will check the Green Room observation booth and classroom, the Preschool Office, the front courtyard, and the front parking lot (along College Avenue).
 - The Associate Director will check the hallway bathrooms, kitchen, Therapy Room, and then the rear parking lot.
 - The Staff Assistant will check the front lobby, the school library, and the copy room. The staff assistant will return to and remain at the front desk after checking these areas and wait there until further notice.
4. If any of the above administrative staff is absent, the Director, Associate Director, School Finance and Operations Coordinator, Programs Administrator, or the Staff Assistant (in this order) will assign a classroom educator to search in the areas assigned to the absent admin staff member. Additionally, the Head Educator, from the group with a missing child, should be searching for the child and another educator should be assigned to stay with the group.
5. The Director or designated director, in her absence, will call 911 if the search exceeds 5 minutes or if there is suspected foul play.
6. Other classroom educators, who can leave their classrooms to assist in the search, will be asked to search the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development.
7. When the child is found, the family needs to be notified and an Incident Report, signed by the family, needs to be filed with the Department of Early Education and Care. A copy of the report needs to be kept in the child's file.

Background Record Check (BRC)

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 15D, §§ 7 and 8, EEC has launched the fingerprinting system to complete background record checks on persons who work at EEC licensed, approved, or funded programs. The Full Fingerprint Launch for Background Record Checks are processed on all candidates for employment and/or individuals who may have unsupervised contact with children. Everyone who currently needs a CORI, DCF, and SORI Background Record Check (BRC) will need a fingerprint check if they will have unsupervised contact. These individuals include:

- New employees, volunteers or interns beginning work on or after September 1, 2013.
- Individuals hired on or after September 1, 2013, to provide transportation services to EEC licensed and/or funded programs with the potential for unsupervised contact with children.
- Individuals employed or licensed on or after September 1, 2013, for any of the following categories must complete a fingerprint check as soon as the process becomes available:
 - Current employees, volunteers, interns, licensees, reviewers, family members/people regularly on the premises, and individuals providing transportation services including EEC licensed and/or funded programs must complete a fingerprint check.

To ensure an orderly rollout of the fingerprinting process, EEC will send notification letters on a rolling basis throughout the months of June and July to individuals who requested a background record check on or after September 1, 2013. For employees, volunteers, and interns who work for center-based, residential, or placement programs, the notification letter will be sent directly to their employer. This letter will inform the individual to register for fingerprinting at a MorphoTrust USA enrollment center. Please do not attempt to register for fingerprinting prior to receiving your notification letter. Please keep a copy of the notification letter, as it will also serve as proof that a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check has been completed on the individual. If you have any questions about the fingerprinting launch, please contact the Background Record Check Unit at (617) 988-7801 or via e-mail at EECFingerprint@state.ma.us.

Guide for Child-Family Separation - An Introduction

Many of us have powerful, vivid memories connected with our school experiences. School was a major influence in our lives. Outside of our families, it was our major opportunity to socialize, develop and emerge as thinking, feeling people. Now, as parents, you have considered school for your child. In choosing our school, you want to extend to your child the chance to have contact with peers in an environment that is specifically designed to meet your child's needs. Whatever your reasons for sending your child to school, it is time to consider the first major issue which will affect both you and your child -- that of separation.

School as a Novel Place

Before children enter school, most of their time has been spent with family or familiar caretakers. Your child has formed very close bonds with you. You are all-important in your child's eyes. Your child looks to you for sustenance and support. Although coming to school may be an exciting time for children, it is also a new experience full of unknowns. School is a novel place -- full of new people, new materials, and new rules. Beyond this, school may be the very first experience some children have in leaving their families and becoming a member of a group other than family.

The First Days of School

Educators at the Children's School have thought carefully about helping your child make a smooth transition from home to school. The Phase-In plan for the Rainbow Room was developed to introduce your child to school with fewer children and for a shorter period. Educators recognize that there are many individual styles of entering new situations. For the first few days, you can expect the curriculum within the room to be very simple. Currently, the emphasis for educators is to acquaint children with the environment and with the routines of school.

Saying Good-Bye

Although you may be very excited about your child's first school experience, you may also be very surprised at your own reaction(s) when it is time to say good-bye. Separation from your child (even if it is positive) may give rise to a whole range of strong feelings. Leaving your child at school with unfamiliar educators and children is a major event. It signifies that your child is really growing up and that school will be playing an important role in your child's life.

