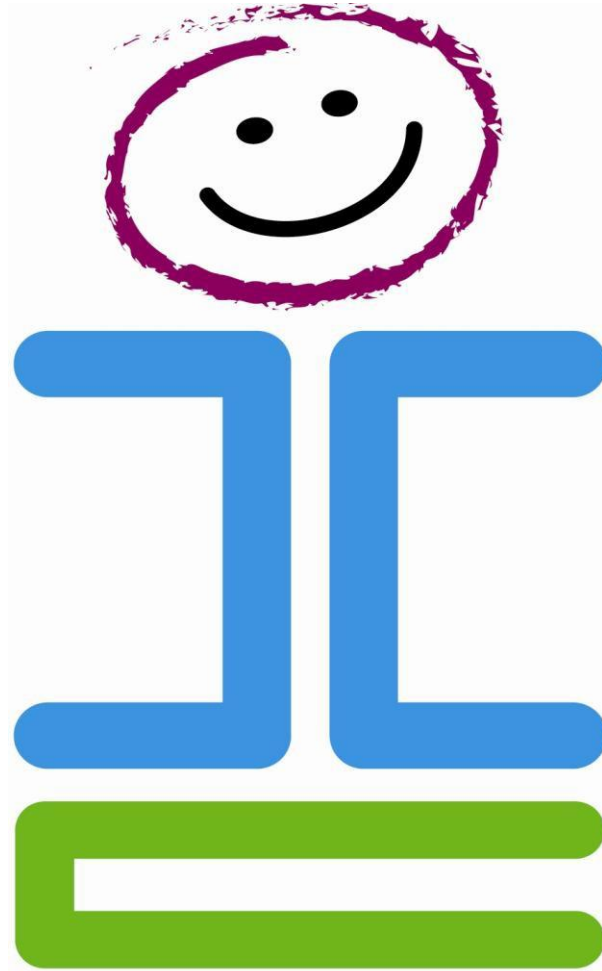


Ithaca Community Childcare Center

Parent Handbook



Main Center (607) 257-0200

579 Warren Road

Kendal at Ithaca (607) 266-5309

2230 North Triphammer Road

Hours of Operation

Full Day Program: 7:30am - 5:30pm (M-F)

Half Day Program: 8:00am - 1:00pm (M-F)

School Age Program: 2:00pm - 5:30pm (M-F)

Leadership Team

Executive Director: Sherri Koski, director@icthre.org

Program Director: Jeanne Malone, program@icthre.org

Finance Manager: Cynthia Hebbard, accounts@icthre.org

Enrollment & Marketing Manager: Staci Higgins, info@icthre.org

Office Manager: Lesli Combs, office@icthre.org

Administrative Assistant: Betsy Sheppard, frontdesk@icthre.org

School Age Program Leader: Christine Thomas, schoolageprogram@icthre.org

Kendal Program Leader: Erika Brooks, ebrooks@icthre.org

Board of Directors

Please visit our website for a current list of Board members

<https://icthre.org/about/board-of-directors/>

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ABOUT THE CENTER

Ithaca Community Childcare Center, Inc. (IC3) is a not-for-profit organization licensed by the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) to provide high-quality child care to families in the Tompkins County area. The OCFS Licensing Regulations are available online and 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 participates in Quality Stars NY, a statewide quality rating improvement system. IC3 is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (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 VISION

IC3 supports families through best practices with a commitment to positively impact children's lives to create a better future.

OUR VALUES

There are 6 principles we value, the ideals that guide our actions. They are what are meaningful and important to our community and how we uphold our vision.

Respect

Innovation

Adaptability

Inclusiveness

Compassion

Community

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

IC3's LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

CHILD CENTERED ACTIVE LEARNING is an approach that encourages children to take an active role in their own learning, driven by their natural curiosity and intrinsic motivation to explore the world. This approach consists of three key components: Child Centered, Active and Learning. At IC3, our teachers create meaningful experiences that foster **cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development** through:

- **Child Centered Learning:** Activities are designed based on children's interests and developmental levels, building upon their prior experiences in a meaningful way. A variety of materials are provided to allow children to make choices that are engaging, developmentally appropriate, and empowering, fostering a sense of control, success, and competence.
- **Active Engagement:** Children are naturally driven to explore and experiment within their environment. Being active means that children are hands-on learners, interacting with their surroundings rather than passively observing. Through these interactions, they develop cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and language skills.
- **Learning Through Experience:** Children construct knowledge by engaging in fun, challenging, and relevant experiences. Learning occurs when children add a new ideas, concepts, or abilities to their existing knowledge or interpret what they already know in a new way.

Together, "Child Centered Active Learning" means that the environment is intentionally designed to encourage children to actively experiment with materials, ideas and actions that promote growth across all areas of development. The materials and activities provided reflect children's interests and abilities, offering varied choices that encourage creativity, independence, and exploration.

The Teacher's Role in Learning

At IC3, teachers play a crucial role in fostering the learning process. Rather than directing activities, they act as guides and facilitators, supporting children as they embark on their own journeys of discovery. Teachers help children extend their thinking and deepen their learning in a non-intrusive, supportive way by:

- Observing and assessing children's developmental needs, interests, aptitudes, and emotions.
- Creating opportunities for meaningful social interactions that allow children to express and regulate emotions, build self-esteem, and develop symbolic thinking.
- Provide a rich variety of materials and activities that inspire curiosity and encourage a lifelong love of learning.
- Engaging with children in their play by asking open-ended questions and introducing new concepts or skills in a natural supportive manner.

- Maintaining a safe, engaging, and fun environment that fosters creativity, exploration, and growth.

IC3'S DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Introduction

IC3 is a diverse and inclusive community of children, families, and staff. Our mission is to provide high-quality childcare that embraces and celebrates families from all backgrounds. We are committed to treating each individual with respect and dignity, ensuring that our policies and practices reflect an appreciation for each person's unique identity and culture.

At IC3, we believe that experiencing diversity in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way is essential for children's growth. Our curriculum, interactions, and decision-making processes are guided by this commitment, fostering an environment where all children feel valued, seen and included.

Definition of "Diversity"

Diversity encompasses many aspects of an individual's identity, included but not limited to: race, sex, gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, family structure, sexual orientation, and level of ability. This list serves as a starting point for recognizing and exploring the rich spectrum of diversity in the IC3 community.

