



School Guidelines

2026-2027

Please retain for your records

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Colorado Department of
Health and Human
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INTRODUCTION

Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School families are part of an important team. We have prepared these guidelines to provide the school community with information covering some aspects of their school experience and to answer many of the questions families might have about this experience. These guidelines are presented as a matter of information only. They neither describe all circumstances and situations in which Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School Cooperative Members might find themselves, nor can they or do they describe all policies and procedures that might affect the contractual relationship. If at any time any Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School Cooperative Member has any questions or concerns about these guidelines or any other aspect of their obligations, contractual responsibilities or any other matter, the Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School Cooperative Member is responsible for contacting a staff or Board of Governors member, as appropriate, for clarification.

These guidelines supersede all prior Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School Cooperative policies and procedures and all other statements or commitments, oral or written, concerning the terms and conditions of your contractual agreement. Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School reserves the right to change, replace, withdraw, or deviate from any or all of the following guidelines without prior notice. Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School's Board of Governors and the Executive Director are jointly responsible for the interpretation of the school's guidelines.

Mission and Philosophy

Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School (RWCNS) is a non-profit preschool dedicated to educating and nurturing children in an enriching play-based environment and engaging families in a supportive community.

Core Values

At RWCNS we value:

- The nursery school years as unique and important;
- A "whole child" approach to early childhood education wherein emotional, physical, social, and cognitive needs are equally significant;
- Equitable learning opportunities that are tailored to each child's needs;
- An inclusive school environment that embraces diversity;
- Child-directed learning that happens organically in enriched environments;
- Our role as leaders in early childhood education; and
- Families and their contributions to classrooms and the school community.

We embody these values by:

- Trusting the nursery school model, knowing that developmentally-appropriate play is the best preparation for future schooling;
- Encouraging children to choose and direct their own work by providing engaging materials, open-ended opportunities, outdoor exploration, and interactions with peers;
- Attending to emotional, physical, social, and cognitive needs with equal care and attention;
- Modeling caring interactions that teach children to identify and meet their own needs;
- Hosting professional development and sharing best practices with the early education community;
- Embracing the cooperative community model to provide the richest, most caring environment possible

- for children and their families; and
- Providing ongoing opportunities for family education and support.

Why are we called Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School?

- Ruth Washburn: Dr. Washburn was an acclaimed child psychologist and the aunt of our school's founder.
- Cooperative: Including families as part of the school benefits everyone.
- Nursery: We honor the child's stage at this moment in time.
- School: Incredible learning takes place every day through play.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

Miriam "Minnow" McPhee Howbert founded Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School in 1961. Until her retirement in 1977, Minnow served as Director for 16 years and remained actively involved until her death in 1989. The school is named for nationally known child psychologist Dr. Ruth Washburn, Minnow's aunt, because of her support during the school's formative years. Her psychological understanding of each child and belief in each child as a valuable person was an inspiration to early childhood educators throughout the country. The school began in 1961 with seven families in the Jerry Jones residence. In 1973, school families located the property and house to where the school is currently. The major task of remodeling the building and landscaping the outdoor area was accomplished through families in their volunteer time. A design by two Colorado College art students, along with the work of family crews, created the exciting, spacious natural environment that is now our playground. In 1990, contributions in Minnow's memory made possible extensive renovation of the building, including the addition of Minnow's Room. A garden project, spearheaded by a school family and through funding from a grant, further enhanced the outdoor curriculum and created the garden area in which children plant, cultivate, and harvest food each year. After many years of strategic planning and through fundraising and grants from generous donors, the school undertook an expansion project which was completed in 2004. The expansion added an additional classroom, offices, a better entrance and more parking, in addition to remodeling existing rooms.

Throughout the history of the school, families have consistently supported the Cooperative in improving and expanding the program to its present dimensions. Our group of families and staff form a community centered around and dedicated to our children's development and happiness.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School offers a complete program for the young child. For children aged two-and-a-half through five years, the school offers various classes, both mornings and afternoons. A typical three-hour preschool day involves a broad opportunity for the child's stimulation and development. The classroom environment provides a variety of activities for experimenting, discovery and creative expression. Daily activities may include:

- **Circle Time** – a special sharing time as a group
- **Interest Center Time** – a time for choosing different centers such as blocks, art, manipulatives and/or puzzles, dramatic play, music, science, books/reading, writing and woodworking
- **Outdoor Play** – a daily time for outside exploration and gross motor development
- **Snack Time** – an important part of the preschool curriculum. It is a time for refueling, learning about proper nutrition and establishing lifelong healthy eating habits. Children sit together family style and

are encouraged to socialize and enjoy a healthy snack. This is a valuable opportunity for conversation and language development.

- **Field trips** are planned throughout the year for our older classes to expand the classroom activities.

*Computer usage and television viewing, including videos, are not a part of the regular curriculum at Ruth Washburn.

FAMILY CULTURE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Families at our school are very diverse and include:

- single parents
- grandparents raising grandchildren
- foster families
- adoptive families
- families co-parenting through separation or divorce
- black, indigenous, and people of color
- stepparents
- mom and dad families
- 2 mom families
- 2 dad families
- parenting partners
- all gender expression

Families are as diverse as individuals and ALL are welcome at Ruth Washburn regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression and ethnic or cultural background. We value diversity and acknowledge that diversity may include children with special needs or different behavior styles, and from families with different parenting styles. Children with special needs are welcome at Ruth Washburn if it is determined that we can reasonably meet their needs. We value students' home languages and cultures. We understand that the language of the home is a fundamental learning tool for all students and we support and encourage native language use at home. Further, we value participation by families in their child's school. **Translation and Interpreter Services:** If requested or needed, Ruth Washburn will seek the services of a qualified interpreter in a family's home language from ASI Language Services and Consulting LLC, a local organization who is able to provide us with translation services for documents and interpretive services as needed.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

In order to keep our school at full enrollment and for the continuity of the school community the following guidelines have been adopted:

1. Current Families will be invited to enroll in the next progressive track each year after communicating their class choice; paying the Registration fee upon completing the registration documents; AND the tuition deposit by May 01; and indicating they agree to the terms of the Membership Agreement Contract.
2. After Current Families have been offered positions, the first family on the Waitlist will be notified of open positions and be given two business days to accept a position and begin the registration process.
3. Any vacancies remaining will be filled by prospective children from the Waitlist until the Waitlist is exhausted.
4. Following the Waitlist, children will be enrolled on a first-come, first served basis.
5. Open enrollment period begins late January.
6. All enrollment decisions must adhere to the enrollment guidelines. These guidelines are meant to provide consistent policies and procedures for enrollment. The Board reserves the right to make exceptions to these guidelines on a case-by-case basis or delegate the decision to appropriate staff.

WAITLIST GUIDELINES

When placed on the waitlist we encourage families to tour the school and consider the commitment required to have your child in the school. We aim to be fair, transparent, and embracing to those families who are waiting for the opportunity to participate in the RWCNS experience.

