



# **The After School Center @ PIC**

## **Family Handbook**

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# **Welcome to the After School Center at The Parent-Infant Center**

All of us connected with the Center think that PIC is a pretty special place. The years of early childhood are formative ones for children and their families. PIC believes that quality child care is a learning experience for parents and children alike, and it is from this philosophy that our Center derives its name and its unique approach. This guide will provide you with information about the Center's structure, policies, and procedures. We hope it answers all of your questions, but if it doesn't, please ask the Program Director, Executive Director, or another staff member.

PIC serves children from six weeks to sixth grade. Younger children are enrolled in our day care program and children in kindergarten through sixth grade attend the After School Center (ASC). We are generally able to provide an adult:child ratio of 1:10 in the school-age program, which exceeds those required by the Commonwealth (1:12 for K-4; 1:15 for older children). We believe this makes an important difference in the quality of child care because it allows individual attention for children who need it.

PIC is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. We are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National AfterSchool Association. We select staff for their experience, creativity, sensitivity in working with young children and skill in communicating with families.

The Executive Director is responsible for administrative and educational supervision of the Center; the Director of School Age Programs functions as the primary liaison between staff and parents. All staff members undergo background checks as required by law and all regular classroom staff members are trained in pediatric first aid.

The Parent-Infant Center values diversity among our families and staff. The center enrolls children and employs staff regardless of race, religion, sex, age, national origin or family structure. We will do our best to adapt our program for children with special needs. We welcome families in publicly funded child care and maintain a modest scholarship fund.

## **PIC in the Community**

PIC considers involvement in its West Philadelphia community to be an important part of its role in the community. We have chosen to be in a diverse community because we want our children and their families to experience the richness that such an environment offers.

For the children, this means frequent walks around the neighborhood to the nearby shops, ethnic groceries, firehouse, or playgrounds. The children like to visit the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, where they can see their grownup friends and climb on outdoor sculptures or visit museums. The Biological Research Pond at Penn is also a favorite site for exploration.

For grownups, this involvement means that some PIC families and staff are involved in the Spruce Hill Community Association and other local community groups. The Center participates in community events and provides meeting space for community organizations. Our staff provides leadership in a variety of early childhood organizations.

Our Board and staff are always interested in exploring other ways we can support parents in our community by working with them to find solutions to parenting problems. In the past we have had grants to train and support

family child care providers and to offer supervised play in area health clinics. The After School Center grew out of parents' need for care for older children. Our parent-child playgroups introduce parents of young children to one another and enable their children to have some of their first group experiences.

We also believe in advocating for quality, affordable child care for all families who need it. We encourage parents to participate in the local, state, and federal electoral and legislative processes, including lobbying policy makers to improve the quality and accessibility of child care. We think that, in the long term, the best solutions to the child care needs of families lie in partnerships between government, employers, and families. If you are not a registered voter, you can pick up a registration form at PIC.

## **PIC as an Educational Resource**

The Center has served as a practicum and research site for high school and university students in a variety of fields. Anthropology students observe the development of language skills, psychology students are testing the development of cognitive skills, while nursing and medical students are learning about child development. High school students gain experience that will make them better baby sitters or parents. Students may also be working under the federal work-study program as part of their financial aid packages at area colleges or fulfilling professional internships.

Requests for observations or research are always cleared with the Executive Director. If a project involves working with specific children outside their regular classroom activity, the parents will receive a letter describing the research and asking for written permission to have their children participate.

## **The After School Center Program**

### ***After School Center Mission***

To provide safe, informal, educational, and recreational activities for school-age children while their parents are at work or school.

### ***After School Center Philosophy***

We believe that the programs should reflect a respect for children as capable and curious people. Every day there are planned activities to introduce children to new experiences and hobbies, time to unwind outdoors, as well as time for them to pursue their own interests and friendships. We think it is very important to use experiences of the After School Center to teach children to negotiate social situations and resolve conflicts in productive ways.

We believe that school-age child care is an important connection between school and home life. We value the opportunity to share information with parents and work with them to help their children have good experiences here and at school. We try to provide a good balance to the school experience by focusing on time with groups of children in play, art and social activities, and time to do the important work of being a kid.

We believe that children work and play best under the supervision of adults who are actively involved and engage children in activities and conversation. However, it is also important that staff allow children space, privacy, and autonomy when appropriate. Staff members welcome children warmly and show respect for them and their work. Staff members help children mediate conflicts and model positive behaviors, reinforcing appropriate behaviors whenever possible and setting limits on and redirecting inappropriate behaviors.