What Separation Will Mean for Your Child

The first days, weeks or months may be a challenging time for your child. School affords children the opportunity to explore their autonomy in a safe, nurturing, and supervised environment. The key difference, however, is that you will not be there to pick up your child after the bumps and the spills. Potentially, this is unsettling for your child until they trust the educators. We recognize that you, the parents, play the central role in your child's life and we are prepared to help children when they tell us that only mommies put their coats on! It is important to remember that your child is flexible and adaptable. No matter what your child's initial reaction to school may be, they will settle into the routine over time.

Some Examples of Reactions

Separation is an issue for every child, and each child will respond differently to saying good-bye. Nonetheless, some patterns of behavior are common. In isolation, the following descriptions of typical reactions may sound alarming; however, such responses are positive evidence that children are working through their feelings about separation and developing strategies, flexibility towards and positive affect towards growth and change.

Sadness

When your child sees you leave, it is often perceived as a loss: "You're leaving," versus "You're leaving but you're coming back to get me at the end of the day." Your child may respond to your leave-taking by looking sad or crying. Complaints about being sick, tired, or not wanting to stay in school are not unusual. The display of such behaviors often makes it very difficult for parents to leave with a clear conscience. Although your child

may be sad, the time for you to leave the room will happen. Educators can lend support if your child shows strong feelings when you are saying good-bye (a later section deals with educator behavior in more detail).

Fear

Some children become afraid when they are not in familiar surroundings, especially when they are alone. When a child first enters school, they may be unsure if educators will keep them safe. Sometimes children test educators by taking more risks than they ordinarily would. Educators address this issue directly with children by assuring them of their safety.

Anger

Although this may seem to be a puzzling response to separation, some children feel angry when parents leave them at school. They may refuse to participate in activities or refuse the help of educators. More curiously, when you arrive at school to pick up your child, you may be surprised to find that your child refusing to leave school, making you wait just as you had made them wait for you at school!

Other Reactions--Some children come to school in body, and not in spirit. Your child may seem quiet, reserved or reluctant to get involved with activities, while at home they may be full of energy and quite verbal. Often it takes time for children to realize that school is a safe, predictable place.

What about the child who cheerfully says good-bye each day without looking back? If your child does not show signs of working out separation in school, you may see changes in your child's behavior at home. Well-established sleeping, eating or toileting routines at home may be disrupted. Sometimes these changes result from children's efforts in managing with their feelings around separation, and, perhaps, their attempts at meeting expectations. Home may be the safest place for your child to freely express themselves. Giving them some room to do so and offering support and reassurances that it is okay to cry and "fall apart" will help them release and express their feelings.

Parental Reactions

When we talk about separation, we often emphasize children's experiences. However, it is also vital to examine your feelings. Many parents feel very sad, guilty, or unsure about how their child will adapt to school. Recognizing your feelings is an important part of your child's successful school adjustment. When parents unwittingly convey ambivalent or tentative feelings about school to their children, school may seem a less happy and secure place. When parents find it difficult to leave, it is even harder for children to want to stay at school.

What You Can Do to Help

1. Prepare your child for the first visit to school when the start of school approaches. Younger children have not developed a sense of time, so that it will be most meaningful when preparation happens very close to the actual event. If possible, be specific about what your child will be able to do at school. If you know the educators' names, share them with your child. Also, your genuine enthusiasm and approval of school will be contagious!
2. Answer all questions honestly and with enough information that satisfies what they really want to know. Help your child understand what to expect—e.g., when will your child go to school, who will take your child to school and how, when will your child be picked up, what will your child do at school—paint, read books, play with blocks, sand table, water table, puzzles, go on the playground, etc.
3. Try to establish an atmosphere of "normalcy" at home during the first few days of school. Keep home routines usual and constant while your child adjusts to being in school.
4. If your child has a transitional object (e.g., blanket, stuffed toy, etc.), encourage your child to bring it to school to keep in the cubby, to be visited periodically as needed.
5. You can also send in a small photo of your child's family/friends to keep at school in the cubby, if this would be helpful.

