



HANDBOOK 2022-23

**Crossroads Nursery School
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1. THE SCHOOL

Crossroads was started in 1947 by a group of parents at the Institute for Advanced Study who wanted a nursery school experience for their children. Originally housed in one of the buildings on Olden Lane Circle, the school moved to 90-91 Einstein Drive in 1957 and to its present location at 225 Olden Lane in 1994. At the time of the move to Olden Lane, the Institute for Advanced Study rebuilt the former ECP building to meet all current state standards and the program expanded to offer full-day childcare for children 3 months to 5 years in addition to the nursery school program for which it had been known.

Total enrollment approaches 60 children who are divided into five classrooms: Infants, Toddlers, and three mixed-age group Preschool classrooms for children 2-1/2 to 5 years of age. Crossroads is incorporated as a non-profit organization and is licensed by the Department of Children and Families of the State of New Jersey.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

At Crossroads Nursery School and Infant Center:

- We offer a nurturing and loving environment.
- We support all learners, both children and adults, in their life-long journey of growth and discovery.
- We provide a safety net for risk-taking and self-actualization.
- We believe that the *process* of learning is of greater value than the final product.
- We value *play* as the work of children.

3. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Maria Echeverria	Chair
Jennifer Richardson	Manager of Human Resources, IAS
Danielle Otis	Director
David Lee	Treasurer
Melanie Clarke	Secretary
Sara McKeon	Parent Representative
Pei Hsiang	
Paula Lutz	
Shelly Yedlin	

4. PROGRAM

Our goal is to provide a caring and safe environment in which children can develop a strong sense of self-worth, competence, creativity, and curiosity. We strive to foster in each child a sense of self-respect as well as a sense of respect and concern for others. Based on the young age of our students and the international nature of the community, this often includes assistance in adapting to a new environment or culture, and many times, to a new language.

Children are natural learners, explorers, philosophers, artists, inventors, scientists and creators. Research shows that the greatest learning for young children occurs through hands-on play and open-ended exploration. By creating a content-rich environment, replete with opportunities for children to pursue their own ideas and curiosity, we can foster a deep love of learning. The teachers provide a wide range of activities, ideas and materials to explore each day, guided by the children's inquiries, interests and inspiration.

Children, like all humans, want to be known and loved. It is our goal to be respectful mentors and authentic companions to children as they learn to navigate the world and find their joyful place within it. We are honored to support children in their social-emotional growth: as they learn to understand and manage their feelings, as they explore what it means to be a kind and productive member of a group, as they build new relationships outside of their homes, and as they practice communicating and interacting effectively with others.

Because children thrive on consistency and clearly defined boundaries, it is our job to create an affirming and positive environment with predictable routines and rituals. When children know what to expect and what is expected of them, they feel secure and free to explore confidently. From this place of security, they are able to engage fully with the materials and experiences available to them.

In addition to our lovely school building with light-filled classroom, Crossroads benefits from the beautiful natural surroundings of the Institute for Advanced Study campus. We spend a great deal of time outdoors each day, exploring the natural world, whether in our playgrounds, on the walking paths, in the woods or by the Institute pond. The children become confident explorers and stewards of our natural environment, and their deep engagement with nature is therapeutic and inspiring.

5. CALENDAR FOR THE 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR

The school year runs from early-September to mid-June for the Part-Time Preschool Program and from early-September to late-June for the Full-Time Programs.

Additionally, it is anticipated that there will be a full-time summer program except for late-August/early-September when the school is closed for approximately three weeks. Details for the summer program are confirmed in the late winter - early spring.

The calendars listing the holidays for the two programs are as follows:

2022-23 PART-TIME PRESCHOOL PROGRAM CALENDAR (PT)

for Half-Day and Extended-Day Preschool Children

September 7	Individual Family Visits
September 8	Full Program Starts – first day of school
September 26	No School – Rosh Hashana
October 5	No School – Yom Kippur
October 21	No School - Parent-Teacher Conversations
November 10-11	No School - NJEA Convention
November 23	Early Closing at 1:00 for Thanksgiving Holiday
November 24-25	No School - Thanksgiving
December 21-January 2	No School - Winter Recess
January 16	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 20	No School - Presidents’ Day
March 20	No School - Staff Development Day
April 3-7	No School - Spring Recess
May 5	No School - Parent-Teacher Conversations
May 26	Early Closing at 1:00 for Memorial Day weekend
May 29	No School - Memorial Day
June 15	Last Day of Part-Time Preschool Program Calendar

