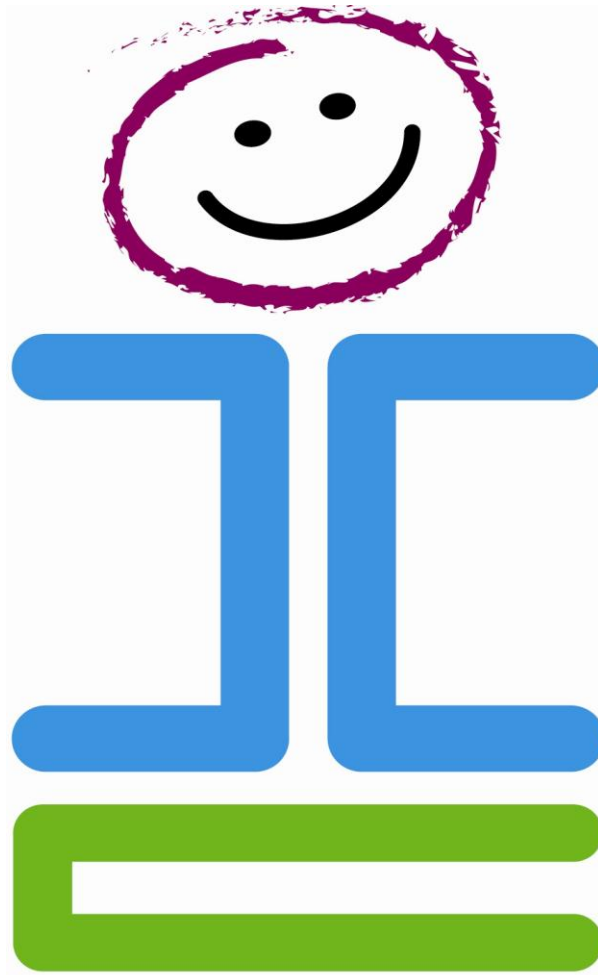


Ithaca Community Childcare Center

Parent Handbook



Approved by the Board of Director
Of the Ithaca Community Childcare Center

Revised September 2014

Main Center 257-0200
579 Warren Road
Kendal at Ithaca 266-5309
2250 North Triphammer Road
HOURS: 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM (M-F)

PLEASE NOTE: Our programs close at 5:30 PM. Please plan to arrive with enough time to gather your child's belongings, talk with your child's teacher and exit the building by 5:30. *Thank you.*

School Age Program (SAP) 257-4670
23 Cinema Drive
HOURS: 2:30 – 5:45 PM (M-F)

PLEASE NOTE: Our program closes at 5:45 PM. Please plan to arrive with enough time to gather your child's belongings, talk with your child's counselor and exit the building by 5:45. *Thank you.*

In case of an emergency, the Executive Director/Program Director or the IC3 Board Officers may be reached at home on weekends or in the evening.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Sherri Koski (home 589-4713)
PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Jeanne Malone (home 279-1688)

2014-2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (BOARD OFFICERS)

Dan Hazlitt- President
Sarah Tomei - Vice President
Ron Huggins - Treasurer
Susan Hoskins – Secretary

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ABOUT THE CENTER

Ithaca Community Childcare Center, Inc. (IC3) is a not-for-profit corporation licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) to provide child care to families in the Tompkins County area. The OCFS Licensing Regulations are available at each program. The Center was incorporated in September 1988 and is the result of a consolidation of the Cornell Community Infant Center (formed in 1984) and the Ithaca Childcare Center (formed in 1975). IC3 is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of NAEYC. An accredited center must meet a variety of strict criteria designed to identify exemplary programs and professional staff.

MISSIONS, VALUES AND VISION

Our MISSION

To provide families with the highest standard of child inspired, professionally nurtured, care and opportunities for learning.

Our VALUES

Ithaca Community Childcare Center provides a
safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate program
which fosters:

active learning,
support for the whole child, and
a child-centered environment.

We foster innovation.

We embrace teamwork.

We strive for excellence.

We respect and support families.

We commit to service at all levels.

We respect and appreciate diversity.

We actively listen and seek to understand.

We communicate openly and productively.

We use resources creatively and responsibly.

We abide by the NAEYC *Code of Ethics and Statement of Commitment.*

Our VISION

To be nationally recognized as an outstanding child care center.

IC3's LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

CHILD CENTERED ACTIVE LEARNING

The term “Child Centered Active Learning” refers to learning that is initiated and actively carried out by the learner, building on his or her intrinsic desire to acquire knowledge and learn about the world. There are three components to this approach: Child Centered, Active and Learning.

- **Child Centered:** Activities are based upon children’s interest and developmental levels, and build upon their experiences in a meaningful way. A variety of materials allows for children to make choices that are enjoyable, related to their current interests, and allow for opportunities to experience feelings of control, success and competence.
- **Active:** Children are intrinsically driven to explore and experiment in their environment. Active means that children are interacting with their environment, not passive observers. Through these interactions, children assimilate concepts in all areas of development – cognitive, physical, social and emotion, and language.
- **Learning:** Children build upon their knowledge base through their experiences. Learning occurs when children are engaging in fun, interesting, challenging, relevant experiences. Learning means that children add a new idea, concept or ability to their existing knowledge or view an existing concept in a new way.

Together, the phrase “Child Centered Active Learning” means that the environment is designed to stimulate children to actively experiment with materials, ideas or actions that encourage growth in their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. The materials and activities provided are a reflection of interests and abilities of the children, and are varied enough to allow children to make choices and to use them in novel ways.

