



Parent Handbook

The Gingham Giraffe Preschool
234 Southern Boulevard, Chatham, NJ 07928
973.635.0033
www.ginghamgiraffe.com

Faculty Directory

Our Administrators

Director... Alison Jackson

Director Emeritus... Gail Smith

BOTH Directors can be reached at directors@ginghamgiraffe.com

Our Teachers

“Just Two Plus” / 2E..... Maureen McLaughlin & Kim Moore

“Junior 3s” / 3A..... Jaclyn Romano, Angela Wager, Diane Fiore

“Young 3s” / 3G..... Kimberly Dwyre, Nancy Mutter, Marge Wentworth

“Three Plus” / 3+.....Caroline DePiro, Nancy “Miss Nancy” Chao, Kara Kopschik, Mandy Pyper

Fours Teachers.... Jayne Ardolino, Nicole Mahoney, Diane Palazzi, Tisha “Mrs V” VanBenSchoten, Michele Toledo, Natasha Kreizman, Susan Zarembor, Kim McWilliams

“Junior Kindergarten” / JK..... Jenny Carbone, Lori Isselin, Janet McAuley

Full Day Kindergarten.... Susan Patterson & Dana Coyne

Special Teachers

Music..... Nancy Chao

Science.... Nancy Mutter (2s & 3s) Diane Palazzi (4s & 5s)

Library & Drama.... Jenny Carbone (4s & 5s)

STEAM... Maureen McLaughlin & Kim Moore (4s, 5s, Full Day K)

Speech & Language Therapy provided independently by Chatham Speech & Language

Occupational & Physical Therapy.... provided independently by Tiny Transformations

The Gingham Giraffe Preschool, opened in 1990, offers educational programs for children aged 2-6 years and is Fully Licensed by NJ Dept of Children and Families. We are a **private, non-denominational, not-for-profit** preschool for *all* children, regardless of race, ability, sex or national/ethnic origin. **Gingham Giraffe strives to serve our community by providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all children who attend our play-based and academic programs.**

Our Parent Handbook is designed to provide helpful information for parents and guardians and is expansive but not all inclusive. **We believe in a Whole Family Approach to preschool**, wherein faculty and household members work together to support your child, so please

contact Administration or Faculty with any questions you may have.

Philosophy and Curriculum

The Gingham Giraffe provides a safe and nurturing environment which promotes all children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Play-based learning and traditional academics combined create a theme-based curriculum that is age-appropriate and success-oriented. Our curriculum encourages cooperative play, promotes expressive language and stimulates learning through curiosity and children's natural sense of wonder. **Classes are established with a six-month age span** and are arranged to allow children to explore. Students learn through small group and large group settings, with both self-directed and guided instruction. Social and physical development are also cornerstones of early childhood development and are supported with daily outdoor play or gym time indoors.

The Gingham Giraffe believes that creating trusted relationships with teachers is an important part of instilling a child's love of learning at an early age. We utilize team teaching and rarely have substitutes: children are always with familiar caregivers. **All teachers are CPR and First Aid certified and receive additional professional development training each year**; all Staff and building personnel are required to be fingerprinted and have a Criminal History Check.

Each year begins with a transitional phase-in schedule, gradually lengthening the day. Classes are scheduled on consecutive days to ease separation anxiety and to better meet the developmental needs of our young students.

Children are supervised at all times. They are not allowed to open any doors (car doors included). A security system is in place for our educational wing during school hours and a tracking (attendance) system is utilized when making transitions to the playground or outside for any reason.

