



Winnetka Public School Nursery
Parent Handbook and Guide

2015-16

Winnetka Public School Nursery
1155 Oak Street
Winnetka, IL 60093
847.446.5153 (office)
847.446.1910 (fax)
www.wpsn.org (Web site)
wpsndirector@gmail.com



This handbook includes information about Winnetka Public School Nursery's programs, policies, and procedures. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of WPSN for more information.

Winnetka Public School Nursery is a private, non-profit corporation. WPSN welcomes all applicants and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or national or

Updated May 21, 2015

ethnic origin in its registration, enrollment, admissions, scholarship, financial, educational, staffing, or administrative policies.

Table of Contents

Welcome from the Director	1
History of Winnetka Public School Nursery	2
NAEYC and DCFS	3
Our Philosophy	4
Our Mission	4
Curriculum	5
Admission	6
Allergies	8
Appointments with Director and Staff	8
Attendance	8
Beginning a New School Year	8
Birthday	19
Bringing Toys & Special Items to School	10
Change of Parent Information	10
Clothing	10
Diapers	10
Communication	11
Confidentiality	12
Consultants	13
Daily Schedule	13
Discipline	13
Disaster Plan	16
Emergency Info	16
Health Info	17
Inclement Weather	19
Energy Saving Measures	19
Lost and Found	19
Mandated Reporters	19
Registration Procedures	19
Room Parents	20
School Closings	20
Scholarships	20
Security	20
Snacks	20
WPSN Terminology	21
Updated May 21, 2015	

Transportation and Dismissal Policy	23
Tuition and Fees	25

Table of Contents

Walking Field Trips	26
Withdrawing from WPSN	26
WPSN Go-To Guide	26

Welcome to WPSN, a very special place for children and families since 1926. Since our founding in 1926 by Dr. Carleton Washburne (former Superintendent of Winnetka Public Schools) and Mrs. Rose Alschuler (pioneer in the nursery school movement in America and founding member of NAEYC) WPSN is proud to have provided quality preschool education to generations in our community. We are prouder, still, to count alumni parents amongst those who recognize the valuable education their children received at WPSN and who now serve on our Board of Trustees or consult in other important capacities. By staying true over the years to the progressive, child-centered ideals that Dr. Washburne held dear, maintaining Mrs. Alschuler's highest standards of excellence, and being inspired by the world-famous schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, WPSN has become the place for young children to learn to think critically, express themselves creatively, and relate constructively to their world.

On June 25, 2007, in a historic decision, the Board of Directors at Winnetka Public School Nursery voted to dissolve that Board in favor of a governance structure comprised of a smaller Board of Trustees and several parent volunteer committees. Our 15 member **Board of Trustees** is comprised of parents, non-parents, the director and a teacher representative. Our very important **Parent Volunteer Committees** operate throughout the year to carry on many school projects and activities related to school fundraising, communications, classroom/administrative and facilities management. WPSN is proud that nearly 90% of our school's families participate on at least one of these committees, and we encourage you to contact the Board President for more information about how you can become an active parent volunteer.

With the publication of this Electronic Parent Handbook, we continue to reach for our goal of becoming a "green" school; of being kind to the earth that our children will inherit. In addition to limiting the volume of printed documents we disseminate and reducing, recycling or reusing various materials, we have installed energy-efficient lighting,

We are so happy you have chosen to join our WPSN learning community and we look forward to sharing the next school year with you and your child.

Warmly,
Erin Austria, Director, WPSN

HISTORY of Winnetka Public School Nursery

In 1926, two educational pioneers, Dr. Carleton W. Washburne, Superintendent of the Winnetka Public Schools, and Mrs. Rose Alschuler, a national leader in nursery school education and founding member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children ("NAEYC") began collaborating on an idea for **a preschool housed within a public school**. They shared the belief that the teachers and children of both schools would benefit. In 1926, the Winnetka Public School Nursery opened its doors.

The school's initial programs reflected **a willingness to innovate and experiment**. WPSN was established as a not-for-profit school dedicated to the following objectives: sound child development, family life education, service to the community, and research. "Child Study" classes in the eighth grade were designed to allow for reciprocal relationships between junior high students and preschoolers. A consulting psychologist was a school resource from its earliest days, and many decades later we continue to engage expert consultants to help maximize the potential of all of our children.

Parent education and the school-family relationship were valued components in fostering children's individual growth and development. An original idea at the time, "30-45 minute interviews with at least one parent present" was recognized by the founders as critical to establishing a bond between parents and school. Pre-enrollment parent tours and face-to-face conferences are still integral parts of our program.

WPSN has spent all but the 1980s in Skokie School, when an increasing student population necessitated a move to Crow Island School. Back in Skokie School since 1991, the nursery school occupies the former industrial arts wing, which was transformed into an inviting learning space. In 2001 [our playground](#) was completely redesigned to create an extraordinary outdoor learning environment. During the summer of 2011, WPSN underwent a renovation that included installation of new "sustainable" flooring, maple cabinetry, and new windows. During the summer of 2009, our kitchen and common areas were updated. Reciprocal programs with teachers/students in District 36's Skokie School and Washburne Junior High School enrich all programs. During the summer of 2013 WPSN was further updated with new floors, cubbies, and classroom furniture. In 2014, the playground was further updated to reflect our commitment to providing rich opportunities for children to the outdoors.

In 1992, Italian educators from the Reggio Emilia Municipal Preschools visited Winnetka. Since that time WPSN has studied, experimented and adapted the ideas emerging from our Italian colleagues as well as U.S. based Reggio-inspired preschool educators. We have traveled to visit other schools, attend conferences and sent teachers to study tours in Reggio Emilia in 2001, 2004 and 2011. Our interest in [the Reggio approach](#) has grown steadily as we have recognized that it is wonderfully consistent with our previous seven decades of educational practice.

