

EPIPHANY COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

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Handbook for Caregivers



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Rev 1/09

Main Floor: Kathy Kelly Fernandez, 74th St. MAGIC Receptionist
Allyson Pagliocca, Party Coordinator
Double Time
Mini Gym
Big Gym
Adult Bathrooms

Second Floor: Julie Flansbaum, 74th St. MAGIC Director's Office
Two Year Old Classrooms (Green doors)
Kitchen
Music/ Art Room

Third Floor: Wendy Levey, ECNS Director's Office
Carrie Schoen, ECNS Assistant Director's Office
School Library/ Carly Fields, School Secretary
Three Year Old Classrooms (Red doors)
Four Year Old Classrooms (Blue Doors)
Adult Bathroom

Penthouse: Conference Room
Playroom/ Dance Rooms
Outdoor Play Space
Adult Bathroom

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Epiphany Community Nursery School! You are a very important part of the school community, along with the children, parents, teachers and administrators. You are part of a team with the parents and teachers, working to make the best possible nursery school experience for the child you care for.

This handbook contains information that will be helpful to you in learning about the child's school routine and our common goals for the child's successful school experience. Please take a moment to read through the handbook, as it will answer many questions you may have about drop-off, pick up, health, safety and other topics. If you still have questions, please free to call us and ask: 212-737-2977.

THE SCHOOL

EPIPHANY COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL is located in a red brick, former carriage house at 510 East 74 Street between York Avenue and the East River, under the red canopy. ECNS is non-denominational with no religious affiliation. The school was founded in 1975 and is chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York.

There are seven classrooms: On the second floor, there are two classrooms for Young and Older 2's. On the third floor, there are three classrooms for the 3's classes, one for the Young 4's and one for the 4/5's. Please take a moment to look at the map of the school, and note the location of the child's

classroom, as well as the closest stairwell. While we do have an elevator, it can get very crowded at drop-off and pick-up times. Please take the stairs whenever possible. There is a photograph with the names of each teacher outside of each classroom. Please familiarize yourself with your child's teachers names and introduce yourself to the teachers if you have not met already.

THE PROGRAM

The school and the program are carefully planned to meet the needs of the young child as s/he grows and develops. Young children need opportunities for play, for socialization (forming friendships and learning to become part of a group) and for individual attention. We value and respect each child as a person who grows and learns at his/her own pace. We aim to meet the individual needs of each child, but each classroom has a regular routine of daily activities and clearly arranged activity areas. Children take part in cleaning and caring for the classroom, as it helps them feel confident and independent.

Here are the basic goals for each age group:

TWO-YEAR OLDS:

1. Separation: Children will learn to feel comfortable in saying good-bye to parents and caregivers and happily join friends and teachers in their classroom. We recommend saying a quick good-bye, assuring the child that you will return, and then leaving right away. If you make it seem like separation is "no big deal", then the child will pick up on that.

2. **Sharing:** We know that it is very hard for two-year olds to share, so we help them learn to talk about ways of taking turns. For example: " Jenny, I see that Susie is using the doll carriage now. Ask her if you can use it when she is finished." (Then, make sure that Susie follows through and Jenny gets a turn.)

THREE-YEAR OLDS: **Independence** is the big goal for the three-year olds. We work to make these children feel confident that they are capable of doing things for themselves. For example, children are encouraged to put on their own coats and hats to whatever extent they are able to, and then, we the adults will do the rest, such as starting the zipper. We expect children to put away the toys that they take off the shelves and play with, and clean up after themselves at snack time. Three-year olds are usually very eager to do these things, as it makes them feel like "big kids". The goal of independence continues throughout the childhood years.

FOUR- YEAR OLDS: **Active learning** is the goal for the Four's and Four/Five's classes. Children learn best by hands-on experience, not just by being "taught". For example, children learn about the concept of height and balance by building block towers. Children learn about how plants grow by planting seeds, caring for plants and talking about the changes they see. You can support the child as an active learner by talking to him/her about the school day ("What kind of an art project did you make today?" " What book did your teacher read?" "Who did you play with today?")

Throughout the nursery school years, children are learning to be part of the group, seeing similarities and differences in others. They are learning to share space and equipment. They are finding the freedom to be an individual and play alone, and also learning to join a group. They are starting

to see similarities and differences in others. School also means accept decisions and limits set by teachers, along with that comes discipline. We try to handle discipline in a firm, but loving manner. If the child is doing something that goes against the classroom "rules" (for example, crashing blocks, grabbing toys away from friends), we will first give them a spoken warning. ("If you don't stop crashing the blocks, you won't be able to play with them"). Next, we will remove them from the activity ("I see that you didn't stop crashing the blocks, so you have to leave the block area now.") If the child is still not listening, then s/he may have to sit on a chair for a few minutes with a teacher until s/he has calmed down and is ready to rejoin the group. Biting is never allowed and any child who bites another child will be removed from the classroom and sent home after one warning.

