



Meeting Street

Meeting Street Early Learning Center

Family Handbook

1000 Eddy Street
Providence, RI 02905
Main Number 401-533-9100
Fax Number 401-533-9105
Early Learning Center Manager
401-533-9251
www.meetingstreet.org

Hours of Operation: Monday- Friday 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Welcome to the Meeting Street family. Each and every child, each and every family and each and every employee are important to us. Together, we will provide your child and family with an unmatched educational and developmental program. This handbook provides you with some simple guidelines to our program along with helpful hints about how to make it a success for your family. We want to make your time here at Meeting Street the best it can be!

Our Mission

Meeting Street compassionately and innovatively empowers children and their families to thrive by fostering the development of the whole child.

Our Philosophy

We believe that children learn best through play, exploration, and discovery. We provide a high-quality early learning center for your child by ensuring a healthy and safe environment that practices acceptance, respect, caring, and encouragement. In creating an environment that fosters true inclusion – a world where all children can laugh together, play together, and learn together, we are able to facilitate learning opportunities that enhance all areas of development.

The Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards framework is used to guide us in creating a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for all children. As the first inclusive early learning center to be accredited by the prestigious National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), our center focuses on a teaching model grounded in the research proven effective in quality early care and education.

Staff and families regularly come together to review and assess the progress made by each child in order to assure that needs and interests of every child are continuously being met. This framework is designed to promote young children’s optimal learning and development. Every day we create a setting where children develop a positive and supportive attitude toward learning. We pride ourselves on communication with families in a positive and supportive manner that encourages the relationship between parents, educators, home and school. Together with families we partner to make this learning experience for your child a positive one.

At Meeting Street, we seek to provide a positive learning environment for children of all abilities from six weeks to five years of age. We emphasize children’s unique abilities and their individual strengths and needs. Children will be allowed to learn at their own pace through active exploration with guidance and positive reinforcement from teachers.

Within each classroom the teachers act as facilitators, arranging the environment to allow children to safely explore and interact with a variety of different materials. A wide range of activities are provided to promote the development of relationships with peers and adults. Children provide input into the curriculum through their daily class meeting, and work is documented with photos, charts, quotes of the day, and projects they complete.

Admissions to Meeting Street Early Learning Center

Meeting Street Early Learning Center provides care for children 6 weeks through 5 years of age. Entrance into our preschool program (ages 3-5) is only on or after the child turns three years old. Prospective families interested in seeing our program, will be asked to schedule a tour with the program manager through our intake line at 401-533-9104 and to submit an application. Families are encouraged to bring their child for the visit to familiarize him/her with the environment and to get to know us. Families interested in enrolling their child will meet with the program manager to ask any questions they may have. The program manager will discuss availability with the family and give them a timeline for potential enrollment. If you are notified that a slot is available, a start date will be chosen, and you will be given an enrollment packet. Upon completion of the enrollment packet a registration fee, program supply fee, and first week of tuition will need to be paid upon the established start date. If an opening is not available, a family may choose to place their child's application in our waiting pool.

The initial 60 days of a child's enrollment will be a probationary period for the child to adjust to his/her environment and for the classroom staff to get to know the child. If at any time in the first 60 days of enrollment the family or the classroom staff feels the child is not adjusting to the classroom, a meeting will be scheduled with the family, the classroom staff, and the manager to discuss the areas of concern. If it is determined that the child needs support in the classroom a plan will be developed to support the child.

Each classroom is staffed with a degreed teacher and teacher's assistant according to staff/child ratio regulations set forth by the State of RI. The ELC uses a substitute list to maintain the staff/child ratio in case a regular staff person is out for any reason. All substitutes hold the State requirements for the position being covered.

Family Involvement – Parent Communication

We believe that a strong relationship between parents and staff is a critical part of a child's experience at Meeting Street. Communication occurs in several ways. We use the Brightwheel app to allow teachers and parents to communicate directly with families throughout the day. We are able to send pictures, daily notes and you can message your child's teacher directly. The manager of the program can also communicate with families about upcoming holidays, events, etc. We also have a parent board located across from the managers' office that has current flyers with updates in the community and any product recalls from the Consumer Product Safety Commission that may affect a family. Parent teacher conferences are scheduled 3 times a year. During these meetings we will review your child's current development and talk about goals for learning in the upcoming months. Additional conferences can always be requested by the parents or teacher at any time. Parents are also encouraged to schedule time to speak with teachers and managers anytime they would like to have a conversation about their child.