Our Programs

Preschool Classes

Preschool classes are created based on a six month age span and meet mornings for approximately three hours. **School bags are provided. All students should bring a nut-free snack and water bottle each day they attend.** Extended hours are offered to every age group via our flexible ticket option or through tuition-based Stay & Play and ACHIEVE Programs. **Children must enroll consecutive days.**

JUST TWO PLUS (2E)

8:45-11:15 AM (or 1, 2:30 or 3 PM)

M/T or W/Th/Fri only

JUNIOR THREES (3A)

8:45 - 11:15 AM (or 1, 2:30 or 3 PM)

THREES (3G), THREE PLUS (3+)

8:30 - 11:30 AM (or 1, 2:30 or 3 PM)

YOUNG FOURS (4C) OLDER FOURS (4B)

8:15-11:45 AM (or 1, 2:30 or 3 PM)

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN (JK)

8:15 - 11:45 AM (or 1, 2:30 or 3 PM)

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN (K)

8:15 - 3 PM

Afternoon & Full Day Programs

Mini Munchers

Students in 2E or 3A bring lunch from home and are dismissed at noon. See page on Ticket Pricing for more information.

Stay and Play

Children bring lunch from home and enjoy additional recess and supervised play. Dismissal is at 1 PM with curbside service along the Exit Drive. Tickets can be purchased to maximize flexibility or can be paid quarterly with your tuition fee.

Achieve / Stay & Play Plus

Gingham's tuition-based **full day preschool program** provides a full day of preschool. After their morning classes, 4 and 5 year old children participating in ACHIEVE bring lunch from home and experience a varied curriculum of electives including Math, Culinary Arts, STEM, Drama, and Sports and Yoga. Children under 4 years old have a state-mandated rest time. Dismissal is at 2:30 PM with curbside service provided. Payments are made quarterly and are discounted from our monthly sign up/drop-in price. Children may also participate in ACHIEVE occasionally and without advanced notice by purchasing tickets through your teacher or by contacting the office.

The Three O'Clock Club

Students can attend after care for half an hour until 3 PM by paying through tuition or purchasing tickets for drop-in after ACHIEVE or Stay & Play Plus. Paying through tuition requires a three day commitment and scheduled days must be consistent for the quarter. No refunds will be made once the quarterly payment is received.

More About Tickets... Flexible Fun!

Tickets can be purchased for those who choose to have more flexibility regarding a longer day. They can be purchased at any time by email request and will be sent home with your child. Please note: if you would like your child to attend Stay & Play, ACHIEVE or The 3 O'Clock Club regularly, our tuition-based pricing is discounted from purchasing tickets and also helps us for planning purposes.

Full Day Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten serves as a natural bridge between the emergent curriculum and readiness skills formed in our preschool and the academic skills necessary for continued success and independence throughout Elementary School. Gingham Kindergarten offers a small group environment with team teachers for individualized attention during this special time of a child's development academically, socially and emotionally. Kindergarteners will be exposed to traditional Academics of Language Arts, Reading and Mathematics, as well as electives in Social Studies, Science, Creative Arts, Spanish Language, and STEM.

Daily Life

A Typical Day at Gingham

- Arrival - Curb Service
- Free Play / Centers
- Morning Meeting / Circle Time (large group instruction)
- Playground/Outdoor Time
- Snack
- Small Group Instruction and individual work (painting, writing, drawing, clay, puzzles, games, STEM, music, reading and library, classroom jobs)
- Lunchtime
- Playground/Outdoor Time
- Achieve Elective (Art, Drama, Sports & Games) Instruction & Activity

Outdoor play occurs daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Activities include teacher-led "structured play" and "free play." Children attending for less than four hours will receive **at least 30 minutes of active play outdoors** (weather permitting) or indoors (gym or classroom). Those attending for more than four hours - after

1:00 - will receive 60 minutes: two play times either outside or inside.

Play clothes and sneakers are the best choice for school. Your child should be able to manage in the bathroom with minimal help. Avoid belts and suspenders and jewelry. Elastic waist pants are easiest and sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are best. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Avoid clothing that can catch on playground equipment (strings, loops). Weather permitting, we go outside every day; our playground is shady and cool in the mornings so jackets and gloves are needed! **Please label everything with your child's first and last name to minimize lost items.**

Lost & Found

If your child brings an item to school and it is not labeled, it may end up in our Lost & Found! If you believe your child left an unlabeled item at school, please visit the Lost & Found outside the Directors' Office. Items not retrieved after a reasonable amount of time will be donated or used as "loaner clothes."

