

Parent Handbook*

**The Children's School of Boise,
Inc.**

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**Revised 2018. A signature is required for each family with a child enrolled in The Children's School acknowledging that you have received, read, and understand this parent handbook.*

**THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OF BOISE, INC.
PARENT HANDBOOK (REVISED 2014)**

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THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OF BOISE, INC.

I. Welcome

Welcome to The Children's School!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide families a quick reference to the school's philosophy, goals, curriculum, policies, and procedures. This handbook reflects our commitment to 1) the growth, development, and needs of young children, 2) the understanding and involvement of families, and 3) the importance of school and home communication.

The Children's School families reflect our belief in diversity. Families bring varying backgrounds--socio-economic, racial and religious--but a common commitment to ensuring all children's optimal growth and learning.

The Children's School of Boise, Inc. admits and welcomes children from all families, without discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religious beliefs, family configuration or disability which can be reasonably accommodated (*adopted by TCS Board of Directors, November 1994*).

PHILOSOPHY

The Children's School of Boise is an independent, non-profit institution. It was founded in 1980 for children 3 to 8 years old as an educational program which emphasizes that affective (emotional) development is equally as important as cognitive (thinking) development. Both function simultaneously to determine what is learned. This approach, known as **Developmental Interaction**, has evolved through more than 90 years of research and analysis at Bank Street College of Education in New York City. It is a coherent integration of developmental psychology, cognitive theory and educational theory and practice.

The beginning years of human development, birth to age eight, are the critical years for learning. That core sense of self--one's value and capability--is laid down early. Whether the world is seen as an intriguing and safe place is established. A good, healthy start can prevent later problems and help assure sound and effective lifetime learning.

MISSION (*revised and adopted by Board of Directors, 2001*)

The mission of The Children's School of Boise, Inc., is to enhance human development by supporting children, during their childhood years, as they experience themselves as capable learners. The school will provide a developmentally and educationally sound program for children through age 8.

In its actions, the school will serve as a community advocate for the whole and healthy development of children and families, and as a progressive educational model.

VISION *(revised through Strategic Planning and adopted by Board of Directors, 2010)*

To reach a broader community while enriching children and families' experiences in the school, and to continue our work toward creating a model environment for a model program.

GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL *(revised by Board of Directors, 2006)*

The school will create and sustain those conditions which:

- enable young CHILDREN to develop competence, individuality, effective social relationships and creativity;
- attract, develop and retain those TEACHERS who will actively reflect upon, understand and implement classroom programs which uphold our goals for children;
- help PARENTS understand the school's theoretical ideas and practice, involve them in school operations and their children's activities, and support their development as parents;
- foster the INSTITUTION'S continuity, stability and vitality;
- reflect our commitment to DIVERSITY: we seek families from different socio-economic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; we respect differences in family configuration and welcome children with disabilities. Our financial aid program supports families in need of assistance.
- encourage the larger COMMUNITY to visit and learn about this early childhood educational model; sponsor public forums on significant issues affecting young children's well being.

VISITORS

We welcome visitors at The Children's School who are interested in learning more about this educational model. University students and prospective families should call ahead and schedule a tour or a visit so that we may provide personal attention and answer individual questions.

Visitors meet with an administrator to discuss TCS philosophy and observe classrooms.

APPLICATION FEES

A one time fee of \$50.00 will be paid upon application to The Children's School. This fee is non-refundable and does not guarantee enrollment. For additional applications from families who have paid the full fee, the application fee is reduced to \$25.00 per child. The school and administrative staff are unable to waive application fees except under very specific circumstances as defined by the Board of Directors.

TUITION

The Children's School is a tuition-funded private school. We sign contracts with families annually to guarantee tuition receipts so that we may maintain our commitments as a business.

Tuition invoices are provided for families each month. Tuition payment options are part of our annual agreement with families. Tuition may be paid 1) in full by check, cash, or money order with a 3% discount by September (date to be announced) of the school year, 2) in full by credit card, 3) monthly by bank draft, or 4) monthly by credit card.

No refunds can be allowed for days missed due to travel, vacations or illness.

The Children's School relies on timely payment of tuition. Tuition is due on the 10th of each month. After the 10th the school will assess a \$75 late fee which will be due in addition to the monthly payment. If payment is in arrears The Children's School is under no obligation to maintain a child's enrollment at the beginning of the next month. However, fulfillment of the contractual agreement and continued payment of monthly tuition is expected until, and if, the child's spot can be filled. *(adopted by the TCS Board of Directors, 9-12-11)*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Children's School of Boise Inc. is a private non-profit corporation with a Board of Directors. The Board establishes and reviews basic policy for the educational philosophy, enrollment procedures, physical plant, financial health and future growth of the school. The twelve to fifteen board members are selected from the community by a nominating committee with most being alumni parents. The Board is balanced by skills in education, law, finance, psychology, and community service. A slate of officers is elected annually by the board. Board members of this working board have committee responsibility and serve a three-year term.

II. CHILDREN, CLASSROOMS, AND CURRICULUM

The Children's School sees development as a process – not as something that happens to a child, but rather as the result of the child's lively interactions in the social and physical world. Development is also affected by the interaction of emotional and cognitive experiences.

Through our actions as a school, it is our goal for children to:

- feel excited about learning and doing;
- make choices, take initiative and become increasingly self-directed and self-responsible;
- know limits in a firm but supportive and non-punitive environment;
- feel sensitive to others and enjoy working together in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition;
- enjoy the natural, outdoor world and learn to value living things;
- develop thinking skills: reasoning, inquiring, perceiving relationships, hypothesizing, generalizing, acquiring and ordering information;
- experience art, science, math, music, movement, language and social studies;
- develop meaningful writing and reading experiences and skills.

