



# Children's House Newsletter



## UPCOMING EVENTS

9/05 .. **Labor Day** – Closed

9/06 .. **First Day of School**

9/19.. **Grandparent's Day for Infants, Toddlers, P1 and P4**

9/20.. **Grandparent's Day for P2, P3, and Pre-K**

Grandparents are invited to come visit the center between 10:00 and 11:15 am. Each classroom will prepare a brief "performance" and refreshments will be served. If grandparents are unable to attend, children are welcome to invite a "special friend".

*In order to avoid confusion and possible upset for the children, parents should not attend in place of grandparents or special friends.*



9/26,

9/27...**BEST ORAL HEALTH DENTISTS ON SITE**

9/27...**Parent Information Night for all Parents**

*Parents are welcomed back to the center from 6:30-8:00 p.m.*

Parents are encouraged to come back to the center to meet with the staff, learn about their child's classroom and curriculum, and

view the rest of the center. Each teacher will prepare a 15-minute presentation. Presentations will be staggered (times will be posted in advance) to assist families with multiple children. We have so many siblings enrolled though, that we may not be able to make all presentations at separate times.

We hope parents will be able to attend! Staff are prepared to discuss their philosophies, classroom routines and give parents detailed information that isn't generally shared at drop-off or pick-up times because the main focus for the staff during these times is the children. Printed information will be given to all families that evening. A raffle will also be held in each classroom for a special children's book.

Those involved in conducting the UMass Study (in our PS/PK rooms) this school year will also be on hand to discuss the project and answer any questions parents might have.

The materials that will be set up in classrooms and in the main hall are set up for *display* purposes only. For this reason, we *strongly* encourage

children not attend. If parents cannot find alternate care for the evening we just ask that they take responsibility for making sure children do not disturb displays.



### In October...

**Firefighter Joe Visits!**

**A Visit from the Springfield Firefighters and their Equipment!**



**10/12 Picture Day for Infants, Toddlers, and P4**

**10/13 Picture Day for P2, P3, Pre-K/K and sibling photos**

*McClement Studios* will do individual and class photos from 9:00 a.m. until approximately noon.

**All children** are encouraged to attend for class/individual pictures — even if it is not a regularly scheduled day at the center. An adult must stay with the child, though, until pictures are accomplished.

Flyers will be sent home with more information and pricing as the date approaches.

### CH Openings Available

CH has several full time Preschool openings left to fill this fall.

Please let friends and co-workers know about our

openings! *The Referral Bonus program is still in effect. Refer a new family! If they enroll, your family receives a \$50 WalMart gift card!*

Children's House now accepts limited community enrollment along with New England Farm Worker's vouchers.

Please encourage anyone interested to contact Pam at 782-4448 or via email at:

[pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org](mailto:pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org)

Prospective parents can find more info on our website:

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

### SEPTEMBER THEMES

*Getting to Know My Classroom*

*All About Me*

*My Family*

*The Five Senses*

*Apples*



# Authorized and Unauthorized Pick-Ups

Children's House takes the safety of your child seriously. Therefore, we have in place a policy regarding "Authorized and Unauthorized Pick-ups" of the children in our care. The policy allows only the parents or guardians of a child to pick up the child from the center unless written or verbal authorization is obtained otherwise.

Written authorization is the most effective in that it doesn't require staff to remember unfamiliar names or to pass on the information to the closing staff. Written authorization can be in the form of a separate note to the teacher, a note on the Infant or Toddler Daily Information Sheet, or a note to the teacher in the Communication Notebooks located in P2 through K.

Verbal authorization is usually done by phone when an unforeseen circumstance arises that changes pick-up plans. Parents should call the center and ask to speak directly with their child's teacher. If the teacher is unavailable, a message can be given to the secretary.

All authorizations *must* include the *full name* of the person who will be arriving at the center (not just "grammy" or "papa"). The person who arrives to pick up must have a picture I.D. with them even if they have been at the center before. The staff who met them initially may not readily recognize them the second time or may not be on site the next time they come to pick up.

