
The Nest Nursery School

Family Handbook





Dear Family,

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing The Nest Nursery School. We are committed to providing a caring, enriching, and safe environment for your child. We recognize the trust that parents place in us when they give us the opportunity to care for and educate their children. We appreciate your trust.

The Nest is envisioned as an exceptional school for the youngest child. With our focus on the unique needs of infants and toddlers, we hope to create a place that feels loving and warm to everyone who enters our doors.

A mission of The Nest is to create an exceptional experience for young children and their families. We believe that children thrive in a caring and enriching environment that supports them in feeling comfortable, confident, and safe. We also believe that the basic building blocks of learning are play, curiosity, creativity, questioning, and imagination, and we believe that schools which embrace this theory of learning have the best influence on children's positive social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

The Family Handbook should answer most of the questions that you may have about The Nest. However, if you have additional questions or concerns that are not addressed in the Family Handbook or if you need additional clarification about the information provided here, please do not hesitate to let us know. We are convinced that a cornerstone of a successful and strong program for young children is a well-informed, satisfied, happy family! Our goal is to make sure that you feel good each and every day about having your child at The Nest.

Thank you again for choosing The Nest Nursery School. We look forward to getting to know you and your child!

Sincerely,

Teresa Cole
Administrator

Mandy Palmer
Pedagogical Coordinator

Kristi Cameron
Pedagogical Coordinator

About Us

Professional Biographies of Founding Educators

Teresa Cole

My professional career has been long and varied. I hold a bachelor's degree in Accounting from University of Phoenix and an associate's degree in Legal Assistant Management from Gainesville College. I've spent the bulk of my career working in administrative roles, both as management and support staff, and as a paralegal. In 1999, I became involved in the Grant Park Cooperative Preschool as a parent of a one-year-old and, over the course of the next 10 years, developed a passion and understanding of how wonderful early childhood education could and should be. After my first visit to Reggio Emilia in 2006, my personal mission became to somehow improve the educational and childcare options for children, and specifically infants. My husband, Adam, and I are proud parents to five wonderful children, the youngest of which will be one of the first students of The Nest.

Kristi Cameron

I grew up in Rome, Georgia, and graduated with a degree in English and Secondary Education in 1992 from Berry College. After graduation, I moved to Athens, Georgia where I briefly taught English as a Second Language to middle school children. However, even as I worked with adolescents, my curiosity and professional passion was more evoked by the experiences of the very youngest children. In 1993, I was accepted into graduate school at the University of Georgia where I began studying in the department of Child and Family Development and first encountered the Reggio Emilia approach to education. Eventually, I transferred into the Education department where I received my M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education in 1997. After graduation, I moved to Atlanta where I have worked in several capacities in the early childhood education field – teacher, college instructor, consultant, stay-at-home mom. Throughout my education and my career, I have been strongly influenced by the experiences of the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy and have been fortunate to participate in several study tours to Reggio Emilia. I have been married for 10 years to my husband David, and we have two sons, Will (age 9) and Eli (age 7). We live in the East Atlanta neighborhood and are actively involved in our children's charter elementary school in Grant Park. In my free time, I enjoy camping, reading, and traveling.

Mandy Palmer

While attending Auburn University, I took a part time job at a daycare center and almost immediately knew that that was what I wanted to do with my life—nurture and support the very youngest people in our world. I believe it is a person's childhood that shapes who they are and that one of the most important factors in a child's life is their family dynamic. For this reason I chose to get my degree in Family and Child Development.

The summer after I graduated, I moved to Atlanta in search of a school that gave more respect to children and their families. At Clifton Child Care Center I was introduced to the Reggio Emilia Approach. I was so excited to find this approach that embraced children as they did and understood their capabilities. I also enjoyed the camaraderie and collaboration involved in this

approach—getting different perspectives from each other and working together towards a common goal.

A couple of years later I discovered the Grant Park Cooperative Preschool and worked there for ten years. During this time I had the opportunity to take on many different leadership roles and attend three study tours in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

When I'm not working I enjoy being with my husband James and my five-year-old son Leo. I also love camping, traveling, reading and gathering with friends and family.

Admission & Enrollment

The school year runs year-round from the first Monday in August through the next-to-the-last week of July. The school is open from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday except for scheduled school closings as noted on the school calendar. The school accepts students from 3 months to 4 years of age.