DEVELOPMENTAL-INTERACTION

A child learns best through active and independent investment of self in a stimulating environment - solving problems with other children, wondering, conferring with a teacher, expressing ideas, pretending roles, and being expressive with materials. Healthy growth is a constant flux of experiencing and connecting, making gradual sense out of life to establish one's place in it, moving towards autonomy and a meaningful personal reality.

This point of view describes the philosophy of the program at The Children's School. This educational approach, known as Developmental-Interaction, fosters individualized learning based on each child's stages of cognitive and social-emotional development. "Developmental" growth is more than just an increase in size and knowledge - it encompasses a qualitative difference as the child integrates new understanding into the wholeness of self. "Interaction" refers to the premise that children learn best through active, meaningful experiences with people, environments, things and ideas. Interaction also refers to the connection between cognitive and affective spheres of development. Thinking and feeling are inescapably intertwined. Thinking ability is affected by one's feelings.

The Developmental-Interaction approach, which has evolved throughout a century of research and experience, is firmly based in ego psychology (Freud, Erikson, Hartmann) cognitive theory (Piaget, Werner) and educational theory and practice (Dewey, Isaacs, Mitchell, and Biber).

GOALS FOR CHILDREN

We work to help children keep their spontaneity, curiosity and joy of learning. In this view, four qualities are emphasized for healthy child development.

COMPETENCE: The having of skills and the ability to use them effectively

To be able to do, make, think and move – climb, run, balance, pour, catch, draw, cut, sift, sort, fit, count, understand, reason, infer

To use language effectively

To see similarities and differences

To overcome obstacles

To be resourceful

To be resilient

To sense one's own competence

INDIVIDUALITY: The active declaration of self

To become increasingly autonomous

To feel self reliant

To make choices and develop preferences

To initiate activities

To take risks

To solve problems one's own way

To enter new experiences comfortably

To be spontaneous

To have feelings and express a range of emotions appropriately - pleasure, sadness, joy, anger, excitement, fear, affection or surprise

To cope constructively with frustrations, fears and anxieties

SOCIAL

RELATIONSHIPS: The adapting of oneself to group life

To enjoy playing with other children

To engage comfortably with adults

To accept limits

To rechannel impulses

To begin to internalize controls

To develop sensitivity to others feelings and space

To learn to see other points of view

To be openly sensitive and responsive

CREATIVITY: The synthesizing of a wide range of experiences into a variety of expressions; the reasoned as well as intuitive

- To explore materials freely
- To play heartily and with deep involvement
- To solve problems and see alternate possibilities
- To imagine
- To express innovative ideas
- To reflect broadly; hypothesize, suppose

CURRICULUM

At TCS there are three levels of curriculum.

First, there is involvement with open-ended materials or play. Play is the backbone of early childhood education. At TCS play is worthy of our closest teaching attention and we support it in happening in every classroom, from the Toddlers to the Primes. There is a period of time each day in each classroom when children are able to make choices from the open-ended materials teachers have chosen for them. Examples of open-ended materials are blocks, manipulatives, or art materials—materials that children make decisions about how they will be used. While it is easier to understand the social value of play for children, play also helps children’s cognitive understanding. Through play children create and consolidate meaning from their experiences and learn to think in increasingly abstract ways.

Second, at TCS we provide content curriculum. Teachers develop content related experiences from what they know about the children’s interest or from topics teachers know to be of value to children. When you hear of teachers planning classroom projects or experiences around bugs, zoo animals, construction, or families, they are working with children on content curriculum. Projects are deeply developed topics of study that evolve from children’s experiences together in the classroom. A project begins with teachers finding out what children know about a topic, and then quickly moves into what children want to know more about and how the class can find out what they want to know. Research—through books, trips, expert visits, classroom experiences, and discussions—makes up the heart of project work for young children. At the very youngest age, children who are learning about which ingredients go into muffins are also involved in content curriculum. At TCS the content curriculum varies between classrooms.

Third, we support skill development. With very young children the skill development part of the curriculum is self-help or material use skills. With older children skill development becomes increasingly focused on the academic areas. Skill development happens in large group meeting discussions, in individual interactions around the classroom, in small group instruction times, or in a part of the classroom set-up to emphasize a particular academic area.

Each type of curriculum is embedded within the routines and schedule of the day as well as the environment of the classroom. Through these classroom experiences teachers plan curriculum that fits with:

- 1) our goals for children (competence, individuality, social relationships, and creativity),
- 2) developmental areas (physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and language),
- 3) content areas (math, science, creative expression, social studies, literacy, health and safety, and technology), and
- 4) approach to learning.

DRESSING FOR SCHOOL

Play clothes are in order! Children need to feel relaxed, playful and comfortable getting wet or sandy. Sturdy rubber-soled, shoes are best for outdoor running and climbing.

On rainy days, send waterproof gear. In snowy winter, boots, hats, mittens and snow pants are a must.

Children often have strong preferences for what they wear. We don't mind if the colors or patterns don't match! A child's budding sense of design or comfort in wearing the favorite shirt over and over is more important. We promise to respect their individuality!

Extra clothes: send a set of labeled clothing to school for those times when a clothing change is necessary.

Please label as much of your child's clothing and footwear as possible.

