



Prospect Child & Family Center

**STEPPING STONES INTEGRATED
NURSERY SCHOOL**

**Parent Handbook
2011-2012**



TEAMWORK

*COMING TOGETHER IS A
BEGINNING*

*KEEPING TOGETHER IS
PROGRESS*

*WORKING TOGETHER IS
SUCCESS*

Dear Nursery School Parents:

Welcome to Stepping Stones Nursery School Program at Prospect Child and Family Center! We are pleased to have many new students enrolled in nursery school this year, and are looking forward to the opportunities ahead.

New curriculum materials continue to be added to all classrooms, including instructional software, to reflect and support the NYS Learning Standards for pre-school students. In addition, many activities are being planned on a monthly basis for all students, which the children really look forward to.

Parents play a very important role in their child's Nursery School success. Every effort will be made to keep parents informed of classroom activities, your child's progress, and other events affecting your child's program. Parent's input and feed back are always appreciated.

The enclosed handbook provides an overview of our program, as well as specific parent information. The handbook serves as a reference and a means of encouraging communication between home and school.

We look forward to your child's participation in our integrated Nursery School Program this year. If you have any questions regarding information contained in the handbook, or about your child's program, please contact the Center.



Warmly,

*Sally Filicetti, M.S.
School Principal*

*Eileen Wells, RN, M.P.S.
Director of Programs & Professional Services*



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STEPPING STONES NURSERY SCHOOL PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Prospect Child and Family Center has been providing educational services in our community for over 40 years. The Center is licensed by the State Education Department, New York State Department of Health and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. The Center is a provider of Special Education Services, Clinic and Medical Services, Developmental Evaluations, and Nursery School. The Agency employs over 150 staff, including teachers and assistants, nurses, psychologists, therapists and administrators. These staff persons work together with the goal of providing stimulating, challenging learning experiences for all of our students.

In addition, the curriculum for all students strives to build strong positive identity through incorporation of an anti-bias approach to children's activities and interactions, in the hope of eliminating some of the stereo-types surrounding gender-typical behavior, and differences among people.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Prospect Child and Family Center Stepping Stones Nursery School provides programs for 3, 4, and 5 year old children. Innovative preschool programs are offered for children with and without disabilities. Classrooms are child focused to meet the varied needs of all children enrolled.

The program provides developmentally appropriate learning and socialization opportunities in a warm, nurturing environment. Activities emphasize language development, enriching experiences with toys, play equipment, nature, songs, art and books. Caregivers encourage social and interactive learning experiences (i.e.: sharing, helping, taking turns), strengthen attention span and participation, and teach children to think about consequences of behavior and alternative solutions to conflicts.

The Nursery School curriculum utilizes a wide range of resources appropriate for children between three and five years of age. Additionally, a variety of educationally based materials are utilized to support both structured activities and those involving discovery and free exploration. A "whole language" approach is used in the classroom that includes theme teaching. Daily lessons, art projects, stories and language activities, pre-academic tasks such as counting, letter recognition, etc. are centered around monthly themes or weekly theme topics.

STAFF

Classrooms are staffed by certified Special Education Teachers, Teaching Assistants, and Nursery School Staff. The staff to child ratio supports guided and closely supervised school experiences. A program administrator and a variety of professional consultants serve to augment the effectiveness of the overall program.

LEARNING CENTERS

A center based learning approach is incorporated to enhance development of specific skills using a “hands-on” approach throughout the Nursery School curriculum. Learning centers allow children to make choices, encourage active learning and hands-on experiences, and provide for individual learning styles. They allow children to work independently, in small groups, or one-on-one with the teachers. Centers also encourage children to learn independence, make decisions and problem solving.

Some examples of Learning Centers include:

- 1) **Manipulative (Fine Motor)/Math Center:** Through the exploration and manipulation of a variety of hands on materials, children are exposed to numbers, concepts, quantities, same and different, shapes, sorting, matching and quantifying.
- 2) **Language/Listening Center:** Includes taped and recorded stories, Language Master, flannel stories, Big Books and tapes, and a variety of auditory memory and discrimination activities to enhance listening skills, story sequence and comprehension abilities.
- 3) **Reading Center:** Readiness skills including alphabet recognition, sequencing, letter printing and beginning phonics are explored through a variety of activities and materials. A variety of children’s books are available for individual or group reading time.
- 4) **Computer Center:** Children use a variety of software programs to reinforce readiness concepts, problem solving, and skill generalization.
- 5) **Art Center:** Children are provided with the opportunities to use scissors, crayons, water paints, glue, etc. to create their own projects, in addition to group activities.
- 6) **Learning About Our World:** Beginning science and social studies are the themes here. Topics may include neighborhoods and communities, health and hygiene, animals, plants, space and environment as a beginning exploration into the world where we live.
- 7) **Creative/Sensory Play:** Areas are created in which children’s imaginative, cooperative play and language skills are enhanced through activities such as water play, play-doh, and finger paints to stimulate sensory exploration.