At IC3, we believe the teacher plays a crucial role in fostering this learning. The teacher does not direct the class, but instead guides children along their own voyages of discovery in a non-intrusive way. The teacher’s responsibility is to:

- Continuously assess the developmental needs of the children, observing and respecting their interests, aptitudes, and emotions.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful experiences with which to interact socially with others, express and control emotions, build self-esteem and confidence, and develop symbolic thinking.
- Provide a breadth of materials, resources and activities to inspire, encourage and nurture a child’s enthusiasm for a lifetime of learning.
- Interact with children to expand upon their play through open-ended questioning and demonstrating new skills.
- Keep the classroom fun and safe for exploration and creativity.

IC3'S DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Introduction

IC3 is a diverse community of children, families, and staff. Our mission is to provide excellent childcare for families and children of diverse backgrounds. We are absolutely committed to treating each individual in our community with respect, and we strive to include and acknowledge, in all that we do, each individual's unique character and culture. Additionally, we are dedicated to providing only meaningful and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to experience diversity in the classroom. IC3's policies and decisions are guided by this commitment.

Definition of "Diversity"

Diversity is broadly defined in relation to specific aspects of an individual's identity. It includes race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, family makeup, sexual orientation, and level of ability. This list is neither exhaustive nor all-inclusive; instead, it is intended to provide us with a starting point for exploring the spectrum of diversity in the IC3community.

Physical Environment

The physical environment at IC3 reflects the diversity of its entire community, and particularly of the children who attend its programs. Our goal is to create a welcoming and comfortable environment for everyone who enters our building, by highlighting elements of diversity in our classrooms, offices, lobby, gyms, staff lounge, hallways, and conference room. IC3 staff will take care to provide an extensive variety of visual images and other materials which connect diversity with Center life, such as photographs of our children and their families, children's artwork, announcements of Center and community events, and informative displays.

Curriculum

1. IC3 strives to integrate awareness and appreciation of diversity into all aspects of its curriculum. This exposure to diversity needs to be continuous and included in all areas of the classroom. Furthermore, the integration of diversity in the curriculum will reflect the interest and developmental readiness of the children.
2. Teachers will approach culture as a set of customs that give meaning to a child and her/his family's world, rather than as a collection of holidays or artifacts. These customs include, but are not limited to, values, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations. Teachers will provide children with play experiences to facilitate the recognition of cultural similarities and differences.
3. Teachers will recognize and affirm the diversity of everyone in the classroom, creating an environment that reflects and respects all the children and their families. We encourage family and community members from diverse backgrounds to read, sing, dance, cook, and otherwise participate in daily activities with the children. Teachers will not, however, invite people into the classroom simply to represent a particular culture or race.
4. While each classroom must make specific decisions about celebrations, the following guidelines affect the way teachers acknowledge, discuss, and celebrate holidays and special events:
 - A. Rather than initiating celebrations themselves, teachers will invite and encourage families to share their holidays and special events in the classroom.
 - B. Discussion of holidays and planning for any celebrations in the classroom must be consistent with the children's interests and with the teacher's knowledge of developmental appropriateness.
 - C. Celebrations must include everyone in the classroom community who want to participate. Teachers will ensure that celebrations avoid language, materials, objects, or activities that promote stereotyping or offend any group.
 - D. Teachers will inform all families in advance of any celebration of holidays and special events, and invite families' involvement in the preparation process.

5. Teachers will introduce children to concepts of kindness and bias by helping them develop respectful ways to speak about differences, encouraging critical thinking about stereotypes, and presenting accurate and realistic images of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. Teachers will also teach and demonstrate to children that many unjust things can be changed, and encourage them to do so with the skills they already have.
6. Our goal of including diversity in daily life at IC3 influences the choice of permanent and transient materials used in classrooms. For example, manipulatives such as toy figures puzzles and board games depict people of various races, and avoid racial, cultural, and sex stereotyping.
7. Such choices are made in all areas of the curriculum.
 - A. Arts, Music, and Movement
 1. Paints, crayons, markers, construction paper and pencils include colors that reflect the variety of skin colors of children.
 2. Music and instruments reflect a variety of world cultures.
 3. Children are provided with opportunities to express and engage in culturally diverse movement and music activities.
 - B. Book Area
 1. Whenever possible, books written in native languages of IC3 children are included in classroom collections.
 2. Books depicting a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, and social groups, showing them in both traditional and “modern” lifestyles, are available and consistently read to the children.
 3. Books display realistic and natural-looking illustrations of all people. Non-realistic illustrations do not exaggerate physical characteristics in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes.
 4. References to color in books avoid stereotyping (e.g., words or illustrations that associate black with evil and/or white with good).
 5. Books represent a variety of family makeup’s and situations.
 6. Books portray both males and females in realistic and nonsexist situations (e.g., both girls and boys are portrayed as active; both men and women are independent, nurturing, caregiving).
 7. Books show adults and children with various abilities, and depict individuals with disabilities as real people rather than as objects of pity struggling to overcome their disabilities.
 - C. Home Living Area
 1. Anatomically correct dolls of both sexes are available.
 2. Dolls have accurate and realistic skin color, facial features, and hair texture and styles.
 3. Contents and arrangements of home living areas reflect the homes of the families in our community.
 4. Dress-up clothing is representative of the lifestyles and professions of our children’s community.
 5. Whenever possible, children have an opportunity to use child-sized wheelchairs, crutches, lens-free eyeglasses, etc.

Foods, Food Preparation, Meals

IC3 considers meals to be an important part of a child’s day and an integral part of our program. Mealtimes and food preparation provide opportunities for children to actively learn about the world around them and appreciate the diversity of cultures, traditions, and foods in the IC3 community.

