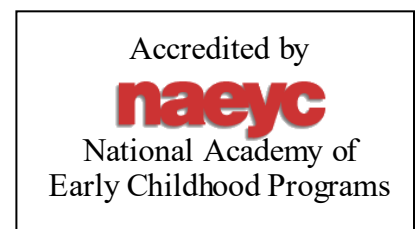




Dean College Children's Center

99 Main Street, Franklin, MA 02038
508-541-1598

PARENT HANDBOOK



DEAN COLLEGE CHILDREN'S CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK

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Dean College Children's Center is a laboratory school for the program of Early Childhood Education, one of the majors at Dean College which is an accredited residential coeducational college.

Dean College Children's Center admits families without regard to race, color, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available by the school. Toilet training status is not an enrollment requirement.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Dean College Children's Center is licensed by DEEC. Parents can contact DEEC at 324-R Clark Street, Worcester, MA 01609 and (508)-798-5180. Dean Children's Center is owned by Dean College. Dean College maintains documents to identify ownership and authorizes the Director responsible for daily operation and to follow the policies and procedures set forth in accordance with DEEC. In the case that the Director is not on-site, the Assistant Director is authorized the person responsible for daily operation, following policies and procedures in accordance with DEEC. Dean College Children's Center must make available any information requested by DEEC to determine compliance with any office (DEEC) regulations governing the program, by proving access to its facilities, records, staff, and references. Dean Children's Center maintains a copy of all regulations on the premises, and they are available to any person upon request.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

Director of Children's Center and Coordinator of Early Childhood Education

Teachers

Students & Volunteers

FLOOR PLAN (not to scale). See floor plan posted in main office of the Children's Center.

MISSION

The mission of Dean College Children's Center is:

- To provide 2.9- to 6-year-old children with a rich initial school experience that reflects current research in child development and early childhood education.
- To provide a learning laboratory site for Dean students preparing for careers in education and other fields.
- To provide a demonstration and resource program for families and early education professionals.

Dean College Children's Center is an NAEYC accredited child development laboratory. Our mandate extends beyond that of a traditional nursery school. In addition to providing an exemplary program for young children, the Children's Center is a teacher training facility. It serves as a demonstration center for area schools, child care centers, and college/university-based programs. It assists parents who want to learn more about their child's development. It is a site for on-going research to be conducted and this research contributes to the current research studies on early education.

We believe that the best teaching is based on a thorough understanding of the principles guiding human growth and development. Our role is to prepare a rich and stimulating environment, to encourage exploration and discovery, and to assist children in making the best use of their own abilities. We strive for a "playful" atmosphere, where children and adults are comfortable, relaxed, and purposeful. We work to involve parents in our teaching through newsletters, conversations, and classroom participation.

PHILOSOPHY

“...each time one prematurely teaches a child something he
could have discovered for himself, that child is kept from
inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely.”

Jean Piaget

A child's first school experience is pivotal. It sets the tone for future learning and builds a foundation that lasts a lifetime. We want to ensure that every child's experience is meaningful, productive, and in keeping with current research in child

development. We have adopted a model, the High/Scope Curriculum, which places its emphasis on several Key Developmental Indicators (KDI's) essential for children during preschool and for their future success: approaches to learning; language, literacy and communication; social emotional development; physical development, health and well being; mathematics (seriation, numbers and space), science technology (classification and time), social studies, and arts (visual, dramatic and music). Many parents are familiar with the traditional unit approach to teaching, where the day is organized around a theme such as transportation, community helpers, etc. At our children's center, teachers are following the child's lead, incorporating the KDI's, thus curriculum comes from the children based on their interests and needs.

Each day is organized in a plan-do-review sequence: outdoor time, planning time, then work time/free play, and finally recall and review. Children are taught to make choices and accept the consequences thereof, a developmentally appropriate task for a 3-4-year-old who is struggling for autonomy and independence. A problem-solving process which allows children to make choices and come up with solutions is very important. The classrooms are organized in a variety of activity areas and teachers provide materials and opportunities for children's exploration and discovery.

Teachers function as facilitators. We use open-ended questions to inspire children and encourage higher level thinking: "What else could we do with this?", "How do you think you can do that?", "Two children want this same bike. What can we do to solve this problem?", "What do you think happened first and second?"

The program develops and evolves from real events in the classroom or the children's lives: an unexpected snowstorm, a new pet, a visiting baby. We do not celebrate the holidays at school since they are over stimulating to young children in a group setting. We encourage conversations among teachers and parents regarding our curriculum. Please feel free to ask any questions.

ADMISSION POLICY

Applications are made to Dean College Children's Center. Upon admission, acceptance letters are mailed as are waitlist letters if necessary. Enrollment forms are emailed and start of school information is emailed before school begins.

To be eligible for admission children must be at least 2 years 9 months of age by the time of entrance. We accept children who are under 6 years of age by December 31 of the entrance year. Dean College Children's Center welcomes the participation of children with special needs. Also, there are a few ways to receive tuition subsidy if needed, so please do not hesitate to ask.

Families are welcome to apply at any time during the year and will receive priority as noted.

<u>Priority</u>	<u>For whom</u>
First 2 weeks of November for the following September	Returning children who are currently enrolled have first priority during this enrollment period on a first come, first served basis. If needed, applicants will be placed on a waiting list. Siblings of currently enrolled children will have the second priority during this enrollment period. If spaces for programs are full, these siblings will be placed on the waiting list on first come, first served basis. Children of Faculty/Staff of Dean College will have third priority during this enrollment period. If spaces for programs are full, children will be placed on the waiting list on first come, first served basis.
Second 2 weeks of November for the following September	Applications for returning families with no currently enrolled children. Spaces are filled on a first come, first served basis. If all spaces for programs are full, children will be placed on the waiting list on first come, first served basis.

Beginning the first
business day of
December for the
following September

Open enrollment for new families. Spaces are filled on a first come, first served basis. If spaces for programs are full, children will be placed on our waiting list on a first come, first served basis. As spaces become available in the program of your choice, we will contact you for acceptance.