Special Activities/Events include:

- Hot Air Balloon
- Visit demonstration by the Queensbury Fire Dept.
- Crandall Library Story Time (monthly)
- Children’s Museum
- Dental Health & Nutrition Presentations (Warren County Public Health)
- School Pictures (Adirondack School Portraits)
- Hearth Health Presentation (Warren County Public Health)
- Moving-Up Ceremonies
- Monthly themes and activities including:
 - * Fall/Harvest/Pumpkins
 - * Families/Sharing
 - * Friendship
 - * Animals
 - * Ocean Life
 - * Celebrations
 - * Springtime



PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Early Learning/Readiness Class: This class emphasizes early learning and readiness experiences, including play and social skills, early independence, and pre-academic activities in a supportive environment.

Offered two, three or five mornings per week

9:00-11:30am

Children must be three by November 1st.

Transition Class: This class incorporates kindergarten readiness skills including concept development, independent play, learning stations and hands-on activities. Emphasis is also on developing survival skills needed for success in a school setting.

This is a full time program offered Monday through Friday

8:30am-1:30pm (includes lunchtime)

Children must be four by December 1st.

TUITION

Program rates:

Classes are offered at the following monthly rates: (Rates are subject to change annually)

Part Time (9am-11:30am)

2 Days- \$40

3 Days- \$60

5 Days- \$65

Full Time (8:30am-1:30pm)

2 Days- \$80

3 Days- \$120

5 Days- \$170

Tuition: Nursery School is a tuition based program. Fees have been spread over the 10 month school year for your convenience. The first month's tuition is required at the time of enrollment in order to secure your child's placement. The tuition helps support the overall cost of the program including materials, staffing and related program costs. Monthly fees are not affected by holidays, vacations, or absence due to illnesses; **therefore the same tuition fee will be required each month regardless of your child's attendance.** Parents are asked to sign the enclosed Agreement Form, indicating they have reviewed this information regarding tuition payments and enrollment.

Tuition payments are due by the first day of each month in order to assure your child's continued enrollment in the Nursery School Program. Payments can be mailed or received at the front desk at the Main Office, with **checks payable to Prospect Child and Family Center.**

APPLICATION PROCESS

Registration includes completing an application form, emergency care, physical forms, and attending a brief orientation of the program and its goals. This provides an opportunity for parents and children to meet staff and become familiar with the classroom setting.

ARRIVALS

When dropping children off in the morning, parents are requested to leave their child in the care of the classroom teacher or classroom staff only. A parent should accompany the child into the classroom where staff is awaiting his/her arrival. Please call Center (798-0170) if you will be arriving late.

DEPARTURES

Children may be picked up from the program in the front lobby of the Main Center at their designated dismissal time. **Parents must sign off when picking up their child from Nursery School indicating the time of pickup and parent signature.** No child may leave the Center unless accompanied by the child's parent or an adult authorized by the parent. It is essential that you pick up your child at the designated dismissal time. Please call Center if you are delayed for any reason.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Nursery School will be closed whenever Prospect School is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency. Prospect School is listed under Warren County closings, and will be announced as Prospect School or Prospect Child and Family Center, beginning at 6:00am. A complete and updated list of local stations will be sent home in early fall.

COMMUNICATION

In order for your child to receive the maximum benefit from Nursery School, regular communication between parents and staff is essential. Parents should feel free to communicate any necessary information with the teacher or administrative staff. Written communication is also encouraged. Notes can be an effective means of communication to all staff, and can help to avoid the pitfalls of verbal communication during the busy openings and closing routines. Individual parent conferences should be scheduled to discuss your child's program and progress.

Parents will also receive regular written communication showing activities your child has completed, as well as upcoming activities/events planned for the month. Parents will be requested to participate in completing questionnaires, and/or interviews at various times throughout the year, in order to gain consumer input which will enable the most complete services to be provided to our families.

ON-SITE OBSERVATIONS

The Prospect Child and Family Center welcomes and encourages parents to observe the classroom during the school year. An observation booth is accessible to parents during program times. We encourage parents to call and/or visit at any time during the school year.