TEACHERS

The teachers are experienced and committed professionals. Their first purpose is to establish trust and understanding, in order to be able to provide effective guidance. Teachers clearly define a broad framework for children in which each child may explore. They help children extend their thinking. They work to channel children's energy without stifling their spirit, keeping reasonable and clear boundaries.

Children are appreciated for their inherent urge to understand the world. Each one is respected for his/her own individual style of learning.

Teachers focus on the growing-learning process rather than on a training program. Early childhood is valued as a unique stage in human development, rather than merely as preparation for later schooling. Healthy experiences today help ensure successful later formal learning. A child who feels secure and valued, strong and capable will grow up competent and happy.

TOYS

Children often want to bring something from home to play with--especially the first days of school. It provides comfort during anxious moments. But a "home toy" can also become a habit which prevents exploring the school's carefully chosen educational materials. We do encourage children to bring natural things they find outdoors; insects, leaves, flowers, nests, stones, or shells can ignite lively talk, questions, stories, activities and sometimes, long term projects. Ask your child's teacher for guidance if you are uncertain or uncomfortable with your child's home toy needs or choices.

PETS

Pets are not allowed to visit at school except under the following conditions:

- when prior arrangements are made with the classroom teacher;
- when documentation is available showing that the pet is fully immunized and suitable for contact with children;
- when adults are available to supervise the interactions; and,
- when teachers are able to provide protection for allergic children.

OUTINGS

At TCS, outings (a term we prefer to field trips because we think the word is more descriptive and meaningful to children) are important, occasional experiences for children. They are planned when they fit with curriculum. An outing is typically planned in order for children to have a real experience with an event, a situation, a place, or an expert around a topic of study. An outing is one of several ways we provide for the content part of the curriculum at TCS; it may involve the entire class or a small group.

Outings are also a way to connect children to the routines of the school day (shopping for foods before snack preparation), to our immediate community (downtown, neighbors, foothills, government buildings, small specialty shops), or to natural processes (season changes). Outings are ways teachers observe and research life outside the school walls with children in order to enrich children's experiences in the classroom.

Parents are asked to sign a permission slip at the beginning of each school year. This permission for a child to participate in outings communicates our intent as a school to take children off the premises on occasion. Families are notified of walking trips through notes, whiteboards, or verbal communication before or after the outing. When children are transported in private vehicles or in commercial or public vehicles parents will be asked to initial the plan provided by teachers to indicate approval for their child to participate. When children are transported in vehicles, we are required to have carseats or child safety restraints provided by families for

children through age 6. Drivers must provide proof of insurance and a valid driver's license. Adult-child ratios are maintained or exceeded during outings.

III. SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

At The Children's School strong relationships and good communication are central to our school culture.

ENROLLMENT

The Children's School is committed to continued enrollment of current students, whenever possible, from ages 2-8. The following enrollment processes ensure that there is a predictable, consistent system for filling classes:

****We offer full day and part day options at the preschool level at TCS. It is anticipated that, whenever possible, children will maintain consistent peer relationships throughout the preschool years.**

****We offer programs that maximize each child's learning potential during these important early childhood years. Children learn best in dynamic, experiential settings. Our approach values the range of abilities and skills that young children bring as well as the expertise of teachers who implement an emergent curriculum that supports children's development of social play, cognitive understanding, and skill development.**

****If requests for a classroom exceed the capacity of a class or of an age level within a multi-age class, the child's original date of application to the school will be used for enrollment decisions.**

****Enrollment priority is given to current families (current students first, then siblings), then alumni families, and finally, new families, according to their original date of application.**

Our tuition assistance program supports families in need of assistance. Current families apply by mid-February for consideration for the upcoming school year. New to the school families are invited to apply anytime during the year for consideration when there is an opening in the school for their child. Applications can be submitted online at <http://sssbynais.force.com> school code #4112.

Each family on the waiting list is given two opportunities to accept an opening in the school when it is offered. Upon the second refusal by the family, the child's name remains on the waiting list, but is placed at the bottom of the list. Families who are offered an opening in the school but do not respond to the offer remain on the waiting list but go to the bottom of the list.

The Children's School communicates student/teacher ratios for each class. Under certain circumstances and under the discretion of the school director those ratios can be modified within the NAEYC accreditation standards (*adopted by TCS Board of Directors, August 2006*).

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Conflicts at this age are a natural, expected part of life with young children. Teachers intervene with calm support to assure safety, understanding, and the rudiments of self-control. They listen, acknowledge all needs or wants, then help children choose their solution. Ultimately, children learn to manage many of their own problems without relying on adult arbitration. Punitive action is avoided, as well as ridicule, sarcasm, name-calling or isolation. Limits are set and the environment is arranged to minimize the numbers of "No's". Guidance techniques are non-judgmental and supportive to preserve the child's integrity and self-esteem. A full guidance policy is posted in the coffee room.

BEING AT SCHOOL

We have expectations for children in the school that apply to classrooms, playyards, and common areas such as the halls, coffee room, and library. We need your help and cooperation in maintaining these expectations when you are here with your children before or after your child's school day, as well as for any special events held at the school.

Please help us by respecting and supporting our expectations. We have three basic schoolwide rules. It is from these three rules that adults make decisions throughout the day about which behaviors need guidance. Although they do not specifically address behaviors like running through the hall, removing branches and leaves from the landscaping, or taking books randomly from the library shelf, these rules are available to help teachers and parents make decisions about which behaviors carry potential for harm to self, others, and school materials. Our three rules are:

- *Children may not hurt people—children or adults.
- *Children may not hurt others' possessions or creations.
- *Children may not hurt animals.