All families are welcome to participate in our quarterly Parent Advisory Committee meeting. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and share your ideas. The Parent Committee and the Manager decide together what they would like to do together throughout the year. If unable to attend Parent Committee you can call or email the program manager at any time to

give your feedback or ideas. A yearly parent survey is distributed to gather feedback and information and is used to inform the development of our annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Quality Improvement

At least one time per year Meeting Street Early Learning Center will engage in a comprehensive self-assessment to determine compliance with the structural and educational program standards and regulations governing the program. The assessment will include a review and analysis of program wide child assessment information, staff and parent surveys, formal assessment of the classroom using the ECERS, ITERS, and CLASS tools, and informal observations of the classrooms by the supervisor. We also develop an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) for each staff person to help us formulate professional development goals. We then use this information to set QIP goals for the upcoming school year. Findings are shared at the Parent Advisory Committee meetings and with staff at staff meetings.

Classroom Environment

Meeting Street creates a safe learning environment where children can safely and actively explore and discover their surroundings. Teachers can plan and collaborate for a minimum of 2 hours each week during the school day. Each classroom utilizes a daily schedule with pictures for children to visually see how activities are outlined for the day. Shelves and learning areas are at appropriate height for children, clearly marked and defined with pictures and words. Our classroom set-up includes the following learning centers: Art Area, Library, Sensory Table, Block Area, Manipulative, Science, Writing Center, Dramatic Play, Math Area, and Music and Movement. Teachers make changes to their environment to reflect the objectives and goals for children that have been identified in curriculum planning. Materials are rotated so the children have an opportunity to explore different items on a regular basis. Materials, chosen specifically to meet the developmental needs of children, are easily accessible to our students to ensure appropriate exploration opportunities. Classrooms are designed to have quiet and noisy areas, messy and neat areas, and individual group areas to provide appropriate and varied types of play. Children have the opportunity to play outdoors or have gross motor time for 60-90 minutes per day. The outdoor area provides varied types of play including a climbing structure, swings, and sensory play as well as many areas of shade. There is also a big grassy area where children can play games and explore nature. Teachers plan outdoor activities that encourage motor skill development. During times of inclement weather (rain, snow, excessive heat etc.) we will use the sensory gyms, take walks in the hallways, and be creative with ways to keep the children moving and active throughout the day. During the colder months we will be using the outdoors to go for walks, scavenger hunts, and play in the snow.

Commitment to Inclusivity:

Meeting Street practices an inclusive model where children of all learning styles and abilities are included in daily learning by providing learning opportunities that are adapted to meet each

child's developmental skill level. In our inclusive classrooms, a culture of community and partnership is the focus. Children are encouraged to see each other for their similarities instead of differences. Inclusiveness is fostered through the curriculum. Teachers and staff adapt curriculum into multi-level learning experiences where all students, regardless of their individual developmental level, can access information and materials.

Individualized Education Plans

In our classrooms there may be children with identified delays, or medical needs which require that adaptations to the classroom environment and/or materials be made to support their various learning styles. These adaptations are often guided by educational plans. Depending on the age of the children they may have an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** developed by the school department in partnership with the family, or an **Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** developed by Early Intervention providers in partnership with families. Plans and adaptations are designed to work with the strengths of each child and are incorporated into the classroom schedule. The school nurse consults with classroom teachers and provides specific training, as needed, to support the health and safety needs of the children attending the Early Learning Center.

Meeting Street partners with several community agencies to advance education, and social services in the state of Rhode Island. We work with several school departments that utilize Meeting Street as a placement for students who will benefit most from our inclusive teaching model. Plans are drafted collectively between the school department, Meeting Street staff and the family. All partners come together regularly to seek input from each other and review data from authentic and regular assessments. Plans are amended to stay current and reflect the child's developmental levels, strengths and areas of need, interests of the child and concerns of both families and staff.

Where appropriate, we also partner with Early Intervention. Early Intervention providers will work with the child, family, and Meeting Street staff to create individualized family service plans (IFSPs) to support and optimize the development of each child by providing interventions in the child's natural environment that are designed to address a child's developmental delay. These plans are also regularly reviewed and amended in a similar manner to IEPs. Early Intervention works with staff and families to create Transition Plans designed to smooth the transfer of services from Early Intervention to any number of community agencies such as a school outreach program or an outpatient therapy service at age three. Meeting Street will refer children to Early Intervention, with parent permission, when there are developmental, social or behavioral concerns for children who are under three years of age.

