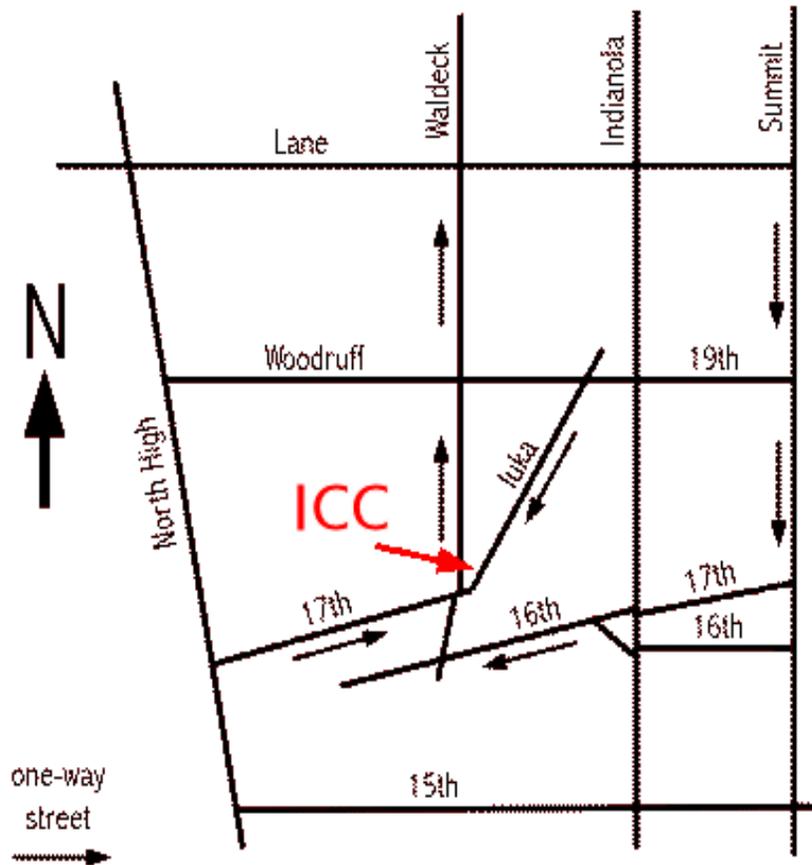




Parent Handbook



Contact Information

Location: ICC is housed in the **Indianola Presbyterian Church (IPC)**. ICC is conveniently located near The Ohio State University campus. It is close to Clintonville and downtown. Within walking distance, COTA buses run along Indianola Avenue and High Street.

Address: 1970 Waldeck Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43201; (See map above)

Phone: (614) 262-1090

Fax: 614-294-8877

Website: www.indianolachildrenscenter.org

Email: info@indianolachildrenscenter.org

Indianola Presbyterian Church: 614-294-3796 <http://www.indianolapres.org/joomla/>

IPC/ICC Tax ID: 31-4379493 <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/dccel/index.shtml>

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Welcome to Indianola Children's Center (ICC). This parent-family handbook describes ICC from its philosophical foundation to its daily operations. You are encouraged to read it carefully and save it for future reference.

ICC is a non-religious outreach mission of the Indianola Presbyterian Church (IPC). While ICC is housed in the Indianola Presbyterian Church, we are a separate business entity. Our mission is not religious in nature. Instead, ICC practices peaceful conflict resolution and peace keeping communication. ICC families are periodically extended optional invitations to IPC church-related events such as a labyrinth walk, Dixieland Jazz service, organ, choir concerts or recitals, special community meal events, etc.

ICC houses three classrooms: Toddlers (18 months to 36 months); Preschoolers (potty trained 3 years old through 5 years old); Schoolagers (starting with Kindergarteners). ICC is not licensed for infants or children under 18 months.

ICC is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. ICC welcomes and supports families, children, and staff of all races, creeds, income levels, sexual orientation or affection, languages, abilities and national origin.

ICC is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to provide early childhood education and care. ICC meets and exceeds the standards and regulations required by the State of Ohio for childcare agencies. It is regularly inspected by ODJFS. A copy of these rules and regulations, including inspections, reports for related building, health, fire and childcare licensing agencies is in the ICC Administrative office. Information about childcare regulations may be obtained from Ohio Jobs and Family Services Licensing Unit in the appendix at the end of this document. See **Appendix on page 37 for JFS 01268** for further information.

ICC is governed by a Board of Directors, which is composed of ICC parents and IPC church members, and community volunteers from the Greater Columbus Community. ICC administrators participate in these board meetings as well.

The ICC Mission

Indianola Children's Center's mission is threefold:

- 1) To serve as a quality provider of early education including childcare for toddlers, preschoolers, and schoolagers;
- 2) To be a parent support and education center;
- 3) To be a community resource for The Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College; and other educational institutions in this surrounding area.

Philosophy and Values

ICC believes that all children are full of remarkable capabilities. They have a right to a childhood filled with play, exploration, and excitement about learning. Children are enormously creative and capable of complex learning through self-play. Here, the educational curriculum focuses around children's questions and pursuits, as well as the skills they are trying to master. Close attention is paid to cultivating self-esteem, as well as children's learning, risk-taking, and problem solving.