1. Our waitlist functions to fill class openings during our enrollment process. Our goal for the waitlist procedure is to place your child in an age-appropriate class in a consistent and equitable process.
2. We use a system where points are awarded to waitlisted children based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
Length of time on the List	1 point/month
Siblings of RWCNS children	18
Children of former RWCNS children	6
Children of RWCNS staff who have completed at least one contract year	6
Children who have attended the Wee Explorers program or utilized Afternoon Explorers for at least 4 calendar months	5

3. These points are cumulative. Your child may earn points for all criteria that meet your situation. The more points your situation warrants, the higher your child's position is on the list.
4. Each child's relative position on the list may move up or down due to the scoring of other children on the list at any given time.
5. A child cannot be added to the Waitlist until after birth.
6. To place your child on the Waitlist, you must sign up on the list with RWCNS via our website. It is required that you also take a guided tour of the school to determine the appropriateness for your family/child, meet the staff, and have an opportunity to ask questions before you enroll.
7. Should your contact information change, it is your responsibility to inform RWCNS as soon as possible so we can update your records. If we cannot reach you during enrollment, we will move to the next family on the Waitlist.
8. Should you no longer wish to have your child on the Waitlist, we ask that you contact RWCNS as soon as possible.
9. In special circumstances when the need to accommodate the particular needs of an individual child or the school arises, RWCNS reserves the right to change the position of individual prospective children on the list at any time.

ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES

Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School seeks to enroll classes for the best available child mix to provide the most ideal educational situation for all children. Toward that goal, we enlist the following enrollment guidelines:

1. Birth date of prospective child to place the child within the appropriate class track.
2. Attempt to maintain a balance of gender in each class.
3. Other enrollment factors may include: current vacancies, appropriate fit for prospective children and the current class.
4. Class Track Progression (children matriculate or move down the indicated track column each progressive year):

Age	<u>Birthday:</u> Fall/Winter (Sunflower Track)	<u>Birthday:</u> Spring/Summer (Bird Track)	<u>Birthday:</u> By September 1 (Mixed Age Bugs)
2	Seeds (Must be at least 2 years 6 months on the day school begins)		
3	Sprouts	Hummingbirds	Mixed Age- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 day honeybees (3-5 year olds) • Outdoor Crickets (4-5 year olds) • Hoppers (4 year olds) • Roly-Polies (3 year olds)
4	Sunflowers	Chickadees	
5		Owls	

5. Once assigned to a class, a child will remain with his or her class at RWCNS as long as he/she is a child at RWCNS, unless changed according to the change policy.
6. Enrollment actions will be documented by staff for tracking and/or auditing purposes by the Executive Director or Board of Governors.
7. Enrollment in classes will never exceed best practice guidelines for adult to child ratio set forth by the NAEYC.

CHANGE POLICY

In rare circumstances families may find a need to request a change in class track during open enrollment in February. Our class placements are made in a very specific way. Families staying in their track (i.e. Sprouts going to Sunflowers) will be placed first. Mixed Age Class Families moving into a track will be placed second (i.e. Roly-Polies going to Chickadees). Families wanting to move to a different class/track will be placed next (i.e. Sprouts to Owls). Families outside the cooperative will be placed fourth (based on class availability, waitlist points and age of child). The Crickets class and Honeybees class may have a waitlist and may require a lottery system for placement. For Crickets, the families who attend the information session will be included in the first lottery. If there are spaces available after that, interested families already enrolled at Ruth Washburn will be placed in the second chance lottery. Next, a general email will go out to all enrolled families for next year to offer a spot in that class and lastly, it will go out to the general waitlist. For the Honeybees, families currently enrolled in Honeybees will retain their space. Next, current students can move from their current track into Honeybees if there is space for their gender/age. If there is still space, a younger sibling of a student continuing enrollment in Honeybees may enroll. Sibling pairs wishing to be in the class together can be placed if there are spaces for each age/gender. If there are spaces available after that, interested families already enrolled at Ruth Washburn may be placed. Next, a general email will go out to all enrolled families for next year to offer a spot in that class and lastly, it will go out to the general waitlist. There is the possibility that there will have to be a lottery at ANY of the steps. The lottery will be handled by notifying families, utilizing an online randomized lottery system and creating a waitlist based on the outcome.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

The RWCNS Board of Governors has adopted these guidelines concerning families when on the rare occasion a child or family's enrollment is terminated. The Board, in consultation with the Executive Director, reserves the right to enforce the financial terms of the enrollment contract if it finds good cause to do so.

BEHAVIOR

In severe cases of inappropriate/illegal behavior by the child or family member, the following steps are taken:

1. A consultation will be held among the Executive and Education Directors, guardians, teacher or teachers and other professionals as deemed necessary.
2. A plan will be implemented to try to problem solve the situation. This includes consultations with outside resources (i.e. therapists, behavior support personnel, etc.), a written plan to be implemented in the classroom, referrals to outside services and extra classroom support.
3. If reasonable efforts have been made and the situation has not improved, the child may be dismissed by joint action of the Executive Director and the Board as stated in the Membership Agreement. The guardians will not be responsible for tuition beyond the last day of the month during which the dismissal occurred.
4. In the case of inappropriate or illegal behavior by a family member, the Board of Governors along with the Executive Director may exclude offending family member(s) from the program but allow the child to continue.

MOVING FROM PIKES PEAK REGION

1. In the case of guardians moving out of the Pikes Peak region, they will be responsible for tuition through the last day of the month that their child attends School, provided that the guardians have given the School notice of the move at least thirty (30) days prior to the child's last day of School.
2. In all cases, the non-refundable tuition deposit and the enrollment fee will not be refunded or credited against the amounts due in connection with a move.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT/SCHOOL POLICIES (WHETHER TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT)

Fulfilling all of your responsibilities is what enables our school to embrace our cooperative model and everyone's participation is both needed and valued.

1. Failure of guardians to comply with Membership Agreement/Policies including Maintenance Days, Family Helping days, committee work, and fundraising obligations may result in dismissal from the program.
2. In all cases, the non-refundable tuition deposit and the registration fee will not be refunded or credited against the amounts due.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

1. If a family was to find itself in financial hardship and be unable to continue at the school, the Board may release the family from its full year's contractual tuition obligation upon the completion of the Financial Hardship Process outlined below:
 - a. Submit a letter or email to the Executive Director initiating the Financial Hardship process.
 - b. The Executive Director must approve a payment agreement for any outstanding balances and future accrued balances. This agreement may include suspending payments until the Financial Hardship process is completed.
 - c. A complete Financial Aid package is to be submitted to the Executive Director.
 - d. A review of the family's circumstances and availability of Hardship Funds by the Board.

- e. Recommendation from the Executive Director to the Board to release the family from all or a portion of the family's contractual obligations.
2. During this review process, tuition and fees continue to accrue.