The primary goal of our food program is to meet the nutritional needs of the children while also meeting guidelines established by the USDA. We acknowledge that there are many ways to achieve this goal that also support a multicultural program. In addition, cooking activities are also an integral part of our classroom curriculum. We support a multicultural food program in the following ways:

1. We try to serve foods that are eaten by children’s families and which children enjoy;
2. We actively solicit recipes and suggestions from families to be served in our food program;
3. We avoid making assumptions about what foods a family serves at home;
4. We explain the differences between daily foods and special foods reserved for holidays or celebrations;

5. We teach children appropriate mealtime behaviors, including respectful ways of serving and declining foods;
6. We include a culturally diverse array of play foods and utensils in home living areas.

ABOUT THE AGE GROUPS

Contact Age Group Leader or Program Director for more information or assistance.

INFANTS: IC3 provides full-day care and learning experiences for infants from 8 weeks to approximately 20 months of age. Babies enrolled in our program are assigned to classrooms based on their age. Our program typically maintains an adult/infant ratio of 1:3. There typically are 6 babies and 2 teachers in each of our infant classrooms. All of our infant classrooms are continuity of care classrooms. Children in these rooms stay together with their teachers until approximately 3 years of age.

TODDLERS: When the infant group is 16-20 months old, s/he will move up to one of our toddler rooms. Sense of self and independence are further nurtured at this age. Verbal expression of emotions is encouraged as autonomy is strengthened. Children are helped to label their feelings to be better understood and to understand others. Self-help skills and healthy hygiene are encouraged. The adult/child ratio in this program is 1:5. There are 10 children and 2 teachers in each of our toddler classrooms.

PRESCHOOL (PRE-K): Age-integrated classrooms for our oldest preschoolers invite cooperative learning. As a 3-year-old enters a Pre-K classroom, the child begins a journey of being helped, helping him/herself and helping others. Interest areas promote skills of self-discipline, decision-making and negotiation; the teachers promote problem-solving abilities, positive conflict-resolution patterns, and positive self-esteem. Our adult/child ratio is 1:7.5. There are typically 15 children and two teachers in each of our Pre-K classrooms.

SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM (SAP): Our after-school program at Ithaca Montessori provides after-school care for children in grades K-3 as well as full day care for many days when school is not in session. The major goal of our SAP is recreation and skill building. Our adult/child ratio is 1:10, and our staff provides a relaxing and stress-releasing alternative to being home alone after school.

PROGRAM SCHEDULES: As every age is different, so is each program's schedule.

Infants: are on an individual (demand) schedule. When their individual schedules start to become more unified (no earlier than 12-15 months), the children will begin transitioning to the toddler schedule (eating together at a table and napping at the same time).

A Typical Toddler and Pre-K Schedule:

7:30-9:00	Arrival/Area Choice Time
9:00-9:30	Morning Snack, Clean Up, Bathroom
9:30-12:00	Group Activity Time, Gym/Outdoor Play
11:30-1:00	Lunch, Clean Up, Bathroom
1:00-3:00	Rest Time
3:00-3:30	Afternoon Snack, Clean Up, Bathroom
3:30-5:30	Area Choice Time, Gym/Outdoor Play

YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS: The teachers are the closest link to you and your child. Teachers plan the daily activities and overall classroom goals based on their knowledge of child development and the children in the classroom. We encourage you to first speak directly to the teachers on any matters regarding your child's day or behavior. It is particularly important to inform them about changes at home that may affect your child—when your child is on medication at home, your child's feelings, etc.—as well as any questions you may have concerning the classroom goals, activities or environment. Drop-off or pick-up times are the moments for quick conversation between parents and teachers. For more in-depth discussions, please call the teachers during the day to set up an appointment.

The strength of our program lies in our staff. New teachers are selected carefully by the Program Director, Executive Director, Age Group Leader, and teachers on the basis of their formal training in child development, their previous experience, and their patience, warmth, and sensitivity in dealing with children. All IC3 employees are encouraged to continue to grow professionally through attendance at professional workshops, reading books kept in our staff library, and attending staff and age group meetings where child care and administrative issues are discussed.

We are required by New York State law to screen all employees for any previous criminal record of child abuse. Each employee must be fingerprinted and cleared through the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment before permanent hiring is allowed. After their references have been checked, new employees are allowed to work with probationary status while their clearance information is being processed.

PART-TIME STAFF: The Center is open 10 hours each day and our full-time teachers work 7-to-8 hour shifts. We rely on our part-time staff (substitutes and teachers assistants) to assist the teachers and maintain adult/child ratios. Before being scheduled in a classroom, our part-time staff must attend a 1-hour orientation session and spend 1-hour observing a classroom in action. Part-time staff is supervised by the full-time teachers, who also provide them with regular feedback and hands-on instruction.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SNOW DAYS, CLOSINGS, DELAYED OPENINGS: We are obligated to maintain state-mandated adult/child ratios whenever the Center is open. Every effort will be made to keep the Center operating on inclement weather days. The decision on whether normal Center operations will be canceled or altered will be at the discretion of the Executive Director.

In case of inclement weather Ithaca Community Childcare Center may choose to delay opening, close early or close for the day. The following factors are considered by the Executive Director when making weather related decisions; weather conditions in Ithaca and surrounding communities, the decisions of other local agencies regarding their opening/closing hours, the ability of staff to commute safely to the Center, and recommendations of the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department.