Physical Environment

The physical environment at IC3 is intentionally designed to reflect and celebrate the diversity of our children, families, and staff. Our goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere throughout our programs and facilities, ensuring that everyone who enters feels a sense of belonging.

We achieve this by integrating diverse and representative materials into all areas of our space, including:

- Classrooms, offices, and, hallways – Displaying photographs of our children and families, children's artwork, and multilingual signage.
- Lobby and common areas – Featuring announcements of IC3 and community events, highlighting cultural celebrations, and using digital displays to share educational and inclusive messages.
- Gym and staff lounge and break room – Providing materials that reflect a range of cultural experiences and perspectives.

At IC3, we recognize that a thoughtfully curated environment plays a powerful role in shaping children's understanding of diversity, identity, and community.

Through intentional representation and inclusion, we create a space where every child and family feels valued, respected, and at home.

Curriculum

At IC3, we strive to integrate awareness and appreciation of diversity into all aspects of our curriculum. Exposure to diversity is continuous and woven into all classroom activities, aligning with children's interests and developmental readiness.

1. Diversity in the Curriculum

- Teachers incorporate diversity as an ongoing learning experience rather than isolated activities.
- Diversity is represented in all classroom areas, ensuring children recognize both cultural similarities and differences through play and daily interactions.

2. Cultural Understanding

- Culture is approached as a set of customs that give meaning to a child and their family's world, rather than just holidays or artifacts.
- Customs include values, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations.
- Children engage in play-based experiences that help them recognize and appreciate cultural differences.

3. Inclusive Classroom Environment

- Teachers create a welcoming and affirming environment that reflects all children and families.
- Families and community members are encouraged to read, sing, dance, cook, and participate in activities, but are not invited solely to represent a particular culture or race.

4. Holidays and Special Events

- Classroom celebrations follow these guidelines:
 - Families are invited to share their holidays and traditions rather than teachers initiating the celebrations.
 - Celebrations must be consistent with children's interests and developmentally appropriate.
 - All celebrations must be inclusive, avoiding stereotypes or offensive materials.

- Families will be informed in advance and encouraged to participate in planning.

5. Teaching Kindness & Addressing Bias

- Teachers help children develop respectful language when discussing differences.
- Children are encouraged to think critically about stereotypes and engage with accurate, realistic portrayals of cultural, racial, and ethnic groups.
- Teachers model and teach children that unjust situations can be changed and empower them to take action using their existing skills

6. Diversity in Classroom Materials

- Classroom materials are carefully selected to reflect diverse racial, cultural, and gender identities while avoiding stereotypes.
- Manipulatives such as toy figures, puzzles, and board games depict people from varied backgrounds and abilities.

7. Diversity Across Curriculum Areas

- Arts, Music, and Movement
 - Art supplies (paints, crayons, markers, construction paper and pencils) reflect the variety of skin tones.
 - Music and instruments represent global cultures.
 - Movement and dance activities incorporate culturally diverse styles.
- Book Area
 - Books in native languages of IC3 are included.
 - Literature features diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, and social groups, depicting both traditional and modern lifestyles.
 - Illustrations present realistic and natural portrayals, avoiding exaggerated or stereotypical depictions.
 - Positive representations of gender roles, family structures, and individuals with disabilities are included.
- Home Living Area
 - Anatomically correct dolls of both sexes are available.
 - Dolls have accurate skin tones, facial features, and hair textures.
 - Home living areas reflect real family environments within the community.
 - Dress-up clothing is represents diverse professions and cultural attire.

- Children are exposed to adaptive equipment such as child-sized wheelchairs, crutches, eyeglasses, when possible.

At IC3, diversity is a lived experience, not a lesson plan. By embedding inclusive practices into everyday activities, we foster an environment of respect, understanding, and belonging for all children and families.

Foods, Food Preparation, Meals

At IC3, mealtimes are an essential part of a child's day and an integral component of our program. Beyond nourishment, meals and food preparation provide valuable learning experiences, helping children explore the world around them while appreciating cultural diversity through food, traditions, and shared experiences within our IC3 community.

Our primary goal is to meet the nutritional needs of all children while adhering to USDA guidelines. We recognize that there are many ways to achieve this goal while also supporting a multicultural approach to food. Additionally, cooking activities are a key part of our classroom curriculum, further enhancing children's engagement with food and nutrition.

We foster a multicultural food program in the following ways:

1. Serving familiar foods - We strive to provide meals that reflect the preferences and traditions of our families.
2. Encouraging family participation - We welcome recipes and suggestions from families to incorporate into our meal program.
3. Avoiding assumptions - We recognize that every family has unique food traditions and preferences, and we remain open to learning about them.
4. Educating about food traditions - We discuss the differences between daily meals and special foods reserved for holidays or celebrations.
5. Promoting respectful mealtime behaviors - We teach children how to serve and decline foods politely, fostering an inclusive and respectful dining environment.
6. Integrating cultural diversity into play – Our classroom home living areas include a variety of play foods and utensils representing different cultures.

By embracing diversity in our food program, we create a nourishing, inclusive, and engaging mealtime experience for all children.

ABOUT THE AGE GROUPS

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

FULL DAY PROGRAM AT MAIN SITE (INFANT, TODDLER, PRE-K)

Continuity of Care – Infants and Toddlers: Our Continuity of Care Infant/Toddler classrooms provide care and learning experiences for children from 8 weeks to approximately 36 months old. Children are assigned to classrooms based on age, with an emphasis on continuity of care to foster strong, lasting relationships with teachers and peers.

Infants For our youngest infants, IC3 maintains an adult-to-infant ratio of 1:3, with 6 babies and 2 teachers in each of our youngest infant classrooms. In our two older infant rooms, the ratio shifts to 1:4, ensuring individualized attention as they grow.

All infant classrooms follow a continuity of care model, meaning that children remain with the same teachers and peers until they transition to a pre k classroom at approximately 3 years old. Infants follow individual (demand-based) schedules, and when their routines naturally begin to align (typically between 12-15 months), they gradually transition to a toddler schedule - eating together at a table and napping at the same time.

Toddler Once the youngest infant in a group reaches 18 months old, the group is officially classified as toddlers. The adult-to-child ratio shifts to 1:5, with 10 children and 2 teachers in each toddler classroom.