Assessments and Screenings

At Meeting Street, we build our curriculum to meet the individual needs of each child. Our teachers are trained not only to assess children but also how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of each student. They participate in an annual refresher training to ensure accuracy of

assessment and receive individual supervision to evaluate where the children in their classrooms are developmentally. This leads to the development of a curriculum that meets the needs of each child in the classroom. Teachers are also provided intentional teaching experiences within the assessment system to help them target a specific area of development for a child that might be struggling in that area. We also work with the Center for Early Learning Professionals and their technical assistance staff when we find that we need help in a specific assessment area.

All children attending Meeting Street are assessed after 6 weeks of entering the program, on an on-going basis using a variety of methods. We use the ASQ-3 for developmental screening and the ASQ-SE for social and emotional screening. In addition, we use Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) for ongoing assessment to measure the status of developmental milestones of children from birth through kindergarten. Teaching Strategies Gold allows for teachers to observe and assess children in the context of everyday experiences and is aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards. TSG assessment documentation is done in the Fall (August-October), the Winter (November-February), and Spring (February-June). Our teachers use the information gathered through observations and on-going assessments to develop curriculum and plan classroom activities that support the needs of each child in the classroom.

Parent input is important to the overall assessment of their child. Parents are given surveys, checklists and ASQ questionnaires to help inform their child's educational and social/emotional goals throughout the school year. We schedule parent teacher conference three times throughout the year. If a teacher or parent has a concern regarding screenings and/or assessments at any point before a scheduled parent teacher conference, there is always an opportunity to schedule a meeting to discuss concerns. If there are concerns about the child's development or concerns about a special need the child may have, they could then be referred to Early Intervention if they are below three years of age, or to a medical or local school department if they are above the age of three. The referral would happen with the consent of the parent. Meeting Street ELC provides information to parents about Child Outreach Screenings. If necessary, we would provide space for the screening to be done during center hours. We do screen all children over the age of three one time a year with a parent's consent and provide them with the results.

Positive Guidance

ELC providers play an important role in guiding children's behavior in positive, supportive and age-appropriate ways. Strategies to address challenging behaviors must be age and developmentally appropriate and individualized to meet the unique needs of each child. Such behaviors can be direct (e.g. hitting, pushing, biting, kicking) or indirect (e.g. teasing, ignoring rules or instructions, excluding others, name-calling, destroying objects, having temper tantrums) and are characterized by actions that:

- Interfere with children's learning, development and success at play;
- Are harmful to the child, other children or adults; and/or
- Put a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure.

Consistent with guidance offered by the Center for the Child and Family Studies at the University of California Davis, all strategies, and approaches, regardless of age group, shall have the following elements in common:

Adults model positive behavior. We show that we can accept, control and express feelings in direct and non-aggressive ways; we let children know that we are not afraid of their intense emotions and will not punish, threaten, or withdraw from them.

Teachers design the physical environment to minimize conflict. We provide multiples of toys and materials for groups of children, define classroom and outdoor areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play, and strive to maintain an appropriately calm level of stimulation.

Teachers maintain age-appropriate expectations for children's behavior. We attempt to minimize unreasonable waiting and transition times and limit the length of large group and teacher-directed activity times according to children's developmental levels. We give children large blocks of uninterrupted time during which to make their own activity choices.

Teachers establish simple rules, or expectations, for the classroom community. The children participate in this process in the beginning of the school year. When issues arise, adults and children can reference the guidelines as gentle reminders about what kinds of behaviors facilitate life in a classroom setting.

Adults help children verbalize their feelings, frustrations and concerns. The staff will help children describe problems, generate possible solutions and think through logical consequences of their actions. Even babies will hear their caregivers describing actions, problems, solutions and logical consequences. The adult role is to be a helper in positive problem solving. We want children to value cooperation and teamwork. We help them to learn peaceful, productive approaches to interacting with peers.

Children whose behavior endangers others will be supervised away from other children. This is not the same as the practice of using a "time out" for a child. An adult will help the child move away from the group situation. The child will then process the problem verbally with support from the staff member. An adult stays close to any child who is struggling emotionally and needs private time to regain composure.

Discipline and guidance is consistent and based on an understanding of the child's need and development. Staff will promote a safe environment for your child to play and develop. Our staff uses positive guidance techniques with all children. There is no cruel, harsh, or unusual punishment. No child is ever spanked, shaken, or hit. Appropriate behavior will be recognized and encouraged through:

- Teacher modeling acceptable behavior.
- Redirection of children to a more acceptable activity.
- Teachers recognizing and rewarding children's efforts.
- Guiding children in the development of positive relationships and interactions with other children
- Helping children in their ability to discuss and regulate their emotions and control impulses
- Structuring the environment and schedules to maximize positive behavior.
- Teachers will set fair, clear and consistent limits for classroom behavior.

