## Welcome

Welcome to Cherry Hill Pre-School. We are very pleased that you have chosen our school for your child's early learning experience. This handbook will provide you with information about our school and its philosophy. We look forward to a happy and productive year. We hope you will feel free to discuss any accomplishments or concerns with us so we can ensure your child has a meaningful school experience.

*"You know your child is special and we know it too!"*

## Program Philosophy and Curriculum

Our program strives to be an extension of the warm and loving environment that your child has experienced at home. Our small class size and limited enrollment ensures that your child will receive the necessary attention and understanding to attain that degree of self-confidence and security for success in academic and social situations.

Cherry Hill Pre-School's students are offered creative learning experiences and an opportunity to develop at their own individual rate with a well-planned child oriented environment. The curriculum, based on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, allows children to learn by "doing" in various learning centers and activities designed to promote development in all areas of growth: cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. Each day is balanced with free play time and planned, structured activities in specific time blocks. Activities throughout the day are either child initiated or teacher directed. Children participate independently, with the entire group and cooperatively in small groups. This variety promotes independence, provides opportunities for children to practice and acquire social skills and fosters the development of a positive self-image.

## School-Home Communication

Communication between our pre-school and parents is an integral part of our approach to early childhood. Raising children who are capable, competent and content with themselves as they face their ever-changing world is a goal that we share with parents. If for any reason you have a concern about your child or the school, please contact the Director at any time.

At Cherry Hill we make every effort to inform parents about what is going on at pre-school. We will be sending home a monthly newsletter, reminder notices about upcoming events, and periodically some useful tips related to child rearing as well as activities to engage with your child at home. Please be sure to always check your child's lunchbox for any projects, important notices, etc. It is also very important that you check your email regularly because this is a great way to relay important information from the school. You would not want your child to miss out on anything special.

Please note that our website is updated each month as well as our Facebook page. Feel free to "friend request" **Cheryl Curcio.** My Facebook page is for the parents of the school. Please refrain from "friend requesting" any other staff member unless you are already friends with them outside of the school. My staff's Facebook page is for their friends and family that reflect their personal views.

## Personnel

Cheryl Lee Curcio, Cherry Hill Pre-School's director and head teacher, holds a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Cheryl joined the staff in March of 1983, after serving as head teacher in a daycare center. With the support of her husband Steve, she purchased Cherry Hill in June of 1986. Cherry Hill is her passion and hopes to continue for many more years!

The staff of Cherry Hill is committed to the welfare of children; believe wholeheartedly in our philosophy and curriculum, and most important, LOVE children!

Our staff participates in ongoing trainings in early childhood education. All staff has received CPR and first aid certification and meets all requirements to be licensed by the state.

## Registration Requirements

Upon entering our program, your child must be fully toilet trained and three years of age by the time they are ready to start school. You must also have all required forms including but not limited to; an application accompanied with the $75 non-refundable registration fee, parent authorization for emergency treatment, immunization records signed by your child's physician, and a personal history form. Your child must have evidence of a physical exam within the last 6 months and a lead screen test required by the state before beginning preschool.

## Program Offerings

Half-day preschool classes are offered Monday through Friday. We are licensed for a maximum of 18 children per class.

We begin our school year right after Labor Day with Children's Orientation and end our school year in mid-to-late June.

## Tuition and Fees

Your yearly tuition is divided among ten installments. All tuition payments are due and payable on the first school day of the month which can be the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th of the month. **Tuition payments must be paid by your child's 2nd school day of the month to avoid a $20 late fee. No exceptions.**

All checks should be made payable to **Cherry Hill Pre-School.** If for any reason your check is returned from the bank, you will be charged a $20.00 service fee that must be paid in cash as well as the amount of the check returned. Cash is readily accepted. We will issue you a receipt for any and all cash payments. All cash payments must be submitted in a sealed envelope with your child's name on the outside to be sure your account is credited properly. Tuition is to be paid regardless whether your child is in school or not. There will not be any make up days lost due to illness, holidays, inclement weather or vacation. The school depends on each month's tuition payment to pay current expenses.

In order to keep our tuition at a minimum, it is essential to institute a mandatory bi-yearly fee. In the months of October and March, you will receive an **Enrichment Fee envelope.** You are required to make the minimum donation requested by the end of those months. Our tuition costs cover staff payroll, materials, and supplies, some upkeep of the school, and necessary tests and inspections

required by the state. The Enrichment Fee will be used for special guests, parties, extra materials and other extras that enhance our school program. This is our only fund raiser.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Please make every attempt to be prompt when bringing your child to school. As soon as the children arrive, we have an activity waiting for them. Being late disrupts teaching and learning time. We would not want your child to miss out.

At dismissal time, again it is extremely important that you are on time. "A late parent makes an insecure child." Teachers also have other classes to prepare for and families to get home to.