Indianola Children's Center is a learning community for children and adults, where:

- Children are valued for their ability to do meaningful work. For children, their wonder and curiosity, along with their perspectives and ability to play, are their "work."
- Families are valued for their bonds and traditions, their dedication to meeting the physical, emotional, social, and educational needs of their children, and their commitment to the dreams for their children.
- Staff is valued as professionals, and educators. They are valued for their vision, their delight in children, their professional skills and most especially, their heart.
- Staff is valued for their knowledge, commitment to families and the ability to play.
- ICC recognizes and appreciates the learning exchanges between people.
- ICC is committed to our roles as peace keepers, most especially in its *practice* of peaceful conflict resolution.

ICC implements anti-bias and peace-building practices that emphasizes the value of diversity of the children as individuals, and as members of families, cultures, and communities. Using a team approach, ICC strives for collaboration with families and the wider community.

The Early Childhood Curriculum

ICC is an early education and care center. Being mindful that ICC offers early childhood education, ICC prefers to be referred respectfully using the professional label "early education" rather than "daycare." The word "educate" means to "draw out." The role of the "teacher as researcher" is enhanced by the teacher's ongoing observation and documentation of children's work and play.

The education of the whole child is achieved through a balance of learning activities. Activities foster language development and emerging literacy, the understanding of number concepts, gross and fine motor skills, self-help skills, and social and emotional development. Classes achieve this through a combination of large and small group activities, and individual choice-making.

Teachers spend a great deal of time planning the environment for learning, then observing closely as things unfold. ICC utilizes The Creative Curriculum educational guide to develop this structure. Teachers plan and develop weekly lesson plans. These plans guide children toward a greater

awareness of themselves, and the world they live in. Teachers operate within an emergent curriculum which "emerges" or arises out of the children's interests and responses to the prepared classroom environment and classroom experiences.

Goals of Early Childhood Education

The goals at Indianola Children's Center are:

- ³⁵/₁₇ To provide a safe, nurturing and responsive early education setting.
- ³⁵/₁₇ To foster the practice of peacemaking and conflict resolution.
- ³⁵/₁₇ To acknowledge and support children's individual differences by helping them to work cooperatively and by promoting their positive and healthy self-esteem.
- ³⁵/₁₇ To help children develop positive social and emotional skills.
- ³⁵/₁₇ To provide academic learning opportunities in literacy, math, science, social studies, music and movement, etc.
- ³⁵/₁₇ To teach children how to have a respectful relationship with the earth; to fully enjoy nature and being outdoors.
- ³⁵/₁₇ To involve and provide educational opportunities to parents and extended family of children at Indianola Children's Center.

Peacemaking and Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Many people are attracted to ICC because our emphasis on peaceful conflict resolution and peacemaking. Peacemaking is the underlying guiding principle at ICC. In our culture, most people are not actively taught such a method or model of communication. Thus, ICC has created its own working definition of what peaceful conflict resolution looks like and how we teach it.

ICC blends together wisdom of early childhood development with related developmentally appropriate peace practices. Children learning language and learning about the world outside themselves are respected for their developmental tasks. In the classrooms, ICC emphasizes that peaceful conflict resolution is an ongoing "practice." The goal is not to eliminate conflict, but to effectively deal with conflicts as they arise. Such skills and values are best introduced in these formative years. With a focus on peacemaking, Indianola Children's Center offers an environment where these qualities can be modeled, reflected and encouraged.

Peaceful resolution of conflicts includes:

- ³⁵/₁₇ The ability to develop strong relationships with others.
- ³⁵/₁₇ The development of awareness/concern for other people and the earth.
- ³⁵/₁₇ The ability to express oneself honestly and responsibly.

ICC is committed to the principles of peace, tolerance, and justice. ICC draws on the wisdom from internationally recognized peacekeeping methods and philosophies such as Non-Violent/Compassionate Communication (Marshall Rosenberg), nature-based learning and many resources within the Early Education profession. ICC strives to model and teach these values in every area of the early childhood education.

ICC acknowledges that conflicts and differences are a part of life. Rather than squelching conflict or attempting to avoid them, ICC challenges children (or grown-ups) to articulate their wishes, feelings, and ideas. Then, teachers support them in working toward mutually agreeable solutions. ICC helps children advocate for themselves and recognize the needs and feelings of others.

For both children AND adults alike, ICC promotes peaceful communication and peaceful conflict resolution by;

1. Nurturing the age-appropriate developmental practices.
2. Promoting the ability to interact with people who are different or the same from themselves.
3. Fostering critical thinking, by entrusting children with opportunities to make their own choices and conclusions.
4. Cultivating the ability to practice resolving disputes with others through peaceful means.
5. Using language that frames things in an affirmative and clear manner. Teachers tell a child what she wants the child to do. Most people learn the more common cultural norm of speaking in negatives and telling someone what you don't want.

Classroom Management and Guidance

All young children are *learning* and *developing* the complex social skills that enable them to play cooperatively with other children and to function as part of a group. Often, when children "misbehave," it is because they haven't yet mastered the skills to speak, to negotiate, to ask for what they need, or to join in play with others, without grabbing, pushing, or hitting. Children are still learning cause-and-effect regarding how their behavior and words impact others. [Many of us grown-ups are still striving to learn these concepts and practices, too.]

Behavior at ICC is managed by providing children with clear expectations about what behavior is acceptable. Teachers positively encourage behaviors that are valued, while downplaying those that are not. Consistent limits are established and cooperation is emphasized. Corporal punishment and humiliation are never used. "Natural consequences" are established for related behaviors.

Teachers allow children to work out their interpersonal conflicts with each other for themselves. Adults can help them to identify disagreements and collaboratively generate possible solutions that can be agreed upon by everyone involved.