A non-refundable Application Fee of \$50.00 is required. When a child has been accepted, the family must make a \$250.00 deposit to hold the place. This deposit is not refundable.

Acceptance letters will be mailed to families of accepted children as will waiting list letters if necessary.

All accepted families are expected to schedule an intake visit before the child enters the program. Parents have the opportunity to visit the program's classroom at the time of meeting us or prior to the enrollment of the child.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition at the Children's Center is quoted at an annual fee, payable in 5 payments:

\$250.00 non-refundable deposit due upon acceptance	
July 15.....	1 st quarter payment
October 15.....	2 nd quarter payment
December 15.....	3 rd quarter payment
February 15.....	4 th quarter payment
	(minus \$250.00 Deposit)

No deductions are made for absences and/or holidays.

If a child is withdrawn from the program, Dean College Children's Center requires 30 days' written notice, and the family is held responsible for tuition during those 30 days, whether or not the child attends. If more than 30 days' tuition has been paid, a refund is made on a per diem basis.

Dean College Children's Center reserves the right to withdraw a child whose tuition account is in arrears.

Application fees, tuition payments and deposits must be paid through our website. The links for payments can be found on the Dean College Children's Center web page.

SIBLING DISCOUNT PROGRAM

Families with two or more children attending Dean Children's Center in the same full school year, will be given a sibling discount of \$100 which shall be deducted from the family tuition upon completion of the full school year (September – May). Children must be attending during the same year and for the full school year. The maximum discount in one academic year is \$100.

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

All children's programs consist of two groups of up to 15 children, each with one teacher, one teacher assistant, and student teacher support. All children's programs are multi-age. This way of organizing ourselves, sometimes called heterogeneous grouping, allows every child to find friends at his/her own developmental level. Children from 2 years 9 months to 5 years of age (under 6 by Dec. 31 of the entry year) may be enrolled in any of the a.m. groups. Children who are close to 4 years old, 4 years old or older, are eligible for the afternoon program.

Programs are scheduled on consecutive days so that children can follow through on activities they have begun.

5-day a.m. program (combination of 2-day a.m. and 3-day a.m.): Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

2-day a.m. program: Tues./Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

3-day a.m. program: Mon./Wed./Fri 8:30 a.m.-12:15p.m.

5-day p.m. program: Mon.-Fri. 12:30 p.m.-3:15 p.m.

5-day Pre-K Full Day: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m. (4-6 years old)

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The staff at Dean College Children's Center are child development professionals. Their areas of expertise include early childhood education, elementary education, special education, adult education, child growth and development and family studies. In addition to planning programs and teaching children, the staff are trainers of people who will become educators. They take an active role in professional development conferences and training.

Teachers:

Teachers have at least a four-year degree in a child development-related field and/or they often have earned advanced degrees and have extensive experience teaching young children. Teachers have earned Department of Early Education and Care *Preschool Teacher* qualification, and some have attained the highest preschool teaching credential offered by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, *Preschool Lead Teacher*. Some are also Director credentialed.

Many of our teachers have a dual role: they teach children's classes and are supervising teachers for Dean student's majoring in Early Childhood Education. The teachers plan curriculum, evaluate children, meet with parents, and work closely with volunteers.

Director:

The director has at least a master's degree in a child development-related field and extensive experience in preschool teaching and administration. The director is credentialed by the Department of Early Education and Care as Director II, which includes Lead Teacher certification. The director supervises staff and students, coordinates special services, administers the daily program, and directs the Early Childhood Education program.

Office Manager:

The Office Manager receives visitors, helps with arrival and dismissal procedures, schedules appointments, manages correspondence and assists the director with administrative tasks. Additionally, the Office Manager provides support to the teachers as much as the schedule permits.

Personnel Policies:

All professional staff are employees of Dean College. All professional staff are orientated and expected to follow the Personnel Policies set forth by the College located with the Human Resources Department.

STUDENTS IN THE ECE MAJOR & WORK/STUDY STUDENTS

Students in the major of Early Childhood Education practice their skills under supervision of professional staff to learn best practices. First-year ECE majors enrolled in the *Introduction to Early Childhood* course observe twice in the fall semester. In spring, they observe twice as a requirement of the *Child Growth and Development or Child Psychology* course. Additionally, first- and second-year work study program students and 3rd/4th year Tri-County Child Development Program majors join us in the classroom. Students come to Dean College Children's Center with varying degrees of experience and understanding of young children. We provide them opportunities to gain a level of performance consistent with the highest professional standards. They function as aides to the teachers in the classroom, under the direct supervision of the teachers, the director, and their faculty. They are assigned to classroom areas, activity areas, and aide the teachers at group meetings. At the end of each day, they meet in a feedback session with the teachers and director to review presented curriculum, behaviors, and plans.

The Dean College second-year Early Childhood Education students are enrolled in the *Field Observation and Participation* course, which requires them to observe specific kinds of behavior for discussion in a weekly seminar. They have taken or are concurrently enrolled in *Curriculum for Young Children*. Each student, with parent permission, does an extended observation to develop a case study of one child's growth and development. The case study becomes part of the student's final project and as such it is confidential. It is not available to the parents since students are just beginning to formulate their specific ideas about children's development and their observations are not yet professional.

In the spring semester, Dean College students who are enrolled in *Practicum in Early Childhood Education* course aid the teachers in the classroom four sessions a week. They prepare curriculum activities and present these to the children. This gives them the opportunity to learn group management skills, while the children enjoy the small group format. A major part of the Student Teaching experience is learning professional behavior. As part of this newly emerging professionalism for them, we ask students to remember their status as beginning teachers who still have a lot to learn. They are not yet knowledgeable enough to comment to a parent on a child's progress or performance. We ask parents not to put students in the position of having to decline to respond to questions. The professional staff are the appropriate people to ask for this information.

ORIENTATION

Making the transition from home to school as smooth as possible requires some planning. We have designed several steps to ease the children into the comfort of their routine.

