



## Table of Contents

SSNSC Mission Statement.....	page 2
South Shore YMCA Mission Statement.....	page 2
Nature Center Preschool Philosophy.....	page 2
Statement of Purpose.....	page 2
Goals and Objectives.....	page 2
Non-discrimination Policy.....	page 3
Enrollment.....	page 3
Tuition.....	page 4
Curriculum and Assessment.....	page 5
Children’s Records.....	page 5
Arrival and Dismissal/Hours of Operation.....	page 6-7
Lead Paint Screening.....	page 7
Illness/Absence Policy.....	page 8-10
Medication Administration.....	page 10-11
Emergency Plan.....	page 11
Emergency Evacuation.....	page 12
Clothing.....	page 12
Toys or Items from Home.....	page 12
Parties/Snacks .....	page 12
Parent/Family Communication.....	page 13
Open Door Policy/Visitation/Confidentiality.....	page 13
Family Advisory Council .....	page 14
Child Guidance Policy.....	page 15
Suspension and Termination.....	page 16
Financial Assistance.....	page 16
Mandated Reporting.....	page 16
Babysitting Policy.....	page 17
Plan for Referral Services.....	page 18-19
Individuals with Diverse Abilities.....	page 18
Lunch Bunch.....	page 19
Hand washing/Toothbrushing.....	page 19-20
Toileting.....	page 20
Transportation .....	page 20
Outdoor Activities/Pet Policy.....	page 21-22
History of SSNSC.....	page 23-24

# WELCOME TO NATURE CENTER PRESCHOOL

Michelle Marquis, Director 781-659-2559 x216

## **South Shore YMCA Mission Statement—The Better You Belongs Here**

The South Shore YMCA is committed to strengthening our communities by nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living, and fostering a sense of responsibility.

## **South Shore Natural Science Center Mission Statement**

The mission of the South Shore Natural Science Center is to provide natural science experiences that educate, excite, and commit every generation to preserve the environment and to encourage responsible use, stewardship and enjoyment of our natural resources.

---

## **NCP philosophy**

Nature Center Preschool connects young children and their families to their local environment developing ecological literacy, critical thinking, engagement, and stewardship for the natural world while nurturing the mind, body and spirit of each child.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of our school is to nurture each child and family's innate desire to discover their world through direct contact with nature, foster respect for the community where they live and play, and prepare them for lifelong learning.

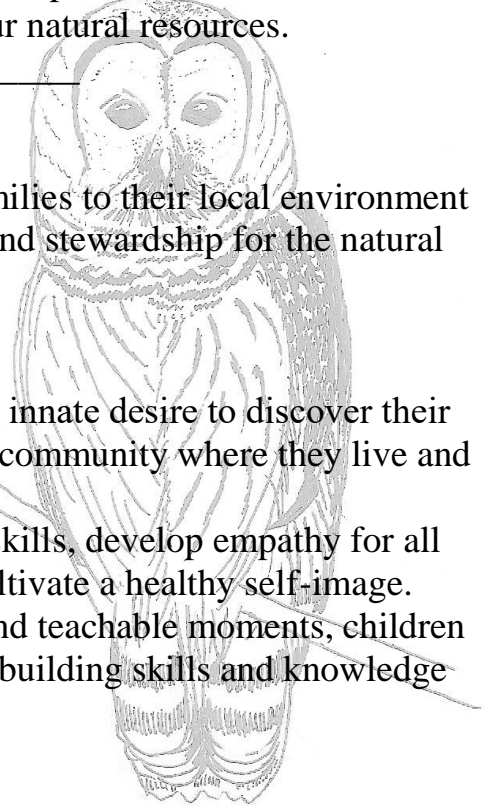
Nature Center Preschool encourages children to build inquiry skills, develop empathy for all living beings, gain confidence in their problem solving, and cultivate a healthy self-image.

Through place-based, hands-on exploration, naturalist visits, and teachable moments, children will have the opportunity to extend their own learning thereby building skills and knowledge that they can transfer to any future learning.

## **Goals and Objectives**

It is the goal of Nature Center Preschool to support young children's investigations, igniting their passion for learning. By highlighting the interconnectedness of humans with the natural world, we provide a foundation of stewardship, inquiry, and innovative thinking. Children are given the freedom to explore a wide variety of intelligences that enable them to make meaningful connections to the early development of language, math, art, science, technology, and social emotional skills.

The Nature Center Preschool curriculum is carefully facilitated to be developmentally appropriate and emergent according to children's curiosity and interest. Nature Center Preschool serves children from 2.9 to 5+ years old.



## Non-Discrimination Policy:

Nature Center Preschool does not discriminate with regard to race, religion, cultural heritage, disability, political beliefs, marital status, toilet training status, or sexual orientation.

### Celebrating Diversity

Nature Center Preschool welcomes all families and celebrates the diversity represented in our Y community. As staff, we encourage open discussions with families to learn about each child's family and culture so we can have a better understanding of all expressions of human differences, including culture, race, language, ethnicity, religion, family structure, ability, learning styles, sexual orientation, gender, age, and socioeconomic differences. We believe that maintaining open communication and educating ourselves builds mutually agreeable practices and procedures that will benefit our program as well as assist with building a strong bond with each individual family in our program. Nature Center Preschool and the South Shore YMCA are committed to embracing & celebrating all cultures and incorporating their celebrations within the curriculum planning. We invite you to be part of the process by sharing your family's culture with us!

#### I. Tuition:

##### **Tuition Policy**

Tuition payments are due weekly and are to be made in advance. Tuition will be expected on Friday for the upcoming week. **Tuition payment is also made for closed holidays; no-show days, family vacations, and days closed /delayed openings due to inclement weather, or closure emergencies and or other delays.** The Enrollment Fee (if applicable) and the first week's tuition are due upon enrollment. Enrollment fees are non-refundable; tuition deposits are refundable with at least 2 weeks' notice prior to expected date of enrollment. Tuition rates are subject to change. A 30 day notification of rate changes will always be provided.

##### **Annual Re-Registration Fee**

Each family enrolled at the Nature Center Preschool will be charged an Annual Registration fee of \$85.00 per child, with a family limit of \$140.00 upon re-enrollment. Along with the annual registration fee families will be asked to update their child's registration packet. Per the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) all registration paperwork is valid for one year only and must be updated annually.

##### **Automatic Payment Deduction**

For the convenience of our families, tuition payment through automatic payment deduction is provided by our billing department. Upon enrollment, families are provided with the authorization form to complete for automatic payment deduction of tuition payments. This

form can also be found at [ssymca.org](http://ssymca.org). Tuition is withdrawn weekly on Friday for payment of the upcoming week's tuition.

### **Withdrawals/Changes**

A written two week notice and verbal notice to the center Director is required if you decide to withdraw your child from the program. We also ask for a written request to change the days your child is enrolled. This allows for authorization of the change, to maintain proper numbers in the classrooms. A new Enrollment Fee will be charged if the child is re-enrolled.

### **Return Check Policy**

A charge of \$20.00 and the original payment must be made by money order. Please note if returned checks occur more than twice you will be required to pay by money order.

### **Late Payment Policy**

Tuition payment is due in advance, on Friday for the upcoming week. Payments that are not made by Monday of the current week will be considered late. No student's account may have more than one week's tuition outstanding at any time. Any accounts with an overdue balance will be sent a termination letter, unless agreement has been made with the business office and/or payment has been submitted.

### **Termination Due to Lack of Payment Policy**

Any account with an overdue balance will receive a warning letter on the day that it is deemed late, (Monday). If payment is not received by the following Friday, a termination letter will be sent (Monday) and if payment is not received by Friday, your child will not be able to return to the Nature Center Preschool on Monday. The effective date of the termination notices will be reflective of your last week's paid tuition. If your payment is brought up-to-date by the termination date, your termination notice will be voided. Repeated instances of termination notices will compromise your child's enrollment and all scholarship funding. All billing questions may be referred to Kathy Crompton at the business office of at [kcrompton@ssymca.org](mailto:kcrompton@ssymca.org).