Every ELC staff member understands and follows our disciplinary approach as well as the standards on guidance and management in our Rhode Island State Licensing Regulations. We work intensively with our student caregivers, so they also understand and employ this guidance approach.

When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others or property, or significantly disrupts the program, we will work with a child's family to find solutions, up to and including referral for outside services or exclusion from the program.

The initial 60 days of a child's enrollment will be a probationary period for the child to adjust to his/her environment and for the classroom staff to get to know the child. If at any time in the first 60 days of enrollment the family or the classroom staff feels the child is not adjusting to the classroom, a meeting will be scheduled with the family, the classroom staff, and the manager to discuss the areas of concern. If it is determined that the program is a fit for the child, a plan will be developed to support the child.

Meeting Street Early Learning Center reserves the right to release a child from the program at any time if management feels the child has behavioral, educational, or medical needs that cannot be adequately addressed by our program.

Prohibited Practices

Meeting Street expressly prohibits the use of physical punishment, psychological abuse or coercion when disciplining a child. Furthermore, the use of physical restraint is strictly prohibited. Examples of prohibited practices include, but are not limited to the following.

- Hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, squeezing, or biting a child.
- Isolating a child in an adjacent room, hallway closet, or any other area where a child cannot be seen or supervised.
- Binding, tying, or taping to restrict movement.
- Using abusive, profane, sarcastic language, verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family.
- Engaging in any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment.

Behavioral Supports and Crisis Intervention

The overall goal of the behavior support program at Meeting Street is to maximize student growth and development while ensuring all community members are safe and able to thrive in the learning environment. Meeting Street firmly believes that suspension, expulsions and other exclusionary measures can be detrimental to a child's social-emotional development and strives to eliminate those consequences if possible. As such, it may be necessary to develop student-specific strategies to enhance self-regulation and communication skills, while fostering independence and promoting success. The implementation of a student specific Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) is one tool by which these outcomes may be attained. Should a student require additional supports, a meeting shall be convened with the child's parents/caregivers to discuss the issue, identify strategies to reduce or eliminate the behavior and/or to obtain

permission to initiate a consult with agency's Behavioral Specialist. *Meeting Street Policy 4.24: Behavioral Support and Crisis Intervention* provides an overview of the program.

When a consult has been initiated and a plan enacted, all pertinent staff involved with a child shall be trained on the student's BIP prior to implementation. All documentation, including BIP's, Functional Behavioral Assessments, consent forms, etc., shall be filed in the student's record. Copies of relevant documents necessary to implement the student's BIP shall be accessible in the classroom (either electronically or in paper format). Copies shall reside with the Behavioral Specialist.

Staff is advised to seek assistance (e.g., administrator or behavioral specialist support) if a student demonstrates behavior that is unusual in duration, intensity, outside of their typical behavior or in any situation that they do not feel comfortable managing.

Exclusion as Last Resort

While it is the over-arching goal of Meeting Street to create and foster an inclusive environment for all children and families, the agency also recognizes that rare circumstances may arise where a child can be better served in an alternate setting. Such decisions are made in partnership with the family when all other interventions have been exhausted and done in accordance with applicable State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interventions may include those described in previous section as well as referrals to supportive services both internal (e.g., EI) and external to Meeting Street (e.g., specialty service providers and/or the child's local education agency (LEA)). All such efforts shall be documented in the child's records. Circumstances that may warrant exclusion from the program include, but are not limited to:

- Documented, ongoing patterns of self-harming behavior.
- A need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children; and/or
- A pattern of bullying or hurting children

Schedule and Hours:

Meeting Street Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Meeting Street will be closed for the following Holidays:

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day & the Day after Thanksgiving *(We close at 1:00 p.m. on the day before Thanksgiving)

Christmas Day *(We close at 1:00p.m. on Christmas Eve)

New Year's Eve & New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

President's Day

Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day
Victory Day

Professional Development – 4 days per fiscal year (once scheduled, these days will be noted on the center calendar distributed to all parents or communicated via Brightwheel).

If a holiday falls on the weekend, the preceding Friday or the following Monday will be observed. A list of exact dates that we are closed and have early dismissal will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Reminders will also be posted in Brightwheel.