We do have forms available that allow listed

persons to pick up anytime without authorization. Please see Pam if you would like an "Authorized Anytime" form. Parents can also simply write a notes stating the names on the note are "authorized anytime". Those persons listed currently in your child's file are *not* authorized anytime *except* in an emergency situation when neither parent can be reached.

Please understand that we are not trying to make it difficult for parents. We are trying to keep children safe and avoid the inconvenience of having parents arrive at the center only to find out someone else has already picked up. Thanks so much for your cooperation!

## 10 Tips to Make Your Child's Morning Drop-Off Easier

- 1 Solicit the help of any staff member.
- 2 Make your a.m. routine consistent from the time your child awakes. Involve your child in his/her morning routine (dressing self if possible, getting own breakfast if possible, getting items ready to bring to school).
- 3 Have your child bring a special stuffed animal or blanket from home for security.
- 4 Don't show distress yourself.
- 5 Help your child connect to either a staff person or another child.
- 6 Don't linger. A child who is upset will calm down very shortly after a parent departs. A parent who stays, may prolong the separation anxiety episode.
- 7 Establish a routine once you arrive at the center. Follow through even when your child resists.
- 8 For some children, a picture of family members or pets posted in their cubby is helpful.
- 9 Reassure your child daily that you love him and will be back to pick him up after work. Make your pickup time consistent to avoid
- 10 Give your child something to look forward to at school. (Look at the lesson plans in the classroom or main hall for ideas!)

anxiety. Children get to know the "order" that they go home in. *Please remember that tuition covers a 9-hour day.* A child cannot look forward to school if she knows she'll be here a really long day.

### Volunteer to Spend Time at the Center!

*We encourage parents to share a talent or a story with children at the center! Arrange this with your child's teacher!*

## COMMUNICATION

We do our best to keep parents informed. Each classroom has its own system for communicating. At Parent Night on 9/27/11, your child's teacher will explain how her system works.

In general, Daily Sheets are used in the Infant and Toddler classrooms. Notes, memos and sometimes receipts are attached to the daily sheets. Receipts are emailed when possible.

In the Preschool through Pre-K classes, communication boards are used along with notebooks and parent/child folders.

The main foyer is also a site for information as well as the front door and the hall leading to the upstairs classrooms. P4 families may want to periodically check the main hall and front door for information that isn't necessarily posted downstairs.

Please check these areas often to stay on top of the news. Also watch for the monthly newsletter!

Phone calls can be received by staff members in the Toddler through Pre-K classes between 1:00 and 2:30 p.m. Conferences can be arranged whenever convenient for both the parents and teacher. Calls to the Infant Room can be received all day *except* between the hours of 11 a.m.



and 1 p.m.

Please try to avoid calling the center before 9:00 a.m. unless there is an emergency. We would like our staff to be able to focus on the children in the early morning as much as possible without interruption.

Pam is available to check on children throughout the day if you need to call sometime other than what is generally most convenient for staff.

Please feel free to talk to Pam about any issues that come up or if you need help with your child's transition into the center or his/her new classroom.

We're all here to help and we want parents and children to feel comfortable in their new settings!

# STAFF REQUESTS

From time to time, parents ask how they can be helpful to the staff. Here are a few tips:

- 1 Summer camp is over. Please bring towels, swimsuits and sunscreen home. Replace with slippers and heavier weight (**but still crib size**) blankets for naptime.
- 2 Please avoid sending items to school in plastic bags. Exception: One set of extra clothes (two or more sets would be appropriate for those children in the process of toilet training) should be placed in a labeled zip loc bag and either kept in your child's back pack or given to your child's teacher.
- 3 Please check extra clothes currently on site or in back pack to be sure they are appropriate for weather and still fit.
- 4 Label! Label! Label!
- 5 Please dress your child in "easy on and off" clothing, especially if your child is recently toilet trained. Avoid hi-top sneakers, onesies, belts, suspenders, buttons, zippers on pants, and one piece

outfits. Velcro shoes are also encouraged.