To be respectful of the children's processes and relationships, teachers strive to refrain from prematurely offering teacher-dictated solutions. Teachers first simply listen to children talk out their problems. If needed, adults can mirror their understanding and ideas back to them. Teachers may occasionally need to take a more active role to model and help the children find appropriate language, voice level, and demonstrate behaviors that communicate the needs and issues of the conflict.

The specific goals of the teacher in assisting children during conflicts are to help children to:

- ³⁵₁₇ Calm themselves down enough to negotiate and be safe.
- ³⁵₁₇ Find movement, drawings, letters or words for their feelings, needs, and wants.
- ³⁵₁₇ Look and listen to peers' feelings, needs, and wants, as situation deems appropriate.
- ³⁵₁₇ Agree to a mutually satisfying solution(s).
- ³⁵₁₇ Continue to play together, feel friendly or gain an understanding.

These goals promote and foster young children's competencies in negotiating and resolving problems as they encounter them. Each phase of early childhood development offers children milestones in this growth.

GETTING STARTED: TOURS, ENROLLMENT AND PAPERWORK

Taking a tour of ICC

ICC welcomes personal referrals from current and past ICC families. Word-of-Mouth is our best compliment! As a thank you for personal referrals, ICC will give currently enrolled ICC families a \$10.00/referral thank you when someone you referred enrolls their child/children at ICC. Potential families can gather information about us and schedule a tour of ICC via our website:

<http://www.indianolachildrenscenter.org/enrollment/schedule-a-tour/>.

Once a family has decided to enroll their child at ICC, an application with non-refundable application fee is submitted. The application is given as part of tour, and is available to print from our website.

Waiting list

If there are no current available openings, children are placed on a first-come, first-served waiting list. To be added to the waiting list, ICC must have BOTH application and non-refundable application fee. [This requirement applies to families who are using Title XX child care or other subsidies.]

In the case of toddlers, ICC starts serving children who are at least 18 months. Since ICC only has five available slots for children 18 to 29 months, families wait until their child is at least 18 months and/or there is an opening.

As slots become available, ICC contacts waiting list families to confirm that the family still needs care. If the family refuses the next-available slot, they can remain on the list but go to the bottom of the list again. After two refused slots, families are removed from the waiting list.

Title XX/Subsidized Child Care

ICC has a limited number of full-time slots available for families who are using subsidized child care programs, such as Title XX contracts. The ICC Board dictates the number of openings. Eligible families must obtain proper authorization, regularly submit required paperwork, and pay the designated weekly co-payment amount. The ICC Administration Office will assist in providing administrative support and delivering official documentation to the Title XX office.

Families under this program pay the non-refundable application fee, quarterly activities, late payment and/or non-sufficient funds payments. Families are responsible for properly swiping in and out of the Title XX system. If the family is not properly swiping in and out, they are responsible to pay the difference in reimbursement. ICC does not and will not swipe in and out for any Title XX family.

For further details regarding this or other related subsidy programs, contact the ICC Office.

Enrollment Forms and Fees

Enrollment Forms

Once families have a confirmed start date, the ICC Director works with parents to complete all the required and necessary forms, prior to the child's first day. Enrollment information is sent via email. Enrollment requirements include annual medical records/check-up, immunizations, and any specific dietary, allergies, etc. Complete enrollment and fee information are provided on the ICC website (www.indianolachildrenscenter.org) where most forms are available to print or download.

Transition Visits Prior to Enrollment

Sometimes families wish to have their child come in for short visits to acclimate to the new setting. Some children need this time to transition and others may not. If you would like to schedule such transition visits, discuss the logistics with the director. Parents/caregivers remain in the classroom during these visits.

Building Security

ICC is a secured building, utilizing a security swipe system using either an Ohio Driver's License or an internal gray security swipe card. To be entered into the security swipe system, give ICC office your official/full driver's license name along with the driver's license number. The IPC church secretary manages this system, so be sure to provide this information in plenty of time. Any "regular" people doing drop-off or pick-up can be added to this system, as needed.

If the person does not have an Ohio driver's license, there is a \$6.00 cash deposit to obtain a gray security swipe card. If gray card is returned upon withdrawal, the deposit is refunded.

Tuition & Fees

The current fee schedule is on the ICC website, or given directly to the family upon enrollment.

ICC accepts tuition payments in cash, money order or check payments. Make checks payable to Indianola Children's Center or "ICC". Tuition is due **Tuesday by 6 pm**. Deliver the payment to the ICC Administrative Office. Do not give your payment to the classroom staff or your child (or left in the lunch box...) It is your responsibility to deliver the payment to the office. If you are paying in cash, a cash receipt is written for you.

ICC does not currently accept credit or debit cards. Most banks offer online/auto banking options which include sending a check on your behalf to Indianola Children's Center. Check with your bank for this service. If you choose to do this bank service, understand that these payments are not consistently received on time. Such payment method is subject to the weekly late. Schedule your payment to arrive earlier than Tuesdays in order to ensure an on-time payment.

It is your responsibility to keep up with when your next payment is due. If you need to make special payment arrangements or have an emergency, see the administrative office to explore payment options. A weekly late fee will be immediately assessed against any account paid after the date that payment was due. After 10 days, any account not paid may be closed and the child may be withdrawn from, unless prior arrangements have been made and approved in writing with the ICC Administration Office.