2022-23 FULL-TIME PROGRAM CALENDAR (FT)

for Infant, Toddler, and Full-Day Preschool Children

September 7	Individual Family Visits
September 8	Full Program Starts – first day of school
October 21	No School - Parent-Teacher Conversations
November 23	Early Closing at 1:00 for Thanksgiving Holiday
November 24-25	No School – Thanksgiving
December 22	Early Closing at 1:00 for Winter Recess
December 23-January 2	No School - Winter Recess
January 16	No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 20	No School - Presidents’ Day
March 20	No School - Staff Development Day
May 5	No School - Parent-Teacher Conversations
May 26	Early Closing at 1:00 for Memorial Day weekend
May 29	No School - Memorial Day
June 16	No School – Juneteenth observed
June 30	Last Day of Full-Time Program Calendar

A Summer session is anticipated for 2023. Information and fees will be available in Spring 2023.

Note: School may be closed on additional days due to severe weather conditions, safety issues related to our licensing requirements, or due to the COVID-19 pandemic

6. EMERGENCY SCHOOL DELAYS AND CLOSURES

The safety of Crossroads families and staff is our first priority. Because of unforeseen emergencies, school may be delayed, closed early, or closed entirely.

Crossroads follows the Princeton Public Schools during severe weather to factor in regional road conditions. Additionally, any emergency closing decisions made by IAS must be adhered to by Crossroads.

Emergency closings most commonly result from inclement weather and resulting road conditions and power outages.

There are four key issues that affect delays or closings for Crossroads as a NJ State licensed early childhood program:

- Road conditions for families and staff who must drive to *and* from school
- Meeting state-mandated adult:child staffing ratios during operating hours
- Having fully operational heat, running water and electricity
- Having fully accessible, cleared emergency exits and access to emergency personnel

It is important to understand that more than fifty percent of our community, students and staff, are not in residence on the IAS campus and must commute daily to school by car. Also, Crossroads is housed on the Institute for Advanced Study campus and is dependent on IAS maintenance of its private roads and buildings for safe access and operation.

Procedures:

For inclement weather, we try to notify families of school closings and delays between 6:00 and 7:00 am on the day in question. This is to allow the Director time to collect the most recent information from the Princeton Public Schools and IAS Administration, while still allowing enough time for parent and staff notification of the decision. In the event of extreme weather such as a blizzard or ice storm, closing decisions can be made the previous evening.

In the event of a school closing or delay, parents can obtain information in the following ways:

- **Email:** Parents who supply Crossroads with a current email address will receive a group email.
- **Phone:** Call the Crossroads telephone number (609-951-4699) for a recorded message.

If ever severe power outages affect Crossroads' communication systems, you can also consult the Princeton Public School website (www.princetonk12.org) or emergency closings telephone line (609-806-4202) to determine if closures or delays are in effect.

Closings:

When the Princeton Public Schools announce they are closed for the day because of severe weather conditions, Crossroads will automatically be closed. Likewise, if the Institute for Advanced Study closes for more localized emergency conditions affecting our campus, Crossroads will also be closed.

Delayed Opening:

When the Princeton Public Schools or the Institute for Advanced Study announces a delayed opening, Crossroads will also have a delayed opening. You will be informed of Crossroads specific opening time by email or you can call Crossroads (609-951-4699) for a recorded message.

Early Closings:

Inclement weather or emergency conditions that develop during the school day can result in early closings. When Princeton Public Schools or the Institute for Advanced Study closes early, Crossroads will also close early. Crossroads will email and call parents to notify you of early closings. In the event the Princeton Public Schools are in session yet cancel after-school activities, a Crossroads early closing will be at the discretion of the Director. In these situations, it is essential that we have current contact information for a parent or emergency contact who will be able to pick up their child within an hour of notification of closing.

Additional Information:

When Princeton Public Schools and/or IAS are not in session, emergency closings and delays will be made at the discretion of the Director.

When there are other emergency events that impact the safety of Crossroads families and staff, the Director has the authority to declare emergency closures and/or delayed openings to insure the safety of our community.

COVID-19 related closings:

The occurrence of COVID-19 cases or exposure at Crossroads could result in home self-isolation/quarantine orders of children, an individual cohort, multiple cohorts or the whole school by the Department of Health. The duration and scope of any program disruption will be determined with the local Department of Health and/or the Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing.