Upon entering the building, all visitors are asked to report to the receptionist and sign in at the front desk. Relatives are welcome, but must be observing at parent request. Classrooms do not receive notification that parents or visitors are observing.

SNACK/LUNCH

Parents are welcome to send in a daily snack with their child. Prospect School also participates daily in a federally sponsored meal program for students, through the Hudson Falls School District. Enrollment is voluntary and further information is available to parents. Monthly menus and sign-up sheets will also be sent home with your child. Children attending nursery school may participate in the breakfast and lunch program.

If choosing to send in a snack or packed lunch, parents are reminded that food items must be sent in from home in proper containers to preserve items. **We do not have the kitchen facilities to heat, store or prepare textures for foods** (refrigeration is available). Parents are asked to notify Center if your child has any food allergies or sensitivities, or other special diet needs.

Please note: Prospect Child & Family Center is a PEANUT FREE facility. Any food that is brought into this facility must be free of peanuts, peanut butter, and peanut oil. All food items offered through the meal program are peanut free. Please contact the Director of Health Services if you have questions about acceptable food to send in for your child's breakfast and lunch.



STUDENT DRESS CODE:

Comfortable play clothes! Activities may include painting or other art projects. Be aware certain paints, though described as washable, may be difficult to remove from certain fabrics. Please keep this in mind when selecting clothing. Coats, hats, boots, etc. **must be labeled** with the child's name. **A complete extra set of clothing should be left at school or sent back and forth in your child's bag each day, also labeled.** Diapers and training pants (when applicable) should be sent on a regular basis, if needed. **All students should wear closed toed shoes in school (i.e. sneakers) unless therapeutically or orthopedically indicated. Sandals, crocs or flip flops are not considered safe footwear for daily activities in the classroom and outdoors, even in warm weather.**

Student safety, comfort and respect are a primary focus in the classroom. Therefore parents are asked not to send their child to school in clothing that constitutes a safety concern, or that may be offensive to others in any way.

In addition, children are required to be dressed appropriately in order to participate in outdoor play during the winter months. This includes winter coat, hat, gloves, boots, and snow pants for playing in the snow. Please check with your child's teacher regarding the frequency of outside play.

Due to allergic reactions of many of our students and staff, parents are to refrain from sending their child to school with perfume, cologne or scented lotions.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES/STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

The Education program at Prospect School, including the Nursery School Program has replaced the more traditional celebrations of holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, and Easter with celebrations that emphasize cultural themes, i.e., pumpkins vs. Jack-O-Lanterns, trees vs. Christmas Trees, as well as an increased focus on seasonal celebrations. This approach to holiday celebrations better meets the needs and respects the diversity of our student population.

Every student will be acknowledged in the classroom on his/her birthday, unless a parental restriction has been made. A birthday certificate will be presented to the birthday “celebrity” and the “Happy Birthday” song sung by classmates.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS:

With parental permission, each student will be acknowledged in the classroom on his/her birthday. A birthday certificate, (also birthday crown and sticker, when appropriate), will be presented to the birthday “celebrity”. “Happy Birthday” will be sung by classmates. However, due to multiple allergies and variations in food tolerance of our students, no foods may be sent in from home for classroom celebrations. Therefore, a special “birthday treat” will also be provided by school in honor of the birthday student. Celebrations will generally be scheduled for approximately 20 minutes.

Special classroom activities are planned throughout the year in conjunction with weekly or seasonal themes. Examples last year included visits from the local Fire Department, Crandall Library, picnics, and other events. Parents will be notified ahead of upcoming special events.

PARENT CONFERENCES/PROGRESS REPORTS

Conferences are scheduled periodically throughout the year. Parents may arrange to meet in addition to scheduled conferences at any time. A checklist will be completed two times per year that includes progress in a number of age appropriate areas for three, four and five year old children. This will be used as a basis for parent conferences regarding your child’s development and nursery school experiences.

PARENT PROGRAMS

Periodic presentations of special topics in areas such as language development, behavior management, and other areas of interest may be offered to parents during the school year. Parents will be notified of dates and times.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Our Nursery School Program, in accordance with the Agency philosophy, is committed to creating an environment that is conducive to developing behaviors in all children. Extensive staff training and clear policies exist to facilitate this commitment. Parents are informed of specialized behavior management techniques that may be utilized on an individual basis. Our Agency mandates that the care and management of the child be conducted in a manner which ensures their well being and dignity. No physical punishment, derogatory verbalizations, or physical restraint will be used within our school programs. In addition, parents will be notified if there are any concerns re: their child’s behavior within the nursery school setting.