What to Bring

Each child will be given a school bag that will be used to transport items back and forth from home. **Please do not send children to school with bags other than the one provided. Additional/replacement bags can be purchased by contacting Directors.** Students will be spending time outdoors as much as possible. Please dress your child accordingly and ensure all coats, jackets, etc are labeled with your last name. If he/she is prone to accidents and/or is being potty trained, parents should **send an extra set of clothes that will be kept in school.** We will send home clothes/ask for replacements or seasonal items as needed!

Everything brought to school will remain in your child's classroom and will be separated from others' belongings in a cubby or basket. **Everything should be labeled with your child's first and last name.**

Two and three-year-olds who are staying after 1 PM should also bring a small blanket or bath towel in a labeled ziploc bag for their state-mandated rest time.

Children should refrain from bringing any personal items (toys, lovies, comfort items) to school.

Snack, Lunch, Water

Each child will need to bring a labeled water bottle and one nut-free snack (in manageable packaging) daily. Simple and healthy is best! If staying after their morning class, he/she should also bring lunch from home. **All snacks and lunches brought from home must be clearly marked with the child's full name and class number (i.e. 3G, 4B).** Our policy remains that

there is no sharing of lunches or snacks due to allergies. Water bottles can be refilled by teachers if needed. Water bottles will come home daily for cleaning and refilling.

We are a nut-free/peanut-free preschool. If your child brings something to school that includes nut or nut butter, it will be sent home and an alternate snack will be provided. Please do not include peanut butter in your child's breakfast on the days they attend school, as some children have reacted to "peanut breath". Avoid eating in the car prior to arrival. If a child is suspected of eating something with nuts or nut butter in the car, Directors may ask the parent to accompany the child into school to wash their hands/brush their teeth. Children are not allowed to bring breakfast "remnants" into class. If your child has food allergies, additional paperwork is required. Please see the "Health and Safety" section in this handbook for more information. If your child has or develops food allergies, please notify us so that we can arrange a meeting with your child's teachers. An additional emergency form is also required.

Diapers & Potty Training

Many of our students are still in diapers and/or are being potty-trained. Our faculty will diaper children when they are wet or soiled, and assist and encourage the use of the toilet if your child exhibits signs of readiness! If your child is in diapers or if he/she is potty training, please communicate with teachers directly so we can assist and support with positive encouragement and consistency. Diapers, pull ups and an extra set of clothing should be kept at school (we also have extra diapers and loaner clothes!) Teachers will notify parents when supplies need to be replenished.

Regardless of the stage of training, all students are required to wear some type of protective layer under their clothing at all times (diaper, pull-up, underwear) to ensure cleanliness of each individual child and the shared space of the classroom.

Accidents happen! Young children have accidents for various reasons and because a child is trained at home does not necessarily mean they are trained for a busy classroom. Cleanliness is our priority: children will be cleaned and changed by a faculty member in the presence of another faculty member. If a more thorough cleaning is necessary, a parent will be notified to pick up the child. **If a child is in underwear and accidents occur frequently, parents will be notified and it may be required for the child to wear pull ups to school until fully trained.** Failure to comply with guidelines may result in a request for a schedule change to reduce accidents, or to withdraw from our program.

Faculty will always accompany children to the bathroom, however once using the toilet on a regular basis, independence and privacy are prioritized. Please teach and encourage wiping skills at home.

Fire Drills, Safety and Lockdown Drills

Fire drills will be practiced by the school once each month in compliance with NJ state licensing requirements. Safety (lockdown) drills will also be practiced throughout the year. Age appropriate language is used, with safety in mind. If evacuation is necessary, students will be escorted by faculty to an emergency site. Law Enforcement will provide guidance. Parents will be notified as soon as possible by email, phone, or brightwheel of any emergency. All teachers carry the children's emergency contact information with them at all times.