### ***A Typical Day***

3:00-4:30	Children arrive, play outdoors, have snack. Some children use this time for homework
4:30-5:30	Children participate in enrichment clubs, with different choices Monday-Thursday. Fridays are for special activities.
5:30-6:00	Free play or time to finish homework assignments

### ***Homework at the ASC***

The staff provide a quiet place available for children to do homework each day. While they will supervise homework and are available for questions, they are not trained as tutors and usually are supervising a roomful of children. It's important that you make your expectations about homework clear to both your child and the staff. Some parents hope that all the homework will be finished before supertime, while others are just as glad to have time after dinner to work with children on assignments. We can't promise that it will all get done at the ASC, but we'll do our best. For older children, "homework time" is one of the club options every day; for grades K-1, it is an option twice weekly.

### ***Full-day Program***

When schools are closed and we have full-day programming, children should be here by 10AM because plans may include a trip. Most of the ASC trips are taken in the PIC vans, though sometimes we rent a larger bus or take public transportation. It is our policy to rent buses equipped with seat belts.

Parents must always accompany their children to the classroom to be sure that they safely reach their destination and so that you can sign in for the day.

### **Enrollment**

The enrollment process is handled by PIC's Family Life Coordinator. Questions about program or staffing should be directed to the Director of School Age Programs. Questions about tuition should be directed to the Accounts Manager. Parents must submit the following forms for each child entering the ASC:

- Application
- Health assessment (including any allergies)
- Emergency contact (updated at least every six months)
- Family Profile
- Special Permissions form

During the school year, the ASC contract is for 40 weeks from September into June and tuition is divided into 10 equal payments. The tuition schedule takes into account our practice of closing between the Christmas and New Year's holidays. ASC tuition covers care until 6PM on regular school days, half-day care when school gets out early, and 10 full days when there is no school. If you are enrolled part-time or for less than the full year, the allowance for full days will be pro-rated. If your family's needs extend beyond the contracted 40 weeks, you pay for those at the same weekly rate as the original contract. All 10 full days must be used within the contract year or are forfeited.

We count on all ASC families to let us know the holiday schedules for your schools as soon as they are announced, since not all schools follow the same schedule. In order to plan special adventures, we need as much notice as possible. ***If your child is one of fewer than four children scheduled for a full day, the ASC opens at 10AM.***

### ***Part-time Care***

Though ASC primarily provides full-time after school care five days per week for working families, we recognize that many families need only part-time child care. We want to support such arrangements as much as possible. However, in order to maintain a balanced budget, we have to maintain careful control over part-time enrollments so that all our classes can be filled. Several rules apply to part-time enrollment:

1. When you enroll your child, you must specify which days of the week she/he will attend. **The After School Center requires a minimum of three days.**
2. You may not change those days from week to week, or even month-to-month. You may not “swap” one day for another in any given week. If it becomes necessary to make a change to your schedule of days for an extended period of time, please check with the Family Life Coordinator to see whether there is a space available on your preferred days. This policy is in effect to assure a comfortable routine for the children, as well as to maintain the routine of the classroom.
3. If your child is absent, due either to vacation or sickness, you may not make up those days by coming another day and you are required to pay for your regular days. If, however, the Center is closed for a holiday on one of your regular days, you may substitute another during the week of the holiday or during the two weeks before or the two weeks after, upon consultation with the After School Director.
4. If you need to add an unscheduled day, you may do so IF there is room in your child’s classroom. You must ask the After School Director and she will consult with the Lead Teacher to see if your request can be accommodated. If you add a day, you will be billed at the drop-in rate for an extra day. If you expect to need extra days with any frequency, you may want to consider adding a day to your regular schedule to simplify record keeping, and to be sure those extra days are available.

If a family seeks to switch from part-time to full-time, every effort will be made to accommodate that request. **A decrease from full-time to part-time requires a month’s written notice.** Exceptions may be made, at the discretion of the Executive Director, if a change in parent’s job status or the birth of a sibling suggests that a switch is appropriate.

*Part-time families in the full-day and after school programs have the same Parent Participation Program requirements as other families in their respective programs. We think it’s just as important that those parents build a relationship with staff and other parents and that they have that important feeling of ownership. This also helps keep the cost of part-time care as close to full-time hourly rates as possible. While part-time children don’t come every day, many of the costs of enrollment are the same regardless of the number of days a child attends: enrollment and orientation, parent conferences, storage space, bookkeeping, notices and newsletters—these don’t vary.*

### ***Holiday Care***

Some families just enroll for holiday care and pay for 10 full days. Families who need more days pay the same daily rate for additional days. All holiday care days must be used within the 40-week contract year. ***Families whose children will come for holiday care must notify the director of the ASC at least two weeks in advance that they plan to attend.*** We require this advance notice for staff scheduling, as well as program planning, purposes. Therefore, if we do not have this notice we cannot guarantee care for your child.