A delay allows an appropriate decision to be made. Taking into consideration information gathered from the resources previously mentioned.

IF IC3 PROGRAMS ARE CLOSED, you will hear the following announcement on local radio stations/News 10 Now by 6:45 am:

*"Ithaca Community Childcare Center is **CLOSED.**"*

If there is **DELAY**, you will hear the following announcement on local radio stations/News 10 Now by 6:45 am:

*"Ithaca Community Childcare Center including its Afterschool program is on an ____ **Hour Delay.**"*

This means that a decision is in the process of being made. When on a delay, the Center will not open before 9:30AM. We may open as late as 11AM or cancel for the day. **The final decision will be announced on local radio stations/News 10 Now between 8-9 AM.**

For your convenience, **we will also change the message on the IC3 voice mail informing you about a delay or closing.** Simply dial our main number and press 7 after the greeting. Please be patient when calling because there will be several calls coming in at once.

If there will be an **EARLY CLOSING**, a decision will be made by 12 noon, and you will hear the following announcement on local radio stations/News 10 Now:

"Ithaca Community Childcare Center and its Afterschool program will close at ____ PM today."

This means that due to worsening conditions, the Center will close early.

Announcements will be made on these stations:

The IC3 phone message at 257-0200 and www.cayugaradiogroup.com (once there click on any of the links to the stations) typically are the quickest sources for closings and delays.

WHCU (870 AM)
WTKO (1470 AM)
WSKG (90.9 FM)

WYXL (97.3 FM)
Hits (103.3 FM)
WQNY (103.7 FM)

WVBR (9305 FM)/Cornell list serve
I100 (99.9/100.3 FM)
Channel 10 News Now

Because many of our employees live outside the Center's immediate vicinity, on days of severely adverse weather conditions, absenteeism may be higher than normal. We encourage parents to volunteer on those days in our classrooms if possible.

Be prepared: Stay tuned to the weather forecasts during the winter, listen to the radio in the morning and throughout the day on particularly inclement days, and have specific back-up coverage prepared for you child's care and/or emergency pick-up.

ARRIVAL TIME: Although there is no set arrival time for children each morning, the children generally have smoother transitions and greater participation in the morning's activities if they arrive before 10 a.m. **If your child will be arriving after 10 a.m.**, please call the Center by 9:00 a.m. This will help teachers plan their morning activities as well as give an accurate meal count to our Food Service Manager.

We prefer that your child be brought in before 12:30 or after 3:00 p.m. so that naptime is not disrupted. We have found that it is difficult for a child to arrive at the Center and go right to sleep; it also disturbs the other children who are settling down to rest. Please also keep this in mind when scheduling doctor's appointments, etc. If there is a circumstance where your child must be brought in at naptime, please notify your child's teachers in advance so they can prepare for your child's arrival with minimal disruption to already-napping children.

For more information or assistance contact the Program Director.

IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT: Please call the Center by 9:00 a.m.

PARKING AT THE CENTER: Parents should park on the North side of the parking lot (facing the Center). This side has been designated for short-term parking. When possible, please reserve the "Infant Parking" spaces for parents of infants, who usually have an armful to carry into the Center. The South side facing BOCES is used by our staff (for longer-term parking). Be prepared for a lot of activity and congestion in our parking lot between 5-5:30 p.m. each day—the time when the majority of parents pick up their children. Please drive slowly and watch for children.

SAFETY NOTE: Do not leave your vehicle running while unattended. Not only is it unsafe, but it is against the law.

Do **NOT** leave your children in your vehicle by themselves.

SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT: You must sign your child in when s/he arrives and sign your child out when s/he leaves. Each classroom has its own clipboard with a weekly sign-in sheet. Please write down the time of arrival and of departure, and initial the sheet when your child departs for the day. This procedure assures greater security in children's arrivals and departures. If your child has experienced a change in behavior, shown signs of illness and/or has been given medication please notify a teacher at drop off. Infant parents: your child's teachers will explain the more thorough written information you will need to provide to them each morning.

For more information or assistance contact your child's teachers.

CLOTHING: Children should wear clothing appropriate for playing—for quiet activities as well as paints, sand, water, mud, etc. We are required to schedule outdoor play each morning and afternoon except when the weather is very bad, so consider this by including items such as boots, warm mittens (preferably attached to the coat), hats, snow pants, etc. as needed. A properly dressed child with a runny nose or cough is unaffected by a short period of outdoor winter play.

Please bring an extra set of clothing for your child to keep at the Center (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt). When spills or accidents happen, we will send home the soiled clothes in a plastic bag. Remember to return the extra clothes so that a complete set remains on hand at the Center. These extra clothes should be labeled clearly with your child's name.

LABELS: Please label everything!! Hats, clothes, boots, even socks. Labeling with a name saves enormous amounts of time and confusion at the Center. (Have you ever tried putting 15 snowsuits and pairs of boots on 15 children?) A permanent marker works best, but any label is better than no label!

ARTICLES FROM HOME: Children enjoy bringing in items from home, and some teachers do allow toys to be brought in for special "sharing." Ask the teachers what the sharing policy is for your child's room. Also, check with your child's teacher before bringing candy to the room (such as for birthdays). Children are never permitted to play with toy guns or weapons at the Center.

For more information or assistance contact your child's teachers.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: You will be notified promptly if your child is sick or injured. Please be sure that your child's teachers and/or the front desk staff know of your location during the day. If your child is injured and you cannot be reached, IC3 staff will proceed to get medical attention for your child as they see appropriate. Your signature on the Parent/Center Agreement and the Emergency Consent forms give us this authorization. We will document everything we do and will continue to try to reach you. The Center does not carry accident insurance for the children; we do carry general liability insurance.

