



Noroton Presbyterian Child Care Parent Handbook

2011 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820

www.npchildcare.org

#16373

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1. ABOUT NPCC

1a. Mission

Noroton Presbyterian Child Care (NPCC) is a ministry of Noroton Presbyterian Church that provides infant, toddler and preschool care and education.

We are committed to building a culture where curiosity, creativity and community are fostered, and where children learn and grow knowing they are welcomed, valued and treasured as members of our NPCC family.

1b. Philosophy

At Noroton Presbyterian Child Care, we believe that children are born with a natural curiosity about the world. We are committed to offering a welcoming learning community that supports each child as they develop; encouraging children to express themselves, explore their environment and build relationships. Our philosophy is grounded in the strengths of our NPCC community:

- Children – we empower children in their natural curiosity and creativity
- Staff – our diverse and dedicated staff places a strong emphasis on providing loving care and high quality education
- Families – we seek to support and partner with our families, building bridges between home and school that allows children to flourish across settings

We are committed to developmental and educational approaches that are based on research and best practice, and that invite wonder and joy into the classroom.

1c. Goals

- To support, respect and appreciate each child and family
- To support parents as partners in the care and teaching of their children
- To support children's social emotional growth in an environment that embraces kindness and friendship
- To provide a safe and healthy as well as nurturing and inspiring environment
- To provide materials that support children's learning in a playful and interesting way
- To provide a generous exposure to outdoor exploration
- To encourage creativity by offering experiences in music, art and literature, and dramatic play

- To encourage interest in language through games, stories and conversation
- To encourage confidence in experimentation and problem-solving

1d. Curriculum

NPCC Curriculum is loosely based on the Project Approach, with influence from other curriculum and philosophical approaches such as Reggio Emilia and Magda Gerber. We believe that children are natural learners, who are curious about the world around them, and who learn best when supported and encouraged to experiment and explore.

Children at NPCC follow a flexible daily schedule that meets the individual needs of our children and families, including those with cultural, language and developmental differences. The daily flexible schedule includes:

- The opportunity to express their own ideas and feelings through creative experiences in all parts of the program, including arts, dramatic play, music, language, motor activity,
- indoor and outdoor physical activities which provide opportunities for fine and gross motor development,
- Problem-solving experiences which facilitate concept formation, language development and sensory discrimination,
- Language experiences that provide opportunities for spontaneous conversation as well as experiences with poems, stories and songs,
- Experiences that promote self-reliance and build self-esteem
- Health education experiences include modeling good health practices, sound nutrition and safety awareness,
- Child-initiated and staff-initiated activities,
- Exploration and discovery,
- Varied choices in materials and equipment,
- Individual and small group activities,
- Active and quiet play,
- Rest, sleep or quiet activity,
- Meals and snacks,
- Toileting and clean up, and
- Navigating individual and group relationships.

1e. Communication

- Much of our parent communication takes place through Brightwheel, an app you can download on your phone. Parents use the app to sign their

child in and out each day, to view information about the events of their child's day, and to message NPCC. Messages posted on your child's Brightwheel account are visible to you, your child's classroom teachers, and administrators. There is also a messaging feature that allows for communication solely between parents and administration. Please feel free to post messages outside of center hours, however please be aware that NPCC staff may not respond to non-emergency messages until the following business day.

- Parents of children in the program will have daily opportunities at morning drop off and pick up to discuss the events of the child's day.
- Special conferences may be requested by the director, teachers, or child's parents as needed.
- To further foster whole family relationships, parents or guardians of children enrolled at NPCC are welcome to enter the facility at any time.
- You are always welcome to contact the office. You can reach the director, Beth Aparicio, at beth.aparicio@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5605 as well as the assistant director, Elizabeth Watson at elizabeth.watson@norotonchurch.org or 203-309-5652.
- We ask that you do not contact our staff by text via their personal phones. We prefer that all text communication happen via Brightwheel.
- You can also connect directly with the classrooms via phone or email. Direct phone lines can be used when you are unable to reach the office and you need to relay time-sensitive information to the teachers in your child's classroom, email can be used to send information such as pictures that cannot be sent via Brightwheel.
 - Infants: 203-309-5641; infants@norotonchurch.org
 - Toddler1: 203-309-5640; toddler1@norotonchurch.org
 - Toddler2: 203-309-5642; toddler2@norotonchurch.org
 - Preschool1: 203-309-5643; preschool1@norotonchurch.org
 - Preschool2: 203-309-5649; preschool2@norotonchurch.org

1f. Hours of Operation

- NPCC is open Monday through Friday, 8:00am – 5:30pm year round. Children may be dropped off and picked up at any time during our program hours.
- NPCC is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Day before Thanksgiving (half day- NPCC closes at noon), Thanksgiving Day,

Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. In addition, the program is closed the week of Fourth of July, the week between Christmas and New Year's, and four additional days for several professional development days throughout the year. For specific dates during the current year, please consult the NPCC calendar that is posted on our NPCC website at www.npchildcare.org. There may be additional days throughout the year when NPCC will close for weather or facility related reasons.

1g. Weather-Related Closures and Delays

- NPCC follows the lead of the Darien Public Schools (DPS) in the event of weather-related delays and closures. In the event that a weather-related delay or closure becomes necessary, NPCC will notify parents via Brightwheel. When DPS are closed due to inclement weather, NPCC is closed. If there is a delay of any length in the opening the DPS, NPCC will open at 9:30am. If there is an early closure of the DPS, or if NPCC deems an early closure necessary, NPCC will contact you via Brightwheel to inform you of the timing of our closing. As we have a longer day than DPS, the necessity and timing of early closures may vary. We ask you to respond so that we know you are aware of the early closing. On days that NPCC is scheduled to be in session and the DPS are scheduled to be closed, we will follow the lead of the Stamford Public schools if possible, or will make an independent decision if needed.
- NPCC does NOT follow the Darien Public Schools closings for vacation-related closings. NPCC is open 50 weeks/year.