### **Financial Assistance**

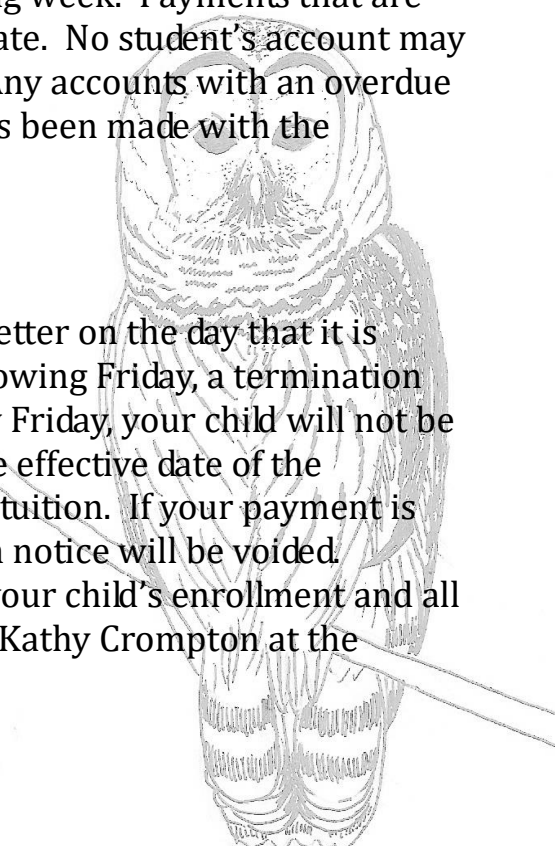
*The South Shore YMCA is a charity.*

*Dollars raised through charitable gifts to our Annual Campaign ensure financial assistance and accessibility to programs and services for all.*

To apply, please complete a financial assistance application. Please consider volunteering your time, talent or treasure to this year's Annual Campaign.

## **II. Enrollment Procedure:**

Children must be 2.9 years old to enroll in Nature Center Preschool.



Registration/enrollment for September 2021 begins as follows:

December 2020: Children currently enrolled in the preschool; siblings

January 2021: Open enrollment

Enrollment is ongoing throughout the school year pending available openings.

- An appointment to tour the school, meet with the Director and visit the classroom may be scheduled before enrollment.
- Membership at the South Shore Natural Science Center is included for Preschool Families. Membership forms are available from the Director.
- The non-refundable fee for new student enrollment is \$85.
- The following forms are part of the enrollment packet and must be completed and returned to the Preschool:
  - Enrollment/face sheet
  - First Aid and Emergency Medical care consent
  - Transportation Plan
  - Medication Consent
  - Individual Health Plan (if applicable)
  - Developmental History
  - Child's Health Record (including immunizations or notification of exemption and lead screening) signed by a healthcare professional.

### **III. Curriculum and Assessment:**

Our developmentally appropriate curriculum is created monthly with the children's interests in mind. As we explore the seasonal changes that occur in nature, children develop skills in observation, making guesses, experimentation, and problem solving. Readiness skills encompassing math, language, social studies and health are woven into the nature-based curriculum. Children are encouraged as they acquire self-help skills, independence and responsibility, as well as social skills and competence in relationship building.

We align our curriculum to the *North American Association for Environmental Education Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence* as well as the *Massachusetts Early Childhood Program Standards*. We use Teaching Strategies Gold as an assessment tool and family/teacher conferences are held twice a year—November and late April. A written progress report of your child is prepared annually and will be discussed at the April family/teacher conference.

### **IV. Children's Records:**

The information contained in your child's record is private and confidential and will not be released to anyone without your written consent. You may have access to your child's records at any time, with two days' notice, and copies will be available at your request. **Please note: Families are responsible for providing the copies to all additional programs both internal and external. Nature Center Preschool will not be able to provide copies of records to**

**parties outside of Nature Center Preschool.** Please allow additional time for record copy requests during the busy summer camp season. You may add to, delete from, or amend your child's record at any time. Documentation including date of amendment and parent initials will be required.

## **V. Arrival and Dismissal:**

### **A. Morning Session Drop Off Procedures**

Rolling drop off starts at 8:50 am for Group One. A member of Science Center Staff will be present at the Driveway Checkpoint to have an adult complete the Health Self-Attestation, check the child's temperature, and sign the child in. The family will then be directed to the unloading area assigned to the child's class. Teachers will be present at the unloading area to assist with helping the child out of the vehicle. Please turn your vehicle off when loading and unloading your child.

Rolling pick up starts at 11:50 for Group One. Staff will be present at the Driveway Checkpoint to sign the child out and check identification before directing the vehicle to the designated pickup area.

If your child needs assistance with their seatbelt, car seat, or backpack please feel free to step out of your vehicle, Parents must remain at their vehicles at all times and must be wearing a proper face covering during drop off and pick up.

#### **Classroom Assignments**

##### **Group One: Sun Classroom 8:50-11:50**

- Chickadees
- Tree Frogs\*

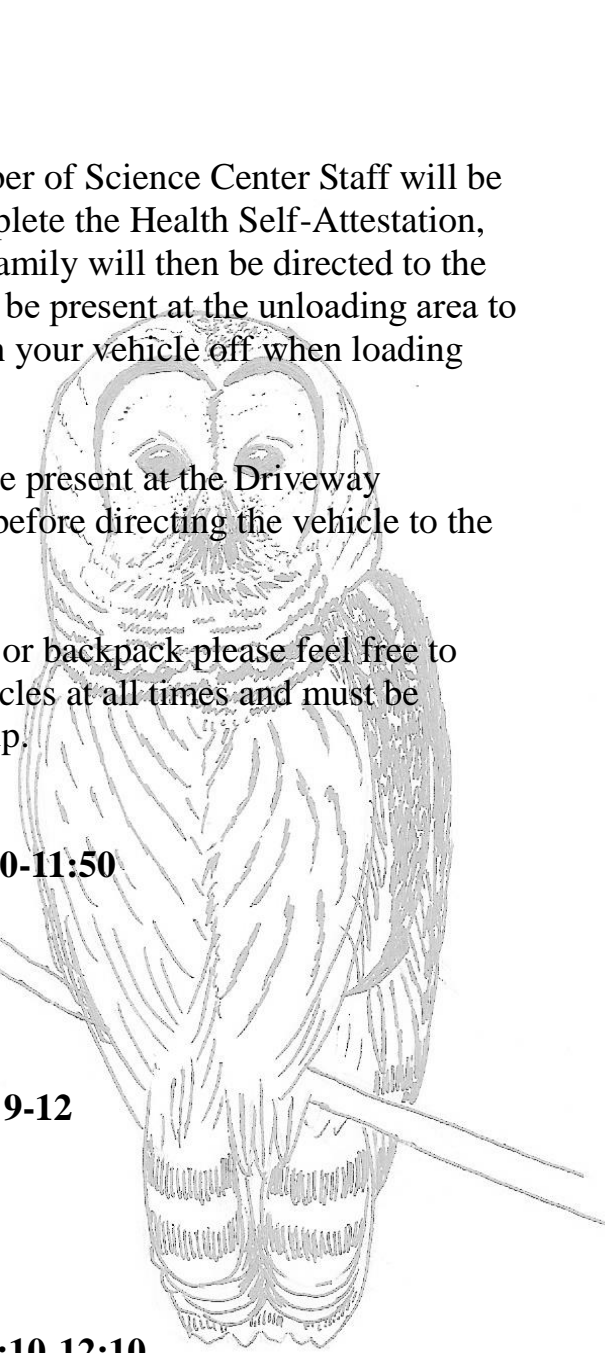
##### **Group Two: Vine Classroom 9-12**

- Salamanders
- Cottontails

##### **Group Three: Earth Classroom 9:10-12:10**

- Crickets
- Foxes

\*Tree Frogs staying for extended day can be picked up at 2:30



## **B. Afternoon Session Drop Off Procedures**

Please see **Morning Session Drop Off Procedures** for an overview of how drop off and pick up will run this year. Rolling drop off for the afternoon session, Squirrels, takes place at 1:00pm and pick up is at 3:30.