Inclement Weather Closing/ Disruption of Utilities Closing:

In the event of inclement weather, Meeting Street will be closed. Closures will be announced on local radio stations WPRO-AM (630), WHJJ-AM (920), WSNE-FM (93.3), or announcements on television stations and websites of WPRI 12 or WJAR NBC 10 for this information. You will also receive a notification via our Brightwheel app. You may also call our main line at 401-533-9100 and listen for the dated message. In case of power outage, loss of water, or loss of heat, services cannot be provided. If the center closes mid-day for any reason, we will contact you or an authorized person to pick up your child.

Classroom Policies:

Child Supervision:

Staff/Child ratios are maintained in each classroom at all times. They are as follows:

Infant/Waddler 1:4 Class size 8
Toddler 1:6 Class size 12
Preschool 1:9 Class size 18

According to State regulations, during toileting/diaper changing times teachers will maintain sight and sound supervision for infants and toddlers. For preschool, sound supervision is permitted during toileting.

Volunteers in the classroom:

We occasionally have volunteers and/or interns in the classroom. All are required to attend the Meeting Street orientation and submit appropriate paperwork, including a criminal background check.

Use of Technology:

According to State regulations for children over 3 years old 30 minutes per week of computer/technology time is permitted. Teachers will plan developmentally appropriate computer activities that align with their curriculum.

What to wear: We understand that toddlers and preschoolers are developing their ability to have opinions and this can make getting dressed a challenge at times. This is a great time to begin giving them choices and encourage decision-making. Children should have clothes that they can manage by themselves and comfortable shoes which allow them to run and be active without

restrictions (**no sandals**). Simple play clothes will serve them best as we are very active and like to get messy from time to time. We ask that you please label all of your child's belongings coming with him/her to school to avoid any confusion.

For outdoor play in the winter and colder months, the children will need a jacket, a hat and mittens. Since each child has his/her own preferences for temperature and comfort, we recommend layers. During the warmer months, please provide the center with sunscreen for your child that is clearly labeled. We ask that you apply the sunscreen in the morning prior to entering the center and we will apply it in the afternoon. Lastly, if you would like to provide insect repellent it is to only be a DEET approved repellent and applied by you in the morning and we will apply in the afternoon.

Diapering and Toileting: Consistent with the guidelines and current recommendations of *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards*

Staff adheres to the diapering procedure listed below:

1. Gather supplies needed
2. Wear disposable gloves
3. Clean child's diaper area
4. Put on clean diaper and dress child
5. Dispose of soiled diaper in plastic lined, hands free container
6. Wash child's hands if contamination has occurred
7. Clean and disinfect diaper changing surface
8. Staff washes hands

We understand that "potty accidents" do happen. Families should make sure that there is always an extra set of clothes in their child's cubby for when these "potty accidents" happen. If your child does soil his/her clothing and we do not have a change of clothes we will call you to bring a change of clothes in.

If you find your child is experiencing a setback in toilet learning, please inform your child's teacher as well and use rubber pants or pull-ups for a short time. For sanitary purposes, we must avoid toilet "accidents" as much as possible.

Routine Schedule for

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Before and After Use:

Clean and Sanitize

Tables (two-step process: spray and clean off table, spray and let sit/dry, Highchair trays (before/after), Pacifiers (after/store in separate container), Changing Tables (after each changing, use gloves)

Daily:

Clean and Sanitize

Plastic mouthed toys (separate from area after mouthing), Cots (after use daily OR weekly if assigned to specific child)

Weekly:

Clean and Sanitize

Machine washable cloth toys, Dress-Up clothes, Play activity centers (this can be done daily if needed or preferred)

Cribs and mats

Monthly:

Clean and Sanitize

Refrigerator, Snack Room

Infant Policy: Due to safety regulations we do not allow anything in the cribs. We require as well that you provide a fitted sheet (Pack and play sheets work best). We do allow for a child to use a sleep sack for warmth. While we understand that when bringing young children into the building the use of a stroller makes it a smoother walk in, we cannot allow strollers to be left in the hallway or classroom. We do not have the storage space in the classrooms and the hallways must be kept clear in order to meet fire code regulations. If a car seat needs to be left at the center because someone different is picking up your child and will need it, please check with classroom staff to determine the best place to store it for the day.