6. Don't re-engage your child: During the first days, weeks or even months, you may need to be available in or near the classroom if your child needs the security of your presence. However, when you are in the room, bring a book or project so that your child will be able to explore the room without your assistance. Educators will coach you on where to sit or when to leave. This process seeks to assure your child that they are safe, and they are fine. If you talk and play with your child, you will be sending a contrary message, making it difficult for them to become involved in school activities and feel that they are fine.
7. When you are ready to depart, give your child a warning, ("I'll be leaving in a few minutes") and a stated time of return ("I'll be back to get you after you have lunch.")
8. Never try to sneak out of the classroom while your child is busy playing in the classroom. **ALWAYS SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR CHILD BEFORE YOU LEAVE.** This is crucial in establishing a bond of trust between the parent, educator, and child.
9. Consistency is key. If you say you will leave in two minutes, then do so. It may be painful to see your child cry, but educators will be there to comfort your child.
10. If your child begins to cry or complain of not feeling well, parents should try to smile, reassure the child you'll see them in a few hours, and wave good-bye. Most likely, once the moment of separation occurs, the child recovers quickly--usually by the time the parent has turned the corner!
11. Don't push for exuberance on the child's part about the new experience--as it is natural for them not to be ecstatic about leaving a comfortable and safe situation at home. Acknowledging their feelings, whatever it may be, helps children develop confidence and trust in themselves and in you, their parents.
12. Don't assume that only the children experience anxiety. It is very common for parents to feel anxiety over separation. Please share these feelings with a partner and/or a friend--*not the child*.
13. Occasionally, a child has prolonged difficulty with separation. When this is the case, special plans are developed. It is very important for parents to participate in this process and stick to it! If the plan is confusing or uncomfortable to you, please share this with educators. When families and educators work together, the results are often quicker and more satisfying for everyone.
14. Remember, separation is a gradual and very normal process for everyone to go through. Some adjustments take longer than others, but everyone does adjust.
15. Sharing information with educators is helpful particularly if there are changes in your child's behavior after school has started. Changes in their home life may also influence your child's reaction to school. This information will help the educator become more familiar with your child and provide you and your child the support you need to go through the process.

How Educators Help with Separation in the Classroom

Educators have resources and the experience to help children and families with the separation process.

1. Each classroom is designed with a combination of quiet areas and more active areas that provide the space and materials for children to explore their thoughts and feelings. For the younger children, there is a dramatic play area, complete with dolls and telephones so that the children can phone home! Book corners have pillows where children can sit for some special time with educators. Books are an integral part of the classroom. Several favorites are chosen with the children's interests in mind. Here are some books, which either deal with separation or are comforting to children: *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown, *Are You My Mother?* by P.D. Eastman, and *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen.
2. When a child is sad or frightened, educators spend time with them on a one-to-one basis. Educators may choose to do a child's favorite activity with him/her or suggest soothing activities such as play dough or water play. They encourage children to explore and express their ideas and feelings and begin establishing relationships based on authentic connections.
3. Children often talk to educators about their parents and families. Educators help greatly by acknowledging feelings and by encouraging children to express their feelings. Educators also help children remember that parents will come to get them at the end of the day.

How Do You Know When Your Child Has Made the Adjustment to School?

When children feel safe and confident about coming to school they will participate enthusiastically in activities. It is normal for this process to take anywhere from one day to several months. Educators try to develop solid relationships with all the children so that each child can come to the educator for support and comfort.

Recurrences--Separation as a Continuing Process

Surprise! Many months after school has begun, you bring your child to school, and they begin to cry and refuse to let you leave. It comes as a surprise because your child has been going to school eagerly and expressing how much they love it. Don't worry. Separation is a continuing process. It is not a task to be mastered and finished with for the rest of one's lifetime. Whether your child is a toddler or in kindergarten, it is difficult to say good-bye. At these times, reassurance and understanding is needed. The feelings of separation are not imagined. Educators will be there to help you re-negotiate a good-bye with your child.

Conclusion

After reading this guide, we hope that many of your questions about separation will be answered and that your awareness of the complexity of this issue will be heightened. During the year, educators will be available to answer questions or to talk with you about the separation experience. Both your feelings and your child's feelings are real and **very** important.