Cell phones should always be on when your child is in attendance, so you may be reached for any reason. Please create a contact in your phone for Gingham Giraffe (973 - 635 - 0033) to avoid accidentally screening a call from school! A sign-out system will be used by an adult already authorized to pick up your child if a parent/guardian is not available. If an emergency should occur when the Directors are absent, decisions will be made collaboratively by consultation of the "Director designee".

Conferences

Conferences are *formally* held twice a year between parent/guardian and teachers. We recognize that young children's behavior and emotions change often. Faculty are always available to discuss your child's growth and needs and can make arrangements for a convenient time to do so. This is discouraged at the curb as safety is a priority, but if you call or email Directors, a teacher will call you or set up a time to meet to discuss your concerns.

Classroom Events/Volunteering & Giving Back

Throughout the year, parents and caregivers are invited to attend several (brief) classroom parties/events during school hours. This is a great way to meet other parents and to see your children interact with their peers! Dates and times will be communicated by teachers, and occasional donations of special items may be requested.

If you or a member of your family is inspired by a theme unit or topic being discussed in your child's class, we would love to hear from you. Parents have visited classrooms to read favorite books, share hobbies, and discuss holidays and family traditions. Contact your teacher if you would like to present a special topic to your child's class.

Tax-deductible donations can be made any time on [our website](#) and appropriate documentation will be provided for tax purposes. As a not-for-profit, we appreciate your support!

We occasionally ask for volunteers or donations, however if you would like to be proactive, and would like to give back to our school, please consider purchasing something for your child's classroom on our teachers' [Amazon Wish List!](#) We also have several fundraisers throughout the year, which all contribute to our supplemental curriculum.

Birthdays & Parties

At Gingham Giraffe, we know that for children, birthdays are a big deal, and we are happy to celebrate your child's special day in class! If desired, you may send in a special **nut-free treat (ice cream cups, jello, fruit cups, cookies, cupcakes, donuts, etc..please, no candy)**. Every classroom has its own birthday traditions, so please ask a teacher for more information on celebrations in class.

To make their day truly special, throw your child a Stay & Play Pizza Party! For more info, visit [our website](#) or contact Directors. You provide the treat - we do the rest!

Therapy & Support

We are proud to partner with **Chatham Speech & Language** and **Tiny Transformations** for on-site **Speech, Occupational and Physical Therapy**. All therapists are independent and are not affiliated with our school. We provide classroom space when available so that our students can receive therapies in a place convenient for our families. **The Gingham Giraffe does not receive compensation for any sessions conducted on our premises.** Consultations are conducted free of charge at Chatham Speech & Language prior to the start of therapy. If you believe your child may be in need of support, reach out to teachers or directors.

Daily School Procedures

Arrival & Dismissal

Curb Service offers a safe way to enter and exit school and eliminates walking through a busy parking lot, while also helping to ease separation anxiety. Curb service promotes responsibility, independence and organization, all needed for success in school. Each family will be assigned a drop off location and time to drop off. **All dismissals will occur at the Exit Drive Door.**

Morning curb service begins promptly at 8:15 AM and is available until our doors are locked at 9 AM. Curb service times are assigned so that the car line moves quickly, **however change in drop off times can be accommodated when requested.** We may request a traditional drop off time for our youngest students due to separation anxiety.... We try to be flexible!

Teachers will unbuckle your child from the car and walk them to the school entrance and/or their classroom if needed. **If you arrive at school after 9 AM, you will need to walk your child to the Exit Drive door and call the office so that a faculty member can let you in.**

During dismissal, your child will be walked to your vehicle by a faculty member. The driver will need to secure the child in his/her car seat before departure. All drivers should be aware of this policy - babysitters, grandparents, etc!

Attendance

Whatever the reason, if your child will be absent from school, please notify us via brightwheel, phone or email. **If your child is absent due to illness or communicable disease, contact Directors to provide your child's diagnosis.** This information will be kept confidential, but is needed in case we need to notify a class or school community of an outbreak. All families must follow Gingham's current Health and Safety protocols.