For more information or assistance contact the Executive Director.

FOOD SERVICE: If your child arrives early in the morning, we recommend that s/he eat before arriving in the morning, as the breakfast we provide is not served until 9 a.m. A complete lunch is prepared and served on site for all children except those infants still on baby food or formula. (Infant parents can provide their child's food and formula until the child is ready to eat the food provided by the Center, or IC3 can provide cereal and formula for infants with parental permission. Please see your enrollment packet for information.) An afternoon snack is provided at 3 p.m. Lunch is served at 11:30 for infants and toddlers and 11:45 for Pre-K.

For more information or assistance contact the Food Service Manager.

JOINING YOUR CHILD FOR LUNCH: You are welcome to join your child's class for lunch. If you wish to join your child's class for lunch, please inform the classroom in the morning so that you will be included in the lunch count.

REST TIME/NAP TIME: During a busy, stimulating day, rest time provides a child with an opportunity to calm his/her body down. Children settle onto cots or mats between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. Lights are dimmed and quiet music or story tapes will be played during rest time. At 3 p.m., classroom activities resume.

Options: After the first half-hour of rest time, children who are consistently awake are offered the quiet activities options of:

- a. Reading books, listening to story tapes with headsets (provided by parents) and doing other quiet activities on their cots or
- b. Moving to a more brightly-lit area within the room, as far away as possible from nappers, where quiet activities are provided.

Using the options: The goal of the rest policy is to determine what is best for the child at any point in time. As a child develops naturally, s/he may end up switching between options (e.g., a normally awake child going through a growth spurt may need the extra sleep for a few weeks). Parents and teachers need to understand ramifications of the options as they are tried in both home and Center settings. Communication is vital to this process.

For more information or assistance contact your child's teachers.

NAP ITEMS: A favorite stuffed toy or blanket may be brought in for naptime. All nap items must be marked clearly and taken home weekly for washing. We recommend that nap items be brought to the Center in a washable, marked laundry bag. This bag provides a clean method of storing each child's nap items daily, and makes it convenient for taking things home for washing. For safety reasons, please try to avoid bags with long strings.

For more information or assistance contact your child's teachers.

PICKING UP YOUR CHILD: The Center's hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The official time is that of the IC3 phone system which is consistent in all classrooms. **Parents must pick up their children in time to exit the building by 5:30 p.m.** All families are encouraged to be in the classroom prior to 5:25pm so that there is time to exit the building before closing. The parent's presence elsewhere on the premises does not negate their responsibility to pick up their child on time. We invite parents to come early to pick up their child if they would like to spend time at IC3 after signing their child out since IC3's facility, including gyms and playground, closes at 5:30 p.m.

Families who are repeatedly late (more than two times within a 6-month period) will receive a late fee of \$50 each time they are between 1 minute and 15 minutes late. After 5:30 p.m., every effort will be made to reach parents and emergency contacts by telephone. After 15 minutes, the parents will incur an additional \$50 fee, and at 30 minutes, if no contact has been made with parents or emergency contacts, police will be called.

In addition, any family, even if they have not been late in the past, arriving after 5:45 will automatically incur a \$100 fine. IC3 will make every effort to reach parents and emergency contacts by telephone. We recognize that emergencies do arise, and in such cases the Executive Director will use his/her discretion in assigning the fee.

For more assistance or information contact the Executive Director.

AUTHORIZATION TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD: Only an authorized adult may pick up a child. An authorized adult is one whose name is written on the child's enrollment form as a parent or emergency contact. Whenever someone other than those authorized on the enrollment form will be picking up your child, a Consent To Release Child form (available at the front desk) must be completed and signed by the parent. Please make sure your child and the teachers know of the arrangements. *NOTE: If there are special circumstances why a parent or other relative may not be allowed to pick up your child (e.g., custody disputes, etc.), the Executive Director must be notified immediately, and must be supplied with supporting legal documents.*

In case of an emergency, you may call the Administrator on Site to give verbal authorization for another adult to pick up your child. Authorization will be given only if the Administrator on Site can recognize your voice.

PLEASE NOTE: As mandated child abuse reporters, we must place the welfare of the child first and foremost, and we will not automatically release a child to any adult who appears under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

FIELD TRIPS: All class field trips (other than short walks to nearby playgrounds) are announced to parents in advance and permission is required from each child's parent to attend. The children may ride in a teacher's car, in a parent's car, on public transportation, or walk. All drivers must show proof of driver's license and vehicle insurance.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

The Ithaca Community Childcare Center uses positive guidance as a learning tool to provide children with guidance and security necessary for emotional and social growth. Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions.

Positive guidance methods used in this learning process include: redirection, ignoring the behavior, positive reinforcement, alternatives and choices, problem solving techniques, modeling, limit setting and time spent away from the group or situation to gain control. Natural and logical consequences are used to help children learn to make good decisions.

Please remember that young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, and, consequently, aggressive behavior may occur (e.g., hitting, yelling, name calling, biting, punching, kicking, etc.). Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration.

The staff at the Center will make every effort to work with children having difficulties, so that they may participate safely and the safety and well-being of all the children is protected. If a child displays frequent disruptive behavior which is detrimental to the physical or emotional well-being of another child/children, the staff and parent will meet to discuss the situation and will develop a plan of action for improving the behavior. General information on curbing disruptive behaviors will be communicated, either verbally or in writing, to all parents in the classroom.

