



A
Growing
Experience!

PARENT HANDBOOK 2009 - 2010

RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL
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WELCOME TO RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Riverside Park Nursery School (RPNS) was established in 1970, by a group of concerned parents who recognized the need for a preschool program in the area. Originally run by the Riverside Inter-Church Social Action Council as a non-profit organization, the school was incorporated in 1977 and has since been run by a volunteer Board of Directors. Its continued success results from the dedication of Board members and the support of parents working with the teaching staff. The school has been integrated since 1987.

We have a high caliber of qualified, professionally-trained and dedicated teachers. All staff must have successfully completed the requirements for a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and are registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators. You are encouraged to discuss with them any questions or concerns relating to your child or the school in general.

Riverside Park is run as a **cooperative** school—one where parents and teachers work together to provide an enjoyable learning environment for the children. We stress the word "cooperative," because it is vital for the successful operation of the school. Parent participation includes:

- ❑ **Helping with your child's class as a Teacher Assistant, on a monthly basis (depending on class size);**
- ❑ **Volunteering for a committee or Board position; and**
- ❑ **Taking part in school activities such as school cleanup and maintenance, etc.**

Parents can also share ideas and/or problems concerning their children with one another and with the teachers. We encourage you to contribute your ideas and talents to the school program.

PHILOSOPHY

Our goals and objectives are to promote physical, social/emotional, intellectual and language growth and development, and to increase the quality of life for all of the children enrolled in our program; regardless of racial, religious or economic background. In order to provide a healthy, growing experience for the children, our primary focus is on building positive human relationships as a sound base for good mental health. Good relationships are reflected in the teachers' care, concern, guidance and instruction. The children's perception of themselves and their world depends largely on the quality of this "input" by the adults in their lives.

Play activities take up a major part of a child's waking hours and we build on this element to promote whole-child development. Although the children may seem to be "merely" playing, they are, in fact, learning many of the skills needed to help them grow towards kindergarten readiness. These include: hand-eye coordination, awareness of shapes, creativity, patience, perseverance, balance, symmetry, listening skills, imagination, sharing and cooperation and most importantly, developing their self-confidence and self-awareness. The teachers are always close at hand in a guiding, supporting and enabling capacity; but the play environment is, for the most part, designed to be self-motivating, child-directed and teacher-facilitated.

2. PROGRAM FACTS

GENERAL

Our qualified staff spends considerable time carefully planning for spontaneous plan and learning opportunities.

The children spend time in two rooms in addition to ½ hour of outdoor play, weather permitting. Different activities are planned for each room, enabling the children to develop social, emotional, cognitive, language and motor skills. In the Discovery room activities such as arts and crafts, sensory play, puzzle and fine motor manipulations, block play as well as a science table can be found. Life skills such as baking, parenting, housework, driving, pet care and dress-up explored through play in the drama area. A book corner and reading readiness activity table prepare children for language arts. Activities in the rooms are changed frequently.

In order to keep parents informed about the program, monthly activity sheets are put into your child's folder and posted on the *Parents' Notice Board*, along with any other pertinent information. There is also a monthly calendar/newsletter that is distributed to parents.

SPECIAL NEEDS INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Children's Integration Support Services (CISS) is a bilingual service funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. CISS provides support services to integrated programs within the Ottawa-Carleton Region and is managed by the Board of Directors of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services. The services provided by CISS may include additional staffing, consultation to programs, staff training, and financial supports in the form of transportation and childcare subsidies. A child with special needs in our program may also have occasional visits from professionals during the morning, including Speech or Occupational Therapists and Integration Advisors.

As defined in the *Ontario Day Nurseries Act*, a child with special needs is "a child with a physical, mental, or developmental impairment that is likely to continue for a prolonged period of time as verified by objective psychological or medical findings."

All children need to learn that differences are not important. What is important is that they learn to interact with each other in a positive way. Children diagnosed with special needs can learn social skills and independence in an integrated program. The role model provided by the other children, both in language skills and behavioural expectations, is invaluable.

Integration can be a wonderful experience for all, providing positive experiences, which will benefit everyone throughout life.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The school operates a morning program from 9:00 a.m. to 11:25 a.m. Monday through Friday for children aged 1.6 years to 5 years. We also offer Before and After Care for a minimal fee.

LATE FEE POLICY

As morning programs end at 11:25 am, children must be picked up no later than 11:35am. If a child has not been picked up by 11:35am, that child will be placed in the after care program at double the regular rate for after-care. Parents/Caregivers will be automatically invoiced at the end of each month that after-care fees have been accrued, and are expected to make payments in a timely manner. The Director reserves the right to refuse admittance of any child as a result of non-payment.

BEFORE AND AFTER-CARE PROGRAM

To accommodate families with busy schedules, a Before Care program and a After Care program is available. Spaces are limited and arrangements for these programs should be made in advance with the Director. Before Care is available from 8:00 am to 9:00 am for an additional cost of \$7.00. After Care is available from 11:30 am to 12:00 noon for \$5.00. For parents that make arrangements in advance to have Before **and** After Care on the **same** day, the fee is \$10.00. For more information on our *Monthly Enrolment Fee Structure*, see the Director.

