

2011

Parent Handbook





Welcome to The Seed!

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We hope this handbook will help you become acquainted with our policies and with day-to-day life at The Seed. It addresses parents' most frequently asked questions, so we ask you to keep it handy for easy reference.

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Philosophy and Mission Statement

Children are like tender seeds. They need continuous, loving care to grow and blossom.

We strive to provide a warm, cozy environment in which children feel happy and secure while engaged in a variety of stimulating age-appropriate learning activities. We give special attention to each child's needs and interests as well as their social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Goals and Objectives

First and foremost, The Seed wants parents to feel peace of mind when they entrust their children to our care, knowing that we support them in the complex and challenging task of raising a young child in today's world.

Everyone at The Seed strives to provide an environment where each child can progress at his or her own pace, and where each child will feel engaged, challenged, and supported in their learning.

Program Staff

The Seed is headed by an Administrative Director and an Educational Director who hold Master's degrees in education with a specialization in early childhood education. Both directors are permanently certified teachers in New York State. They have both received additional training in day care administration and supervision.

Our teaching staff consists of Coordinators/Head Teachers, Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and Substitutes. Eleven of our full-time teachers hold Master's degrees in Early Education and permanent Teacher Certification in New York State. All of our teachers, teacher assistants, and substitutes have been formally trained in Early Childhood Education and are experienced in working with young children.

All teaching staff, regardless of their previous training, are required to complete at least 30 hours of professional development every two years.

Every member of our staff has been fingerprinted and cleared by the State Central Register to work with young children. Each staff member is required to provide proof that they are in good health.

Admission Policies

The Seed is open to all children regardless of race, creed, national or ethnic origin.

All initial fees must be paid before a child is considered enrolled at The Seed. All forms in the tuition packet must be completed, signed, and on file before a child may begin attending The Seed.

If you choose to withdraw your child from The Seed, one month's notice is required. The initial deposit will be applied to that month, whether or not your child attends.

For safety and security reasons, your child will not be released to any person whom you have not previously authorized, in writing, to pick him or her up.



Tuition Policies

Tuition is due on the first day of each month. If tuition payments fall behind, a late fee is applied. If payment is not immediately forthcoming, your child will not be allowed to attend The Seed until such time as payment is brought up to date.

There is a \$60.00 annual administrative fee. This fee is nonrefundable.

In addition to the administrative fee, a one-month's deposit is required. This deposit will be kept in escrow and will be applied to the last month your child attends The Seed.

The Seed reserves the right to raise prices at any time.

Tuition has been prorated into 12 equal monthly payments per year. In July and August you may opt for regular monthly payments or the Session Plan.

Extra-day requests must be made beforehand and are subject to availability. There is a per diem charge. Switched days are subject to the same availability and pay-rate as extra days.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Parents may drop off or pick up their children at either of two security entrances, the *Little Flower*, at 2084 Baldwin Road or the *Blossom*, the big building at 2175 Crompond Road (Rte 202). *Sunshine Roomers* must be signed in and out through either of those two security check points.

Parents sign their children in electronically on the computer in the foyer, which gives them coded access to the classrooms. Parents are then required to accompany their child into the classroom.

Parents are strongly advised not to share their security code (PIN) with anyone, including their children. Persons whom parents have authorized to pick up their children may be given their own PIN, if parents so request.

The Seed staff members are not permitted to release a child to anyone whom the parents have not previously authorized, in writing, to pick up their child. A signed note in the parent log is considered sufficient authorization, or—in case of emergency—an email or fax.

How to Dress Your Child for School

- ❖ **Play clothes** that are easy-care, sturdily constructed, and comfortable.
- ❖ **Weather-appropriate clothes.** Provide layers so that extra clothes may be removed or put on as needed.
- ❖ **Sneakers—no laces, please.** The Seed has a strict policy regarding this.
- ❖ **Label everything!**



Please Provide the Following Items for Your Child

- Slippers for indoor use.
- Crib-sized fitted sheet, small blanket, and small pillow for rest time. (Please launder bedding weekly.)
- A zip-lock, labeled bag containing a complete set of extra clothes (shirt, pants, underpants, socks).
- A small, soft, cuddle toy for rest- time.
- **Label everything!**

What to Leave at Home

- All other toys
- Makeup, perfume, and jewelry
- Delicate or breakable items
- Snack food
- Glass jars for insects or any other glass item

Show-and-Tell

- ⊗ Children's and educational books, music, videos, all clearly labeled with your child's name
- ⊗ Insects, nests, or other things from nature in labeled, zip-lock bags or unbreakable containers
- ⊗ Objects that can awaken interest in and initiate discussion about your cultural background

Where to Put. . .