NAEYC-ACCREDITED

We were one of the first preschools to be NAEYC accredited when accreditation was first offered, and we are proudly NAEYC accredited today. **WPSN was especially proud to be among the first schools in the nation to complete NAEYC's new and more rigorous accreditation process.** To earn NAEYC Accreditation in the new system, **WPSN** went through an extensive self-study process, measuring our program and services against the ten new NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 400 related Accreditation Criteria. We received NAEYC Accreditation after an on-site visit by NAEYC Assessors to ensure that we met each of the ten NAEYC program standards. We continue to file Annual Reports and adhere to the NAEYC accreditation criteria.

DCFS LICENSED...We are licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers may be accessed through the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcfs.

We are proud to maintain collaborative relationships with the Winnetka Alliance, Winnetka School District 36, The North Suburban Special Education District, Erikson Institute, National-Louis University, The Kohl Children's Museum and the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA). A long and strong history of innovation and excellence informs our work in the present and our plans for the future.

Our philosophy...

Winnetka Public School Nursery strives to continue our tradition of excellence in innovative, developmental early childhood education. We believe that children learn by exploring their environment and creating constructive relationships with peers and adults.

Our mission...

To stay true to our founders' ideals... to the progressive, child-centered ideals that Dr. Carleton Washburne held dear and to the highest standards of excellence in early childhood education maintained by Mrs. Rose Alschuler;

To maintain our role as leaders in educating adults about what our experience, training, and study suggest about how young children learn and grow;

To grow as a learning environment inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, a place where young children learn to think critically, express themselves creatively, and relate constructively to their world.

IMAGE OF THE CHILD... We believe each child is unique, competent and full of potential for learning, developing relationships, creating and imagining. This image of the child is reflected in all the choices we make regarding children, their families, our school and classroom environment, and our curriculum.

FAMILIES... WPSN is committed to a collaborative approach to nurturing each child by engaging parents in communication, education, shared activities, and providing various opportunities for feedback and participation in every aspect of school life. We co-construct a knowledge base, which continues to evolve and grow. *By participating in a democratic process, children, parents, and educators negotiate in order to construct and transmit values that preserve the rights of all individuals, creating a powerful culture of education, which inspires hope for the future (Carlina Rinaldi, March 2000).*

WPSN strives to create an environment of inclusiveness and community among children, teachers, and parents. Our goal is to achieve 100% family involvement and we encourage every family to support our school through social, educational, and fund-raising activities.

EDUCATORS...The role of the educator is to co-construct and facilitate learning with children and colleagues. As educators we ask open-ended questions, make reflective statements of children's ideas, and offer choices that will help to support the journey of learning. We seek to build trusting, nurturing and respectful relationships with children and families. We document children's thoughts and this work reflects on the learning process and incorporates knowledge and insights to further guide our journey of discovery together with the child. We model the learning process with our own continued growth and development, both within and outside the classroom. We encourage you to read about our staff at www.wpsn.org.

ENVIRONMENT... The environment is a teacher, an oasis, and an evolving reflection of the children and teachers who inhabit it. It is carefully designed to invite exploration and experimentation, inspire imagination and creativity, foster autonomy and cooperation, and provide both structure and flexibility.

CURRICULUM...Curriculum is a "course of study." At the preschool level, certain aspects of that course are the same from year to year: sharing resources, getting along with others, mastering self-help skills, making friendships, expressing ideas, developing physical and intellectual skills, and importantly for our 3s and JK students, negotiating the world without a parent or trusted nanny. These and other developmental tasks are addressed in our play-based programs, for we believe that play is children's research. These tasks form the core of our approach at WPSN. Our methods are informed by the writings of Piaget, Erikson, and Vygotsky, and we are inspired in our practice by the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

With a very carefully planned environment as a foundation, teachers provide opportunities for learning in whole group, small group, and individual settings. We observe and listen carefully, and together children and teachers select topics for study. The content for these explorations varies enormously from year to year; it emerges from the group. Even when the content is similar (e.g. bugs, worms and other small creatures often fascinate preschoolers) the expressions will always be unique to the particular individuals and group. We encourage children to use all of the "languages" available to them: words, drawing, construction, modeling, music, movement, design and more. The work you'll see displayed at school and in children's portfolios will be a unique reflection of his/her individuality. We support collaborations between and

among children, for it is in relationships with others that we learn how best to express and refine ideas.

Our engaging and varied curriculum necessarily involves attention to health, hygiene and wellness practices. It also includes a respect for nature and an appreciation for what we can do with children to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining a safe and healthy environment, locally and globally. Our curriculum is always a work in progress and we invite your collaboration.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES...Each class has a daily schedule posted in the classroom, providing a program of activities geared to the age and developmental needs of the children, and to their interests. The curriculum is informed by our educators' knowledge of what is developmentally appropriate for a given age group, as well as by their teaching experience, their familiarity with The Illinois Early Learning Standards for Early Childhood, NAEYC's new accreditation criteria, and by their knowledge of the development/strengths/interests of each individual child in the class.

ADMISSIONS POLICY...It is the policy of WPSN to extend equal admission opportunities to all applicants without regard to race, sex, religion, disability, national and ethnic origin, ancestry or parental status, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

Enrollment of a child and his/her participation in a program offered at WPSN are dependent on a number of factors, but shall include an evaluation of what the child needs to be successful and the school's abilities to serve his/her needs. A child shall not be excluded from a program at WPSN if he/she can be successful with reasonable accommodation. While WPSN makes every effort to accommodate all children who register, if a requested accommodation would result in an undue burden on WPSN resources or fundamentally alter the nature of the WPSN program, admission or continued enrollment may be denied. We cannot accept children who in our judgment are a danger to themselves, a danger to others, or a disruption to normal activities making it reasonably difficult for others to benefit from our program.

When making enrollment decisions concerning a child requiring accommodations, the school administration will consider input from appropriate persons, including the child's parents or legal guardians, past and

potential teachers and/or caregivers, and the child's physician, social worker or health care consultant.