At this stage, children are developing a sense of self and independence. Teachers encourage verbal expression of emotions, helping children label and understand their feelings while also recognizing the emotions of others. Self-help skills and healthy hygiene practices are reinforced to promote autonomy.

Pre School (Pre K) Our mixed-age classrooms, serving children approximately 3 to 5 years old, foster a cooperative learning environment where children learn with and from one another. As 3-year-olds join the classroom, they begin a journey of receiving help, gaining independence, and learning to help others. Children ages 4 and 5 have the opportunity to step into leadership roles, serving as peer role models for the younger children. In turn, the younger children provide the older ones with opportunities to share their knowledge, practice leadership skills, and build confidence.

Classroom interest areas encourage self-discipline, decision-making, and negotiation skills. Teachers further support children's growth by guiding them in problem-solving, positive conflict resolution, and the development of healthy self-esteem.

Our adult-to-child ratio is 1:7.5, with typically 15 children and 2 teachers in each classroom, ensuring individualized attention within a supportive group setting.

IC3 AT KENDAL PROGRAM (INFANT AND TODDLER)

Kendal Infants: IC3 at Kendal provides full-day care and learning experiences for a mixed-age group of infants ranging from 8 weeks to approximately 18 months old. The adult-to-infant ratio is 1:3, with typically 6 babies and 2 teachers per infant classroom. Children and teachers stay together until at least 18 months of age, fostering strong, secure relationships.

Kendal Toddlers: At approximately 18 months of age, children transition to the toddler room, a mixed-age classroom for children 18-36 months old. At this stage, a child's sense of self and independence is further nurtured. Teachers encourage verbal expression of emotions to help children label and understand their feelings while also recognizing the emotions of others. Self-help skills and healthy hygiene are encouraged. The adult-to-child ratio is 1:5, with 10 children and 2 teachers in the classroom.

Resident Interactions: IC3 at Kendal offers children the unique opportunity to interact daily with resident "grandparent" figures. These interactions take place in various settings, including:

- Walks throughout the halls to greet residents
- Share music sessions
- Joint activities with the residents such as balloons, storytelling, singing/dancing, play dough, art and cooking
- Lunches in the café

Residents may also volunteer in the classroom, engaging with children by:

- Reading stories
- Working on puzzles
- Singing songs and using puppets
- Participating in free play

These intergenerational experiences help foster social connections, empathy, and a sense of community among children and residents.

HALF DAY PROGRAM

Half Day Toddler: The IC3 main site provides half-day care for children 18-36 months of age. The adult-to-child ratio in this program is 1:5, with 10 children, 1 Teacher and 1 Teacher Assistant in the toddler classroom.

At this stage, toddlers are developing a sense of self and independence. Teachers encourage verbal expression of emotions, helping children label their feelings to foster understanding of themselves and others. Self-help skills and healthy hygiene practices are promoted, supporting their growing autonomy.

Half Day Pre School (Pre K): The IC3 main site provides half-day care for children 3-5 years old. Our mixed-age classrooms, serving children approximately 3 to 5 years old, foster a cooperative learning environment where children learn with and from one another. As 3-year-olds join the classroom, they begin a journey of receiving help, gaining independence, and learning to help others. Children ages 4 and 5 have the opportunity to step into leadership roles, serving as peer role models for the younger children. In turn, the younger children provide the older ones with opportunities to share their knowledge, practice leadership skills, and build confidence.

Classroom interest areas encourage self-discipline, decision-making, and negotiation skills. Teachers further support children's growth by guiding them in problem-solving, positive conflict resolution, and the development of healthy self-esteem.

Our adult-to-child ratio is 1:7.5, with typically 15 children and 2 teachers in each classroom, ensuring individualized attention within a supportive group setting.

The half day program operates from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and follows the Ithaca City School District Calendar.

Each program at IC3 follows a schedule tailored to the unique developmental needs of the children in that age group.

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 or Outdoor Play
11:30-1:00	Lunch, Clean Up, Bathroom
1:00	Half Day Program Dismissal
1:00-3:00	Full Day Rest Time
3:00-3:30	Afternoon Snack, Clean Up, Bathroom
3:30-5:30	Area Choice Time, Gym or Outdoor Play, Departures

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM (SAP)

Our After-School program provides care for children in grades K-5, with a focus on recreation and skill-building in a relaxed and supportive environment. Our adult-to-child ratio is 1:10, ensuring that children receive attentive care while engaging in fun and enriching activities.

In addition to supervised free play, children have the option to participate in enrichment activities facilitated by Counselors, Parents, or outside resources during program hours.

Daily After-School Schedule

2:00-3:15	Arrival, Attendance, Gross Motor Play
3:15-4:00	Snack (provided by IC3, children may bring their own)
4:00-5:30	Activities: Crafts, Manipulatives, Board Games, Art (Older children will have time for homework if desired.)

Picking up Your Child from the SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM

The program runs from 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Please allow time for your child to put away any materials or games they have been using. You may pick up your child any time before 5:30 p.m. The program ends promptly at 5:30 p.m.

Full-Day Care for Non-School Days

IC3's School Age Program offers full day care on many days when school is not in session. If your child is scheduled to attend SAP on a given day, full-day care is included in your tuition.

Full Day Sign up Requirement

- All children must be signed up in advance for full day care, even if they are normally scheduled to attend SAP on that day.
- You must sign up in advance for full days. To secure your child's space you must complete the registration form sent in advance.
- Advance sign-up is required to allow the SAP Leader to plan field trips, activities, and snacks based on attendance. By doing so, IC3 will ensure that the appropriate amount of staff are available to provide care to the children in attendance.

Additional Attendance

- If your child is not normally scheduled to attend SAP on a particular day, they may attend for an additional fee, provided there is space available.
- Requests must be submitted via email to the Enrollment Manager at info@icthree.org

*** Whenever there is a full day of care (expected or unexpected), please send a bag lunch with your child. IC3 will provide a morning and afternoon snack.**

IC3'S TEACHING STAFF

YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS: Your child's teachers are your primary link to their daily experiences and development. They plan activities and set classroom goals based on their knowledge of child development and the specific needs of the children in their care. We encourage you to speak directly to your child's teachers regarding any questions or concerns about your child's day, behavior, or overall classroom experience.