Registration for the school year begins in January of each year for the following August. The Registration Fee (\$300) must be paid at the time of registration in order to secure a spot for the upcoming fall. After acceptance by the family of enrollment and the payment of the registration fee, the school will hold placement for the child and the policies of this handbook apply to any changes in enrollment status or other situations that may arise from the time of enrollment until the new school year begins.

All families must sign an Enrollment & Acknowledgment Agreement, which will outline their responsibilities to the school and the school's responsibilities to the family. All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and accounts must be current prior to your child's first day of attendance and/or the first day of the new school year.

Currently enrolled children and their siblings will have first priority for available spots. New families needing 5-day care will have priority for any additional spots available. Part-time spots will be filled from the wait list should they become available.

The school retains the right to make decisions regarding enrollment and classroom makeup and placement based on the needs of individual children and/or the larger school community.

Upon enrollment to The Nest Nursery School it is the responsibility of the parents to keep the school informed of any changes in personal information, including but not limited to, phone numbers, email addresses, residential addresses and place of employment.

Non-Discrimination

At The Nest Nursery School equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Inclusion

The Nest Nursery School believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in early childhood education programs. We make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Certification

The Nest Nursery School is licensed by and complies with the rules and regulations of Bright From the Start – Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

Tuition & Fees

Registration Fee	\$300 (due in January at the of Registration)
Full-time Monthly Tuition	\$1025
Part-time Tuition	\$660 (3-days per week, M,W,F)
Part-time Tuition	\$440 (2-days per week, T,TH)

All tuition payments are due on the first day of each month. Families have the option of choosing a 12-month contract (year-round care) or a 10-month contract (no care needed for June and July). The monthly tuition and registration fee are the same for either option, but these options allow the school to plan for staffing during the summer when some families may not need childcare. We ask that each family choose carefully and give at least 30 days notice if they need to make changes.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance on the first business day of each month with no deduction for absences, family vacations, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond the school's control. Payment is due as outlined in the Enrollment & Acknowledgment Agreement.

Late Payment Charges

Tuition payments are due on the first business day of each month. If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$10 will be added for each day that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may not attend school until the account has been brought current. After 15 days enrollment may be forfeited.

The school retains the right to take measures to collect unpaid balances either through small claims or collections. If these measure become necessary the family is responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions are charged a fee of \$35. This charge may be collected electronically.

Late Pick-up Fees

Because late pick-up negatively impacts the children and staff, it is heavily fined. The school closes at 6:00 p.m. If you realize you are unable to pick up your child by 6:00 p.m., please contact the school as soon as possible to alert us. A late fee of \$1 per minute is assessed for each minute between 6:00 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. A late fee of \$5 per minute is assessed for each minute late after 6:15 pm. Late pick-up fees are invoiced at the end of each month and are due on the first business day of each month.

Withdrawal

If a family decides to withdraw from the school, 30 days written notice is required. All tuition and fees owed to the school during the 30 days following date of the written notice must be paid whether or not the child attends school.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records are transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Photographic Release

Photographs of children enrolled at the school may be used on promotional materials for The Nest Nursery School as well as affiliated organization including Inspired Practices in Early Education, Inc. and the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA). Photographs are not used for any such purpose without the express written consent of a child's parent or guardian.

Curriculum & Philosophy

As educators, our vision of the possibilities for schools is strongly influenced by the experiences of the infant/toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. As we look to the example of education in Reggio Emilia, we see a strong expression of how families and educators can create schools for young children that reflect the values of the community. To be a “Reggio-inspired” school means having a vision of children and families as strong, competent, and capable.

Inherent in our beliefs and values is the conviction that as citizens of a community, children and their families have a right to high-quality educational programs. A child enters the world as a curious, capable human being who seeks relationships and connection with others. Schools should be places where the innate strengths of young children are nurtured. Schools should be places where children are supported in growing to their full potential within an environment that is interesting, engaging, and responsive. Schools should be places where professional educators are happy, receive satisfaction from their jobs, and are viewed as valuable contributing members of the community in which they work. Schools should be places where families feel welcomed, involved, and respected for their individuality and unique points of view.