EXPLORERS - EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

The Explorers program provides childcare primarily for the children enrolled in the school ages three through six years of age. Sign up is available for blocks of time at a set rate. This allows us to meet the needs of families while ensuring smooth staffing and transition time for children. Children from non-Co-op member families may also utilize the program as space permits. The Explorers program is an extension of the preschool program in philosophy and in activities. The Explorers' day typically consists of:

- **Outdoor Play** offered 3x daily
- **Lunch** brought from home. **Snack** is provided for Afternoon Explorers.
- **Rest** or nap
- **Circle Time**
- **Open Exploration**

EXPLORERS FEES

The Explorers fees are set per 2 hour blocks: 11-1, 1-3, 3-5 at \$25 per block. Communication will go out before the school year begins. Explorers Sign-Ups must be completed by the 25th of the month prior to your desired start date via our online signup system. Each month thereafter, monthly charges will be added to your account. You will be billed in advance on the first of each month. If you need to make changes to your child's schedule, you must do so by the 25th of the month for the following month or you will automatically be billed (i.e. if you need to make changes to March's schedule, you must do so by February 25th). **Reminder:** Refunds will not be given for missed days – **you are responsible for payment for your child's scheduled time in Explorers including illness-related absences or school-wide snow days.** You will not be billed for pre-scheduled school closures. Sign up for this program will go out in the summer to begin in September.

We also offer Drop-In care which you may sign up for by emailing, calling, or in-person request. The drop-in rate is slightly higher at \$35 per block.

LUNCHES/SNACKS FOR EXPLORERS

Families are required to send their child with a lunch if they will be in Afternoon Explorers during meal time. Lunches sent for the Afternoon Explorers program should be sent in non-breakable containers with each item, including the containers, and bag clearly labeled with the child's name. Children need a well-balanced meal containing a variety of foods. The School has a responsibility to ensure that each child brings a balanced nutritious lunch. The following guidelines are suggested:

- Meat or other Protein Foods – 2 to 4 tablespoons daily of lean beef, pork, fish, chicken, egg, seeds, or beans.
- Vegetables and Fruits – a total of 3 servings daily (a serving equals 2 to 4 tablespoons cooked, 2 to 4 tablespoons raw)

- Breads and Cereals – 2 to 3 servings daily of whole grain bread, rice, macaroni, noodles or cereals. One third of the daily allowance of each food group should be included in the lunches brought to the Afternoon Explorers Program.

Candy, Soda, or other sugary snacks will be put back in the child’s backpack to enjoy at home.

FINANCIALS

TUITION AND FEES

The Board of Governors sets the Tuition and Fee rates each year. Tuition is based on several factors such as: anticipated operating costs, competitor rates, the previous year’s tuition collected, estimated vacancy rate, etc.

Guardians are responsible for the payment of tuition for the entire year. An early withdrawal fee of \$500 will be applied to families who withdraw mid-year, outside of the contractual agreement. The filling of a vacancy created by a child’s enrollment termination has no bearing on the obligation to pay the remainder of the year’s tuition. No tuition refunds will be given. All fees are non-refundable. Fees are assessed to help offset the costs associated with providing specific services, such as registration and school materials. For any program changes after invoicing, a \$35 administrative fee will be charged.

FINANCIAL AID POLICY

The Financial Aid program enables any child of any background to attend the school who might otherwise be unable to attend because of financial limitations. Financial need is the primary criteria for the selection of financial aid recipients. Other considerations may be used in allocating funds among those families with demonstrable financial need. Some of these considerations include:

- a) *School families:* As a cooperative nursery school, we are serving families with young children. We want all children in a family to have an equal opportunity to attend our school if the family has limited resources.
 - b) *BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and LBGTQ+ families:* Our board has a goal to provide equitable learning opportunities to our diverse Colorado Springs community. As BIPOC and LBGTQ+ families have been historically underrepresented in private preschool programs, our board has identified increasing enrollment as a priority.
 - c) *Children with special needs:* The enrollment of children with special needs, within our ability to provide for their needs, is a valuable goal for our school.
2. The Executive Director will review all applications for aid and along with the Board’s Finance committee, determine the amount of aid to be granted. The Executive Director will notify families of final decisions via email within approximately one month of the application deadline. The review process will be confidential and anonymous.
 3. In order to offer financial aid to as many families as possible, Financial Aid awards generally range up to a maximum of 50% of tuition costs, however the Executive Director and Finance Committee reserve the power to award an amount that is higher than 50% if deemed appropriate. Every financial aid family is required to pay the balance of tuition for their child/children.
 4. Financial aid awards are confidential and carry no special requirements other than those shared by the general membership. The award will not be reduced or withdrawn during the school year unless the child is withdrawn or expelled from school with the following exceptions: Willful neglect of the member’s Co-op

responsibilities could be the basis for reduction or rejection of a financial aid award in the current or subsequent years. Awards may be subject to reduction or be withdrawn should a child attend less than 80% of scheduled school days.

Tuition & Fees 2026-2027



- Each family pays a yearly \$100 non-refundable registration fee.
- Please note, the fees listed below reflect a 3% discount for paying the full annual amount up front.
- Prices are based on paying via your bank account. Paying by credit card adds an additional 2-3% to all fees (under Colorado statute). Paying by check is also an option.
- We are participating in Colorado's Universal Preschool Program (UPK) which will pay for at least 360 hours of preschool at Ruth Washburn. This is for children in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten. Families must register in the UPK portal.
- Financial Aid is available. Please reach out for a Financial Aid Packet if your child is ineligible for UPK.

CLASS	YEARLY TUITION TOTAL	NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT DUE MAY 1	INTERVAL OPTIONS	AMOUNT DUE
Seeds: Thu & Fri 8:30 am - 11:30 am Hummingbirds: Thu & Fri 8:00 am - 11:00 am Roly-Polies: Thu & Fri 8:15 am - 11:15am	\$3596	\$500	Annual (Aug 1)	\$3096
			Monthly (Aug-March)	\$399
Sprouts: Mon, Tues, & Wed 8:15 am - 11:15 am	\$4915	\$500	Annual (Aug 1)	\$4415
			Monthly (Aug-March)	\$569
Chickadees: Mon, Tues, & Wed 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Crickets: Mon, Tues, & Wed 8:30 am - 12:30 pm Owls: Mon, Tues, Wed, & Thu 12:30 pm - 3:45 pm Hoppers: Mon, Tues, Wed, & Thu 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm Sunflowers: Mon, Tues, Wed, & Thu 12:45 pm - 3:45 pm	\$5549	\$500	Annual (Aug 1)	\$5049
			Monthly (Aug-March)	\$649
Honeybees: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, & Fri 8:00 am - 11:30 am	\$8544 \$3839 w/UPK	\$500	Annual (Aug 1)	\$8044
			Annual UPK	\$3339
			Monthly (Aug-March)	\$1035
			Monthly UPK	\$429

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

In the event that an account becomes past due, the following procedures will be followed:

Day 1	Send invoice via email.
Day 15 (and every 15 days after)	Resend invoice via email.
Day 60	Letter from Executive Director and/or Business Manager. Meet with Executive Director and create written plan for making payments.
Day 90 (and every 30 days after)	Check in to make sure written plan is being followed. Change plan as necessary. If progress is not made, Executive Director sends letter. Explorers cannot be utilized at this time and family cannot enroll for following year.
30 days (after acct. letter)	If no plan in place or no progress made, letter to inform them that account will be sent to collections and enrollment terminated.
30 days after final letter	Terminate enrollment and send account to collections or small claims court.