In order to best meet the needs of your child **it is especially important to inform teachers of any changes at home that may affect your child, such as medication, emotional changes, or family transitions.** If you have any questions about classroom goals, activities, or the learning environment, please share them with the teachers. Quick conversations at drop-off or pick-up are welcome. For more in-depth discussions, we encourage you to call, email or send a message through the ProCare App to arrange a meeting.

The strength of our program lies in our dedicated staff. New teachers are carefully selected by the Program Director, Executive Director, Age Group Leader, and existing teachers. Selection is based on their formal training in child development, previous experience, and their ability to interact with children with patience, warmth, and sensitivity. All IC3 employees are encouraged to continue their professional growth through various training and development opportunities.

Employee Screening & Security: As required by New York State law, all employees are screened for any prior criminal record related to complaints or crimes against children or adults.

Each employee must be fingerprinted and cleared through the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment before being permanently hired. After reference checks, new employees may work under probationary status while their clearance information is processed.

Part-Time Staff: IC3 operates 10 hours per day with full-time teachers working 7-to-8 hour shifts. To maintain appropriate adult-to-child ratios, we rely on part-time staff, including teacher assistants, counselors, interns and substitutes, to assist in the classrooms. Before being scheduled in a classroom, part-time staff must complete an 8-hour orientation and undergo 5- hours of classroom training. They work under the supervision of full-time teachers, who provide guidance, feedback and hands-on instruction.

Students and Visitors: IC3 welcomes students and visitors who come to observe, learn about early childhood education, and assist the children and staff during the day. However, they are not considered staff and do not count toward staff-to-child ratios.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Arrival Time: While there is no set arrival time for children, we have found that children generally experience 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 by 9:00 a.m.** If we haven't heard from you, your child's teacher will reach out. This allows teachers plan their morning activities and provide an accurate meal count to the Food Service Manager.

Midday Transitions: We prefer that children transition before 12:30 p.m. or after 3:00 p.m. to avoid disrupting naptime. It can be difficult for a child to arrive and go straight to sleep, and it also disturbs other children who are settling down for rest. If your child must arrive or be picked up during naptime, please notify their teacher in advance so we can minimize disruption to the other children.

If Your Child Will Be Absent:

Please call by 9:00 a.m. (2:00 p.m. for SAP) to inform us if your child will be absent.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Parking Lot Safety: Please keep your speed under 10 mph and watch for children when driving in the parking lot. Reserve the "Infant Parking" spaces for parents of infants, who often have an armful to carry in and out of the Center. Be aware of congestion in the parking lot between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., as this is when the majority of parents are picking up their children.

Safety Note: Do not leave your vehicle running while unattended. It is unsafe and against the law. **Do NOT leave your child in the vehicle by themselves.** If a report of an unattended child is made, parents will be contacted by the Executive Director or Program Director.

Sign In and out: IC3 Staff will sign your child in and out using the ProCare Parent Engagement App (or in written form if the app is not able to be used). This procedure ensures greater security for children's arrivals and departures. **If your child has shown any change in behavior, signs of illness, or has been given medication, please notify a teacher at drop off.**

When picking up or dropping off your school age child please be sure to make contact with a counselor to ensure that they know the transfer of guardianship has occurred.

Security at IC3: Safety is IC3's top priority. We currently have security cameras throughout the building, parking lot, and playground areas. Our main entrance is double-locked, and access granted via key fob or pin entry. Visitors must use the call box to gain access and sign in and out of the building.

Emergency Procedures: You will be promptly notified if your child is sick or injured. Please make sure your child's teachers and/or the front desk staff know how to reach you during the day. If your child is injured and you cannot be contacted, IC3 staff will seek appropriate medical attention. Your signature on the Parent/Center Agreement and the Emergency Consent forms authorizes us to do so. We will document all actions taken and continue our efforts to reach you.

The Center carries accident and general liability insurance for emergencies. This coverage applies only after any person insurance covering the child outside of IC3 has been accessed.

The Center has a comprehensive emergency response plan. To request a copy please email office@icthree.org.

Clothing: Children need protective, comfortable and appropriate clothing and footwear to explore their environments. Children should wear clothing suitable for active play and learning, with consideration for daily and seasonal weather. We schedule outdoor play each morning and afternoon, except in very inclement weather. Please ensure your child has clothing that provides good weather protection and suits the current climate conditions such as:

For cold conditions: boots, well-fitting warm mittens, hats, snow pants. *A properly dressed child with a runny nose or cough can still benefit from a short period of outdoor winter play.*

For wet weather: water proof outerwear (waterproof playsuits recommended; waterproof shoes/boots)

For warm weather: skin protection, sun hats, etc. along with water-play appropriate clothes.

Always provide an extra set of clothing for your child to keep at the Center (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt). In the event of messy play, spills or accidents, soiled clothes will be sent home. **Remember to return the extra clothes to ensure a complete set remains at the Center.** Extra clothes should be **clearly labeled with your child's first and last name** using either iron-on labels or a laundry marker to prevent loss and ensure proper identification and ownership.

We believe in fostering opportunities for children to practice self-help and independence skills and support them to dress themselves when possible. Families are encouraged to dress their children in clothing that supports growing independence (e.g. easy to remove pants for toilet training and toileting).

Shoes: Children are active and for safe participation in our program and outdoor play, children who are able to walk should always have well-fitting,

closed toe shoes that stay securely on their feet. In the classroom there are activities in which it is best if children wear appropriate shoes in order to participate safely (e.g. large wooden blocks). Loose-fitting sandals, flip-flops, or shoes that slip off easily are not suitable for most outdoor activities (i.e., climbing, running, jumping or neighborhood walks).

Your classroom teachers will provide you with developmentally appropriate clothing suggestions and requests as needed based on seasonal considerations or program activities.

Diapers: Parents must provide an adequate supply of disposable or cloth diapers. If using cloth diapers, they should be assembled, and a waterproof cover is required. Cloth diapers requiring pins for closure are not permitted, and they will not be laundered at the program. Soiled diapers and coverings must be changed and not reused. Soiled cloth diapers must be stored in a wet bag provided by the parent, which must be labeled with the child's first and last name. All cloth diapers and contents (urine and/or fecal matter) will be placed in the wet bag, which must be taken home daily.