The release of your child is a serious matter. **We will only release your child to those people you have listed on your child's application and emergency card.** It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school updated with any changes to this list. If someone different than the usual person is picking up your child on any given day, please be sure to inform the staff by either a note or a phone call. Please review our pick-up procedure with that person as well as informing them that they must present the staff with a picture ID. You also **must inform the school if you ask another parent of the class to pick up your child as well. We will not allow your child to go with anyone without being informed by you.**

The staff must be made aware of all custody cases involving children in our program. Copies of state documents must be given to the staff to place in your child's file including any no contact orders.

## Beginning School

Before school begins, each child and their parents will be invited to an orientation to meet their new teachers and classmates.

Saying good bye is a time when teachers work with parents to ease every child into their day. The teachers will be greeting your child on the walk every school day.

Through experience we have found that the quickest exit from the parent is the easiest on the child. Please give your child ample time to adjust. For every child the adjustment period is different. If your child is having a difficult time, you will be contacted to discuss an appropriate plan of action.

## Attendance and Absences

By registering your child at Cherry Hill, parents are committing themselves to the program for the entire school year. Show your child attendance is very important. If your child is withdrawn from our program, two weeks' notice is required prior to the date of withdrawal. If your child is going to be absent, it is the parent's responsibility to call the school (**231-3355)** each day he/she will be out. Please do not use e-mail or Facebook to report an absence.

## Health and Safety

No one knows your child better than you do. If your child isn't acting himself due to ailment then chances are he/she is not up to a day at school. As a guideline, if your child is running a fever, vomiting, had diarrhea, a cold with a lot of nasal discharge and cough, then keep him/her home. Not only will you be doing your child a favor, but they won't be infecting everyone else either. Also, if he/she has pink eye, chicken pox, measles, strep throat, head lice or any other communicable disease, he/she needs to stay home and a phone call to the school is needed so we may make families aware. **(Please refer to our Covid guidelines as well, which is included in this handbook)**

If they are put on antibiotics for an illness, please keep them home a good 24-48 hours before returning to school.

Since your child is with us for such a short period of time we discourage dispensing any medication. However, exceptions will be made if absolutely necessary. In such a case, a permission slip (obtained at the school) signed by the pediatrician and parent, with instructions must be submitted with the medication in the original container.

We will make every attempt to contact a parent in case of an emergency. If necessary, we will call emergency services and or your child's pediatrician. Until the arrival of a parent, the director will be in charge. Please keep the school up to date with emergency phone numbers and other pertinent information.

Please be aware that the preschool is mandated by the Child Protection Law to report to DCYF (Dept of Children Youth & Families) any suspected case of child physical, emotional or sexual abuse and child neglect.

## Emergency Closings

On a day that is necessary to cancel classes I will e-mail all families, change my school phone message to the current status of the day and post it on our Facebook page by 7:00am. Cherry Hill Pre-School is not affiliated with the Johnston Public School's pre-k or kindergarten announcements however, if all of Johnston Public Schools close due to inclement weather most likely Cherry Hill will be closed as well. Be sure to check your e-mail, call the school or go on my Facebook page for the necessary information.

## Clothing

For the safety and comfort of your child we encourage washable play clothes and sturdy shoes. For the safety of your child, **CROCS are not permitted** in school. Please keep in mind your child will be participating in some messy projects. When dressing your child for school be sure they can independently handle their clothing. They need to be able to attend to their bathroom needs. We do play outside when the weather permits, so please keep that in mind when selecting your child's outfit for the day. In the cold weather it is best to layer your child's clothing making sure that their outerwear is clearly labeled with their name. Since we do not go outside in the winter there is no need for snow pants. We do not allow snow boots or rainboots to be worn in our classroom. You will be dropping your child off right in front of the school on the clean walk so there is no need to wear

those kinds of boots. We discourage belts, suspenders, stiff buttons, and one-piece clothing that make it very difficult for your child to be independent when using the bathroom. If your child is wearing tie shoes to school, please be sure to double knot their laces.

## Toys from Home and Jewelry

We ask that your child leave his/her toys at home. If he/she has a security toy that they have difficulty separating from, encourage your child to leave it in the car to keep the toy safe. We discourage most jewelry and do not permit watches or bracelets at school. Small pierced earrings, as well as medical bracelets are acceptable.

## Snacks

Cherry Hill Pre-School considers good eating habits to be an integral part of our program. Each child needs to be provided with a healthy, nutritious snack and drink in a lunchbox each school day. Please keep in mind that this is only a snack and should be something your child can manage independently such as a pre-packaged snack in a zip lock bag. Napkins will be provided by the school if necessary. Snacks are preferred to be in a plastic baggie or a small container your child can easily open rather than a **Bento Box.** Please provide necessary utensils if needed. **Ice packs are not necessary.**

If we enroll a child(ren) with nut allergies we will be a "Nut Free" class. If your class is "Nut Free" we will not allow nuts of any kind and any snack containing nuts and/or peanut butter. We also caution sending any kind of snack that may easily cause choking, therefore please take this into consideration when choosing and preparing your child's snack. Please refrain from sending dips with their snacks. We often find most children find it difficult to eat it independently and make a mess.

