



Washington Heights & Inwood

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NURSERY SCHOOL PARENT MANUAL 2007-08



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WELCOME

Dear Parents:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of the YM & YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood, we would like to welcome you to our agency and our Nursery School. The Nursery School is an entry point to our agency for many families, and we hope this is just the beginning of a long and rewarding relationship between the Y and your family.

The Nursery School staff has been hard at work developing plans for the upcoming school year, and we look forward to a wonderful year full of many enriching experiences for both your child and your family. We look forward to sharing some of these plans with you at our **Parent Orientation Meeting** to be held on **Thursday, August 30, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.**

In order to accomplish our ambitious goals we depend on parental involvement. There are several ways parents can participate. First, we have a Parent Committee which assists staff in developing and evaluating our program, developing and implementing fund-raising activities and modifying policy when necessary. The Parent Committee meets approximately every 6 weeks with the Nursery School Director. In addition, the school celebrates many holidays, such as Chanukah, Purim, and Passover, and there are always ways in which parents can assist in these celebrations. Lastly, the school goes on several field trips over the year, and a few parents are always needed to join the class and assist as chaperones. Of course, parents are always welcome in the classroom to participate in activities and projects.

The role of the parent in the early childhood classroom is an integral part in your child's development. We know that your participation will enhance the Nursery School experience for both you and your child. We strongly encourage you to participate in these volunteer opportunities or classroom activities.

We look forward to working closely with you over the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Michael Fermaglich
Associate Exec. Director

Susan Herman
Nursery School Director

HEALTH

Please Note: No child can be admitted to class without a Medical Form completed and signed by your pediatrician. The medical form must be based on an examination within the required time period (after July 1, 2007), and all immunizations and screenings must be current with Board of Health requirements. In addition, our Emergency Medical Treatment consent form (signed by a guardian) and a Confidential Intake Form must be completed and submitted prior to the first day of school.

Your child's health is of great importance. Should your child become ill at school, parents will be contacted and asked to take him/her home. It is important that you have submitted information regarding an *emergency contact* in case we can't reach you.

In case of minor injury, a Y staff member with CPR/First Aid certification will apply care when applicable and teachers will send a note home. If possible, they will try and contact you during the day to inform you of the injury. If the child requires further attention, we will notify you or your pediatrician. If we cannot reach anyone, we will take the child to the emergency room at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. Someone on staff will remain with your child until we are able to contact a family member.

We expect that you please keep your child home if he/she exhibits any of the following:

- Fever over 99.6 degrees **(Please keep child home for 24 hours after a fever).**
- Severe coughing or trouble breathing
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Infected skin patches
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Headache or stomach ache
- A "fresh" cold
- Runny nose with green or yellow discharge
- Persistent lethargic behavior

For the safety of all children, please notify the school if your child does contract a communicable disease. The school will notify parents without naming specific children by note immediately. Re-admission is allowed after the required exclusion period:

Strep throat: 48 hours after oral antibiotics.

Chicken pox: 1 week after rash begins and/or until all pox are scabbed over.

Pink eye: Until all redness and crustiness have disappeared.

In cases where questions arise, a doctor's note will be required.

Please notify the school when your child is absent.....whether you will be away or if your child is sick...we need to know!!!

SEPARATION

Beginning school is an exciting experience for both you and your child. However, coupled with your child's wonderful opportunities to explore new materials and meet new friends is the need to leave the secure surroundings of home, parents, siblings and caregivers.

There is no "correct" or "best way" for a child to adjust to separation since each child's style is unique, and experiences are different. However, there are certain guidelines that can help make for a smoother transition, not one that necessarily "works" the most quickly, but one that helps the child's long-term ability to handle separation.

The approach at our Nursery School is to work cooperatively with parents on a gradual transition. The aim is not to distract your child quickly so that he/she doesn't notice you're leaving, but rather to help him/her attach to someone or something else – a teacher, a toy, another child. Only when your child has attached to someone or something with which he/she feels comfortable, will he/she be ready to "detach" from you.

The Nursery School staff is particularly sensitive to the fragile first few weeks of school and to the importance of being able to meet the individual needs of each child. For the first couple of days children attend in small groups and for a shorter day in order to make this "getting acquainted" time an easier one with a gradual start. Parents/Caregivers stay in the classroom until both the teacher and the parent are comfortable having the child remain in the room without his/her parent/caregiver.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR EASING YOUR CHILD INTO A SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- **PREPARE YOUR CHILD:** Talk to your child at home about going to school and use the teachers' names so your child becomes more familiar with them.
- **GOOD FEELINGS ARE CONTAGIOUS:** If you are genuinely excited about your child beginning school, chances are he/she will be too.
- **TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:** Parents know their child best. If you have any ideas for how the transition can be made easier for your child, share them. At the same time, recognize the teachers' expertise in balancing the needs of the group with those of individual children.
- **SEND A TRANSITION OBJECT TO SCHOOL:** Children like to bring a favorite object from home to school to bridge the gap (book, toy, etc.). Please make sure the object is not irreplaceable and that it is not too overstimulating for the group (such as a large battery-operated toy).