2-Week Deposit

Upon enrollment, ICC collects a 2-week refundable deposit. The amount is based upon the weekly tuition rate for your child. If a child starts out at a part-time rate, then later goes to a full-time rate, additional deposit will be collected at that time. If need be, families can make special written arrangement for paying the deposit over a series of payments. See ICC office for details.

Deposit can be applied toward any unpaid balance (including late fees, non-sufficient funds for checks, activity fees, and/or tuition due, etc.) If no written 2-week notification is given, the deposit is applied towards the last 2 weeks. Unpaid balances beyond the amount of the 2-week deposit are subject to credit collections. Any disputes in billing or balance due need to be resolved prior to the child's final day of attendance.

See withdrawal information on Page 35 for deposit refund information. Be sure ICC has your current/correct address any refund can be sent within 30 days.

Quarterly Activity Fees

The quarterly activity fee covers all mobile education, special events, guest speakers and related costs, as well as classroom supplies and family/parent events. **See page 33**. Quarterly activity fees are due the first Tuesdays of January (1st Quarter), April (2nd Quarter), July (3rd Quarter), and October (4th Quarter). Unpaid activity fees are subject to weekly late fees.

Weekly Tuition Payments/Checks Deposits

Since ICC is under the umbrella of IPC, ICC's checks are processed within our administrative office, then deposited through the IPC/ICC Treasurer. Be aware that checks written for one week may not be deposited/posted until the following Monday. "Bounced" checks are subject to a late fee for that week, in addition to the non-sufficient funds fee. The non-sufficient funds or returned check fee is \$35/returned check.

Enrollment Changes School Year and Summer

ICC is a year-round program, employing full-time teachers. Families who opt to take the summer off and plan to return for the school year will be charged a non-refundable weekly holding fee. This weekly holding fee is half the rate of your regular tuition. Summer holding fees may be applied for time periods between one and three months. Notify the Administrative Office in writing with your summer holding request at least one month prior. In lieu of summer holding fee, families may check to see if summer part-time options are available.

As with all payment policies, the holding fee is due by Tuesday by 6pm. This fee is a holding fee only. Any child care needed during the non-enrollment must be prearranged in writing with the Director's approval, charged at the daily rate. If the child does not return, a 2-week written notice is required.

Miscellaneous Tuition and Fee Information

ICC is a year-round, full-time early care center. It is Not a drop-in center. Upon enrollment, children are placed in a guaranteed slot. If your child does not attend due to vacations, holidays or days off, illness, weather or emergency closures, or other such circumstances, families are expected to still pay the weekly tuition rate by the regular due date.

It is the commitment of the ICC Board of Directors and IPC to provide affordable tuition rates that make early education and care accessible to families. The tuition is used for operating expenses and providing quality teachers (with training, degree, experience, etc.) Per the ICC Board of Directors, the tuition rates are subject to an annual cost of living increase. See current tuition rate sheet on the ICC website for further details.

A 10% discount to the child with the lower tuition rate will be given to those families with more than one full-time child. The discount is rounded up/down to nearest \$0.50.

ICC provides regular tuition statements upon request. ICC will provide monthly flexible spending statements if your employer participates in such a program. Each family's financial situation will be different, but the option for flexible spending accounts seems to benefit many. Check with your employer for requirements and details.

Annual Tax Statements for the previous year are generally sent out in late January. Most families receive an electronic copy of their statement. Be sure to inform ICC of any address changes.

School Closures

Regular Closures/Holidays

A calendar of scheduled closures will be distributed to families each fall, covering the period of September through August. Signs and/or email will be posted reminding families of closures.

ICC is closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
 - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 - Memorial Day
 - July 4th
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
 - Christmas Eve and Christmas Day: Subject to change each year
-
- Holidays falling in a Saturday will be observed on the Friday before.
 - Holidays falling on a Sunday, will be observed the following Monday.
-
- ICC is closed twice per year for staff professional development days or work days. These designated days are announced in advance on the annual calendar.

Weather

ICC makes every effort to remain open on days of snow, ice, power outages, etc. However, in the interests of safety, ICC WILL close for a Level 2 or higher snow emergency or in the event that the weather conditions threaten the general safety of the ICC community.

A separate notification for ICC will not be made on TV or radio. However, ICC will attempt to post updates on our website's home page and/or ICC Facebook page, as availability allows. ICC will make a decision to close by or before 6 a.m. As availability allows, we may call or send an email notification of ICC's closure.

Part-time Enrollment Options

When available, ICC may enroll children on a part-time basis. The part-time choices are full days on either M/W/F or T/Th. Children who are enrolled on a part-time basis are enrolled for only their scheduled days. Part-time slots are *not* available for toddlers 18-29 months.

Below is specific information related to part-time enrollment. The policies and procedures throughout the rest of this handbook also apply to part-timers.

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due on Tuesdays by 6 pm. Plan ahead and make your payment by Tuesdays. If tuition is not received, a late fee is charged. See tuition and fees for details.

Sick/Absent Days

Follow the guidelines for sick children. Call or email ICC to let us know you are not bringing in your child. You are expected to pay the tuition for any absent days that occur on the regular part-time schedule.

Holidays/School Closures

If a holiday or school closure falls on your schedule part-time day, you are expected to pay the tuition, as usual. You may contact the Director for written approval for a possible additional day at the daily rate.

Special Events for Part-Time

As a part-timer, if a special activity or event is scheduled on the off day, your child may attend event without additional charge. However, the child must be accompanied by a parent or guardian during the special event.