- 6 Encourage your child to practice self-help skills at home (i.e. putting on own coat, zipping, putting on own shoes, tying (if older), dressing self, washing hands, wiping self after toileting, etc.).
- 7 For safety reasons, we ask that children wear sneakers on the playground. Sandals are dangerous on the playground and children are not allowed on any of the equipment if they are wearing them.
- 8 Please avoid allowing children to bring hard toys to school. **One small**, stuffed animal is appropriate for naptime. Pillows larger than crib size are not allowed due to limited storage space in cubbies. Whatever your child brings to school, must fit in his/her back pack. Try it out at home. If your child cannot "stuff" his/her belongings into the back pack by him or herself, then smaller items need to be chosen for school.

- 9 Teachers will inform parents if they plan to have "sharing" or "show-n-tell" days.
- 10 Because children mimic TV characters, staff recommend limiting your child's exposure to shows like Power Rangers, wrestling, violent animated shows and the like. We also strongly discourage sending children to the center with merchandise reflecting the above mentioned characters/shows.
- 11 **Please call** if you will be bringing your child to the center *after* 10:00 a.m. Our lunch counts are given to the cook at this time. So to be sure a lunch is prepared for your child, we will need to know **by 10:00** if he/she will be in attendance.

*Thank you!!*

*"We find delight in the beauty and happiness that makes the heart too big for the body.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## OUR STAFF

We have new faces on deck at Children's House as we begin this new school year! See the staff schedule chart (last page) for all the details.

Classroom doors will provide parents with pictures and information about the staff members who will spend time in each room.

### Need Assistance or Have Questions??

In the event **Pam Flowers**, the Center Director is not available and you need assistance or have a question, in the early morning please see **Sandy Bigelow** in the Pre-K/K class at the top of the stairs. In the late afternoon, **Sue Alexopoulos** will be on site to support staff and assist parents.

### Check in or Stop in Anytime!

Please feel free to contact Pam via phone ( 7 8 2 - 4 4 4 8 ) o r e m a i l (pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org) to check on your child.

Parents are also welcome to drop in *anytime*.

## FIA



The Family Involvement Association (FIA) is a communication group formed to facilitate information between the family and center regarding the care and development of each child. Through identification of mutual interests and needs, the parent/teacher partnership will support programs and activities that best meet the needs of the children. Members of the FIA will include parents/guardians of children enrolled and the Center's staff members. FIA meets monthly and all are invited to attend.

**Our first Family Involvement Association meeting will be held in October at MassMutual. The date will be posted.**

*All* parents are encouraged to attend. If you would like to attend, but are not a MM employee, please contact Pam. We can meet and go in together.

Prior to our first meeting, we would like parents who are interested in representing their child's classroom at FIA meetings to sign a "Volunteer List" which will be posted in each room. The classroom teacher will appoint one "Room Representative" and anyone else who volunteers will assist the Room Representative throughout the school year.

Specific duties of the volunteers may include: welcoming new families via email and acquainting them to communications systems (E-Mail/Outlook), soliciting refreshments for class parties, assisting in

soliciting chaperones for field trips, running one or two FIA meetings per year (including meeting CH staff and possibly other parents at the security desk, copying the agenda for the parents attending the meeting, going through the agenda *at* the meeting, arranging for a parent to take and prepare minutes (or doing themselves), putting minutes on e-mail and providing CH with "hard copy").

Room Reps must be able to attend monthly FIA meetings. However, if unavailable, *Reps will be responsible for arranging room representation by another parent in the class.*

It is our hope that at least one parent per classroom will attend each month. Suggestions for agenda topics should be sent to Pam at:

[pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org](mailto:pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org)



### Just a Reminder....

Tuition is due on the Friday before the new week begins. A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed on late payments. If your child is sick or absent for other reasons, please attach a note to your payment so that the fee can be waived. Feel free to contact Pam Frogameni (accounts) at: 782-4448 or [pfrogameni@childrenshouseinc.org](mailto:pfrogameni@childrenshouseinc.org) with any tuition questions.

Thank you!

