



Rainbow Connection Child Care Center Parent's Handbook 2009/2010

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Purpose

The purpose of Rainbow Connection Child Care Center is to provide needed care, protection, and continuous developmental education experiences to the families employed by the Nanuet Mall, as well as the entire Rockland community.

Hours and Days Available

The center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday 52 weeks a year.

The center is closed on holidays observed by the YMCA, one day for staff training, as well as on days when there is a weather emergency.

Enrollment Priorities

Rainbow Connection Child Care Center will give priority first to full-time enrollers and then to part-time enrollers.

Program Policy

Rainbow Connection Child Care Center is part of the Rockland County YMCA, a nonprofit organization serving area families. We provide quality programs to children between 18 months and 5 years from diverse economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Our purpose is to promote the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of the individual child. At the same time, we will help to build a strong sense of self-esteem and a healthy outlook on school in particular and on life in general.

The rooms are play-centered environments with a wide range of materials and developmentally- appropriate activities designed to allow each child the opportunity to explore, create, experiment, discover, invent, manipulate, unfold, and make choices, according to their individual interests and needs. Each day your child will be presented with an array of new ideas and experiences to choose from. Our teachers, trained in child growth and development, will gently and warmly guide him or her. In this way, we can promise your child a year full of fun and active learning. Ours is an individualized program within the group setting. Activities are planned daily to reflect all areas of each child's development:

Large motor skills: climbing, jumping, crawling, throwing, lifting, riding, building, creative movement, and group games.

Fine motor skills: eye-hand coordination, dumping, pouring, manipulating, lacing, constructing, stringing, drawing, painting, sewing, cutting, pasting.

Sensory: activities that enhance the senses. Water and sand play, cooking, rhythm games

Intellectual activity: exploration of concepts such as size, shape, color, weight, problem- solving with games and puzzles, learning about cause and effect, expanding knowledge through stories and songs, fostering creativity with “open- ended” materials (blocks, art supplies, etc.).

Language arts: listening to language patterns in stories, songs and rhythms, labeling and naming of objects and events, building communication skills through dramatic play and group games, opportunities to express self as well as listen to others, story making.

Social and emotional development: development of self-help skills, development of self-esteem through mastering materials and positive social interactions, learning about social roles and concepts through stories and dramatic play, development of constructive communication skills through role-modeling and guidance.

Small group skills: time set aside for teachers to work with children in small groups on simple tasks that match the child’s developmental abilities, including classification, seriation, spatial relations, visceral and auditory discrimination and memory, motor skills, creative expression, etc.

FORMS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION

WE MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING FORMS ON FILE IN ORDER FOR YOUR CHILD TO ATTEND RAINBOW CONNECTION CHILD CARE CENTER. FAILURE TO RETURN THESE TO THE DIRECTOR WILL RESULT IN YOUR CHILD'S INABILITY TO ATTEND THE CENTER!

WE MUST RECEIVE ALL FORMS ONE WEEK BEFORE STARTING DATE.

Physical Exam and Immunization History Form

The regulations of the State of New York require that your child be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, and mumps, and also be immunized with HibTITER[®] vaccine.

Physical examinations and all immunizations must have been done within thirty days before admission.

A medical form is included in the enrollment packet. This form **MUST BE SIGNED BY A PHYSICIAN** with the date of the physical examination, immunizations, findings, and recommendations. Physical examinations must be submitted annually thereafter. In order to keep our records current, we require notification of dates and types of immunizations your child receives.

This form must be redone each year.

Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization Form

This form **MUST BE NOTORIZED**. This form enables your child to be treated medically. Without it, emergency staff would have to await your arrival to proceed, which could be life threatening in certain circumstances. Of course, before using this, every effort will be made to contact you or any emergency contacts named by you. However, if we are unable to reach anyone with authority over the child, this form becomes necessary. In the event of nonserious injury, we would await your arrival before proceeding with any medical treatment. Please refer to the section on illness and injury.

Emergency Contact Numbers Form

You must provide us with at least **THREE EMERGENCY CONTACTS**. Please make sure these contacts are aware that they are on the list. Also, make sure they are able to respond, i.e., they have a car, are physically and mentally capable of picking up your child, and understand how to proceed in an emergency. These numbers will be used if your child becomes ill or injured or if it is late and no one has picked up your child. We will contact the parent(s) first and proceed through the list in order. Please refer to the sections on arrival and dismissal, and on illness and injury.