Additional Days to Regular Schedule

Sometimes families need additional days for a special occasion or emergency. Please contact the Director and get written approval if additional days are available. The daily rate is charged for any/all additional days that ICC provides child care.

In order for ICC to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios, any deviation from your contracted days must be submitted in writing to the Director for prior approval. The Director/staff has the right to refuse a child who is trading days/times, if the unscheduled days have not been approved ahead of time and/or changes the ratio of a classroom cannot be accommodated.

ICC Family Co-op

Since its inception, Indianola Children's Center has a tradition of being a supportive cooperative. The ideas that parents and families share their skills and talents, involve themselves in their children's community, and enhance the quality of the care and services provided, are appealing to many people. By helping with ICC needs, daily tasks, sharing one's skills, talents, and time, parents and/or family members help make ICC a very special, connected community.

Families earn co-op hours by providing services and assisting at ICC. Tasks can be requested by staff/classroom needs. Or, parents may propose their ideas or skills in a way that the children of ICC ultimately benefit. The co-op duties are ones that go beyond the realm of normal parent participation requirements.

In our efforts to recognize the value of time and talent, as well as make it worth a parent's time, the rate is \$10/hour. Family members, parents, grandparents and/or friends can earn co-op hours on behalf of family.

- ³⁵/₁₇ Full-time enrollment can earn UP TO: \$50/month - when they submit an emailed or written approved monthly time & tasks at the end of each month.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Part-Time enrollment can earn UP TO: \$25/month - when they submit an emailed approved monthly time & tasks at the end of each month.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Email monthly time to: info@indianolachildrencenter.org. Hours need to be submitted in writing by the Friday of 1st week of the next month. Hours not submitted in writing or submitted later will not be applied for tuition credit. ICC will not accept "late" submissions. No verbal hours accepted.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Obviously, parents and families can work more co-op hours in a month's time. Co-op hours, however, cannot be "stored" for a future time.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Families are expected to still pay their regular tuition amount. Once ICC receives the time record, a statement balance will be provided to family with adjusted amount due.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Any noted memos on checks must be verified with approved time record.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Co-op hours are meant to encourage and support families. If there is a dispute or question about the credit with co-op hours, parent must supply written records of their payments and approved co-op hours.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Co-op hours may possibly be applied towards past-due amounts. Families must make written arrangements with Director and fulfill the requirements accordingly.
- ³⁵/₁₇ ICC/IPC staff who are receiving an employee tuition discount are not eligible for co-op.

A DAY IN THE LIFE AT ICC

The ICC Classrooms

ICC Classrooms

ICC delights in the education of young children between the ages of 18 months and school age. Being a small, 3-classroom center, ICC aims to create a welcoming environment. The Indianola Children's Center's classrooms are designed to help children explore and integrate a variety of play experiences. All of the programs offer spaces for sensory play, block building and construction play, dress-up and dramatic play, sorting, counting, and design work, music and movement, sensory, book reading and other literacy work, quiet/alone time, and more.

Daily Schedule

Each classroom follows a general schedule designed by the teachers to meet the needs of the children in that group. (See below for specific classroom schedules.) Schedules are flexible and influenced by class interests and current activities. Each class offers consistency for activities such as morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and rest times.

The day consists of a balance of free-choice activities and teacher-planned activities for small or large groups. Every day time is spent in the outdoor classroom in active exploration.

Bathroom times

There are several diapering and bathroom routine times during the day when everyone is changed or goes bathroom. Other needs are taken care of on an as-needed basis.

After each time of using, or attempting to use the bathroom, teachers will ensure that children thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water. The single most significant thing teachers can do to keep the children healthy is to teach, model, and reinforce proper hand washing.

Children will occasionally have accidents. This is a normal part of childhood. Teachers support and assist children changing and coping. **Remember to provide and replenish extra underwear, pull-ups, diapers, wipes, clothes, etc. (3-5 sets are recommended.)**

Next, the descriptions below give a general overview of each classroom and its daily schedule.

TODDLER CLASSROOM

In the Toddler classroom, children are in a mixed-age group (18 - 36 months). It is a relaxed group experience. Children are encouraged to explore their environment hands-on. Children are offered attractive, engaging activities tailored to their individual development level and areas of interest. Teachers foster positive self-concept and self help skills when children show signs of readiness and interest in these skills. Teachers will support toddler's language development. They will model appropriate language usage, providing the necessary social guidance to assist children in building relationships with their peers and teachers.

ICC strongly supports family relationships. Parents or other important family members are encouraged to bring family photographs from home. Families are welcomed to visit, read, and to play with children when your schedule permits.

Children have opportunities to choose their own play activities and playmates within the reassuring structure of daily routines. Physical development is supported by providing time, space and appropriate play materials for active play such as walking, climbing up and over, jumping, pushing and pulling objects and dancing. Providing support while children explore simple puzzles, pop beads, stacking toys, and a variety of sensory materials encourages fine muscle development.

Early conflict resolution skills are developmentally appropriate practices. Toddlers may not have language to resolve their conflicts but will gain from learning to wait, share, help or move. Teachers encourage and model using movement, words to express feelings, simple turn-taking, and practicing the use of exchanges such as gentle touches.

Teachers use observation to plan and revise curriculum to meet the needs of individual children and the group as a whole. Routine tasks such as diapering, bathroom, eating, dressing and sleeping are handled in a relaxed and individualized manner based on developmental needs and parental requests. Teachers strive to work with parents and children to maintain a high-quality, caring educational environment. This is a place created for children to learn, grow and be celebrated.

