

EPIPHANY COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

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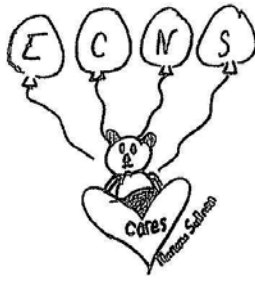
PARENT HANDBOOK



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Dear ECNS Families,

Community service has always been a vital part of the ECNS curriculum. As a result, ECNS Cares was established as a series of community service programs and activities throughout the school year. By including community service on a regular and ongoing basis, we hope to instill in our children consideration and empathy for those less fortunate than us, and to teach our children to view community service as a habit rather than an obligation. ECNS is lucky and proud to have so many wonderful families who contribute their talents, time and energy to the school. We strive for 100% participation in this year's ECNS Cares programs. They are as follows:

October

Heavenly Hats Parade
Halloween Candy donated to Ronald McDonald House
UNICEF

November

Yorkville Common Pantry Food Drive

December

Yorkville Common Pantry Toy Drive

January

Coat & Warm Clothing Drive
ECNS Bag Ladies' Benefit

February

Valentines for Vets

March

American Cancer Society Daffodil Days
Project Cicero

May

Ronald McDonald House Bake Sale

Year Round

Magazine collection on the third floor to be picked up monthly for families at Mt. Sinai Hospital who are there with their terminally ill children

The committee chairs will announce each of these programs a few weeks before the event and look forward to your participation.

Many Thanks,
The ECNS Parent's Association

Main Floor: Kathy Kelly Fernandez, 74th St. MAGIC Receptionist
Cynthia Villanueva, 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
Carly Fields, School Secretary, School Library
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

Each year we greet our new families and welcome back returning families to the ECNS community. We are a community of children, parents, caregivers and teachers, with the common goal of making the nursery school experience not only great for the children, but the adults as well.

This Handbook contains information that will be helpful to you whether you are a first year family or a returning family.

Please take a moment to read through the book, as it will most likely answer many questions you may have regarding routine events as well as procedures for emergencies etc. We strive to anticipate all questions, however if we don't, please feel free to call and ask.

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: two for the Young 2's/2-3's, three for the 3's, one for the Fours and one for the Four/Fives. Each of the rooms offers clearly defined areas for blocks, creative materials, manipulatives, housekeeping, science, story-telling, water play, music and a reading area.

There is also a full kitchen for our cooking activities (although most cooking is done in the room with a convection oven), an indoor play/movement room, library, parent's meeting/conference room and rooftop, outdoor play area.

Our school year runs from the end of September to the end of May. We also offer Summer Days Camp at 510 East 74 St., a day camp program for 2.5 - 6 year olds, operating from June to August.

We offer EARLY MORNING DROP-OFF (8:30 a.m.) for 3's, 4's and 4/5's for a small daily charge of \$5, payable directly to the teacher in charge, in the library on the third floor.

PROGRAM

The environment and the program are carefully planned to meet the needs of the young child for play, socialization and individual attention. The curriculum is a core curriculum using units and recognizing the importance of each child as a distinct personality developing at his/her own pace. There is, however, a regular, constant sequence of daily activities and a clear order in the introduction of materials and equipment to help the child gain self-confidence. Routines are implemented from the start for the same reason.

For each child, nursery school means being in a group of children who are similar, yet different, as all people differ. This involves many important experiences. It means...

- Sharing space and equipment
- Learning to accept decisions and limits set by teachers
- Exploring, experimenting, finding relationships as children deal directly with concrete materials through play alone and with others
- Free play outdoors or in the playroom as well as organized activities indoors
- The freedom to be an individual and play alone, or join a group and play with others
- ...and it also means discipline. We try to handle discipline in a firm, but loving manner. First we give children a verbal warning. Second, we remove them from the activities in question. If the problem continues, we sit the child down on a chair for a few minutes. Should the problem continue, we call the parents and solicit their assistance. Biting under any circumstance is deemed unacceptable. Any child who bites another child or teacher will be removed from the classroom and sent home after one warning.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All children are visited at home by their teacher(s) before the school term begins. You will get a call after Labor Day to set up the appointment at a mutually convenient time. This is a special time for you and your child to meet the teacher on a one to one basis before school begins. Please allow at least 1/2 hour for this visit, preferably, during school hours. This visit is for parents, not caregivers.

Each child adjusts to nursery school gradually. All children are eased into the program slowly. The two-year-olds start with 30-minute sessions, and half the group attends the early session; the other half arrives in mid-morning. With each visit, they work up to more time until roughly the end of October when the entire group comes for the whole morning. The Threes, Fours and Four/Fives breaking in period is quicker since they come every day and most have been in school before. Their first day is one hour, the second day is two hours, and the third day is a full morning, three hours.