1. **Intake:** Every family is invited to come for a visit. This gives the child a turn to explore, try out materials, and develop a beginning awareness of this place called school. Many children remember one space or special project all summer long. Parents have an opportunity to observe teacher/child interaction and to speak with us about the program, interactions, curriculum, and philosophy.
2. **First Week Schedule:** For the first day in the first week, only fifteen children come to school at a time, with each session lasting 1.5 hours. This schedule keeps children from being overwhelmed by too many new faces at once.

We invite parents to stay for the first day.

4. Orientation Parent Seminar: The first Parent Seminar of the year is held early in the year and is designed to introduce the staff and the curriculum. Typically, we present a slide show of first month activities. We explain our plans for the year and invite parents to participate in asking questions about the program. It's important to point out that we encourage parents to ask us about the program at any time during the year. Please do.

MANAGING SEPARATION

Going to school means a new environment, new relationships, and new experiences. Children must learn to cope with being in a group, sharing the teachers' attention, and meeting new expectations. Parents must learn to give up their exclusive influence and allow new adults to have meaningful relationship with their child. It is no surprise that children and parents alike experience some ambivalent feelings. Children have their own way of managing these mixed feelings. Some seem unconcerned, easily exploring the new environment on their own. Others cling and cry, refusing to let the parent leave. The staff have seen every variation on the theme. They are comfortable with helping the child who screams every time the parent leaves. They know how to draw out the child who retreats, hoping not to be noticed.

Some children do best with a brief, definite goodbye with teachers doing the comforting. Others need the parent to stay for a time while they ease into the group. Some manage easily in the first weeks, but have second thoughts later about being on their own. For everyone, time must elapse before the novelty wears off and trusting relationships can begin to form. Children take their cues on how to feel from the parents. It is essential that parents believe that they are making a good choice for their child and communicate that message clearly. This may mean some parent/teacher conversations, so that they can develop their own trusting relationship, as well as helping strategies.

Some things we have found to be helpful:

1. Send a tangible symbol of home for the child to keep in his/her backpack: a small stuffed animal, a picture of you, a handkerchief with your cologne on it. Please keep toys at home.
2. When the child is ready, move to an intangible symbol: a kiss in a pocket, a secret in the ear, a private hand signal.
3. Make a telephone call at a time prearranged with the teacher.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

At Dean College Children's Center, guidance of children's behavior is designed to increase understanding, internal controls, and the ability to use language as a problem-solving strategy. This is important for children in preschool and when they are older. In conformity with Department of Early Education regulations: Punishment, defined as negative behavior controls, will have no place in practice or policy. No corporal punishment, including spanking, will be used. No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, or isolation. No physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks will be used. No child shall be denied food as punishment. Also strictly prohibited are: depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks, force feeding, using food as a consequence, disciplining a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet, forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting, confining a child to excessive time-out which is defined as not to exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

Expectations of children's behavior are based on age and on developmental norms and these expectations allow for individual differences. The staff speak clearly and use a minimum of words, so that children understand easily what is being required. No judgments or judgmental words are used, and no child is required to apologize. In resolving conflicts between children, the educator helps them to verbalize their needs and feelings. Educators do not provide or impose solutions, instead facilitate problem solving for children to devise their own. Children that devise their own viable solutions, own those solutions and therefore change their own behavior with educator's facilitation.

Strategies for classroom behavior guidance include distraction and re-direction, peer problem-solving, group problem-solving, separation from the area to another area with assistance from staff to help the child make a fresh start.

- a. Children are approached calmly, and feelings are acknowledged. The teacher facilitates by requiring each to listen to the other and helping them to reach a mutually acceptable solution.
- b. Group problem-solving deals with general classroom issues: too long a wait for the bicycles, materials used inappropriately, etc. Children come up with various solutions as to how these issues could be worked out. The staff member acts as a facilitator, encouraging language and thoughts.
- c. Children who cannot yet respond may be given time away from the group with two adults supervising them throughout. The child is removed from the play space and goes with a staff member to a less-busy area, usually the office with the 2nd adult there, where he/she can collect himself/herself. Two adults remain with the child until he/she has regained control, offer comfort, and help the child to make a fresh start.
- d. Behavior problems of a serious nature or which persist over a period of time are brought to the attention of parents for their input into the solution. It is expected that parents will assist in clearly guiding their child in these cases. We see ourselves as a partner to parents and feel that open communication is the first step to working through difficult issues.

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR A.M. PROGRAMS

8:30-8:45 Arrival Time - Parents come to the greeting gate (or back door on a rainy day) to drop off children with the greeting staff member as they are checked in. Children hang up their coat and backpack and wash hands. Children play with manipulatives, draw pictures, or look at books as classmates arrive.

8:45-9:00 Planning Time – Teachers help children make a plan for work time/free play. Children also place their name on the attendance board and sing songs.

9:00 – 10:20 Work time/Free Play – Children work/play in classroom areas. Students and volunteers are assigned to each activity area to support children's work and play. Teachers circulate, observe, interact, and supervise.

Snack Time – Children serve themselves during work/play time with assistance

Toileting – Children use the bathroom as needed

10:20 – 10:30 Clean-up Time – Children, students, volunteers, and teachers return materials to areas

10:30-11:00 Outside Time – Children play freely in the outdoor play yard. Students and Volunteers are each assigned to one area of the yard to support children’s play and monitor safe activity. Teachers circulate, observe, interact, and monitor overall safety.

11:00-11:15 Lunch Preparation – The children come indoors to hang up their coats and wash hands for lunch.

11:15-11:45 Lunch /Clean-Up – Lunch brought from home is eaten at the table with a teacher. Children are encouraged to throw away/recycle trash and pack storage containers back into lunchboxes.

11:45-12:15 Quiet Time/Story/Recall – Children will have an opportunity to have a brief rest time. Teachers led children in recall discussion of free play and read a story/flannel board and/or perform a movement activity. Additional activities may occur within small groups of children.

12:15 Dismissal – Parents pick up children for departure

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR P.M. PROGRAM

12:30 – 1:15 Arrival and Outdoor Time – Children play freely in the outdoor play yard. Students and Volunteers are each assigned to one area of the playground to support children’s play and monitor safe activity. Teachers circulate, observe, interact, and monitor overall safety.