Authorized Persons for Pick-Up Form

Place your name first on the list and follow with any capable persons whom you would allow to pick up your child. Make sure those listed as emergency contacts on the above form are also listed on this form.

THE CENTER WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE FOR WHOM WE HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN WRITTEN PERMISSION BY THE PARENT TO DO SO.

THE CENTER WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE WHO IS INEBRIATED OR OTHERWISE INCAPABLE OF CONDUCTING THE CHILD HOME SAFELY.

THE CENTER WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE UNDER THE AGE OF 12.

HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES

Administration of Medications

Under the provision of the New York State Education Law, persons in day care centers can dispense prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications to children **ONLY ON THE WRITTEN ORDER OF A PHYSICIAN**, a copy of which must be on file at the center.

In addition, Center staff must receive a signed letter from the parent for both over-the-counter and prescription medications, stating that the Rainbow Connection Child Care Center is permitted to administer the specific medication to that particular child in the manner specified.

Medication must arrive in its original container with directions. Prescribed medication must have the original label with the child's name and directions on the container.

Illness and Injury

Your child will not be able to get the most from her day if she isn't feeling well. Also, one sick child in a classroom can lead to an epidemic. Please **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL WITH:**

- diarrhea
- heavy cough
- severe cold
- upset stomach
- discolored discharge from the nose
- rash
- complaint of unusual pain
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- fever

A child must be without fever, diarrhea, or an upset stomach, or an antibiotic treatment for 24 hours before he/she may return to the program. Any child requiring a throat culture should stay home until the results are known.

If your child contracts a contagious disease (e.g., chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc.) please let the teacher know as soon as possible so that we may send a letter home to the other parents.

Please keep in mind that if your child is well enough to be at the Center, she is well enough to participate in all of the activities offered. Please do not ask for your child to remain indoors or napping since we have neither the staff nor the facilities to accommodate such requests.

Please call to let us know if your child will be absent.

In the Event Your Child Becomes Ill At the Center

A registered nurse visits the Center periodically to ensure the health and safety of the children.

Should your child become ill while attending the program, we will call you and/or your emergency contacts in their listed order, and ask that someone come to pick him or her up. Please have alternate plans ready in case a situation as this does occur.

If a child becomes seriously injured or ill while at the Center, an ambulance will be called to take the child to Nyack Hospital (unless parents have specified an alternate hospital). The parents will be called and asked to meet us there. If a child is less seriously injured, the parents will be called immediately and together the Head Teacher and parents will decide how to proceed. If a child receives a minor injury, he/she will be treated by the staff and the adult picking up the child will be informed of the injury when they arrive.

ENROLLMENT

Placement of children on our master enrollment roster is based on the date an application form is received. The roster is in place with the understanding that children highest on the roster will be offered placement. When a child on the roster becomes eligible for placement and the parent wishes to refuse but requests future placement, the child's name will be put on the bottom of the roster. A numerical standing will not be given out.

All eligible children who are currently enrolled will be given preference according to birth date for moving into the next age group when openings are available. If there is no space, the child will remain in the existing placement until an opening is available. If there are extenuating circumstances, however, the ultimate decision rests with the Head Teacher.

TERMS OF PAYMENT

Tuition is based on enrollment and not on attendance. The Center operates 52 weeks of the year and the program fee is divided into 52 equal payments. To retain a position, fees are due and payable even if a child is absent from the Center regardless of the reason for absence, including vacation, illness, or leave of absence.

Upon enrollment, R.C.C.C.C. will receive two weeks tuition as a deposit. This will be held until your child finishes the program, and will be applied to the child's last two weeks.

Late Payments

Payments are due for each week by the Thursday of that week. The operation of the Center requires that payments be made on time. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for any account that is received after that Thursday. Exceptions to this will be made only upon the consent of the Director. Families whose payments fall behind by more than 30 days will forfeit their placement in the Center.

Returned Checks

If a check used for payment is returned for any reason, YMCA policy is to NOT REDEPOSIT. We will require replacement in cash or with a money order, and a returned check fee of \$35.00. After a second returned check, all subsequent tuition payments must be made in cash or with a money order.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Center will be open five days a week Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for the entire calendar year, except for those days officially designated by the YMCA as holidays and one day per year used for staff training.