Tuition refunds will not be issued for closings caused by circumstances outside of Crossroads' direct control, except as described in the Force Majeure addendum in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic; nor will additional school days be added to the Crossroads calendar. Please note that if a child is absent or unable to attend the program because he or she is ill for any reason or quarantined for any reason, whether or not related to COVID-19, such absences do not qualify for a tuition credit unless your child's class is closed.

7. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The majority of spaces are reserved for families affiliated with the Institute for Advanced Study. First preference for admission will be given to children of Members and Staff of the Institute for Advanced Study. Second preference will be given to children who have been in Crossroads the previous year. Third preference will be given to siblings of community children. Any remaining openings will be made available to community children on our waiting list.

Crossroads does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national

origin. The School does not discriminate against students on the basis of disabilities that may be reasonably accommodated.

8. TUITION

In order to assure the high level of quality of the Crossroads' (the "School") programs and to maintain its financial integrity, the School requires that tuition be paid for the full academic year for which a child is enrolled. Tuition is payable by the year or in ten monthly installments. Although monthly installments may be used, such an arrangement does not constitute a month-to-month contract.

The parents' obligation to pay charges for the full academic year is unconditional. Except as described below, or in the Force Majeure addendum, no portion of such charges so paid or outstanding will be refunded or cancelled in the event of an absence, an emergency closure for reasons outside the School's control, withdrawal or dismissal of the child from the School for any reason. Continued enrollment is conditioned upon the child's and parents' compliance with all of the School's rules and regulations. Failure to comply may result in the child being dismissed.

Parents must pay bills for tuition and fees within the time designated. In the event any bill rendered by the School has not been paid within 30 days of the date it is due, interest on the balance of 10% per annum will be due. In the event the School commences legal action to collect any sums due on this contract, the parents will pay the School's costs of collection, including reasonable attorney's fees. The child will not be permitted to attend School should the parents fall behind in payments due.

Parents of children beginning the program mid-year or who are Institute Members who applied for only one of the two academic terms will owe tuition on a basis prorated for the number of months the child attends the School.

IAS Staff and IAS Members receive a discounted tuition. Should your status with the IAS change during the school year and you no longer qualify for this discount, you will be responsible for the regular tuition for the remainder of the school year.

If a child is withdrawn midyear on the advice of the Crossroads staff, the parents will no longer be responsible for the remainder of the tuition and their deposit will be fully refunded if their account is in good standing. Should a child need to be withdrawn before the end of the year due to financial problems, the school will make every effort to work with the parents to establish a payment plan.

Tuition is payable by personal check, money order, or direct electronic payments (ACH debits). If any check is returned for insufficient funds, any and all banking fees incurred will be the parents' responsibility. If the parents have chosen to pay in monthly installments instead of one annual payment, payment is due the first of each month, September through June. The tuition deposit made at the time of enrollment will be credited toward the final tuition installment in June.

9. HEALTH POLICIES

9.1. MEDICAL RECORDS AND IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Health forms must be filled in by your child's health care provider. All children in public and private schools are required by the State of New Jersey to have the following immunizations: DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis), Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Polio, Haemophilis B., Pneumococcal, Varicella (chicken pox) and an annual Influenza vaccine received between September 1 and December 31. If your child does not have these immunizations, please consult your health care provider immediately to establish a schedule to meet the State requirements.

As your child receives new vaccinations over the course of the school year, please remember to request an updated immunization record from the doctor's office and submit it to Crossroads. This will ensure that we have the most up to date information on your child's vaccination history.

In late June 2022, the FDA approved COVID-19 vaccines for children 6 months and older. This was an exciting milestone for families and Early Childhood Education programs. In the childcare setting, accessing and staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations is the most critical strategy to protect the health of children and staff, as well as to reduce disruptions and interruptions in care. COVID-19 quarantine guidelines vary depending on your child's vaccination status and health history. Please be sure to submit your child's proof of vaccination, or proof of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis to be eligible for any applicable quarantine exemptions.

9.2. POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Parents will understand the necessity of keeping the child home if he/she shows any symptom of illness. This is particularly important during the Covid-19 pandemic.

You must keep your child home for at least 24 hours after any diarrhea, vomiting or fever has ended (without fever-reducing medication), thus giving him/her a chance to fully recuperate and help prevent the spread to other students and staff.