FUNDRAISING

Tuition and fees help offset the costs of operating Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School, however each year we rely on the generosity and support of our Cooperative families, alumni, and friends to provide a significant stream of revenue for our school.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our federal tax identification number is 84-0561864. Charitable contributions beyond the value of products, services, or other items of value provided by the School to the donor are fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT & AUCTION

The Auction Event is an annual fundraiser for RWCNS. Families are responsible for the following:

EVERY family in the School is required to do the following:

- Provide either an Auction Item or a monetary donation.
 - Auction Item: An item or collection of items that will be offered for bidding in the silent or live auction, valued at \$100 or more. This item can be obtained from local businesses.
 - Monetary Donation: A personal or business contribution of \$100 donated to the School.
- Provide an item towards the class basket. More information about this is available at the family potluck and is managed by the class coordinator. This item usually runs about \$20 or less.

FAMILIES

It is the cooperation between teachers and families that gives the School its unique character and strength in guiding the growth of our children. The School is organized as a cooperative in the belief that its educational aims can best be accomplished with the active presence of families within the school. Families assist in the classroom and take responsibility for the maintenance, governance, and financial well-being of the School, while the School, in turn, provides opportunities for family education and support. The School encourages each family to contribute its own personal skills and talents. This blending of school and family life eases the child's transition to the world beyond the family and creates a cooperative community dedicated to providing the richest, most caring environment possible for children.

These opportunities are organized into a basic framework, and accomplishment of the activities described below will fulfill all expectations of family involvement:

- **Family Helping in the Classroom**
- **Serving on a School Committee**
- **Attending Family Meetings/Family Education Opportunities**
- **Attending one Maintenance Day per school year**
- **Supporting our fundraisers**

FAMILY EDUCATION

Families are the principal facilitators of a child's development in the earliest years. To encourage families in positive parenting skills and to provide additional support, family education is a valued part of the School. Workshops and discussion groups are held on topics of particular interest to families of preschool children. Families are encouraged to check out books from the family resource lending library maintained at the school. Any suggestions for topics or speakers are welcome, as are donations to the lending library.

RESPONSIBILITIES

FAMILY HELPING IN THE CLASSROOM

One family helper assists in each class each day, more than one is welcome. The advantage of a family helper is increasing the adult-to-child ratio in the class. Family helping also provides a unique opportunity for families to observe their child, get to know their child's classmates, and to enrich the school day with personal contribution. Each family is required to help once every three to five weeks depending on the size and meeting frequency of the class. Families with more than one child enrolled must complete this requirement for each child.

A schedule is set up by the Class Coordinator in each class. Helping in the class is scheduled on a rotating basis. **If you cannot work on your scheduled day, it is your responsibility to find a replacement.** The procedure is to call or text families in your child's class to find help. If no one can help or trade days with you, notify the school. If no one can trade with you, the extra snack will be used, and it is your responsibility to replenish it.

Families with newborns are given a month-from-delivery exemption from family helping. However, to prevent overburdening of the other families in the class, families with newborns are responsible for working the same

number of family helping days during the school year as the other families in their class. Your newborn is welcome in the classroom with the expectation that the baby will be “worn”.

Siblings (with the exception of non-mobile nursing infants) should not accompany family helpers. This is a day to focus on the enrolled child in his or her classroom experience. **Additionally, the classroom is not organized for additional children or safe for younger children, or permitted by licensing regulations.**

- **Early arrival:** (10 minutes before class starts) – enables family helpers and teacher to discuss the day’s planned activities.
- **Snack:** The family helper brings a nutritious, non-sugary snack. The child of the family helper benefits from the experience of sharing with classmates, and children get special attention and time with their family helper. The class benefits from the greater variety of snacks presented from day to day. Because of increasing concern about harmful effects of pesticides, we recommend organic fruits and vegetables. Please be aware of the choking hazards posed by certain foods such as whole grapes and popcorn. Each age group has specific requirements about this put forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Specifics will go out during the class potluck. **Check your class’s allergy list before preparing any snack.** Snack guidelines are available in your home visit folder and at the potluck.
 - **Birthdays** – Our snack policy still applies. If you’d like to do something special, some suggestions are: carrot cake without frosting; frozen yogurt; trail mix in colorful cups or muffin liners; sliced fruit in plastic parfait cups; yogurt sundaes topped with granola, fruit; muffins sweetened with apple juice; banana, carrot, pumpkin or zucchini bread. So much of the enjoyment of food is in the presentation of it. Using real parfait or dessert dishes and cloth napkins can completely change the impact and appeal of the snack.
 - **Colorado Department of Health regulations** require snacks furnished by families to consist of only “non-potentially hazardous foods (hazardous foods are those in a form capable of supporting the rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms).”
- **Assist in projects and supervision** of children
 - Read to children
 - Join in art experiences (without making models to replicate)
 - Share a song or finger play
 - Join in child-directed play
 - Be a friend to all classmates
 - Assist with clean up at end of free play
- **Never Unsupervised**-The family helper works alongside the Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher and is never to be unsupervised with any children other than their own child while on school grounds.
- **Late departure** (~30 minutes after class ends) – enables family helper and teacher to do the necessary cleaning, end-of-day duties, and discuss the day’s events.
- **End of day duties:** vacuuming, sweeping, mopping, dishes, trash out, recording snack on log

ATTENDANCE AT ALL-SCHOOL MEETINGS

- All- School meetings are typically held two times a school year to discuss major issues and to disseminate information. Attendance at these meetings is required.
- Each class holds a family potluck, before the beginning of the school year in August. This event is for adults only and provides an opportunity to meet the other parents and to sign up for your family helper days. This meeting is also required.

COMMITTEE WORK

Each family is responsible for working on a committee for the duration of the school year. There are usually 10-15 different committees to choose from. We value each family's unique contribution and will work to find a committee that best fits the family's schedule, talents and interests. Committee members will receive guidance at the beginning of the school year regarding their specific assignment.

MAINTENANCE DAYS

Each family is responsible for participating in one 4-hour maintenance day per school year. Maintenance days are held in August, September, January, and April.

BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY POLICY

Even though we do not care for infants in our program we are committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding families through a supportive environment. Families will be provided with a designated, private space to breastfeed either their current enrolled student or sibling/s. We will provide refrigerator space for proper storage of expressed breast milk.

COMMUNICATION

PRIVACY POLICY

Information collected by the School is for school purposes only. Families, employees, subcontractors, or vendors may only use any information obtained for on-going school related communications.

Sales Policy

Many of our families own small businesses. The Board of Governors specifically prohibits the use of our school directory, class email lists, and student cubbies for distribution of items related to families' businesses. Furthermore, the Board of Governors specifically prohibits direct solicitation of individuals during school hours and special school events. Individuals from our community may attach fliers or business cards to our community board. Additionally, the Board of Governors encourages businesses to advertise by donating items or sponsorships in support of our annual auction event.

FAMILY TEACHER CONVERSATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Family-Teacher Conversations/Conferences are held two times each year. In November, families will meet with their child's teacher to discuss interests and goals for their child. In March, conferences will be held in which the teacher provides information on the assessment of the child completed over the school year.

