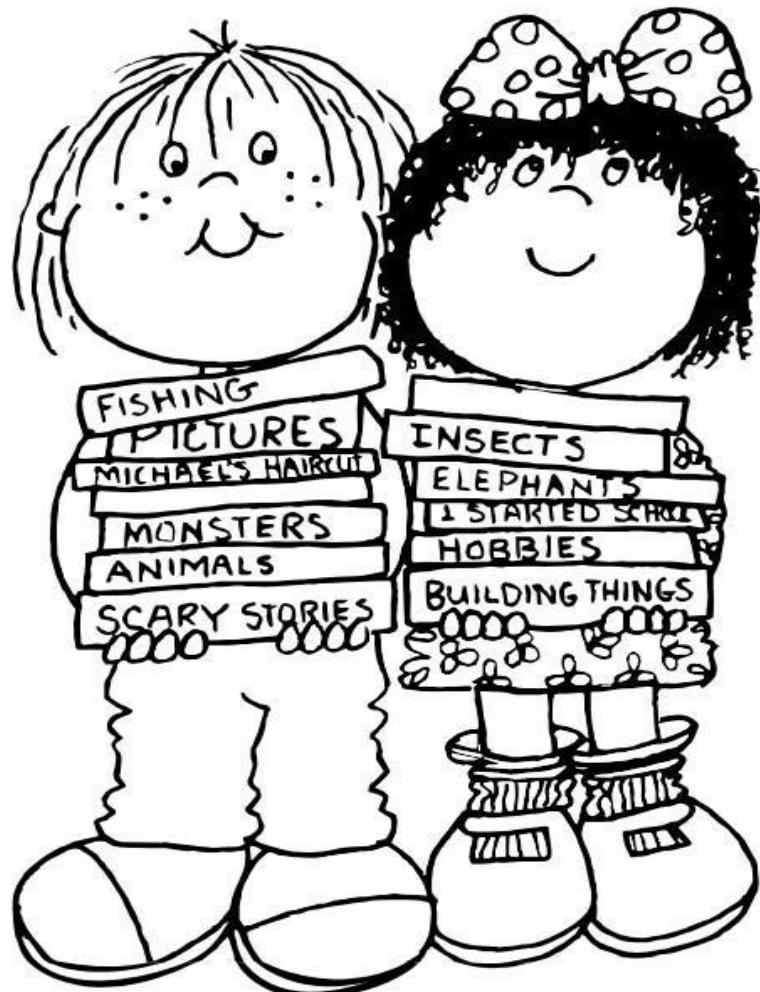




## Child Steps Preschool Parent Handbook



## Child Steps Preschool & Kindergarten Handbook

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## **Child Steps Preschool & Kindergarten Handbook**

Welcome to Child Steps Preschool and Kindergarten! Our goal is to provide a safe, secure, caring and nurturing environment for your child that fosters physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Your child's teachers are a very important part of our program. We hope to develop a partnership between home and school which will benefit the development and growth of your child.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Our development model is based on and incorporates teachings and theories of Piaget, Montessori and Erikson. Learning through a multitude of activities such as play, art, drama and music are the cornerstones of our curriculum. Children are respected as individuals in a child-oriented program. We strive to build self-esteem, confidence and independence. We recognize children develop at different rates and have different interests and abilities. By having small group sizes, we can meet the individual needs of our students. Learning and play are not limited to the classroom. We also have a large outdoor play yard and an indoor recreation area where there are opportunities to develop gross motor skills via group games, climbing toys, riding toys, playing with balls, etc.

### **HOURS**

Our sites are operational from 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM on school days.