## OUR MENU

Our lunch and snack menus are posted in the main hallway. Lunch menus are sent home via email monthly. Through trial and error, we believe we have put together meals that the majority of the children enjoy, are nutritious and varied. Fresh fruits and vegetables are added often via our affiliation with the "Farm to Preschool" initiative. When canned fruits are purchased and served, they are almost always "no sugar added" or "in its own juice". We appreciate menu suggestions, especially favorite family recipes. Please feel free to share! *Just drop suggestions on Pam's desk.*

## COMMUNITY INFO/INVOLVEMENT

This year, we are hoping to continue involvement in community activities. We will be planning a few "events" or activities that parents, staff and children can participate in. So far, some ideas include: Toys for Tots, Coats for Kids, food donations to an area soup kitchen, Asthma Walk, and participating in the Easter Seals Read-a-thon or Hop-n-ing.

We welcome any ideas parents might have! Please email your suggestions to Pam at [pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org](mailto:pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org) or see Sue Alexopoulos, our *Community Events Coordinator*, at the end of the day.

**Whenever we receive info about events or activities happening in the community, we post them in the main hall. Please take a few minutes each week to check out new postings by the bulletin board nearest the Infant rooms.**

### Children's House T-Shirts Available!!

**Children's Sizes 6-8 and  
10-12 available  
\$8.00 each**

**Adult Sizes M, L and XXL  
available  
\$10.00 for M, and L  
\$12.00 for XL**

**Please let your child's teacher  
or Pam know if you'd like to  
purchase a T-shirt.**

### Happy Anniversary to Staff!

*The following staff have now  
completed 5+ years at Children's  
House! Please join us in saying  
CONGRATULATIONS!*

**Irene Provenzano 27 years  
Pam Flowers 27 years  
Sandy Bigelow 23 years  
Sue Alexopoulos 20 years  
Kim Allaire 19 years  
Maura Shea 15 years  
Marta Gonzalez 14 years**

### Happy Anniversary to Staff!

*Continued...*

**Natalya Yazhbin 13 years  
Dianne Guthrie 10 years  
Linda Hornig 5 years**

**Thank you so much for  
your dedication and  
caring!**



### Backpack\* Checklist

(Toddlers through Pre-K)

\_\_\_ Extra Clothes (socks, underpants,  
pants, shirt) in a labeled Ziploc bag

\_\_\_ One **small** blanket and **crib** sheet for  
naptime (Toddlers through K)

\_\_\_ Slippers

\_\_\_ **Small, soft** toy for naptime  
(optional)

- Backpacks should be **medium-sized**. Over-sized backpacks or bags which are more "horizontal" are difficult to store and take over space designated for other children.

~Thanks!

**Children's House Family Surveys/Center Evaluations were sent home recently.**

We recognize that this is an awkward time of year to have to send them out because so many of our families are new to the center or new to the room they are now in. However, due to the timing of forms that need to be completed to retain our NAEYC accreditation, we needed to have the evals done so that they could be collated and included in our documentation.

Please talk to your child's teacher or Pam if you would like an explanation of how any of the criteria are met. It would be so helpful if you could request the information before indicating "No" or "DK" on the form as we are rated on the responses.

It is very important to us that parents truly feel as if the criteria they are asked to rate us on are being met. We have unfortunately had a few "No" responses on a variety of questions posed and because the evals are anonymous, we have little opportunity to help parents understand the many ways in which we work to meet the standards.

Please give us the opportunity to make changes to better the experience for your family if you feel improvement is needed. ~ Thank you!

**UMASS STUDY INVOLVING OUR PRESCHOOL/PRE-K CHILDREN**

We are currently in the "Recruitment" phase of the study. Summer, a member of the study team has been on site in several afternoons to speak with parents about the study and answer any specific questions that come up.

We are hoping more parents will still sign up! So far we have about 37 participants. Please see your child's preschool or PK teacher if you are willing to allow your child to participate.

If you would like more information about the study, please contact the Project Staff at: 545-6104 or at [thestep.study@gmail.com](mailto:thestep.study@gmail.com).