1h. Entering and Exiting the Building

The NPCC entrance is located on the west side of the Noroton Presbyterian Church facility. Parking is accessible via Noroton Avenue or the Post Road. Once you are registered for the program, you will be given the security code to enter the building. This code will change each year, usually in the fall, in order to ensure safety. Parents are notified when the change occurs.

Please, for the safety of everyone in the program, do not share the code with your children, or allow children of any age to use the key pads. Please ensure that children are supervised when entering and exiting the building, especially when walking through the parking lot.

1i. Classrooms and Class Assignments

- NPCC operates five classrooms – Infants, Toddler1, Toddler2, Preschool1 and Preschool2.
- The Infant, Toddler1, and Toddler 2 rooms can hold up to eight children on any given day and are staffed at a minimum of a 1:4 ratio.
- The Preschool 1 room can hold up to 8 children and is staffed at a minimum of a 1:4 ratio unless all children are 3 years and up, at which point the room can be staffed with a single teacher if needed. Children must be 3 months old to enter the Infant room. Class assignments are otherwise not strictly based on age.
- The Preschool 2 classroom can hold up to 17 children and is staffed at a minimum of a 1:10 ratio. Children must be 3 years old (or 32 months with signed parent permission), and fully potty trained, in order to join the Preschool 2 room. The classroom holds a mix of 3 and 4 year olds with some children turning 5 during the course of the year.
- Class placements are done on a combination of an annual and rolling schedule. Many of our class placements are done using a yearly schedule, such that children will begin and end the year in the same class. There are also times when we will plan mid-year class changes, generally for children who are in between classes age-wise. We will discuss any changes with you at least a month ahead of time, and both you and your child will have the opportunity to meet the new teachers well before the scheduled transition.

1j. Staff

NPCC staff is hired on the basis of their childcare experience, responsibility and ability to care for and educate the children. Each staff member is given a handbook that describes our expectations of them and their daily responsibilities. A copy of this handbook is available in the office for your perusal. Staff is required by the state of Connecticut to receive continuing education credits while working at NPCC. Those who are working full time are required to attend 20 hours of continuing education throughout the year. Continuing education includes first aid training, CPR training, Epi-pen/Auvi-Q administration and other child development and child education topics. There are CPR/first aid trained personnel on site at all times for your child's safety.

1k. Daily Schedule

This flexible schedule varies depending on the developmental stage of the child and shared use of playground space in accord with state regulations:

8:00 – 9:30	Arrival and Free Play
9:30 – 10:15	Playground
10:15 – 10:30	Bathroom/Diapers
10:30 – 10:45	Snack
10:45-11:30	Activities/Projects
11:30 – 11:45	Bathroom/Diapers
11:45 – 12:00	Story/Music and Movement
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:00	Bathroom/Diapers
1:00 – 3:00	Rest/Nap
3:00 – 3:15	Bathroom/Diapers
3:15 – 3:30	Snack
3:30 – 4:30	Playground/Gym
4:30 – 5:30	Free Play and/or Games

Hand washing is a frequent and regular practice for the good health of our community.

1l. Noroton Presbyterian Church

NPCC is a ministry of Noroton Presbyterian Church, but is open to any member of our wider community, regardless of religious affiliation or belief. On occasion, you will receive information about NPC sponsored events in your child's tote bag. Please accept our warm welcome to attend any service or program. NPC's pastoral staff is available to serve you.

1m. Noroton Presbyterian Nursery School

For information about shared day programs between NPCC and NPNS, please contact the NPCC office.

2. REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

2a. Registration

- In order to register for the program, you must submit a completed waiting list registration form along with a \$75 registration fee. You will then be

added to the waiting list if space is currently unavailable, or you may proceed straight to enrollment.

- If there is space available for your child, we ask that you schedule a time to come and tour the program. Scheduling a visit gives you the opportunity to see the classrooms and talk with us in more detail about the program. Since we do not offer a provisional enrollment period, we want you to be comfortable that NPCC will be a good fit for your family.
- We do allow registration for children prior to their birth following the same procedure above. Should we have the availability to offer you a contract, we will hold your space free of charge until your child is three months old and eligible to attend NPCC. Your first month's tuition is due with your signed contract - this is credited to your account for the month when your child turns three months old, but is a non-refundable payment should you decide to withdraw from the program prior to that time.

2b. Waiting List

- In cases when space is unavailable, children will be placed on a waiting list. Enrollment will then take place as space becomes available.
- NPCC reserves the right to offer space to wait listed families in a way that meets the needs of the current families within the program and prioritizes admissions based on the criteria below:
 1. Siblings of children already in the program (this includes new infants born to current families - but please note that we cannot guarantee space will be available)
 2. Children of NPC, NPCC, and NPNS staff members
 3. Siblings of children who have attended NPCC in the past
 4. Children of NPC members (beginning with children born in 2023)
 5. Families new to NPCC

2c. Enrollment

- Once the space you need becomes available, we will ask that you complete a more comprehensive packet of information, including a signed contract, Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record, Enrollment Form, Developmental History and Health Care Plan (if needed). These forms will need to be updated annually.
- NPCC contracts operate on a 12-month year that runs from the beginning of the fall until the end of the summer. Your annual contract specifies your