SCHOOL AND STAFF EVALUATIONS

At least once each year, families are asked to complete a written online evaluation of the School and the staff to aid in the objective administration of the School. The evaluations are extremely important in setting goals and aiding school and staff development. Your input is valuable and appreciated.

CONCERNS/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

If you have a comment, complaint, or suggestion, you are encouraged to contact a member of administration via in-person, email, or phone call. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can utilize our anonymous online reporting form to address any concerns. The link to this form can be accessed through any of our weekly emails.

Any guardian who believes that an act or omission of the administrative staff or the Board of Governors has materially impacted the experience of the guardian or the guardian's child(ren) at RWCNS may file a grievance under this policy. Any guardian who wishes to file a grievance under this procedure must do so in writing. A grievance must be signed by the guardian and must state in sufficient detail the grounds for the grievance, including alleged act or omission of the administrative staff or Board of Governors and the alleged material impact on the experience of the guardian or child(ren). The grievance shall be filed with the Executive Director. Whenever any grievance has been filed, the Executive Director (or in the event of his/her absence or interest in the subject matter of the grievance, the Board President) may attempt to resolve the grievance through informal means, including mediation if agreed to by both parties. In the event that the grievance is not resolved through informal means, the Board President shall appoint three (3) members of the Board of Governors, who shall not have a direct interest in the subject matter of the grievance, to serve as the grievance panel. The Board President shall also appoint the chairperson of the grievance panel from among the three (3) panel members. The grievance panel shall consider the arguments and evidence presented by the grievant, as well as the arguments and evidence presented by the administrative staff or Board of Governors, as the case may be. If appropriate, the grievance panel may, in its sole discretion, convene a hearing to allow the parties to present their arguments and evidence. The panel shall also invite any other family who may be directly impacted by the decision, or whose child(ren) may be directly impacted by the decision, to present arguments and evidence and to participate in the hearing, if one is held. All proceedings shall remain confidential. The grievance panel shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after reviewing the evidence or conducting a hearing, issue a written decision on the subject matter of the grievance. The decision of the grievance panel shall be final and binding.

If you feel that the preceding process is unsatisfactory, you can file a complaint about this facility. You can contact The Colorado Department of Early Childhood by calling 303-866-5958.

SCHEDULE

ABSENCES

Please notify the school when your child is going to be absent for any reason via an email to director@rwncs.org or calling the school. If your child is absent due to illness, we will reach out to you for symptom information to fulfill our illness tracking requirements.

Arrival: Please bring your child to school at the scheduled start of your child's class. If you arrive unexpectedly ahead of schedule, please feel free to utilize Minnow's Room. There are two very important reasons for this:

- The teacher needs the time before class to prepare for the children. With punctual arrival, your teacher is ready to greet the children. Also, the classroom will look its most inviting and be ready for exploration.
- When children enter at approximately the same time, they feel more comfortable separating from you. Arriving on time, they will have the opportunity to be a part of the class's team meeting/start of day routine. The teacher, your child, and you will start the school day with a more relaxed, confident feeling.

Departure: Picking up your child on time is also important for the following reasons:

- Teachers need time to clean up and prepare the classroom for the next class.
- Children worry when their grown-ups are late. They begin looking for you as soon as the first family arrives, and they can get uncomfortable as other children depart. If you should be detained unavoidably, please call the school if possible and we can communicate your delay to your child and teacher.

LATE PICKUP AND NO PICK UP

If you know that you will be late due to unforeseen circumstances, please call the school so we can notify your child. Children who are not picked up within 5 minutes of class dismissal time will be taken to the office and parents will be called. If your child is not picked up within 15 minutes of class ending, your child will be taken to Explorers, and you will be charged the drop-in fee of \$35 for a block of time.

If your child is enrolled in our Explorers program and you are late to pick up from your scheduled time, the same policy will apply.

If the guardians cannot be reached, emergency contact numbers for the child will be called. If no emergency contact person can be reached, a staff member will wait at the school with the child until 5:30 PM. If no one can be reached by that time, authorities will be called.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

DAILY SCHEDULE

Class schedules are set prior to enrollment/registration.

Class Schedule:

Class	Schedule
Seeds	Th, F 8:30-11:30
Roly-Polies	Th, F 8:15-11:15
Hummingbirds	Th, F 8:00-11:00
Sprouts	M,T,W 8:15-11:15
Chickadees	M,T,W 8:00-12:00
Honeybees	M,T,W,Th,F 8:00-11:30
Sunflowers	M, T, W, Th 12:45-3:45
Hoppers	M, T, W, Th 12:00-3:00
Owls	M, T, W, Th 12:30-3:45
Crickets	M,T, W 8:30-12:30
Explorers	M-Th 11:00-5:00

CHANGES TO SCHEDULES

In rare circumstances, the Executive Director may need to make changes to the established schedule. School schedules may change before the beginning of the school year, but families will be notified at least 30 days in advance.

Each year before the May Board meeting, the Board of Governors will approve an annual school calendar with specific dates for the upcoming school year. The following guidelines to set the annual school calendar:

Event	Typical date
Start of School Fiscal Year	July 01
Staff In-Service	Week Prior to Labor Day
First days of school	First Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday after Labor Day
All-School Meeting	Fall
Teacher Workdays	Fall and Spring
Fall Break (School Closed)	The week of Thanksgiving
Family-Teacher Conversations – (No Classes Meet)	November
Winter Break (School Closed)	Two weeks at the end of December into January
MLK Day (School Closed)	Third Monday in January
School Auction	Spring
President's Day (School Closed)	Third Monday in February
Spring Break (School Closed)	Last full week in March
Family-Teacher Conferences - (No Classes Meet)	March
Last days of School	Wed, Thurs, or Friday before Memorial Day
Memorial Day (School Closed)	Last Monday in May
Staff In-Service	Tuesday following Memorial Day
Summer Session	June, July, and August
End of School Fiscal Year	June 30

DROP OFF AND PICK UP OF CHILDREN

One important aspect of the family cooperative is **drop off and pick up of children**. Children love for their adults to see what is happening in the classroom. Important communications are often in children's cubbies. Additionally, there is a legal obligation to have adults sign children in and out of class. As our parking lot can be very full, we understand that this may be frustrating at times. We strive to have families park in our lot or on the street closest to the school so they do not have to cross the busy street. Occasionally families may have to drop children off to another adult/staff member due to family illness or surgery, sleeping or ill siblings, or when it isn't advisable to have a newborn come into the school. In these cases, we ask that families make arrangements with the front office by calling the school prior to drop off or pick up time. We will make every effort to have a member of the admin. staff support in these temporary situations by meeting at the vehicle to walk the child into class and sign them in. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the School with any questions.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations of school may be announced due to unsafe conditions such as inclement weather conditions (including winter storms or excessively hot weather) or facility emergencies. Families will be notified by text message from the class coordinators or teachers, and an eblast message will be sent. We follow District 11 decisions on school closures. When District 11 decides on a delayed start, Ruth Washburn's policy will be to open at 10 am. If we have a delay on a Wee Explorers day, those programs will be cancelled.