Schedule of an Average Day:

Morning

7:00-8:30-Arrival-Free Play

8:30-9:15-Art or other activities

9:15-9:45-Bathroom and snack

9:45-10:45-Group circle time.

Music. Songs.

10:45-11:00-Transition. Dressing.

Outdoor play

11:00-11:20-Bathrooming.

11:20-11:45-Lunch.

Afternoon

11:45-3:00-Story Time. Nap.

3:00-3:30-Bathroom & Snack.

3:30-4:30-Outdoor play.

4:30-5:30-Free play.

OVERVIEW OF SCHEDULE

Free Play

After the parent departs, the child selects activity from the various learning centers, taking his own initiative. When given this freedom, he/she is more likely to choose an activity that is age-appropriate, and his interest and motivation will be high so that his learning potential is great. The teacher's role now is to extend and guide his play by expressing an active interest and asking questions that are challenging.

Clean-Up Time

Children are given a five-minute warning to give them a chance to complete their activity and prepare for a transition. Even the youngest child is encouraged to clean up, although no one will be punished or shamed for nonparticipation. Teachers emphasize cooperation, and use singing, conversation and learning games to make it a positive experience.

Teacher-Initiated Activities

These are special activities designed for small group participation and are planned by the teacher, who will use the interests and abilities of the children as a guideline. In our art activities, we try to focus for the most part on the process rather than the product, and provide the children with open-ended exploration of a wide variety of media. Other activities include science activities, music activities, and activities that enhance hand-eye coordination.

Large Motor Play

The outdoors will provide space for climbing, digging, neighborhood walks and running. The children may go outside every day unless it is either raining or very cold.

If a child is well enough to attend the program, she is well enough to participate in the program and go outside. Please do not ask to have your child remain indoors-we do not have the extra staff to accommodate such requests.

Please send appropriate outdoor clothing for your child that can be used with as little assistance from an adult as possible. In the winter, we prefer bib-like snowpants, snowsuits, over the foot snow boots,

and two pairs of mittens. Please bring all winter clothing in daily from November through March. Please label all outdoor clothing with the child's first name and last initial.

In the classroom, there will be creative movement activities.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL AND LATE PICK-UP

Arrival

Parents are required to sign their child in at arrival time. Accompany your child to his/her classroom.

If your child is newly enrolled, please be prepared to spend some time with him/her in the classroom.

Dismissal

Parents are required to go to the child's room, sign their child out, and dress their child in his/her outer clothing for dismissal.

For the safety of your child, s/he will be released only to persons whose names have been placed on the Pick-up Authorization form that you have signed. Please refer to the section concerning forms.

Late Pick-Up Policy and Fines

Rainbow Connection Child Care Center has the following policy concerning the late pick-up of a child:

When a child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m., the parents and emergency contacts will be called in order indicated on the emergency form. At the same time, the following fines will be levied:

The first time a child is not picked up by 6:00:
a grace period of 5 minutes will be given
between 6 and 15 minutes late will result in a fine of \$10
between 16 and 30 minutes late will result in a fine of \$20
between 31 and 45 minutes late will result in a fine of \$30
between 46 and 60 minutes late will result in a fine of \$40

The second time a child is not picked up by 6:00:
between 5 and 15 minutes late will result in a fine of \$ 20
between 16 and 30 minutes late will result in a fine of \$30
between 31 and 45 minutes late will result in a fine of \$40

between 46 and 60 minutes late will result in a fine of
\$50

After 60 minutes, the police will be notified.

When a child is picked up late, it is inconvenient to staff, hurtful to the child, and illegal for the program to care for any child for longer than the program runs.

**IF THERE ARE THREE OFFENSES, THE CHILD'S ENROLLMENT
WILL BE TERMINATED.**

Please plan for traffic and weather. If on occasion when you know that you will be late, make arrangements with a friend or relative listed on the Pick-up Authorization Form to pick up your child. And remember to let us know of your plans.

CLOSINGS

If the Nanuet School District closes or delays opening due to severe weather, we may also close or open on a delay, depending on the weather prediction.

In any case, please listen to WHUD 100.7 FM for an announcement.

If weather conditions or another emergency necessitates the closing of Rainbow Connection Child Care Center during the course of the day, parents or the designated alternate emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up their children immediately.