ACTIVITIES

PHYSICAL PLAY

Indoor and outdoor activities with equipment specifically designed for young children help develop motor skills and body awareness. The Y has a state of the art roof top playground, a brand-new, renovated playground on the first floor between two of our classrooms, a dance studio and a full size gymnasium providing wonderful opportunities for nursery children to run, play and have a great time.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Painting, collage, drawing, construction and clay work all encourage creative expression, independent thinking and visual discrimination. Children are encouraged, with guidance from the teachers, to start and complete projects on their own. We believe this helps to build independence while helping children feel good about themselves as they see just how much they can accomplish. Our philosophy with art is *process not product*.....whatever the child creates is valued.

MUSIC

Singing, movement, and the use of rhythm instruments develop listening skills, rhythm and body awareness. Teachers introduce the children to different instruments as they sing songs and move their bodies.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Listening to stories, participating in discussions, using computer software, making original books and other educational projects contribute to reading and writing readiness.

JEWISH PROGRAMS

The school incorporates the Jewish holidays and customs into our daily classroom play within our morning program. Major Jewish holidays are discussed, arts & crafts projects are included in the learning, stories are read and often special foods are introduced to the children. Children learn songs, and for some of the holidays the children make and wear costumes. Every Friday the children participate in an Oneg Shabbat program complete with singing, candle lighting, challah and grape juice.

LUNCHTIME ACTIVITIES

Based on interest, the Y may offer a number of extracurricular, specialized activities during lunch time with an extra fee. Examples may include soccer, dance, arts and crafts and music. Although there are some specialty activities interspersed throughout the week, these activities will be concentrated and led by various outside specialists.

4'S CLASS-PREPARATION FOR KINDERGARTEN

Reading readiness concepts including pre-reading skills such as letter-sound awareness, left to right orientation, rhyming etc. are integrated into our thematic studies. Math activities such as counting, one to one correspondence and graphing are also incorporated when appropriate.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

NURSERY SCHOOL HOURS

9:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. - FULL DAY PROGRAM

9:00 A.M. – 11: 30 A.M. - A.M. HALF DAY

OR

1:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. - P.M. HALF DAY

8:15 A.M. – 9:00 A.M. – EARLY MORNING DROP-OFF –(if sufficient interest)

Extended Lunch Care: 11:30-1:00

In the morning, parents are requested to bring their children to the classrooms. Teachers will open the doors when classes are scheduled to begin. Please be patient, as prior to 9:00 a.m., teachers are busy setting up the room for the day. Please hang your child's coat in his/her cubby along with his/her book bag. Bring lunch and your child's notebook into the classroom and have your child learn to put each in the proper container.

Extended Lunch Care is available as a day care option to half-day children for an additional fee.

Door to Door Transportation is available for an additional fee. Pick-up is generally between 8:15 a.m. and 8:55 a.m. and drop-off between 3:35 and 4:15 p.m. One day a week, it is possible that the drop off will be slightly later due to bus conflicts with the Department of Education dismissal schedule. It is very important that a parent or caregiver is on time and waiting for the bus at the front door of the building.

DISMISSAL – At dismissal time parents are asked to wait in the lobby until classes are ready for dismissal. It is very important to be on time for dismissal. Teachers will not release a child to anyone without authorization from a parent. Please inform the teacher, by way of note, if someone other than you or your normal surrogate will be picking up your child. In case of an emergency, please call the office.

SNOW AND EMERGENCY – If school must be closed for inclement weather or due to an emergency, parents will be notified by telephone. A message will also be left on our agency voice mail indicating this closing.

FOOD

All children receive two snacks daily; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If you would like to volunteer to bring in a special snack, please speak to the teacher. We would be happy to have you share snack with us. All full day children should bring in a dairy lunch. As our agency maintains a Kosher policy (observance of Jewish dietary laws), we ask that no meat be brought into the classroom. Please refer to the guide below for suggestions of dairy lunches.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DAIRY LUNCHES

Bread, Pita, Roll, Bagel, Crackers

Tuna Fish, Egg Salad, Omelet

Hard Boiled Eggs, American Cheese

Cottage Cheese and Fruit

Macaroni and Cheese---Cheese Ravioli

Other Variety of Cheeses

Cream Cheese with Jelly

Spaghetti

Pasta Salad

Yogurt, Pudding, Jello

Canned Fruits, Applesauce (small)

Baked Potato

Fresh vegetables (bite size pieces... cucumber, pepper, cherry tomatoes or baby carrots)

Rice and Beans

Note:

***Please do not bring any PEANUT BUTTER. There are children with extreme allergic reactions.**

BIRTHDAYS

Parents are welcome to celebrate their child's birthday by bringing in cake, cupcakes, ice-cream or other treats to share with the class. In accordance with the school's Kosher policy, all packaged food must bear one of the following symbols:

(U) (K)

There are several kosher bakeries in the community. However, Entenmanns store-bought cakes are fine as well as some brands of ice-cream (Breyers, Turkey Hill). You may give out "goodie bags" but we request no candy please. Suggestions: a small item (plastic animal or book) or a balloon for each child.