Food Service: If your child arrives early in the morning, we recommend they eat before coming, as the morning snack is not served until 9:00 a.m. A complete lunch is prepared and served on-site for all children except infants who are still on baby food or formula. Infant parents may provide their child's food and formula until they are ready to eat the food provided by the Center. IC3 can provide cereal and formula for infants with parental permission. Please see your enrollment packet for information. An afternoon snack is provided at 3:00 p.m. Menus are available to all families at the front desk and on the IC3 website. IC3 participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and follows the age appropriate meal patterns and nutritional requirements.

Joining Your Child For Lunch: You are welcome to join your child's class for lunch. Please keep in mind how your child responds to transitions and plan accordingly.

Rest and Nap Time: During a busy, stimulating day, rest time offers children the opportunity to calm their bodies. Children settle onto cots or mats between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. Lights are dimmed, and quiet music or story tapes will be played during this period. Full classroom activities resume at 3:00 p.m.

Options: After the first half-hour of rest time, children who remain awake can choose quiet activities such as:

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

The goal of the rest policy is to determine what is best for each child at any given time. As children naturally develop, they may switch between options (e.g., a typically active child going through a growth spurt may require extra sleep for a few weeks). Parents and teachers should communicate about implications of these options as they are implemented in both home and Center settings.

Nap Items: Infants may use sleep sacs however, blankets and stuffed toys are prohibited. Children in Toddler and Pre K classrooms may bring a stuffed toy or blanket for naptime. All nap items must be clearly labeled and taken home weekly for washing. For safety reasons, please avoid sending bags with long strings into the program.

Picking Up Your Child: The Center's hours for the Full Day Program are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and for the Half Day Program, they are from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The official time is based on the IC3 phone system, which is consistent in all classrooms. Parents are responsible for picking up their child on time, regardless of their presence elsewhere on the premises. We encourage parents to come early to spend time with their child at IC3 after signing them out, as the facility, including the gyms and playground, closes at 5:30 p.m.

Full Day Program: Parents must pick up their children in time to exit the building by 5:30 p.m. Families should arrive in the classroom before 5:30 p.m. to avoid being late, and are encouraged to be in the classroom by 5:25 p.m. After 5:30 p.m., every effort will be made to reach parents and emergency contacts.

Half Day Program: Parents must pick up their children in time to exit the building by 1:00 p.m. Families should arrive in the classroom before 1:00 p.m. to avoid being considered late, and are encouraged to arrive by 12:55 p.m. After 1:00 p.m., every effort will be made to reach parents and emergency contacts.

Authorization to Pick up Your Child: Only an authorized adult may pick up a child. An authorized adult is defined as anyone whose name is on the child's enrollment form as a parent, guardian or emergency contact. If someone other than the authorized individuals 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 ensure that your child and the teachers are aware of these arrangements.

Note: *If there are special circumstances preventing a parent or relative from picking up your child (e.g., custody disputes), the Executive Director must be notified immediately and provided with supporting legal documents.*

In case of an emergency, you may call your child's classroom and speak to a Teacher or Teacher Assistant to give verbal authorization for another adult to pick up your child. Authorization will only be granted if the staff can recognize your voice.

Please Note: As mandated child abuse reporters, we prioritize the welfare of the child and will not release a child to any adult who appears under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Late Policy: The Center closes at 5:30 p.m. Children who are picked up between 1 minute and 15 minutes late more than two times within a six-month period will incur a late fee of \$50 for each instance they are picked up late. Children picked up after 5:45 p.m., regardless if they have not had late pickups in the past, will automatically incur a \$100 late fee.

After 30 minutes, if no contact has been made with the parents, guardians or emergency contacts, the police will be called.

IC3 will make every effort to reach parents and emergency contacts by phone. We understand that emergencies occur, and in such cases, the Executive Director will use discretion in assigning fees. For further assistance or information, please contact the Executive Director.

Field Trips: All program field trips (excluding short walks to nearby playgrounds) will be announced to parents in advance, and permission is required from each child's parent for attendance. Children may travel in a teacher's car, in a parent's car, on public transportation, or by walking. All drivers must provide proof of their driver's license and vehicle insurance. Field trips may require a nominal fee. You will be notified in advance of any fees associated with field trips.

Snow Days, Closings, Delayed Openings and Early Closings: IC3 is obligated to maintaining state-mandated adult-to-child ratios, ensuring the safety and well-being of all children in our care. The decision to close, delay opening, or close early due to inclement weather is made at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Factors Considered for Weather-Related Closures or Delays:

- Weather conditions in Ithaca and surrounding communities
- Decisions of local agencies regarding their opening/closing hours
- Staff availability, as many employees commute from outside the immediate vicinity (Severe weather may result in higher absenteeism than usual)
- Recommendations from the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department

Be prepared: Stay informed about winter weather forecasts and have a backup plan for child care or emergency pick-up in case of an unexpected closure or delay.

Delayed Opening: A delay allows time to evaluate conditions before making a final decision. During a delay:

- IC3 will not open before 9:30 a.m.
- The opening time may be pushed to as late as 11:00 a.m. or result in a full-day closure
- A final decision will be communicated to families between 8:00-9:00 a.m. via the ProCare Parent App.

Early Closing: If conditions worsen during the day, an early closing may be necessary.

- A decision will be made by 12:00 p.m.
- Families will be notified via phone, email or ProCare Parent app message.

HOW TO STAY UPDATED

For up-to-date closing and delay information, please check:

- IC3's Facebook Page: www.Facebook.com/icthree.org
- ProCare Parent App: IC3 will send notifications through the app. If you haven't downloaded the ProCare Parent App yet, please do so to receive important updates.

STAFF AND PARENT COMMUNICATION

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.

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

Cubbies and Clipboards: Parents will find important Center information, memos, and updates in their designated cubbies or clipboards. Please check these daily. At the end of each week, remember to take home everything in your child's cubby and art pocket or bin, as well as their nap items.

Daily Communication: Communication is an important part of the parent, teacher and child relationship. We encourage you to call, email or utilize the ProCare Parent Engagement App whenever you have questions or concerns about your child or the program. Parents can speak directly with the teachers,

or a teacher will return your call at a more convenient time. Teachers will also reach out to you if they have questions or concerns.

Please note that some toddler and pre k classes do not take phone calls during nap time, except in emergencies, but you can leave a message. Since there is no set rest schedule in the infant rooms, feel free to call your infant's teachers at any time.

Teachers prioritize the needs of the children in their care and may find it challenging to engage in conversations with parents while supervising. If you need to discuss matters at length, please arrange for a mutually convenient meeting time. The Center practices confidentiality and will not discuss issues involving a child in the child's presence.