- C. No child or group of children will be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than the parent/guardian who enrolled them without written authorization. Please update authorizations accordingly. Identification will be required.
- D. **Please drive slowly at all times** and do not let children cross the parking lot unaccompanied by an adult.
- E. **Do not let children play on the traffic island**- cars coming from right parking area cannot see children; please enjoy the safety of the side yard and gardens.
- G. Nature Center Preschool follows the Norwell Public School calendar for holidays and vacations. Vacation week programs will be offered. Additional fees apply.
- H. There may be times when South Shore Natural Science Center must close due to severe weather conditions. Weather related cancelations will be determined as needed. **Please visit [ssymca.org](http://ssymca.org) for closing updates.**

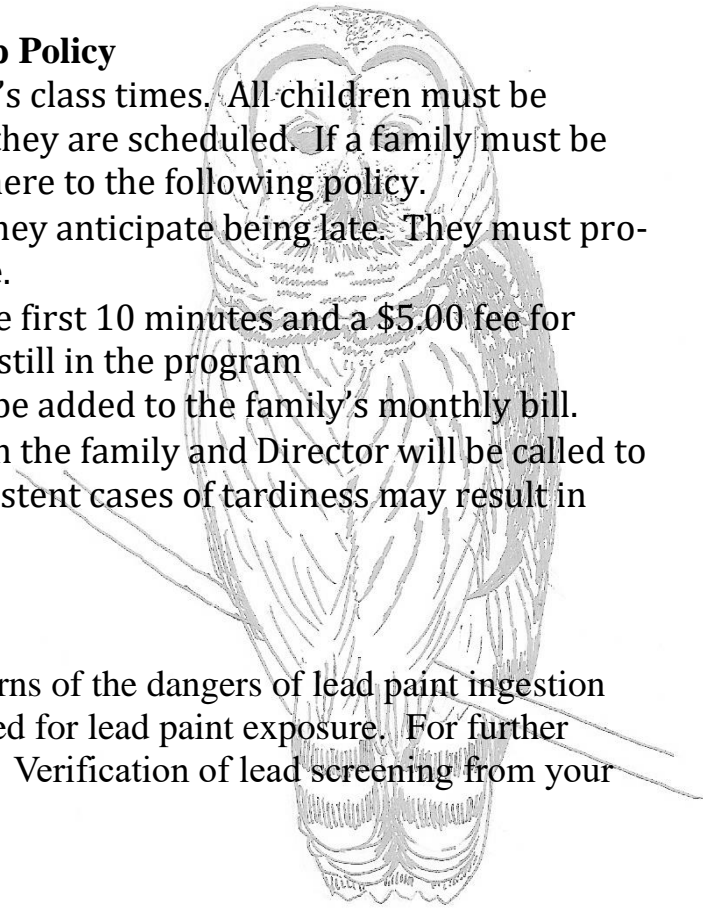
### **Late Pick-up Policy**

The staff schedule is set in regard to the program's class times. All children must be picked up at the conclusion of the class in which they are scheduled. If a family must be late for pick-up, Nature Center Preschool will adhere to the following policy.

- Families must call the Preschool to tell us they anticipate being late. They must provide the time in which they expect to arrive.
- Families will be charged a \$10.00 fee for the first 10 minutes and a \$5.00 fee for each five minute interval that their child is still in the program after class has dismissed. The late fee will be added to the family's monthly bill.
- If the tardiness is consistent, a meeting with the family and Director will be called to discuss strategies to avoid tardiness. Consistent cases of tardiness may result in compromised enrollment.

## **VI. Lead Paint Screening:**

The Department of Early Education and Care warns of the dangers of lead paint ingestion and requires children under the age of six be tested for lead paint exposure. For further information check with your child's pediatrician. Verification of lead screening from your child's healthcare professional is required.





## **VII. Illness/Absence Policy:**

If your child feels ill in the morning before a school day, please keep him/her at home. Children should be fever free for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Since all children go out on the trails each day, your child should not return to school until he/she can go outdoors. Please see the Covid Addendum for information about Covid related symptoms.

When a child will not be in attendance on their regularly scheduled day at Nature Center Preschool, it is the responsibility of the family to call Nature Center Preschool **(781-659-2559 ext. 216)** and inform the staff of the child's absence by 9:00am. Nature Center Preschool staff will take the following steps to ensure the child's safety:

- If a family member of an absent child has called or emailed the School, the staff person who took the phone call will note the confirmed absence on the Call In Log located inside the Director's office.
- At 9:15am, for AM classes and 1:15pm, for PM classes, an identified staff member will call each classroom to find out which children are not in attendance.
- The staff member will call the contacts listed on the absent child's emergency contact sheet.
- When contact has been made, the staff person will note the person spoken to and the time on the 'Call In Log'.
- If, after calling all emergency contacts listed, no contact has been made to confirm the child's absence, the staff person will inform the Director who will call the non-emergency line of the family's local police department for a welfare check. Please note that this required policy is for the safety of your children.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent is called to take the child home. If the parent cannot be reached, an authorized person may be called to take the child home. In the event that no parent or authorized person can be reached, a teacher will stay with the child in a quiet area of the classroom until he/she goes home. Children cannot return to the school until they are symptom free for 24 hours. This will allow your child time to recover and prevent the spread of illness to other children.

Parents are asked to have their children bring a set of seasonally appropriate clothing each day (including socks and underwear) in a bag or backpack with the child's name on it. All soiled clothing will be double bagged in sealed plastic bags and stored apart from other items. All items used by the child will be disinfected and/or washed. The teacher will wear disposable gloves if necessary and wash her hands after contact with the child.

## **VIII. Communicable Diseases:**

In accordance with state regulations: "Nature Center Preschool shall not admit a child who has a diagnosed (or suspected) communicable disease (such as impetigo, conjunctivitis, or



H1N1) during the time when it is communicable and shall notify all parents when any communicable disease, such as chicken pox, measles or mumps has been introduced into the center.

Nature Center Preschool follows the public school rules on communicable diseases:

**We suggest that you follow the directions listed below when returning your child to school after an illness.**

<b>DISEASE</b>	<b>May Return</b>	<b>Approx. Time</b>
“Blushing Disease” (fifth disease)	May return with rash, if no fever or distress.	1-3 days
“Cold” Symptoms	Reduction of cough and runny nose. No fever.	1-6 days
Chicken Pox	No NEW eruptions or fever. May have old dry scabs.	1 week
Hand-foot-mouth disease (Coxsackievirus, Enterovirus)	Keep children with hand-foot-and-mouth disease out of child care or school until fever is gone and mouth sores have healed.	7-10 days
Head Lice	After verified treatment	No nits present
Hepatitis-infectious, not otherwise specified	Until documented that illness is not transmissible by fecal oral route or until one week after symptom onset, whichever occurs first.	Fever is completely gone and a week has passed since the symptoms started.
Impetigo	Doctor’s permission or clearing of condition.	24 hours after first medication
Measles (Rubella) / (3 day)	No rash or fever	4-8 days
Measles (Rubella)/ (7 day- hard-red)	No rash or fever, red eyes, red nose	7-10 days
Mononucleosis	Absence of all symptoms	Depending on condition
Mumps	No swelling, fever	1-2 weeks
Pink Eye	Doctor’s permission or clear eyes evident	1-4 days
Ringworm	Doctor’s permission or clear area	
Scabies	After verified treatment	After verified treatment
Strep Infections, Scarlet Fever, Strep Throat, Scarletine	At least 24 hours after initiating antimicrobial treatment.	Personal surveillance and prophylaxis with an antimicrobial when appropriate. Otherwise, no restrictions.