- schedule and rate for the current year. Your initial contract may vary in terms of start date, but will expire at the end of the upcoming summer.
- Contracts are updated on an annual basis as part of a process that begins in February, when you will be asked to update your enrollment information and schedule requests for the upcoming year. A \$75/child administrative fee is due at that time. Please read the mailing you receive at that time carefully, as it will reflect any policy or pricing adjustments that will go into effect in the fall.
 - Once you have received your contract, signed it, and returned it to us, your space and rate are guaranteed for the upcoming year.
 - Current children are guaranteed their place in the program at their current schedule going into the upcoming year. Should you become pregnant after we have completed contracts for the year, we will do everything we can to offer a space to your baby, but we cannot guarantee that space will be available.
 - Families who joined NPCC prior to 2021 have the grandfathered ability to attend on an existing part-time schedule.
 - Those families may submit a request to add days to their contracted schedule. If the space you are requesting is available, we will amend your contract to reflect your new schedule and rate. If the space is not currently available, we will waitlist your child for the requested spot.
 - Individual add on days may also be requested by emailing the office up to one month in advance. We would be happy to accommodate your request if the space is available. Once we have confirmed add on day by email, the space is contractually yours, and payment is due with your next scheduled payment.

3. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3a. What to Bring

Please be sure to label everything! This is very important as it is not easy to identify your child's belongings and they might not be able to identify them for us. It is important to the health and safety of your children to keep all bottles, sippy cups, pacifiers, etc., separate from those of other children. Labels that are washing machine and dishwasher safe are available at

<http://www.namebubbles.com>. The following items are important to bring when attending NPCC:

- Diapers, wipes and diaper creams (as appropriate). Please note that all diaper creams must be accompanied by the appropriate completed permission form.
- Sippy cup/bottles (as needed).
- Lunch and two snacks packed in a lunch box. (NPCC is a nut-free facility; this includes both products with nuts and products that have been manufactured in a facility with nuts.) Food can be refrigerated and microwaved in the classroom.
- Bedding (sleep sack and pack and play size sheets for Infants; blankets and pack and play size sheets for Toddler1; blankets and crib size sheets for Toddler2, Preschool1 and Preschool2).
- Complete change of clothes appropriate for the season.
- Pacifiers without stuffed animal attachments (if needed).
- Comfort object (if needed).
- Sunscreen (when appropriate/permission slip required).
- Jacket, boots, hats, mittens and snow pants for wintertime outdoor play.
- Tote bag (no gym bags or backpacks) for each child should be brought daily.

Please-do not bring toys from home unless it is a comfort object to be used primarily at rest time.

3b. Arrivals and Departures

- NPCC opens at 8:00 am; we are flexible in terms of what time children arrive. The parent code only works during program hours and will not allow access to the building prior to 8:00 am or after 5:30 pm.
- Please use the Brightwheel app to sign your child in and out each day. Daily sign-in and sign-out is a state requirement. When picking your child up please be sure to gather all belongings, double checking for their lovey, if applicable.
- Children must be supervised by parents at all times in the hallways during pick up and drop off. Please do not allow your child to run in the hallways or to leave your side.
- For your child's protection, only persons authorized by the parent/guardian are permitted to take the child from the facility.
- Parents/guardians must list the names of anyone allowed to pick up the child on the Enrollment Form.

- Individuals listed in the child's file may be asked for photo identification to confirm their identity.
- If someone other than the listed individuals will be picking up your child, you must notify both the office and your child's teachers. This can be done easily by sending a Brightwheel message. Staff will ask for photo identification before the child is handed over to them.
- In the case of court-ordered custody decisions that would affect drop off or pickup, documentation must be on file.
- Please notify NPCC via Brightwheel if, due to some emergency, you are unable to pick up your child on time. Overtime charges are detailed in the financial information section.
- NPCC is closed at 5:30 pm. This means all children must have left the building by 5:30 pm. Please plan to be here at least five minutes earlier to begin the process of getting your child ready to leave.
- Please note the following procedures and fees for late pick-ups: Two staff members 18 years of age or older will remain at the program with the child at all times. If the child has not been picked up by 5:30, a staff person will attempt to call the child's parents using the numbers provided. If they cannot be reached, the staff person will attempt to call the emergency contacts, alternate adults provided by the parent at the time of enrollment. The police will be called after ninety minutes if parents or other adults specified on the permission to release forms cannot be reached. At that time the child may be released to the police. The non-emergency number for our local police department is 203-662-5300. Parents will be charged \$10 for each five minutes that they are late.

3c. Absences

Please use your child's Brightwheel feed to notify us if your child will be absent; be sure to note whether the absence is illness related, including symptoms or diagnosis if applicable.

3d. Meals and Snacks

- Please have your child eat breakfast prior to coming to school in the morning.
- Please send your child with lunch and two snacks. All food must be nut free (including avoiding food packaged in a facility that may also process nuts) and adhere to choking safety guidelines.

- Parents are welcome to bring a special snack for their child's birthday or other special events, must tell the classroom teachers ahead of time what they will be bringing, and provide a complete list of ingredients. The other parents in the classroom will be given this information and asked to provide either permission for their child to have the special snack, or to provide an alternative snack for their child. Due to the risk of cross contamination with potential allergens, all snacks must be store-bought.
- Please pack all food in a reusable lunch bag. Food will be stored in a refrigerator in the classroom and can be reheated as needed. All uneaten food will be sent home so that parents can see how much their child has eaten.
- Water will always be available throughout the day.
- Please send one sippy cup for water (we will refill as needed through the day). You are welcome to send a second sippy cup of milk or juice if you would like. Please make sure that any milk substitutes are nut free.
- Please send infants with pre-filled bottles for the day packed in a lunch bag. We will refrigerate the bottles until they are ready to be warmed and served.