New parents are encouraged to stay in school, for the first few days, usually in the hallway or another room. They are present (but out of sight) until the child is ready to accept full separation. All children, regardless of how many years they have been at the school, must have a parent stay on the first day of school.

School begins promptly at 9 a.m. for every class. It is important to be on time. Latecomers are disruptive to the entire class and children who miss out on the beginning of the day are often frustrated. Please try and arrive a few minutes early, and make sure that the teacher is in the room before the adult bringing the child leaves the classroom. Arriving more than a few minutes early is also difficult. If you do arrive early, please remember that the parent or caregiver must watch the child.

Dismissal: Please see the schedule below for dismissal:

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

Early morning drop-off (8:30 a.m.) for 3s, 4s and 4/5s is available in the library on the third floor for a small daily charge payable in cash directly to the teacher in charge. If you are not taking advantage of this service, you may not go into the library at this time.

Pick-up must be prompt. It is difficult for children to wait, and the teachers have other commitments such as jobs, their own families and graduate school, following school. Parents should notify the school by note, in advance, if another person is picking up their child. No child will be released to a stranger.

If parents must make last-minute arrangements, please phone the school office: (212) 737-2977. Notes may be faxed to: (212) 737-2993 or e-mailed to Carly at Carly@ecns.org. A list of people permitted to pick up your child is kept by the classroom door.

ILLNESS

ECNS has a school doctor, Dr. Joseph Licata, who is affiliated with Lenox Hill Hospital available to us if needed.

A physical examination by the child's own doctor is necessary each year. The medical form provided by ECNS must be completed by your doctor and returned by **September 15**.

Two year olds must be examined by a pediatrician every six months.

In accordance with the New York State Health Department Standards, children must be immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, rubella, chicken pox, mumps, Hepatitis B and Hib.

If an injury occurs at nursery school, the parent is called at once. If we are unable to reach the parent, we call the emergency person who is designated by you. We must have that name, address and cell phone number in our file when school opens.

The school reports any sign of illness to the parent so that the child can be taken home before further exposing other children to possible infection. Sick children must be isolated, and we try to make them comfortable in our office until someone comes to take them home.

A child with a bad cold, infection or diarrhea, or one who has vomited or who has a contagious disease should be kept at home. If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease (e.g., chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep throat, conjunctivitis, lice), please contact the school **immediately** so we can let the other families know. Parents are asked to notify the school in the morning whenever a child is going to be absent. Any child who has had a fever should be fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to school, this is true for vomiting and diarrhea as well.

A message regarding your child's absence may be left with the staff member answering the phone or on the school's voice mail.

Parents should be reasonably sure that a child is ready to resume the full nursery school schedule before returning from an illness, this includes going outdoors.

CLOTHING - BIRTHDAYS - VISITORS - WEATHER

CLOTHING: All clothing (boots, hats, mittens, scarves, snowsuits, sweaters, etc.) must be marked clearly with the child's first and last names. Much of the children's clothing is identical or similar in appearance. We cannot keep track of these clothes unless they are marked. Please do not forget a **complete change of clothes that fit** (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, mittens and sweater) to be left in the child's cubby. Children are encouraged to dress and undress "all by their self" so clothing should be as manageable as possible.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS: For children new to using the toilet, it is essential that clothing **not have** buckles, zippers or buttons. For children new to using the toilets, pants with elasticized waists are best. Overalls, buckles and zippers are bad for the last minute dash! Clothes should be comfortable and easily laundered. Despite smocks, things do happen, and those "washable" paints aren't necessarily so!

TOYS: If anything is brought from home, a book, CD, DVD, or audiotape are best. Toys, especially favorite stuffed animals are easily misplaced and not readily shared. **No Guns or Weapons Allowed at Any Time**

BIRTHDAYS: Children may celebrate their birthdays in school. Please arrange this ahead of time with the teacher. Cupcakes, paper plates and napkins are fine, nothing elaborate or complicated. Candy and favors are not permitted. We ask that in lieu of favors, parents donate a children's book to the library. These books are pre-selected by the teachers and are available in the third floor office of the Assistant Director, Carrie Schoen. The book has your child's name on the bookplate and will be read to the group at the time of your child's birthday.

VISITORS: Siblings and other relatives may visit as long as it is arranged ahead of time with the teacher. We discourage large numbers of visitors on any given day. If your sibling is on vacation, visiting every day is too much; we are not a babysitting service.

WEATHER: In the event that we feel the weather is too dangerous for the children to travel, the teacher or class parent will notify you by 8:30 a.m. This rarely happens.

SCHOOL STORE: The display case is located on the 3rd floor. Items are sold at large parent events or online.