### ***SUMMER CAMP at PIC***

The ASC offers a variety of indoor and outdoor activities during the summer weeks in one- or two-week sessions. For many families, our program offers care to fill the time between school and other day camp programs. For other families, the summer program may be the best summer option. We strongly encourage families whose children have been in the school year program *not* to enroll their children for the entire summer. If possible,

arrange for your child to have a break in the year by taking a family vacation week or planning a visit to friends or relatives. Remember that children need vacations, too!

### ***Vacations***

The Center depends on tuition to meet its operating expenses and cannot afford to hold open a slot that is not paid for. Parents must, therefore, pay fees as usual during vacations and all other absences of the child from the Center. Nevertheless, it is a great help to the Center to know of absences in advance and we urge you to give us as much notice as possible whenever your child will not be in attendance.

### **Hours and Closings**

The After School Center is open from school dismissal until 6pm, Monday through Friday, and when school is closed for the full day. PIC is closed on the following days:

Martin Luther King Holiday

Presidents' Day

Memorial Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Day through New Year's Day (and at 1 p.m. December 24)

*We also close two days a year for staff in-service training.*

### ***Snow Closings***

The Center tries to remain open regardless of the weather. If schools have early dismissal because of inclement weather and PIC is open, we will transport children to PIC. If we will not be open for the day, that information will be on our website and voicemail by 6:45AM. If it becomes necessary to close the Center early, parents will be notified by phone and must pick up their children as soon as possible. If the University of Pennsylvania is closed due to weather conditions, the Center will be closed. Call 215-898-MELT to find out the University's operating schedule. PIC's KYW School Closing number is **3018**.

### **What to Bring to PIC**

#### ***Food***

Healthy snacks are served as part of the after school program. The ASC participates in the Nutritional Development Services Program administered by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. All snacks served to children under this program are served at no separate charge regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. There is no discrimination in admission policy, meal service, or the use of facilities. Any complaints of discriminations should be submitted in writing to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

**When we have all-day programming, remember to send lunch with your child.** Teachers are encouraged to follow USDA snack guidelines, and we hope that you will do the same at lunchtime. The guidelines suggest that lunches include one serving of fluid milk, two servings of fruit and/or vegetable, one serving of bread or grains (bread, pasta, noodles), and one serving of meat or meat alternative (eggs, cheese, beans, nuts, yogurt). You can find information about food and nutrition and ways to create nutritious snacks and meals on the USDA website: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/index/html>.

There are often too many children for us to be able to heat up lunches, so we ask that you send lunches that don't need to be heated. There is a refrigerator for keeping them cool. **Please label everything** - lunchboxes, bottles, cups, thermoses, plastic containers, etc.

### ***Clothing***

Children of all ages have occasional accidents. A change of clothing should be brought to the Center on the first day and should be replaced as needed. The type of clothing should be appropriate to the season. Please be sure to label all articles of clothing clearly. Use first name and initials -- there could be several Matthews or Ayannas. Staff do their best to keep children's belongings together, but it's a lot harder if no names are attached.

Here are some hints about clothing:

- Children should wear sturdy, comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing. Please remember that our play is sometimes dirty. If it's important that your child be picture clean at the end of the day, you may want to bring a spare outfit.
- **The children go outside all year round**, so be sure they are dressed warmly in the winter and that they have mittens and waterproof boots.
- School-age children who wear school uniforms often wish to keep a set of play clothes at the ASC so that they can change when they arrive each afternoon.

Your child will have his or her own "cubbie" for storing extra clothes. In the ASC it's a canvas bag hung on the child's hook if there is not a cubbie available.

The Center welcomes donations of children's clothing to keep on hand when someone runs out of clean clothes. If your child comes home in unfamiliar clothes, please launder and return them. We also collect stray mittens for children to use when they've lost theirs.

### ***What NOT to bring to ASC***

While we do not have a "no toys" policy, we do recommend that toys and electronic gadgets stay at home. Toys that come to the ASC may mysteriously find their way into other children's bags, get broken or lost, or present sharing challenges. The ASC cannot be responsible for keeping track of these toys. We would appreciate your cooperation in making sure that, if your child decides to bring a toy to PIC, it is one that is appropriate for this environment. Toy weapons and other toys that may lead to unsafe play should remain at home.

### ***Lost and Found***

The lost-and-found box is located by the reception desk at the ground floor entrance, Spruce Building. *You will find lost items faster if they are labeled with your child's name.* **School-age children lose many more items than small children do.**

When classes are closing outdoors, younger ASC children place their belongings along the fence. Check before you leave to be sure you have everything. If you leave something behind, it probably will be placed inside the front door when staff members leave the building.

### ***Behavior Policy***

Over the years, our families and staff have devised a very specific series of consequences that will be used with children who frequently exhibit inappropriate behavior, including seriously disrespectful attitudes toward staff. Corporal punishment is *never* used.