Learning Environment

Our learning environment reflects our belief that children are inherently curious, seek relationships with others, and construct their knowledge and understanding of the world through their active engagement and experiences with their environment and the people, materials, and experiences within it. From a philosophical standpoint, we consider ourselves to be social constructivists.

As a reflection of our educational philosophy, we provide a learning environment rich in materials and possibilities. Of the utmost importance are children’s active explorations in the environment. Children’s formation of ideas through experiences and processes of inquiry are valued. Rich and varied materials are provided for the purpose of experimentation and creative expression. Children are challenged to research their theories of how things work and are encouraged to engage in a wide variety of experiences. Children are frequently engaged in small group interactions where each voice can be heard and various ideas explored and results negotiated. Each child builds skills not only in traditional cognitive, gross motor and social categories, but also in the areas of problem solving, original ideas and strength of conviction.

A primary task of the educator is to provide an environment that is filled with unlimited possibilities – possibilities that encourage children to make discoveries, to experiment with their own ideas, and to interact in meaningful ways with other people. Educators are constantly engaged in a process of observation and documentation in order to develop the best possible educational environment for children. The environment is intended to be responsive to the interests and needs of children while simultaneously encouraging children to develop in ways that are projected by educators.

Each classroom, as well as the school as a whole, acts as a democratic model where all participants interact with one another in a spirit of mutual respect and an attitude of care.

Outings & Field Trips

Field trips provide unique opportunities for learning and are scheduled frequently. Generally, field trips are taken with small groups of children to strengthen and deepen both the experience and the relationships among participants. These trips may include walks in the neighborhood, trips to parks and other natural areas, visits to nearby restaurants and shops, and outings to various sites around the City of Atlanta such as Zoo Atlanta, The Atlanta Botanical Gardens, etc.

Children are supervised closely and accounted for at all times during field trips. Classroom educators communicate with families regarding details of upcoming trips. A permission slip must be signed by a parent for children to participate. Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend field trips with their children.

Teachers and/or parents will provide transportation for field trips in their own personal vehicles, which have been previously determined to have appropriate authorization, documentation and equipment to transport children.

Inserimento

Translated from the Italian, inserimento literally means “insertion” and is a concept of introducing children to the school environment and the initial process of the child’s adjustment into a new community.

Upon enrollment, a child and his/her family are invited to spend some time with the teachers in the classroom. Depending on the needs of the child and the family, these visits generally last from 30 minutes to 1 hour. This is an opportunity for conversation between parents, teachers and the child within the context of the school environment.

Children’s response to separation varies dramatically. We ask that parents be flexible during the first few weeks of school and plan to spend extra time at school with their child if needed in order to ease the anxiety of separation. Separation anxiety is a healthy, normal developmental stage, which we believe deserves time and appropriate attention. We feel that by easing into the transition and gradually lessening the time of “goodbye”, children develop confidence that their parents will indeed return and that educators can be trusted to provide a warm and nurturing environment while parents are away. As a child becomes more comfortable at school, a parent’s short, predictable and loving “goodbye” is often all that is necessary as the child is dropped off at school.

Inserimento is an important time for children as they develop new relationships with other children, adults, and the new environment. We believe that the process of relationship building is most important for young children; because of this, we treasure this time of inserimento.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

Our educators are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. When hiring educators we take a variety of traits into consideration such as educational background, experience, dedication to the profession and willingness to participate in the mission, vision and values of the school.

We believe that a unique aspect of The Nest Nursery School is the strength and commitment of the educational professionals who choose to work at the school. In order to support educators at The Nest Nursery School in their continuing evolution as professionals, we make a strong commitment to ongoing professional development for all of our staff, professional development that exceeds the minimum requirements of Bright from the Start. Please be aware that this type of professional development requires occasional absences of educators from the classrooms. In all cases, well-trained substitute educators work in the absence of your child's regular classroom teacher. We hope that the strength and nature of the experiences for you child and you while at the school is evidence of the power of our strong commitment to regular professional development.

Project Infinity

The Nest Nursery School is pleased to be a part of a very special educational project called Project Infinity, which is an initiative of a local non-profit organization called Inspired Practices in Early Education. Project Infinity supports connections between schools in Georgia and South Carolina that are interested in knowing more about the infant/toddler centers and preschools or Reggio Emilia, Italy. Through participation in the project, schools engage in ongoing dialogue and reflection about their own contexts and experiences with the goal of supporting the thinking and action of educators.