Below are some ideas for healthy snacks and drinks:

*Fresh fruit, small containers of fruit packed in light syrup or its own juice, applesauce, raisins, Craisins, etc. Please be sure when packing fresh fruit, it is prepared so your child can easily eat it. Please peel any fruit such as oranges, clementines, etc…

*Fresh vegetables again prepared so your child can easily eat them.

*Dairy products such various cheeses and yogurt.

*Muffins (chocolate and party cake flavored are not acceptable), bagels, crackers, pretzels, fruit bars, granola bars, various breads, Cheerios, and animal crackers are some other healthy options as well.

* Acceptable beverages may include water, 100% fruit juices, low-fat milk, and yogurt smoothies.

## Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays by giving the birthday child a crown. We sing "Happy Birthday" to them and invite them to be the leader for the day. We will make it a special day for your child. If your child's

birthday is not during school we will celebrate on the closest day. Summer birthdays will be celebrated the last week of school in June. We discourage any and all birthday food treats at school. If you are having a birthday party for your child and intend on inviting your child's classmates you must do it outside of the school. We will not distribute any invitations in school. Please do not rely on the school for addresses. Please refrain from discussing the party with your child so as not to cause hurt feelings with the other students. Gifts may not be distributed at school.

## Progress Reports

Assessment and documenting progress are a continued process throughout the school year. We encourage any parent input that you may have about your child. We issue progress reports in January and May. We also issue a mini-progress report in November for our pre-k students. We are always available any time during the year to conference as the need arises.

## Behavior Management Plan

The staff of Cherry Hill Pre-School is trained to use the following philosophies in managing children's behavior.

First and foremost: Remember that some behaviors exhibited by young children may be a typical stage of development and learning. Our objectives as teachers are to minimize the behaviors by teaching what is acceptable and what is not, explaining rules and reinforcing positive behavior. Redirecting a child's behavior to help avoid a future situation may be necessary.

If there is a problem situation with 2 or more children involved, we will find out what caused the situation and talk to all the children involved. We will make certain each child is treated fairly. At Cherry Hill there are times that a child may need to "take a break". This happens when a child continually exhibits unacceptable behavior and has difficulty controlling the behavior. The teacher invites the child over to sit next to her to calm the child and speak with them about the behavior. They are usually calm and ready to interact with others within a few minutes.

We communicate with parents regularly regarding children's behavior, positive or negative and conference with parents if there is a serious problem with a child's behavior to come up with a workable solution.

## Rules of Conduct

At Cherry Hill Pre-School we expect our students to exhibit respect and respond appropriately to authority when confronted. We expect them to assume responsibility for their behavior, attitudes and speech as well as respect the rights of others, in and out of the classroom. Our students should demonstrate proper respect for school facilities and property, use kind language in and out of the classroom and be honest in all situations.

## Termination of Enrollment

Termination of a student's enrollment may become necessary under the following circumstances:

1. If a child's behavior poses a threat to other classmates or staff after repeated attempts to resolve the problem such as parent conferencing, behavior modification and or other available help and resources.
2. A child is not emotionally ready to separate from parents.
3. Tuition payments are overdue and no attempt is made to bring these up to date. If tuition payments are caught up after termination of enrollment, the student may return to school providing that space is still available.
4. A parent or guardian is perceived as threatening or abusive toward a child, staff member or other parent or guardian, then this matter will be brought to the attention of the director. If a resolution cannot be reached, termination of that family will occur.

## Parking

Please be considerate of our neighbors and businesses by not parking in their lot or blocking their driveways if you need to park and come into the school. Parking is available up and down the street along the curb and on the side street. No one should block or park in our driveway, as well.

## Donations

Cherry Hill Pre-School appreciates any and all donations. Throughout the years parents have been very generous. Whether your donation is paper goods, food, supplies, a helping hand, etc. It is graciously accepted. We sincerely thank you for your support.

## Holiday and Vacation Closings

Cherry Hill Pre-School observes the following school closings. A schedule of the exact closing dates will be handed out in the beginning of the school year as well as posted on the bulletin board and stated in the monthly newsletter. Please mark your calendars.

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| **September** | **Labor Day (usually we open after this holiday)** |
| **October** | **Columbus Day (celebrated on a Monday)** |
| **November** | **Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Friday** |
| **December** | **winter holiday vacation (this includes Christmas & New Year's)** |
| **January** | **Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday (celebrated on a Monday)** |
| **February** | **President's Day (celebrated on a Monday)** |
| **March or April** | **Good Friday (if not within the spring vacation)** |
| **April** | **spring vacation (one week)** |
| **May** | **Memorial Day (celebrated on a Monday)** |
| **June** | **Juneteenth (celebrated on June 19)** |

**Cherry Hill Pre-School is non-discriminatory.** Equal attention and care will be given to your child without regard to race, creed, religion, sex or national origin. We do not discriminate against children with special needs providing the needs are within a reasonable limit and do not pose a financial hardship to the preschool. In cases of severe disabilities, we are limited to the services that we are able to provide.