1. Verbal warning is given with an explanation about why the behavior is inappropriate. The Child will be given appropriate time and opportunity to correct his or her behavior.
2. Withdrawal from the activity. This is meant to be a time for the child to refocus and redirect, to “chill out” rather than as a punishment. A behavior incident form is completed; one copy is given to parents by the lead teacher and the other copy is given to the ASC Director.
3. Verbal communication in a meeting between parent(s), child, appropriate staff, and the ASC Director and/or Executive Director. This meeting will result in a contract among child, parents, and staff regarding child’s behavior and possible consequences.
4. If the contract is broken, the child will be immediately removed from all ASC activities and parents will be required to pick up the child immediately. The child may not participate in the ASC the following day.

If the After School Center seems to be an inappropriate setting for a particular child, the teachers and program director will involve parents and any necessary resource people in making a plan for serving the child. *A decision to terminate a child’s enrollment would be made in consultation with the Executive Director.*

### ***What to do if you have a concern***

Occasionally, a parent will find he or she has some concerns about something happening in the classroom or the Center. Open communication usually solves most problems. If you’re comfortable talking with the lead teacher, that’s the place to start. If you’d prefer to talk with someone outside the classroom, it’s best to schedule an appointment to talk with the Program Director who is responsible for supervision of your child’s teachers. She can help you think about how best to address the issue or speak directly with relevant staff members. If she is not able to help solve the problem, please feel free to speak with the Executive Director or Family Life Coordinator. Room Parent(s) may also help you locate the appropriate person to address your concern.

## **Transportation/Transitions**

### ***Parking***

Between the hours of 8AM and 10AM, and 4PM to 6PM, the parking spaces halfway down the blocks on both 42<sup>nd</sup> and Locust Streets are designated as 20-minute loading zones. At other times, those spaces are available for parking for an extended period. Many parents find the loading zones to be convenient for drop-off and pick-up; however, if you expect to spend more than 20 minutes dropping off or picking up your child, you may want to park in one of the 2-hour parking spaces on our neighboring blocks. Please remember that spaces adjacent to the Penn Alexander School are designated “no parking” between the hours of 7:30 and 4:30 on school days.

### ***Pick-up Time***

The Center closes promptly at 6PM. This means that you should arrive by 5:45 to allow adequate time to hear about your child’s day, observe his or her latest accomplishment, collect belongings and chat with staff and other parents. If, because of an emergency, you cannot arrive before 6PM, please call ahead. Staff can reassure your child by explaining what has happened and can adjust their own plans. Children who have not been picked up in their respective classrooms by 6PM, will be taken by a staff member to the ground floor of the Spruce Building.

Parents must sign out when picking up their children. Others designated to pick up children must be at least 16 years of age and be listed on your child’s emergency contact sheet. Verbal release of a child to a person not on the contact sheet must be documented with a PIC administrator.

PIC staff members have been instructed not to release children into the care of any adult who seems incapable of safely caring for the child. This would include parents who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If

that seems to be the case, the teacher will notify an administrator who will call one of your emergency contacts to ask that person to come and pick up your child.

After you have arrived for pickup, please remember that you are responsible for your child even if staff members are present. This clarification of *who's in charge here?* is important to prevent disruption of program and potential problems that can occur at transitions when there is confusion about responsibility.

### ***Late Fee Policy***

If a child has not been signed out by 6:00PM, your family will be charged \$15.00 for any part of the first 15 minutes and \$5.00 for every part of each additional five minutes thereafter. Remember that cell phones are an accurate time keeper if there is a question about lateness. You, along with the staff member waiting with your child, will be asked to sign a "late fee" form, and the fee will be billed to your account.

### ***Transition to PIC***

All children must sign in when they reach PIC. Children attending the adjacent Penn Alexander School are escorted to PIC by staff. For children attending other schools, PIC has two vans to transport children from their schools to the ASC. Other children may be dropped off at the main entrance by their school vans and will be met by ASC staff.

*Regarding van pickup:* To avoid confusion at pickup time, it is critical that families in the ASC call the Director of School Age Programs by noon to notify us if your child **will not** be coming to the Center. Children must understand the importance of going directly to the bus/van pickup point without dawdling. If your child is not at the designated pickup location, we may need to proceed to the next school. In that case, we will call the school to find out why your child was not at the van stop. Children should know that if the PIC van is unavoidably late or they miss the bus, they should go directly to the school office. School personnel have our phone number and are asked to call to alert us to any problems.

Children who frequently miss the bus or fail to follow rules about transition to the ASC may be asked to leave the program.