WPSN endeavors to educate students within the limits of our programs and facilities. The best interests of the child and/or the class may require WPSN to provide additional classroom support to a child. If this should occur, WPSN reserves the right to seek financial reimbursement for such support from the interested child's family. WPSN may also need to do any of the following in the best interests of the child and/or the class:

- *require additional parent/teacher conferences to discuss identified concerns
- *make recommendations to seek assessments in speech/language, cognitive, physical and social/emotional areas
- *require parental consent to call in a consultant to observe a child, or children, and advise the Director and teachers
- *make changes/adjustments in a child's schedule or program based on identified needs
- *consult with parents/guardians regarding accommodations and additional services necessary for a child's continued participation at WPSN
- *refer parents/guardians of children who cannot participate, with reasonable accommodations, in WPSN programs to a more appropriate placement

When a child is receiving outside services, it is important that WPSN be considered part of the team of professionals working to enrich each child's preschool experience. WPSN staff members working with this child may need access to information from outside services that would help facilitate each child's adjustment to preschool. We request that reports from agencies and/or private therapists providing services to a child enrolled at WPSN be forwarded to the Director in a timely manner. All information is treated as confidential.

To facilitate an understanding of a child's learning style and, where appropriate, make adjustments, WPSN requires parents to sign a release of information form enabling the classroom teachers and the director to talk directly with the agency or therapists providing services to help the child succeed in the classroom. WPSN also may require parental consent to permit WPSN staff to participate in the child's IEP/IFSP meetings with the public school district. Failure to assist WPSN in obtaining information WPSN believes necessary to accommodate a child may result in admission or

continued enrollment being denied. If it is determined that a child, even with reasonable accommodations, is unable to be successful in WPSN programs, we are happy to assist in determining the best placement for the child.

ALLERGIES... We recognize how severe allergic reactions can become life threatening to children. We count on you to inform us about your child's environmental or food allergies. If you have any concerns about either snack foods or material exposure, please speak with your child's teacher. We are happy to monitor and modify as necessary, within our abilities, so that each child at WPSN is as comfortable and safe as possible. We share with our families that our school strives to be nut-free, and we do our best to make sure that items with peanuts/tree nuts and/or traces of peanuts/tree nuts are not present in our school.

APPOINTMENTS WITH DIRECTOR AND/OR STAFF... The school office is open from 8:45-3:45 Monday through Thursday and 8:45-12 noon on Fridays. WPSN practices an Open Door policy with regard to all families. An Open Door Policy means that parents and legal guardians may visit our school at any time. No appointment or prior arrangement is needed. We strongly encourage scheduling an appointment with the Director, when desired. If you wish to meet with a teacher, contact the teacher by writing a note, calling the school, or emailing the teacher directly to schedule an appointment. The office manager is available to assist with forms, appointments, messages, and general school questions.

ATTENDANCE... WPSN has no formal attendance policy. We do appreciate knowing if your child will miss an extended amount of school for any reason. This helps us in planning group experiences.

BEGINNING A NEW SCHOOL YEAR... Starting school is both an adventure and a challenge for preschool children. Young children often feel uncertain about starting new experiences, even ones that they are ready for and enjoy. Each year of preschool is a new beginning, which asks children to adjust to a different classroom, new teachers, and unfamiliar classmates. At WPSN, we provide the following steps to help make the transition from home to school a gradual and comfortable process.

***Parent Orientation and Classroom Meetings...**These meetings are an important opportunity to meet your child's teachers, other WPSN parents, and become acquainted with WPSN's philosophy, curriculum, and procedures. We encourage all parents, including returning families, to attend both of these meetings to learn the latest information regarding safety procedures and school/family communication practices.

***Home Visit...**Before school begins, we ask you to welcome your child's teachers into your home for a brief, informal visit. This visit allows your child to meet his/her teacher(s) in a familiar, comfortable setting, and enables the teachers to become acquainted with each child as an individual prior to meeting together in the classroom community.

***School Visits...**During home visit week, you and your child are encouraged to visit WPSN together, as often as you wish, to become acquainted with the classrooms, materials, and playground. Hours of school visits will be sent to you.

***First Days of School...**In order for each child to have more individualized attention and to foster the teacher-child relationship, children enter school on a staggered basis. Half of the class attends the first day and the other half attends the second day. The entire class meets together on the third day.

***Parent Support...**It is natural for your child to want you to stay in the classroom during the first days of school. Taking time to gradually "ease" out of the classroom provides the support your child needs to adjust to a new situation. Please arrange childcare for siblings to enable you to share this special time with your child.

BIRTHDAYS...While we recognize that birthdays are important markers for young children, we find that they are more comfortable when this event is acknowledged in a simple and low-key manner at school. Each child's birthday is observed according to individual classroom "traditions" and the child's particular interests and needs. The birthday celebration is incorporated into a group time experience and might include a special activity, blowing out candles, and of course, singing. We do not provide special birthday snacks at school but parents may arrange to bring in a snack with their child's teachers. Healthy snacks are encouraged.

BRINGING TOYS AND SPECIAL ITEMS TO SCHOOL...WPSN does not have a formal "show and tell" time and we ask that you do not encourage your child to bring personal items to school. Toys from home can easily become lost or broken. However, if your child finds it helpful to bring a special object from home to ease the transition to school, please prepare your child to have the toy remain in his/her school bag during class time. Special trips to visit this object in the school bag will provide your child the assurance he/she may seek.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, PHONE, OR EMAIL...Notify the school immediately if you have a change of address, telephone number (including work and cell phone), or email address during the school year. It is important that we are able to contact a parent in case of an emergency.

CLOTHING...Send your child to school dressed to play. Children learn through play, and playing means getting dirty. Resale shops often have clothes that are perfect preschool attire! Choose Velcro shoes, easy to slip on boots, mittens, and other child-friendly attire that encourage the independent development of self-help skills.