**Before Care: 7:30 AM – 9 AM**

**Regular School Day: 9 AM – 2:45 PM**

**Morning Session: 9 AM – 11:45 AM**

**After Care: 2:45 PM – 5:30 PM**

### **TUITION**

Tuition is due the first of the month. It is the responsibility of each family to track tuition fees. We will fill out and sign any company paperwork needed for child care reimbursement. For the Havertown location, checks can be placed in the school mailbox located INSIDE the vestibule at the bottom of the stairs. Checks for both locations can also be mailed to: **Debbie Tarkin, 34 Waterford Way, Wallingford, Pa 19086**. There is a \$25.00 fee for any returned checks. If payment is not made within 10 days of the due date, a \$5.00 per diem fee will be charged. If there are extenuating circumstances where payment cannot be paid on time, please see the director for a workable payment schedule. If an account is past due with no payment or consultation with the director after a month, the parent will be asked to remove the child/children from school. Tuition is based on a 10-month commitment and includes all holidays, sick days and days missed due to vacations and/or inclement weather. There are no make-up days and we do not "switch" days, so please do not ask us to do so at any time.

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### **DISENROLLMENT**

A child may be asked to leave if tuition is not fully paid within the appropriate time mentioned previously. If a child displays aggressive behavior on a regular basis and no intervention is made, he/she could possibly be asked to leave. It is our responsibility to provide a safe school environment for all children.

### **EXTENDED HOURS POLICY**

The extended school day begins at 7:30 AM and ends at 5:30 PM. The cost is \$5 per hour. If you are dropping off your child for early care, **you must arrive no later than 8:30 AM**. Please do not use the car lane to park your car and walk your child into the building. Please park on the street in front or in the lot out back. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.**

If you pick your child up after 3 PM and they are not in extended PM Care, you will be charged \$5 per hour. We charge in half-hour increments. Any pick-ups after 5:30 PM require a **\$10 late fee which must be paid to the teacher in charge at pick-up**. Our teachers would like to go home to their families too, so please do not be late.

### **HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS**

The school is closed for Thanksgiving Day and the day after, the week of Christmas and New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Easter week and Memorial Day. In the summer, our Havertown location runs an 8-week camp program. It will be closed for one week after the last day of school, the July 4th holiday and the last two weeks before Labor Day. **Our Broomall location remains open for camp in the summer, only closing for one full week before Labor Day.** The yearly school/summer camp tuition cost includes these holidays off.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of severe weather, Child Steps in Havertown follows the Haverford Township School District's decision on whether to close school, delay opening or dismiss early. Our Broomall location follows the Marple-Newtown School District. Child Steps in Havertown utilizes a text alert system as a courtesy to parents. We will also send out an email informing you of the school's status. If there is a 2-hour delay, Child Steps will open at 9:30 AM and early care will be cancelled.

### **LUNCH BUDDY PROGRAM**

If your child only attends our morning session (9 AM-11:45 AM) and you would like them to stay for lunch, kindly let his/her teacher know that morning and bring \$5 (cash) inside a labeled envelope with your child's name on it. Pick-up time for Lunch Buddies is 1 PM and you must provide your child a lunch and beverage.

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### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

School begins at 9:00 AM **SHARP**. That is when our doors open to welcome students. A teacher will always be at the door to assist any child who needs help getting to his/her classroom. Doors lock promptly at 9:15 AM. Pick-up and drop-off take place at our main entrance doors. During regular drop-off and pick-up times, a teacher will be at the door. After hours, please ring the school door bell. **PLEASE** obey the moving car line and **DO NOT** leave your car unattended in line to walk your child into the building. Please park in the parking lot if you wish to walk your child to their class or walk into the building to pick them up. Initially, some students may be upset when saying goodbye in the morning, but when parents depart promptly, this helps children calm down and acclimate to the morning routine. If after a reasonable period of time a child is still upset, the parent will be notified. If someone other than an approved family member is to pick up a student and that individual is not already listed as an authorized pick-up, the parent must notify the school with a description of the person and a valid ID must be shown. If questionable, no child will be released to any "unknown" person.

**Should you need to pick up your child earlier than his/her scheduled time, you must sign them out on the sheet located at the top of the stairway (Havertown location).**

### **ESSENTIALS**

ALL items, including school bags, lunch bags, clothing and jackets **MUST BE LABELED** with your child's **FIRST AND LAST NAME**. Lots of children have the same bags and it does get confusing. Child Steps will not be held responsible for any lost items and we do not allow any toys from home at school. Too many prized items have been lost and this can be avoided by simply leaving personal items at home!