AFTER-CARE LATE FEE POLICY

Children must be picked up from the after-care program, no later than 12:00pm. By 12:05pm, a late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes, per child, will apply. Parents/Caregivers will be automatically invoiced at the end of each month that after-care late fees have been accrued, and are expected to make payments in a timely manner. The Director reserves the right to refuse admittance of any child as a result of non-payment. The Director also reserves the right to decline after-care privileges to any family who fails to pick up their child(ren) by 12:00pm more than two times during the school year.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

Our class times are held in the mornings only. Our Toddler Program operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays and is for children ages 1½ years to 2½ years.

Preschool children are aged 2½ years to 5 years and there are five options for enrolment: 2 Day Preschool on Tuesdays and Thursdays; 3 Day Preschool on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; or 5 Day Preschool where children attend Monday through to Friday.

We also offer French Preschool Programs with the option of attending 2 days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) or 3 days a week (Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays). Note: due to the popular demand of our French Programs, parents wishing for their children to attend 5 mornings cannot enroll in both French Programs. Children will attend one of the English programs.

In the case of children attending 5 mornings per week, parents are responsible to be a Teacher Assistant in each program (minimum twice a month).

More information on the Toddler Program can be found at the back of the Parent Handbook.

PRESCHOOL CLASS SIZE

The *Ontario Day Nurseries Act* regulates the acceptable ratio of adults and preschool children. This allows the nursery an 8:1 ratio of children to teacher and a 4:1 ratio of children to parent. This allows for a total of 12 children per class.

TODDLER CLASS SIZE

The *Ontario Day Nurseries Act* regulates the acceptable ratio of adults and preschool children. This allows the nursery a 5:1 ratio of children to teacher and a 2:1 ratio of children to parent. Our Toddler class has a maximum of 12 toddlers with two teachers and one Teacher Assistant.

SNACK

Each teacher takes her group of children for this special social time. The school provides snacks. If you wish to bring a special snack for your child's birthday, or at any other time, please speak to the Director. Occasionally, you may be asked to contribute food for a special snack activity. When planning snacks, some foods may be prohibited as some children may have life-threatening allergies. Extreme caution is used, and all teachers and parents are made aware of all allergies that any of the children may have. At all times, RPNS is a peanut/allergen safe school.

CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

Another special event each day is Circle Time. Here the children learn to wait, take turns, and cooperate through finger plays, songs, musical instruments, games and stories. They learn the days of the week and months of the year through calendar time. They learn to recognize their printed name. The children learn to count to 30, learn the alphabet and many other concepts.

SPECIAL THEME CIRCLES

The Director plans monthly special theme group circles to which parents are invited. Children will explore a special theme through stories, finger plays, music, dance and other interactive activities.

THEMES

Our staff follows monthly themes, which are carried into the various activity centres, as well as circle activities. You are encouraged to share with the staff any suggestions you may have in this area.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Weather permitting; the children will spend some time outside every day in a fully fenced area. We have a variety of toys such as shovels, trucks, tricycles, toboggans and a large, covered sandbox. Children must bring bicycle helmets in order to ride the tricycles or scooters. In the winter months outdoor play will not occur if the temperature (including the wind chill) is below -20 degrees Celsius. On colder days (-10 to -20, including wind chill) outdoor playtime may be less than the allotted 30 minutes.

BIKE HELMET POLICY

Safety of the children is one of our major concerns at Riverside Park Nursery School. The helmets that the children wear need to fit properly in order to give optimal defense in case of an accident.

Properly fitted helmets should:

- Fit comfortably on top of the head and sit low on the forehead, just above the eyebrow. The helmet should not move if you shake your head.
- Have an outer shell, inner protective liner, chin straps that hold the helmet firmly in place, and adjustable sizing pads.
- Meet SPCS, CSA or Snell standards.

Placing a baseball cap or any other headgear changes the fitting of the helmet on the head.

- The thickness of the hat under the helmet raises the helmet above the head. The result is that the helmet covers less of the head than it should, leaving the sides unprotected.
- Raising the helmet on the head destabilizes it by moving the sides that normally keep the helmet steady, up and away from the sides of the head.
- Having steel buttons (top of baseball cap) on top of the head could concentrate the force of the blow on one spot. The helmet is designed to spread out the force of impact to prevent the skull from fracturing.
- The thickness of hats, sweatbands, as well as the bill of a cap, interferes with the fit of the helmet.

For further information on the subject, please check out the following websites

www.bhsi.org

www.ottawa.ca (search "Tricycle Safety")

PLEASE NOTE: BIKES WILL NOT BE OUT UNLESS IT IS WARM ENOUGH TO NOT REQUIRE WINTER HEADWEAR.

TOILETING

A child does not have to be toilet-learned to attend our school. Parents, as part of their Teacher Assistant duties, will toilet children as necessary. This includes changing diapers, changing wet clothing, etc. Parents and teachers can discuss how to proceed when a child shows signs of toilet learning.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

During the school year we will provide the preschoolers and toddlers with enriched activities within the school. We do not participate in field trips but we do have activities which may include special guests and presentations that enhance the theme of the month. These activities will provide the children with additional learning experiences in a safe environment. Parental involvement and participation is encouraged.