Community Communication: Each classroom has a written system to keep parents informed about daily activities. Additionally, we share Center updates and important news via emails, the ProCare Parent Engagement App, and digital signage in IC3 lobby and waiting area.

If you have any announcements or items of interest that you would like to share with Center parents, please bring them to the front desk for approval.

Resolving Concerns: Open communication between staff and parents is essential to providing high-quality care. If you have questions or concerns about your child's care or any aspect of the Center's operations, we encourage you to address them as soon as possible with your child's teacher.

If the teacher is unable to resolve the issue, they will refer you to the appropriate administrator.

If the issue remains unresolved or you believe the Board of Directors should be made aware of the concern, you are encouraged to contact a Board member. A list of Board positions is available on our website, and contact information is available upon request.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Screening: The first 5 years of life are a critical period for your child's growth, setting the foundation for success in school and beyond. During this time children experience rapid development and acquire essential skills. Ensuring that development is progressing as expected is an important part of early childhood care.

As part of our commitment to supporting your child's growth, we utilize Ages & Stages-3 Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and the Ages and Stages: Social

Emotional-2, Second Edition Questionnaires (ASQ:SE-2). These tools help us track your child's development and provide insight into their progress.

You will receive an ASQ-3 questionnaire when your child has been enrolled for approximately three months. The questionnaire asks about skills your child has or is developing in the following areas: communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem-solving, and personal-social skills. Once completed the results will be shared with you and your child's classroom Teachers. Your child's Teachers will schedule a 3-month check in meeting to discuss the results. A written summary of findings will also be provided.

This information is confidential and will only be shared with other agencies with your written consent. We may also use the ASQ-3 when your child transitions from the Infant/Toddler program to a Pre-K classroom to ensure a smooth developmental progression.

The ASQ: SE-2 Social-Emotional Screening is used at the discretion of the teachers to assess social-emotional development and identify any areas where additional support may be beneficial.

Our goal is to work in partnership with families to support each child's unique development and ensure they are thriving in our program. If you have any questions about the screening process, please speak with your child's teachers or the administrative team.

Assessment: Children are assessed throughout their time at IC3. Assessment occurs 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 two assessment systems: the Ounce Scale and Work Sampling System. The Ounce Scale is used with children 8 weeks – 36 months and the Work Sampling System is used with children 36 months – 60 months. These assessment systems assess the whole child, social, emotional, cognitive and physical mainly through the use of anecdotal notes, observations and portfolio samples.

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. 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 may also ask their Age Group Leader or Program director to assist

in the gathering of information by observing the child and offering an opinion of what was observed.

Assessment allows for and leads to reflection by the teaching staff. Assessment and curriculum are closely linked. Teaching staff will discuss a child's growth or lack of growth and evaluate what needs to be put in place to enhance development. This includes evaluation of the child, and external factors such as the social and physical environments. Teaching staff will evaluate environmental factors, the activities offered, the makeup of the children and their own teaching styles in order to fully assess all factors that influence development. This is another time that an Age Group Leader or Program director would be asked to observe and provide feedback to the teaching team for program improvement.

The full assessment cycle includes Parent-Teacher conference and developmental reports which initially occur after 3 months of enrollment. Infants under 12 months are assessed at ages 4, 8 and 12 months. Children over 12 months are assessed every 6 months and can be conducted 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/Guardians are informed of areas of development that are proficient, developing and not yet evident, 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 conducted by Teaching Staff and are scheduled with the parents 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 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 through CPSE.

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. When sharing information or seeking advice from others, confidentiality must be considered and the child should not be identified. Written permission from the child's parent must be obtained when sharing information with others. Parents are informed at the beginning of conferences or meetings that information pertaining to their child's development is kept confidential.

Confidentiality: All information related to children is confidential and securely stored in the child's portfolio, communication log, filing cabinet, or at the front desk. Teachers create and have access to assessment information, and when necessary, the Age Group Leader and/or Program Director may participate in assessing a child by observing, recording, and discussing findings with the classroom Teachers.

When seeking general advice from other staff members, therapists, or specialist, confidentiality is strictly maintained, and children are not identified.

Assessment information is used to:

- Evaluate a child's developmental progress
- Help teachers provide appropriate materials, activities and classroom environment
- Inform parents about the child's growth
- Assist outside organizations supporting a child's development.

Parental consent is required before sharing any information with outside organizations. Parents are informed at the start of conferences or meetings that their child's information is confidential. Written permission from a parent or guardian must be obtained before sharing information with others.

Conferences: Conferences are scheduled at least annually or upon request by a parent/guardian. This is a valuable opportunity to discuss your child's development, address any concerns, and collaborate on their growth and experience within our program.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

The Ithaca Community Childcare Center (IC3) uses Positive Guidance as a learning tool to provide children with the guidance and security necessary for

emotional and social growth. IC3 understands the responsibility and importance of creating an environment where all children feel safe, both physically and emotionally. Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help the individual child develop self-control. We believe that all domains of learning are supported during play and through positive interactions with adults. Promoting healthy social and emotional development, including self-control, is one of the fundamental responsibilities of our program and is the focus of our behavior guidance policy so that the use of suspension, expulsion or other exclusionary measures are limited and/or eliminated.

Positive Guidance is an approach to managing the behavior of children. Steps that we take towards establishing behavior management include: building secure relationships with children, offering a safe and predictable environment, having appropriate expectations based on a child's developmental age, setting appropriate limits, explaining the appropriate use of materials, reinforcing positive behavior, discussing acceptable options for inappropriate behavior, offering choices and encouraging problem solving.

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. IC3 staff also use FLIP IT!, Second Step, the Pyramid Model and Conscious Discipline as additional tools to promote social and emotional competence.

IC3 will not use corporal punishment as a behavior management technique. The term corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body including, but not limited to, physical restraint, spanking, biting, slapping, compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth soap, hot spices or irritants. Food will not be used as punishment or reward. Also, methods of discipline and interaction which frighten, demean or humiliate a child will not be used.

Keep in mind that young children (under 5 years of age) need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to interact and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, takes time to master and consequently, unsafe behavior may occur (i.e. – hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, elopement etc.). Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it does take time for a young child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with their anger and frustration.