**To ensure the health and safety of the Preschool community, a letter, email, or telephone call informing the Preschool Director of a highly contagious communicable disease within a student's family is required.**

Common Cold: The common cold is the cause of more absences than any other single ailment. Most children's diseases begin with symptoms like those of the common cold. If your child has a cold, keep him/her at home until early symptoms have passed, such as coughing, sneezing and running nose. Colds may be prevented with proper hand washing technique as well as hygiene habits that encourage sneezing and/or coughing into the elbow/sleeve rather than into the hands.

Covid-19: If a child or staff is exposed to COVID-19 regardless of symptoms, the child or staff must remain home for 14 days. The center will consult the local board of health for guidance on quarantine for other children and staff as well as additional precautions needed to ensure the program space is safe to continue child care services.

If a child or staff's household member tests positive for COVID-19, the child or staff must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last time they could have been exposed. Please see the Covid 19 Addendum for more information

## **IX. Medication:**

### **Oral Medications:**

Prescription and non-prescription medications will be administered with the written permission of the parent and by the written order of the physician utilizing the medication consent form (valid for one year).

**This includes homeopathic oral medications.**

The medication must *be in its original bottle* with the child's name, the name of the drug, and the directions for usage and storage on the label. The parent must fill out the authorization for medication form, in its entirety, accompanied by a parental signature. **No Educator will administer the first dose of any medication to a child in case of an allergic reaction. The first dose must always be given at home.**

A teacher with specific training in medication administration, including epi-pen, will always be present to administer medications.

The teacher accepting the medication will document the child's name, time medication will be administered, in the daily log.

The teacher will administer the medication according to the physician's instructions, and record the date, time, dosage and staff signature on the medication log.

Unused medication will be returned to the parent and documented on the child's

medication log.

**Topical non-prescription medications:**

Topical, non-prescription medications such as petroleum jelly, anti-bacterial ointments, which are applied to minor wounds, rashes or broken skin must be stored in the original container and used for an individual child, only. The original container will be labeled with the child's name and only administered with written parental authorization and by the written order of the physician.

- Written authorization includes a signed statement listing the specific topical, non-prescription medication to be administered and the criteria for administration. This parental authorization is valid for no more than one year from the original date and signature.
- **The school will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the original container unless authorized by a written note by the child's physician.**
- Topical non-prescription medication such as sunscreen, bug spray and other ointments which are not applied to open wounds, rashes, or broken skin may be generally administered to a child with written parental authorization. It is preferred that sunscreen and/or insect repellent be applied by a parent or caregiver before coming into school.
- The parent will be notified when non-prescription medication is administered to the child.

**X. Emergency Procedures:**

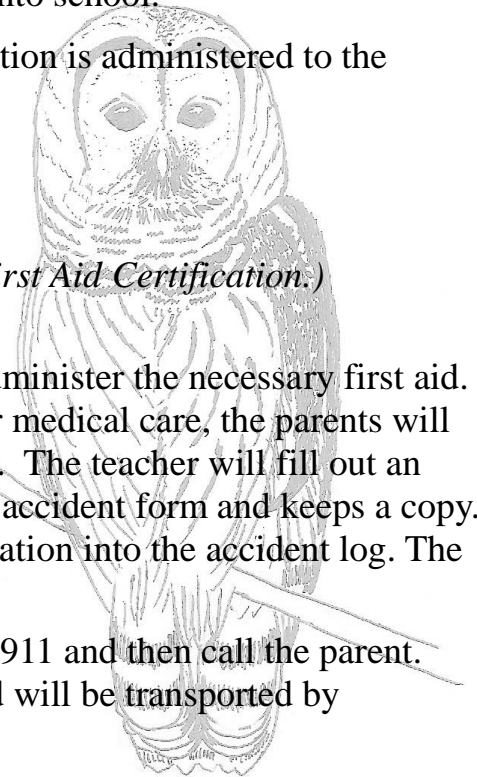
*(All Nature Center Preschool staff maintain current CPR and First Aid Certification.)*

When a child has a minor injury or illness the teacher will administer the necessary first aid. If the teacher and/or Director feel that the child needs further medical care, the parents will be called and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible. The teacher will fill out an incident/accident form within 24 hours. The parent signs the accident form and keeps a copy. The director reviews the accident form and enters the information into the accident log. The accident form is placed in the child's file.

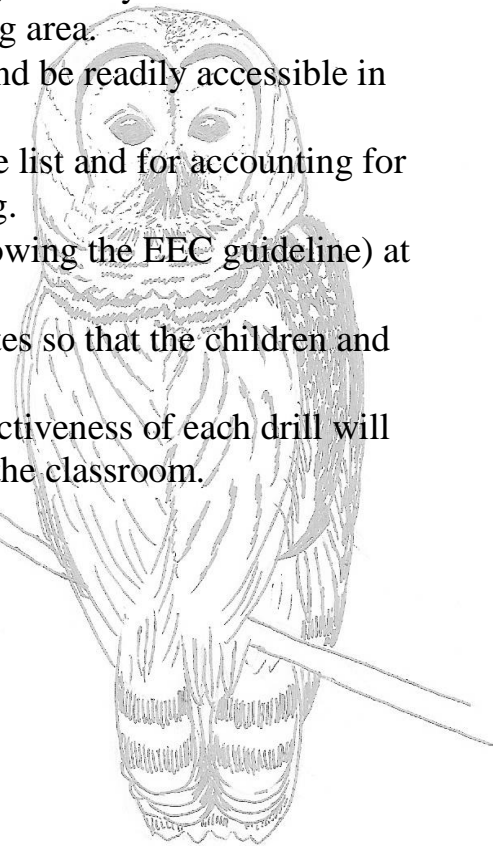
If there is a life-threatening emergency, the director will call 911 and then call the parent. The teacher will administer the necessary first aid. The child will be transported by ambulance or parent to the appropriate hospital.

**XI. Emergency Evacuation**

- Emergency Evacuation Plans will be posted at all exits
- During an emergency evacuation the Lead Teacher will be responsible for taking the attendance information, emergency contact information, a first aid kit, and for ensuring that all of the children are out of the building.
- Teachers and assistant teachers will assist in the evacuation.



- Once evacuated, the class will meet at the back of the building and may continue to a center wide meeting place by the large pine tree near the staff parking area.
- The emergency contacts will be kept in each class backpack and be readily accessible in case of an emergency evacuation.
- The Lead Teacher will be responsible for taking the attendance list and for accounting for all of the children in the class once they are safely out of the building.
- Emergency evacuation drills are conducted every month (following the EEC guideline) at different times of the program day.
- Children and staff will practice using different evacuation routes so that the children and staff will be familiar with them.
- Documentation of the date, time, number of children, and effectiveness of each drill will be maintained on the Fire Drill Log located on the bulletin board in the classroom.



## **XII. Clothing:**

- Because three groups share the classroom, anything your child brings to school should have his/her name on it.
- An extra set of clothing should be brought from home in a backpack with **the child's name on it.** Please also label clothing.
- We go outdoors every day in most weather. Safety is of utmost concern and conditions will be closely monitored and assessed for safe conditions. Please dress your child in appropriate clothes. Play clothes and rubber-soled shoes are best; **no crocs or open toe shoes/sandals, please.** For rainy weather, a rain coat and rubber boots are recommended. In winter we require a warm jacket, snow pants (when needed for snow or bitter cold), boots, hat, and water-proof mittens.
- Please provide at least 2 masks for your child to use during the school day

## **XIII. Toys or other items from home:**

We prefer that children not bring toys from home except on "Show and Tell" days or items of special interest to our teaching themes indicated on the calendar. If a lovey is necessary we just ask that the child keeps in their backpack where they can visit it when they need to.