Your child will play outside every day, unless it is raining or the wind-chill temperature drops dangerously low. We watch the temperature, and (taking into account sunshine, humidity, and wind) make careful decisions about outdoor play once the temperature drops below 20 degrees F. Layers are best in the fall and spring when temperatures often fluctuate. Winter necessitates warm, waterproof, clothing from head to toe. When "boot weather" starts, please send a pair of non-slip slippers for your child to wear and keep at school. **Please mark all attire with your child's name!**

Tote bags are preferred over zippered backpacks because they, like certain clothing/shoes, are more child-friendly and encourage independent development of self-help skills. Tote bags also make it less likely that articles/messages being sent to and from home will be misplaced in a recessed compartment of a backpack.

DIAPERS...Diapers can be changed in the classroom. Toilet "learning" is an important milestone for preschoolers and we will work closely with you to support your child's developing independence. Please provide diapers, wipes and a change of clothes to ensure that your child is comfortable.

COMMUNICATIONS...We believe that it is important for parents and teachers to share knowledge, insights, and daily happenings with mutual respect and trust in order for children to have the best possible preschool experience. Therefore, we provide many opportunities for frequent communication between home and school and continuing educational opportunities that address issues of early childhood.

***WPSN Mail** that must be in hard copy (rather than email) will be sent home periodically with the oldest child in each family. Mail may include a message from the Director, information of upcoming events at WPSN and within the Winnetka community, in addition to other events pertinent to preschool age children.

***Email Communication**...All WPSN families are required to provide WPSN with an email address for timely communication about health/safety concerns, events, and other important messages. In keeping with our concern for our environment, it is our goal to minimize the volume of printed documents that we disseminate. Therefore, we make an effort to communicate by email whenever this method of communication seems appropriate and most efficient. **Please check your email regularly.** **Classroom newsletters** will be delivered electronically every other Friday. Please let the school know if you experience difficulty accessing your email and an alternative method of communication will be arranged.

***Conferences**...Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. In addition, the Director and teachers are available for conferences throughout the year, and parents or teachers may initiate a meeting at any time.

***Informal Communication**...It is most helpful to teachers if parents keep the school informed of events at home that may affect children's behavior at school. Knowing about a visit from relatives, a pet's death, a new caregiver, or a vacation can help teachers better meet your child's individual needs. Telephone calls, written and email notes are valuable ways for both parents and teachers to share daily happenings, as well as questions or concerns.

WPSN has voicemail to provide a direct line of communication to the appropriate WPSN staff. All messages related to director, teachers, office manager and general school messages may be left in the general voicemail box.

* **The WPSN Newsletter**, Electronic Newsletter...WPSN publishes an electronic newsletter every other week to share information pertinent to the entire school.

***Fence Bulletin Board**...This bulletin board will be regularly updated with important dates and other school activities.

***Conversations with the Director**...Informal group conversations with the Director will be scheduled and advertised throughout the year. This is an opportunity to gather with other parents to learn more about WPSN's educational philosophy, curriculum, practices and procedures. It is our goal to make these conversations interactive and responsive to our families: please email the Director with questions you would like to see addressed.

***Parent Education meetings**... We schedule and/or advertise speakers/presentations to act as educational resources for families. Subject topics in the past have included transition to kindergarten and the Reggio Approach to early childhood education.

***Parent Participation**...We encourage parents to spend time with your child in the classroom. These visits enable you to participate in classroom life and observe your child's growth during the year. After the initial separation and adjustment period, teachers will invite parents to participate for all or part of a day.

***Parent Travel Information**...When both parents will be out of town, we ask that you communicate your care arrangements for your child while you are gone.

***Teacher/Parent Resource Room**...We believe that a preschool should be a resource for parents as well as children. Parents are encouraged to borrow books from the Parent Library.

CONFIDENTIALITY... WPSN has adopted NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct. No one, except a child's parents or legal guardian, has the "right to know" about a child's developmental agenda and/or health issues. The people who have the "need to know" are those persons directly accountable and responsible for the care and well-being of a child. WPSN urges the private sharing of necessary information about a child's condition with the Director, so that she may evaluate the best placement for the child and attempt to provide the best possible experience for the child and family. WPSN will work with parents and other professionals concerned with the health, education and well-being of a child to the best of its ability. Information concerning a child's condition shall be kept confidential and shall be disclosed

to third parties only in accordance with this policy or any applicable laws. Parents/guardians who desire WPSN staff members to share information about their child with other professionals will be asked to sign a formal release form permitting this sharing of information. These release forms are available in the office.

CONSULTANTS... WPSN has relationships with excellent early childhood consultants in the areas of speech and language, occupational therapy and clinical psychology. We have found that early identification and intervention can often make huge differences for children. Issues addressed in the preschool years are often resolved in a way that allows children to be more successful as they begin their primary school experience. The teachers or Director may request a consultant observe in classes and collaborate with them to enhance children's growth. Individual children are never discussed with consultants without parents' explicit permission.

DAILY SCHEDULE... Vacations and holidays generally coincide with the Winnetka Public School's calendar. You will receive a WPSN school calendar as well as WPSN's newsletter, which provides updated information on school events.

A.M. Three year old Collaborators, and JK Relaters: 8:45-11:15 Monday through Friday

Two & Three year old Inquirers: 8:45-11:15 Monday through Wednesday

Two year old Investigators: 9:00-11:15 Thursday and Friday

P.M. Three year old Collaborators: 12:45-3:00

P.M. JK 12:45-3:45

Toddler Explorers Friday 9:15-10:30

JK Enrichment Classes 11:30-1:30

All student Enrichment Classes: 11:30-1:00 p.m.

DISCIPLINE... Everything we say or do at school must be:

Safe for you and others;

Fair to everyone;

Respectful, not hurtful to everyone and everything.