Payment is expected in full for days that the Center is closed, delayed, or closed early due to extreme weather conditions.

LUNCHESES AND SNACKS

Well-balanced lunches complete with dessert are served daily to the children. A mid-morning snack and a late afternoon snack will be provided to children as well. A New York State licensed nutritionist approves all lunches and snacks.

All children will eat, both for snack and lunch, “family style” at a table with at least one staff person sitting with them. Children will be encouraged to serve themselves, as it is developmentally appropriate, in order to further encourage independence. Children will not be forced to eat.

Snack and lunchtime are a part of the educational program. We will be discussing food sources, nutrition, colors, textures, tastes, etc. The children will be given the opportunity to prepare their own foods through cooking projects on a regular basis.

Under no circumstances will any child be allowed to bring candy or gum into the program.

DISCIPLINE

Rainbow Connection Child Care Center's approach to guidance is a positive one, which encourages self-control, self-esteem, and cooperation.

Consistent, clearly defined rules are given which assist in the smooth, healthy functioning of the class. Since children lack experience in expressing their feelings constructively and resolving conflict, we show and encourage them to express anger, sadness, frustration, and other emotions through words. We do not permit hitting, pushing, biting, or any other acts or threats of physical aggression by both adults and children. When a child displays such behavior, we acknowledge her right to feel mad, frustrated, or upset, and gently remind her that we use our words not our hands, and show the child better ways to accomplish her goal, or ask the child to show us a better way (e.g., asking to share, telling another child to stop bothering her, etc.). At times, it may be necessary to separate a child from the group if her behavior continues to be unacceptable. What this means is having the child sit in a chair in the same room as the rest of the children, but separate from them, for just a few minutes (the general rule is one minute for each year of the child's age). If a child does not respond to such feedback after repeated incidents, we may need to call a Parent- Teacher conference to discuss the child's behavior and possible resolutions.

IF AN UNSAFE BEHAVIOR (E.G., BITING) IS NOT RESOLVED WITHIN A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TIME (AS DETERMINED BY THE STAFF) THE PARENT WILL BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW THE CHILD (refer to section on Withdrawal).

Teachers will avoid the use of competitive situations, comparative remarks, threats, shaming, or labeling. At no time will hitting, spanking, shaking, or slapping be used, nor will any child be confined to an enclosed area.

The best motivation for encouraging positive behavior is modeling, praise, high expectations, and the child's own inward satisfaction.

TOILETING PROCEDURES

Toddlers do not have to be toilet-trained. They will each be changed as needed. Our staff will support you in training your child when the time comes. Please speak with us concerning how and when you plan to proceed. Training will be most effective when there is consistency between home and Center.

Children who are trained will have access to the bathroom as needed. They will be required to wash their hands after using the toilet each time. We also Encourage the children to use the toilet at regular times such as before meals and snack and before and after outdoor play. Once a child is using the toilet, we are not allowed to assist him/her with personal hygiene- the child must clean him/herself. Otherwise, children will be assisted as needed, but please try to dress them with independence in mind.

If a child wets or soils his clothes, he will be gently directed to try again. Clothes will be immediately changed. The teacher will explain in a non-threatening way that “accidents happen to everyone”, it is not a big deal, but that when he does feel the need to go, he should tell the teacher or just go straight to the bathroom and not wait too long. A child will never be treated in a derogatory or negative way by the staff. Please provide a seasonal change of clothes in case of such accidents.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

An initial deposit of two weeks tuition is necessary at registration in order to guarantee placement at the Center. This deposit will be applied to your child's final two weeks attending the Center.

Each weeks tuition is payable by Thursday of the week. Failure to keep payments current to within two weeks will result in a \$10 late payment fee. Failure to keep payments current to within four weeks will result in the immediate withdrawal of your child from the Center.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Voluntary Withdrawal

To voluntarily withdraw your child you must give two weeks notice. Your initial deposit will be used to pay the tuition for the last two weeks. Payment is still required for a full period of the week you give notice even if your child is withdrawn before the end of the final week. This practice will enable us to fill the vacancy immediately, thereby giving another child the opportunity for quality care. Failure to give two weeks notice will forfeit your deposit.