Handling, Storage and Heating of Bottles

Adults and children's hands must be washed before and after preparing, serving and consuming food and/or bottles. The handling and storage of breast milk and formula must follow CDC standards. Bottles must be prepared and served as follows:

- Only BPA free plastic or glass bottles are used.
- All bottles or bags filled with breast milk are to be labeled with the child's full name, the date and the time the milk was expressed.
- Bottles are to be stored in the refrigerator immediately upon arrival and are maintained as follows at a temperature of at least 39 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Bottles should be heated according to the parent's request. Bottles are to be warmed in the bottle warmers only, never in a microwave, in water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than 5 minutes.

- Formula is mixed and served according to the manufacturer's instructions and must be received in factory-sealed containers.
- Prepared breast milk or formula is used immediately or stored in the refrigerator.
- Any unfinished or unrefrigerated formula or breast milk is discarded after one hour.
- Un-served prepared breast milk or formula is returned to the parent at the end of each day.

Nursing mothers who wish to breast-feed and/or pump at the Center shall be provided with access to a comfortable, private area to do so. Meeting Street has a designated Lactation Lounge space for such purposes.

Idling Vehicles

When parking your car in the parking lot you must turn your vehicle off completely. We do not allow cars to be left idling while you are picking up or dropping off your child due to safety concerns.

Birthdays: Let us share your joy by helping celebrate your child's birthday. Please see your child's classroom teacher to make arrangements. ***Due to food allergies we only allow popsicles.***

Week of the Young Child: The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration each April sponsored by the National Association of the Education of Young Children. The purpose of the week is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to support the early childhood programs that meet those needs. Meeting Street sponsors a week of fun-filled child friendly events.

School Pictures: Each year in the fall we have a photographer come to Meeting Street to take school pictures, individual or sibling pictures and class pictures. A notice is sent out as the dates are set.

Operational Policies:

Arriving to School: Meeting Street opens at **7:30 a.m.** We cannot accept children in the center before 7:30. When dropping your child/children off in the morning please make sure you are signing them in using your initials. ***We ask that all children arrive to school no later than 9:30 a.m. Arriving late disturbs your child's routine and makes it difficult for teaching staff to transition your child into the day. We do, however, understand that there may be a time your child will be late for school. It is essential that you call the center and speak with the manager at 401-533-9251 to let us know when this situation arises. If you have been approved by the manager to arrive at school later the 9:30, the cut off is then 10:30.***

Appointments: We recognize that sometimes appointments must be scheduled during center hours; we ask that you please try to schedule these appointments early in the morning or late in the day. This allows you to drop off your children later in the morning or pick them up early to minimize the disruption to their day, as well as the classroom. If a child leaves during the day for an appointment they are not allowed to return that day as it disrupts the routine of your child and the classroom. However, we understand that an emergency appointment may arise. If there is an emergency please speak to a supervisor about you're pick-up and drop-off time and they will try to accommodate if possible. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

End of the Day: Meeting Street closes at 5:00 p.m. We ask that parents arrive at the center by 4:45 to allow time for them to gather their child's belongings and check in with classroom staff to see how their child's day was. ***When picking up your child/children in the afternoon please make sure you are signing them out using your initials.*** Closing time is 5:00 p.m. promptly and you will be charged a late fee to provide payroll for staff needed to stay late. The first time a parent arrives late, after 5:00 p.m., they will be asked to sign the *Late Book* but no fee will be assessed. ***Each additional late pick up will result in a fee of \$25.00 and \$10 for each 5-minute interval or any portion of a 5-minute interval after 5:00 p.m. Please note that these fees are charged per child.***

When a parent has not arrived by 5:15 p.m., every attempt will be made by the teacher to contact the parents and/or the persons listed for emergency contact on the enrollment form. *If no contact has been made by 5:30 p.m. the police department will be notified.* Parents/guardians who are consistently late picking up their child will be dismissed from the program.

Release of Children: Please come into the classroom when dropping off and picking up your children each day. The Center must ensure that a child is released only to a parent or an adult designated by the parent. Written notification must be received prior to pick-up if the child must be released to someone other than the custodial or authorized persons on the pick-up list.

For the safety and security of your child, we do not accept phone call additions to the pick-up lists. Please be sure authorized pick-up persons bring a photo ID. The name and ID number of the person who picks up the child must be on the *Authorized Pick-Up List*. Parents are responsible for providing the center with any necessary custody and/or restraining orders relating to the child. The center will keep the documents in the child's file and make all staff aware of authorized pick-up lists and special restrictions.

Absences and Vacation: The Center tuition and fees are individually agreed upon depending on the type of program selected. Once the program is selected, tuition is due whether the child attends all of the scheduled days and regardless of holidays or closings due to inclement weather. Our costs do not vary with individual absences or illnesses; we cannot make individual adjustments in fees.