1:15 – 1:35 Planning Time – After the children hang up their coats and backpacks, they wash their hands and join their teacher for attendance, songs, and planning. Teachers help children make a plan for work time/free play.

1:35 – 2:45 Work time/Free play – Children work/play in classroom areas. Students and volunteers are assigned to each activity area to support children’s work and play. Teachers circulate, observe, interact, and supervise.

Snack Time – Children serve themselves during work/play time with assistance

Toileting – Children use the bathroom as needed

2:45– 2:50 Clean-up Time – Children, students, volunteers, and teachers return materials to areas.

2:50 – 3:00 Quiet Time/Small Group Activity – Children rest on their blanket/towel, listening to music/story, drawing, or participating in Mindfulness Activities. Additional activities may occur within small groups of children.

3:00-3:15 Recall/Group Time – Teachers lead children in recall discussion of free play and read a story/flannel board and/or perform a movement activity.

3:15 Dismissal – Parents pick up children for departure.

ROUTINES

A. ARRIVAL:

Dean College Children's Center does not provide transportation. Suitable safety carriers, restraints, or seat belts should be provided by parents/guardians for everyone in the car. This is important to remember if you are car-pooling. Children should ride in the back seat.

On walking campus field trips, children will always be supervised by teachers. If a child is hurt or becomes ill on campus, the teacher will call campus security and/or 911 if necessary and use First Aid/CPR procedures. Then the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified.

Parking is in the Campus Center lot at 109 W. Central Street. There is a walkway from the lot to the Children's Center play yard. Parents are required to walk with their children up to the gate or to the back doorway and pass their child(ren) to the greeting staff. Up until the point a child is with the teacher, parents are responsible for their child(ren).

We will be responsible for each child once school hours begin and the child is passed to the staff from their parent/guardian. Up until that point, the parent/guardian is responsible for their child(ren). We will be responsible for each child until school hours end and the child is passed back to the parent/guardian. Up until that point, the staff are responsible for the child(ren). The program allows for parent/guardians to visit at any time, therefore when visiting we ask that you follow all procedures for group care of children. We establish staff responsibility for the child in the classroom once the school hours have begun. If for some reason, you remain on site before or after school hours, it is then the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise the child(ren). This parent/guardian responsibility includes activities such as family nights that take place after school hours.

If you want to leave a message or ask a question, please step into the office to speak to the admin assistant of our office. If you need to speak to a teacher or the director, this is a good place to wait as our admin assistant can plan for these conversations to happen. Also, we encourage parents to periodically read the parent bulletin board which is located just outside the office.

B. DEPARTURE:

Children are often reluctant to leave special friends and exciting play. Don't take it personally if your child meets you with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm. If you would like a teacher to help, please feel free to ask.

Authorized people: Children are dismissed from the play yard gate (or the side door on a rainy day) and parents/guardians must come to the gate or door to pick up. Children are released only to the parent/guardian or to the people listed on the permission/authorization form. If the teacher dismissing children is unfamiliar with the person picking up, he or she will ask for identification. Please be aware that parents/guardians, whom we have not met or become familiar with, will be asked for identification. We hope you understand this safety precaution in protection of children.

If you have arranged a carpool, you must list all drivers on your permission/authorization form. If you make special pick-up arrangements on a given day, we must be notified of the person's name, address on their identification, and phone number. In an emergency, please make a phone call to alert us and provide this information. Also alert the person to bring their identification.

Siblings: Parents/guardians need to bring siblings to the gate or door when they drop off and pick up, since it is not safe to leave them alone in the car, ever. It is very important to remind one another about this responsibility

for the safety of all children. Please note that staff will not supervise siblings, and they remain the parent/guardian responsibility.

Folder boxes at dismissal: Children's papers and notices for parents/guardians are filed in two folder boxes at dismissal. When you arrive, *please retrieve your child's papers yourself* **before** you ask the child to leave. Do not ask your child to go through the folders, since this will result in a line of children waiting. Please note our rule that any work not in the folders is not ready to go home – it may be a painting project that is still drying – and will be placed in the folder boxes soon.

Snow days/emergency closing: The Children's Center closes initially if Franklin Public closes due to inclement weather. It also closes if the College closes due to inclement weather. If the college has a delayed opening, our morning preschool session is cancelled. The Children's Center will be reopened as soon as possible independently from Franklin Public. Notifications of the Children's Center closing are posted to the Dean website, on the Children's Center voicemail, and sent in an email from the director.

In the event of an emergency requiring the closing of school while in session, we will call you or the name listed on the emergency forms on file. In the event the Children's Center must be evacuated, children will be moved to the Campus Center lobby/atrium a parent/guardian will be notified. If during an emergency, a parent/guardian cannot reach the Children's Center at the usual telephone number, they should call the Dean College Office of Public Safety at (508)541-1888.

C. SNACKS: We make snacks available every day that are healthy, tasty, and interesting to young children. We emphasize color, texture, variety, and the children do their own cooking several times a week. We serve water, juice and/or milk to drink. We do not serve cookies, cupcakes, or other highly sugared foods. If your child has any food allergies, be sure that those allergies are listed in their developmental history papers and that you have had a direct conversation with the assistant director about food allergies before the first day of school.

We are a "nut free zone". **No** nuts or nut oils of any kind are served here, as many children are allergic to different types of nuts. Snacks are bought by the school in a very careful manner and snacks provided by parents/guardians cannot be accepted.

Many children are working out control issues that relate to food. To help with this, we make snack time a relaxed, conversational atmosphere. A child may choose to come to snack, not to come to snack, or to come several times. Giving children choices helps them relax and try new things. Sometimes a child will have a snack with you after their session with us, then after a few invitations to join in on snack the child becomes comfortable enough to try out the snack foods at school with their peers. Snack menus are posted on our parent bulletin board and emailed to you. Snack and lunch times are supervised by staff.

We teach that handwashing before and after eating makes food tastier and healthier. We show children how to pour water, how to wipe up spills, and where to get another pitcher when one is empty. We use disposable paper towels for table spills at snack time.