The Nest is one of seven schools in the southern United States, which participates in Project Infinity and the only school to begin in the project from the school's inception. Dr. Margie Cooper, the President and founder of Inspired Practices, has dedicated her professional life to expanding interest in and conversation about the experiences of Reggio Emilia. Margie is a wonderful resource for our program and The Nest's participation in Project Infinity is an important strategy in creating the best possible school for young children.

Child to Staff Ratios

The Nest Nursery School provides student/teacher ratios well below those allowed by the State of Georgia. For infants 3-12 months the ratio is 3 or 4:1. For toddlers and preschoolers the ratio is 6:1 with additional support provided by a part-time daily studio teacher. Maximum staff/child ratios for the State of Georgia can be found in the in the Childcare Learning Center Rules and Regulations at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CCLCRulesandRegulations.pdf>.

General Policies and Procedures

Personal Belongings

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or misdirected items that are not properly labeled.

What to Bring for Infants (3 months to 12 months)

- Enough bottles of breast milk or formula for one day's feedings should be brought already prepared to school each day. Bottles should be clearly marked with the child's name and date. Empty bottles are returned to the family each day.
- Food
- A supply of diapers and wipes.
- At least 2 complete changes of clothes.
- Any comfort items that your child needs such as pacifiers, blankies, lovies, etc.

What to Bring for Toddlers and Preschoolers

- A sippy cup for water or water bottle
- If your child is a young toddler (under 18 months) and still needs a bottle during the school day, we will work with you during the transition to a cup.
- At least 2 complete changes of clothes (more if your child is potty training).
- Any comfort items that your child needs for naptime such as pacifiers, blankies, lovies, etc.

Absence

If your child will be absent from school, please call or email the school by 9:00 a.m. so we that we can plan accordingly.

Year-Round Calendar and School Closings

The Nest Nursery School provides full-day, year-round care. However, the school is closed periodically for traditional school holidays and to provide professional development opportunities for the entire school staff.

Families should consult the school calendar for dates when the school is closed. Since tuition is based on a yearly budget, there are no discounts for school closings. Families may opt for a 10-month or a 12-month enrollment at the school; tuition rates will reflect the enrollment type that is chosen.

Holiday Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and the beliefs of children, families, staff and community. While the school does not promote specific holidays, we welcome and encourage families to share important traditions with their

child's classroom, keeping in mind the cultural and traditional aspects of the celebration instead of the material and commercial aspects.

Birthdays

Within the classroom, we plan a small celebration for each child on his/her birthday. Parents are welcome to celebrate birthdays at school with their child, but the school requests that party elements such as sugary treats, balloons or other decorations or gifts not be brought to school.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs until they are able to roll over on their own.

After lunch, toddlers and preschoolers participate in a quiet rest time. Children rest for at least 30 minutes and if they do not fall asleep may be given quiet activities. Children older than 12 months sleep on mats with a sheet, blanket and pillow and any comfort item sent from home.

Diapering

Diapering is an important process in the daily life in the infant and toddler classrooms. Diapering is a time for one-on-one interaction between the child and teacher. The process of changing diapers is always done in a comfortable and respectful manner. The Nest Nursery School will follow all guidelines for cleanliness and hygiene as outlined by Bright from the Start. Diapering procedures are posted above each changing area within the classrooms.

Toilet Training

An important factor in making the toilet learning experience at school as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process.

Guidance

We have a fundamental belief that children are powerful, competent, and capable. We also believe that children grow and develop through rich and meaningful relationships with others. We embrace respect as one of our core values. Our philosophy of guidance reflects these beliefs.

We believe that children are born with the desire and ability to be in relation with others. The adults in a child's life – especially family members and educators – have a responsibility to support children in developing positive social skills.

At The Nest Nursery School, we employ several strategies of guidance, including effective communication, acknowledgment of children's feelings, praise for positive behaviors and

interactions, redirection from challenging situations, and natural consequences. We create with children “calming spaces” in each classroom that are designed to give children a place to go to be quiet and find calm when necessary.