If your child will not be coming to school for any reason, please send a message via Brightwheel as early as possible so staff may plan activities for the appropriate number of children. **Tuition is due regardless of vacation or absence.**

Withdrawal from the Program: If you decide to withdraw your child from the program you are required to give the center a two weeks' notice or pay two weeks tuition.

Payment Policy: Application Fee: There is an annual \$50.00 application fee due prior to enrollment each August to process updated paperwork.

Supply Fee: There is a one- time \$30.00 per child supply fee that is due at the time of enrollment only.

Weekly Tuition: Tuition is due on each Friday for the following week of service. Monday is a grace day. A late fee of \$5.00 per day may be assessed for any overdue payments. ***Missing two weeks of payments will be grounds for your child's enrollment to be terminated.*** Payments must be made by credit card or special arrangements must be made with the billing office. A Credit Card Authorization Form will be given to you to be filled out and handed in prior to enrollment. Again, payments are due on Fridays for the following week. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Classroom Observations & Volunteers: In addition to the regular classroom staff and therapists, there are other adults that you will see in our classrooms. We regularly have students from colleges who are here observing or volunteering in the classrooms. They are completing a community service requirement for a class, doing a field placement, or just volunteering. From time to time, we also have consultants who are contracted by Meeting Street to provide specific types of support to classroom staff (i.e.: classroom design, behavioral interventions, and services for the visually impaired). All staff and volunteers will be wearing a badge while working.

Every volunteer completes a Meeting Street orientation conducted by our Human Resources Department. Volunteers are never left alone in the classroom and are never counted as part of the child/teacher ratios set by the State of RI.

Child Abuse Law: Rhode Island State Law requires the staff of Meeting Street to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families or a law enforcement agency. Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) a division of the Department of Children Youth and Families requires human service providers who suspect a child has been abused or neglected to contact the proper authorities as soon as they have any relevant information. Delaying the report to monitor the situation or to gather more information can result in more serious harm to the child. Confidential reports may be made by calling the 24-hour toll free Abuse Hotline at 1-800-742-4453. The reporter is not expected to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. All agency staff are considered Mandated Reporters.

Medical Records: Our medical forms must be completed before your child can participate in the program. Immunization forms, including lead screening must also be completed. Please provide, in writing, any updates of immunizations and physicals. Physicals must be done annually for your child to remain in the program.

Illnesses: Each day your child will be given a brief health check. A staff member will contact you if there are any concerns or symptoms of illness noticed. We do not have the staff or facilities to care for children who are too ill to take part in regular school activities. Therefore, a child is not allowed to attend school if she/he has any of the following:

- Temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea (2-3 uncontained)
- Vomiting
- Contagious condition within the last 24 hours.

Children may not return to school until they are free of fever, diarrhea or contagious condition for 24 hours.

Contagious Disease Policies

1. **Chicken Pox:** Students may not attend school as soon as the outbreak period is suspected (fever, rash) until 6 days after the onset of the rash or all lesions are crusted and dry.
2. **Conjunctivitis:** Also known as Pink eye, is a contagious infection of the eye. Students with yellow or white discharge will be sent home and must receive 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school. There is no exclusion from school for the clear watery type.
3. **Ear Infections:** Students who have ear infections must be free of pain or fever to attend school and must be able to resume a normal activity level. If ear drainage is present they must receive 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school.
4. **Impetigo:** This is a contagious infection of the skin. Its most common symptom is crusted sores, usually appearing first in the facial area. Children cannot return to school until they have had at least 24 hours of antibiotics and the lesions have dried.
5. **Strep Throat:** The common symptoms of strep throat are fever, sore throat, and sometimes a rash. Students must receive at least 24 hours of antibiotics, be free of fever, and must be able to resume normal activity to return to school.
6. **Children with fever, loose stools, or vomiting** will be evaluated by the school nurse on an individual basis. In the case of any illness, **the decision to send a student home will be made by the School Nurse or Head of School.**

Anytime your child becomes ill during the day, a staff member will call you. At times, you may be called to come pick your child up. Please understand we are looking out for the health of your child and the other children in the class. If you cannot be reached, we will use the emergency numbers you have given us.