## **Tuition Payments**

ASC families enrolled in the school-year program make ten equal payments from September to June. Families receiving CCIS subsidies pay tuition weekly, with tuition due every Monday. *The Center is required to notify the CCIS office if families are remiss in their payments.*

Tuition checks should be made payable to the Parent-Infant Center (or PIC) and placed in locked tuition mailboxes designated for that purpose in the Spruce Building (outside the ASC Director's office or by the ground floor reception desk) or Sweet Building (near the Administrative Assistant's office, first floor). Families with more than one child enrolled receive a 10% discount on the oldest child's tuition.

Monthly tuition is payable in advance and is due on the first business day of the month. A late fee of \$10 per week will be assessed on all payments not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of each month. You will receive a mid-month reminder if you have forgotten to make a payment. All families receive statements at the end of the month; statements are e-mailed unless you would prefer a printed statement delivered to your PIC mailbox.

PIC accepts credit card payments for all tuition and other expenses (minimum \$10 charge). Tuition payments made by credit card, or automatic withdrawals from your credit card, will be assessed a 2% surcharge to cover banking fees. There is no surcharge for automatic withdrawals from checking or debit accounts.

If circumstances require a special payment plan, please discuss this with the Accounts Manager.

Tuition deposits are held in escrow and returned by the Center upon withdrawal, less any outstanding tuition payment or PPP obligation. The deposit is \$250 per child in the After School Center. Families with more than one child enrolled at PIC pay the full deposit for the youngest child and one-half of the usual deposit for each additional child enrolled. The deposit is adjusted or waived for families receiving child care subsidy.

### ***Withdrawal***

Families are required to give one month's written notice of your intention to leave the Center and pay tuition for that month, so that we can have adequate time to fill your child's space. **Families who are leaving in August, September, or October must give two months' notice.** Your deposit, minus any tuition and a charge for uncompleted PPP obligations, will be returned about a month after you leave the Center.

### ***Child Care Expenses and the IRS***

Many employers have adopted programs that enable employees to tax shelter their child care expenses. Check with your employer to see if you can, as it will be a significant savings. If that's not available to you, check with your tax adviser about deductions for child care expenses. PIC's Employer Identification Number is 23-2151143. Your monthly statement should satisfy any need to document your expenses.

## **Family Involvement at PIC**

Our Board and staff are committed to the idea that the best child care involves the entire family. In a variety of ways, every member of each child's family is drawn into the Center's activities. Parents are in important part of PIC and we welcome families to come into the classroom and visit at any time of the day.

### ***Parent-Teacher Communication***

Regular communication between parents and teachers is an important element of this partnership. Each group posts the schedules of its teachers and the schedule for the day on a bulletin board outside the room. Please let us know about important events in your child's life—a visit from relatives, a special outing, times of unusual stress such as visits to the doctor, a family death or divorce. This information will help us be more responsive to your child's needs. The Director of School Age Programs may be reached at 215-222-5480 x306; the best time to reach the director is before the program begins (noon-2pm).

### ***Confidentiality***

All employees are required to maintain strict confidentiality regarding files, records and other information regarding children or their families. No information can be shared with any persons and/or organizations outside of the agency without the signed consent of a child's parent or legal guardian. Disclosure of confidential information among agency staff is for professional purposes only and done in a setting that assures privacy. All records with personal information are maintained in locked files by the Family Life Coordinator or in password-protected electronic files.

### ***Parent-Teacher Meetings***

Parents of school-age children are encouraged to request one at any time. Our staff members are glad to talk with you about how things are going and share news.

At least once a year, in the fall, the teachers will schedule a classroom potluck supper that begins with a parents' meeting to discuss plans and answer questions. This is an excellent time for parents to make curriculum suggestions and talk about ways you can get involved in your child's classroom experiences.

The staff also perform annual developmental assessments in the After School Center and may schedule conferences with parents to share that information. At these private meetings, parents and staff can candidly discuss the child's development. It's helpful if you have thought ahead about questions you have for the teachers.

The quality of our care for your child is influenced by the quality of our communication with you. Receiving accurate, frequent information about your expectations, needs, and feelings about your child's care enables us to do our job more effectively. Please do not hesitate to drop a note or arrange short conference times with your child's teachers, the Program Director, or the Executive Director, especially when you have been unable to stop and chat with the classroom staff at drop-off or pick-up time.

### ***Board of Directors***

The Center is managed by a Board of Directors made up of parents and community representatives. The Board hires and supervises the Executive Director and works closely with her to make program and policy decisions, develop and oversee the budget, and organize fundraising efforts. The Board and its committees provide a direct opportunity for parents to influence the programs of the Center. Parents who are interested in serving on committees or the Board are encouraged to make us aware of their interest. We want to have a Board that represents all of our programs, reflects the diversity of our families, and has the skills needed to run a good business. Parents and staff are welcome to attend Board meetings.