If any of the symptoms that cause the exclusion from school are also considered COVID-compatible symptoms, the most stringent exclusion criteria (standard exclusion criteria or COVID exclusion criteria) will apply.

If the symptoms are not considered COVID-compatible symptoms, once the child is symptom-free, or has a health care provider's note stating that he/she no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, he/she may return to the center unless contraindicated by the Princeton health department or the New Jersey Department of Health.

Please let us know if your child is to be absent from school for illness or any other reason. Our teachers worry and may be holding up an activity in hope that the child will arrive soon. It is best to call or email the school before the child's normal starting time. Please report all communicable diseases to the school by email (crossroads@ias.edu), being specific about symptoms and medical advice received.

We, in turn, will inform families if a classroom has been exposed to a communicable disease.

The teachers will send home any child showing any of the symptoms listed below or who in the opinion of the teachers is feeling unwell enough that he/she cannot participate in classroom activities. If we are unable to reach the child's parents, we will then contact the child's emergency contacts. We have facilities for isolating the child until arrangements can be made for his/her return home. The person picking up the sick child should come within thirty minutes of the teacher's call.

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and the parent will be called to take him/her home. Crossroads may exclude a child whose illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children at the center.

SYMPTOMS REQUIRING EXCLUSION:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea or bloody diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated axillary temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38.1 degrees Celsius)
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 AND EXCLUSION: The currently known, most common symptoms of COVID-19 include: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

Children who meet the following criteria will be excluded from childcare, or promptly sent home, until they have a negative COVID-19 test, are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and symptoms have improved.

- At least TWO of the following symptoms: fever, chills, rigors (shivers), muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose; OR
- At least ONE of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.

9.3. POLICY ON EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider’s note stating that the child/staff member presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the health department by the center. The Department of Health’s Quick Reference Guide “Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions” contains a complete list of reportable communicable diseases and can be found at: http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf

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### 9.4. POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE

At times during the course of the year, children are well enough to attend school, yet still need medication to clear up infections or other medical problems. Please make sure to inform your child’s teachers if s/he is on any medication. Ideally, your doctor will be able to prescribe a medical treatment that can be administered only at times when your child is home. However, if the physician deems it necessary for your child to receive medication during the school day, the following policy will apply:

- Classroom teachers or the Director will administer medication to children
- Medication may be administered in the case of a short-term illness or, in the case of a child with special needs, as reasonable accommodation if the failure to do so would jeopardize the health of the child or prevent the child from attending the center
- Medication and health care procedures will only be administered after receipt of written approval from the child’s parent(s). Please ask your child’s teachers for a Medication Permission Form to complete
- All prescription medication will be prescribed in the name of and specifically for the child
- All prescription medication will be stored in its original prescription container, labeled with the child’s name, the date it was prescribed or updated and directions for its administration. (Ask your pharmacist to put prescriptions in two labeled bottles, one for home and one for school)
- Non-prescription over-the-counter medications can only be dispensed with instructions from a licensed health provider and written parental approval. The health care provider’s office may give instructions by telephone or provide written permission, including frequency and dosage
- Crossroads shall inform you immediately if your child exhibits any adverse effect of a medication or health care procedure

### 9.5. CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS AND ALLERGIES

Before a child with any identified medical need begins their first day at Crossroads, we will have a meeting with parents and appropriate Crossroads staff to inform us of needed information regarding the medical condition and to arrange necessary supports for a smooth transition for the child, family, teachers and existing children in the classroom.

If a child has a chronic health condition requiring the administration of medication, or health care

procedures or accommodations on a long-term basis, Crossroads will require a written statement from a certified health care provider as well as training from a parent or another appropriately trained person on necessary special health care procedures.

If your child, develops an allergy or long term health condition at any time during the school year, please inform your child's teachers and the Director and request a "Care Plan for Children with Special Health Needs" form. An individual plan will then be formulated to accommodate your child's chronic health condition or allergy.

## **9.6. FIRST AID**

For minor injury, First Aid kits are located in each classroom, and will be used to disinfect and bandage the hurt area following Red Cross First Aid instructions. For more serious injuries while under the school's care, the school will take the necessary actions to protect the child from further harm and will immediately attempt to notify the child's parent/guardian orally. The emergency medical release form signed by the parent/guardian empowers the school's representative to authorize medical treatment at an emergency medical center. The school carries an accident insurance policy for each child covering the time he/she is in school.