DURATION AND HOLIDAYS

The nursery school usually follows the normal school year of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), with classes commencing on the first Tuesday following Labour Day. All holidays, with the exception of PD days are followed and these include:

- *Labour Day
- *Thanksgiving Day
- *Christmas Break (two weeks)
- *Family Day
- *Good Friday and Easter Monday
- *March Break (one week)
- *Victoria Day

Note: the nursery school is open on Remembrance Day and closes after the third week in June to allow staff time to tear down the program for the summer months.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

In the event that the school must be closed due to loss of power, loss of water, flood, fire, or other unforeseen circumstances, every effort will be made to contact the parents to inform them of the closure. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee everyone will be contacted. If you are uncertain whether or not the school will be operating please call the Director at 613-738-0305.

Refunds cannot be given for school closures.

SCHOOL BAG REQUIREMENTS

- Diapers or pull-ups.
- Small change pad.
- Wipes.
- Full change of clothing (undershirt, underpants, sweater, pants, socks).
- Indoor shoes (whatever footwear the child has for outdoor play cannot be permitted to be worn indoors).
- Do not leave any form of medication (Tylenol, cough drops etc.) in your child's school bag.

3. BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Riverside Park Nursery School abides by the regulations set out in the *Ontario Day Nurseries Act*. Under no circumstances are physical punishments or harsh, degrading verbal measures used as a form of discipline.

We want all of the children to feel safe and secure. To ensure this, we set limits so that the children may not harm themselves, other children or an adult, or destroy the property of others. Limits are expressed firmly but warmly in a positive manner, with simple explanations given. If necessary, a child may be removed from a situation for a short period of time and may return to the activity when he or she feels ready.

We encourage the children to express themselves verbally rather than physically, and to discover their own solutions through problem solving. The teacher serves as a resource person in disputes between the children and at times it may be necessary for her to offer suggestions.

All Teacher Assistants are expected to follow through on safety rules and limits, and to treat the children with respect and kindness. Teacher Assistants are required to read and sign our *Behaviour Guidance Policy and Contravention Procedures*, which set out actions appropriate to specific circumstances, and will be monitored by staff to ensure that they are following this policy. All staff and parents must read and sign the *Behaviour Guidance Policy* as required by the *Ontario Day Nurseries Act*.

4. ADMISSION

GENERAL

Children are enrolled in programs at the school in an age-appropriate fashion. For the Preschool Program, children must be 2½ by September 1st of the current school year. For the Toddler Program, children must be 18 months by September 1st of the current school year. In consultation with parents/guardians and teachers, movement between programs may occur based on the age and developmental level of the child.

WAITING LIST

We do maintain a Waiting List should the school be full. There is often some turnover in registrations during the school year, and you will be contacted if a suitable vacancy occurs.

WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

Parents wishing to withdraw their children from the school **must notify the school registrar in writing before the 15th of the month.** If they do not do so, they must pay the following month's fee (*e.g.* notification of withdrawal on October 15th would still result in the payment of fees for November). The supply/fundraising fee is non-refundable if a child is withdrawn after the commencement of the school year. **There will be no refunds after March 15th of the current school year if a child withdraws.**

Riverside Park Nursery School reserves the right to direct parents to withdraw their child from the school for reasons that include the following:

- ❑ A child continues to require a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time and attention;
- ❑ Behaviour is found to be continually disruptive to the group as a whole;
- ❑ The School is unable to meet the needs of the child; and/or
- ❑ Failure to provide proper duty day support (as defined in Duty Day Policy).

Prior to directing a parent to withdraw their child the following steps will have been taken.

- ❑ Written observations of the child completed by the staff.
- ❑ Any concerns documented.
- ❑ Staff meeting with parents.
- ❑ Referral to appropriate resources.
- ❑ Support and discussions to help fulfill Duty Day requirements.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child in question may bring the matter before the Board of Directors if the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction. The decision of the Board will be final.

5. OTHER POLICIES

FEES

Upon registration the following shall be provided:

- ❑ A non-refundable registration fee payable the day you register your child.
- ❑ A non-refundable/non pro-rated supply/fundraising dated September 15th.
- ❑ Ten post-dated cheques for monthly fees dated for the **15th of each month starting August 15th through to May 15th**. Fees are collected fifteen days in advance to cover school expenses

Cheques can be made out to RPNS. Refer to "*Fees*" on the Registration Instructions page of the Registration Package.

NSF CHEQUES

Upon receipt of an NSF cheque, the school will verbally request that the financial obligation be honoured with cash or a certified cheque within 15 days of notification. **A \$15 fee will be applied.** If satisfactory arrangements are not made within the 15-day period, notification will be sent by registered mail, extending the time period for payment another 15 days. If, at the end of the 30 days, payment has not been arranged, the child/children will be withdrawn from the school's registry, and the family will be notified in writing.

MEDICATION

From time to time, Riverside Park Nursery School may have children in attendance that require medication for allergic reactions or other medical conditions. Staff are trained and prepared to administer medication to children when required. Although children are supervised at all times while in attendance at our school, safe storage of medications is a concern. Traditionally, parents have left medications in their child's back pack. However this poses a safety concern as a medication that could be life saving for one child, may be life threatening for another.