Age Transitions

The Toddler room is composed of children who are between 18 months and [generally through] 36 months. Children in the Preschool room are generally 3, 4, 5 years old and potty trained. With transitions from Toddler to the Preschool classroom, teachers examine a number of variables:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Age and level of independence (dressing, bathroom, etc.)
- ³⁵/₁₇ Social skill development (using a tool such as Ages and Stages Questionnaire)
- ³⁵/₁₇ Cognitive skill development (using a tool such as Ages and Stages Questionnaire)
- ³⁵/₁₇ Length of time in the classroom (i.e. if the child has just recently started in a classroom, teachers might be reluctant to add yet another transition.)
- ³⁵/₁₇ Whether or not she or he has any siblings, and if so, birth order (i.e. if the child is the youngest in the family, possibly being the oldest in the classroom is a great opportunity.)
- ³⁵/₁₇ Which room her/his closest companions are placed and/or when others will transition as a group.

No two children are exactly alike. As with most other decisions at ICC, teachers reference general guidelines, but do not impose them broadly across the board. Rather, teachers take into the account the uniqueness of each child and make a decision accordingly.

Go to the **Appendix (Page 37) for Reference for the Sample Transition Letter** for Child Care Centers from Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services.

Toddler Daily Schedule

7:00-7:30	Arrival/Hand washing/Free play/Quiet Table Activities
7:30-9:00	Free-Choice Activities/Bathroom/Diaper changing as needed
9:00-9:30	Morning Snack
9:30-10:30	Diapering/Bathroom/Hand washing
	Music and Movement Group Time
	Free-Choice Activities
10:30-11:30	Planned and Self-Directed Activities in Outdoor Classroom
11:30-12:00	Group Time (Books, Fingerplays, Flannel Board Stories, Singing, or Movement)
12:00-12:30	Lunch
	Diapering/Bathroom/Hand Washing
12:30-3:30	Nap
3:00-4:00	Teacher Planned Activities
	Diapering/Bathroom/Hand Washing
4:00-4:30	Afternoon Snack
4:30-6:00	Planned/Self-Directed Activities in Outdoor Classroom

** Note: Children will be taken to the bathroom on an as-needed basis, as well as given opportunities to use facilities during scheduled bathroom times. **

THE PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

The Preschool classroom teaches a mixed-age group comprised of 3-5 years who are already potty-trained. Building upon the developmentally appropriate practices learned in the toddler room, teachers create a solid learning environment using stories, songs, arts, science, math, reading and writing. Preschoolers' activities incorporate fine and gross motor building skills and activities. Teachers encourage the children to master daily activities, such as dressing, bathroom, problem-solving, and clean-up. Communication, using movement, print, drawing, words, and a peacemaking approach emphasizes a growing sense of independence and interdependence.

Children are immersed in "play-based" activities. Much of the education and learning that occurs in early childhood education looks quite different from formal elementary school education. This emergent approach incorporates the above subjects, without the use of testing and rigorous formal formats. While this might not seem to be "academic" in nature, using the emergent play-based approach, children gain the basic foundational skills needed to attend and succeed in later schooling. The preparation for children to be "ready for school" evolves through children's play. By providing them with opportunities for rich learning and relationship-building through play, teachers create an in-depth curriculum for discovery and investigation.

For example, after completing an art project, children encouraged to label their project with their name, allowing them to learn their letters. Children are encouraged to help each other and share tasks that will be expected at a Kindergarten level. ICC follows the State of Ohio competencies and standards that are deemed developmentally appropriate, including social and emotional development.

The bathrooms are outside the preschool classroom. Thus, Preschool children need to be fully potty trained. They will continue to master the fine motor skills it takes to button, zip, Velcro, and grab small objects through activities such as changing clothes, dressing and eating.

Preschool Daily Schedule

7:00-8:00	Arrival/Hand washing/Free Play/Table activities
8:00-9:00	Snack/Free play/Work time/Table Ideas
9:00-9:15	Clean up/Bathroom/Hand washing
9:15-10:30	Outdoor/Large Muscle Activities
10:30 -10:45	Group Time/Songs/Stories/Special discussions
10:45-11:45	Free Play/Work Time (Art, Dramatic Play, Sensory, Manipulatives, Blocks and Literacy)
11:45-12:00	Wash hands/Prepare for Lunch/Bathroom if needed
12:00-12:30	Lunch time
12:30-1:00	Bathroom/Hand washing/ Prepare for Rest
1:00-1:30	Quiet Reading Time (While on Cots)
1:30- 3:00	Rest time
3:00-3:30	Bathroom/ Snack/Quiet Table Ideas
3:30-4:30	Outdoor/Large Muscle Activities
4:30-5:30	Hand Wash/Group/Free Play
5:30-6:00	Clean up/Literacy Activities/Departure

Age Transition

Preschoolers will remain in the preschool classroom until they attend Kindergarten. After completing Kindergarten, children are welcomed to ICC for the summers for schoolage programming.

SCHOOL AGE CLASSROOM

Schoolage children are children who are/have already attended Kindergarten. ICC has a small class size of 12 or less children. ICC hosts both a summer schoolage classroom, with occasions to also host a before/after school program during the school year.

The year-round Before and After School program has its own condensed guidelines, separate from this document. If children attend both the year round and summer programs, families will follow program-dependent guidelines respectively: school year schedule from August to June, and summer schedule from June to August.