Late Drop Off/Early Pick Up

Should you arrive late or need to pick up early, you must notify the office at 973-635-0033 so that a faculty member can let your child in, or escort your child to the curb for dismissal.

The Start of School: Phase-In Schedule & Separation Anxiety

We have always found success in easing the transition back to school by gradually lengthening the day. Letting children express how they feel the first few days and "seeing and hearing" their worries and fears will help them know that they are supported. However, families should keep in mind that too much emphasis and discussion about the first day of school may cause a child to be apprehensive. When parents are positive, excited, and confident, children sense this and feel the same way. Accordingly, it is helpful to practice your child's school routine (bedtime, breakfast, etc.) days before school starts.

Beginning school is a time for children to make new friends and engage in peer play in new surroundings and with new materials. Awareness that separation is an important part of growing up and a lifelong process that must be handled with care and sensitivity will balance the challenge of this initial separation. Working as partners in guiding your child through this adventure is paramount to a successful transition from home to school.

As in years past, we will implement a phase-in for the first week of school. We will follow a modified schedule as we gradually lengthen the day.

Inclement Weather

Our calendar and closures closely follow the Public Schools of the Chathams with some changes due to the needs of young children and the activities in the building. Inclement weather and other unplanned closings/delays will be communicated to parents electronically as soon as possible. **If you prefer to be notified of school closures using an alternate method, please communicate this with your child's teacher.**

Delayed Opening Schedule:

All Morning Classes

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

(drop off times to be staggered)

Stay & Play Options:

11:45 - 1:00 PM

ACHIEVE:

11:45 - 2:30 PM / 3 PM

Tuition & Payment

Your Annual Registration Fee holds your child's spot for future Enrollment. Returning families can register in January for the following school year; new families will be offered enrollment in writing in February if space permits. **Tuition is broken into five quarterly payments. Once a tuition payment is made, it will not be refunded. The first tuition payment binds your child's Enrollment for the coming school year and is due by April 1 for new families, June 1 for returning families. Additional payments are due the first weeks of October, December, February and April. A \$25.00 late fee will be applied for each week tuition is late.** Failure to pay tuition can result in expulsion unless prior notification is given and arrangements are made. **Credits will not be given for vacation, illness, or classes missed for any reason.**

Student Withdrawal

Should a family choose to withdraw their child for any reason (relocation, etc), two week notice is recommended so that teachers can assist with a smooth transition. **Requests for refund or reimbursement for quarterly tuition payments already made will not be granted.**

Schedule Changes

Permanent changes to a student's schedule should be made in coordination with our school quarters. Families may alter their child's weekly schedule by adding days or afternoons, space permitting.

Refunds will not be granted for extended day programs once the quarterly tuition has been paid. If a child's schedule is not consistent (fewer than two days with the same dismissal time), tickets are required and/or payment for the later dismissal time will apply. Please contact Directors to request tickets or request a permanent change to your child's schedule.

Students cannot attend days they are not scheduled for unless approved by a Director. In emergency situations, drop-in days may be accommodated for a fee if space allows.

Communication, Technology, Photos and Social Media

The Gingham Giraffe Preschool's faculty understands the benefits of technology and uses it as a communication tool for staff and parents and to share resources and to promote educational excellence. While we understand the benefit of some technology, **we limit its use for students. We believe in providing a print-rich environment at all times and encourage**

children to be physically active. There are times, however, when pictures are priceless and may be used to illustrate concepts and increase visual memory.

We **occasionally** use visual media to reinforce curriculum, including small snippets of videos on a laptop or ipod. Students will have no more than twenty minutes maximum screen time.

The Gingham Giraffe Preschool uses email, brightwheel and our website to disseminate important information. Social media (Facebook & Instagram) is also used to share information and fun events that happen at school. Direct communication with your child's teachers is permitted through the brightwheel app.