Discipline is not punishment; we do not punish children. Discipline is a means of teaching with the goals of helping children gain self-control, learning to respect the rights of others, and playing in a safe, secure environment. Key elements to discipline are clearly defined limits and consistent adult response. Generally, when children know what their limits are and that going beyond these limits will be met with a consistent response, they are less likely to engage in inappropriate behavior. We know that some children will repeatedly test the limits set for them and realize how important it is to repeat the limits for each setting and each activity.

Teacher Action and Child Involvement

- Teachers help children develop self-control and a sense of responsibility for their actions. Verbal redirection in the form of positive statements shall be the primary means of child guidance to appropriate behavior. For example, "You may run when we go outside" replaces "Don't run in the classroom." Corporal punishment, denying food, humiliation, emotional abuse, or inappropriate language shall never be used as a means of discipline.
- When inappropriate behavior does occur, the teacher's first response is an attempt to redirect the child's behavior verbally. ("We use this table for putting our toys and food on. Please use the pounding bench to pound on.") Redirection includes using positive statements and asks the child to "make a different choice" when we see that the current activity is not productive. "Don't", "no" and "stop" are used only to avert imminent danger. When conflicts arise, teachers often model problem-solving strategies and encourage children's participation. For example, a teacher may suggest, "You each have a different idea of what to build with the blocks. What could you do?" If the children do not offer a suggestion, the teacher might continue, "I think there is enough room to build both an airplane and a ship. Let's plan where each of you will build." Responding with sensitivity and consistency to children's individual temperaments and needs for support and guidance, we work with children until the conflict is resolved and they are able to move on.
- If verbal redirection is unsuccessful, the teacher may help children by leading them to another activity. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be asked to remove him/herself from the activity in question. That area becomes temporarily "closed" to the child as a natural consequence. The children are gently

reminded that they can rejoin the group as soon as they feel able to control the inappropriate behavior. Thus, the child develops self-control and inner discipline.

- Children are best guided to appropriate behavior when natural consequences are utilized. For example, a child throwing sand on the playground should be asked to help return the sand to the sandbox, then be redirected to another area, if necessary.
- Help children resolve conflicts by expressing their discontent. A toddler can say "stop" to a friend who is hitting him, a young preschooler can say "I don't like that, it hurts" and a preschooler might say, "It makes me angry that you hurt me. We are trying to play here." Children should be encouraged to resolve their problems through verbal expressions and identification with their feelings. Teachers assist children to resolve conflicts whenever necessary.
- In all cases, talking calmly with the child forms a large part of classroom discipline. Explaining why a particular behavior is not allowed as well as acknowledging children's feelings are very important in gaining their cooperation and adherence to limits. We focus on the behavior, helping children to see the consequences and making it clear that it is not permitted. We do not shame or isolate a child in our school setting.

Parent Involvement

- Daily communications, parent-teacher conferences and parent meetings are forums that afford teachers opportunities to talk to parents about specific discipline issues. Knowing about changes at home which may result in a change in the child's behavior at school will aid the teacher and the family in returning the child to consistent, appropriate behavior.
- When there is persistent behavior that includes but is not limited to damage to person or property, and the child is unresponsive to other guidance techniques, a parent-teacher conference also including the director, is required. A plan of action for changing the child's behavior must be established with the parents.
- WPSN reserves the right to request withdrawal of the student from our program. If the child has not progressed, over the course of the established timeline, to acceptable age or developmentally appropriate behavior, and continues to disrupt the program, WPSN may require the parents to procure therapeutic intervention from an outside source in order to continue enrollment. If the family chooses

a private agency, the family is responsible for any expense. However, if the family accesses programs provided by their school district, there may be no additional expense. WPSN will incur expense only when we have determined it is to our advantage to provide classrooms with consultation services.

DISASTER PLANS...Fire, tornado, and other safety drills are conducted each month and are recorded by the teachers. The teachers are trained at the beginning of each year in escape procedures for various possible emergencies. We communicate with Skokie school personnel via email or telephone so we are kept alert to local security/safety issues. In the event of a disaster, after the students are accounted for and the police/fire departments have given their permission, we will coordinate with Skokie School administrators to arrange the release of the children to those authorized on the child's emergency card.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION...Each child is required to have an emergency information form on file in the school office. **It is crucial that each family keep the information on their child's emergency form current at all times.** A signature acknowledging acceptance of school policy regarding medical treatment is also required on the Red Emergency Information Card. Copies of emergency cards are kept in areas where they can be easily accessed in case of emergency.

Gun-Free Facility. . .Guns are prohibited everywhere in our school and in our Outdoor Learning Environment, at all times.

HAND WASHING...In an effort to curb the spread of germs, and in accordance with DCFS regulations, hand washing takes place several times throughout the day: upon arrival in the classroom, before and after snack, after outside play, before and after water table play, and after toileting.

HEALTH FORMS, DISEASES, MEDICAL TREATMENT, MEDICATION AND ILLNESS...

***Health Forms...**A complete medical history report (including lead analysis) is required to be on record for every student attending classes at WPSN. Immunization records are valid for 2 years. All forms required by law must be on file in the school office prior to the first day of school. This includes a Child/Family History, Medical form, and Emergency Card. Children whose files are incomplete may not attend preschool. Please be sure to schedule an appointment with your child's physician in a timely manner if a physical form is required. If a child's records are approaching the 2 year mark, a parent needs to provide proof that a visit to the physician has been scheduled.

In accordance with NAEYC accreditation criteria, we will request that every family either provide proof of health insurance coverage or sign a statement that they decline to provide proof at this time.

Information in your child's file will not be made available to any other school, agency, or individual without your written permission.

***Communicable Diseases...**Please notify school immediately when your child has a communicable disease, such as: measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep throat, or head lice. In accordance with DCFS and Cook County Board of Health regulations, WPSN will notify families of students who have been exposed so that families can be aware and contact their pediatrician with any questions. This notice will be by the quickest and most efficient means possible, which will often be email. For serious illnesses which are highly contagious or of long duration, we will require a note from the child's physician before the child returns to school.