Food Policy

At the Dean College Children's Center, we encourage good nutritional habits. A healthy snack is included in the tuition. Snacks may consist of fresh fruit, vegetables, non-sweetened juices, cheese and yogurt, a variety of crackers and food the teachers and children make themselves. Parents of those attending a morning session are asked to provide a lunch for their child. Please help promote a healthy attitude toward food by including nutritious items in lunchboxes and avoid including candy, cookies, cakes, and soda. We will provide water at each table. The children will eat lunch with the teachers and their classmates.

—Suggestions for Lunches—

Fruits and Vegetables (safe, bite-size pieces)

apple slices	melon	applesauce	strawberries
blueberries	oranges	pears	dried fruits
green peppers	cucumbers	tomatoes	zucchini

Main Course Items

soup	tuna salad	egg salad	yogurt
cottage cheese	pizza	spaghetti	chicken pieces
sandwiches	cheese slices	macaroni and cheese	

Other Items

muffins	banana bread	pumpkin bread	graham crackers
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If you are sending perishable items, please include a reusable cold pack in your child's lunchbox. Please keep in mind that we do not microwave lunches. Containers for keeping foods warm can be found at most stores.

Helpful Hints:

- Keep portion sizes and food amounts small (for example ½ sandwich, cheese and cut-up fruit)
- Save dessert for home so that children will eat their lunch
- Encourage independence by providing manageable food containers (containers with easily removable covers.)
- Label your child's lunchbox and containers
- **We are a peanut/nut free facility – please check all labels before packing your child's lunch. Foods that are labeled, *May Contain Nuts*, should not be included in your child's lunch. There are many safe brands to choose from including *Made Good* brand, found in many stores. Label sandwiches made with a peanut butter alternative such as sun butter so there will not be any questions about the contents. Yogurt packaged with additional ingredients such as granola and M&M's often may contain nuts and should not be included in your child's lunch.**

IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION

To: Parents, Guardians, Volunteers, Students, Visitors, and Friends
From: Joanne Hogan, Director of Dean College Children's Center

We look forward to a new school year at the Dean College Children's Center. As in past years, we recognize the importance of preparing children with allergies. As you have undoubtedly read in the regional and national media, there are growing numbers of children with allergies and consequently, we can anticipate more children with allergies enrolling in our Center.

I want to take this opportunity to advise you that the Children's Center has been a “**nut free zone**” for years. There are additional precautions we can take to lessen the possibility of serious reaction to a variety of allergens. We ask that parents/guardians remain aware of the allergens and partner in taking the following precautions.

- Only snacks provided by the center will be available to children.
- Some **food** allergens are peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, nut oils, eggs, milk, soy, whey, barley and oat. Additionally, some sun lotions and hand lotions **may** contain nut oils.
- When children touch these nut oil-based lotions on their skin and then touch materials at the Center, it increases the likelihood that a child with this type of allergy could have a reaction.
- Due to the severity of allergic reactions, we ask that each person, before entering the children's classroom, diligently wash their hands with warm water and soap.
- There are reminder signs around the classroom and at the doorways to help us all remember hand washing and continue it as part of the daily routine.
- The teachers and other adults here at school will help the children wash with warm water and soap at arrival time in the classroom and when snacks are available.
- Children will wash their hands before and after lunch.
- Staff wash hands before preparing snack.

D. BIRTHDAYS: Birthdays remain very low key here at the center. Parents/guardians often like to send something to give to the school to celebrate their child's birthday in the way of craft materials or a storybook. Due to the increasing allergies of young children, we cannot allow any birthday snacks at school.

E. TOILETING: Although we prefer that child be toilet-trained before entering the program, we know some children are not ready before entering preschool, and that new situations can cause regression. We have clothing at school, and if an accident happens, we help the child into clean clothing. We send home the soiled clothing in a sealed bag. We ask that you return the school clothing after laundering. We remind children where the bathroom is and ask them to think about whether they may need to use it. We show them how to do as much as possible for themselves and where to wash their hands. We do not have a scheduled time for toileting. If you have questions about your child's toilet learning, please feel free to ask.

F. REST TIME: After a full morning activity and stimulation of free play, children need a transition to the afternoon group time. They sit or lie on a blanket or towel from home, listening to music or poetry or a

storybook, while adults rub backs or sit next to restless children for a few minutes. Rest time helps children to relax and regain their composure and energy so they can enjoy the rest of their day. Some children are anxious about resting time, probably because it is reminiscent of napping or going to bed. We do not ask children to sleep or nap, just rest to regain energy for the rest of their long day. Soon they learn to look forward to it, and some even complain if we need to omit it!

G. CLOTHES FOR SCHOOL: Children should be dressed for a busy, active, and sometimes messy day at school. Shoes and sneakers with non-skid soles are a good choice. Our floors are carpeted, and children are welcome to bring in non-skid slippers in boot weather. Sending in layering such as sweaters or sweatshirts help us add clothing as needed on the cold winter days. We are outside every day, even in winter, unless it is raining or unreasonably cold, so children will need boots, mittens, snow pants, etc.

Please label all clothing clearly as sometimes children don't recognize their own extra clothes or mittens.

H. TOYS FROM HOME: We ask that you not allow your child to bring toys from home. An exception is a comfort/security toy that a child needs to feel safe. Please talk with the teachers about this. We want children to learn about owning things in community and introduce the ideas of sharing, waiting for a turn, etc. Occasionally teachers will send a note home asking that children bring a particular item for a special event and send it home that same day, so it won't get lost.

I. LOST AND FOUND: If your child is missing a mitten, hat, jacket, etc., check the *Lost and Found Box* in the front hall.