### ***Family Life Activities***

PIC has a strong Parent Involvement Committee whose mission is to motivate parents to be involved in the life and direction of the center, and to build a stronger community of families at PIC. There also are Room Parents overseen by a subcommittee of the Parent Involvement Committee who establish and sustain center-wide connections.

Throughout the year we plan occasional social activities for parents and children to get to know one another and parenting workshops that provide a chance for parents to learn from one another's experiences. Parenting is tough work and we all benefit from having other parents to talk with about the challenges and joys of raising our kids.

## **Parent Participation Program**

Active parent participation is one thing that makes PIC different from most other child care programs and it's one of the features we consider very special about PIC. We really *are* a parent-run center. It contributes to a greater sense of community among our families and builds a strong sense of ownership of the Center and its programs.

Two-parent After School Center families have a 10-hour commitment, while single-parent ASC families have a 6-hour commitment. There is no PPP requirement for families enrolled only in the summer camp.

These are some of the jobs parents do to support the work of the Center:

picking up litter	playground safety	laundering dress-up clothes
making games	running errands	gardening
cleaning	painting	fixing computers
editing the newsletter	teaching about special cultural events	making repairs
answering the phones	organizing refreshments for events	serving on the Board or committees
helping with a special interest club	taking photographs	organizing family social events
building climbers	providing legal or medical advice	typing
writing grant proposals	chaperoning trips	organizing parenting workshops
organizing fundraising events	marketing and publicity	... and many more

Requests for PPP assistance are announced in the newsletter, posted on bulletin boards or in your classroom, or e-mailed to the Center-wide list serve. You may see a task that needs doing yourself or have an idea for a special project. Talk with your child’s teachers or one of the Center administrators about your idea.

***PPP FAQ’s***

Here are the answers to some of the most frequent PPP questions:

*HOW are records kept?*

When you do a project, record the task and the time spent and drop that information in the tuition box. Hours are recorded and you receive quarterly updates of your PPP standing.

*WHAT IF we work the hours and forget to record them?*

Record them when you remember. They don’t expire.

*WHAT IF I say I will work but can’t make it? What if I don’t manage to get all my hours worked during the specified time?*

If you have made a commitment to work and are unable to fulfill your responsibility, we expect *you* to find another parent to fill in for you. Whether it’s a workday, a class trip, or a special project, other people have made plans that count on your involvement. If you are especially busy during one quarter, you may choose to complete your obligation during the next quarter or you may pay off those hours. At the end of PIC’s fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>), you will be billed for any outstanding hours at the rate of \$15 per hour.

*WHAT IF I still owe hours when our family leaves PIC?*

The hours owed will be deducted from your tuition deposit before it is returned to you.

**Center Communications**

***Family Mailboxes***

You will find monthly newsletters, quarterly PPP reports, notes from the administration, completed artwork, and much more in your mailbox. Families should check their PIC mailbox periodically to be sure that you receive information in a timely manner. ASC families with younger children can find their mailboxes in the hallway next to the ASC Director’s office; mailboxes in the Stucco building are located on the bottom level of the building.

***Newsletters***

The Center’s monthly newsletter, Circle Time, includes news of classroom activities, announcements of upcoming events, public policy updates, and other information. Parents are welcome to contribute articles to share information, express concerns, or make suggestions. We also publish a semi-annual newsletter for the broader

community to reach current and alumni families, PIC neighbors, business and professional contacts, legislators and policy makers. The spring community newsletter also functions as our annual report.

### ***Website***

PIC's website, [www.parentinfantcenter.org](http://www.parentinfantcenter.org), contains PDFs of current newsletters, a copy of this handbook, and basic information about the center, including calendars, a staff roster, phone and e-mail contacts. The website's photo gallery shows classroom activities and documents special events such as PIC parades or celebrations.

### ***E-mail***

We value the quality of communications between parents and staff, and we believe that face-to-face communications are best when discussing important issues concerning your child. *E-mail may not be used to report a child's absence, in lieu of medication consent forms, or for any other activity requiring your signature.* PIC's Family Life Coordinator maintains an e-mail list for general announcements and queries to parents. Classroom teachers use e-mail occasionally for reminders or special announcements. If you reply, please remember that teachers are tending to your children and may not have an opportunity to respond for a day or two.

### ***Bulletin Boards***

To find information about center and classroom activities, check the bulletin boards near entrances and outside classrooms. The bulletin board just outside the small gym in the Spruce Building will have information about childcare issues and legislative activity.

## **Development**

While the Center generally meets its operating expenses from fees paid by parents, we depend on contributions and fundraising events for scholarships and capital improvements. Special projects are generally funded by grants.