***Medical Treatment...**In the event a child is injured or becomes ill at school, a trained and certified staff member will administer basic first aid. A staff member will then attempt to reach the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, the school will try to contact the adults listed on the Emergency Card. If the injury or illness is serious and either the parents or the adults listed on the Emergency Card cannot be reached, the Winnetka Fire Department paramedics will be called immediately. One of the child's teachers or an administrator will stay with the child at all times and accompany him/her to the hospital with paramedics. Upon signing the Statement of Acceptance of School Policy Regarding Medical Treatment, located

on the Emergency Card, parents give permission for their child to be transported by the paramedics to Evanston Hospital and acknowledge their responsibility for costs incurred.

A staff member will complete a communication log form when a child is injured at school and a parent/guardian will be asked to review and sign the report which will be kept on record in the office. Copies of communication log forms are available in the office.

***Medications...**State law forbids school personnel to administer any type of medication to students, with the exception of life saving equipment such as an epi-pen or Benadryl. If your child requires the use of these items, you must register them with the office. Parents are to make every attempt to give their children any necessary medications (prescriptions or over the counter) at home.

***Illness...**In order to accurately assess your child's health at school, teachers **need to know** when your child is taking medication. If your child becomes ill at school, you are immediately called and your child is cared for until your arrival.

When deciding whether your child should come to school, use the following criteria:

***Child should be fever-free for 24 hours.**

***Child should be symptom-free from intestinal upsets, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours.**

***If there has been an injury, sprain, bump on the head, cut requiring stitches, child should not be in school the following day.**

***If child is unable to play outdoors, he/she should not come to school. It is not possible to keep a child indoors while the rest of the class is outside.**

You know your child best, and we depend on you to use common sense and be considerate of others. If you are in doubt about whether your child is well enough to go to school, we appreciate you erring on the side of caution and keeping your child home. A sick child prefers to be comfortable at home and is not able to enjoy school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE... Teachers will wait inside the school door. Follow the carpool and parking regulations to escort and retrieve your children directly at the school door. All other routine procedures apply.

ENERGY-SAVINGS MEASURES... We have installed energy efficient compact fluorescent bulbs in place of incandescent bulbs and sustainable non-petroleum-based flooring in our classrooms and common areas. We try to limit the volume of printed paper documents we disseminate if email is a more ecologically sound way to distribute information. We reduce, reuse or recycle various materials, and we encourage our families to turn car engines off when idling in the carpool lane. We are actively seeking additional ways to leave a smaller carbon footprint on our planet, and we encourage you to share your ideas and become involved in this meaningful effort.

LOST AND FOUND... All unmarked clothing found at school is placed in the Lost and Found basket in the gathering space. Please check these regularly. Items not claimed at the end of the school year are donated to a charitable organization.

MANDATED REPORTERS... Under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, all staff members are mandated reporters, required to report to the Child Abuse Hotline whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional official capacity may be abused or neglected.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES... At WPSN, we strive to nurture relationships with families. Thus, priority status for enrollment is given to continuing children, siblings of currently enrolled children, and then "gap" families returning with younger children. New Family Applications will be accepted beginning in mid to late October of the calendar year prior to entry. All New Family Applications will be kept on file until the conclusion of Returning Family Registration in November, at which time New Families will be offered places in order of date/time of completed applications. Placement is subject to availability and at the discretion of the Director. Each year

approximately one-third of our school is comprised of children from families new to WPSN.

ROOM PARENTS...Room parents help to plan and execute class-related activities which include a fall get-to-know-you event, money collection for teachers' gifts and parents' nights out.

SCHOOL CLOSING... In case of severe weather, WPSN will cancel classes whenever District 36 (Winnetka Public Schools) closes or institutes a "late start" day. The Director, with the President's approval, may cancel classes for other emergency reasons. Should WPSN need to cancel classes for any reason, you will be notified via an email sent by 7 a.m. In the event of an unscheduled school closing a make-up day will be offered at the end of the school year. A maximum of two days will be made up.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Limited scholarship funds are available to families in need of financial assistance. Applications and more information are available from the Director.

SECURITY...The school is secured during school hours. Admittance to the building is through the front door by ringing the bell. If not recognized, those seeking admittance may be asked to hold a form of identification up to the window in the door. Children are not permitted in the Outdoor Learning Environment without a teacher present.

SMOKE-FREE FACILITY...Smoking is prohibited everywhere in our school and in our Outdoor Learning Environment, at all times.

SNACKS...For many children, snack is an important part of the school routine. In our "self-service" approach, children choose when they wish to stop for snack time. Children are taught to wash their hands, find a place, pour their own juice or water, take a snack portion, and clean up. We are a peanut-free and tree nut-free facility. We provide 100% fruit juices and a variety of simple snacks (e.g. graham crackers, Ritz, pretzel fish, Wheat Thins). Occasionally we will also

offer fresh fruit or vegetables. As stated in the Allergies section, we will work with you to insure that your child is not exposed to prohibited foods.

WPSN GLOSSARY of SCHOOL TERMINOLOGY, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL ANNUAL SCHOOL EVENTS and OPPORTUNITIES... (this section is a living document...please let us know what you've wondered about so we can help answer the kinds of questions that families new to WPSN have each year!)

***Fall Family Gathering or:** A gathering of WPSN families (siblings and grandparents/aunts/uncles/caregivers welcome!) held at the school to celebrate the beginning of the new school year and to build relationships amongst families. Tickets are reserved in advance to cover the cost of this delicious pasta/salad dinner.

***Pumpkinfest:** A Fall Festival with rides, food, face-painting and games, held on the Winnetka Green in October. Volunteering to help with Pumpkinfest is a wonderful way to make new friends and benefit the school. And it's a great day, chock full of preschool and school-aged oriented activities, for you to share with those you love.