While this is how we handle discipline at school, every household has slightly different rules. If you are unsure of how your employers would like you to discipline the child it is always best to discuss it with them.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **School calendar:** Please see the school calendar for the "phase-in schedule" for the beginning of the school year. The two-year olds are slowly eased into the nursery school program, starting with half-hour school sessions, then building up to longer and longer times until they are ready to stay the full morning, usually in November. Please see the phase-in schedule so that you know when the child is expected at school.

The Threes, Fours and Fours/Fives have a much quicker breaking-in period, but please see the schedule for this as well.

Please also check the calendar for school holidays and discuss the child's schedule for days off with your employers.

2. **Arrival:** School begins promptly at 9:00 for all classes. It is important to be on time, as it is hard for children to arrive when their friends are already busy with activities, plus latecomers are disruptive to the entire class. When you drop the child off, please make sure there is a teacher in the room first, and please say hello to the teacher before you leave. Please try to learn all the names of all the teachers in the child's classroom, as they are trying to learn your name as well. Arriving more than a few minutes early is also difficult. If you do arrive early, please remember that you must watch the child. A photograph with the names of the teachers is outside each classroom. Remember, you are all working on the same team with the goal of making a happy, confident child.

3. **Dismissal:** Please see the schedule below for dismissal, and note the dismissal times for the child's class.

| Class | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Y2s | | 12:00 Noon | | 12:00 Noon | |
| O2s | 12:00 Noon | | 12:00 Noon | | 12:00 Noon |
| All 3s | 12:00 Noon | 2:30 PM | 12:00 Noon | 12:00 Noon | 12:00 Noon |
| 4s & 5s | 2:30 PM | 12:00 Noon | 2:30 PM | 2:30 PM | 12:00 Noon |

Pick-up must also be prompt, as it is very hard for children to wait when they see their friends are being picked up. Plus, teachers often have to be other places right after school. Please make sure you carry

the school's phone number with you at all times (212-737-2977), and call if you have an emergency and cannot come on time.

Please note that the child is only allowed to leave with you or his/her parents. If anyone else (i.e. playdate, grandparent) is picking up the child, the parent must write a note to the teachers. If you are picking up another child for a playdate, we must have a note from both the family that you work for and the family of the other child to ensure safety and to avoid mix-ups.

4. **Health:** A child with a bad cold (green nose, deep cough), infection or contagious disease should be kept at home. If you notice the child shows any symptoms of these things, please tell your employers right away. If your child has been exposed to a highly contagious disease (chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep throat, conjunctivitis /pink eye), the parent must call the school to report this immediately. Any child who has had a fever or vomited should stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever or throwing up is gone.

If a child becomes ill or injured at school, we will call the parents immediately. The parents will let you know if you are needed to pick the child up.

5. **Clothing:** All clothing (boots, underwear, hats, mittens, scarves, snowsuits, sweaters, etc.) must be marked clearly with the child's first and last names. Many of the children have the same items of clothing as each other. We cannot keep track of clothes unless they are marked. If you don't have nametags, the easiest way to label clothing is to write the child's name on the inside label with permanent magic marker.

Please make sure that the child has a complete change of clothing in his/her cubby (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, mittens and sweater).

Please make sure to check the change of clothing in the cubby every so often to make sure that it is complete and still fits the growing child.

6. **Toys:** We recommend that children not bring their toys from home into the classroom. These toys often get misplaced, plus it is very hard for children to share them with the class. If the child wants to bring something to share with the class, a book or musical CD or cassette is best. **No Guns or Weapons Allowed at Any Time**

7. **Playdates:** Nursery school is where many friendships begin. Playdates can make a stronger connection between children, as the child has the chance to play with a friend outside of the classroom. It is important to be open to playdates with all children, and to help the child feel this way as well. It is also important to tell the child it is not okay if s/he says "I don't want to play with so-and-so today" and demands to cancel the playdate. This is a good opportunity to remind the child to be considerate of the feelings of other children.

If you are responsible for picking up another child for a playdate, the teachers must have notes form both your employers and the family of the other child. If both children are being picked up by their own caregivers or parents, then the teachers do not need a note.

8. **Lunch at school:** The 3's eat lunch at school once a week on Tuesday, and the 4/5's eat lunch at school three times a week (Monday, Wednesday,

and Thursday). Each child brings his/her own lunch from home. Lunchtime is a time for children to really enjoy eating as a social experience. Even picky eaters will eat with their friends. If you are the one making the lunch, please be sure to pack a lunch that you know the child will like , and the child can manage on his or her own. Please pack something that does not need to be heated. And please remember, no nuts. Please note that we will not permit parents or caregivers to join or help children during this part of the day.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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