Administrative Withdrawal

If the director, head teacher, or teacher of the Center determines that a child is unsuited for the center's environment, the parents will be consulted. Within one week of this meeting, the child will be withdrawn and all agreements will be terminated. Rainbow Connection Child Care Center can, in these instances, refer the parent to outside agencies which may more appropriate for that child.

Withdrawal Due to Nonpayment of Tuition

A child may also be discharged from the Center for nonpayment of tuition. Failure to keep payments current to within four weeks will result in the immediate withdrawal of your child from the Center.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing, which can take splatters from paint, dirt, and glue. Do not dress your child in special clothes that you want kept clean - they can't be if s/he is expected to participate fully in our program. While we do use smocks, they don't always completely protect the clothes, and the children will play outside.

THE YMCA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CLOTHING SOILED BY THE CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN OUR PROGRAMS.

Please make sure clothes are easy to get on and off. We encourage independence in the children, and the teachers often can't get to the buttons and buckles in time to get to the toilet.

Please make sure shoes are safe, and slip-proof. Rubber soles are a plus. Sandals should not be worn. The children will be running, hopping, skipping, jumping, and climbing and we want them to be able to do so safely.

Please label all outerwear to prevent loss and confusion.

Please do not let your child wear valuable jewelry since it can get lost or broken. Do not let your child wear dangling earrings or necklaces since they can get caught on climbing apparatus. Please bring extra clothes, labeled, in case of a spill or other accident.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Please do not bring in toy weapons, superheros, action figures, or other toys, which can lead to aggressive play.

We always welcome you to bring books, and tapes from home to share with the group. Please label these with the child's name.

THE YMCA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOST OR BROKEN PERSONAL ITEMS.

BIRTHDAYS

We invite you to share your child's birthday with his class by providing a snack. It isn't necessary, but some parents in the past provided cups, plates, and napkins as well. Your child will be given a birthday crown made by the teachers, and we will light a candle and sing "Happy Birthday".

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We recommend each parent becomes involved in his child's experience at the Center to the best of his/her ability. It makes the child's transition into school easier, and parental involvement has been shown to parallel success by the child in school.

PARENT TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Conferences are held twice each year. This is a brief meeting to discuss the program, your child's progress, and future goals. Please bring with you any questions or concerns you may have about the program or your child. Conferences may be scheduled at other times if the parents or teachers feel it is necessary or desirable.

For all programs, some of our most valuable communication concerning a child comes at drop-off and pick-up times. Please feel free to express concerns, ask questions, comment, or let us know of any changes anytime. If there are ANY happenings at home, please let the teacher know so that any changes in your child's behavior can be dealt with appropriately. We can be of immense help. Even what an adult is considered a change for the better (e.g. a new bed, a visit from grandma, ect.) can result in a difference in behavior, which can surprise and perplex the staff if we don't know why it is occurring.

NOTICES

Occasional newsletters and notices will be sent home with your child. Please take the time to read these so you do not miss special activities and events. Remember- if it wasn't important, we wouldn't bother taking the time to write a notice to you about it.

EQUIPMENT AND PROGRAM DONATIONS

We use a variety of throw-away items in our dramatic play and for art projects. Please keep us in mind before you throw something away, especially in consideration of the environment.

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| old phones | cameras | calculators |
| hats | paper | stickers |
| plastic containers | coffee cans | spray bottles |
| fruit baskets | acorns | beans |
| beads | buttons | baby food jars |
| cardboard | cotton balls | corks |
| carpet remnants/padding | dice | doilies |
| jewelry | egg cartons | funnels |
| felt and fabric | gloves and mittens | garland |
| wood | x-rays | zippers |
| greeting cards | styrofoam trays | nails |
| newspaper | oatmeal boxes | pie pans |
| ribbons and rick rack | roll-on deodorant | jars |
| screws | string | stamps |
| seeds | spice jars | spools |
| shells | paper towel and toilet paper rolls | |
| tins | utensils | washers |
| uniforms and other clothes | velvet | wallpaper scraps |
| wigs | wool | yarn |
| old toys no longer wanted | | |

LET US BE YOUR FRIENDLY RECYCLING CENTER!

CLOSING DATES

Rainbow Connection will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

We close one day each year for staff training (given with one month's notice). We may choose to close on the following days, with two weeks notice:

- Columbus Day
- New Year's Eve
- President's Day