***Book Fair and Toy Fair:** A Fall tradition, WPSN collaborates with a local bookseller to offer a stellar selection of books for purchase. WPSN parents and professionals highlight books that might particularly interest your preschool child. A portion of the proceeds benefits WPSN, and parents have an opportunity to buy books from a "wishlist" requested by WPSN teachers for our classrooms.

***WPSN Benefit:** Our primary fundraiser of the year (usually in the Spring), and a great opportunity for adults to mingle with friends and meet new ones! The evening includes an auction, raffle, and lots of good food and fun. Volunteering on this Parent Committee is a great way to make new friends and assure WPSN a strong future.

***PJ StoryNight:** Usually scheduled during the winter, PJ StoryNight is a FREE early evening gathering at school for you and your children to attend together...children may opt to wear their pajamas. Teachers share stories, music, and finger-plays.

***Grand Foods Receipts:** The local Grand Foods Store will donate back a percentage of the amount you spend in their store. Just save your receipts! There is a box where you can deposit them in the Gathering Space,

or put them in an envelope labeled "Grand Foods" and send it to school when you drop off your child.

***Wearables:** A Parent Volunteer makes it possible for you to order clothing and tote bags with our WPSN logo. Show your school spirit!!!

***Wonder of Discovery:** Usually scheduled during The Alliance's "Screen Break" week, Wonder of Discovery is an opportunity for you to come to school on a Saturday and play in our classrooms with our Reggio inspired activities.

***Dad's Night-Out Poker Tournament Fundraiser:** Join other WPSN dads for a fun night of Texas Hold 'Em while raising money for the school. Bring your friends and join in the poker game, or just come for the food, drinks and socializing

***Art Show:** This special event is an opportunity for the families and community to see the beautiful art created by the children at WPSN. It is held in the spring in a community hall which is generously donated by one of our community sponsors.

***Classroom Nights:** Twice a year your child's teachers will invite you to come to WPSN to play in your child's classroom. This is an opportunity to create a project that is similar to the one your child does all year.

***Studio Days:** The studio teacher will welcome you at least twice per year to join her and the Nature intern as you and your child work on a project in the art studio. This will give you the opportunity to see and create something special in our fantastic studio space.

***5th Grade Partnership:** Just about every day for about 30 minutes per session, the WPSN classrooms welcome 5th graders from the Skokie school. This program is a realization of Dr. Washburen's belief that preschool should be tied to the District 36 school system. This partnership benefits all of the children. Our preschoolers love having the older children visit our school. The 5th graders learn about child development and make little friends.

***Partnership with District 36's Special Ed Program:** Each year WPSN welcomes one 8th grade student to our school so that (s)he can work on pre-employment skills such as time-management and how to conduct oneself in a work environment. This partnership is an important opportunity for our preschool children to meet people of differing abilities and for the student to learn how to interact with a group.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL... For the safety of every child, your observance of the drop off and pick up procedures is paramount. *Please be sure to review these procedures with full time and temporary caregivers as well.*

Arrival Procedures

*For children beginning school on the playground, one teacher from each class will wait at the rolling playground gate at 8:45 a.m. or 12:45 p.m. to greet the children.

*For children beginning school in the classroom, one teacher from each class will wait at the school door at 8:45 a.m. or 12:45 p.m. to greet the children.

*Walkers should walk along the playground fence to the playground gate of the school door within the yellow guidelines along the west fence.

*Parents and caregivers may park on Oak (please DO NOT double park), Glendale, or Berkeley Streets

*The carpool line enters the circle drive coming west on Oak Street, and exits the drive going west on Oak Street.

*Drivers move up as far as possible into the circle. Please do not exit the car unless your entire car (bumper to bumper) fits in the circle drive.

*Once parked, **turn off the engine**, get out of the car, and escort children out of the car on the passenger side only. Walk with the children to the playground gate and/or the school door where the teachers are waiting.

*When ready to leave, drivers may pull around other cars if there is room to do so safely.

*Drivers and walkers must make verbal contact with the teacher to transfer responsibility for the children to her.

If you wish to talk with the teachers, or if your child would like you to accompany him/her into the classroom or to the playground, please park your car rather than using the carpool line. Often a few extra minutes spent in the classroom or on the playground can make the beginning of the day feel more relaxed and comfortable for both you and your child. As a courtesy to other parents, however, please park and walk in these situations to help us keep the carpool line moving in a safe and efficient manner.

Double-parking on Oak Street is a violation of the law. Be aware that the police monitor this situation and you may be ticketed. More importantly, double-parking can create dangerous situations for children, particularly in

times of inclement weather with limited visibility and/or icy conditions.
PLEASE DO NOT DOUBLE-PARK.

Bicycles, Wagons, Scooters, and Strollers...Children coming to school via bicycle, wagon, scooter, or stroller should follow the yellow lines along the west gate and enter through the center gate. These vehicles should be parked along the fence near the "secret garden." We highly encourage bicyclists to wear helmets. The school assumes no responsibility for bicycles. Private bicycles are never to be ridden on school grounds when students are present.

Carpools...Sharing transportation can be convenient for parents, a positive experience for children, and good for the environment. We recommend that children be given the time necessary to ease into new situations, including carpools. Once a carpool is established, please notify the office of the carpool participants and scheduled drivers. All drivers must be listed on each child's Emergency Information Card (the Red Card) in the office. Sign out sheets will also list carpool assignments.

Dismissal Procedures...Teachers will have children seated on the playground benches at dismissal time- drivers and walkers must sign out next to the name(s) of the child/children they are taking before the teachers release responsibility for the child/children.

*Walkers should walk to the playground gate to meet children.

*Parents and caregivers may park on Oak (please do not double park), Glendale, or Berkeley Streets and walk to the playground gate to meet the children.

*The carpool line enters the circle drive coming west on Oak Street and exits the drive going west on Oak Street.