In the event that consultation and action plans are not successful and the administration determines that enrollment in this Center is not in the best interest of the individual child and/or the other children, the Director reserves the right to exclude a child from the Center when the emotional and physical well-being of the children and the staff is in danger and all other positive methods and resources have been exhausted. This notice can come without warning if the situation warrants. Each situation will be evaluated on an individual basis and the final determination regarding a child's enrollment status will be made by the Executive Director and Program Director.

It is also our policy that we will handle all discipline situations which may arise with the children while they are at the Center. IC3's confidentiality policy states that matters relating to children and their families are confidential and are not to be discussed with other families. We understand that aggressive behavior brings up many emotional responses in parents. If a parent has concerns regarding another child's behavior, we strongly encourage parents to discuss these concerns with the classroom teachers.

STAFF AND PARENT COMMUNICATION

For more information or assistance contact your child's teacher or the Program Director.

CUBBIES/CLIPBOARDS: This is where parents will find important Center information, memos, etc. Please check your parent cubby or clipboard daily. At the end of each week, please take home everything in your child's cubby and art pocket or bin as well as their nap items (for older children).

DAILY COMMUNICATION: In addition to notifying the Center when your child is sick or arriving late, we also encourage you to call whenever you have a question or concern about your child or the program. Parents can speak directly to the teachers, or a teacher will call back at a more convenient time. The teachers will also call you when they have questions or concerns. Some toddler and pre k classes do not take phone calls during nap time, except in an emergency, but messages can be left. Since there is not a set rest schedule in the infant rooms, feel free to call your infant's teachers at any time.

Teachers must attend to the needs of children in their care first and often find it difficult to speak with parents while caring for children. If you need to speak with the teachers at length, please arrange for a mutually convenient meeting time. It is the Center's practice not to discuss problems involving a child in the child's presence.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

Children are assessed throughout their time at IC3. Children are assessed on a daily basis through teacher/child interactions, teacher/child discussions, and observations of children while playing. Assessment of children is conducted by the Teachers in each classroom and occurs naturally throughout the day. As children play and talk, run and jump, draw and create, assessment is occurring. This kind of assessment is considered an authentic assessment approach, not an assessment tool that is artificially imposed on children. IC3 uses the assessment system The Focused Portfolio. This system assesses the whole child, social, emotional, cognitive and physical mainly through the use of anecdotal notes, observations and portfolio collections.

Assessment is used to support individual learning and is an integral tool used by teaching staff to identify children's developmental areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Assessment is also used to determine a child's interests in order to plan activities and experiences, guide the direction of the curriculum and set up the play environment. All children are continually assessed so that their developmental progress can be tracked. Children who are typical in their development as well as children who have atypical development are assessed in the same way. The recording of anecdotal notes is a daily practice that teaching staff integrate into their day. Teaching staff may focus their observations of the child to a certain time, area, behavior, or interaction. Teaching staff will interpret the portfolio information based on their knowledge of child development, as well as the use of the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum and checklists.

Parent conferences are offered a minimal of once per year and can be held as often as necessary to meet the child's needs as well as address any parent concerns. A written report is generated by compiling the information gathered and this information is used to inform parents of their child's developmental progress. Parents are informed of areas of development that are mastered, developing and emerging, as well as next steps in development. Parents and the teaching staff work together in developing goals for the future. Parents are offered a variety of dates and times for the conference. Due to IC3's year round enrollment, conferences are not held at a certain time or certain month of the year. Conferences are planned around the transitioning of the children into or out of a group. Conferences are conducted by the two Teachers and are scheduled with the parent's of the child. If a child is receiving services, the therapists are invited to participate in the conference.

It is a goal of IC3 to be an inclusive program where all children can succeed. If a child is developing typically or atypically, Teachers will share their findings with a child's parent at a parent conference. When a child's development is atypical, Teachers will share their specific concerns with the parents about their child's development and recommend a plan of action. This plan will incorporate an evaluation of the child's development from an external resource. Resources most often used are the County Health Department, the School District the child resides in, or the Franziska Racker Center. Parents will be given contact information for the community resources, a brief explanation of how an evaluation works and words of encouragement. Parents have to give written permission to the evaluating agency for an evaluation to occur and written permission to IC3 in order for IC3 teaching staff to share developmental information.

If a child is approved for services, IC3 will participate fully with the therapist(s) and will assist the therapist to create a schedule that will work best for the child. IC3 Teachers will incorporate the recommendations of therapists into their daily activities and plan. In cases where a child's IEP or IFSP is shared with Teachers, IC3 Teachers will incorporate IEP & IFSP goals into their individualized planning. In New York State, parents of children approved for services do not have to pay for these services. The services are funded by the State through Early Intervention or the child's school district.

CONFERENCES: Conferences are scheduled yearly (or whenever a parent requests a conference). This is an opportunity to discuss your child's development and any concerns you may have about our program. Continuing and open communication between the Center and parents is an essential part of a good program, and we ask that you bring any concerns about your child or the Center to our attention as they arise.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION: Each room has a written system for informing parents about daily activities, and we inform parents of Center news via notes or flyers on the lobby easel and postings throughout the Center. If you have any items of interest that you would like to announce to Center parents, please bring them to the front desk.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information pertaining to children is confidential and is kept in the child's portfolio, communication log, in a filing cabinet, or at the front desk. Teachers create and have access to all assessment information. When needed, the Age Group Leader and/or Program Director are asked to be involved in assessment of children by observing, recording, and discussing their specific findings with the classroom Teachers. When Teaching staff are seeking general advice from others (teaching staff, therapists, etc.), confidentiality is respected and the child is not identified.