## **XIV. Parties and Snacks:**

**Nature Center Preschool is a tree nut and peanut-free environment!**

A mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack of water, crackers, a protein choice such as hummus or sunflower butter, and fruit or vegetables is provided each day. Nature Center Preschool strives to provide nutritious choices for snacks that promote good overall health.

Contributions from parents are much appreciated but not required. Nature Center Preschool will follow physician's orders regarding special diets and allergies. Family requests for dietary needs, not requiring a physician's order, may also be submitted.

The YMCA has made a commitment to the Partnership for a Healthier America. Nature Center Preschool implements all HEPA (Healthy Eating and Physical Activity) standards in our classrooms. We provide daily opportunities for children to learn about healthy food choices and promote physical activity to keep our children healthy and strong!

Birthdays are celebrated, and we have a Fall party, a Winter party, a Friendship (Valentine's) Day party with exchange of cards, a Spring party, and an End-of School celebration with a picnic. We emphasize healthy choices for celebrations such as a child's favorite fruit. Other choices may be pretzels, rice cakes, bagels or veggies with dip. Prior to sending in any baked goods it is required that families speak with the classroom teacher regarding ingredient labels and the procedure followed in the cooking process. No candy, please, and **no items with peanuts, nuts, or their oils.**

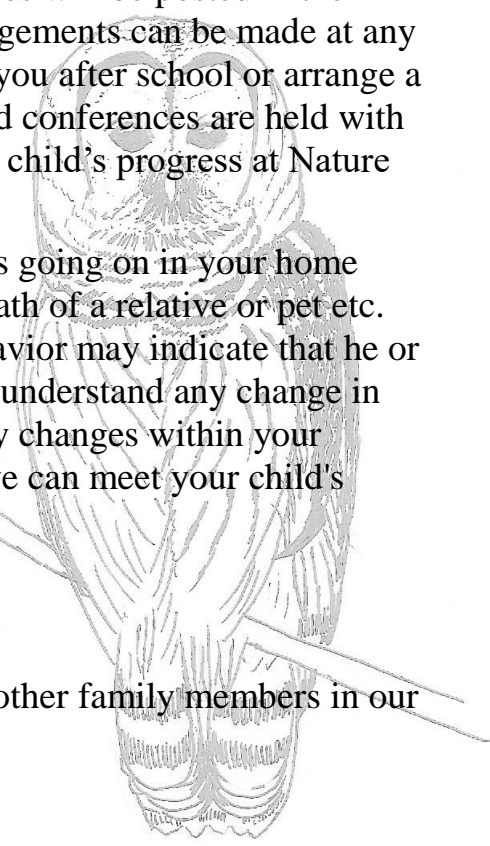
#### **XV. Parent/Family Communication:**

Nature Center Preschool staff will utilize many forms of communication to keep families aware of special events, curriculum, policies and other news. This may take the form of email or letters sent home with children. Additionally, there is a white memo board in the hallway of each classroom that tells about the school day. Pictures will be posted in the hallways, as well, relating to current classroom activities. Arrangements can be made at any time to speak with a teacher at length. We will be happy to call you after school or arrange a conference any time during the school year. Regularly scheduled conferences are held with all parents/guardians in November and late April to discuss your child's progress at Nature Center Preschool.

It would be helpful to the teachers to know if anything unusual is going on in your home during the year. This may be an illness, an anticipated move, death of a relative or pet etc. Although your child may not seem to be affected, his or her behavior may indicate that he or she is upset. If we know what the cause is, we are better able to understand any change in behavior. Please let the classroom teachers know if there are any changes within your family or routine that may affect your child in any way so that we can meet your child's needs.

#### **XVI. Open Door Policy/Visitation/Confidentiality\*:**

\*Due to Covid-19 we are unable to have volunteers, parents, or other family members in our indoor or outdoor classrooms. Please disregard this section.



Nature Center Preschool has an open door policy; we want you to feel welcome at any time. Parents and family members are also invited to help in the classroom with special projects or on our nature walks. In the spirit of child safety and to protect all children in our program, we will be implementing the South Shore YMCA Volunteer Policy. These are the guidelines for volunteering at Nature Center Preschool:

- One-time volunteers (other than chaperones) are not required to submit paperwork.
- Field trip chaperones must submit a CORI/SORI; waiver/confidentiality agreement.
- Families who request to volunteer on a regular basis (more than four times/year) in the classroom are considered Program/Dept. volunteers. The following is required:
  - CORI/SORI
  - Application
  - References
  - SSYMCA Orientation
  - Waiver/confidentiality agreement

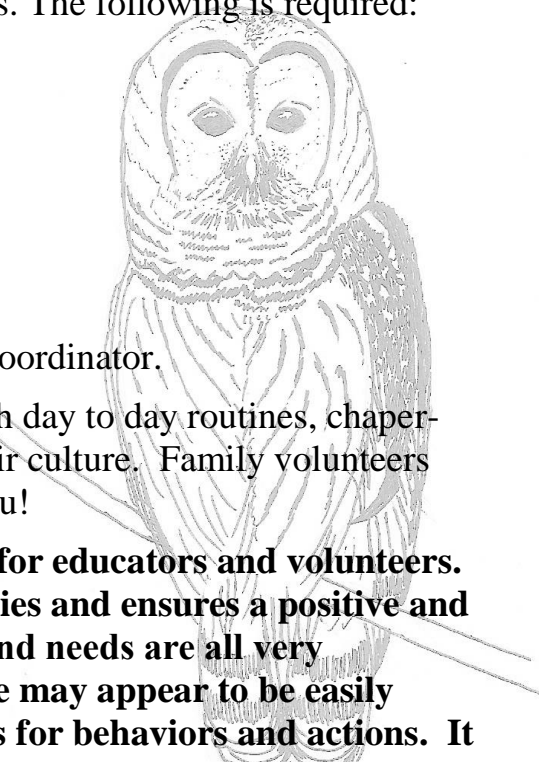
These forms can be obtained from the SSNSC volunteer coordinator.

We value the assistance that families provide helping out with day to day routines, chaperoning field trips, sharing talents and hobbies, and sharing their culture. Family volunteers enrich the NCP experience and we could not do it without you!

**Nature Center Preschool also has a confidentiality policy for educators and volunteers. The confidentiality policy protects the privacy of all families and ensures a positive and respectful environment for all. Children’s personalities and needs are all very individual and happenings in the classroom on the surface may appear to be easily identified, when, in reality, there are much deeper reasons for behaviors and actions. It is important to be aware that information out of context can be misunderstood and lead to misinformation. As professionals, NCP educators work with families every day to create the most beneficial environment for each individual child. Educators adhere to strict confidentiality which includes maintaining the privacy of each child and family. Volunteers in the classroom are also expected to adhere to these confidentiality guidelines:**

- **Information that identifies individual students should not be disclosed.**
- **Discussion about individual students or groups of students should be respectful and not include directly identifying names of children.**
- **Incidents that occur in the classroom should not be discussed with anyone other than the educators caring for the child or children.**
- **Concerns may be raised with educators in a private setting.**

**Please do not take photos while volunteering in the classroom or on field trips. The use of any type of audio or video recording device is prohibited unless authorized by the Nature Center Preschool Director.**



## **XVII. Family Advisory Council:**

Our Family Advisory Council (FAC) is made up of volunteers who serve as liaisons between families and teachers. Representatives of the FAC are invited to regularly scheduled meetings to discuss ideas for enhancing the preschool and share feedback from families. Our dedicated volunteers also help with Science Center events, the Storybook walk, family evenings and events, and they help organize fundraisers and other projects of interest.

There are several possible roles:

- Class Liaison
- Sub-committee member
- Secretary/Co-secretary

Please speak with the Director or Classroom Teacher if you would be interested in volunteering on our Family Advisory Council.

We **strongly encourage** families to be involved in fundraisers that contribute to scholarships and equipment for the Preschool, to the Science Center as a whole, as well as the South Shore YMCA's Annual Campaign.