Faculty and Staff will often send photos home via brightwheel and school newsletters. Occasionally we may share photos on social media. If you prefer that your child's photo not be shared in this way, please contact Directors. Parents and teachers are expected to refrain from posting pictures of children at Gingham on any social media sites unless they have permission from the child's parents.

Methods of Parental Notification

If needed, Directors and Teachers will call, email, or send a brightwheel message to parents depending on the situation. Voicemail will be left in non-emergencies. **For emergencies, we will call the preferred phone number listed on your Enrollment Form**, followed by the second parent phone number. If parents cannot be reached, we will call the child's Emergency Contacts.

If a method other than a phone call should be used to notify parents of an injury to a child's head or face, a bite that breaks the skin, a fall from a height, or an injury requiring professional medical attention, **you must note this on your child's Enrollment Form.**

brightwheel

Gingham Giraffe currently uses the app called brightwheel for simple and easy communication between parents and faculty, as well as billing. Instructions on how to access and set up brightwheel will be sent at enrollment time. Occasional photos and messages are sent home as "conversation starters" and this is a great tool for parents when a long conversation with teachers is not warranted, but communication is needed. **Note: Non-urgent matters only.** **Teachers are not required to respond to brightwheel messages while supervising/teaching children during school hours. If an immediate response is required, please call the school office at 973-635-0033.**

Email

Email is checked daily by the Directors. **Non-urgent school** matters regarding health, attendance, tuition and school policies should be sent via email. Parents can expect a response

to emails within 24 hours when school is in session. **If an immediate response is required, please call the school office at 973-635-0033.** Leave a message so that faculty can contact you directly by your preferred method if needed.

Newsletters

Each month there will be a schoolwide emailed newsletter from the Directors with news about Gingham community happenings, tips for families with preschoolers and other helpful information. Individual classroom newsletters will be sent separately each month by teachers. These are sent home in your child's bag, and make for great conversation at home with your little one.

Behavior Policy: Positive Discipline

Positive Discipline helps to develop confidence, healthy relationships and self-esteem. Behavior guidelines are given which are appropriate for the age of the child. In order for children to appreciate and respect each other and their environment, they need limits set gently but firmly. Young children need help in: establishing inner controls geared to their level of maturity. We hope to foster self-control and an understanding of themselves and others. All children are invited and encouraged to participate in all activities.

If a child becomes disruptive, we.....

*Intervene * Reiterate Rules * Redirect*

We hope to:

- Anticipate friction to effectively redirect/ clarify messages and brightwheel
- Offer encouragement and options and praise accomplishments
- Offer options/point out consequences
- Provide positive attention and affection

If a child behaves in a destructive manner, a few minutes of "quiet time" with a teacher may be warranted. "Time out" is encouraged as a positive tool to help regulate emotions and behaviors rather than as a punitive measure. A child who becomes repeatedly aggressive, (hits bites, kicks), towards classmates or faculty will be separated temporarily from other children. If aggression continues and a tantrum ensues that may cause harm to anyone, the child and teacher will discuss the problem with the Director. If necessary, the child will be removed from the classroom by the Director or acting Director. A parent will be contacted and a "positive behavior" plan will be discussed and implemented upon agreement by Parent and Faculty. After a reasonable period of time, if behavior continues to be negative and aggressive, the child will be asked to withdraw from the program to seek a more suitable environment.

Our Director, Mrs. Jackson, became a certified Positive Discipline Instructor in 2019. We feature

Positive Discipline in our monthly school newsletter's "Positive Parenting" column. If you have any questions about utilizing Positive Discipline at home, please contact Directors! See "Guidelines for Positive Discipline" at the end of this handbook for more information.

Health & Safety

Our goals are to nurture and educate your child in a safe and healthy environment. Every teacher and staff member is CPR and First Aid certified. New Jersey Law requires that all children must have a complete health record on file and be adequately immunized. Children will not be left in our care without an up to date Health Record. A fall flu shot is also now required by law.