## **9.7. SLEEP SAFETY FOR INFANTS**

Infants up till the age of twelve months will be put to sleep on their backs only. We can make no exception to this rule unless we receive a signed directive from the child's physician.

## **9.8. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The COVID-19 pandemic requires a community-minded and pro-active approach to the application of health policies. Due to the ever-evolving nature of the pandemic, our policies and public health strategies will continue to be updated and evaluated. We will monitor weekly reports from the NJ Department of Health and work closely with the Princeton Health Department to assess regional risk levels and understand how they impact our policies and efforts to maintain the health and safety of our community.

We will issue updated COVID-19 policies before the beginning of the school year, to have the most current information possible. As the school year progresses, please be attentive to email updates informing the community of protocol changes.

## **10. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION METHODS**

Crossroads will communicate with parents primarily via email, especially if the information/notifications are not urgent. Communication in an emergency situation will be done by phone and/or email using the emergency contact information given to Crossroads.

## 11. POLICY ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- In order to limit “screen-time” and maximize opportunities for hands-on exploration and play, Crossroads students will not use computers, television or “smart devices” at school. For children over 2, a teacher may occasionally use an internet-enabled device to find photos or brief video clips to illustrate a theme being explored in class or to provide visuals in response to a child’s question.
- Crossroads does not use any social media platforms for the school. We understand that many parents and staff members do maintain private social media accounts. Crossroads staff is not allowed to post photos or videos of your children. Parents are allowed to post images of their own child at school. It is prohibited, however, for parents to post photographs or videos of any other child than their own.
- Crossroads teachers carry cell phones in order to take photos/videos for classroom newsletters and for use in any potential emergency situations. Staff members’ personal cell phones may not be used to text with parents. Barring emergency circumstances, all communication with parents will be via email and Crossroads telephone.
- In order to respect professional boundaries, while a child is enrolled at Crossroads we discourage social media connections between Crossroads staff and parents of students. This does not apply once a family is no longer enrolled at Crossroads or if a personal relationship/social media connection pre-dates a family’s enrollment at Crossroads.

## 12. DAILY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

In order to protect the health of our community members, drop off and pick up routines have been adapted to reflect NJ Department of Health COVID-19 recommendations for reducing the potential spread of illness.

Because COVID-19 health and safety regulations continue to evolve, our protocols may need to be updated periodically, we will send updated information on arrival and departure procedures any time there are new changes.

Staff, Parents and Children over 2 years of age must wear a mask during Arrival and Departure.

### **Daily Health Monitoring:**

Parents are the first line of defense in protecting our community by keeping children home when they display symptoms of illness. Please monitor your child’s health each morning before bringing them to school.

If your child is unwell, please email us at [crossroads@ias.edu](mailto:crossroads@ias.edu) to let us know why your child will be absent. Please be specific about what symptoms you have observed or of any diagnosis so that we may follow up as needed.

## **MORNING DROP OFF:**

Drop off times are staggered to reduce the potential spread of illness by limiting exposure between children and families in different classrooms. We ask you to please make every effort to arrive in your drop off window.

**Full-Day families (Infant, Toddler, Full-Day Preschool Children):** Your drop off time is 8:30-8:40.

**Half-Day Preschool families:** Your drop off time is 8:45-8:55.

**Extended-Day Preschool families:** Your drop off time is 9:00-9:10.

Everyone (including children over 2) must wear a mask during the drop off routine.

Morning drop offs will take place at Crossroads' main entrance. Children will be escorted to their classrooms by a member of the Crossroads team.

If you know that you would like to pick up your child early, please inform your child's teacher at drop off so we know to expect you at an alternate time and can get your child ready in advance.

## **AFTERNOON PICK UP:**

Please come to your designated pick up location during your assigned pick up time, and remember to wear a mask. A Crossroads teacher will bring your child and their belongings out to you.

**Half-Day Preschool families:** Your assigned pick up time is 12:35-12:45 in front of the Main Entrance

**Extended-Day Preschool families:** Your assigned pick up time is 3:20-3:30 in front of the Main Entrance

**Full-Day Preschool families:** Your assigned pick up time is 5:00-5:15 in front of the Main Entrance

**Infant Room families:** Your assigned pick up time is 5:00-5:15 at the Courtyard Entrance.

**Toddler Room families:** Your assigned pick up time is 5:00-5:15 at the Toddler Playground Gate

If you miss your drop off time, or would like to schedule an early pick up, please call the school at 609-951-4699 to make an individual arrangement with us. When you arrive, please call us or ring the doorbell for assistance.