Medications

In the event that your child requires medication during the course of the school day, a trained staff person (e.g., nurse, administrator or designee) is available to administer the required dose. All medications, including over the counter medications, must be delivered to the ELC by a responsible adult and must include a written physician's order. We will require your written authorization for each medication we will be providing. **You will need to administer the first dose of any newly prescribed medication.**

Incident Reporting: School can be a busy place and occasionally accidents do happen. In the event your child is hurt, staff is trained in CPR and First Aid. A staff member completes an incident report indicating the place and time of the accident/incident, the injury if any, and the first aid procedure implemented. You will be asked to sign the report to verify that you have been informed of the incident. The original copy of the report is kept in your child's record.

Emergencies: If your child becomes ill or has an accident at the center that is an emergency, you will be contacted at once and your child will be taken by ambulance to the emergency room at the Hasbro Children's Hospital. Our nurse will assess your child and provide as much information as possible to you and the paramedics. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital. Our nurse is on duty from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Should an emergency occur after 3pm our teaching staff will assess the situation and contact you immediately, and call 911 if necessary. All our staff are First Aid and CPR trained.

Allergies ***Meeting Street has Nut Free and Latex Free classrooms*** Please be sure to inform us if your child has any allergies. If a staff member discovers an allergy, the symptoms will be noted and recorded; and parents will be notified. The suspected causes will be eliminated from either the child's diet or environment. The staff in your child's class will be informed of the specific allergy. In the event that your child has a mild allergic reaction while our nurse is here, Benadryl will be administered as long as you have completed the permission form. If a signed form is not on record, a staff member will notify you.

If your child has a severe allergic reaction, our nurse or staff member will administer an Epi-pen, providing you have signed the permission form. If this occurs, 9-1-1 will be called and you will be notified. We keep Benadryl and an Epi-pen at the center for emergency allergic reactions.

Nutrition: We all want to give the children the healthiest diet possible. We also know that by starting young children on the path toward healthier eating habits, they will be more likely to continue those habits throughout their lives. Meeting Street will be providing your child with morning and afternoon snacks. You are responsible for supplying your child's lunch. We ask that the meals sent to school be packed with healthy foods to meet your child's nutritional requirements. There is no such thing as a typical school lunch. Offering a variety of foods is healthier and more interesting to your child. Variety also helps many children remain receptive to trying new foods as they get older. Please do not send any candy.

Refrigeration is available in most classrooms to store your child's lunch. We can also microwave your child's lunch if it is in a microwaveable container. It is helpful if you limit the number of heat-ups sent due to the amount of time it takes our staff to heat up numerous lunches. We will encourage your child to try all the foods you provide. If you have any questions, concerns, or special feeding instructions, please feel free to contact the Program Manager or your child's teacher.

***The following foods represent a significant choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age. Parents are asked to please not include these foods in their child's lunches.

- Hotdogs, whole or cut into rounds
- Whole grapes or other fruits of similar size and shape- please quarter them
- Popcorn
- Whole carrots
- Hard Pretzels
- Meat larger than could safely be swallowed

Evacuation Drills: Safety is one of our highest priorities and in order to be prepared, we conduct evacuation and safety drills multiple times a year. Evacuation locations are posted in each classroom. If you are in the building and the fire alarm sounds, please leave your child with a staff member and remove your vehicle from the front semi-circle immediately. When vehicles are left in the semi-circle, emergency vehicles cannot enter. If you are in the building during a lockdown drill you must remain in the building until the drill is complete. A lockdown would occur in the event that there was a threat to the safety of those in the building. The building is secured so that no one can come or go until it is deemed safe. During a lockdown drill classroom lights are turned off and children are moved away from doors and windows. A drill log is maintained and a copy is sent yearly to licensing agents.

Release of Information: As previously stated it is imperative we have on file any custody papers involving your child. In cases where there is joint custody, any information that is requested regarding your child by either party will be given to both parties. Please remember to provide any papers relating to your child's custody.

In cases where school departments or other educational institutions request information regarding your child we will ask for a written release form from a parent or guardian before filling the request.

Concerns and Complaints

Individuals who receive or have received services may, from time to time, have complaints concerning staff or services. It is the goal of Meeting Street to make every attempt to address such concerns/complaints and to resolve any such issues in a quick and equitable manner free of discrimination or recrimination. Clients of Meeting Street and/or their authorized representatives

have the right to discuss any concerns with staff and, if desired, have a conference with the involved staff person's supervisor. If the matter cannot be resolved through this process, a meeting may be requested with the program's director. If the concern/complaint cannot be resolved at this level, or pertains to the program director, a member of the agency's Executive Team, or a designee, shall mediate the process.

Thank you for choosing the Meeting Street Early Learning Center! We are so happy to have you join the Meeting Street Family 😊