3e. Naps and Rest

- Rest time is generally from 1:00pm to 3:00pm for all rooms, with an additional morning nap in the infant room for those children who need it.
- Children who no longer nap, or who take shorter naps, will use the time to rest quietly on their cots.
- Please provide a fitted sheet (pack and play sized for the Infant and Toddler1 rooms, crib sized for our older children in the Toddler 2, Preschool1 and Preschool 2 rooms). Children over 12 months may also use a blanket and a lovey. Children under 12 months may use a swaddle or sleep sack.
- Bedding will be sent home on Fridays to be laundered, or earlier in the week if it becomes soiled.

3f. Field Trips

- NPCC offers occasional field trips. In many instances these are "walking" field trips, with no vehicular transportation involved. Parents will be asked to sign a permission slip for their child to leave our facility grounds.
- If a field trip is outside of walking distance, parents will be asked to drive. Children will bring a car seat to school. Only qualified adults that are

insured and licensed drivers will transport children. Drivers will follow all pertinent laws and will not use cell phones at any time while in the vehicle. Children will always be in proper seats and seat belts. Children will not be left unattended. Upon returning from each trip, cars will be inspected to ensure that no child is still on board. A separate permission slip will be needed if you will be transporting children.

- Children who do not have a signed permission on file may not participate in the planned field trip.

3g. Files

- Please remember to provide us with all current information - addresses, phone numbers, work phone numbers, immunizations, emergency phone numbers, etc.
- If information (including medical information) is requested for the child's file, and is not received, care may be discontinued.

3h. Clothing

- Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable for a variety of active, and sometimes messy, activities as well as outdoor play. It is best practice and our policy for the older children to be outside twice daily, weather permitting.
- Please make sure your child has at least one change of clothes that is weather appropriate and can be stored in the classroom.
- Mark your child's name clearly on all articles of clothing.
- Tennis shoes or some other comfortable shoes are preferred for daily activities and playing, both in and out of doors.
- As the weather changes, be sure to send sweaters, jackets, coats, gloves, hats, boots, etc. as warranted. For younger children, please consider sending mittens or gloves that are on a string or can be clipped to your child's winter coat.
- We will ask parents to provide sunscreen during the warmer months. Children should come to school with sunscreen having been applied at home; we will re-apply after rest time. Sunscreen must be labelled, non-expired, and accompanied by an authorization form.

3i. Toys and Electronics

- NPCC offers a variety of toys and materials for the children to play with. Please do not bring toys from home to NPCC except when permission is given from their teacher (i.e. show and tell) or as a lovey for napping.
- Electronic devices (i.e. phones, gaming systems, tablets, laptops) are not allowed.

3j. Lost and Found

- Items from home can easily get misplaced or placed in the wrong tote bags. Please be sure to label all your child's possessions - coats, sweatshirts, gloves, hats, sippy cups, food containers, etc.
- Please check with your child's teacher if an item comes up missing but know that NPCC is not responsible for items that have been misplaced.

3k. Photographs of children

From time to time, NPCC uses photographs of children engaged in activities to promote awareness of the program. Photographs could appear in church publications, area newspapers, our website, etc. Additionally, NPCC has an active Instagram account that is open only to parents. You will receive pictures of your child, both individually and as part of a group, on a daily basis via the Brightwheel app. While you are free to re-post individual pictures of your child, we ask that you refrain from re-posting pictures that include other children. If you would prefer your child not to be included in any of the above, please see the director in person, and we will be happy to honor your specific wishes.

4. Health and Safety

4a. Communicable Diseases

- Staff members are trained in the signs and symptoms of illnesses and in proper hand washing procedures to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- Every means will be taken to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Please do not send your child if he/she is ill or has been ill in the last 24 hours. If your child is too ill to go outside or participate in activities with their class, they are too ill to attend. Similarly, if your child has been ill and

needed medication overnight, they should not attend school the following day.

- Parents are expected to have the child picked up within 30 minutes of being notified that the child is ill to minimize the spread of illness. Please have a backup plan available if you will be unable to pick your child up within that time frame.
- Children should be free of all symptoms for 24 hours, without medication, or have a note from the doctor stating that return is permissible; specifically including the diagnosis explaining the symptom and stating that the child is not contagious to others before returning to NPCC.
- If a staff member has a communicable illness, parents will be notified. A substitute caregiver will be assigned in their place as needed.

4b. Illness Related Exclusion and Return to School Criteria

NPCC is committed to providing a healthy environment for all children. Individuals who are not feeling well should be kept at home. Individuals will be sent home, or should be kept at home, if they exhibit any of the following symptoms or health-related reasons:

- 1. Fever of 100.0F or higher** – Individuals should not be given any fever reducing medication, regardless of the reason for administration, within 24 hours of attending NPCC. An individual must be symptom and medication free for at least 24 hours to attend. If a mild fever is detected by temporal or ear reading (which can be less accurate than readings at home or a doctor's office) while your child is at NPCC, we will evaluate for additional signs of illness or discomfort to determine whether pick up is needed or additional monitoring is warranted. Should this occur, parents will be notified via Brightwheel and are welcome to pick up earlier than required.
- 2. Unexplained Rash** - Unexplained rash does not include diaper rash. Unexplained rash must be evaluated by a physician and determined to be non-contagious. In many instances, physicians can complete this process after viewing a picture provided by NPCC or parents.
- 3. Vomiting** – Individuals must be home after a single incidence of vomiting. They may return once they are symptom free for at least 24 hours with at least one meal eaten.
- 4. Diarrhea** – Individuals must be home after three incidences of loose stool. An individual may return once symptom free and medication free for at least 24 hours or with doctor's clearance (a signed note stating the

diagnosis responsible for the diarrhea and that the child is not contagious).