Excludable Communicable Diseases

We expect that all parents will exercise caution and good judgment by sending their child to school only when physically well. If there is doubt in your mind because of symptoms, lack of rest or behavior, your child should be kept home. If your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend school:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes/jaundice skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior change
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck
- Unmanageable runny nose

Once the child is symptom-free or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/others the child may return to school.

A child who contracts **excludable communicable symptoms or disease may not return to school without a note from a health care provider** stating he/she presents no risk to himself/others and/or until all open sores/rashes are healed. If a child is exposed to an excludable communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, Covid-19) while in school, parents will be

notified in writing. Please see more at the end of this handbook.

Illness & Exclusion Due To Illness

If your child feels ill during the school day, the child will be isolated from other students, and a parent or caregiver will be notified so pick up can be arranged. Please make sure someone is readily available should this be necessary. **Your emergency contact should be geographically close.**

Your child may return to school after 24 hours that he/she is fever free without the aid of fever-reducing medication.

If prescribed antibiotics, your child must have them in his/her system for 24 hours before returning.

Children displaying symptoms of uncontrolled mucus, cough, sneeze or malaise may be discharged or asked to remain home at the discretion of the Directors.

Parents are required to pick up ill children immediately. **If you are not able to pick up your child within 30 minutes, or we can't get in touch with you, we will call emergency contacts.** Please ensure that your emergency contacts are up-to-date and **geographically close** at all times! Please see Policy on The Release of Children for more information.

Health Guidelines, when updated or changed, will be communicated to all families in writing via email.

Injuries

Small cuts and scrapes will be treated by a member of our first-aid trained faculty and noted in our injury log. If a child receives any injury - however minor - on the head or face, it will be reported to the Parent/Guardian. If there should be a biting incident, which can happen with young children, both parents will be notified and a second incident will result in the "biter" leaving school early.

The Staff at any time will call 911 for emergency medical treatment if their judgment warrants it. Parents/Guardians would be contacted immediately thereafter. If necessary, faculty will accompany a child to the hospital until the child's Parent/guardian arrives.

Medication

Any emergency medications that should be kept at school must be labeled and **in the original prescription box** (epi-pens, benadryl etc.) Please note the expiration dates. Medication will be administered by the Directors only in the case of an emergency, after calling 911. Serious medical conditions will require the completion of our Emergency Health Plan form to be

completed and signed by a Physician and a conference with Teachers and the Director. **If a child is taking any medication on a regular basis, it must be administered by parents.**

Head Lice

Lice are highly contagious. They are usually transmitted by direct person to person contact or with possessions that have been in recent contact with someone with lice. Should your child **carry lice, you will need to contact us, and show proof that your child is lice/nit free for 24 hours before returning to school. A note indicating when the child was first diagnosed and when she/he is declared lice/nit free is mandatory to return to school.** Please share information as you acquire it so we may keep Gingham free of this health nuisance.

Food Allergies/Emergency Plans

We are a nut-free school. (See "Lunch, Snack, Water" in this handbook) **If your child has serious food allergies, or develops one, please notify us immediately. You will need to provide medication and we will review our emergency plan with you.** We always err on the side of caution and take this very seriously! Teachers will make decisions with the Directors when classes are established to determine "safe" food practices for each class. The safety of all children will be taken into consideration. Emergency plans regarding medications etc. will be discussed with Parents, Team Teachers and the Director. An "Emergency Bag" will be compiled and will be kept with the child at all times.

Attached/above please find:

- Policy on The Release of Children
- NJ Licensing Guidelines on Communicable Disease
- Expulsion Policy
- Policy on Positive Discipline
- Policy on Methods of Parent Notification
- Policy on the Use of Technology, Photos & Social Media
- Information to Parents Document

Acknowledgement of receipt of this Handbook is necessary for your child to attend The Gingham Giraffe Preschool. If you have questions about any of our policies or procedures, please contact directors@ginghamgiraffe.com.