Assessment information is used to evaluate where a child is developmentally and assists the teachers to provide the most appropriate materials, activities and room environment in order to promote development. Assessment information is also used to inform parents about the child's development and to assist other organizations in understanding and enhancing a child's development. Written parental permission is obtained before any information is shared with other organizations. Parents are informed at the beginning of conferences or meetings that information pertaining to their child's development is kept confidential. Written permission from you, the child's parent/guardian must be obtained when sharing information with others.

RESOLVING CONCERNS: Open communication between staff and parents is an essential ingredient in providing high-quality care. If you have questions or concerns about the care your child is receiving or any aspect of the Center's operation, we urge you to discuss them as soon as possible with your child's teacher. If the teacher is unable to help, they will be happy to refer you to the appropriate administrator. If the issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction or you believe the Board of Directors should be made aware of the problem, you are encouraged to contact a member of the Board. Board officers' names and contact information are posted on the bulletin board by the Executive Director's office.

HEALTH NOTES

For more information or assistance contact the Executive Director, Program Director, and your child's teachers.

IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES ILL DURING THE DAY: The teachers will notify the parent/guardian. **The child must be picked up within one hour.** If the parents cannot be reached, the child's emergency contacts will be called.

When a child is sent home for illness, the parents will be given a SYMPTOM SHEET, on which the teachers note what symptoms the child has, and a written medication consent form. The symptom sheet also includes guidelines for when the child will be allowed to return to group care. These guidelines are for the welfare of the individual child as well as the health of the other children and teachers in the classroom. Please take the permission form with you if you take your child to the doctor; the doctor must sign this form to authorize your child to return to group care and to allow us to dispense any prescription medication. **Without a written doctor's note, we cannot give prescription or nonprescription medicine to your child.** (*Please refer to our more detailed Health Policy for specific information regarding illnesses and guidelines for sending ill children home.*)

HAND WASHING AND HYGEINE: Staff and children wash their hands whenever they are soiled, before eating or cooking, after using the bathroom, after wiping noses, etc. Children who are old enough to understand are taught

basic procedures to prevent the spread of germs. They are taught to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze and to blow their runny noses. Teachers role model all of these procedures.

DONATION OF FACIAL TISSUES: Due to the large volume of facial tissue that we use throughout the year, parents are asked to periodically donate a box of tissues to their child's classroom. We appreciate your helping us in this way.

CLEANING: A bleach disinfectant solution is used on the diaper-changing tables, the eating tables, children's furniture, and countertops in the kitchens and for cleaning toys. The Center premises are also professionally cleaned daily. Parents wash their children's nap items weekly. Dress-up clothes and Center laundry (bibs, pillow covers, blankets in infant wing) are washed regularly on site.

MEDICAL EXAMS AND UPDATES: Every child enrolling at IC3 must submit a copy of the child's immunization records and have a complete well exam prior to the start of his/her enrollment. (You can pick up a Medical Report of Child in Day Care form at the front desk for your doctor to complete.) If your child is unable to obtain an examination prior to his/her first day, bring your child's immunization records and a note from a physician stating that the child is free from communicable diseases and able to participate in group care. Each child must have a well exam and submit an updated medical form, in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics' schedule of well exams (yearly for infant, toddler, and Pre-K).

BRAUN THERMOSCAN® EAR THERMOMETER or WELCH ALLYN SURETEMP®: These thermometers, are the same models used in hospitals, for taking children's temperatures. They are extremely accurate, quick, and non-invasive. Body temperature is measured by the heat of the eardrum, under arm, and/or mouth if possible.

HIV/AIDS POLICY: IC3 shall not deny services or employment to any individual or families which have the HIV infection or AIDS, or are perceived as having HIV/AIDS or a related condition, as well as persons who are associated with individuals who are infected with the virus or a related condition. Children with HIV/AIDS have the same needs and rights as other children. This includes participating in a stimulating, nurturing environment designed to meet each child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional developmental needs, such as is found at IC3. Adults with HIV/AIDS have the same needs and rights as other adults. This includes working in a setting for which they have the training, skills, abilities, enthusiasm, actively participating in the community, and being treated with dignity and respect. Our position is based on information and recommendations of the U.S. Public Health Service, the Center for Disease Control, the American Disabilities Act of 1990, and the New York State Dept. of Social Services. As new information develops and is circulated by these expert agencies, we shall continue to update our implementation of their recommendations. We believe our actions must carefully protect the rights of these children and staff members, while also diligently ensuring that the health of the other children and caregivers is not compromised. These actions include education of parents and staff members, confidentiality of records, and infection control to protect infected children and/or adults.
(Copies of the HIV/AIDS Policy for Children and Staff can be obtained at the front desk.)

ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

For more information or assistance contact the Enrollment Manager.

ENROLLMENT: A child's initial and continued enrollment in the Center is provisional on the Center's ability to meet that child's needs. If these needs cannot be met, the Program Director will examine more suitable alternatives for the child with his/her parents.

Submitting an Application for Waiting List: There is a non-refundable \$25 waiting list fee. IC3 does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, handicap, race, religion, national origin or color. Anyone interesting in visiting the Center should arrange a tour with our Enrollment Manager.

Enrollment Fees: When parents reserve a space at IC3 for their child they pay a one-time, non-refundable registration fee per child, as well as a security deposit. The family's deposit will be refunded after the child's last day, assuming six weeks' notice has been given and your family's tuition account is paid in full.

TUITION DURING ABSENCE OR VACATION: If a child is absent from the Center for any reason (whether the child is sick, on vacation, or staying home with a visiting relative), tuition must be paid in full.