While young children are learning socially appropriate behavior, IC3 expects school age children (5 to 12 years of age) to have some mastery of socially appropriate behavior. Unsafe behavior may fall in the domains of verbal,

emotional or physical (i.e. –, threatening, bullying, ostracizing, destroying property, racial slurs, fighting etc.) and are unacceptable and unsafe behaviors.

Some children may need more intensive support when their behavior: interferes with their ability to engage in positive interactions and relationships with peers and/or adults, interferes with their ability to explore the environment and learn, persists despite developmentally appropriate guidance, and causes the child's family and/or caregivers to be concerned.

The staff at the Center will make every effort to work with children exhibiting unsafe behavior, in order that they may participate safely and the safety and well-being of all the children and staff are protected. If a child displays unsafe behavior which has a negative effect on the child, other children in the program, and/or IC3 staff, the incident will be recorded on the IC3 incident report form and the parents and IC3 administration will be notified.

If the unsafe behavior continues, the staff and parent will meet privately to discuss the situation and will develop an individualized support plan determining strategies to improve the behavior, reduce safety risks and/or connect the child with resources outside of IC3 that they may need in order to be successful. A referral to Early Intervention or Committee for Preschool Special Education and/or community resources may be requested. The individual assessment plan will include parent insights, possible cause/solutions, and steps to be taken at home to support the plan.

The frequency of parent meetings and individual support plan updates will depend on the severity of the behavior and staff's ability to keep themselves and others safe while working through the individualized plan. If the behavior does not improve, a referral to Early Intervention or Committee for Preschool Special Education and/or community resources will be required.

It is IC3's expectation that a child can be safe without ongoing 1 on 1 assistance or adding extra staff to the classroom. IC3 provides group childcare. Our teacher/child ratio is a licensing requirement and one teacher cannot be dedicated to one child's needs. IC3 must make an individualized assessment on whether we can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally altering our program. This is in compliance with federal and state civil rights laws.

IC3 Administration will evaluate the efforts made to resolve the behavior: whether outside resources were recommended or required and if so were resources accessed by the parent; the severity of the safety risk; and if staff can successfully prevent harm or injury to the child, themselves or others. The Executive Director and/or Program Director reserve the right to exclude a child from the center when consultation and individualized support plans are not successful, the emotional and physical well-being of the children and the staff is in danger, and 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/or Program Director. The Executive Director and/or Program Director will work with the parents/guardians to identify alternative programs which may be more appropriate to the child's needs.

HEALTH NOTES

About IC3's Health Policy: Our health policy is designed to provide a healthy environment for the children in our care as well as for our employees. We recognize the work responsibilities of parents and the conflicts which arise when an ill child must stay home. IC3 does serve mildly ill children. However, IC3 strives to control the spread of illness to the extent possible by ensuring that neither children nor employees are needlessly exposed to illness.

To ensure a healthy group care environment, a partnership between parents and staff is necessary. Staff practice proper hand washing and equipment disinfectant procedures to minimize the spread of illness in the classrooms and are alert to the symptoms of illness. Parents play a key role in minimizing illness and maintaining a healthy environment for all of the children by keeping their child out of the Center when the child's health is questionable or when the teachers believe it is necessary due to health concerns in the room. Please refer to the full Health Policy for additional information.

If Your Child Becomes Ill During the Day: If a child becomes ill, teachers will notify the parent/guardian, and the child must be picked up within one hour. If parents cannot be reached, the child's emergency contacts will be called. When a child is sent home for illness, parents will receive a Symptom Sheet, detailing the child's symptoms. The Symptom Sheet also outlines return-to-care guidelines to ensure the well-being of both the child and the classroom.

If you take your child to the doctor, please bring the Medication Consent Form, in case prescription medication is prescribed. This form is required for IC3 to administer any prescribed medication.

Without a written doctor's note, we cannot dispense prescription or nonprescription medication. For more details, please refer to our Health Policy.

Hand Washing and Hygiene: Staff and children wash their hands whenever they are soiled, before eating or cooking, after using the bathroom, and after wiping noses, among other times. Children are taught basic hygiene practices, such as covering their mouths when the cough or sneeze and properly blowing their noses. Teachers model these behaviors to reinforce good hygiene habits.

Donation of Facial Tissues: Due to the high usage of facial tissues throughout the year, we kindly ask parents to periodically donate a box of tissues to their child's classroom. Your contributions help maintain a healthy environment, we sincerely appreciate your support.

Cleaning and Sanitizing: A Peroxide disinfectant solution is used to sanitize diaper-changing tables, eating tables, children's furniture, countertops and toys. Additionally, the Center undergoes professionally daily cleaning.

- Parents are responsible for washing their child's nap items weekly.
- Dress-up clothes, bibs, pillow covers, and infant blankets are washed regularly on site.
- Vital Oxide disinfectant solution is used to sanitize large surfaces and play areas.

Medical Exams and Updates: For every child enrolled at IC3 the following must be provided:

- A copy of the child's immunization records
- A well-exam report from a physician before the start of enrollment.

If your child cannot obtain a well exam before their first day, parents must provide:

- Immunization records
- 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. (yearly for infants, toddlers, and Pre-K children).

Braun Ear Thermometer: IC3 uses Braun Ear Thermometers to take children's temperatures. These thermometers provide quick and accurate readings by measuring the heat of the eardrum.

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

ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

For more information or assistance contact the Enrollment Manager, info@icthree.org.

Enrollment: A child's initial and continued enrollment at IC3 is contingent on the Center's ability to meet the child's needs. If IC3 determines that a child's needs cannot be met within the program, the Program Director will work with the family to explore more suitable alternatives for the child with their parents.

Wait List Application: A non-refundable waiting list fee is required to join the waiting list. IC3 does not discriminate on age, sex, disability, race, religion, national origin or color. If you would like to visit the Center, the Center should arrange a tour with our Enrollment Manager.

Enrollment Fees: To reserve a space at IC3, parents must pay a non-refundable registration fee per child and a security deposit equal to one month's tuition. The deposit will be refunded after the child's last day, provided that:

- A six week written notice of withdrawal has been given.
- The family's tuition account is paid in full.
- Deposit Refund/Exit Interview (DRF) Form must be submitted before the child's last day. Failure to complete the DRF will result in the forfeiture of the family deposit, which will be considered a donation to IC3.
- Notice must be provided in writing to the Enrollment Manager. If a child is withdrawn without notice, the parents are required to pay tuition for six weeks from the date written notice is given.