5. **Infected Bites** - Bug bites often itch, causing the child to scratch and possibly infect the bite; this can result in a problem called Impetigo, which is infectious to others. An individual may return to NPCC 48 hours after beginning treatment or once the sores have dried and healed.
6. **Ringworm** – An individual may return 24 hours after treatment.
7. **Head Lice** – An individual with head lice may return to school after treatment.
8. **Conjunctivitis** - An individual may return 24 hours after their first dose of medication if they are symptom free.
9. **Chicken Pox** – An individual may return once the blisters have dried, and they are no longer infectious.
10. **Casts, splints, stitches or staples** – Individuals may return if they have obtained a doctor's release to participate in both indoor and outdoor school activities and the director's approval.
11. **Covid and/or Household Exposure to Covid** – Please refer to our Covid policy outlined in section 4c. Policy around symptoms associated with Covid is subject to change dependent upon community transmission levels, the potential emergence of new variants, and updated public health guidance.
12. **Respiratory Diseases** – Individuals that have a persistent cough that interferes with their ability to eat, sleep or play comfortably, that is accompanied by a fever, and/or causes difficulty breathing must be evaluated by a physician for the possibility of a respiratory disease including RSV, Covid, Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Flu. Return date for these respiratory diseases (other than Covid) should be determined by the doctor making the diagnosis.
13. **Additional Infectious Diseases other than Covid** – Individuals must be symptom free and medication free for at least 24 hours or a doctor's note clearing attendance must accompany the child on their return to NPCC. A full list of covered conditions is available through the CT Department of Health.
14. **An individual's state mandated health paperwork, vaccinations, and/or medications are out of date.** All individuals must have a completed and up-to-date Connecticut Health Assessment Record on file. Any individual with a medical condition requiring specific care at school must have an up-to-date care plan and non-expired medication. All children over six

months must have proof of a flu shot as of December 1, unless a notarized medical exemption has been filed. Please note that the state of Connecticut is no longer allowing religious exemptions for flu shots or any other immunizations in school or childcare settings.

In any of the above circumstances, NPCC must be informed of the reason for the absence within 24 hours, and all criteria for return to school must be met prior to the child coming back to NPCC.

4c. Covid-Related Policies

Please note that all Covid-related policies described below are current as of October 2023 and are subject to change.

4ci. Testing

- In any situation where testing is either required or recommended, both PCR and rapid tests are acceptable.
- In cases where rapid test results need to be reported, please take a picture of the completed test that also shows the child's name and the date the test was administered (this can be added to the picture electronically, or you may hand write the information and include both the documentation and the test in the same image).
- Test results may be posted on your child's Brightwheel feed or emailed to the office.
- Children who are exhibiting signs of Covid should be tested at home as needed. Please factor in potential out-of-school exposure in your decision to test based on symptoms and follow our exposure-based day 5 testing for asymptomatic children based on their level of exposure when that exposure occurs outside of home or school. As NPCC cannot track out-of-school exposure, testing as appropriate is the responsibility of parents. NPCC reserves the right to require negative test results prior to attendance in response to changing variables (i.e., mild symptoms during times of higher community transmission).

4cii. Classroom Exposure

If there is a case of Covid reported in the classroom, a notification will be sent via Brightwheel. The classroom will remain open; children may continue to attend as usual as long as they are symptom-free but will need to test on the morning of day 5 and submit test results prior to coming to school.

4ciii. Household Exposure

- All household exposures are considered high intensity, and more caution is therefore required.

- Children living in a home with a test positive individual may continue to attend NPCC as long as:
 - The test positive individual is isolated from the child
 - The child is symptom free
 - The child tests on the following schedule and remains negative:
 - Day 0 (the day the positive case is identified, and the child is isolated from the individual), day 3, and day 5.
- If there is a second case in the household, the above process begins again based on the exposure from the second case.
- All exposures must be reported to NPCC.

4civ. Positive Cases

- If a child tests positive, they will need to isolate for 5-10 days, with day 0 being the first day of symptoms, or in asymptomatic cases, the day they tested positive.
- After day 5, the child may return to school when they meet all of the following criteria:
 - test negative on a rapid test the morning of day 6 (if that test is positive, the child should isolate for day 6 and 7, and test again the morning of day 8, returning to school on day 8 if the second test is negative, and isolating for the remainder of the 10 days if the second test is still positive)
 - have been fever-free for 24 hours without medication
 - are otherwise feeling well
- Experience has shown that individual circumstances are often very complicated and do not fit neatly into a preset guideline. In cases where there are questions about implementing the policy, we will rely on our nurse consultant in making the final determination about return criteria.

4cv. Classroom Closures

Classroom closures are not part of our normal operating procedure in response to a positive case of Covid within the classroom community. As with all Covid-related policies, this is subject to change if deemed necessary. NPCC reserves the right to close classrooms in the event of overwhelming staff illness or due to contagious disease but will make every effort to avoid needing to do so.

4d. Immunizations and Physical Exam

- At least two weeks prior to your child's first day of attendance, NPCC will need a current copy of your child's physical (Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment). In order to attend, the form must indicate that your child is up to date on their immunizations and has medical clearance to

attend. All necessary paperwork and medications for health-related needs must be on file and approved by our nurse consultant.

- As your child receives new immunizations and/or has updated physicals, please update the record on file in the NPCC office.
- A copy of the Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment form must be on file and current within 12 months (based on date of exam) at all times.
- Immunization exemptions are allowable for medical reasons only and must have proper documentation on file to be approved by state consultant.
- If your child's health assessment record indicates an allergy or medical condition that requires medication or a treatment plan, the required medication and forms must be completed and up to date for your child to attend.