## **XVIII. Child Guidance Policy**

Our child guidance techniques are used in a consistent, reasonable and developmentally appropriate way based on an understanding of the individual needs and stage of the development of each child. By using the following child guidance techniques, we strive to minimize inappropriate behavior while creating a positive and nurturing environment for all of the children in our care.

Child Guidance Techniques will include:

- Setting reasonable and positive expectations.
- Offering choices and providing children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings.
- Firm and reasonable limits and rules will be explained to children in an age-appropriate manner using clear, easy to understand words.
- Redirection- we will offer alternatives to children when undesirable behavior is displayed.
- Verbal intervention- we will talk with the child about his/her inappropriate behavior and give suggestions on how to deal with the situation more appropriately.
- Logical consequences- we will help the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions, which will encourage self-control through understanding.
- If a child is acting out by hurting themselves or others, we may separate the child and assist them to an area where he/she can be supervised at all times until the child feels he/she can



rejoin the group.

- If a child persists with particularly challenging behavior, the teacher and the family will discuss appropriate management techniques together.
- Children shall participate in the establishment of rules and limits appropriate to their age.

Staff will be a positive role model for youth by exhibiting professionalism in all interactions, portray an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, maturity and always maintain confidentiality to children and families.

### **Nature Center Preschool Strictly Prohibits:**

- Corporal punishment, including spanking of children.
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment.
- Depriving children of meals or snacks.
- Force feeding children.
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

### **XIX. Termination Procedures:**

Every effort will be made to work with children and parents with the goal of continued enrollment at Nature Center Preschool, including parent meeting and feedback. However, sometimes it may be necessary to suspend or terminate a child's enrollment. In cases where a child's continued behavior is a risk to other children, the staff, or property, parents may be asked to withdraw enrollment.

Parents will be notified in writing of the reasons for the suspension or termination of enrollment and a meeting with the teacher and the director will be arranged. At this meeting other options for the child will be explored and/or referrals made to other community services (Please see referral policy on page 16 of the family guide). We will prepare the child in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand to ease with the transition.

Other Conditions for Termination or Suspension:

- Failure to pay weekly tuition.
- Unresolved disagreement regarding center policies or procedures as stated in the Nature Center Preschool Family Guide.
- Lack of updated physical and immunizations (child may re-enroll based on availability once updated paperwork is completed).
- When a child and/or family member is physically and/or verbally abusive and /or threatening to children or staff.

If a child has been dis-enrolled (required to end enrollment by Program Director) from any

South Shore YMCA Program, and is moving to another SSYMCA Program, a family meeting is required with the Director of the new SSYMCA Program prior to the Program's start. The family must request and schedule the meeting with the Director, and ensure it takes place prior to the Program's start. This meeting is to ensure that the new Program is able to gather information re' the child's needs and that the program can meet the child's needs. It is encouraged that the prior Program Director (and South Shore YMCA Inclusion Director if applicable) be a part of that meeting (Example: Day Camp to Afterschool). Please ask the Director for additional information as needed.

## **XX. Mandated Reporting**

Nature Center Preschool will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the care and custody of the school.

All SSNSC/SSYMCA staff fall under the MA guidelines of Mandated Reporting and are mandated by law to report all incidents of suspected abuse and/or neglect of children under the age of 18 to the Department of Children and Families via 51A Report. According to MA General Laws to Protect Children Section 51A-F no staff will ever be "discriminated or retaliated against" for making a report of suspected abuse.

To learn more about South Shore Natural Science Center/South Shore YMCA commitment to child safety, visit <http://ssymca.org/safe-kids/>

The staff will follow written procedure for the reporting of any suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect as required by MGL 119 and 51A:

- All staff are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. The report will be made to the Department of Children and Families pursuant to MGL 119 and 51A, by the Preschool Director.
- Nature Center Preschool conducts comprehensive background checks on all staff including an EEC CORI, DCF, SORI and fingerprinting.

## **XXI. Babysitting Policy**

Nature Center Preschool teachers are prohibited from babysitting, visiting, transporting, or attending any birthday parties when a child is enrolled in the program.

## **XXII. Our Educators**

At Nature Center Preschool we believe that the quality of the children's experiences while in our care is largely dependent on the quality of our educators. Therefore, we carefully select our educators based on their education, experience, passion, and ability to work with children and families. Nature Center Preschool provides an extensive orientation process regarding program policies and procedures, curriculum, and philosophy of education. We provide ongoing professional development opportunities for our educators to further their own learning through courses and trainings offered inside and outside of the South Shore YMCA. Early educators participate in ongoing professional development in both nature-based curriculum goals and traditional early childhood development. Educators attend a spring Early Educator's Retreat and complete 12 StrongStart Essentials modules to support the healthy growth and development

of young children as well as ensure core competencies are enhanced and critical early childhood education skills achieved. In addition, all employees of Nature Center Preschool receive training in first aid and CPR as well as Child Abuse Prevention, Recognition and Reporting.

### **XXIII. Referral Policy:**

If a staff member has a concern about a child's social, educational or mental well-being, she is responsible for bringing it to the attention of the preschool director, who files written documentation.

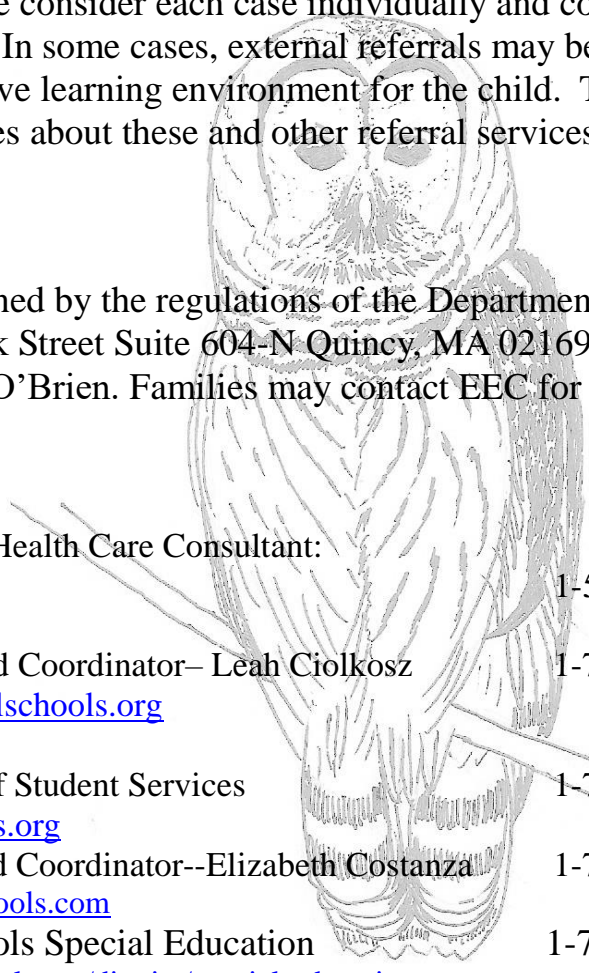
The staff member as well as the Director must first observe and record the child's behavior over a period of time and review previous records if available. The director contacts the family for a conference and offers assistance with referrals, if necessary. A list of services in the community is in the parent handbook including the contact person for Early Intervention. The preschool director will make the referral and follow-up will take place with parental permission.

### **XXIV. Individuals with Diverse Abilities**

Nature Center Preschool will make reasonable accommodations for children with diverse abilities and chronic illnesses. We consider each case individually and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In some cases, external referrals may be recommended in an effort to provide the least restrictive learning environment for the child. The following is a list of resources for families. Inquiries about these and other referral services may be made through the Director.

### ***REFERRAL RESOURCES***

Nature Center Preschool is governed by the regulations of the Department of Early Education and Care located at 1250 Hancock Street Suite 604-N Quincy, MA 02169. Telephone: 617- 472-2881 x628. Our Licensor is Lori O'Brien. Families may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory history.