DECREASING ENROLLMENT: If a family decides to decrease the days their child is enrolled in the center, a minimum of six (6) weeks' notice is required. Notice must be provided in writing to the Enrollment Manager.

INCREASING ENROLLMENT: If a family decides to increase the days their child is enrolled in the center, parents should contact the Enrollment Manager to see if there is space available.

WITHDRAWING FROM THE CENTER: If a family decides to withdraw their child from the Center, **a minimum of six (6) weeks' notice is required. Notice must be provided in writing to the Enrollment Manager.** If a child is withdrawn without notice, the parents are required to pay six weeks' from the date written notice is given unless the center is able to fill the space prior to that.

TUITION AND BILLING PROCEDURES

For more information or assistance, contact: Finance Manager.

HOW TUITION IS CALCULATED: Tuition rates are calculated based on an average of 21.75 business days (4.35 weeks) per month. Tuition is charged for weekdays (including days when the Center is closed for holidays, unexpected closings, snow days, or delayed openings). If you enroll or withdraw in the middle of the month, your tuition will be pro-rated based on the number of days you are actually enrolled.

PAYMENT TERMS: **As of 9/1/07 tuition payments are due in full by the 1st of each month.** Payments not received by the 1st of the month will be assessed a \$15 late fee. In addition, any account with an outstanding balance as of the 15th of each month will be assessed finance charges at a rate of 1.5 percent per month.

Tuition statements will be provided prior to the 1st of each month and placed in your classroom box. Statements are provided for your records, showing payments and charges to your account for the past 30 days. Because your tuition charges remain the same each month, payment of tuition is expected by the 1st of the month regardless of whether you have received your statement by that date. If you do not find a statement in your box prior to the 1st of the month, please check with your classroom teachers. If they are unable to locate a bill for you, please inform the front desk staff. We recommend you retain these statements for your future income tax records.

PAYING YOUR BILL: Tuition payments may be made at the front desk. IC3 accepts MasterCard, Visa, and personal checks. Afterschool Program and Kendal at Ithaca payments may be made at the main center or given to the site director. If you would like a receipt, please request one at the front desk at the time of payment.

To insure that your payment is applied to the proper account, please label your payment with your child's first and last name.

If you have a Select Benefits form that requires an IC3 signature, please bring the form with you when you make your tuition payment. The front desk staff will sign your form at that time. (If no check is attached to your Select Benefits form, we must verify your payment with our accounting records. We will return the signed form to you classroom box in three to five business days.)

A \$20 fee will be charged for any check returned by your bank.

TUITION ASSISTANCE: For short-term emergency needs, a Scholarship Fund is administered by the Daycare Council 273-0259. IC3 also has a short-term Emergency Scholarship fund; please contact the Executive Director for application information. The Department of Social Services also provides assistance for qualifying families; call 274-5286 for more information. IC3 operates on a flat-rate system with a scholarship fund. A detailed explanation of our scholarship fund and application are available at the front desk, or you may contact the Enrollment Manager for more information.

IC3's primary source of income is tuition. We reserve the right to increase tuition fees at any time with six weeks' notice. Tuition fees are generally increased each year on September 1st.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Just as your work is a daily occurrence for you, your child's day-to-day experiences are central to him/her. Your children delight when you share in their world at our Center, and we encourage you to participate in Center activities at whatever level is possible within your schedule. We believe the benefits are well worth the time. The integration of your child's home and childcare Center is one of our goals; you, the parents, are the important link in this process.

Parent involvement is crucial for us to continue providing the best possible care for your child. As a not-for-profit Center, IC3's income is primarily from tuition paid by parents. Your involvement in the classroom and in Center-wide fundraising events helps our effort to minimize tuition increases while continuing to improve our program.

OPEN DOOR POLICY: IC3 has an open door policy for parents to come and visit their children during the day. We invite you to come and share in your child's day whether you are a parent that wants to participate in a feeding, take your child for a walk or share a special talent, hobby or holiday.

CLASSROOM INVOLVEMENT: Individual classrooms plan field trips and parents are encouraged to help out with driving and supervision. Teachers or the administrative staff may call on individual parents to help out with specific tasks such as sewing, computer programming, installing a shelf, or small repair projects. The individual rooms, the age-group programs, and the full Center also plan family get-togethers which are opportunities for families and teachers to get to know one another and enjoy themselves in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

For more information or assistance, contact: Your child's teachers.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS: We are delighted when you think of sharing your family's special celebrations with us. Talk your ideas over with the teachers and perhaps with other parents who might wish to join you. A special treat from home for a child's birthday is fun for the whole class. Special foods and symbols showing how you celebrate specific days are fascinating for all the children and bring the home and child care experiences closer together for your child. The Center's policy on celebrating religious holidays (Christmas, Passover, etc.) is for the staff to emphasize the general themes involved, such as sharing, and giving to others, rather than specific religious beliefs. However, we encourage individual families to come in and talk about their own traditions or how you celebrate your own ethnic heritage.

For more information and assistance, contact: Your child's teachers.

CENTER-WIDE EVENTS: Over the course of the year, many Resource and Development activities occur, and several rely on parent involvement for their success. The Center also schedules work weekends where all parents are encouraged to contribute a few hours of their time painting, sanding, planting trees, building new equipment, and otherwise helping to improve our facility. Resource and Development activities and work weekends are fun events where parents get to know each other better, meet families and teachers from other parts of the Center, and maybe even learn a new skill or two. It is also an essential way in which the Center can continue to keep costs down.

For more information or assistance, contact: Executive Director.