Additionally, children in their parent's care must be supervised in the school library, the playyards, the hallways or in the coffee room.

Finally, teachers are unavailable to monitor children before or after class or in common areas of the school. If occasionally you are running late please let us know; it is important to us to make arrangements that are respectful of your child and your child's teacher.

The teachers and administrative staff are available to facilitate smooth and safe transitions for children coming to or leaving school. We respect your role as parent, and we see you as "in-charge" of your child during transitions. Please let us know if you need our help and support during transitions. We want this to be a successful part of the day for you and your child.

PARENTS/FAMILIES

At The Children's School parents and teachers work together for children's benefit. Educational values which are consistent with the family's values provide a coherent framework for the child's growing sense of the world. Parent involvement at school builds relationships with teachers, as well as providing insight into child development, each child's uniqueness and the school's approach to learning and growth.

Parents often contribute at school through: classroom activities, outings, parent education events, fund-raising, facility and yard work days, as parent representatives for classrooms, and as active members of Parents for TCS.

PARENTS FOR THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

The parent community is an important piece of the success of The Children's School. All parents at The Children's School are members of the Parents for The Children's School (P-TCS). One of the primary responsibilities of P-TCS is to help raise funds for school tuition assistance, specific capital improvement projects, and to develop parent, staff and community educational programs which strengthen the understanding of early childhood education. P-TCS fundraising supports the school's ability to meet long established goals, stated in Goals for the School on page 4.

Officer positions in Parents for TCS are self-nominating and consist of volunteers who have an interest in serving. Each spring and fall new-to-the-school families are invited to meet with current parents to determine officer and committee roles and interests for the upcoming school year, and to begin planning events, such as the fall carnival and spring fundraiser. In addition, each class has a parent representative who actively participates in P-TCS activities and meetings, facilitates communication with other parents in the class, encourages volunteer participation in events, and communicates with teachers.

While participation in P-TCS is voluntary, it is our hope that all families will find time to contribute to the various events and fundraisers P-TCS sponsors. We appreciate the fact that families with young children have varying amounts of time and energy to give to volunteer pursuits and there are a number of ways to be involved, both large and small.

Watch for opportunities to be involved each year. Volunteer jobs range from being an officer or class representative to smaller jobs like spending an hour or two working a carnival activity or helping set up at the other fundraisers. Ongoing opportunities to be involved are also announced on the Web site, on the hall communication board, and the Weekly Update. Whatever you choose, family contributions to the school strengthen our school community and provide an excellent opportunity to get to know other parents in the school.

SEPARATED OR DIVORCED PARENTS

If parents are in the process of deciding custody and visitation, or if they have a custody agreement, the School needs to have a written statement that clearly states:

- visitation rights of each parent
- pick-up rights of each parent
- which parent signs permission for school outings
- whether both parents will participate in parent/teacher conferences

In Idaho, divorced parents usually share legal custody and both parents have access to school records and evaluation of their child.

As the involvement at school of both parents is important to the emotional growth and attachment of the child, we will gladly schedule either joint or separate conference times for fathers and mothers, provide a parent box for each, or mail school newsletters and notices to a parent.

The emotional issues of separation and divorce are difficult for parents, children and teachers. It is necessary for the school to remain neutral regarding custody disputes in order to maintain a supportive learning environment for children. As always we will work to maintain a positive, trusting relationship with parents.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

When you have a question, comment, or concern about something happening at the school, please talk with the person most closely involved in the situation.

Often that will be your child's teacher; sometimes you will want to talk with the director.

If a family disagrees with an individual teacher or a teaching team about a child's experience in the classroom, it is important for us to hear from you in the most direct way possible. Some families prefer to set up a special conference time with teachers, write a note to teachers, use an established classroom communication system, or talk with teachers during scheduled conference times. Other families may prefer to talk with someone more removed from the situation, like the school director, as a starting point. However you choose to communicate with us about concerns, we prefer to think of it, consistent with school philosophy, as an opportunity for problem solving and conflict resolution. As a school faculty and staff, we see conflict, uncomfortable as it may be at times, as an opportunity for growth.

A TCS Family Resource Book is located in the front hall. We have included information in this book that is not time sensitive (events or resources that refer to a specific date will be posted in a visible place in the school). Examples of information available to families in this book format are: public school early childhood screening processes; TRUCE Toy Action Guide on choosing toys for children; home playground checklist; information on illnesses, lunch ideas, and transitioning to other schools (primarily transitions at K-3rd grade). If, after you have reviewed this family resource you have ideas of other resources that would be helpful to you and your family, please let the school director know.

Announcements and personal messages are put in family mailboxes in the front hall or on the communication areas at the front of the school. This area is our main communication center so you will want to pass through every day.

Email is preferred by most families. Therefore, we will use email communication in addition to or instead of mailbox or sign communication around the school in certain situations. Please inform the office of your current email address.

School mailboxes are for the purpose of The Children's School business and communications only. No commercial, political, or non-TCS fund raising materials are to be put into school mailboxes. *(adopted by the TCS Board of Directors, December 2003)*

Non-TCS advertisements, public information flyers, non-TCS fund-raising promotions, and other information, may be posted on the designated communication board, at the discretion of the director. Paid advertisements may be included in the school's monthly newsletter, at the discretion of the newsletter editor and the director.