## **13. POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Your child will only be released to his/her parents or the adults listed as Emergency Contacts on the Medical Information and Emergency Release Form. If your child is to leave with someone else, please email Crossroads ([crossroads@ias.edu](mailto:crossroads@ias.edu)) or leave a signed, dated note with the teacher in advance.

A child will not be released to a person who, in the judgment of a staff member, appears to be physically or emotionally impaired and may place the child at risk of harm. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, we will need you to provide documentation to that effect. Crossroads will maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If a child has not been picked up an hour or more after closing time and our staff has been unable to contact the parents and emergency contacts to make arrangements to release the child to an authorized person, Crossroads staff may call the Department of Children and Families Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child until a parent, or person authorized by the parents, is able to pick up the child.

#### **14. POLICY ON BABYSITTING**

Crossroads teachers are not available to babysit for Crossroads students outside of school.

#### **15. TOYS FROM HOME**

Try not to bring any toys from home. We have plenty of toys for the children to enjoy and it is easier for children to share community property. If it helps your child to have a transitional object from home, we recommend bringing a book they would like to share with their classmates.

#### **16. CLOTHING**

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothing that encourages self-help (e.g.: elastic waistbands, easy to push up sleeves). We do a lot of hands-on, exploratory play which can get quite messy. Please restrain from sending your child in special clothing you would be unhappy to have wet or soiled. Each child should bring and store complete changes of clothing at school, plainly marked with his/her name. Please remember to replenish this back-up supply as your child grows, seasons change and parcels of soiled clothing are sent home for washing.

If at any time your child does not have adequate changes of clothing, we will send them home in spare clothing belonging to Crossroads. These articles of clothing will be marked with an X in permanent marker for easier identification. Please launder and return these articles as soon as possible so they are available for the next child who needs a change of clothing.

We are committed to providing Crossroads children with outdoor time in nature and our playground. Your child will need effective gear for all types of weather and conditions. There will be sunshine, rain snow, puddles, mud, etc. to explore and enjoy. Having the right gear improves your child's comfort and ability to explore whole-heartedly. It also makes your laundry easier to handle! We will send you

specific recommendations for gear that have served Crossroads children well over the years.

Please label ALL clothing. We know that labelling all items can create a short-term inconvenience for you in the beginning; however it makes it much easier to manage everyone's gear and avoid lost items in the long run.

## **17. FOOD**

Children will bring their own food and utensils from home. Try to send nutritious food that your child likes and in amounts that they can finish. Uneaten food is usually repacked so that you can see what your child has eaten, unless the packaging doesn't allow clean transport home.

Please be sure to note on the "STUDENT INFORMATION" form any allergies your child may have or any dietary restrictions (see section on Chronic Health Conditions and Allergies for further information).

If there are any food allergies in your child's classroom that necessitate food restrictions, you will be notified of whatever accommodations need to be made by your group to keep all the children in our care safe.

To avoid confusion over similar lunch boxes, please label all lunch boxes and beverage/food containers.

For children in the Preschool Half-Day and Extended-Day programs, you will need to send a morning snack and lunch each day.

For children in the Full-Day programs (Preschool and Toddler), each day your child will need to bring both a morning and afternoon snack as well as a lunch.

For children under 12 months of age, the teachers will develop with the parents a plan regarding the feeding schedule, specific formula, nutritional needs, and introduction of new foods for each child. The food and bottles for each child are brought by the parents and should be carefully labeled with the child's name and the date. Mothers who are breast feeding are welcome to come to nurse their infants as needed, as long as they cooperate with all current COVID-19 protocols for entry into Crossroads.

## **18. DIAPERING**

Children in diapers will be changed as needed. Parents supply their child's diapers and wipes which are kept in the child's marked bin above the changing counter or in the classroom bathroom. Please replenish the supply when low. If you use cloth diapers please also supply a clearly labeled, covered container in which the soiled ones can be kept and taken home at the end of each day.