Nature Center Preschool Health Care Consultant: Barbara Blaney, RN	1-508-328-0214
Norwell • Early Childhood Coordinator– Leah Ciolkosz <a href="mailto:leah.ciolkosz@norwellschools.org">leah.ciolkosz@norwellschools.org</a> Hanover Public Schools	1-781-659-8800
Keith Guyette, Director of Student Services <a href="mailto:kguyette@hanoverschools.org">kguyette@hanoverschools.org</a>	1-781-878-0786
Hingham Early Childhood Coordinator--Elizabeth Costanza <a href="mailto:ecostanza@hinghamschools.com">ecostanza@hinghamschools.com</a>	1-781-741-1570
Weymouth Public Schools Special Education <a href="https://www.weymouthschools.org/district/special-education">https://www.weymouthschools.org/district/special-education</a>	1-781-335-1460
Department of Children and Families <b>Coastal Area DCF Office</b>	1- 781-794-4400 FAX: 781-794-4507 and

220 Forbes Road\Rear, Suite 117  
Braintree, MA 02184 781-794-4510

Child-at-Risk Hotline 1-800-792-5200

Parental Stress Hotline 1-800-632-8188  
[www.parentshelpingparents.org](http://www.parentshelpingparents.org)

Dept. of Early Education and Care (EEC), Quincy 1-617-472-2881  
[www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us)

MA Dental Society 1-800-342-8747  
[www.massdental.org](http://www.massdental.org)

MA Medical Society, Lakeville 1-508-946-0120  
[www.massmed.org](http://www.massmed.org)

MA Psychological Association, Wellesley 1-781-263-0080  
[www.masspsych.org](http://www.masspsych.org)

National Mental Health Association 1-800-969-6642  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

Lead Poison Prevention 1-800-532-9571

Poison Information Center 1-800-682-9211

South Shore Therapies, Weymouth, Pembroke and Cohasset 1- 781-335-6663  
<http://www.southshoetherapies.com/>

Quincy Family Resource Center 617-481-7227

Bryna Rogers- Senior Program Director <https://quincyfamilyrc.org/>

1120 Hancock St., Quincy MA 02169

Early Intervention 1-617-971-2470

[www.talkreadplay.org](http://www.talkreadplay.org)

**Social Services and Tuition Assistance:**

Women, Infants and Children (WIC): 1-508-747-4933

Community Care for Kids: 1-617-657-5305

<https://www.qcap.org/our-programs/early-childhood-education-care/community-care-for-kids/>

**XXV. Lunch Bunch\*:**

\*Due to Covid-19 Lunch Bunch will not be offered this year. Please disregard this section.

We offer an opportunity for children to stay for lunch on Wednesdays and Thursdays from

12:00PM- 12:50PM, starting on the last Wednesday of September. The cost is \$12.00 payable on the morning of the day on which your child will be staying for the extended hour or a booklet of 5 lunch tickets for \$50 may be purchased. Afternoon students are welcome and should pay upon arrival.

Serving healthy meals and snacks to children is important to providing good nutrition, supporting lifelong healthy eating habits, and helping to prevent costly and potentially disabling diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. At Nature Center Preschool, we will work with families to ensure that all children's nutritional needs are met by following USDA guidelines.

The children are asked to bring their own lunch in **recyclable containers**. Water will be provided but the child may bring his/her own drink if desired. **Please see the 'trashless lunch' suggestions on the back cover of the family guide.**

Lunch Box Suggestions: **Please pack a nut-free and peanut-free lunch** *\*(some children might be allergic to peanuts, or nuts. Please take this into consideration when packing your child's lunch)*

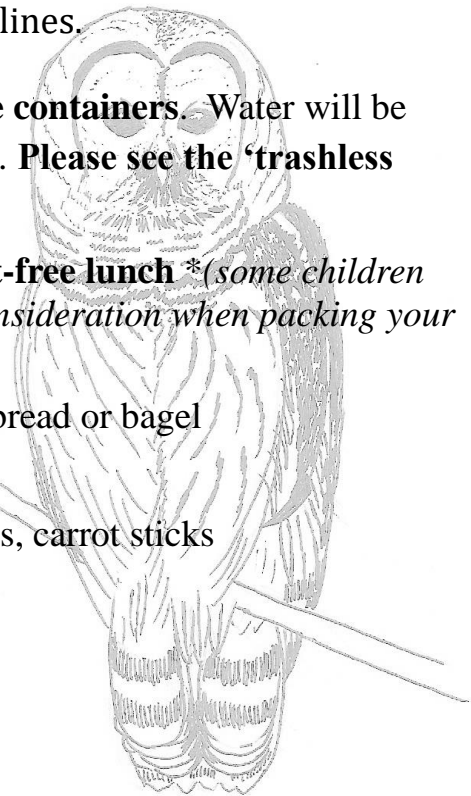
**Sandwich:** luncheon meats, cheese, tuna fish, whole wheat bread or bagel

**Drink:** water, milk

**Fruits & Vegetables:** apples, bananas, pears, grapes, oranges, carrot sticks

**Other items:** granola bars, crackers, yogurt, pasta

No Candy or Gum Please!



## **XXVI. Hand washing**

Children and Adults will wash their hands:

- After diapering or using the bathroom
- Before eating, or preparing food
- After handling animals or their equipment
- Before and after water play or messy play
- After sneezing or coughing/using a tissue

## **XXVII. Toileting**

Children who are toilet trained will use the bathroom as needed and as scheduled throughout the day. After using the bathroom, all children will follow proper hand washing procedures. For children who are learning to use the toilet, educators will follow family requests and work in partnership during this process. Educators will provide many opportunities throughout the day for children to become familiar with the toileting process.

Toileting accidents: All families are asked to provide a complete set of clothes (appropriate to the season) in their child's backpack. If a child has a toileting accident,

he/she will be cleaned up by an educator in the bathroom and changed into clean clothes. The soiled clothes will be placed in a doubled and sealed bag and returned to the family at the end of the school day.

### **XXVIII. Transportation Plan:**

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from the preschool or on eventual field trips. A permission slip for field trips will be required.

### **XXIX. Tooth Brushing Policy**

In accordance with Department of Early Education and Care's Health and Safety Policy, Nature Center Preschool Educators must assist children in brushing their teeth whenever they are in care for more than four hours or whenever they consume a meal while in care. Nature Center Preschool will provide the toothbrush and toothpaste and educators will assist children in brushing their teeth and apply toothpaste according to labeled directions. Individual, labeled toothbrushes will be stored in a safe and sanitary manner open to the air without touching each other. Toothbrushes will be replaced every three months or after an illness.

### **XXX. Outdoor Activities:**

An important part of the curriculum will be outdoor exploration to teach children about the natural world around the Science Center and provide hands-on exploration that connects all areas of learning.

The teachers of Nature Center Preschool have many years of experience leading young children on trail walks around the center. Three people will be with the children on the walks and during outdoor activities if we have more than 15 children in the group. A first aid kit is always brought along as well as a cell phone and a 2-way radio so that we can keep in touch with the staff at the Science Center.