Policy on the Release of Children

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order. The center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fail to pick up a child at the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Division's 24 hour Child Abuse Hot line (1.800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual.
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s)
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Divisions 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school aged child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s).



Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases as mandated by the State of New Jersey

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.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea or bloody diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated axillary temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

Once the child is symptom-free, or has a doctor'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.

Excludable Communicable Diseases

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

Respiratory Illnesses:

- Chicken pox**
- German measles*
- Hemophilia influenzas*
- Measles*
- Meningococcus*
- Mumps*
- Strep Throat
- Tuberculosis*
- Whooping Cough*

Gastro-Intestinal Illnesses:

- Campylobacter*
- Escherichia coli*
- Giardia Lamblia
- Hepatitis A*
- Salmonella
- Shigella*

Contact Illnesses:

- Impetigo*
- Lice*
- Scabies*
- Shingles*

Covid-19

*Reportable diseases that will be reported to the health department by the center.

**If your child has chicken pox, a doctor's note is not required for re-admitting to the center. A note from the parent is required, stating that all sores have dried and crusted.

If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center you will be notified in writing. Children must be kept home if they show any symptom of illness. Children must remain home for twenty-four hours after any fever, diarrhea or vomiting has ended, thus giving him/her a chance to fully recuperate and help prevent the spread to other students and staff. The teachers will send home any child showing any of the symptoms listed or who in the opinion of the teachers is feeling ill enough that he/she cannot participate in classroom activities. We have facilities for isolating the child until arrangements can be made for his/her return home.

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 the school before the child's normal starting time. Please report communicable diseases to the school. We in turn, will post a notice on the bulletin board if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. Medications may be administered only after a written request and instructions from the child's parent or guardian.



Department of Children & Families Office of Licensing INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing INFORMATION TO PARENTS Under provisions of the **Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52)**, every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/portal/>.



**Department of Children & Families
Office of Licensing
INFORMATION TO PARENTS (CONT'D)**

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292- 0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/dcf/.



GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE:

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children, and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children **what they should** do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline **teaches self-esteem**.

You can use positive discipline by planning ahead:

- Anticipate and eliminate potential problems.
- Have a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults.
- Have a well-planned daily schedule.
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor,
- Include some group decision-making.
- Provide time and space for each child to be alone.
- Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group.
- Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences.
- Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about our room, our toys.

You can use positive discipline by intervening when necessary:

- Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior.
- Model language... "Can I have a turn when you are done?"
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation.

Use time-out - by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control. (One minute for each year of the child's age is a good rule of thumb).

- Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict.
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings. . .
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice only if there are two acceptable options.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don't say "bad boy" or "bad girl." Instead you might say "That is not allowed here."

You can use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- Respond to and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing. Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior. Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism. Overlook small annoyances, and deliberately ignore provocations. Give hugs and praise every day.
- Appreciate the child's point of view.
- Be loving, but don't confuse loving with license.

Positive discipline is NOT:

- Disciplining a child for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves
- Hitting, shaking, or any other form of corporal punishment
- Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of
- children
- Engaging in or inflicting any form of child abuse and/or neglect Withholding food, emotional responses, stimulation, or opportunities for rest or sleep .
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time

Positive discipline takes time, patience, repetition and the willingness to change the way you deal with children. But it's worth it.... because positive discipline works!





Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program, either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child. The following are examples of reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

Immediate Causes:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or self.
- A parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff.
- A parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff.

Parental Actions:

- Failure to pay fees/habitual lateness in payments.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up.
- Failure to complete required forms (including immunization records).

Child's Actions:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums or outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Biting.

A child will NOT be expelled if a parent/guardian:

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

Proactive Actions That Can Be Taken In Order To Prevent Expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities, and supervision.
- Staff will always only use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally

- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian will have a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- Parent/guardian will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.

Schedule of Expulsion:

If after the remedial above have not worked, the child's parent will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsive action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior, or to come to an agreement with the school.

The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.

The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center.

The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date with as much advanced notice as possible.