## **19. TOILET TRAINING**

Successful toilet training is dependent on physical and emotional readiness, not a specific age. We will not push or pressure a child, and will watch for signs of readiness to begin toilet training. Over the years, we have found that the process goes very smoothly when it is in response to a child's display of readiness. It is a much more stressful and complicated process when a child is pushed into toilet training on an adult's schedule.

It is important that parents and teachers work together in the toilet training process. When a child begins to show signs of readiness, we will schedule a parent-teacher meeting to discuss the timing and strategies for effective toilet training at home and school. We ask that you communicate proactively with your child's teachers if you are interested in initiating the transition out of diapers.

We support each child by being calm, consistent and natural about the transition out of diapers, providing ample opportunities for your child to use the toilet, without creating undue tension or stress. We make it part of our regular classroom rituals to take toileting breaks, even for those still in diapers, to help build familiarity and confidence with the process.

We expect children to have occasional accidents while learning to use the toilet. It is during these times that our support is most needed. Therefore, we will not express anger or disapproval, nor will we scold, shame or punish. We will calmly clean up accidents while reminding the child to listen to their body, and assuring the child that he/she can remember to use the toilet next time. We will also give reminders to use the toilet during the day to help him/her to be successful.

## **20. NAP GEAR**

If your child is in the Extended-day or Full-day Preschool or Toddler program, you will need to provide a (labeled) 2x4 fitted crib sheet and a (labeled) 2x4 blanket. Because storage space is very limited we ask that nap gear be as compact as possible. If your child needs a special item for nap time, such as a pacifier or stuffed animal, it is preferable that it be an item that can remain with the nap gear and not be taken home each night. In the infant group each child has a crib assigned and Crossroads supplies the bedding.

## **21. TOTE BAGS OR BACKPACKS**

Children should bring a large reusable bag or a large backpack to school each day, even if they do not always have projects to take home. Please check your child's bag each day for messages, soiled clothes, and school projects.

## **22. PARENT'S VISITS**

Unfortunately, during this continued phase of the COVID-19 pandemic with elevated transmission levels in our region, the Department of Health and Department of Children and Families discourage the entry of parents and other non-emergency visitors in the school. Exceptions are made for therapeutic service providers, NJ State Inspectors, and nursing mothers who can schedule a time to come feed their baby. All necessary visitors will adhere to current COVID-19 protocols. We hope that conditions with the global pandemic will improve, allowing us to ease regulations, so that parents will be permitted once again to visit their child's classroom.

## **23. FALL AND SPRING PARENT-TEACHER CONVERSATIONS**

Open, trusting, supportive and respectful communication between teachers and parents are essential ingredients to building a fruitful partnership in support of children. In addition to regular communication throughout the year, there will be two scheduled opportunities for teachers and parents to come together for Parent-Teacher Conversations (Fall and Spring). These discussions provide an opportunity for us to share observations from both home and school to deepen our understanding of each child and strategize on how to best support the child's growth. We relish these opportunities to share insights and anecdotes with one another and discuss any questions about your child.

There will be no school on Parent-Teacher Conversation days. Please feel free to arrange additional conversations with your child's teachers if you have concerns you would like to discuss. It is very important that we stay in regular communication so that home and school can work in concert to provide the best possible experience for your child.

## **24. INCLUSION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Crossroads is an inclusive environment which aims to provide a nurturing and developmentally appropriate early childhood experience for all children enrolled. We aim to assist all children and families to participate fully in our program, including children with identified disabilities, special learning and developmental needs and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **24.1. CHILDREN WITH PREVIOUSLY DIAGNOSED SPECIAL NEEDS**

Sometimes a child comes to Crossroads with a special need already identified during previously performed assessments. In such cases, before the child's first day at Crossroads, we will arrange to have a meeting with the child's parents and appropriate Crossroads staff. The purpose of the meeting is to inform Crossroads of any needed information regarding the special need and to discuss necessary supports for a smooth transition for the child, family, teachers and existing children in the classroom.

In these circumstances, it is important for families to share previously performed assessments with

Crossroads, including any Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP for children 0 to 3 years) or an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP for children 3 years and older) or therapeutic treatment plans so that we can all work together to support the child.

With the written consent of the parent of legal guardian, Crossroads welcomes specialists on site to evaluate and work with children according to the IFSP, IEP or treatment plan. Alternately, Crossroads will accommodate the child's schedule if the child must leave for part of the day to receive services. Crossroads welcome the collaboration with and the input of specialists in determining effective classroom strategies as well as determining the most supportive environment for the child.