BIRTHDAYS

At school we acknowledge birthdays quietly in order to prevent undue self-consciousness, overwhelming excitement, or hurt feelings. Parents may bring a special birthday snack by prior arrangement with teachers, but party favors are always discouraged. (see guidelines for home snacks in the Health section of this handbook)

For home parties all arrangements must be made outside of school time. Invitations should be mailed from home rather than placed in school mailboxes unless all children in the class are invited (no exceptions, please). Presents should stay at home. Party guests should be picked up from their homes, not school. Gift exchanges should take place away from school.

COFFEE ROOM

The coffee room is available for parents to sit, meet with a friend, or read.

PARENT USE POLICY FOR THE PARENT'S LIBRARY

Carefully selected books on child development and parenting are available to check out in our front hall. The parent library is for the use of parents of children currently enrolled in classes at The Children's School.

Books are available for check out for one month.

Please follow guidelines for checking out books that are posted on the librarian's desk. Parents are responsible for checking out and returning books with quarterly review by the school librarian.

FAMILY USE POLICY FOR THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

Although the children's library is primarily for classroom use, we welcome family use of the library with the following guidelines:

- 1) If you take books off the shelf to read, please place them on the red cart rather than placing them back on the shelf.
- 2) If you and your child wish to take a book home, we ask that you check out one book for one week. A book must be returned to the library before another is checked out.
- 3) The children's library check out procedures are posted on the librarian's desk.

NON-PARENT PICK UP

Only a previously authorized person may pick up your child. This authorization must be given to the school in person, in writing, or--in case of emergency--over the phone. The daily "Comings and Goings" sheet provides space to write down irregular going-home arrangements. Please be sure that anyone picking up your child is familiar with the routine and with the parking lot safety rules.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Cars enter from the alley on Thatcher and exit onto Eighth Street. Please walk with children while moving between your car and school to ensure safe transport of children through the parking area. Children should not be allowed to run ahead of parents or cross the parking lot without a parent. We have reserved spaces for carpooling families, families with "handicapped" parking permits, and fuel efficient cars. We also request that larger cars park in the spaces facing Thatcher or in the alley spaces. Thank you for taking care in our parking lot.

Bike racks are provided for biking families. Locking bikes and accessories, even for a short trip into the school, is highly recommended.

Children must be brought into the school by families (or someone designated by the family) to help ensure a smooth and safe transition. Sign your child in on the "Comings and Goings" sheet in the classroom on arrival, and sign out at pick up time. To pick up your child, park and come inside. This is your child's chance to connect you to his/her school life – art projects, buildings, works in progress, animal life in the terrarium. You may get a minute to chat with the teacher informally but please save child-concerns for a private time--a phone call or conference.

We want you to maintain adult friendships and feel comfortable and supported as parents here. Therefore, we make an effort to have the coffee room available for you most of the day. After initial greetings and brief exchanges of information in the classrooms, we encourage you to use the other areas of the school, like the coffee room, for nurturing adult relationships. When you are in the classroom we appreciate it when you focus on your child and the relationships and educational activities important to him/her in that carefully planned environment.

Although we understand that every family has a day on occasion when it makes sense to make a slower start, we appreciate your efforts in getting children to school on time. When a child consistently arrives after the opening activities s/he misses the opportunity to engage with classmates as early social connections are forming each day. Also, children who arrive to school late or miss school often are not able to fully participate in the educational opportunities available in the class.

Families who pick up children late from classes will be assessed a fee of \$5 for the first ten minutes and \$5 for each five minutes thereafter. Late charges will be added to your next month's bill.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are a fact of life today, and we understand that at TCS. We hope that under most circumstances parents are able to finish cell phone conversations prior to entering the school. The transition for children between school and family time is one that should have your full attention—for reasons of safety, so you can reconnect to your child after a time of separation, and so that, at the end of the day, you can be available to see and hear about your child's experience during the school day. If you carry a cell phone in the school please turn it off or place the ringer on vibrate. If you need your phone in the school and receive a phone call while in a classroom, please go to the coffee room or outdoors to talk. That way we are all working together to respect children's time and experience at school and using our parent/child/teacher time together to communicate and focus on school issues.

LOST AND FOUND

A basket of lost and found items is kept in the school. Several times a year we put lost items on a table in the front hall. After a time, unclaimed items will be taken to the WCA.

CONFIDENTIALITY

At The Children's School we respect the privacy of children, families, faculty, and staff.

Written or verbal information that we necessarily have access to through our work as a school concerning children, parents, families, faculty, and staff is kept confidential at The Children's School.

When it is necessary to discuss an issue concerning your child with you or a teaching colleague, we will take care to talk privately outside of the child's presence or hearing.

We also take the following steps in maintaining child and family confidences:

- 1) We keep assessment information for each child in an individual file in the classroom or faculty room. Those who have access to children's files, including assessment information, are: the child's teachers, the school director, on-site colleagues and consulting specialists who are involved with assessment interpretations and decisions, and the child's parents. If school assessment information is to be shared more broadly, specific permission will be sought from parents.

- 2) When teachers are not directly working with a child's file or when families or school visitors are in the classroom, children's files are put in a closed, private storage area in the classroom or faculty room.
- 3) When a child's file contains confidential information that is not needed to serve the child's ongoing educational needs, such as health records, that information will be stored in the child's file in the locked school office.
- 4) School faculty and staff are not able to discuss a family's well-being or a child's development, behavior, or progress with other families in the school, except in special cases where we have been given permission to solicit support for a family or child during times of need.