During the summer months, schoolagers have a relaxed leisurely schedule which includes off-site field trips to places such as the library, art museum, movie theater, OSU campus walks and museums, and possible routine walking trips. Children are accompanied by at least 2 adults, when on walking field trips or taking the bus. ICC only provides transportation via walking and/or COTA bus.

In keeping with our early childhood education objectives, the schoolage teacher plans and follows a curriculum, with age appropriate activities covering the classroom areas: literacy, reading, math, science, music & movement, building, large and fine motor, art, language, and more.

Both the summer and school-year school age programs employ full-time staff. That means that ICC is guaranteeing a regular full-time slot. Thus, even if your child is not attending due to summer vacations/travels, illnesses, etc., the regular tuition is still due as usual.

Schoolage children are not permitted to be in any part of ICC without a teacher. When going to the bathroom, children are always in hearing or sight of a teacher in their room. Parents are to escort children directly to the schoolage classroom.

When attending a field trip, a permission slip will be sent home for parents to sign and return prior to the field trip. The permission slip will include: the date and the location of the field trip, how the children will be getting to the location (i.e. COTA bus or walking), and time of arrival and departure. The form is filled out with your child's name, your signature, and date. It is then returned to the teachers. Written parent permission is required for all trips. For any/all routine walking trips, parents sign a permission slip which is kept on file.

There are events during the year that are held at ICC. In order for your child to participate in activities (The Farm, Zoo, COSI on Wheels, etc.) at ICC, parents fill out and return a permission slip prior to the event. The permission slip will include the date and the nature of the activity, location within the building, and the starting and ending times of the activity. Fill out your child's name, your signature and date then return it to the teachers.

While walking or riding the COTA bus on a field trip, there will be two teachers/adults at all times, one in the front of the children and one behind the children. The children walk with a partner. While off-site, teachers have a list of the children, emergency medical forms, along with a cell phone for immediate communication. Children have ICC-specific contact information on them, as well.

Schoolage forms, guidelines, tuition and fees are listed on the ICC website: (www.indianolachildrenscntr.org), and/or are provided by the Director upon enrollment. There is a separate, condensed guidelines for school year before and after care program.

Summer School Age Classroom Schedule

7:00-8:00	Arrival/Free Play
8:00-8:30	Morning Snack
8:30-10:30	Kids Choice
10:30-11:00	Recycled Art Project
11:00-12:00	Group and Activity
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	Quiet Reading
1:30-1:45	Bathroom/Sunscreen
1:45-3:00	Outside (Outdoor Classroom)
3:00-3:30	Afternoon Snack
3:30-4:30	Clean up/Bathrooms/Sunscreen
4:30-6:00	Outside (Front Lawn)/Gardening

THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

In 2010, ICC was awarded the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Education mini-grant to install a 550-gallon rain tank. It offers children a water-play feature using collected rain water which runs through a "river" and drain out into a native plant rain garden.

In 2014, ICC earned the Arbor Nature/Dimension's Foundations' certification as a Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom. The outdoor space (formerly referred to as a "playground") is now called The Outdoor Classroom. Just like an indoor classroom, it contains learning centers such as block building, sensory play, dramatic play, large motor movement, art/nature art, etc. Teachers build curriculum activities for their outdoor time, generally going outdoors twice a day in most weather conditions. The outdoor classroom allows the children to enjoy nature-based learning which also foster peaceful conflict resolution skills. Nature-based learning invites creativity, appreciation of the outdoors and is scientifically proven to benefit young children's overall well-being and development.

All classrooms have their turn at outdoors time. Sometimes the classes will use the church's front lawn. At times, the staff parking lot is completely blocked off for bike and tricycle use.

The First Day at ICC

It is important that your child's first days at ICC are successful. Allow yourself plenty of time to get ready for ICC and to separate after your arrival. The first few days can be stressful and/or fatiguing for children. Feel free to discuss any concerns with your child's teacher.

Bring your child in clothes designed for active indoor and outdoor play. These clothes are ones that you and your child are willing to get dirty. The classes will go outside for play and exercise each day. Parents need to help your child dress comfortably and appropriately, including shoes for running and climbing, a jacket or raincoat for the ever-changing Ohio weather. Also, your child's clothes should be comfortable and easy for your child to get in and out of on his/her own. Avoiding belts, overalls, and difficult fasteners promotes successful bathroom experiences at ICC.

Important Note: Be sure there is at least three to five full change of clean clothes in your child's cubby at all times. Clearly label clothing with your child's name or initials. Check your child's cubby or coat hooks for soiled clothes at the end of each day and replace any extra clothes that your child has used.

When you want to leave, let your child know you're leaving. When you say good-bye, feel confident that the teachers will support your child, offering comfort, reassurance, and acknowledgment. Teachers and classmates will help comfort and entice your child into the activities in the classroom.

It may help you to make a specific plan with your child on the way to school about how the drop-off time will look like, for example: "*Let's read two books together, and then you can give me two hugs and three kisses before I leave.*" Our intention is to honor the bond between you and your child, and to make room for your child's feelings during transitions.

On your child's first day at ICC, remember to bring:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Required paperwork.
- ³⁵/₁₇ *Small blanket, small pillow and/or soft toy for nap.*
- ³⁵/₁₇ Lunch with a cold pack. Lunches are not refrigerated.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Spare clothes and shoes/boots, clearly marked with your child's name or initials.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Optional: Framed photo of your family for the classroom.