**ACCIDENTS HAPPEN:** Please make sure you provide an extra pair of weather-appropriate clothes (underwear, socks, pants and shirts, etc.) in a **labeled Ziploc bag with your child's first and last name on it**. These are to remain at school in the event of an accident, as they do occur. If any extra clothing is used, please be sure to bring in a replacement item the next day.

### **ABSENTEE POLICY**

We appreciate you letting us know if your children will not be in school. Kindly call the school, 610-789-9970 (Havertown) or 610-325-7099 (Broomall), in the morning to report an absence. For the Havertown location, you can also email [childstepspreschool@gmail.com](mailto:childstepspreschool@gmail.com). **There are no make-up days for absences!**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is essential in order to work together to meet the needs of each student. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We value your input.

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### **DISCIPLINE**

Sometimes we need help to redirect a student's behavior. In these instances, we will either use conflict resolution, talking to the child and if all else fails, redirect them to the "thinking chair" for quiet reflection.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Children should come to school dressed in comfortable clothing and prepared for outdoor play, weather permitting. During colder weather, we ask that they come properly attired to go outside (hat, gloves, boots, heavy coats). Proper play shoes should be worn always. We ask that children **avoid** wearing **flips flops or sandals**, as they can easily slip off.

### **POTTY TRAINING**

We ask that all children ages 3 and up be potty trained (wearing pull-ups does not mean a child is potty trained!). A potty-trained child is also capable of properly wiping/cleaning themselves. We understand some children need more time than others and we will work with you and your child on successfully going to the bathroom during the school day **if absolutely necessary.**

### **NAP/REST TIME**

Every child enrolled in our Tiny Tots classes will participate in nap time. We have sleeping cots but you must provide a thin sheet. Sleeping bags, blankets and pillows are not allowed as we do not have the storage space. You are responsible for laundering your child's sheets. If your child does not nap, they will rest on a cot and can listen stories/music on CD.

### **MEDICATION**

We will administer prescription medication if we have written parental permission. Please ask the office for a form. The medication must be in its original container with the child's name on it and the prescribing physician's written instructions and it must be given to the teacher, not left in a bookbag/backpack! We will not administer over-the-counter medications unless we have a doctor's note.

### **ALLERGIES**

**Our Havertown location is a Teal School.** This means we are nut-free, egg-free and free of any foods containing sesame. Please do not pack food for your children that contains ANY of these ingredients. If your child suffers from an allergy, please ask us for an Allergy Action Plan form so you can provide detailed information on the allergy, what symptoms your child might display and what we should do in the event your child suffers a reaction. **Our Broomall location does NOT have any food restrictions.**

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### **LUNCHES/SNACKS**

Parents are required to provide snacks and lunches. Each class has a morning snack time and lunch. All PM Care classes have afternoon snack time. Please pack and label snacks and lunch items separately so teachers know exactly what to give your child and when! We have a fridge to store any items requiring refrigeration and each classroom has a microwave. We strongly recommend sending your child in to school with a refillable cup or water bottle each day. If you pack anything that requires eating utensils, **it is YOUR responsibility to provide them!** We DO NOT keep a supply of utensils here so please make sure your child has them to eat.

### **SUPPLIES**

Child Steps provides a very safe and clean environment for your children. We appreciate donations of disinfecting wipes, hand wipes, paper towels, hand soap, tissues, toilet paper, napkins and plastic eating utensils.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We are very happy to celebrate your child's birthday in school. If you have any special plans, please discuss this with the teacher. Cookies, cupcakes and munchkins are a favorable treat but please remember Havertown is a Teal School, so be extremely mindful of ingredients.

### **EMERGENCIES**

Our staff is prepared to deal with a variety of emergency situations. In a severe or threatening emergency, the children in our Havertown location will be escorted to the church or church refectory building behind the school. In the event of an area-wide emergency, the students in our Havertown location will be escorted to the Brookline Fire Company. In the case of emergency at our Broomall facility, children will be taken to the Presbyterian Home next to the school. If any of these situations occur, you will be alerted as soon as possible.