Afternoon classes and Explorers will be held if a late start is warranted in the morning. When in doubt, please call the school or your child's teacher. We attempt to notify families by 6:30am stating whether we are delayed or closed for that day.

*When District 11 is not in session or chooses not to delay their school start time, we may still elect to delay or cancel classes for the day if weather conditions warrant. The Executive Director and Board President will determine if classes will be held. The safety of our families and staff traveling to school will continue to be the most important factor in any decision to delay or close. Of course, in all cases, parental discretion is advised.

MEDICAL FORMS

Medical forms are required by Colorado state law and must be in the School office before your child may attend the first day of class. Each child must have a medical examination by a physician (that is not a family member) every twelve months. Immunizations must be kept current. RWCNS does enroll children who are not immunized because of religious, medical or personal reasons.

MEDICATION

Prescription and non-prescription medications can be administered only with the written order of a person with prescriptive authority and with written guardian consent. The written order must include: the child's name; the licensed prescribing practitioner's name, telephone number, and signature; date authorized; name of medication and dosage; time of day medication is to be given; route of medication; length of time medication is to be given; reason for medication (unless information needs to remain confidential); side effects or reactions to watch for; and any special instructions. The medication must be kept in the original, labeled container bearing the original pharmacy label that shows the name of the medication, date filled, expiration date, physician's name, child's name, and directions for dosage. All medications **must** be kept in the School's designated storage area for medicines (not child's backpack or cubby) and dispensed by a designated staff member only. Emergency and rescue medications (epinephrine or asthma inhalers) will also be kept in the

School's medication storage area. These regulations are Colorado law for the safety of all children in our care. Guardians should meet with the Executive Director to establish a health care plan if their child will have medical needs while at school.

SUNSCREEN

Individual skin types and sensitivities need to be considered when selecting a sunscreen. Therefore, according to licensing regulations, guardians must send sunscreen labeled with the child's first and last name and complete a permission form that allows the school to apply a specified type of sunscreen. We will provide Babyganics mineral based 50 SPF sunscreen at the School and will ask you to sign a form to use that type of sunscreen. You can find information about this sunscreen at <http://babyganics.com/products/mineral-based-sunscreen-spray-50spf-2/>

LOTION

According to Colorado State Statute, over the counter-topical preparations can be applied to children at school with guardian permission. If you would like to allow your child to use hand lotion at school, please see the information below and select that option upon registration. A paper form will also be available at school.

We will provide Earth Mama's Angel Baby Lotion. You can find information about this lotion at <https://earthmamaorganics.com/collections/lotion/products/simply-non-scents-baby-lotion>

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Ruth Washburn staff members are trained in CPR, First Aid, and Universal Precautions. If a child is injured at school, first aid will be administered and guardians notified. In case of a medical emergency, 911 will be activated. If a child is injured at Ruth Washburn, it must be reported to the child's guardians on an Accident/Illness Form. The report should be signed by the guardian and the copy turned into the office within 24 hours of the injury. Injuries requiring first aid must be reported immediately to administration so proper follow-up can be made.

SNACK AND FOOD ALLERGIES

To promote good nutritional habits, please bring only healthy non-sugary snacks to school. Organic fruits and vegetables and non-choking foods are recommended. These policies extend to birthdays and other special occasions. Guardians are required to notify the school of any food allergies their child may have so that adequate precautions and preparations may be made. Please check with the teacher for any allergies in your child's class before planning snack or special cooking projects. Additionally, it is important that we avoid choking hazards for young children. Popcorn is not allowed in classes where children are under age 4. Grapes must be cut in half for 3 and 4-year-olds and into quarters for 2-year-olds. We have tools to help with this.

We are sensitive to the allergies and dietary restrictions of every child who attends Ruth Washburn. Each class will post a list of foods that cannot be served at snack. Please be vigilant about checking the posting—they sometimes change throughout the year. Please do your best to serve only foods that all of the children in class may eat.

We are supportive of children with severe allergies and those families who have dietary preferences. In a classroom, we accommodate plant-based diets (no meat, cheese or eggs), vegetarian diets (no meat, but cheese and eggs are ok) and well-balanced diets (meat, cheese and eggs). All dietary preferences, allergies and/or restrictions must be included in the child's health form to be included in our class exclusion list. For

children going through intermittent testing for food allergies, we will ask for those guardians to provide snack for their child during that process to ensure that a child does not inadvertently receive a food allergen at snack time. We take food allergies very seriously and will ask for children with a listed food allergy to have an epi-pen and or Benadryl on site as directed by their health care provider. Anaphylactic allergies will require a specific anaphylaxis plan that must be signed by the child's guardians, physician, and school health consultant. Contact the school to get a copy of this form.

ILLNESS POLICY

Young children frequently become mildly ill. Preschoolers experience a yearly average of six respiratory infections (colds) and can expect one or two gastrointestinal infections (vomiting and/or diarrhea) each year. The following list gives guidelines and recommendations for deciding whether to bring your child to school or keep your child home:

1. A child should not attend if the illness prevents him/her from participating comfortably in activities, or if the illness results in a greater care need than Ruth Washburn staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
 - a.) Please notify the School to report symptoms of illness
 - b.) If a specific diagnosis is made, e.g. strep throat, chicken pox, pink eye, etc., please let the School know so other families can be alerted, and so we can document the illness in our required health department illness log.

We will be able to limit the contagious illnesses at school only if families cooperate in preventing the spread of contagious illness. Obviously ill children should not be sent to school. If your child becomes ill at school, you will be called to take your child home. A detailed Illness Policy is distributed to families at the August Home Visit and is also posted throughout the year in the office. Communicable illnesses will be reported to the local health department pursuant to regulations of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

SAFETY

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips give children the opportunity to expand their learning beyond the school environment and attend special activities in the community. Field trips are only scheduled when they are developmentally appropriate for the group. There may be occasions when an additional fee is required.

FIELD TRIP PERMISSION

Guardians will be notified in advance of any scheduled trip away from the school and must give written authorization for their child to participate.

CHILDREN ARRIVING LATE FOR FIELD TRIPS

In the event a guardian has not provided written authorization for their child's participation on a field trip or the child arrives after the class has left the premises for the field trip, the child will remain at the school under the supervision of other staff members, or the family may have the option of bringing the child to the field trip location.

FIELD TRIP DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

In order to comply with the Colorado State Department of Human Services' guidelines concerning transporting children for school activities, each adult who drives must have a valid driver's license and current liability insurance on their vehicle. Please submit a copy of your current driver's license and proof of liability insurance to the office prior to transporting children on a school trip. For each field trip you must confirm these qualifications :

1. Possess a valid Colorado driver's license.
2. Will use a vehicle for transporting children that is appropriately licensed, inspected and maintained.
3. Carry proof of current liability insurance on the vehicle.
4. While driving for the field trip the driver must:
 - a. Have all doors locked when the vehicle is moving.
 - b. Drivers must carry a first aid kit (one can be provided by the school).
 - c. Children must be properly fastened into an appropriate child restraint system.
 - d. Each vehicle will carry a cell phone or have two adults in case of an emergency.
 - e. Refrain from smoking and tobacco product use.