Under no circumstances will any of the following methods of discipline be allowed at The Nest Nursery School:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking, shaking, jerking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval
- Shaming, humiliating, or other verbal abuse
- Withholding food as punishment
- Retaliating, or doing to the child what he/she did to someone else
- Labeling the child (i.e., indicating a child is a “bad” boy or girl)

Communication & Family Partnership

Communication Between School and Home

The Nest values the communication between school life and home life. In an effort to reduce paper waste, most communication will be sent through email and our website. The school will provide information about the children’s experiences at school in the following ways:

- Each child will have an individual portfolio. The portfolio will contain individual work of the child, photos and/or videos that show the child’s work processes, notes made by teachers and other documentation about the child’s experiences at school. The portfolio will be a living and ongoing body of work that will follow the child throughout their matriculation through the school. Parents are encouraged to look at and contribute to the portfolio often.
- The infant class will have individual journals in which the teachers will make note of the sleeping, eating and diapering of their child each day. The teachers may also make notes regarding activities, general mood of the child, or upcoming events. The journals will be sent home each day and parents are encouraged to make notes for the teachers regarding any important happenings, changes in schedule, etc. It will be the responsibility of the parents to make sure that the journal travels successfully from home to school each day.
- On most days, a “Daily Diary” will be posted on the classroom blogs. Daily diaries are a snapshot of the day’s work with children and are not meant to be an all-encompassing document.
- Twice per month, blog posts will be posted on the classroom blogs. The blogs will describe in more detail the work and projects going on in the classrooms as well as upcoming events and needs of the class.
- Two school-wide parent meetings will be scheduled per year. These meetings will be exchanges of documentation of work and dialogues around what the children are learning.
- Parent/Teacher conferences will be held by request. We will not have a scheduled time for parent/teacher conferences. However, if a parent has concerns or wants more information about their child’s experiences at school they may request a meeting with teachers at any time during the year.

Family Participation

The Nest Nursery School does not have mandatory volunteer requirements. However, we strongly believe that parent participation in the child's educational life strengthens the child's education experience. Parents are welcome and shall have access to the center at any time in which children are in the care of the school. We strongly encourage family participation and involvement in the daily life of the school. Because we value the unique contributions that parents can make to their children's experiences and to our community as a whole, we encourage involvement in the school as much as schedules allow.

There are diverse opportunities to volunteer. Possible opportunities for family participation in the daily life of the school include the following:

- Visiting your child's classroom,
- Chaperoning field trips,
- Nursing or having lunch with your child,
- Participating in a weekend workday,
- Share a special talent or skill with the school (music, photography, art, yoga, etc.)
- Read a book to the class
- Organize fundraising events.

The opportunities for family participation are endless so use your imagination! When you participate in the daily life of the school, you enrich your child's experience at the school while developing a stronger connection with the rest of the school community.

Class Parents

Each class will have one or more class parents. The class parent will organize events and communications for the class including, but not limited to:

- Coordinate class socials
- Organize meal brigades for families with new babies or death in the family
- Coordinate with other parents holiday and birthday gifts for teachers
- Organize teacher appreciation week events

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Procedure

The school opens at 7:30 AM. Drop-off before this time is not allowed even if staff is present. Children arriving between 7:30 – 8:00 will enter through the infant room and remain with the early care educator until the arrival of their classroom teachers. Children arriving at 8:00 or later enter the school through the door that is directly connected to their classroom.

The school closes at 6:00 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time. Late pick-up penalties are severe and are collected.

Parents shall escort their children into and out of the building during drop off and pick up. Parents also sign their children in and out each day.

Visitors will enter and exit through the visitor's entrance on the northeast side of the building located on Gracewood Avenue.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child is released only to you or to those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child is required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child is not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts are made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions are made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after two hours we are not able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are important times of communication between the school and home. In order to make the best use of these opportunities and to meet your child's needs during these times of transition, we ask that you not use your cell phone at anytime while inside the center.

Health Policies

The Nest Nursery School does not provide sick childcare.