*Drivers move up as far as possible in the circle drive. Please do not leave your vehicle unless your entire car (bumper to bumper) fits in the circle drive.

*Once parked, turn off the engine, get out of the car, and walk to the playground gate to meet children. Escort children to the car on the passenger side only.

*Drivers are responsible for escorting children safely to the car, buckling seatbelts and closing doors. If the driver is uncomfortable escorting several children to the car at once, the teachers will stay with some of the children at the playground gate while the driver takes care of the children a few at a time.

*If several children must be buckled in, drivers may pull up to the area beyond the designated parking spaces and stop to buckle everyone. This helps the carpool line move along.

*When ready to leave, drivers may pull around other cars if there is room to do so safely.

Dismissal of Children to Persons Other Than their Parent or Caregiver...

As a matter of policy, teachers can permit your child to leave school only with persons whose names are listed on your child's Emergency Information form, which is kept in the office. As you form carpools or your child has play-dates with new friends, you will need to come to the office to add the appropriate drivers' names to the Emergency form or send a note at drop-off.

WPSN must have written parental permission in order to dismiss a child to anyone other than those listed on the emergency form. In the event that you wish to grant permission for a one-time-only pick-up, please send a note with that person's name. This is a discrete and limited exception to the rule that teachers can release only to parties listed on your child's Emergency form. Please remember that, without written permission, WPSN cannot release to grandparents, neighbors, or other WPSN parents. Permission forms, which ask for all necessary information: child's name, driver's name, date and parent signature, are available in the office. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us ensure your child's safety.

If a child has not been picked up 10 minutes after dismissal time, staff members will monitor the child and call the numbers on the child's Emergency Card in the order they are listed by the parent/guardian

Word of Caution...Rushing through arrival and dismissal procedures can be dangerous. Please do not cut across the circle or take other "short cuts" to save time. Please do not back up. Do not use cell phones/text. Children's safety is our greatest concern.

TUITION AND FEES...A non-refundable fee of \$100 per child is required at the time of application. Tuition for each WPSN school year is established annually by the Board of Trustees. The tuition payment schedule is detailed in the contract which must be signed and returned with the initial tuition payment. **All payments are required on the stated due dates and are non-refundable.** A late payment or NSF check may result in loss of priority status, removal from class, and/or an additional fee of \$75.

If an attending family is relocated or moves outside of north suburban Cook County, they are entitled to a pro-rated tuition refund minus the \$100 application fee. Proof of change of address is required.

A family unable to meet its financial obligation should contact the Director, so that suitable arrangements can be made. Limited scholarship funds are available. All financial transactions are kept confidential.

WALKING FIELD TRIPS...On rare occasions, the children may take a short walk off of school premises. Any child participating in such activity must have a signed permission form on file in the school office. These forms are distributed and collected during Parent Orientation.

WITHDRAWAL...A child may be withdrawn from WPSN at any time at the discretion of the parent(s). Required protocol for withdrawal is to schedule an exit meeting with the Director upon completion and submission of the WPSN Withdrawal Form by the parents. All tuition and application fees paid to date are not refundable to families who voluntarily withdraw from WPSN.

WPSN reserves the right to request withdrawal of any student. When it is determined that a problem exists that would jeopardize the safety and wellbeing of a child or others around him/her, a meeting will be scheduled with the child's family and the Director, teachers and support staff. These parties will discuss the problem, design a plan of action, and determine a time frame for the implementation of this plan. The situation will be re-evaluated at the end of the specified period. At this time a decision will be made either to allow the child to continue at WPSN as we continue to monitor and make adjustments for his/her needs, or to request the child's withdrawal and assist in the placement of the child in an environment that better fits the needs of both the child and family. WPSN will make every good faith effort available to accommodate each child's situation before requesting a withdrawal. When WPSN has requested a withdrawal, refund of tuition fees will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be the decision of the WPSN Board of Trustees.

WPSN "GO TO" GUIDE...

For child and classroom specific issues: Grievances and concerns about child and classroom specific issues are properly directed in the first instance to the classroom teachers. Teachers will make every effort to respond constructively to your concerns, and may confer with the Director while

doing so. If, after taking the time to dialogue with the teachers you do not feel that your grievance or concern has been adequately addressed or resolved, the grievance or concern should be directed to the WPSN Director. The Director may ask to meet in person together with the concerned parent(s) and the teachers in an effort to resolve the issue.

For school programming, policy and procedural issues: The Director is available to address any school programming, policy or administrative issues brought to her attention.

For any grievance that the Director is unable to resolve to the satisfaction of all concerned parties: The Director will confer with the President of the Board of Trustees in the event that she is unable to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all concerned parties, and together the Director and President will either make a decision, or decide to raise the issue before the Board of Trustees. A parent may write a letter to the Board of Trustees at any time, indicating a desire to be heard at the Board level, and the Board of Trustees will respond to this request within 30 days of receipt of this written request. Contact information for the President of the Board of Trustees can be found in the school directory or from the office.

LEADERSHIP... WPSN is led by a strategic planning board that provides business leadership. This Board of Trustees, which meets at regularly scheduled and posted monthly meetings during the school year, is comprised of parents, non-parents, the director and a teacher representative. Parent Volunteer Committees operate throughout the year to carry on the many school projects and activities related to school fundraising, communications, classroom/administrative and facilities management. Please refer to the current school directory for the names and contact information for our current Board of Trustees and Parent Volunteers.

WPSN strives to create an environment of inclusiveness and community among children, teachers, and parents. We encourage each family to participate in our social, educational, and fund-raising activities. Parents are encouraged to contact the President of the Board of Trustees to explore ways they might offer their time, experience, and expertise to benefit our learning community.

Board of Trustees meeting times will be posted at school and will appear in the bi-monthly e-newsletter, and/or be emailed to families in a timely manner. All meetings are open meetings as required by law, and parents and teachers are encouraged to attend.