### ***Fundraising Events***

We count on the participation of all PIC families to assure the success of our annual fundraising events – the spring plant sale and the fall silent auction. Proceeds from the plant sale support our scholarship fund; ArtStart, the fall silent auction, raises additional scholarship monies and supports a range of improvements. Parent committees provide critical support in planning these events and volunteers lend their hands-on help at each fundraiser.

### ***Contributions***

The Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization and contributions are tax deductible. Gifts are always welcome and make unbudgeted extras possible.

PIC is eligible to receive funds through the United Way Donor Choice plan. We hope you will keep this in mind the next time you are urged to give to the United Way. Our number is 2671. In the Penn's Way Campaign, our number is 55-2671. You can also designate PIC through the Combined Federal Campaign.

Each year PIC conducts an annual appeal to friends and alumni of the center to raise funds for capital improvements and scholarships. You may be invited to suggest names of friends or relatives whom you think we should include in this appeal.

We appreciate donations of toys and dress-up clothing for use in our classrooms. We may also be able to use spare furniture or other valuable "junk" and wonderful bargains you run across. If you see great deals, take a

chance; we can probably use it. Watch the trash or check out yard sales for great surprises. If you would like a record of your contribution for tax purposes, please give the Development Director a list of donated items.

When children graduate from the Center, some families choose to designate their tuition deposits as a contribution to our endowment fund for scholarships, capital improvements, or the staff development fund - a thoughtful farewell gesture that is always appreciated. The Aleksander Grill Endowment was created in memory of a child who was briefly at PIC and whose sister and brother grew up here. Managed by The Philadelphia Foundation, it is earmarked for scholarships. The Marni Sweet Staff Tuition Assistance Fund was created to honor the contributions of former Executive Director Marni Sweet.

## **Security and Safety**

All of the doors at PIC are kept locked. *When you ring the bell for entrance, please let the person who answers know who you are and whom you are picking up.* Be certain to close the door securely behind you. Be sure you know anyone whom you are inviting to enter with you.

Families are expected to abide by the following rules:

- Drop-off: All children must be brought into the classroom by a parent or another responsible adult. Please be sure that a staff member knows that your child has arrived and that you have signed in.
- Pick-up: When you pick up your child at the end of the day, you must sign out and notify one of the regular staff that you are taking your child home.
- Change of escort: You must notify the teachers ahead of time when there is someone new who will pick up your child. Please be sure that person is listed on your child's emergency contact sheet. Any pick-up person not known to the staff will be asked to show identification.
- **Contact information: You are responsible for reporting any change in address or phone numbers or changes in employment to the Family Life Coordinator. Remember to keep your Emergency Contacts up to date. It is essential that we know where and how to reach you at all times.**
- Families with children in the Spruce Building may receive a key fob to PIC so they don't have to wait for the door to be answered; in the future, we plan to expand this system to the Stucco building where older ASC children have classrooms. Ask the Operations Manager for details.

## ***Emergency Preparedness and Parental Notification***

As part of our responsibility to assure the safety of children in our care, we have developed an Emergency Response Plan for all types of emergencies – weather, utilities failures, or catastrophe. Depending upon the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- Immediate evacuation: All children and staff will be evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility or to another building nearby in the event of a fire, smoke, or related emergency
- In-place sheltering: Police emergencies, weather, or hazardous materials may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- Modified Operations: Circumstances may dictate cancellation and/or postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building issues, however, they may be necessary in a variety of situations.

In an emergency we may communicate in a variety of ways, including local television/radio stations, our website ([www.parentinfantcenter.org](http://www.parentinfantcenter.org)), e-mail notification (if possible), and telephone calls (if possible). We ask that you **not** call our main number during an emergency. This will keep the telephone lines free to contact the local

emergency response support. We will call you to let you know if we've taken one of the protective actions and when it is safe for you to pick up your child.

We will reach you using the telephone numbers that you have designated on your emergency contact form. We will only release your child to persons whom you have listed on this form. Please check to be sure that your telephone numbers and escort lists that we have on file are always up to date. The safety of the children in our care is our first priority. Should you have additional questions regarding emergency operating procedures, please talk with the Executive Director.

## **Health Policies**

Our policies have been developed in consultation with pediatricians and the available literature on illness in child care settings. Staff and children must wash their hands frequently, especially before meals or preparing food and after using the toilet. Hand sanitizing liquid will not be substituted for soap-and-water hand washing.

### ***Medication at PIC***

Only prescribed medication and Tylenol/Motrin (or generic substitute) can be administered at PIC if (A) when prescribed, it is provided in its original container with the prescription indicating the dose and frequency to be given and (B) a "Medication Consent and Log" form is filled out giving teachers permission to administer the medicine, including exact instructions, amount, and time of administration. This should be signed by the parent and dated each day. The forms are available from the classroom staff. All medicines will be placed in a locked container that is inaccessible to children. Medicines must not be put in the child's lunchbox or cubby. If it needs to be refrigerated, be sure to include that information on the "Medication Consent and Log" form.