- **Outerwear:** Your child's cubby
- **Bedding and soft toys:** Mesh bag (this is provided by The Seed)
- **Payments, forms, notes:** The most convenient drop box for you
- **Medicine (in its original container):** Give it to a teacher, along with the required forms



Where to Find . . .

◆ General Information:

- The Coordinators and Directors
 - **Little Flower:** Patricia Colleran
 - **Blossom:** Diana Spinoza
 - **Sunshine Room:** Diane Turcin
 - **Administrative Director:** Paulette Sink
 - **Educational Director:** Madeline Barry
- The Seed's website: www.theseedaycare.com
- This handbook
- Monthly newsletters
- Periodic emails
- Electronic checkpoint
- Bulletin boards and doors

- ◆ **Feedback on your child's progress:** You are invited to schedule a parent-teacher conference with your child's classroom coordinator. These conferences are held at 5:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Parents are asked to respect the school schedule and remember that during school hours the teachers are busy taking care of the children. Prearranged appointments for even short conferences are the best way for teachers to give children and parents the attention they deserve.

- ◆ **Information on what your child does in class each day:** This is handled differently in each building. Make sure to ask the Coordinator how to find this information for your child's class.
- ◆ **Lunch & snack menus:** These are posted weekly on the bulletin boards in each building.
- ◆ **Lost Items:** Each building has its own "Lost and Found".
- ◆ **Information on community events:** Bulletin boards.

Special Requests

You need to put these *in writing*—either by a separate, signed note or a signed note in the parent book in your child's classroom. The staff greatly appreciates it when you reinforce your written request with a *verbal reminder*.

About Medication

Certain staff members in each building have been certified to administer medication to children. Even these staff members are only authorized to administer medication under very strict state guidelines.



If your child needs to receive medication at The Seed, either temporarily or on a permanent basis, you will need to fill out the necessary forms and have them signed by a doctor. These forms may be obtained, a) from the NYSOCFS web site (under “Forms”), b) by email from The Seed (just ask), c) in person at The Seed.

Illness Policy

The Seed is not licensed to take care of sick children, even those who are mildly ill. Therefore, when you bring your child in the morning, he or she must be:

- 📌 Fever-free for 24 hours
- 📌 Free of infections (including green-running nose and/or other contagious discharge)

In the event a child becomes ill after having been dropped at The Seed, we call a parent to pick him or her up. Please note: Parents must have arrangements in place for someone to pick up their ill child at a moment’s notice if, for any reason, they themselves are unable to do so.

Immediate pickup is required when a child:

- ✚ Has a fever of 100 degrees or above
- ✚ Has persistent diarrhea
- ✚ Has an undiagnosed rash, except diaper rash
- ✚ Vomits two or more times, or vomits once but has other signs of illness
- ✚ Shows signs and symptoms of possible illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, discolored urine, refusal to eat or drink, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs
- ✚ has an infection of the eyes, skin, or upper-respiratory system

Parents will be contacted and asked to be on call if a child’s symptoms are less severe.

If there is an urgent, life-threatening emergency, 911 will be called and parents will be notified. If a child needs to be transported to a hospital, either one of the directors or a senior staff member will accompany him or her at all times until a parent can take over. The child will be taken to either Northern Westchester Hospital Center in Mt. Kisco, or Hudson Valley Hospital Center in Cortlandt Manor.

Guidance and Discipline

At The Seed, we help children learn socially-appropriate behavior by providing guidance that is consistent with their level of development. We encourage children to help each other, take turns, and use different strategies to resolve conflicts. We help children deal with feelings by comforting and guiding them in the identification and solution of their problems.



We address challenging behavior by using positive behavior support strategies, and meeting with families to develop a school/home connection plan which will address the behavior in a consistent way.

The Seed reserves the right to dis-enroll a child whose behavior is overly aggressive to other people, himself, or school property, if we determine that our standard guidance and discipline policies have failed to be effective.

Special Needs and Services

The Seed staff has been trained and is experienced in early childhood education. The Seed does not provide special education nor is any member of the staff considered a special education provider.