LUNCH AT SCHOOL: The 3's, 4's, and 5's all eat lunch at school (the 3's once per week). This is a time for children to really experience eating as a social activity. Even the pickiest of eaters will eat with their friends. Please be sure to pack a reasonable lunch that you know your child will like and that he or she can manage on their own. We will not permit parents or caregivers to help their children with this part of the day, we are trying to build confidence and independence. And please remember, **no nuts.**

SCHOOL ETIQUETTE

1. During arrival and dismissal times from school, there is a lot of congestion in the elevators. If it is possible, please leave your stroller on the first floor or outside the building so as not to overcrowd the elevators. Of course, if you have a sleeping child, we respect your decision to take the stroller in the elevator.
2. For birthday parties outside the classroom, please invite either less than half the class or consider including the entire class. Alternatively, you could have just the girls or just the boys. We ask that you follow these guidelines to avoid hurt feelings, on the part of other children and parents.
3. Nursery school is where many early and significant friendships begin. While the younger children may engage in more parallel play than cooperative play, the socialization process starts in school. Please keep in mind when scheduling playdates that the children need to be reminded of the feelings of others should they change their mind and decide "well I don't want to play with so and so today" especially if the date was made in advance. This is a good opportunity to teach your child about the consequences of hurting the feelings of others, and the value of keeping a promise.
4. For 3 year olds who begin their day on the roof or anyone else who goes to the roof early, before school begins at 9:00a.m., we are not responsible for your children and the conditions may or may not be safe if it is raining or snowing or has rained or snowed. You are responsible for your child's behavior as well as their safety.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

ECNS has an active Parents Association with 2 representatives from each class. The Head of the Parents Association holds meetings as needed and welcomes everyone's input. Parents are encouraged to be active in the school. This can be enriching for both the children and the parents. We believe it is never too early to let your child know that you are interested in his activities and enjoy being involved. Parents can participate in a variety of ways: sharing a skill in the classroom, helping on a trip, doing tours for prospective parents, writing for the newsletter or fund raising. If you wish to spend part of the day with the children doing a special art, cooking or music activity please coordinate this with the teacher ahead of time in case we are having other visitors. Too many adults in the classroom can be over-stimulating for the children and non-productive.

Brief, informal discussions between parents and teachers occur almost daily. If a problem arises, parents are urged to arrange a special conference time with the teacher or in the case of more serious problems, with the director and teachers.

Comprehensive parent /teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. During these times, the child's social, emotional and academic development is discussed.

Attending meetings, hearing guest speakers, seeing films, observation of the classroom, reading etc., are all ways of exchanging valuable information for parents and teachers alike; and, everyone will gain a deeper understanding of young children and their behavior.

TUITION -ADMISSIONS POLICY

FINANCES: Financial matters are handled only by the office. No discussion or disbursement of money to teachers is permitted.

TUITION PAYMENT: A \$150 non-refundable Application Fee is due with the application. Upon acceptance by ECNS, a \$3000 *non-refundable* deposit is due with the contract to hold the child's place. (This deposit is considered part of the child's tuition.) A second payment of 60% of the total tuition, less the deposit, is due by May 1. The third and final payment of the remaining 40% of the total is due August 1. If you are unable to keep this schedule, please speak to the director.

ADMISSION POLICY: We try to keep a balance of ages and gender in each group. These factors, as well as genuine compatibility and family circumstances

are considered in forming groups. For admission, the youngest age as of July 1st is two years. The oldest age is five for admission to the 4/5s group.

It is required that the parents both tour the school and then, with their child, have a personal interview with the Director of the school before admission (unless there is a sibling who attends the school).

The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or ethnic or national background in the administration of its admissions, finances, educational or other school policies.

THE TEACHERS: CPR and first aid classes are required for all staff. All staff members are fingerprinted and checked for child abuse through the New York State Child Abuse Registry. Teachers are required to have a yearly physical check up and are encouraged to continue their professional development. Teachers meet with the Director and the Assistant Director on a regular basis to share information on the children and discuss curriculum.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

ECNS

Wendy Levey, Director (3rd floor)
ext. 2024

Wlevey@ecns.org

Carrie Schoen, Assistant Director (3rd floor)
ext. 2017

Carrie@ecns.org

Carly Fields, School Secretary (3rd floor)
ext. 2020

Carly@ecns.org

Rudy Zannoni, Building Supervisor (1st floor)
ext. 2014

Rudy@74magic.com

74th St. MAGIC

Julie Flansbaum, Director of MAGIC and
Summer Days Camp (2nd floor)

ext. 2015

Julie@74magic.com

Amalia Cepero, Gym Coordinator (1st floor)
ext. 2012

Amalia@74magic.com

Cynthia Villanueva, Party/Events Coordinator
(1st floor)

ext. 2011

Cynthia@74magic.com

Kathy Kelly Fernandez, Receptionist (1st floor)
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