J. FIELD TRIPS: One of the things that makes Dean College Children's Center a special experience is being in the college environment. We help the children be aware that our school is part of the college, that the students live here, and that lots of interesting things happen on campus. We go on field trips whenever there is something exciting to see or do. We painted murals in Dean Hall and danced with the Creative Movement class. We have visited the theater and mailed letters home at the Dean College Post Office. We never leave the campus, and no vehicles are used to transport children. A teacher and several students and volunteers accompany each group. Most trips are scheduled and notice to parents/guardian is provided/posted. Spontaneous trips do occur however, when advance notice may not be feasible. Your permission for campus walks on file in the office allows us to include your child in campus field trips.

On walking campus field trips, children will always be supervised by their teacher and several aides. If a child is hurt or becomes ill on campus, an adult will call campus security and/or 911 if necessary and will use First Aid/CPR procedures.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Since young children often do not communicate clearly what their school day is like, it is important that parents/guardians have opportunities to get information from teachers. Since teachers are busy with children during drop-off and pick-up, we have established the following ways for you to learn what is going on.

1. NEWSLETTER & CONTACT: Teachers send information on classroom activities, the learning taking place, recipes, fingerplays, and songs the children are learning for you to try at home. Many of these activities are included in the semester newsletter, or sent in an email from the teacher, or put into the folder boxes as a notice to go home. You will also receive photo updates via email as well.

The teachers give parents general feedback at the end of the day and can provide more specific feedback by phone or appointment. All teachers have office hours so please call them as needed. Please do not hesitate to

call the teachers if you have any questions about your child. Call the main office number and ask to contact your child's teacher. If any difficulties or concerns about your child arise or your child's development, the teacher will be sure to contact you individually to talk and make any plans necessary. If your child is possibly in need of any special services, the teacher and director will help you connect with appropriate educational/community personnel. Please be sure to ask us for any information you might need. You can reach the director by email, phone or in person to get any additional information.

2. SCHEDULED CONFERENCES AND ASSESSMENTS: In November and in May, teachers and parents/guardians meet to talk about the child's development, adjustment to school, and/or topics that are of concern to you. For the November conference, we prepare a short-written Entry Assessment that is based on our HighScope curriculum model. Teachers observe children throughout the year, gather anecdotes and document children's progress for parents/guardians. The parent conference in May is also based on HighScope curriculum, with a progressive and comprehensive written assessment presented to you. Children's assessments are kept in their confidential file and may be released upon request of the parent/guardian.

Follow-up conferences are often helpful, and you are invited to request one whenever you feel the need. All teachers have office hours posted on the bulletin board. You can reach the director for any information.

3. TELEPHONE: If you would like to speak to your child's teacher on the telephone, the administrative assistant will take your message and have the teacher return your call. If you call when no one is available, voice mail will record your message for a later response.

4. PARENT INPUT: If you have a suggestion or concern about school policy, you can request a meeting or send a written statement to the director. We will be glad to consider your input.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

1. PARENT COMMITTEE: The committee organizes seminars, discussion groups, and special events for parents/guardians and children. All enrolled families are members of the committee. We welcome your ideas and encourage your active participation as a committee member in as much or as little as you can participate. Please let us know if this is something that interests you.

2. CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS: Each semester we have space for several classroom volunteers. Volunteering provides an opportunity to see the program in action, observe teaching strategies, and learn about child development. In return for a commitment helping the teachers in the classroom for one session per week, a voucher may be given which allows you to enroll in an SCS 3-credit course at Dean.

3. PARENT EVALUATIONS: In April, parents/guardians are asked to evaluate the program and make suggestions for improvement. A survey is sent to all families at that time. Your ideas and comments are valuable so please send your survey back to us. This information helps us with continuous improvement and sustaining a great program.

4. CLASSROOM VISITS: We encourage parents/guardians to visit and be part of their child's school experience from time to time. By regulation, a parent/guardian is permitted to observe his/her child in the classroom at any time, and requests for a brief visit are never declined. However, to protect children from being

overwhelmed by too many adults at one time, we ask that full-session visits be scheduled through the administrative assistant.

6. PARENT RESOURCE LIBRARY: Parents/guardians are invited to borrow child development and guidance books, magazines, and other related materials from us. The borrowing period is two weeks. Simply let us know which titles you are interested in. Also, as part of the Community and Family Engagement Program, we have access to resources that help children cope with a variety of life's difficulties. Feel free to ask about this.

7. PARENT SUPPORT: Teachers and the director are available to communicate with parents about continuity from one year to the next. Please be sure to let us know if you have any concerns you would like to discuss.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EVACUATION

1. HEALTH CARE CONSULTANT: The Health Care consultant for Dean College Children's Center is John Scannell, R.N. The consultant is responsible for reviewing the First Aid training of the staff and the general health policies of the Children's Center, as well as helping us resolve specific health care issues. All professional staff members are required to read the health care policies and to have First Aid/CPR training.

2. MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM: Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations require at the time of entrance that we have on file a record of each child showing they have received all mandated immunizations and an annual lead test if younger than 48 months. A record of a physical examination done not more than one year before the time of entrance is also required. Any child found not to have received immunizations and/or lead screening will be excluded from attending until compliance is met.

3. ILL CHILD POLICY: A child who is ill needs to be at home. We require that children not return to school until their temperature has been normal for 24 hours or until their physician has certified in writing to us that they are well. If it is a communicable disease that the CDC or other health organization has provided recommendations for, we will require all parents/guardians to follow those recommendations, for example if one week is recommended, then parents/guardians will keep their child home for one week. The program must follow exclusion policies for serious illnesses, contagious diseases, and reportable diseases in conformance with regulations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health.

Please call the main office 508.541.1598 to let us know if your child will be absent. It is important for us to hear from you if your child will not be arriving at school. We ask that you include notification to us immediately in the case of any contagious illness. In accordance with DPH recommendations, with no children's names ever disclosed, we notify parents/guardians of contagious illnesses.

If a child becomes ill while at school, we will call you or the person you have designated on the forms in your child's files. We will keep the child quiet and away from the group and under supervision until you can come for him/her.