### **ILLNESS POLICY**

We understand illness happens, especially at this age. Our goal is to keep all students and teachers safe and healthy. Sometimes it is difficult to determine when it's best to keep kids home from school. Many times, a child's symptoms make the decision a no-brainer. Other times it's not so easy. To help take the confusion out of your decision, here are a few examples of when to keep your child home:

If your child has a fever, he/she must stay home. We ask that you please respect and follow this policy. A child **must be free of fever for 24 hours without the use of medication** to be allowed to return to school. Please do not administer a fever suppressant and bring your child to school!

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### **ILLNESS POLICY (continued)**

If your child is vomiting, please do not bring them to school until your child is vomit-free for a full 24-hours. If he/she gets hurt or becomes ill at school, we will notify you and ask that you pick them up immediately. If your child becomes ill with a contagious disease (including head lice), we ask that you notify us so that we can alert other families.

#### **Other illnesses:**

- **Colds:** Colds are part of life (especially during the fall and winter months) and the decision to keep your child home sometimes may not be clear. If cold symptoms are accompanied by a fever or wheezing, it's best to keep them home and call the pediatrician.
- **Diarrhea:** When a child is experiencing an increase in stool frequency, or very loose consistency of stools, your child should be kept at home if the diarrhea cannot be contained in a pull-up (in the rare case a child is not potty trained), causes potty accidents in a potty trained child, contains blood and/or is black, results in too many pull-up/clothing changes that compromises the teacher's ability to attend to other children, and/or if your child displays other symptoms such as fever and/or is acting very ill or appears jaundiced (yellow skin/eyes).
- **Excessive coughing** that is unrelieved by cough drops or cough medicine.
- **Rash/head lice:** Frequent scratching of body or scalp, head lice or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm (unless determined to be non-communicable by a physician).
- **Pink eye:** Pink eye, or conjunctivitis, can be caused by a virus, bacteria, or even allergies. **If you notice redness, itching, discharge, and crusty eyes in the morning, please do not bring your child to school until they are evaluated by a doctor.** If the doctor determines it is bacterial (which tends to produce a yellower, stickier discharge), your child may be prescribed antibiotic drops and can usually return to school **after 24 hours**. There is no treatment for the more common viral form. It remains contagious until symptoms are no longer present. In cases of viral pink eye, we will follow the pediatrician's instructions on when a child may safely return to school. Some schools with older children (i.e. elementary, middle or high school) may have varying policies regarding pink eye; however, the younger the child, the more difficult it is to minimize the spread of germs (i.e. hand to face contact, mouthing of toys, nasal discharge, uncovered sneezing and coughing, etc.).

#### **Why 24 Hours?**

Waiting 24 hours before sending your child back to school reduces the risk of an illness spreading and allows children to get proper rest, hydration and TLC.

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

If your child is unable to participate in normal school activities (including being able to play outside), then please keep them home. If your child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care, please keep them home. Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes.

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### **ILLNESS POLICY (continued)**

In the event a child becomes ill at school and it is determined the child needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour. If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up.

### **GENERAL**

We want your child to be prepared for kindergarten and elementary school. This is why we, effective the start of the 2020-2021 school year, now require any child enrolled in junior kindergarten or kindergarten to attend school five days per week (mornings or full days). We have found that a consistent, regular schedule ensures no important lessons are missed so that each and every child can enter elementary school equipped with all the intellectual and social skills needed to shine and excel. We thank you for understanding why this change is so beneficial to all our future students.

Schedules are important: You must keep to your child's regular schedule and you cannot switch days. If you have agreed upon an arrangement with the school director, there will be no problems. We need to keep within teacher/student ratios and if days are switched, we may have issues keeping in accordance with state laws. If there is a special event happening at school (holiday parties, pancake breakfasts, student shows, etc.) and it falls on a day that is not normally your child's regular day, your child is most welcome to participate in that festivity.

Thank you for sharing your children with us at Child Steps!



Debbie Tarkin  
Havertown Director



Linda Scutzlas  
Broomall Director