CLOTHING

On the first day of school all children should bring with them an extra set of clothing in a small bag ...*each item labeled with the child's name on it*. This should include:

- Pants and shirt
- Underwear – underpants and socks
- Sweater or sweatshirt

Full Day children should also bring for Rest time:

- A small blanket that will fit in the cubby
- One favorite stuffed animal that may help your child to relax

Please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothing so that he/she can participate fully in our program. We teach the children to be independent. Please send them to school in clothing so they can dress themselves. Belts or pants with difficult fasteners make it hard for the children to use the bathroom without help.

* We prefer sneakers for gross motor play. Sandals and flip flops can be dangerous and hinder development of gross motor skills.

VERY IMPORTANT

Please make sure all clothing is clearly marked with your child's nameespecially winter jackets and sweaters.

COMMUNICATION

Open communication between staff and parents is what has always helped to make the Y Nursery Program most successful. We want to know what we do well and what we could do better. Please share your impressions with the teachers.

In addition, we want to know if anything special or unusual is happening at home that may affect your child's behavior in school. We will send weekly notices home informing you of what is going on in the classroom. To that end, we ask you to provide a **hard cover composition notebook** to be carried with your child back and forth to school each day in his or her backpack. Please make sure the backpack is big enough to hold this notebook with space for other things as well. Please do remember to look in the notebook every night for notices, personal notes or flyers.

We are always available to hear your concerns. Below is a list of telephone extensions which may be used to reach individual staff members.

Michael Fermaglich	Associate Executive Director	ext 210
Susan Herman	Nursery School Director	ext 224
Nursery School Teachers		ext 224
Rick Justiniano	Registrar	ext 200

Y NURSERY PARENTS COMMITTEE

The Y Nursery School's Parent's Committee works to support the school and the school's administration through the volunteer efforts of its members. It also acts as a conduit for information between the parents and the school administration.

The Committee has three primary components, Fundraising, Curriculum and Event Planning.

The fundraising component is used to develop "wish lists" for projects, works with the administration on large infrastructure projects that fall outside of the Y's general operating fund, and on events to help fund these projects. The committee may investigate grants, but grant applications must be reviewed and approved by the Y administration.

The curriculum component is used to gather feedback on and ideas for classroom programs. These suggestions are forwarded to the school's administration for consideration.

The event planning component is used to suggest and investigate events and trips for the Nursery school. The subcommittee also works on event planning, including scheduling, staffing and publicity for fundraising events.

The entire Committee meets every 6-8 weeks; smaller groups may meet between and report back at meetings of the entire Parent's Committee.

Interested parents should send a message to sherman@ywashhts.org

TUITION PAYMENT DATES

The following are the due dates for Nursery School payments. Tuition may also be paid in advance by check or credit card.

Registration Fee: \$500

May 18, 2007- Sept.-Oct., 2007 + June, 2008 + Y Family membership

October 26, 2007: November/December 2007-January/ February 2008

Due February 29, 2008: March 2008-May, 2008.

Transportation is billed monthly.

NURSERY SCHOOL CALENDAR 2007-2008

2007

September 4	Tuesday	First day of school (partial class day)
September 5	Wednesday	Second day of school (partial class day)
September 6	Thursday	Half day-3 yr olds; Full day-4 yr olds
September 7	Friday	Half day-3 yr olds; Full day-4 yr olds
September 10	Monday	Transportation begins; Full day everyone
September 12	Wednesday	Erev Rosh Hashanah-no transportation home (close at 3:30)
September 13	Thursday	CLOSED Rosh Hashanah
September 14	Friday	CLOSED Rosh Hashanah
September 21	Friday	Erev Yom Kippur-no transportation home- (close at 3:30)
September 27	Thursday	CLOSED Sukkot
September 28	Friday	CLOSED Sukkot
October 4	Thursday	CLOSED Sukkot
October 5	Friday	CLOSED Sukkot
October 8	Monday	CLOSED (COLUMBUS DAY)
November 6	Tuesday	REGULAR SCHOOL (Election Day)
November 12	Monday	CLOSED Veteran's Day observed
November 22	Thursday	CLOSED Thanksgiving
November 23	Friday	CLOSED Day after Thanksgiving
December 24 Through January 1, 2008	Monday Monday	CLOSED Winter Recess

2008 Cont.

January 21	Monday	CLOSED Martin Luther King Day
February 18 Through February 22	Monday Friday	CLOSED Mid-Winter Recess
March 21	Friday	CLOSED Good Friday
April 21 Through April 25	Monday Friday	CLOSED Spring Recess 2
May 26	Monday	CLOSED Memorial Day
June 9	Monday	Shavuot – CLOSED
June 10	Tuesday	Shavuot – CLOSED
June 13	Friday	Last day of regular school and transportation
June 19	Thursday	Last day for UPK