### ***Examinations and Immunizations***

We require an **annual** medical examination of your child by his/her physician. We will remind you of this by providing you with a new medical exam form when the old one is about to expire. We appreciate your assistance in making certain that your child receives regular examinations and all necessary immunizations. Because this is a state licensing requirement, we may exclude children from the Center whose parents fail to return completed forms. If, for medical or religious reasons, your child is not immunized, you must complete an exemption form to attach to the health form. These can be obtained from your pediatrician.

### ***Special Care Plan***

When a parent or legal guardian informs PIC staff that a child has a special need (such as an allergy or asthma) or disability, a special care plan needs to be completed by a parent and/or health care provider(s). This is kept in your child's file by the Family Life Coordinator.

### ***Emergency Medical Attention***

A well-stocked first aid kit is available at all times. All staff have annual first-aid training and someone with CPR training is on site at all times.

In case of an emergency that requires immediate medical attention, we will take your child to the Emergency Room at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, which is at 34th and Civic Center Blvd. We will call you immediately, and you can meet us at the hospital to authorize treatment. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP YOUR HOME, BUSINESS, AND EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS CURRENT AT OUR OFFICE.**

### ***Mandated Reporting***

Staff are required by law to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect. A designated staff member will forward all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to PA ChildLine.

### ***Illness Policy***

We ask you to carefully review the following criteria to determine whether your child is well enough to attend the Center:

1. A fever of 101° (temperature of 100° taken under the arm or 101° taken by mouth) and malaise or other abnormal behavior, unassociated with reactions to immunizations, needs to be taken seriously. If your child comes down with a fever while at PIC:
  - You must pick up your child immediately and take him/her home.
  - With your permission, the staff will give a dose of Tylenol, Motrin, or a generic substitute (“GS”) to bring down the fever while awaiting your arrival.
  - Your child may return to the Center once his or her temperature has been normal for 24 consecutive hours, without medication.
2. The staff will not administer any over-the-counter medications except for Tylenol or Motrin (or GS) without a doctor’s note.
3. The following policies govern the administration of Tylenol or Motrin (or GS) at PIC:
  - Staff will give Tylenol or Motrin (or GS) for the onset of a fever or pain. Examples of pain include: teething pain, ear pain from a diagnosed ear infection, or pain after immunizations.
  - If your child requires Tylenol or Motrin (or GS) for one of the reasons listed above, then you will be asked to fill out a form each day this medication is required.
  - PIC will not administer Tylenol or Motrin (or GS) to “prevent” a fever. A fever can be a sign of illness and needs to be recognized.
4. Children with persistent coughs and runny noses may need to be seen by a doctor and are likely to need 2-3 days’ home rest before returning to the Center.
5. Diarrhea is defined as loose, watery stools of at least twice the normal daily frequency. There are infectious and non infectious causes. If it is not contagious and if the child has no other symptoms, we *may* allow his or her continued attendance at the Center. However, sometimes the added demands on the staff, or stress for the child, may suggest that the child be sent home. When diarrhea is accompanied by fever or a negative change in behavior we ask that children be kept at home until stools are normal for 24 hours.
6. Children with ear infections should be kept at home for the first 24 hours of antibiotics. They may return to school with the continued use of the medication.
7. Mouth cold sores are infectious in beginning stages, while they are draining. Your child must stay home until the sores are dried.
8. If your child shows signs of conjunctivitis, such as pink or red, swollen, or purulent eyes, you must see a doctor and obtain a doctor’s note before returning to the Center. A child with bacterial conjunctivitis may return once the course of treatment has begun. A child with viral or allergic conjunctivitis may return with a doctor’s note.
9. Head lice are common among young children. Lice are transmitted through direct contact with an infected person or their personal belongings, especially clothing or head gear. Treatment is complicated, so we urge each family to make regular head checks at home. When a child is infested and treatment has been completed, we will continue to check for nits, as you should.
10. Illnesses requiring a doctor’s note for readmission include, but are not limited to: hepatitis, scabies, ringworm, pinworms, scarlet fever, strep throat. Please inform your child’s teacher and an administrator as soon as your child becomes ill at home from any cause. We can warn other parents to be alert to similar symptoms or take appropriate preventive measures. It is important that you also let us know if your child ever needs hospitalization.
11. Nearly every day our activities include outdoor play. Children well enough to be at the Center are expected to be well enough to go outside, provided they are dressed appropriately for the weather. We generally don’t have

enough staff to be able to have a caregiver inside with one child while the others are outdoors. If your child's medical needs require an exception to this rule, we will require a letter from the pediatrician specifying the circumstances under which a child is to be kept indoors.