Therefore, to address this safety concern, parents are to adhere to the following:

1. Parents are to complete an **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION FORM** if their child requires medication and hand the form and medication to the Director.
2. The form and medication will be locked in a portable box and it will be stored in the nursery school office. Teachers wear "fanny packs" to carry epipens and inhalers.
3. Parents must approach their child's teacher or the Director at pick up time to retrieve the medication. For children with allergies (especially those requiring epipens) we recommended that you obtain a second dose of medication that could be left at the school. This way important medication will not be forgotten here or at home.

4. Parents are not permitted to leave any form of medication in their child's back packs. This includes cough medicines, lozenges, Tylenol etc.
5. Parents are to check the expiry dates on medications as we will not administer out of date medications.
6. For ongoing medications (ie. allergies), parents are asked to advise staff of any changes to dosage/type of medication/possible side effects etc. The completed ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION FORM **must** match the actual medication.

Thank you for your cooperation.

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION

In the best interest of your child and the other children at the Nursery School, he/she must be kept home when they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Severe runny nose or cough, wheezing or difficulty breathing, excessive lethargy.
- An oral fever of 38°C (100.4°F). Contact your physician immediately if 39°C (102°F).
- Undetermined rash. Your child must be seen by a physician to determine the nature of the rash before returning to nursery school.
- Vomiting, diarrhea or fever within the last 12 hours.

If a child appears to be ill on arrival to the school, teachers reserve the right to send the child home. We strongly recommend that parents prepare and arrange for emergency back-up childcare in anticipation of these situations. If your child is not well enough to participate fully in the program, he/she is probably not well enough to be at school.

If a child becomes ill during school, the parent or alternate adult will be contacted to pick up the child. We ask parents to keep staff informed of all communicable diseases and any other signs and symptoms of illness their children experience. This information may need to be reported to the City's Health Department.

In order for medication or drugs to be administered to a child, a *Medication Permission Form* must be filled out. This will allow the staff to administer medications such as an Epi-pen, Benadryl, asthma inhalers, etc.

Children must be immunized according to the Health Department's Immunization Schedule (contained in the Registration Package). Tuberculosis testing will be required for participants who have spent three months (90 days) or more during the past 5 years in countries specified by the Health Department.

You must fill out an immunization form from the District Health Office **BEFORE** your first visit to the school takes place, indicating the date that each vaccination was given. This is a regulation of the *Ontario Day Nurseries Act* and the City Health Department. Children who have not had the necessary vaccinations can be withdrawn from the school until the vaccinations are up-to-date.

We follow the recommendations of the City of Ottawa Health Department for childcare facilities regarding the prevention of Hepatitis B and HIV infection.

Parents will be asked to read, sign and comply with our *Sick Children Procedure*.

TRANSPORTATION

The school does not provide transportation.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The entrance to the school is located at the back of the church, beside the playground. Please do not use the church entrance.

There are four handicapped parking spots in the lot and these are to be used by the cars that have handicapped parking permits. Please do not use these spots even if you are in your car waiting. Keep them free for those who need them.

Children must not be left at school until the program start time and a staff member is made aware of their arrival. The Director or acting Director will sign each child in and out as they begin and end their day at the nursery school. Should you arrive late, make sure the Director is aware of your child's arrival.

When picking up a child for home, be sure that a staff member knows that your child or car pool is leaving with the proper driver. Please check artwork to be sure that the children in your care take home their own work and nobody else's.

Teachers cannot release your child to an unauthorized person. Please notify the school in advance by filling out a *Take Home Authorization Form* (available for download on www.rpns.net) when someone else is picking up your child. The authorized individual must present ID to the staff member before your child will be released into their care.

Please pick up your child on time. A child left behind can become very anxious. As well, the staff has additional duties to perform before they can leave.

Do not leave siblings in the car or outside in a stroller unattended. As a suggestion, ask another nursery school parent to help you.

COMMUNICATIONS

Always check your child's folder in the Communications Box in the hallway for important notices, updates and events. Email is also frequently used for communications so please be sure to check your Inbox for RPNS calendars, duty rosters and other notifications.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted in the building nor anywhere on the property. This includes the playground and parking lot. (Day Nurseries Act requirement).

SECURITY

All children are supervised at all times. Anytime they need to leave their classroom, including washroom visits, an adult accompanies them. We have in place a chime to alert the staff of unauthorized access to the premises. The nursery school entrance door is locked between 9:20am and 11:00am. Ring the door bell if you need access to the school during these times.

POLICE RECORDS CHECK

All staff and any volunteer involved in the delivery of the school's programs must submit a current Police record Check before the start of each school year. Such volunteers include community Reading Buddies, ECE students placed at our school, parents or others who perform Duty Days, and any person assigned direct responsibility for a child or children by the school.

The school will provide staff and parents/volunteers with the necessary documentation to obtain a PRC; however, staff and parents/volunteers are solely responsible for obtaining the PRC.

Police Record Checks must be received by the school before the commencement of duties. In the case of staff or prospective staff, noncompliance will result in termination or denial of employment. In the case of Duty Day volunteers, a valid replacement must be found at the expense of the family who cannot fulfill their assigned Duty Day obligations. Any other person who has not submitted a PRC will not work directly with the children at the school.