SUPERVISION

At Ruth Washburn children are always under adult supervision by sight and sound. Each staff member has responsibility for a specified group of children, and children are accounted for at each transition and at regular intervals. Adults dropping off and picking up must closely supervise their child(ren) at all times when not in the classroom. Family helpers will never be left alone with children other than their own. A staff member will help children in the bathroom.

ACCESS TO FACILITY

All visitors must enter and leave the school building through the main entrance. Visitors are required to sign in at the office. To enter the school, families must enter the current code or be let in by a staff member. All premise doors with panic bar equipment will remain locked each day. All doors equipped with panic bars allow classes to exit while the door is locked from the outside in case of emergency.

LOST CHILDREN

In the event a child appears to be lost, staff members will take the following action in the order listed:

1. Contact all staff who might have knowledge of the child's whereabouts.
2. Conduct a thorough search of the premises.
3. Contact the family to see if they have removed their child without informing the staff.
4. Notify the police.

VISITORS

Visitors are required to sign in and out of facility. To gain access to the facility, the following information may be required at any time:

- Name and contact information
- Copy of driver's license or identification

Visitors will be escorted throughout the facility at all times.

SIGN IN AND OUT

Legal requirements state that each child must be signed in and out by the adult bringing them and picking them up each day. All sign in and sign out is done electronically, either through a QR reader on your mobile device or by using the kiosks in the front hallway.

AUTHORIZED PERSONS TO PICK UP CHILDREN

Guardians are required to provide the School with a list of authorized people who are permitted to pick up their child/ren. This list shall be updated immediately by the family should any information change. This information must be updated in writing. If someone other than the regular person is to pick up your child, you **MUST** ensure this person is named on the pick-up authorization in your child/ren's file. For obvious safety reasons, we cannot allow a child to leave with an unauthorized person.

END OF DAY

At the end of each day, the closing staff will ensure each child has been signed out and accounted for.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Ruth Washburn has written procedures for dealing with medical emergencies, fires, tornadoes, and evacuations. We practice and document emergency evacuations monthly. Emergency procedures and evacuation plans are posted in each classroom and throughout the school.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School Emergency Response Plan includes preparations and procedures that are in place in the event of an emergency identified by local law enforcement officials.

Preparations include:

- First aid kits and supplies
- Flashlights and batteries
- Blankets, rest mats and extra clothing
- Water supply (from hot water tank, if needed)
- Food supplies (on hand for Explorers program)
- Up-to-date Pick-Up Authorization Form (all students)
- Up-to-date Emergency Contact Cards (all staff and students)

Shelter-in-place procedure:

- Administrative staff will monitor public access emergency broadcasts
- Staff will be advised of emergency status and all children will be accounted for at all times in their classrooms
- Class schedule will be adhered to as much as possible to avoid creating any fears in children
- Children will be released to guardians or authorized pick up persons at any time
- Staff and children will relocate to Minnow's Room if precautions indicate a more secure room is necessary
- Outgoing calls will be made on personal cell phones available to keep the school line free
- Board President will be called to indicate that the Emergency Response Plan is being activated

Evacuation from school – to another site:

- Procedures above will be followed until that evacuation is determined necessary by authorities
- Evacuation procedures in place for other emergencies will be followed to gather children and staff at one of the designated evacuation sites (likely locations include the NW corner of Hillside or SE corner of Farm playgrounds)
- Children with disabilities will be assigned a staff member to assist in their evacuation
- Staff members will account for all children with daily sign in sheets
- Administrative staff will ensure that building is vacated (and locked if time allows) and information posted on the front door of the school
- Emergency contact and pick up authorization information will be carried with staff and children to off-site location
- Off-site location will be determined by local authorities and/ or administrative staff (likely locations include ARC store parking lot or SecureCare Self-Storage on King Street)
- Board President will be called to indicate that the Emergency Response Plan is being activated
- Staff will contact guardians to request pick up at an alternate location

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING/LICENSING COMPLAINTS

If you suspect your child has been physically or sexually abused, you are advised to seek assistance immediately from the local El Paso County Department of Early Childhood 719-444-5700. If you are concerned about problems of this nature at our school or have any complaints concerning suspected licensing violations, you can make a report to the Colorado Department of Early Childhood by calling 303-866-5958.

WEAPON-FREE SCHOOL

For the safety of all persons, guns, knives and any other weapons are not allowed in the school or on school property, or at school sponsored events.

CHILDREN

ADDITIONAL NEEDS/ SCREENING/FAMILY RESOURCES

Children and families all have unique needs and may need access to screenings, support and outside resources. Families are encouraged to discuss any unique family or developmental needs with staff. Each year families will also have the opportunity to fill out a family needs survey which will help us support families who have monetary, housing, food, clothing or social needs. Staff will help families identify resources in the cooperative or in the community.

Children with special developmental, mental health, or physical needs are welcome in our school, within our ability to meet such needs. Families of children with special needs are encouraged to discuss those needs in detail with the Executive Director and the teacher so we can help support any IEP/IFSP/504 plan already in place. We will work to support the goals in those plans and any other support plans developed for the child while enrolled at Ruth Washburn.

The child's physician is required to complete a child screening as a part of our school entrance physical. During the school year, observations, screenings or assessments might indicate the need for outside services for a child. If any observation, screening or assessment indicates a need, the family will be given a list of resources to the appropriate community service agency. This could include a referral to the local school district's Child Find office, the child's health provider, or a specialist. The referral might be for speech, development, physical, mental health, or behavior. Our staff are not developmental specialists so will only make recommendations based on reporting from families and observations of the child. Please feel free to speak with our Education Director, Executive Director, or your child's teacher any time you have concerns.

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

All staff at Ruth Washburn take a course in Trauma Informed Practices within the first year of employment. Additionally, we utilize several approaches to supporting children and family who may have gone through traumatic stressors.

PYRAMID PLUS

Ruth Washburn is a Pyramid Plus Implementation Site. The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence for Infants and Young Children is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework that early educators can use to promote young children's social and emotional development and prevent/address challenging behavior. Our staff is trained in this approach by their second year of employment and it is utilized in all classrooms. We utilize a Behavior Support Professional, Mental Health Consultant and social emotional curriculum (PATHS) to support all children in our program.

TOILET TRAINING

Children who are not toilet trained are welcome to attend Ruth Washburn. The proper procedure for diapering is posted by each changing table. When children are ready for toilet training, we support the toileting routine that families use at home to the best of our ability.

PRIMARY CAREGIVING

Research indicates that best practices for caring for young children include having the same caregivers/ teachers daily. Our policy at Ruth Washburn is to have the same Teaching Team throughout the year. This will allow your family and child to form relationships with the Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher. We utilize other staff only when one of the teachers is out due to illness or planned absence. We do not utilize “floaters” in our program so children will not have to get to know new staff regularly.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions involve how children enter our program, how they move through the program from year to year, how they move through activities throughout the day and how they make the move to kindergarten. All orientations and classes will be shared on our school calendar, on our website (rwcns.org) and also through weekly e-blasts.