Regulations require that written permission from the parent/guardian AND from the physician be on file if you wish us to administer medication. We will administer medication in an emergency situation. Our professional staff members are trained in Medication Administration per regulation guidelines and annual assessment of their ability to administer is performed. Trained professional staff administer medication in accordance with Individual Health Care plans written by a licensed health care practitioner with the child's parent/guardian, and with that health care practitioner's permission the parent/guardian then trains professional staff on the implementation of their child's Individual Health Care plan. One of the regulations is that the 1st dose of a medication has to be administered by parent/guardian or a licensed health care practitioner.

Our professional staff are trained and model best practices in infection control, including but not limited to using universal precautions using gloves during diapering changes, washing hands effectively and at appropriate times, monitoring and general cleaning of classroom furniture, toys, and equipment using appropriate sanitizing solution.

4. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: All Children's Center professional staff are mandated reporters and must report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). In the event of a complaint involving a charge of abuse or neglect against a staff member or anyone at the center with children: The Director will report this to DCF (Department of Children and Families) and Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) as regulated by the state mandate. The person will not be able to work with children until the investigations are complete and s/he is absolved of all charges and after time as the DEEC requires. Additionally, the Director will report this to Dean College Public Safety, to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, and to the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at Dean College.

5. MISSING CHILD POLICY:

If for any reason a teacher cannot account for a child's whereabouts, the following procedure will be followed:

- All children will be gathered into their assigned groups with their teachers.
- Attendance will be taken. Children will remain in the assigned group with their teacher until it is deemed appropriate for children to resume playing, otherwise until the missing child is found.
- The Director and Assistant Director will search the children's classroom immediately to see if the child is hiding in the classroom or in the playground.
- Public Safety will be notified immediately upon attendance count and recognition that the child is not hiding in the classroom or in the playground. Local authorities will be notified by Public Safety. Public Safety will lead a search for the missing child unless it is deemed necessary for the Local authorities to lead a search.

Once the incident is resolved, the director and teaching staff will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes. If the police are not needed, the incident will be documented on an Incident Report form and reviewed and signed by the parents. In cases where the police were contacted, the Department of Children and Families as well as the Department of Early Education and Care will be informed of the incident. Teachers will review safety rules with children.

6. FIRST AID, CPR & EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE: All professional teachers and the Director have current certification in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR. We will notify you of injuries verbally and will also write an injury report within 24 hours as regulated. In the event of a medical emergency, we will attend to the child until you arrive, or until an emergency team takes responsibility. We will contact Dean College Public Safety and/or 911 as either becomes necessary. In the case that emergency medical care is needed, a parent/guardian will be notified as immediate as possible.

7. EVACUATION PROCEDURES: Whenever we leave the school, be it for emergencies or for on-campus walks, we bring our current attendance list as well as the authorized person pick-up listing each family has indicated in their child's file. This authorized person pick-up listing is also on file with the chief of Dean Public Safety.

If an emergency (fire, natural disaster, chemical spill, severe weather) requires the evacuation of the building, the following procedures will be followed:

1. We will be notified of emergency by the alarm in our building and/or the College Emergency Notification System which is by campus tone, land lines, cell phones and email.
2. All children will be led from the building, using signed or alternative exits posted in each area of the classroom.
3. The first place of assembly is the far-right corner inside our play yard, near the Davis Thayer School, where a head count and attendance will be taken. The attendance count will be reported to the Director and Assistant Director. In the case attendance is not complete, Public Safety will be notified immediately.
4. If the duration of emergency requires removal of the children from the area, adults and children will exit the play yard and follow the walkway to the Campus Center Atrium. Children will be gathered in the Atrium, on the lower level of the Campus Center, where there are bathrooms and telephone service available.
5. If it is deemed necessary to evacuate campus, by way of example a natural disaster, the College Public Safety (in coordination with local authorities) has assigned an undisclosed place for us to bring children away from the facility. A parent/guardian will be notified as immediately as possible.
6. In the case of a prolonged power outage resulting in the prolonged loss of heat during cold weather, a parent/guardian will be notified, and school will be closed.
7. In the case of a loss of water, resulting in prolonged loss of bathroom use, a parent/guardian will be notified and school will be closed.
8. If during an emergency parents cannot reach the Children's Center at the usual telephone numbers, they can call Dean College Public Safety at 508.541.1888. Dean College Public Safety personnel have our center emergency cell number. The Director of the center carries this emergency cell phone during the hours the children are in session. Alternately, when the Director is off-site, the Assistant Director carries this cell during the hours the children are in session.

SOCIAL SERVICES / SPECIAL EDUCATION / COMMUNITY REFERRALS

Community Referrals: If any child is possibly in need of special services, the teacher or director will be certain to consult with the child's parents. If any specialist requests an individual observation of a child or intervention at school by a specialist, the child's parent/guardian will be consulted for written permission. Children found to need special education services are typically referred to the special education coordinator of the public school system in the community in which they live. If the parent/guardian gives written permission for the center to work with the public school system on their child's behalf, the director serves as the liaison to the system and coordinates the individual education plan. Sometimes parents/guardians choose to work directly with the public school system or private services on their child's behalf. We respectfully ask that reports with classroom suggestions to help your child's learning be forwarded to the center.

Health Care Consultant/Pediatrician: The Health Care consultant for Dean College Children's Center is John Scannell, R.N. The consultant is responsible for reviewing the First Aid training of the staff and the general health policies of the Children's Center, as well as helping us resolve specific health care issues. All staff members are required to read the health care policies and to have First Aid/CPR training.

Hearing: Hearing screenings should be performed routinely beginning at 6 months by the child's physician. A child with suspected hearing problems should be referred to a hearing specialist immediately

Area hearing specialists: MetroWest Ear Nose & Throat Assoc., Inc.
Milford Audiology Center

Vision: All three- and four-year-old children should have a full eye examination that includes general eye health, near and far visual acuity, and vision skills, performed by the child's physician. Children with obvious vision problems should be referred to a vision specialist immediately.

Area vision specialists: Caroline Perriello, O.D., Milford
Dr. John Hatch, Franklin

Dental: A child should first see the dentist at three years of age, or when all twenty baby teeth have come in. Food served should be nutritious and non-sticky. Parents should seek dental help immediately if a child breaks a tooth, knocks a tooth out, or complains of toothache.