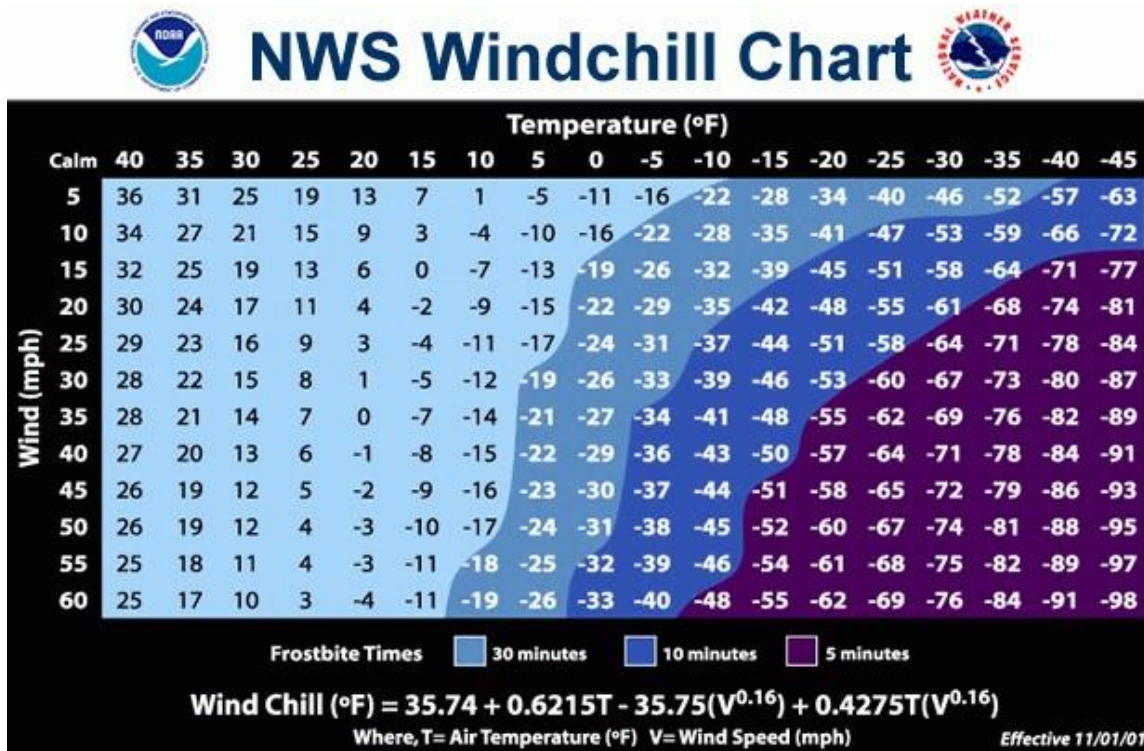
The duration of the outdoor time will be approximately 30 minutes or longer depending on the activities and the weather. In the Fall and Spring, the classes may have their entire class day outside. The children sometimes use a field with a sandbox and at other times play in the meadow. The trails will be inspected by Science Center Staff on a regular basis and kept in good condition. Our Preschool curriculum empowers children to explore the natural environment in a safe and appropriate way.

Our program differs from that of a traditional preschool with regard to outdoor education. Our Teachers' expertise with the outdoor environment provides for meaningful experiences that encourage and enhance the growth and potential of each child.

**Warmer weather:** Please apply sunscreen and insect repellent outdoors prior to arriving to Preschool. In addition to wearing *sunscreen*, you can help protect your child from harmful rays by having them wear a hat, sunglasses, sun-protective clothing and by limiting sun exposure, especially during the most intense times of the day from 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tick prevention includes insect repellent, long pants tucked into socks, and permethrin applied to shoes and clothing. We limit meadow play when the grass is very long and stay in the center of the trails during hikes. Please check your child daily for ticks especially in hidden areas of the body.

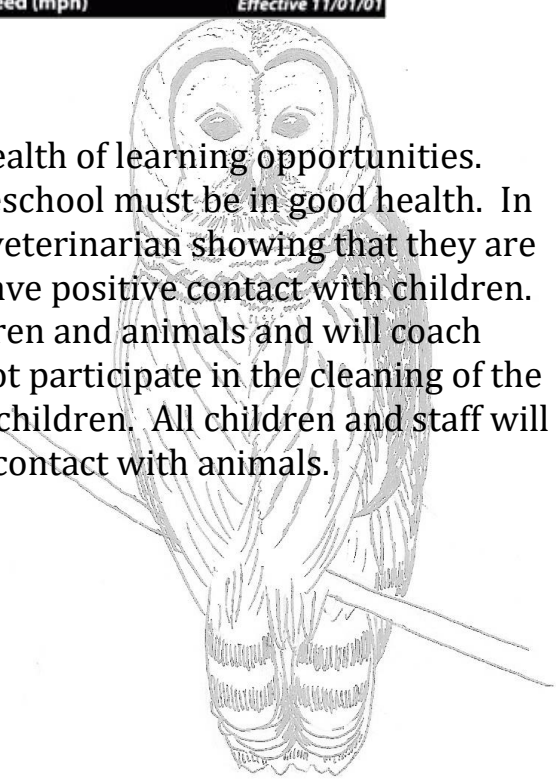


**Winter:** We take the safety of children very seriously and we utilize guidelines for outdoor time. When the property is full of ice and walking anywhere is hazardous, we do not venture out. Additionally, high winds that cause tree limb damage would be another reason to stay inside. Regarding cold temperatures, we gauge the safety based on the frostbite guide put out by the National Weather Service (p.21). In extreme cold we limit outdoor time to less than thirty minutes while also closely monitoring the children's comfort. Having snow pants, jackets, waterproof mittens and a hat generally protects children from the dangers of cold along with reduced exposure time.



### Animal and Pet Policy

Animals can be fascinating to children and provide a wealth of learning opportunities. Classroom pets or visiting animals of Nature Center Preschool must be in good health. In addition, all animals must have documentation from a veterinarian showing that they are up to date on immunizations and are of the nature to have positive contact with children. Educators will supervise all interactions between children and animals and will coach children on safe behavior with animals. Children will not participate in the cleaning of the animal's habitat and litter boxes will be inaccessible to children. All children and staff will follow proper hand washing procedures following any contact with animals.





## Nature Center Preschool Organizational Chart

Michelle Marquis, Preschool Director  
781-659-2559 x216 mmarquis@ssymca.org

Kristine Swan, Vice President of Youth Development  
781-826-7910 kswan@ssymca.org

Chris Jacobs, Executive Director of the South Shore Natural Science Center  
781-659-2559 cjacobs@ssymca.org

Revised 8/2020

### South Shore Natural Science Center History

Founded in 1962, by a group of local naturalists and college professors, and led by William G. Vinal, PhD (retired professor of Nature Education) and John Ripley Forbes, (President of Natural Science for Youth Foundation), the South Shore Natural Science Center is one of Massachusetts oldest nature centers. The Science Center has been an integral part of the south shore community experience for multiple generations and currently serves a population of approximately 450,000 from 41 area towns south of Boston. Through our unique combination of education and cultural programs, multidimensional interactive live animal habitat exhibits, and nature trails, the Science Center enjoys an established reputation as an outstanding resource for environmental education. Seasonal celebrations, craft demonstrations, and expert lectures extend the Science Center's programming and attract wide audiences.

SSNSC offers year-round programming, Monday through Saturday (9:00-5:00); Sundays (11:00-4:00) and our trails are open daily dawn until dusk. The Center's fully accessible main building includes the ECOZONE, an interactive living habitat exhibit area focusing on the region's ecosystems, classrooms, greenhouse, nature store, and a large art gallery/function room featuring monthly nature related art and photography exhibits. The state EEC certified preschool provides a nurturing beginning to environmental education and the summer day camp thrills young explorers. Member admission is free and volunteers earn complimentary individual memberships after 40 hours of donated time.

SSNSC is proud that our outstanding environmental education initiatives are recognized at the federal, state, and local levels with support from Mass. Cultural Council, REI, DCR, Animal Planet's ROAR, South Shore Playhouse Associates, and Norwell, Pembroke, Marshfield, and Scituate Local Arts Councils. SSNSC is actively involved with New England Museum Association, American Association of Museums, and Ma Environmental Educators Society. SSNSC collaborates with the North and South Rivers Watershed Association, New England Wildlife Center, Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, Mineral Club of Southeastern Mass. and Mass. Audubon-South Shore Sanctuaries. SSNSC is an active member of the Norwell

Chamber of Commerce, South Shore Chamber of Commerce, Plymouth County Development Corporation, and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. In addition, SSNSC participates in the MCC PASS Roster Program, AAA discount and Mass. Teachers Association Discount Program.