4e. Medication

Our staff is trained to administer the following prescribed medications when ordered by your child's physician:

- Epi-Pen or Auvi-Q by injection.
- Benadryl or other Antihistamine by mouth.
- Tylenol or other fever reducing medications by mouth when part of a health care plan ordered to prevent an emergency situation (for example, a child with a history of febrile seizures)
- Inhaler for Asthma.
- Special prescription creams and ointments which will assist the child in being more comfortable while at NPCC, such as creams and ointments for Eczema or Diaper Rash.

If your child's Early Childhood Health Assessment Record indicates an allergy or asthma, we are required by the state to have the following:

- An Authorization for the Administration of Medication by Child Day Care Personnel as well as an Emergency Care Plan which substantiates permission from the parent and authorized prescriber and describes the specific steps to take in an emergency.
- A Medication Administration Record is provided by our program in order to document when the medication was administered.
- Medication must be properly labeled with prescription label, a child safety cap where applicable, and in its unopened, original container.

Please note the expiration date prior to bringing in the medication, as it will need to be replaced prior to expiring.

- All paperwork must be fully completed, signed, and up to date, with medication matching the prescription order in name and dosage. Paperwork that is incomplete, unsigned, out of date, or that does not match the medication provided cannot be accepted.

Teachers will follow the procedures for administration as outlined in the Connecticut Nurses Association Medical Administration Manual.

Our staff is also able to administer non-medicated topical medications (such as diaper creams and non-prescription sun protectants). In order to do so, we will need the following:

- An Authorization for of Non-Prescription Topical Medication by Child Care Staff must be fully completed before our staff can apply non-medicated diaper creams or sun protectants.
- The non-prescription medication must arrive unopened and labeled with the child's full name.
- Creams that contain certain active ingredients such as hydrocortisone are considered medicated even if they are available for purchase over the counter, and must be handled per the prescription medication protocol, but without requiring an emergency care plan.

We believe that a child who is ill and who needs over the counter medications such as Tylenol, cough medications, etc., will be more comfortable at home. We do not administer this type of medication (unless it is part of an emergency care plan).

Children needing eye drops, ear drops, antibiotics or other medications should be kept at home, or parents may provide the medication at home prior to coming or after leaving NPCC. In the event that a child needs a dose of such medications during the day, a parent is welcome to come administer the medication here.

4f. Ongoing Medical Issues

- If a child has a medical issue that is reoccurring, such as a rash, runny eyes, or frequent vomiting, NPCC must have documentation from a physician stating that the issue is not contagious and that the child may attend when symptoms are present.
- If documentation of the medical issue does not exist, the condition will be treated as a potential communicable disease and the child will be excluded until documentation is presented.

4g. Food Allergies and Choking Hazards

Food allergies are a potential safety risk to the children in our care. Reactions can range from mild to life threatening. Nuts and nut products are NOT allowed at NPCC. This includes peanuts, peanut butter, nut-based dairy substitutes, nut-based granola bars, Nutella, etc. as well as any products that have been manufactured in a facility with nuts.

On your NPCC registration form we ask you about your child's allergies. This information is then posted on a Medical Alert List for the teachers so that they can control snack sharing and avoid potential reactions. Please alert us if your child has an allergy and send your child with the appropriate medications and paperwork as required by the state of Connecticut.

There are a number of foods that, prepared in certain ways, present a choking risk to young children. Please do not send your children with the following: popcorn, hard pretzels, raisins and hard or gooey candy. Additionally, please cut the following foods before packing: grapes, hot dogs, cheese sticks, marshmallows, and raw vegetables.

4h. Emergency Drills and Plans of Action

- Emergency Procedures, including fire evacuation and severe weather plans, are posted in every classroom, bathrooms and hallway.
- Emergency Drills are held monthly and at varying times: fire drills are held eight times a year, lockdown drills are held twice a year, and severe weather drills are held twice a year.

4i. Relocation of Children in the Event of Building Emergency

- In the event of a major emergency, such as a fire or other event that would make the building unsafe, the children will be escorted out of the building.
- The children will be moved to the NPCC playground if that provides enough distance to ensure safety.
- Children may be taken to the SHAC (the red building at the north end of the property) or the Lawrence Funeral Home on the Post Rd, if one of those locations better ensures safety.
- Parents will be notified that they must pick their children up immediately and be informed of the location and process to do so.

4j. Safety, Incidents and Accidents

- Environmental safety begins with a clean environment, free of germs and viruses. NPCC classrooms are swept, vacuumed, and wet mopped daily; Toys, furniture and other equipment used by children are cleaned and disinfected when they become soiled or contaminated.
- Our goal is to provide the safest environment possible for the children in our care. Teachers are trained to be alert to what is going on around them and to continually scan the room for potentially harmful play. Even so, incidents and accidents can occur, and we have procedures to deal with them:
 - The staff member who has observed the accident will fill out the incident report on Brightwheel.
 - In non-emergency instances, the staff will provide on-site first aid.
 - If the child requires medical attention, the parent will be called, informed of the injury, and asked to pick up the child.
 - If the injury requires immediate medical attention, 911 will be called and parents will be informed immediately.
 - Parents are asked to report any instances of the child being treated by a physician, clinic or hospital.

4k. Environmental Safety and Air Quality

While outdoor play is an important part of our everyday schedule, we want to be sure children are not exposed to unhealthy air. We utilize airnow.gov to determine if and for how long children will be outdoors. When Darien is in the red zone, children will remain indoors. In the orange zone, classes may go outside for shortened playground times. In the yellow zone, classes may be outside, but children will be monitored for signs of discomfort, especially for children with known asthma. As the index changes frequently throughout the day, numbers will be continually monitored and children will be moved indoors as necessary.