If your child exhibits any symptoms below he/she should not be brought to school:

Fever	If the child has a fever for any reason s/he cannot attend school. The child should be fever-free for 24 hours <u>without medication</u> before returning to school. If the child develops a fever of 101 or higher during the school day, parents will be contacted and the child will need to be picked up immediately. If the child is sent home with fever during the school day they cannot attend school the following day.
Pinkeye	The child should be on medication for 48 hours and be clearly responding to the treatment before returning to school.
Strep Throat	The child should return only after 36 hours on medication. The child must be showing signs of improvement and be willing to eat and drink.
Diarrhea and/or vomiting	The child should not come to school until he/she is deemed non-contagious by a physician or has had no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.
Chicken Pox	The child should not return to school until all pox are scabbed over.
Runny noses/ Coughs	If your child's runny nose will require frequent attention from the teacher or if the child is irritable or running a fever or if mucus is any color other than clear he/she should not be in school.
Head Lice	The child may return to school when free of ALL nits. In order to remove nits, it is usually necessary for the child's hair to be well combed with a special nit removal comb after treatment with the medicated shampoo. Guidelines for treatment of head lice are available from the Director or from your county health department.

By keeping children home when they are ill, the spread of illness among our school community is greatly reduced. This means fewer illnesses for children, teachers, parents, and other family members, fewer visits to the doctor, and fewer days lost from work for parents.

If your child becomes sick while at school you will be called to take him/her home. Sick children should be picked up no later than 1 hour after notification by the school that the child is sick. If the parent notified cannot be at the school by the end of 1 hour, other arrangements should be made for the child's pick up. If we cannot reach a parent, we will notify the emergency contact person(s) listed on your enrollment application.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We take care to notify families via email and/or printed letter about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism

- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

Medications

It is the general policy of the school not to dispense medicine except in life-threatening situations. In these circumstances the following guidelines must be met:

Prescription Drugs:

1. Before any prescription medicine is dispensed, a written and signed authorization that includes date, name of child, name of medicine, prescription number if any, dosage, date, and time of day medication is given must be provided.
2. Medicine must be in its original container labeled with the child's name.
3. Parents must provide and label any necessary equipment for the dispensing of the medicine.

Non-prescription medications

Before dispensing non-prescription medications the school requires a note and direction signed by the child's pediatrician. Non-prescription medication shall not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.

Non-prescription topical ointments

The Enrollment & Acknowledgement Agreement includes a section for the authorization of the administration of non-prescription topical ointments, such as diaper cream, sunscreen and insect repellent. The school will not administer these items unless this authorized by the parent on the Agreement.

Safety Policies

Clothing

Dress your child for school in clothing that is washable and allows for freedom of movement. Children in diapers should wear clothing that is easily removed for changing. Please do not send children to school in clothing that you would not want to get soiled or stained as your child will be engaged in “messy” activities such as painting, outdoor play, sand, water play, clay, gardening, etc. Outfits that the child can manage alone will make the day go more smoothly. Heavy leather boots, complicated belts, and buttons often pose problems for children at school.

Children should wear shoes to school that facilitate climbing and running and other such activities. **Children should not wear flip-flops or other backless shoes.** Supportive shoes will help eliminate injuries during the school day.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play does not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 99°F or less than 37°F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play is canceled if the air quality rating is 50 or below.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

In case of extreme weather, the school follows Atlanta Public Schools with regard to school closings. In the case of severe weather (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes) please listen to the local news and/or radio station.

If Atlanta Public Schools are closed The Nest Nursery School will also be closed.

Closing Due to Physical Plant Defects

In the event of loss of power, loss of water, or other physical plant defect that prevents the school from opening on time or at all, or necessitating early closure, families are contacted by text, telephone and/or email. If any of these conditions happen during the school day and are deemed to persist for longer than one hour and in the case where proper care of the children beyond that time will not be possible, parents and/or emergency contacts will be called to pick up children as soon as possible. Appropriate staff will remain at the center until all children are picked up. The school will maintain emergency supplies order to provide basic necessary care for at least 4 hours.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid is administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you are contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, 911 will be contacted at once and the child will be transported immediately by ambulance to Children's HealthCare at Elgeston. Parents and/or emergency contacts will be notified at once. If an authorized person cannot be contacted or arrive before the ambulance a proper escort from the school will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance is called for transportation. A proper escort from the school accompanies and remains with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

A Special Note about Biting: As upsetting as it can be for children and adults, biting is a normal stage of development that is common among young children. Most young children bite and/or are bitten by another child at least once when they are in group care settings. Often, whether their child was the child who bit or the child who was bitten, parents experience strong emotional reactions to biting. Again, please be assured that biting is normal developmentally in children who are experiencing discomfort due to teething, do not have the verbal skills to communicate their frustrations, and are unable to exhibit self-control that would limit their reactions in frustrating situations.