If at any point it is understood that we are unable to provide an optimum environment for a particular child, we will support the family and help the family to find the resources available to lead them to the most appropriate setting. Also please see *Policy on the Expulsion of Children*, below.

#### **24.2. CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT**

If at any point, a family has concerns about their child's development, we encourage them to share those concerns with their child's teacher and/or the Director. While Crossroads staff members are not qualified to diagnose any children with a disability or developmental delay, we welcome the opportunity to discuss the concerns, provide feedback and suggest supportive activities and strategies.

Crossroads may provide a list of resources and referrals for seeking further professional input or evaluation – these referrals could include your child's pediatrician, private therapeutic practitioners, New Jersey's Early Intervention System for children ages 0-3 years, or to the Child Study team of the local school district for assessment of children ages 3-5 years.

If a child is determined to have a diagnosed disability and the parents provide written consent, then Crossroads will work with the family and specialists to support their child and to determine the best environment for the child.

If professional assessments determine that the best environment is Crossroads, every effort will be made to give the child, the staff and the other children in the classroom the most optimal experience.

If at any point it is understood that we are unable to provide an optimum environment for a particular child, we will support the family and help the family to find the resources available to lead them to the most appropriate setting. Also please see *Policy on the Expulsion of Children*, below.

#### **25. POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The method of guidance and discipline shall be positive and consistent with the developmental needs of the children. At no time is hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule or harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment used. Discipline shall not be associated with the behavior of children in regard to rest, toilet training, or food. Children shall not be isolated without supervision. Discipline shall not result in the withholding of emotional responses or stimulation and should not

require the child to remain silent for long periods of time.

The best solution is to avoid the need for discipline. An experienced teacher can anticipate frustrations or antagonisms building and hopefully prevent hurtful incidents from occurring between children. The teacher can intervene and help the children find a solution to the problem or effect a change of activity or grouping. If a child does lose control and becomes hurtful or disruptive, he/she can be taken aside by a teacher and engaged in an activity alone or with the teacher until the child regains composure and can return happily to the group.

A word about biting: Although biting is an unwanted and upsetting behavior with emotional and physical consequences to all parties, it is a common occurrence during the early years of development when children are still learning language and problem solving skills. An injury report will be completed if a child was bitten and left with a mark or broken skin. If the skin was broken, teachers will call the parents of the injured child and the child should be seen by a doctor. If there is a pattern of biting, teachers will meet with the family of the child who is biting and together they will discuss strategies and create a prevention plan.

## **26. POLICY ON THE EXPULSION OF CHILDREN**

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to suspend or expel a child from our program. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from needing to be enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

### **Immediate Causes for Expulsion**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or themselves.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

### **Possible Actions Leading to a Child's Expulsion or Suspension**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Persistent and uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts putting other children or themselves at risk
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- The Director has requested that the parent(s) seek additional assessment or support services for the child and the parent(s) refuse(s) to act upon this request
- Professional assessments indicate that the child requires care beyond the scope of what the school can offer. The Director feels that the nursery school can no longer provide adequate care for the child even with minor adjustments and reasonable accommodations.

## **A Child Will Not Be Expelled for the Following:**

If a child's parent/guardian(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.

## **Proactive Steps That Can Be Taken In Order To Prevent Expulsion:**

- Staff will try to redirect a child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, supervision.
- Staff will use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will recognize appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently set clear rules related to children's safety and respect for others and property.
- Age appropriate consequences will be applied when rules are broken.
- Child will be given reminders of safety rules.
- Child will be given support in learning to express their feelings appropriately and practice problem solving skills.
- Child will be given time to regain control and support to re-engage in play when they are ready.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified of concerns verbally and we will work with families to create supports for the child.
- Parent/guardian will be given written notification of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff will arrange conference(s) with parents/guardians to discuss strategies to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises may be provided.
- Recommendation of evaluation by NJ Early Intervention System (children 0-3 years) or the local school district Child Study Team (children 3-5 years) may be provided.
- Further evaluations will never be implemented without the parent/guardians written consent.

## **Schedule of Expulsion**

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting suspension or expulsion. A suspension is meant to provide a period of time so that the parent/ guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. In the case of an expulsion, parents will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parents sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to children's welfare or safety).