ABSENCES

Please advise the school (613-738-0305) any time your child is going to be absent.

CLOTHING

All clothing for school should be simple, comfortable and washable. Our paints are washable and non-toxic, but may stain some fabrics. While we try to protect the children's clothes, because of the nature of the activities in our program, we cannot be held responsible for damages to clothing.

All children play outdoors every day, weather permitting. Please be sure they are dressed appropriately for the weather. All outdoor clothes and boots should be marked with your child's name. Neck warmers are safer to wear than scarves. In warm weather, please make sure your child wears a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen.

Please send a complete change of child-friendly clothes, allowing children to toilet themselves, to school every day in a backpack. Slip-on or Velcro shoes are also required for indoor play. These encourage independence and self-help skills. Children still in diapers must also have diapers, wet wipes and a change pad in their bag.

FUNDRAISING

Parents have voted through the Fundraising Survey that they would rather pay a flat fundraising fee than have to solicit family and friends with various fundraising initiatives. As a result, in addition to our supply fee, we have added a fundraising fee with our initial registration. This will prevent us from having to fundraise throughout the year. It should be noted that families with two or more children enrolled pay the full fundraising fee for the first child and half the amount for each consecutive child. This is to ensure that all families participate equally. With each family contributing towards the fundraising fee, parents will not have to support various fundraising programs which require considerable effort and organization. This policy will be reviewed annually by our Parents Volunteer Board to ensure that it meets the needs of the parents and school.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

This is a cooperative school, so we are counting on you. Your help is needed and very much appreciated. As members of the school, you are expected to be an active helper on your Teacher Assistant days, serve on a committee or fill a Board position, attend the Orientation Meeting in September and participate in Fall and Spring work parties.

To keep the school running smoothly, parent participation is needed in a wide variety of activities. The activities are listed in Section 6 (*Organization*) of this handbook, and offer an opportunity for parents to participate at a level that reflects their talents and available time. Parents who work outside the home can help in the evenings by serving on the Board.

"TEACHER ASSISTANT" DAYS

Your day as Teacher Assistant is your child's special day at school. The assistant does not have to be a parent; we welcome grandparents, caregivers and others as long as a *Police Reference Check* has been completed for them. However, siblings and other children are not permitted to stay at school on these days because of licensing restrictions.

Teacher Assistant Days are fun but busy. You are not there to play with just your child, but to help with all of the children. Parents are welcome to visit in the program when it is not their parent assist day by making an appointment beforehand with the Director.

Parents are required to assist on these days in each program in which their children are registered (*e.g.* parents of children who are enrolled five mornings a week must be able to assist in both the two-morning and three-morning programs.)

Parents must be ready to toilet children. This may include the changing of diapers, helping children with their clothing, and wiping, if necessary. You may also be required to assist children to change their clothes if their clothing becomes soiled or wet. You may be washing dishes, cleaning, preparing snack.

PLEASE NOTE: All parents must arrange for another parent to switch with them if they are unable to attend on a scheduled Teacher Assistant day and must notify the Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator and the school of the change.

TEACHER ASSISTANT ROSTER GUIDELINES

Parents are responsible for doing a Teacher Assistant day approximately once a month, depending on the enrolment in each program. If parents have any special requests for Teacher Assistant days, they will be accommodated as much as possible.

Parents who cannot do a designated Teacher Assistant day are responsible for finding another parent to switch with them. Please notify your Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator of all changes.

Some parents may be available to do a *paid* Teacher Assistant day at a cost of \$25. This would be an arrangement between the scheduled Teacher Assistant and the replacement. The scheduled Teacher Assistant parent would be required to pay for the replacement. A list of parents who may be able to do extra *paid* Teacher Assistant days will be provided with the class list. Again, the Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator must be advised of any changes.

All scheduled Teacher Assistant parents or designated persons must have their criminal reference check completed and approved before they can help in the classroom.

A rotation of Teacher Assistants in each program will be established once the first regular schedule is made. The September schedule will be subject to change while enrolment is still fluctuating during the early weeks. However, after September's schedule, this rotation will be followed as closely as possible during the remaining school year. Some changes can be expected from time to time to accommodate special requests made by parents.

Parents arrive at 9:00 a.m. and assist the teacher throughout the morning. Parents stay until 11:45 to help with cleanup.

If more than one child in a family is enrolled in a program, parents will be responsible for teacher assistant days for each child. Parents with children in both the 3-day program (Monday-Wednesday-Friday) and the 2-day program (Tuesday-Thursday) will be required to assist in each of the programs.

If a last-minute emergency prevents a parent from coming in for their scheduled Teacher Assistant day, it is the parent's responsibility to find a replacement. If all attempts to find a replacement have been unsuccessful, please call the Director immediately.

If a parent fails to attend a scheduled Teacher Assistant day and has not arranged for a substitute, a charge will be levied for the cost of an emergency replacement and a warning will be given. Subsequent failures to attend scheduled Teacher Assistant days without notification may result in the child being withdrawn from the school.

6. ORGANIZATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The legally constituted Board of Directors administers the school on behalf of the parents. Without it, the school would not be able to operate. Board meetings are held once a month during the school year. The following is the list of board members.