If a college student is working in the classroom to fulfill coursework, our expectations are that out of school, in conversations or in written assignments, children's real names are not to be used.

At times parents make observations about another family's child through volunteer opportunities in the classroom or on an outing. We ask that, if you have observations about something happening in the classroom, you direct your comments or questions to the faculty or staff at The Children's School. We value and respect all families, and want to maintain a school environment that follows the highest standards of communication and confidentiality.

When we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we are legally bound (as are all education personnel in Idaho) to share information, even if it would otherwise be considered confidential, with agencies whose responsibility it is to intervene in the child's interest.

Questions or concerns about confidentiality or breaches in confidentiality should be addressed to the school director immediately.

IV. ASSESSMENT

All children enrolled in The Children's School, with the exception of those who participate with their parents in the Parent-Toddler program, are involved in our school assessment process, as defined in the following section. The purpose of assessment is for teachers to get to know children well and to be able to plan classroom experiences that meet the needs of the children enrolled. TCS faculty and staff review assessment processes and resources for interpretation annually.

CHILDREN'S PROGRESS/WRITTEN ASSESSMENT PLAN

Our school-wide assessment processes are ongoing and structured around:

- 1) our goals for children (competence, individuality, social relationships, and creativity),
- 2) developmental areas (physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and language),
- 3) content areas (math, science, creative expression, social studies, literacy, health and safety, and technology), and
- 4) approach to learning.

The Assessment of Children's Progress at The Children's School is based on observation of activities and experiences within the classroom. Family input to this assessment process is welcomed daily through verbal and written communication. Assessment information is sought formally from families three times during the school year: at the beginning of the school year (through classroom specific questionnaires and/or the school update form) and at each of the two parent-teacher conferences. Through these processes teachers come to understand children's interests and development, and are better able to make decisions about teaching children individually and as part of a group.

Teachers have a variety of more formal assessment instruments available to them, as needed, to assess development and ability within a specific area of development or content.

At times The Children's School and families find it necessary to learn more about a child's abilities and development than is available to us through our school-wide assessment processes. Within the school, teachers have access to consultations and observations with colleagues and consulting specialists. When there is need for further screening or evaluation, families are referred to specific agencies, public school resources, or medical facilities for further assessment. The purpose of these referrals is to assist the child in experiencing success in the school setting.

Assessment information for each child is kept in an individual file in the classroom. Those who have access to children's files, including assessment information, are: the child's teachers, the school director, colleagues and consulting specialists who are involved with assessment interpretations and decisions, and the child's parents. If school assessment information is to be shared more broadly, specific permission will be sought from parents.

Through these fluid and ongoing assessment processes we hope to: know children and families individually; communicate with families; effectively plan curriculum; and, fully support the realization of competence, individuality, social relationships, and creativity for TCS children.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANNING

When a child's assessment and referral process results in a specific developmentally-, educationally-, or medically-related diagnosis for a child, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed by the diagnosing agency to address the individual need and its impact on the child's education. If it is developed prior to your child's enrollment at The Children's School we will need a copy for our files, as well as any evaluative, screening, or assessment information from other agencies or prior schools, so that we may plan appropriately for your child. If your child receives a diagnosis (from a qualified agency) while enrolled at The Children's School or if a child's existing IEP is due for review, we may participate in the development or review of the IEP at the diagnosing agency.

For children who are on an IEP through a diagnosing agency *or* for non-diagnosed children who exhibit significant education or behavioral concerns in our classrooms *or* when there is reason for teachers to think that a referral for further evaluation would benefit a child, The Children's School has a process for meeting as a team of faculty and staff. The Child Study Team's purpose is to benefit the child and his/her success in our classrooms. This Child Study Team (CST) consists of the school director, the classroom teachers, other faculty, consulting staff, and, in most instances, the child's parent. If a child's parent is not a part of the CST for any reason, TCS faculty will provide timely communication and opportunity for parent input and feedback on the process and decisions. Records of the CST meetings are called Individual Child Planning (ICP); an ICP may also, at times, be prepared for a child by his/her TCS classroom teachers without input from a Child Study Team as a way to organize individualized education planning for a child.

The Children's School is able to provide a list of agencies or individuals who provide diagnostic evaluations and services for children with a specific diagnosis. It is the family's responsibility to arrange diagnostic evaluation and the resulting therapy or remediation.

CONFERENCES AND REVIEWS

Teachers welcome opportunities to talk with parents. We are available to talk informally on a daily basis during drop-off and pick-up. For more detailed conversations we are available any time during the year by appointment. Our professional code of ethics requires that all adult conversations about children be held away from children.

In addition to informal talking time, parents and teachers meet in the fall and winter (see calendar) to confer about each child's development and school experience. Conferences provide an opportunity for families and teachers to

share perceptions of a child's well-being, current happenings at home or school, and/or communication regarding home and school child-rearing practices.

Twice during the school year, once at a conference time and then again at the end of the school year (spring or summer) families receive a written review of your child's school experience and current stage of development.

TERMINATION OR SUSPENSION OF ENROLLMENT

A child may not continue enrollment if:

- the school is unable to ensure other children's physical and/or psychological safety;
- the school cannot meet a child's special needs;
- disruption of classroom life is severe and prolonged;
- a family refuses to seek an outside professional evaluation and/or recommended treatment after thorough school assessment and parent/teacher discussion;
- if tuition payments are in arrears.