ENTERING RUTH WASHBURN:

Beginning preschool is a special time in a child’s life. We work to make this transition as smooth as possible for the families and the child. Families are asked to visit the school with their child before enrolling for the following year to see the facility, observe the classrooms in action, and find out about the cooperative. After enrollment there are four important pieces to the transition process:

- a. Attend a New Family Orientation in August. This is usually 2-3 weeks before the school year begins and will cover information about the Cooperative, family helping, and committee work.
- b. Have a Home Visit with your child’s teacher. During this time, the teacher will visit your child at your home in order to facilitate a strong relationship and bond in the child’s space before the school year begins.
- c. Attend the Family Potluck for your class. During this time, you will meet with the guardians of the children in the class, learn more about family helping, sign up for your family helping days, and get all of the important, class-specific information for your family to have a successful start at the school.
- d. Attend Child Orientation, which is the week before school begins. This is a short visit in which children find their cubbies, visit the classroom, and connect with their new teachers.

TRANSITIONING TO THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR:

If your child is of age to continue in the school for the following year, registration will open in January or February. Once assigned to a class track, a child will remain with his or her class track at RWCNS as long as he/she is a student at RWCNS, unless changed according to the change policy (outlined in enrollment section). This allows families and children the continuity of the same class community for at least two years. Always reach out to administration with any questions about class placement.

TRANSITIONS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM:

Transitions during a school day between activities are minimized to allow children to remain engaged in the activities of the day/week. When a transition to a new activity is within 5 minutes, the teacher will speak to each child individually to ensure they are aware and ready for the transition. Extra support is given during transitions because this is a time in the day that can be difficult for young children. We utilize songs, fingerplays, a change in music, lighting, to ease transitions. Feel free to speak with your teacher with any questions about transitions throughout the day.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Leaving the open-ended free play of preschool for the structure and long days of Kindergarten can be challenging. We host a Kindergarten Information Night in January in which teachers/administrators from many local schools come to answer questions about Kindergarten readiness. We recommend families also attend local events geared at school choices to find out more about private, public and charter options in the community.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Discipline is an important aspect of any preschool program because young children in the process of growing need positive guidance in many areas. The word 'discipline' comes from the word 'disciple', which means 'to teach.' In using this definition rather than the negative connotation of punishment, discipline becomes a teaching tool. Discipline, then, becomes guidance of growing children in a positive, teaching way.

At Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School (RWCNS), positive guidance is used in the classroom. The foundation for teaching young children how to successfully and safely negotiate their needs and feelings is built upon respectful, meaningful relationships. If a child feels that you respect him or her, it will make it easier for him/her to behave in a way that pleases others. Teachers use many strategies to develop respectful relationships with each child, such as establishing eye contact and using a soft, positive tone during all interactions with a child, offering choices to a child whenever possible, asking children for their input and ideas, and giving children suggestions of what they can do rather than telling them what they cannot do.

The second building block in promoting social-emotional competence is in the design of the preschool environment. At RWCNS, environments are spacious and well defined, allowing several children to play side-by-side in cooperative play. Learning materials are displayed to clue children to the various uses for the materials and art materials are available to promote process versus product-oriented expression.

Relationships between children are supported through teaching strategies that promote the safe expression of feelings. Each classroom teacher at RWCNS incorporates an age-appropriate social emotional curriculum into circle time activities. Children are taught preventatively that all feelings are acceptable, that there are several safe ways to express feelings, and that the classroom community cares about each other's feelings.

At RWCNS, we expect that children will struggle with the expression of feelings from time to time. As the need for additional support arises, the Education Director is available to each classroom teacher and

families to design a plan that will optimize each child's preschool experience. Since young children often lack the vocabulary to express their feelings and needs verbally, we understand that at times children will do so through their behavior. It is our goal to team with families to understand what motivates a child's behavior and to design an individualized plan to support the child's strengths and needs. Corporal punishment is never acceptable.

SCHOOL CLOTHES, TOYS AND ACCESSORIES

CLOTHING

Play clothes are appropriate for school. They allow the child to participate in a variety of activities without inhibition. Shoes should be comfortable and preferably rubber soled. Any removable clothing should be clearly labeled with the child's name for easy identification. Various accidents happen at school; therefore, every child is required to bring a change of clothing in a gallon-size zip-lock bag. Families are asked to replenish the clothes as needed. The plastic bag and all clothing, boots, jackets, etc. should be labeled with the child's name. Boots are recommended for muddy and snowy days. We do have a winter gear list for our Crickets class that may be helpful for everyone. We go out, even on very cold days, so layers and waterproof items are always appreciated.

- Wool socks
- Waterproof mittens
- Base layers (wool or synthetic)
- Fleece sweater or middle layer
- Fleece sweatpants (Optional, but good on really cold days)
- Snow pants
- Winter jacket (waterproof)
- Insulated winter boots
- Hat
- Neck Gaiter (Optional) or scarf

PERSONAL TOYS AND POSSESSIONS

We ask that personal possessions be left at home unless your child is asked to bring something relating to special events or programs. Items brought for "Show and Tell" must be clearly marked. Breakage, loss, or just sharing a favorite item may be difficult for the young child. Money or valuables brought in by the child will be kept at the front desk until a parent/guardian can pick it up.

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

Birthday celebrations at school focus on the child rather than on decorations or favors. Families may bring a special treat at snack time if they wish, adhering to the School's nutrition policy and the allergy requirements of the class. Please do not distribute invitations to parties at school unless everyone in the class is invited.

RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, AND OTHER HOLIDAYS

The school is sensitive to the strong feelings among families belonging to various religious and cultural groups with respect to the questions of celebration of various holidays. Either a strong emphasis on such holidays or complete avoidance of reference to them is inappropriate and unrealistic. The school prefers to acknowledge such holidays, but in a minimal fashion. In reference to school closings for holidays, please refer to the school calendar.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors is a group of twelve members, including current and former (alumni) families and community members who serve three-year terms. The Board of Governors is responsible for the operations of the school legally, fiscally, ethically and philosophically. Their duties include setting a budget, hiring the Executive Director, and assisting in problem-solving and looking at future directions and needs of the school to plan effectively for the future.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee, volunteer, or board member of the Organization who reports an activity that he or she considers to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities. Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting. If an employee or volunteer has knowledge of or a concern of illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee or volunteer is to contact the Board Treasurer or the Board President who is responsible for investigation and coordinating corrective action. The employee or volunteer must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseline allegation. An employee or volunteer who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Whistleblower protections are to cover two important areas – confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals with their legal rights of defense. The Organization will not retaliate against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes he or she is being retaliated against must contact the Board Treasurer or the Board President immediately. The right of the whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated. Employees or volunteers with any questions regarding this policy should contact the Executive Director or the President of the Board.

NAEYC CODE OF ETHICS

Ruth Washburn is committed to following the National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethical Conduct. This code lays the foundation for how we approach children, families and the profession. Our Staff each individually agrees to the following Commitment:

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability I will:

- Never harm children.
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

If you are interested in more information about the NAEYC Code of Ethical conduct you can visit their website at www.naeyc.org