- President

- ❑ Vice-President
- ❑ Past President
- ❑ Treasurer
- ❑ Assistant Treasurer
- ❑ Secretary
- ❑ Registrar
- ❑ Operations Chair
- ❑ Public Relations Chair

COMMITTEES

In addition to the Board of Directors, the school needs the work of two committees in order to function. Each of these committees has one chairperson and several members. The role of the chairperson of each committee is to direct and coordinate the work of the committee members. The two committees are as follows.

- ❑ Operations
- ❑ Public Relations

DESCRIPTION OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

PRESIDENT (Board Member)

The president oversees the operation of the school on behalf of the parents and the Board of Directors. The president works in close co-operation with the Director, who runs the school on a day-to-day basis. This position could be shared with another parent as Co-President.

Task Description	Frequency
Prepare agenda, and preside over board meetings.	Once a month
Become familiar with school policies and procedures.	At the beginning of the year
Discuss issues with the Director and with other board members and committee chairs and, if necessary, provide direction.	Usually once every week or two
Answer some government or other correspondence on behalf of the school.	3 to 4 times a year
Be part of hiring committee when new staff is hired.	Infrequent
Liaison with Church Joint Use Committee.	As needed
Prepare Annual Report for incoming board, and ensure smooth transition.	Once

VICE PRESIDENT (Board Member)

The Vice President fills in for the President when the President is absent. Their role is to support and assist the President in overseeing the operation of the school on behalf of the parents and the Board of Directors.

Task Description	Frequency
Attend board meetings.	Once a month.
Liaison with Church Joint Use Committee.	As needed
Assist the president and committee chairs.	As needed
Liaison with RPNS parents and RPNS Board of Directors.	As needed

TREASURER (Board Member)

The treasurer is responsible overseeing the finances of the school. This includes being aware of the work of the Bookkeeper, as well as being the primary advocate of good financial management within the Board. Note that the bookkeeper reports to the Board through the Director.

Task description	Frequency
Attend board meetings.	Once a month
Ensure all three signing officers are registered with the bank (With assistance from President).	Usually once a year
Receive financial information from the Director and the Bookkeeper and present this information to the board.	Usually once a month
Ensure the tax return is prepared by the Bookkeeper.	Once a year
Write cheques for all school's expenses including for salary, teachers assistants and substitute work.	Ongoing
Ensure payment of all salary related deductions to government agencies (WSIB, CRA) by bookkeeper.	Ongoing (CRA monthly – WSIB quarterly)
Maintain all receipts for Bookkeeper to file for GST rebate.	Ongoing
Give receipts to parents and others as required.	As required
Assist the Director and the Bookkeeper in preparing the budget for Board consideration and approval.	Once a year
Assist the Bookkeeper in providing all relevant information to the Auditor/Financial Inspector	Once a year

ASSISTANT TREASURER (Board Member)

The Assistant Treasurer helps the Treasurer with some of the Treasurer's tasks.

Task description	Frequency
Attend Board meetings.	Monthly
Assist the treasurer as required.	Ongoing
Assist the president in other duties as required.	Ongoing
Prepare invoices for Before and After Care Programs	Monthly

SECRETARY (Board Member)

In addition to being a member of the board of directors, the secretary's responsibility is to provide secretarial services to the board and the school.

Task Description	Frequency
Participate in monthly Board meetings and other meetings, and prepare minutes of meetings.	Once or twice a month
Distribute draft minutes of board meetings to members in advance of monthly meetings (no later than a week after the previous meeting), and post a copy of approved minutes on the School Bulletin Board.	Once a month
Type revisions to bylaws, policies and other school documents.	As needed
Prepare, distribute and collect parent surveys, and compile survey results.	Once a year

REGISTRAR (Board Member)

The Registrar is responsible for registrations. The Registrar is usually the first contact for new parents, and as such plays a major role in promoting the school. A Registrar Assistant assists the Registrar in these duties (see Operations Committee).

Task Description	Frequency
Attend board meetings.	Once a month
Prepare student lists and keep them updated	As needed
In the spring, revise the registration package and/or Parent Handbook.	Once a year
In the spring, organize and execute registration for the following school year.	Once a year

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (Chair is Board Member)

This committee is responsible for various school administration and operational tasks, such as telephone, laundry, playground, maintenance, food, duty roster, and registrar's assistance. Although this committee has by far the most members, the role of the committee chairperson is primarily administrative.

This person has two main functions:

- The matching of roles with parent volunteers (an activity which takes place primarily in September); and
- Acting as liaison between the Board/school administration and committee members during the school year. The Operations Chair is a voting Member of the Board of Directors and is required to attend monthly Board meetings.

The following list covers most of the activities that this committee would be involved in, but other activities may also be assigned to this committee by the Board if they fall within the same category.