In case of suspension or termination, the school will attempt to work with the family to achieve a smooth transition for the child back to home or into another early childhood program.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Once a year, parents, staff and other professionals are asked to evaluate how well the program is meeting the needs of children and parents. Evaluation criteria are based upon NAEYC accreditation standards, as well as The Children's School's particular values and goals.

A report of annual evaluation findings is shared with families, staff, and the Board of Directors through compiled reports displayed in the school and a written summary posted in the parent's communication area in the front hall.

Program improvement plans are prepared annually by the school director following the program evaluation process. Program improvement plans are communicated to the Board of Directors, the school faculty and families.

REGULATORY AND ACCREDITING AGENCIES

The Children's School is licensed to operate by Boise City. Our license is renewed annually in September, requiring a site visit by city, fire department, and health department personnel.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation was earned in 1989, making The Children's School the first in Boise to achieve

this recognition. An accredited program has undergone comprehensive scrutiny by each staff and parent. Standards are set and verified by external professional review to certify compliance with NAEYC's criteria for high quality programs. Accreditation must be renewed every five years.

V. HEALTH AND SAFETY

SAFETY AT SCHOOL

Safety is crucial at TCS and is the responsibility of all the staff and parents.

The parking lot at TCS tends to be busy during drop off and pick up times. To ensure the safety of your child and others, parents are **REQUIRED** to drive slowly and to remain with their children at all times when in the parking lot or adjoining areas. Under no circumstances should children be allowed unsupervised access to the parking lot or adjoining areas.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide consistent and constant supervision at drop off and pick up times.

Opening doors and gates are **ALWAYS** adult responsibilities at TCS.

SICKNESS AND HEALTH POLICY

We want children to stay healthy. Children's illnesses are the most infectious at the beginning. Parents must keep children home at the first sign or symptom of illness, such as a temperature, rash, red eyes, earache, sore throat, upset stomach or diarrhea. If your child is extremely irritable or droopy, s/he should stay home. A child must remain home for **24 hours** after the occurrence of a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Children who have symptoms of illness when not medicated (for example, a child who still has a fever when not taking a fever-reducing medicine) are too sick to be at school.

If a child gets sick at school, s/he will be separated from the class into a supervised resting area and a parent will be called to take the child home. Please make sure we have current work, home, cell, and emergency numbers on file in the office. Let the school know if they change during the school year.

In addition to our assessment of the *risk of infection* to others, a child's ability to be at school is determined by his/her *ability to participate* in school activities and in our school faculty/staff's *ability to care* for your child.

If your child is well enough to come to school, s/he is well enough to go outdoors to play. We plan for outdoor play every day!

Please call us before your child's class start time when you are keeping your child home.

At all times there are staff trained in pediatric CPR and first aid on site.

Families are required to provide the school with a "Health Report" form, signed by your child's physician. This information needs to be updated as age appropriate—at the least, upon enrollment and at Kindergarten age.

The school has information on specific illnesses common to young children. If you are not sure whether your child's symptoms require *exclusion from school*, please check-in at the office or refer to the exclusion chart in the parent resource book in the library.

Head lice are a common occurrence in groups of children. Children found with active cases of head lice will be sent home for treatment and can then return to school. Treatment includes not only shampooing but removal of nits. TCS has a written policy regarding lice and steps that parents and teachers use when lice occur.

MEDICATIONS

Under most circumstances we are able to make arrangements with families on medication administration.

Prescription medication to be given at school must be in the original container accompanied by written instructions from the physician, prescription number, name of medication, date filled, child's name, physician's name, directions and schedule for dosage, route (mouth, topical, etc.), storage requirements (refrigeration, for example), and expiration date.

Non-prescription medicine must be in the original container showing printed dosage amounts and expiration date. Any request by parents for administration of non-prescription medications will require a doctor's written order.

Administration of both prescription and non-prescription medications requires written parental authority on a school consent form. Consent forms are completed and stored in the office.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

TCS recommends immunization for all children enrolled. We suggest that families contact their child's pediatrician or the Health Department for immunization schedule guidelines. Please provide the school with your child's immunization records within the first week of school and keep us informed as your child receives new immunization.

As allowed by current school immunization law, families may, for personal, medical or religious reasons, choose to exempt their children from some or all immunizations. As required by state regulations, parents of under-immunized children are required to submit a signed copy of the "State of Idaho Certificate of Exemption" to the TCS Office within the first week of school. At that time The Children's School will provide an informational hand-out to be reviewed with TCS administrative staff and signed by parents which states:

- *TCS is concerned about the health of its students;
- *The risk of under-immunizing children;
- *Under-immunized children will be excluded from the school during an outbreak within the school of disease with a required State of Idaho immunization; and,
- *Under-immunized children may be excluded from the school if there is an outbreak in the larger community of disease with a required State of Idaho immunization upon advice from Central District Health.

TCS community, including parents, teachers and staff, maintains confidentiality around immunization records for individual children. However, we may, if and when appropriate, release information to the school community about the number of exemptions on file for a given school year (*revised by TCS Board of Directors, 2006*).

HANDWASHING

One of the best ways to prevent illness in schools is through handwashing. At The Children's School, we ask adults and children to wash hands at the following times:

- *On arrival to school
- *After diapering/assisting with toileting/toileting
- *After handling body fluids (nose wiping, coughing, mucus, blood, vomit)
- *Before meals and snacks
- *Before preparing and serving food
- *After handling any raw foods that require cooking (meat or eggs)
- *After having hands in the water table
- *After handling pets or materials (dirt, sand) that might have been contaminated by animals
- *When moving from one group of children to another
- *Before and after feeding a child
- *Before and after administering medication
- *After handling garbage and cleaning

Gloves are required when handling potentially infectious body fluids. Gloves are a supplement to hand washing, not a replacement.