4l. Discipline Policy

Noroton Presbyterian Child Care (NPCC) believes that discipline should be handled in a positive way. Techniques such as setting clear limits, emphasizing positive behavior, and redirection will be used. Children will be taught and encouraged to look for positive ways to solve problems, manage their emotions, and ask for what they need.

We want our children to understand that they are loved and accepted unconditionally, and to learn to interact with others in a kind and cooperative way. Children will be continuously supervised by staff during any disciplinary action.

Staff will not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. Staff will not physically restrain children unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people. If behavior becomes disruptive or threatening to others, the child may be temporarily removed from the group and assisted in calming down. If a child engages in a potentially harmful behavior, such as biting, hitting, or throwing toys, a teacher will calmly engage the child one on one and explain why the behavior is unacceptable and help the child come up with alternate solutions. In the event that the behavior continues, an incident report will be filled out for the parents to read and sign. The teacher, administrators, and parents will work together to come up with a plan of action to avoid further such incidents.

4m. Biting

Biting is a natural developmental stage that is usually a time-limited phase. It is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. The safety of the children at the center is our primary concern.

Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or be overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. We encourage the children to "use their words" as best they are able if they become angry or frustrated and the staff members maintain a close and constant supervision of the children at all times.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs:

- The biting will be interrupted with a calm and firm directive.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water.
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident via Brightwheel, and the confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.

- The child that has bitten will be shadowed by a teacher for the subsequent three days, or longer if necessary, and regularly offered a chewy teether.

Biting is less common in older children and will be handled as a behavioral issue under our discipline policy as opposed to a developmental stage.

4n. Potty Training

In most instances, potty training takes place while children are in our Toddler2 classroom. If you are thinking about starting earlier, or holding off later than that, please come and talk with NPCC administration. Below is a little bit of information about approaching potty training, but please feel free to talk to your child's teachers or the office in person as well!

- Potty training should begin at home when you see signs that your child is both ready and interested. You will want to have several days at home where you can focus on potty training - at minimum a long weekend, but preferably 4 or 5 days.
- When your child returns to school, they must be wearing at least one of the following: underwear, pull-ups or diapers. Some families opt to send their child in underwear with a pull-up or diaper on top. Please do not send your child in underwear only if they are having multiple accidents through the day. If they are still early in the potty-training process, you'll want to keep them home a bit longer and keep working on it, or else send them in pull-ups.
- Potty training includes more than just using the potty - children need to be able to navigate getting clothes on and off, getting on and off the toilet, and washing and drying their hands. You can help by sending your child in clothes that are easy to get on and off and having them use a similar set up at home in the bathroom to what we have here (a standard-sized toilet with a step stool and a child-sized seat insert).
- One of the differences between home and school is that our bathrooms are not attached to the classrooms (or playgrounds), and that children must be accompanied by an adult. That means that another part of potty training for our children is having them be able to tell us they need to use the bathroom, and to do so with enough lead time to make sure we are able to work within staffing ratios to take them. This can mean asking several friends to accompany them, and getting four toddlers to stop an

activity and walk to the bathroom doesn't always happen instantaneously!

- Having accidents is a natural part of the potty training process, and may happen at school for a little longer than they do at home so we ask that you provide several extra changes of clothes and plenty of clean underwear for the first few weeks. If accidents are creating sanitary concerns in the classroom (multiple accidents that require more than minimal clean up), we may ask you to provide diapers or pull-ups until the child remains clean and dry for a period of time (usually two weeks). We are committed to limiting any sanitary concerns in the classroom setting.
- Please take your child to the bathroom when you arrive at school. If you are sending pull-ups, please make sure they have side close tabs. In most cases, children will use pull-ups at rest time for a while regardless of what they are wearing during the rest of the day.
- Children must be fully potty trained in order to move into our Preschool2 classroom, although pull-ups may be used during rest time. A child who is fully potty trained is able to do the following:
 - Verbally request that they be taken to the bathroom.
 - Be able to wait several minutes as staff helps them to the rest room.
 - Pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance, get on and off the potty, and wipe themselves after using the toilet.
 - Wash and dry hands.
 - Stay clean and dry throughout the day.
- The Preschool2 room is not equipped or staffed for cleaning up accidents. We will talk with you at least a month ahead of a planned transition to the Preschool2 room to make sure you are comfortable that your child will be fully potty trained by that time. Children who are not fully potty trained by the time they are scheduled to be in the Preschool2 room may need to be home until the process is completed and they are ready to join the class. Should a child in the Preschool2 room have more than three accidents within 30 days, NPCC will consider the child not yet potty trained, and may ask you to keep your child home for a period of time (usually three to five days) to complete training.
- We do not use food or candy as rewards at school, and typically find that we don't need stickers, etc. - most children thrive on encouragement, praise, and high fives!

4o. Mandated Reporting

NPCC staff is mandated by law to receive child abuse detection and prevention training. NPCC staff is required by law to immediately notify the local child protection agency if they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.

5. FINANCIAL

5a. Tuition

- NPCC reserves the right to change fees annually.
- Base rate for the 2024-2025 program year is \$2030 per month.
- Annual administrative fee is \$75 per child.
- Late pick-up fee is \$10 for each five minutes.
- Sibling discount: full price for first child, 10% off for additional children.
- Staff discount: please contact the NPCC office for information about discounts available to NPC, NPNS, and NPCC staff.
- Initial registration fee is \$75 per child.
- Payments may be made by credit card, by check (made out to NPCC) or by using PayPal via the "Online Payments" link on the "Parents" tab of our website - www.npchildcare.org
- The first tuition payment for new families is due with your signed contract as a non-refundable deposit.
- All tuition payments are due on the first of each month, one month prior to the month of attendance, regardless of your child's attendance.