There is one final thing to remember: separation is a process, not an event. It takes time, patience and effort to get through some hard goodbyes. Good luck!

Some children's books recommended to help separation anxiety regarding beginning school:

- Miriam Cohen, *Will I have a Friend?*
- Charlotte Steiner, *I'd Rather Stay with You*
- Gunilla Wolde, *Betsy's First Day at Nursery School*
- Ann Rockwell, *The Nursery School*
- Patricia Reif, *The First Day of School*
- Tano Yashima, *Umbrella*
- M. Kantrowiz, *Willy Bear*
- E.G. Hurd, *Come with Me to Nursery School*
- M.W. Brown, *The Runaway Bunny*
- J. Burningham, *The School*
- J. Burningham, *The Blanket*

Original Guidelines written by: Dena Cherenson Children's School, December 1982

Adapted By: LeeKeenan, Children's School, August 1996

Family Involvement Information- EEC (2010)

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of family childcare, small group and school age and large group and school age childcare. These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00, establish standards for operation of family childcare, small group and school age and large group and school age childcare programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (program owner) regarding their work with families. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities are identified below.

Family Engagement

The following 606 CMR 7.08 requirements apply to all programs, including family childcare, small group and school age and large group and school age childcare. Additional requirements for family childcare are found at 606 CMR 7.08(9). Additional requirements for small group and school age and large group and school age childcare are found at 606 CMR 7.08(10). The licensee must support and encourage a partnership with and the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children.

Parent Communication The licensee must develop a mechanism for and encourage ongoing communication with parents and must be able to communicate effectively with families whose primary language is not English or who require alternative methods.

Parent Input The licensee must have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of program policies, which may include, but need not be limited to a suggestion box and individual or group parent meetings.

Parent Visits The licensee must permit and encourage unannounced visits by parents to the program and/or to their child's room at any time while their child is present.

Enrollment Meeting The licensee must provide an opportunity for and encourage parents to meet with the administrator or his/her designee prior to admitting a child to the program.

- The licensee must offer children and parents an orientation to the program.
- The licensee must provide an opportunity for parent(s) and children to visit the program and meet educators before the child is enrolled.
- The licensee must seek information about each child's and family's interests and needs.
- To support transitions and coordinate with services offered by other providers, the educators must request that parents share with them information about other therapeutic, educational, social and support services received by the child.
- For children younger than school age, educators must discuss each child's developmental history with his or her parents at the time of enrollment. The developmental history must be updated annually and maintained in the child's record.
- Written Information for Parents: The licensee must provide the following information to families in writing prior to enrollment of their child:
 - Notification that parents are welcome to visit the program unannounced at any time while their child is present; and that input from and communication with parents is encouraged.
 - The frequency of children's progress reports

- The program's policy regarding administration of medication
- The procedures for meeting potential emergencies
- The transportation plan
- A program calendar noting closed days and hours of operation
- The program's fee schedule, including any fees for late payment, late pick- up, field trips, special materials, etc.
- The program's plan to provide positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development
- The program's criteria for excluding children from care due to serious illnesses, contagious diseases, and reportable diseases in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health; information regarding SIDS risk reduction practices, including the practice of sleeping infants on their backs
- The procedures relating to children's records; notice that child educators are mandated reporters and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families
- Notice that the program is licensed by EEC, including the telephone number and address of the EEC regional office responsible for the program
- A statement that parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.
- Parent Conferences. The licensee must make educators available for individual conferences with parents at parental request.

Notifications to Parents

The licensee must inform parents:

- Immediately of any injury, which requires any medical care beyond minor first aid or of any emergency administration of non-prescription medication
- Immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving their children while in the care and custody of the licensee
- Prior to or as soon as possible following any change in educators; at the end of the day regarding any minor first aid administered; in writing within 48 hours of any incident
- Whenever special problems and significant developments arise
- Whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program
- In writing seven days prior to the implementation of any change in program policy or procedures
- Prior to the introduction of any pets into the program
- Of the use of any herbicides or pesticides, prior to their use whenever possible; and whenever the program deviates from the planned menu
- Additional Requirements for Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care

The licensee must provide the following information to parents in writing prior to enrollment:

- The program's written statement of purpose including and, where applicable, information on the administrative organization of the program
- The suspension and termination policy