An annual reenrollment fee of \$50 per child is required to maintain enrollment.

Tuition During Absence or Vacation: Tuition must be paid in full regardless of the reason for absence, including illness, vacation, or staying home with a visiting relative.

Decreasing Enrollment: If a family wishes to reduce the number of days their child attends the Center, a minimum of six (6) weeks' written notice is required. Notice must be submitted to the Enrollment Manager.

Increasing Enrollment: If a family wishes to increase the days their child attends the Center, parents should contact the Enrollment Manager to check for availability.

Extra Day: Families with part-time enrollment may request additional days, which will be granted based on availability. Any extra days will be charged on the next tuition bill. Requests should be made through the Enrollment Manager.

SAP Afterschool Full Day Fees: Children enrolled in the program who are not normally scheduled to attend the program on the day may do so for an

additional fee, provided space is available. The charge will be at your regular daily rate and added to your next tuition statement. **For children already scheduled to attend SAP on a planned full day, there is no additional charge.**

Withdrawing from the Center: If a family chooses to withdraw their child from the Center, a minimum of six (6) weeks' written notice is required. Additionally, the Deposit Refund/Exit Interview (DRF) Form must be submitted before the child's last day. Failure to complete the DRF will result in the forfeiture of the family deposit, which will be considered a donation to IC3.

Notice must be provided in writing to the Enrollment Manager. If a child is withdrawn without notice, the parents are required to pay tuition for six weeks from the date written notice is given.

TUITION AND BILLING PROCEDURES

For more information or assistance, contact: Finance Manager, accounts@icthree.org.

How Tuition is Calculated: Tuition rates are based on an average of 21.75 business days (4.35 weeks) per month. For the School Age Program (SAP), tuition is averaged over a 10-month period from September to June.

Tuition is charged for all weekdays, including those when the Center is closed for holidays, unexpected closures, snow days, or delayed openings. **If you request an enrollment change or withdraw mid-month, your tuition will be prorated based on the number of days your child was enrolled during the month.**

Payment Terms: Tuition payments are due in full by the 1st of each month. Payments not received by this date will incur a \$15 late fee. Additionally, any account with an outstanding balance as of the 15th of the month will be subject to finance charges at a rate of 1.5% per month.

Tuition statements will be provided before the 1st of each month for your records, detailing payments and charges from the past 30 days. However, since tuition charges remain the same each month, payment is still expected by the 1st of the month, even if you have not yet received your statement.

If you have not received your statement before the 1st of the month, please contact accounts@icthree.org. We recommend retaining these statements for your income tax records.

Multi-Sibling Discount: Families with two or more children enrolled in Infants through Pre-K will receive a 10% discount on both monthly tuition for both children. Families that have two children in the School Age Program will receive a 10% discount on both monthly tuition for both children.

Families with children in the School Age Program and in Infants-Pre-K are not eligible for the sibling discount.

Paying Your Bill: Tuition payments can be made online through our website or at the front desk. IC3 accepts MasterCard, Visa, and personal checks. A \$25 fee will be charged for any returned checks.

If you require a receipt, please request one at the time of payment at the front desk. IC3 also offers a **cash price discount** for parents who choose to pay via cash, check, or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

Tuition Assistance: For families facing short-term financial difficulties, a Scholarship Fund is available through the Daycare Council, call 607-273-0259. IC3 also offers an Emergency Scholarship Fund—please contact the Executive Director for application details. Additionally, the Department of Social Services provides financial assistance for qualifying families; for more information, call 607-274-5286.

IC3 operates on a flat-rate tuition system with an established scholarship fund. A detailed explanation of available scholarships and the application process can be obtained at the front desk or by contacting the Enrollment Manager.

Tuition Notes: To ensure your check payment is correctly applied, please write your child's first and last name in the memo line. If you need an IC3 signature on a Select Benefits form, bring it with your tuition payment, and the front desk staff will sign it at that time.

If no check is attached to your Select Benefits form, we must verify your payment with our accounting records. Tuition is IC3's primary source of income, and we reserve the right to adjust tuition fees with six weeks' notice. Typically, tuition rates are reviewed and updated annually on September 1st.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Your child's daily experiences are just as important to them as your work is to you. Children thrive when parents take an active role in their world, and we encourage you to participate in Center activities in a way that fits your schedule. Strengthening the connection between home and childcare is one of our core goals, and parents play a vital role in this process.

Parent involvement is essential to maintaining the high-quality care we provide.

As a not-for-profit Center, IC3 primarily relies on tuition from families. Your participation in the classroom and Center-wide fundraising events helps us keep costs manageable while continuously enhancing our programs.

Open Door Policy: IC3 welcomes parents to visit their children at any time during the day. Whether you'd like to participate in a feeding, take your child for a walk, or share a special talent, hobby, or holiday tradition, we encourage you to be part of your child's daily experience. Your involvement helps strengthen the connection between home and the Center, fostering a supportive and engaging environment for all children.

Classroom Involvement: Each classroom organizes field trips, and parents are encouraged to participate by assisting with driving and supervision. Teachers or administrative staff may also reach out to parents for help with various tasks, such as sewing, contributing ingredients for a recipe, donating materials, or sharing their unique skills and expertise.

Additionally, individual classrooms, age-group programs, and the entire Center host family gatherings. These events provide wonderful opportunities for families and teachers to connect, build relationships, and enjoy a fun, relaxed environment together.

Special Celebrations: We love when families share their special celebrations with us! If you'd like to participate, please discuss your ideas with the teachers and connect with other interested parents. Bringing a special treat from home for a child's birthday can be a fun and inclusive experience for the whole class. Sharing meaningful foods and traditions helps enrich all children's understanding of different cultures and fosters a sense of community.

The Center's policy on celebrating religious holidays (e.g., Christmas, Passover) focuses on universal themes such as sharing and generosity rather than specific religious beliefs. However, we warmly invite families to share their unique traditions and cultural heritage with the class.

Center-Wide Events: Throughout the year, we host events for families and the community to express appreciation and foster connections. These gatherings provide opportunities for parents to meet one another, interact with families and teachers from different programs, and strengthen our community. Additionally, we occasionally seek parent volunteers for projects and events that help enhance our facility and manage costs. For more information or assistance, please contact the Executive Director.