Alcohol based hand rubs are only a temporary measure, not a replacement for hand washing. If used, a sufficient amount must be used to keep hands wet for 15 seconds.

HOME SNACKS and LUNCHES

We provide simple, healthy snacks every day. Fruits, vegetables, whole grain crackers and dairy products are our staples. Cooking experiences may become a part of the curriculum.

On “home snack” day, the child and parent plan a snack for the whole group. Sometimes a parent and child will plan and/or prepare snack foods together at home. At other times it is something the children can make together at school.

When we plan school snacks we follow these nutritional guidelines and ask that you support us in our goals for feeding children when you provide home snacks:

- *We choose foods from at least two food groups (fruits, vegetables, dairy, grain, or protein).

- *If there is a reasonable option for the school when purchasing packaged snacks, we offer whole grain foods and avoid high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oils. We will strive to provide organic and/or locally grown foods. Exceptions may occur, including: curriculum-focused snacks; cooking projects; or, snacks provided on outings.

- *We do not offer children younger than four hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, and hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

- *For children’s nutritional and dental well-being we discourage but do not ban the occasional sweet home snack. If you do bring a sweet snack to school for sharing at a snack time, we ask that you bring a healthy option to offer children at the same time. For example, if you bring cookies or cake to school, we recommend that you bring a fruit or milk or cheese.

For children who eat lunch at school, families provide lunches. We are happy to provide information on nutrition or lunch suggestions. Each classroom has a microwave for heating up lunches. Please make sure that lunch boxes are clearly **labeled** with your child’s name on the outside. Lunch boxes are not generally refrigerated by teachers (although parents may request refrigeration when necessary on occasion) so please use an ice pack. Thermoses are effective for keeping milk or juice cold and fresh.

FOOD ALLERGIES/PEANUT BUTTER GUIDELINES

The Children's School often enrolls one or more children who are sensitive or allergic to peanut products, including peanut butter. Out of concern for children who may have a severe reaction to peanut products requiring medical attention or for whom ongoing exposure to peanut products may be harmful, The Children's School has established the following guidelines for teachers and parents.

- *The faculty at The Children's School will plan snacks and projects that do not include peanut products, including peanut butter.

- *We ask that families sending home snacks to a class refrain from using peanut products.

- *We ask that families packing lunches for their children use food products which do not contain peanut products.

- *The Children's School reserves the right, upon annual review of the needs of children enrolled in the school or in a particular class within the school, to modify these guidelines in either more lenient or more restrictive ways. These modifications may include the creation of peanut o.k. areas within the school or within a classroom for children bringing lunch to school. Other modifications may be created for the purpose of assuring a safe and healthy environment for all children enrolled in classes in The Children's School or for providing families the maximum freedom when packing school lunches.

- *Families for whom a child's peanut allergy requires medical intervention such as benadryl or an epi-pen will provide the school with the products needed to treat an allergic reaction. In addition we will need written permission to use the treatments at our discretion and instructions from a doctor on how and when the treatments will be used if the family cannot be contacted or the severity of the reaction precludes family notification.

- *Families impacted by peanut sensitivities or allergies will be asked to sign a waiver releasing the school from liability if an allergic reaction should occur on-site despite the school's best efforts to prevent exposure.

When children have diagnosed non-peanut food allergies (such as wheat, soy, dairy, or gluten) or food-related medical conditions (such as diabetes), the school will work with families to provide appropriate snacks. We will, whenever reasonable, provide snacks to an entire class that all children can safely eat. When this option is not reasonable (for example, in the case of home snacks or certain school planned snacks) we will 1) keep one or two school-purchased snacks on hand to serve as an alternative to foods served other children in the class, and, 2) keep family-provided foods to be served to a child with an allergy.

PLANS FOR EMERGENCIES

At The Children's School we plan for keeping children safe during school hours. We have systems of "alert, action, and recovery" for emergencies in the facility, neighborhood, or community. Emergency plans are posted in the school and are available to teachers in each classroom; a detailed emergency plan book is available in the school office for review by families.

Some emergencies require preparation with children. For example, each month we practice evacuation with children in case of fire (not all children are present for all evacuation drills). Other emergencies require practice and preparation by adults caring for children. For example, the school has plans for responses to security threats, utility failures, and natural disasters. These are reviewed, refined, and practiced annually by teachers.

The Children's School has a system of assigning management responsibilities when the director is off site. This system includes administration and, when necessary, teachers.

CLOSURES

The school office hours are 8am to 4pm daily. Because of our concern for confidentiality and the sensitive nature of school records, when the office is unoccupied during the day or closed after hours the door will be locked. If you call the school after hours you may leave a message or dial into your child's classroom.

Refer to the annual TCS school calendar for holidays, early release days, and professional development days when all or part of the school will be closed.

If the Boise Public Schools are closed for an emergency such as heavy snowfall in the community, TCS will also be closed. Rarely, TCS will be closed when local schools remain open (ice storm of 2012, for example).

The Children's School administrative staff closely monitors health information available through Idaho's Central District Health Department (CDHD), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Children's School follows the advice of these health agencies in making health related closure decisions.

Notification of closure will be made on the school webpage (www.tcsboise.org). When possible, teachers will contact you by phone and /or email.