If your child is currently receiving special education services under CPSE, he or she may be eligible for enrollment at The Seed, depending on his or her IEP and The Seed's assessment as to whether The Seed is the best fit for your child.

If your child is not receiving special services but you suspect that he or she might have developmental delays that will require such services, you may contact your school district to arrange for free screening.

Children who have been approved for services through CPSE are eligible to receive those services at The Seed on the days and during the hours they are regularly scheduled to attend.

It sometimes transpires that a Seed student exhibits special needs that are outside the scope of what The Seed can accommodate. In the rare case that parents are asked to withdraw their child from The Seed, the administration and other staff will make every effort to help with a smooth transition to another program.

School Closings

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving, Thursday and Friday
- Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day
- Winter break: The week between Christmas and New Year's
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Thursday and Friday before Easter
- Spring break: One week in May
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Summer break: The week before Labor Day

The Seed is open, regardless of weather, on all other days.



Meals and Snacks

The Seed's menus have been approved by a nutritionist. The child who attends a full day at The Seed will be supplied with at least 2/3 of his or her daily food requirement.

The food served at The Seed is homemade and prepared on the premises. The Seed serves a hot, homemade lunch and two snacks daily. Breakfast is provided upon request.

If your child requires a special diet for any reason, we will develop an individual health care plan with you.

The Seed is a peanut-free environment.

Lending Library

The Seed's library, Katie's Library, has a wide variety of children's books. Children are permitted to check out two books per week on a designated day. Books need to be returned in order to check out more books.

Our library has resources for parents, a variety of multicultural children's books, and children's books on special subjects such as new babies and divorce. Please ask if you have a special request.

There is a replacement charge for lost or damaged books.

Family Participation

The Seed has an open door policy. Parents of children enrolled at The Seed are welcome to make unannounced visits at any time during school hours to observe classes in session or spend time with their child. If you wish to make an extended visit, we ask you not to choose the hours between 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. or 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., since parking space is limited and these are heavy drop-off and pick-up times.

The Seed also warmly invites you to share your knowledge and interest with the children by coming in and reading a story, talking about a cultural festivity, doing an art project, showing off your patrol car, and so forth.

At The Seed, mindful of our global society, we celebrate diversity. We welcome you to share aspects of your cultural background with the children—your main celebrations, special dress, foods, and so forth.

Photographs

Each fall the children are photographed by a professional photographer, individually and with their class group. There is no obligation to purchase.

Additionally, The Seed teachers use photographs and videos as a way of documenting the children's project work and activities.

Birthdays

Each child's birthday is special to all of us at The Seed. Parents are welcome to help celebrate by providing a treat for the children. Please, no peanut products or hard candy.



Telephone Directory

You are invited to make your telephone number available to other parents who may want to arrange a play date with your child.

Phone lists are posted in each building.

Student Assessment

The Seed conducts informal and formal assessments for all its students to help make sure that each child is learning and meeting the appropriate developmental milestones.

Assessment tools may include the following: checklists, portfolios, written anecdotal observations, parent notes.

If the staff has concerns about a child's development, The Seed will assist in procuring an evaluation and special services if needed.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Seed schedules two parent/teacher conferences a year to discuss your child's progress. Additionally, please feel free to schedule a conference whenever you have concerns or questions.

Confidentiality

All information regarding your child and family is kept strictly confidential. Only parents/legal guardians may authorize The Seed to release information.

All program staff and volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement.

Suggestions and Feedback

The Seed is always open to suggestions and feedback to improve the way we serve you and your family.

Grievance Procedure

When a parent has a concern or complaint, the following steps should be taken to help resolve the issue as promptly as possible:

- Let the coordinator know of your concern and make arrangements for a conference
- If a meeting with the coordinator does not adequately address your concerns, you may schedule a meeting with the directors

The Seed makes every effort to resolve complaints expeditiously. We will work with you as long and as often as necessary to make sure your concerns are resolved to your satisfaction.



Other Information and Where to Find It

- Day Care Center Licensing Regulations: Building bulletin boards
- Emergency Procedures: posted in every building
- Discipline Policy Statement: available upon request
- Curriculum goals and objectives: available upon request
- Inclusion strategies for children with disabilities and other special learning needs: available upon request



Admission Policies Sign-off Sheet

I have read the following policies and procedures of The Seed Day Care Center.

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Child's name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Today's date: _____