Some of the approaches used in classroom management that help students develop self-discipline include:

- Stating rules in a simple positive manner
- Offering choices
- Recognizing positive behaviors
- Reminding children to use their words to express feelings instead of physical/reacting (i.e. hitting).
- Redirecting the child to another activity

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE

Prospect School implements a wide range of practices to promote and support the responsible behavior of its students. These practices support positive approaches within a safe environment where students are provided opportunities to develop internal controls and coping skills, at the same time ensuring the student's well being and dignity.

It is the responsibility of every student, and staff member of Prospect Child & Family Center to maintain an orderly environment, conducive to learning and respectful of the rights of others. Student behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment include: potentially harmful towards self or other, and verbal abuse (ex. swearing).

Every effort is made to consider alternative interventions before removal or suspension of a student. This includes analysis of the behaviors in question including review of other issues that may be influencing a student's behavior, i.e.: health, changes within the family, sleep disturbance, etc.

In light of the above, however, a student's problematic behavior will warrant further action including possible suspension from school when the following occurs:

1. A student acts in a threatening manner, either verbally or physically, toward staff or other students.
2. A student's behavior poses a danger to others or self.
3. The student carries a weapon to school or to a school function. No student shall have in his or her possession upon school premises any object which is not necessary for school activities and which could be used as a weapon. A weapon is defined as any explosive device or any other instrument capable of inflicting bodily harm (ex. knife, dart gun, toy swords, etc.)
4. The student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or a controlled substance at school.
5. A student acting in such a way as to interfere or disrupt the well-being of other students.

A written parent notice will be sent, along with a phone call, regarding the reason for removal.

HEALTH

School Health Staff- A registered nurse is always on the premises during the school day.

Physicals/Immunizations-All children must have an initial physical completed prior to enrollment. Yearly physicals and updated immunizations are required for all children in the preschool program as well. School physicals are available through the Center by Guy Lehine, MD, Medical Director, by appointment.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

1. Children must be free from any contagious or communicable disease to attend Prospect Nursery School.
2. If your child should become ill while in school or an emergency arises, every effort will be made to contact a parent immediately. It is therefore essential that we have both a home phone number, daytime work number, and the phone number of a nearby relative or neighbor who may be contacted.
3. No child may attend Nursery School with an undiagnosed rash.
4. No child should return to Nursery School until free from temperature elevation, stomach and/or bowel upsets for 24 hours, unless it is allergy related, due to medication or diet.
5. If your child is absent with a contagious or communicable disease, parents may be requested to submit a signed statement from the physician indicating the date that your child may return to Nursery School.
6. Due to the allergic reactions in many of the children, it is requested that caretakers refrain from sending their children to school with perfumes or scented lotions.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR NURSERY SCHOOL

1. **Do** remember to sign out daily at the front desk when picking up your child from Nursery School.
2. **Do** have your child wear comfortable play clothes and sneakers/closed toed shoes to Nursery School.
3. **Do** send a note if someone other than a parent is going to pick up your child at dismissal. Your child will not be released to another adult without confirmation and identification.
4. **Do not** leave your child alone in the parking lot or lobby. Please escort your child to the classroom.
5. **Do** remember Prospect Child & Family Center is a “peanut free” facility.
6. **Do** celebrate birthdays.
7. **Do** send in one complete change of clothes (top, pants, and underclothes) labeled in a shoe box with the child’s name clearly noted on the end.
8. **Do** make sure that all sweaters, hats, coats, and other clothing your child wears to school are clearly labeled. This includes boots, mittens, and scarves also.
9. **Do** plan on phoning in the morning if your child will be absent that day.
10. **Do** feel free to observe your child’s program whenever you wish.

PARENT AGREEMENT STATEMENT

Stepping Stones Nursery School is a tuition based program, and fees have been spread over the 10 month school year for your convenience. The tuition helps support the overall cost of the program including materials, staffing and related program costs. Monthly fees are not affected by holidays, vacations, or absence due to illness; **therefore the same tuition fee will be required each month regardless of your child's attendance.**

Tuition payments are due by the first day of each month in order to assure your child's continued enrollment in the Nursery School Program. **Failure to make timely monthly payments will jeopardize your child's enrollment.** Please sign below, and return with the registration materials.

I have reviewed and understand the policy regarding the Nursery School Tuition Payments as stated above.

Parent Signature

Date