Task Description	Frequency
Duty Roster Coordination: Set up schedule of teacher assistants, and update throughout the year.	About once every 4 weeks
Food: Purchase snacks for school upon request by Director.	Once a month
Telephone: Organize the list of parents. Phone parents to inform them of a school cancellation (e.g., due to a snowstorm), or to inform them of some other important school event(s).	As needed
Laundry: Wash towels and other items used by the school. The items are to be taken to the volunteer's home and washed.	Once a week
Grass Cutting of grounds.	As needed
Cleanup: Organize work parties for Spring cleanup and for Fall cleanup. The objective of these work parties is to maintain and/or repair the outdoor play area and various equipment and toys.	Twice a year
Museum of Nature volunteer: Picks up and returns specimens on loan to RPNS from the Museum collection.	As needed
Family Fun Day: This event takes place in the Spring. It is an occasion for parents and children to get together and play games, eat and have fun!	Once a year, in the summer
Registrar Assistant: Assists the Registrar in all duties assigned to the Registrar (see description of Registrar's job) or as agreed with the Registrar.	As agreed with Registrar

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE (Chair is Board Member)

This committee is responsible for the school public relations and publicity of special events. The committee chairperson directs and coordinates all of the activities, and acts as liaison between the Board/school administration and committee members during the school year. It is desirable for the chairperson to attend monthly Board meetings. The following list covers most of the activities that this committee would be involved in, but other activities may also be assigned to this committee by the board if they fall within the same category.

Task Description	Frequency
Publicity: Publicize special events, fundraisers, open houses, registration, and so on.	Every two or three months
Design and post flyers.	Every two or three months
Place ads in community and other newspapers and media.	Every two or three months

Provide information to school newsletters and/or suggest articles or photo opportunities for community.	Every two or three months
Help promote awareness of the school.	Every two or three months
Suggest creative ways of reaching the community.	Every two or three months

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**Thank you for choosing Riverside Park Nursery School.
By working together, we can ensure that our children have a positive and rewarding preschool experience – one that will help prepare them to meet the challenges of the years ahead.**

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A
Growing
Experience!

Toddler Program: Additional Information

RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL
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1. WELCOME TO RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT - TODDLER PROGRAM

- ❑ We involve toddlers in things that concern them. We don't work around them or distract them to get the job done faster.
- ❑ We invest in quality time. Our 5:1 ratio enables us to play with the children not just supervise them.
- ❑ We learn each child's unique way of communicating (cries, words, movements, gestures and facial expressions).
- ❑ We don't focus on a single aspect of development; we concentrate on the whole child.
- ❑ We respect toddlers as worthy people. They are not treated as objects that can be manipulated.
- ❑ Toddlers perceive the world from their own ego-centric perception. They interpret the way others feel as a cause and effect relationship with themselves. When we pretend to be happy or excited toddlers sense this. To facilitate a healthy self-concept we are honest about how we feel.
- ❑ We model the behaviour we want to teach.
- ❑ We recognize problems as learning opportunities and let toddlers try to solve their own difficulties. Of course we're close by if needed.
- ❑ By being dependable and consistent in words and actions, we build security by teaching trust.
- ❑ We are concerned about the quality of development in each stage. Toddlers are not rushed to reach developmental milestones.

WHY CONSIDER A TODDLER PROGRAM?

The Toddler program is not a scaled down Preschool program. We take into consideration the fact that small children are less able to wait their turns, defend their rights or verbalize their needs. Our program will provide a healthy environment which allows the child to grow in all areas of their development.

Why send your child to a Toddler program? Because toddlers are learning how to play as well as how to play with other children. A Toddler group works on playing skills in addition to verbal and socialization skills. Most importantly a Toddler program builds a foundation for independence which is the focus of the toddler period.

2. SEPARATION ANXIETY

When a 12-month old child is clinging to his mother and crying (a vocal function) for her not to go, he is also saying “I know I need you” (a mental function). As his mental capacity grows, his experiences teach him that he can trust his mother to return. From attachment comes trust, as he learns that the world is basically a friendly place where he can get his needs met. From attachment also comes autonomy and independence as babies grow and begin to take over the caregiving by learning self-help skills. They also find it easier to let go because they know that their mother (or father) will be back. This ability to trust a relationship is the foundation for independence – a focus of the toddler period. Secondary attachments are in addition to the primary ones – not replacements for them. Children learn to cope with separation and this skill will serve them for a lifetime.

Coping with loss and separation is a lifetime task, not something we get over when we are babies. All our lives we lose those we are close to as friends and family grow and move away. The coping skills we develop in our first years serve us for the rest of our lives. When children learn to cope with fears of loss and separation they get a feeling of mastery. When they don’t learn to cope, they feel failure and mistrust.

Here are some *Hints for Helping Your Toddler with Separation Anxiety*:

- ❑ **Once you’ve said goodbye the departure should be immediate. Do not peek in the windows. Do not remain in the hallway. Do not come back into the room. This will only make the anxiety worse.**
- ❑ **Be positive about the teachers and the program. Your child will follow your lead.**
- ❑ **Your child may bring in a comfort toy or family picture to ease the transition.**
- ❑ **Rest assured we will call you regarding your child’s progress.**

At the beginning of the year we phase the children into the program. This allows your child to become accustomed to the class and teacher without having too many children all at once. The Director will notify you of what dates your child is to come in.

3. PROGRAM FACTS

HOURS OF OPERATION

The school operates a morning program from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday for children aged 18 months to 2.5 years old.

CLASS SIZE

The *Ontario Day Nurseries Act* regulates the acceptable ratio of adults and toddlers. This allows the nursery a 5:1 ratio of children to teacher and 2:1 ratio of parent to child. Our Toddler class has a maximum of 12 toddlers with two teachers and one Teacher Assistant.