When biting happens, our first response is to take action immediately to provide appropriate care for the child who was bitten. We also respond to the child who has bitten with strategies designed to help him/her learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus is not on punishment for biting, but on developing effective behaviors that address the reasons for biting.

Notification of a biting incident is given in written form to both the family of the child who was bitten and the child who bit. We work together with families to keep them informed and to develop strategies to address the situation.

For further information on our approach to biting, we recommend the excellent article entitled "Dealing with Biting Behaviors in Young Children" which is available online at <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/biting.html>

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely even that a child becomes lost or separated from a group either at the school or on a field trip, all available staff search for the child. If the child is not located within five minutes, 911 will be called and the family will be notified.

Evacuation of School

In the event of an emergency at the school, such as fire, gas leak or other emergency requiring evacuation of the premises, evacuation of students and staff would occur in the following manner:

- Director gives evacuation order or alarm is sounded.
- Director contacts authorities by calling 911.
- Teachers in each class evacuate students from building according to procedures practiced in monthly drills.

- Teachers proceed away from the building down the sidewalk toward Gilbert Street to a safe distance from the building and take a head count.
- Director takes contact information from the school files.
- If possible, Director places message on school number indicating evacuation and location of evacuation.
- Director calls each family and/or emergency contacts to let them know of the situation and the location of the evacuation.
- Children are kept at the evacuation site until an adult from their contact list picks them up.
- Children are signed out by parents as they are picked up.
- Staff members will remain until all students in their class have been collected.

Emergency Procedures For Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather (i.e. tornado, hurricane) the following procedures would be followed:

- Director will notify the teachers to prepare for severe weather or alarm will sound.
- Teachers will direct children to the inner most areas of the school (bathroom and hall way) and away from windows and doors.
- One teacher from each classroom will double check sign-in sheet to make sure all children are accounted for.
- Director will collect emergency information from the office.
- All children and staff will remain in emergency shelter until severe weather advisory has passed.
- Director will report injuries and/or damage to authorities by calling 911.
- Parents are notified by telephone and/or email of the situation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency determines appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with all fire safety equipment required by Bright from the Start – Georgia Department of Early Learning and the City of Atlanta Fire Department, including hard-wired fire alarms, pull stations, emergency lighting and an evacuation crib for the infant room. The School conducts a monthly fire drill and reviews fire evacuation plans with children and staff on a monthly basis.

Nutrition Policies

The Nest Nursery School offers a full food program of quality meals and snacks for children 12 months and older. Food prepared at the center meets or exceeds guidelines described in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service. Meals are prepared fresh daily and, to the extent feasible, include fresh, whole and organic ingredients. Meals are largely, but not strictly, vegetarian utilizing protein sources other than meat and poultry for the majority of meals.

The school's food program includes the following:

- **Lunch** – served at 12:00 pm to children who are 12 months and older. The school works with each child to introduce new foods and to ensure nutritious and pleasant dining.
- **Snacks** – provided mid-morning and again after nap time. Snacks include fruit/vegetables, grains and proteins.

Infant Feeding Plans

Families of infants (children between 3 and 12 months) are responsible for bringing breast milk, formula and appropriate food for their child. The educators work closely with each family to create and maintain an infant feeding plan and introduce new foods according to each child's development. "Baby" food may be store bought or prepared at home. All bottles and baby food jars and/or containers must be clearly marked with the child's name and date.

Meal Time

Meals at the school are served "family-style" in the dining room and include the participation of the children. At meal time, the table is set with plates and flatware. The food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Children are encouraged to serve themselves. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted on the school bulletin board and online at our website for viewing by families.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Severe Food Allergies or Special Diets

In order to ensure the safety of children with severe food allergies (extreme and rapid reactions, allergic to many foods, etc.) or those requiring a highly specialized diet (gluten free, strictly vegan, kosher, etc.), the school reserves the right to request that families bring their child's food that has been prepared according to individual needs.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received and reviewed The Nest Nursery School Family Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in The Nest Nursery School Handbook.

Name of Child(ren)

Recipient Signature

Date

The Nest Nursery School Staff Signature

Date