**CHILDREN'S HOUSE HOLIDAY/CLOSINGS SCHEDULE FOR 2011/2012 SCHOOL YEAR**

9/5/11

Labor Day

11/24/11, 11/25/11

Thanksgiving Break

12/26/11

Christmas Day Observed

1/2/12

New Year's Day Observed

1/16/12

Martin Luther King Day

2/20/12

President's Day

4/6/12

Good Friday

5/11/12

Staff Professional Development Day

5/28/12

Memorial Day

7/4/12

Independence Day



# Children's House, Inc. Staff Schedule

**Mary Larrivee and Debbie McLaughlin, Owners**

**Pam Flowers, Center Director - 9:00-3:30 MWF, 9:00-5:30 TTh**

**Sue Alexopoulos, Center Administrative Assistant/Teacher Floater - 11:00-6:00**

**Dianne Guthrie & Linda Hornig, Consultants/Teacher Floaters – Hours vary outside regular shifts below**

**Irene Provenzano, Administrative Assistant - 8:00-4:30**

**Pamela Frogameni, Accounts Receivable Clerk – 9:15-2:15 M-Th**

## Infant 1 - max # in group 7

<u>Hours</u>	<u>Break (Covered by)</u>
Kim Allaire, Lead Teacher 8:45-5:45	2:00-3:00 (Maria)
Fran Ducharme, Teacher Qualified Assistant 8:30-5:15	12:30-1:15 (Maria)
Maria Perez*, Teacher Qualified Floater (I1/I2) 11:00-5:45	1:15-1:45 (no coverage needed)
(*Natasha Graham-Marshall on maternity leave 9/12/11-11/7/11)	Dishes/Laundry. 3:00-3:30

## Infant 2 – max # in group - 7

Nereida Castellano, Teacher 7:00-3:30	11:00-11:30 (Maria)
Noreen Fitzgerald, Teacher Qualified Assistant 8:00-5:00	11:30-12:30 (Maria)

## Toddler 1 – max # in group - 9

Margeaux Gilfoil, Teacher 9:00-6:00	2:00-3:00 (Dianne/Linda)
Lynn Lewis, Teacher Qualified Assistant 8:30-5:00	1:30-2:00 (Dianne/Linda)

## Toddler 2 –max # in group - 9

Patrice Zaryckyj, Teacher 7:00-3:30	11:00-11:30 (Dianne/Linda)
Alexandra Trites, Teacher Assistant 8:00-5:00	12:30-1:30 (Dianne/Linda)
Dianne Guthrie, Consultant/Teacher Floater (T1, T2, P1) MTW 11:00-6:00	3:00-3:30 (no coverage needed)
Linda Hornig, Consultant/Teacher Floater (share w/Dianne) Th F 11:00-6:00	3:00-3:30 (no coverage needed)

## Preschool 1 –max # in group - 9

Sarah Schoolcraft, Teacher 7:30-4:30	11:30-12:30 (Dianne/Linda)
Jasmine Gomez, Teacher Assistant 9:30-5:00	2:15-2:45 (Sarah)

## Preschool 2 – max # in group - 10

Natalya Yazhbin, Teacher 7:00-3:30	11:00-11:30 (Sarah)
Sarah Brown, TQ Assistant (Floater P1, P2, P3, P4, PK) 11:00-6:00	2:45-3:15 (no coverage needed)

## Preschool 3 –max # in group - 10

Jennifer Close, Teacher 9:00-5:30	1:45-2:15 (Sarah)
Jasmine Gomez, Teacher Assistant 5:00-6:00	(no break for these hours)

## Preschool 4 –max # in group - 20

Kristy Raymond, Teacher 8:30-5:15	1:00-1:45 (Sarah)
Marta Gonzalez, Teacher Qualified Assistant 8:00-4:30	12:30-1:00 (Sarah)

## Pre-K/Kindergarten – max # in group - 20 (25 if all over 4.9 yrs.)

Sandy Bigelow, Lead Teacher 7:45-4:15	11:30-12:00 (Sarah)
Maura Shea, Teacher 8:30-5:00	12:00-12:30 (Sarah)

Blue font = EEC Teacher qualified  
Staff Schedule 9/11