Area periodontists: John Ficarelli, D.M.D, Walpole
Simon Yampolski, D.M.D, Milford

Special Education:

Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Franklin Public Schools
Franklin, MA 02038
508-528-5600

SPED Director
Medway Public School
Medway, MA 02053
508-533-6646

SPED Director
Bellingham Public Schools
Bellingham, MA 02019
508-966-0244

Coordinator of Special Educ.
Wrentham Public Schools
Wrentham, MA 02093
508-384-5430

State Agencies:

Department of Early Education and Care/Office for Child Care Services, Region 2
324 Clark Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 798-5180

Child Care Connection
100 Grove Street
Worcester, MA 01605
508-757-1503

Early Intervention Kennedy-Donovan Center - Early intervention birth to 3 - serving the towns of: Attleboro, North Attleboro, Mansfield, Norton and Foxboro - child focused groups and developmental evaluations (508-226-6035) <http://www.kdc.org/services-pages/services-early-intervention.htm>

Confidence Connection - making friends and behavioral assessment (617-964-1031)
www.confidenceconnection.org

The Friendship Network for Children -Nancy Swanberg and Alexis Ohanian – social groups for children with connection challenges (508-393-0030) http://www.networkforchildren.org/FNC_FAQ.php

Children's Hospital Boston - complete neurological evaluation (617-355-6388) <http://www.childrenshospital.org/clinicalservices/Site2132/mainpageS2132P0.html>

UMass Worcester Neurology Department – consultative and diagnostic services (508-334-2527) <http://www.umassmemorial.org/MedicalCenterIP.cfm?id=1719>

Dr Timothy Martin and Dr. Jeremy Devlin – pediatric neuropsychologists and developmental evaluations (781-551-0999 ext. 201) <http://www.cfpsych.org/mike/Developmental%20Evaluations.html>

Memorial Hospital Pawtucket - Neurodevelopmental Center - neurodevelopmental and neuropsychological assessments (401-729-6200) http://mhriweb.org/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.5044

Boston Neuropsychology – comprehensive pediatric evaluations – neurodevelopmental evaluations including play skills (877-283-7863) <http://www.bostonneuropsych.com/evaluations.html>

Integrated Center for Child Development (www.iccdpartners.org) provides neuropsychological evaluations, home and community programs for Applied Behavior Analysis, educational consultation.

Therapeutic Learning Center (781-821-9955 www.therapeuticlearningctr.com) provides comprehensive evaluations and treatment for ADHD, Autism, Social Skills Delay, Learning Disabilities, Behavioral Challenges, Speech/Language Delay, Neurological Impairment, Sensory Processing Dysfunction.

Consultations for families:

Families wishing to discuss aspects of their child's development are invited to schedule a conference. A program of action, a conference with the consultant, or a referral to a human services agency will be developed.

PERMISSION FOR PROFESSIONAL OBSERVATION

1. To provide staff with assistance in gaining more information about my child, and to plan and implement appropriate programming, I agree to permit informal classroom observation of my child,
_____, by

_____ of _____.
(professional's name) (title/affiliation of professional)

2. I agree that these records may be reviewed:

_____ Medical History in my child's file

_____ Developmental History in my child's file

_____ Developmental Evaluation in my child's file

3. I understand that no testing procedures or other interventions will be done without my permission.
4. This Permission for Observation will expire one year from signing.
5. I understand that the information gathered by this observation is confidential only to the staff of the Children's Center, the consultant named above, and to the parents of the child being observed unless otherwise agreed upon by me.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION

Dean College Children's Center reserves the right to terminate or suspend the enrollment of a child under the following circumstances:

1. It is the judgment of the professional staff, after consultation with the parents/guardian and/or resource consultants and/or the College, that the continued presence of the child constitutes a danger to the health and safety of others.
2. The Tuition Agreement is not adhered to.

In the event of a termination or suspension:

1. Parents will be notified in person or by telephone at least one week before the effective date. In the case that the presence of the child constitutes a danger to the health and safety of others, this notification of termination or suspension will be immediate.
2. Written documentation of the reasons for termination or suspension will be provided as the parent requests within one week.
3. Parent/guardian will be informed of the availability of information for other services, and this information shall be provided upon request and within one week.
4. The professional staff will prepare the child for termination or suspension from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand. It is expected that in any case, one week notice or immediate notice, the parent will prepare the child for termination or suspension from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.
5. All tuition paid beyond the one-week notice period will be refunded on a per diem basis.

In assisting the child prior to the suspension or termination:

At this juncture, the child will be assisted in the circumstances based on their age and on their developmental levels of understanding. The words and actions will be chosen carefully for the individual child.

The program will assist all children in behavior guidance to maintain health and safety of all in accordance with our behavior guidance strategies noted in this handbook. Behavior problems of a serious nature or which persist over a period of time are brought to the attention of parent/guardian for their input into the solution. It is expected that the parent/guardian will assist in clearly guiding their child in these cases. If it is the judgment of the professional staff, after consultation with the parent/guardian and/or resource consultants and/or the College, that the continued presence of the child constitutes a danger to the health and safety of others we retain the right to terminate or suspend the enrollment of the child.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF RECORDS

In accordance with Department of Early Education:

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. No information in the child's record will be released to anyone not directly related to implementing the child's program without written consent of the parent/guardian.

Dean College Children's Center will log each occasion when a copy of the information from the record is released. Dean College Children's Center will notify the parent/guardian if the record is subpoenaed, and the parent/guardian has not signed that release.

The parent/guardian will have access to the child's record during class hours and will have the right to request the addition or deletion of pertinent information. The parent/guardian has the right to request a conference to discuss any changes he/she requests. Dean College Children's Center will, within one week of the conference, render to the parent/guardian a written statement regarding the decision and the reasons therefore.

When the child is no longer in care, a parent/guardian may request a copy of their child's records. Upon request, a parent/guardian will receive a copy of their child's record within two business days of request without unreasonable cost for copies of any information contained in the child's record. When a school requests a copy of records, the request must be accompanied by parent/guardian authorization, or it will not be released.