5b. Billing

- Statements will be emailed on the last business day of the month and will show fees billed and paid during the month, as well as fees due on the first day of the new month.
- Fees are based on the space being available to your child, not on their attendance (or lack thereof).
- We understand your family may have scheduled vacations during days that NPCC is open. One week of vacation time has been factored into your tuition; no additional paperwork or notice is required.

5c. Termination of Care

NPCC reserves the right to terminate childcare for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Non-payment in excess of 45 days.
- Failure to complete required forms or provide required medications.
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property by a child and/or parent that is not corrected by an improvement plan set by the director and the parents, or continued challenging behavior that is not resolved after utilizing available resources and that, at director discretion, indicates placement at NPCC is not in the best interest of either the child or the program.
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations.
- False information given by parent either verbally or in writing.

5d. Withdrawal from NPCC

- Written notice of withdrawal (from the program or from specific days in your contract) must be submitted 30 days in advance to the NPCC Director in order to terminate responsibility for monthly payments.
- Parents are responsible for all scheduled fees applying to the final thirty-day period.
- Should the final day of that period fall in the middle of the month, fees for that month will be pro-rated.
- Should a withdrawal occur between March and August, it will be applied to both current and upcoming contracts.

RESPONSIBILITIES

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

General Work Habits – Provides reliable and responsible general work habits.

1. Arrives on time.
2. Follows procedures for requesting time off.
3. Maintains hygienically clean and orderly classroom.
4. Monitors classroom for safety concerns.
5. Follows program mission
6. Follows program philosophy.
7. Open to new ideas.
8. Flexible when necessary.
9. Maintains a calm, positive attitude.
10. Maintains state mandated ratios and provides continual supervision of children.
11. Uses phone for work use only when in the presence of children.
12. Follows all policies and procedures.

Attitude and Skills with Parents – Develops partnerships with parents, communicating daily.

1. Approachable and available.
2. Tactful with negative information.
3. Listens and responds well.
4. Maintains confidentiality.
5. Seeks parent partnerships.
6. Uses Brightwheel to communicate with parents, providing photos and videos that demonstrate the learning, development and caretaking of the children.

Attitude and Skills with Co-Workers – Works cooperatively with teaching staff.

1. Friendly and respectful.
2. Assumes fair share of work.
3. Shares ideas and materials.
4. Approaches criticism with a learning attitude.
5. Provides coverage in other classrooms when needed.

Attitude and Skills with Children – Provides high quality childcare to the children of NPCC, with focused attention on their care, safety, development and education.

1. Demonstrates warmth and affection.
2. Uses an appropriate voice.
3. Bends low to the children.
4. Shows respect for individuals.
5. Encourages independence.
6. Limits interventions.
7. Avoids stereotyping and labeling.
8. Practices positive, constructive discipline.
9. Observes children regularly.
10. Implements developmentally appropriate activities.

11. Demonstrates knowledge of child development.

Attitude and Effort toward Professional Development – Completes professional development requirements as defined by state regulations.

1. Seeks improvement.
2. Participates in staff meetings and workshops.
3. Meets regulatory requirements regarding annual training.
4. Sets goals for self-development.

CLASSROOM RESPONSIBILITIES:

Teaching and Classroom Management – Creating an inviting, inclusive environment with attention to developmentally appropriate routines, engaging project work, and social emotional growth.

1. Creates an inviting environment that reflects current project work.
2. Contributes to project brainstorming web and weekly learning plans.
3. Utilizes the Project Approach to provide a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
4. Documents student learning in portfolios, the classroom, and hallway.
5. Appropriate role model.
6. Anticipates problems and redirects.
7. Prepares daily.
8. Handles transitions well.
9. Maintains records of accidents, illness, and medication administration.

Classroom Organization – Maintains a dynamic and orderly classroom environment with a variety of learning opportunities.

1. Sets up a creative, orderly environment with clearly defined developmentally appropriate activity centers.
2. Provides a wide variety of choices with hands-on discover learning.
3. Offers a balance of developmentally appropriate materials, toys and books for active and quiet play.
4. Plans opportunities for children to play independently or with peers.
5. Provides opportunities for self-expression and imagination.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

Attitude and Skills toward Program Goals – Supports the growth of the program by embracing program initiatives.

1. Implements the Project Approach
 - a. Topics – avoid cookie cutter topics; focuses on the childrens' interests.
 - b. Brainstorming Web – completes web along with teaching peers and/or children.
 - c. Lesson Plans - Implements creative ways to teach skills and/or concepts and facilitates developmentally appropriate activities.
2. Implements the Conscious Discipline Approach

- a. Structures (i.e. Friends and Family Board, Visual Rules and Routines, Classroom Jobs, Words have Power, Safe Space, Safekeeper, School Family Rituals, Ways to be Helpful, Celebrations, We Care, and Class Meetings) that are applicable to your classroom.
- b. Phrases (STAR, Did you like it?, You did it!, That was so helpful!, You have a choice!, You were hoping...) used by the Conscious Discipline approach.
- c. Powers (Perception, Attention, Unity, Free Will, Acceptance, Love and Intention) used by the Conscious Discipline approach.
- d. Skills (Composure, Assertiveness, Encouragement, Choices, Empathy, Positive Intent, Consequences) used by the Conscious Discipline approach.