EXAMPLE OF TODDLER DAY

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Arrival of children
	Free play in the activity areas
10:00 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.	Circle Time
10:20 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.	Handwashing routine & Snack Time
10:40 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Dressing for outdoor play
11:00 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.	Outdoor play
11:25 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Preparing for home time

The toddlers occupy Room 7. During free play, the children will have ample opportunity to explore the various activities. Sensory activities may include play-dough, goop, painting, finger-painting, water play and sand play. Gross motor activities may include tunnels, sit and spin, rocking boat and steps. Musical instruments will be out; such as bells, sticks and drums. In the dramatic play area, children will be able to dress up, play house, cook, talk on the phone and take care of “babies”. Cognitive and fine motor skills are facilitated with various age-appropriate puzzles, manipulative toys and games. In the quiet area, children will be able to look at books or be read to. The block area is wonderful for developing a sense of spatial relations. During free play the children will be able to interact with each other and the teachers. This will help foster a sense of belonging, friendship, trust, and self-esteem.

Snack time facilitates more social and emotional development, as well as providing a healthy snack.

Circle time is the most “formal” learning time. The children will gradually learn how to sit and listen to a story; sing songs; count to 10 or more; learn about themselves and others; learn about animals and so much more. Circle time is quite interesting because in the beginning, most children cannot sit for five minutes, but by December they will all be able to sit for at least 20 minutes (if not more).

Dressing time and outdoor play facilitate self-help skills, independence, and large muscle development. Fresh air is important and helps children develop.

TOILETING

Toddlers are toileted on a “as needs” basis. Wet or soiled diapers will be changed immediately by the duty day parent. Please let us know when you wish to begin toilet learning. When your child is in the process of toilet learning, please provide a minimum of 3 extra pairs of pants, underwear and socks. Toddlers will be gently encouraged to use the toilet when they show signs of readiness.

4. ADMISSION

GENERAL

Children are enrolled in programs at the school in an age-appropriate fashion. Children must be 18 months by September 1st of the current school year to enroll in the Toddler program. In consultation with parents/guardians and teachers, movement between programs may occur based on the age and developmental level of the child.

SCHOOL BAG REQUIREMENTS

- Diapers or pull-ups.
- Small change pad.
- Wipes.
- Full change of clothing (undershirt, underpants, sweater, pants, socks).
- Indoor shoes (whatever footwear the child has for outdoor play cannot be permitted to be worn indoors).
- Do not leave any form of medication (Tylenol, cough drops etc.) in your child’s school bag.

"TEACHER ASSISTANT" DAYS

Your day as Teacher Assistant is your child's special day at school. The assistant does not have to be parents, we welcome grandparents, caregivers and others as long as a criminal reference check has been completed for them. However, siblings and other children are not permitted to stay at school on these days because of licensing restrictions.

Teacher Assistant days are fun and rewarding and are probably your most direct contribution to the children. If you have special talents (*e.g.* musical or creative), the teachers will help you incorporate them into your time at school. Special talents enrich the school's program.

Parents are required to assist once a month depending on class size.

Parent’s duties will include disinfecting of toys, setting up the snack, and helping in the classroom with the teachers.

PLEASE NOTE: All parents must arrange for another parent to switch with them if they are unable to attend on a scheduled Teacher Assistant day and must notify the Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator and the school of the change.

TEACHER ASSISTANT ROSTER GUIDLINES

If parents have any special requests for Teacher Assistant days, they will be accommodated as much as possible.

Parents who cannot do a designated Teacher Assistant day are responsible for finding another parent to switch with them. Please notify your Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator of all changes.

Some parents may be available to do a *paid* Teacher Assistant day at a cost of \$25. This would be an arrangement between the scheduled Teacher Assistant and the replacement. The scheduled Teacher Assistant parent would be required to pay for the replacement. A list of parents who may be able to do extra *paid* Teacher Assistant days will be provided with the class list. Again, the Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator must be advised of any changes.

All scheduled Teacher Assistant parents or designated persons must have their criminal reference check completed and approved before they can help in the classroom.

A rotation of Teacher Assistants in each program will be established once the first regular schedule is made. The September schedule will be subject to change while enrolment is still fluctuating during the early weeks. However, after September's schedule, this rotation will be followed as closely as possible during the remaining school year. Some changes can be expected from time to time to accommodate special requests made by parents or the addition of new children into the program.

Parents must arrive at 9:00 a.m. on their scheduled Teacher Assistant day. Parents are asked to play with the children and assist the teacher as required. Parents will stay until 11:45 a.m. to assist the teachers with tidy up.

If more than one child in a family is enrolled in a program, parents will be responsible for Teacher Assistant days for each child.

If a last-minute emergency prevents a parent from coming in for their scheduled Teacher Assistant day, it is the parent's responsibility to find a replacement. If all attempts to find a replacement have been unsuccessful, please call the Teacher Assistant Roster Coordinator for your program, or the Director.

If a parent fails to attend a scheduled Teacher Assistant day and has not arranged for a substitute, a charge will be levied for the cost of an emergency replacement and a warning will be given. Subsequent failures to attend scheduled Teacher Assistant days without notification may result in the child being withdrawn from the school.

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