Arrival and Departure

***** Children will be Supervised at ALL times *****

Your child may attend any time between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Your child must be accompanied to and from ICC, as well as throughout the building and outdoor spaces by an adult. During your time in the ICC building, please honor our licensing rules that children are always with an adult. **Parents: Do NOT send your child up to the classroom alone or leave them unattended.**

Children will be released only to those adults whose names are provided in the child's enrollment papers. You may make additions or deletions to this list by notifying the school in writing.

If someone other than the custodial parents or guardian is going to be picking up your child, you must leave teachers a note with the name of the person picking up your child and your full signature. As a safety precaution, staff may ask this person for identification before allowing them to take the child. When you have a new person picking up, remind him/her to bring a driver's license inside with him/her.

ICC closes promptly at 6:00 pm. You will be charged a \$1.00/minute for each minute you are late. After 10 minutes, you will be charged a \$15 late pick up fee, in addition to the \$1.00/minute charge. These charges are added to your next tuition.

Parent/Family Parking

ICC families are issued dated parking passes for drop-off and pick-up. Use the two loading zone slots on Waldeck, just in front of the ICC entrance doors. If both slots are occupied, go around the block and park in the IPC Main Church lot at Iuka/Waldeck/18th. You do not need to pay for parking in the lot if you dropping off or picking up. Free parking is available for ICC-specific events.

If you are staying for an ICC visit, provide the church office with your car's license plate numbers, car make and model. If you would like to regularly park in the IPC lot, secure a monthly paid pass through the IPC Church office.

Follow all the posted street parking signs, including street cleaning or snow removal no-parking days. Park in the Handicapped spots only if you have a handicapped permit. ICC is not responsible for any parking tickets. While you are dropping off or picking up your child, be aware of locking your car and keeping valuable items out of sight.

To ensure the safety of all the children, as well as at the request of IPC, ICC parents are to always park in the IPC Main Church lot and/or use the Waldeck Avenue loading zones. IPC guests and staff are frequently pulling in and out of this back Iuka ICC Staff parking area, as well as the surrounding college residences may not be expecting little people.

Outdoor Classroom Drop-off & Pick-Up

When the class(es) is/are in the outdoor classroom space (off Iuka Avenue by the dumpster), parents may find *street* parking on Iuka or park in the Main IPC Church lot at 18th and Waldeck. **The lot closest to the outdoor classroom is always off-limits to parents/families.** That lot is specifically for only ICC/IPC staff and church members.

Collect your child's belongings from the classroom first before going to the outdoor classroom. Teachers are not able to leave the outdoor classroom to re-open the door, as they are required by ODJFS to supervise the children. If you need to return back in the building, you will need to walk around and swipe at the parent entrance. *For safety reasons, hold your child's hand and supervise him/her while walking around to the front of church to your car or back into the building.*

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

The following section covers general program information for all ICC classrooms.

Teacher-to-Child Ratios

According to the standards set by ODJFS, ICC observes the following teacher/child ratios:

Toddlers: 18 months to 30 months: 1 teacher to 7 children
Preschoolers: 3 years to 4 years: 1 teacher to 12 children
Schoolagers: Kindergarten-11 years old: 1 teacher to 18 children

As a center achieving quality standards ratings under the auspices of ODJFS' Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) rating system, ICC provides smaller group sizes:

Toddlers: 2 teacher to 12 children (maximum)
Preschoolers: 2 teachers to 24 children (maximum)
Schoolagers: 1 teacher to 12 children (maximum)

Health-Related Required Forms and Information

Immunizations and Health Exams

ODJFS requires a health history and record of immunizations for each child prior to admission. Ohio requires that ICC has the date of your child's last physical exam, which must have been completed within one year prior to admission. Provide ICC with the name of the family physician, in case of an emergency, and any conditions of the child which may require specific attention.

Children **must** have all immunizations that are recommended for their age by the State of Ohio. Medical exemptions to immunizations may be granted by a licensed physician; personal or religious exemptions can be claimed by parents/guardians. In the event that your child is not immunized against a particular disease and an outbreak of that disease occurs, your child may be excluded from care.

Yearly Physical

ICC files an immunization report with the Ohio Department of Health. At the end of each calendar year, new forms are sent for updates of your child's immunizations records. Ohio Department of Health provides free immunizations for children. Children are required to have an annual physical which is recorded on the immunization sheet, even if there is a waiver to immunize. Failure to provide these records may result in loss of care until the records are submitted/updated.

Administration of Medication

In order for ICC staff to administer ANY medication (over-the-counter or prescription) to a child, parents must have written authorization. The administration of medication (including inhalers) is the same procedure for toddlers, preschoolers and schoolagers. Check with the office to complete the Parent Permission for Medications form. This form must be filled out for prescription and non-prescription medications. Fill it out completely and specifically as possible. return it to your child's teacher. When the medication is administered, the teacher will sign the date, time and amount given on the reverse side of that form.

The following types of non-prescription medications may be administered by ICC staff with written parent permission: antihistamines, non-aspirin analgesics, no narcotic cough suppressants, anti-itch ointments or lotions, chap stick, diaper ointment, sunscreen. Medications must be provided by the parent and be in the original container labeled with child's FULL name. We can only administer medications according to the dosage and age recommendations on the packaging. Any exceptions must be accompanied by a signed note from your child's physician. Staff do not have to give if it is not prescribed and they can make the choice if comfortable.

In situations where the child has special health/allergy needs, parents need to educate the teachers and Director directly on any allergies and medical response procedures related to your child.

All prescription drugs must be in the original container with the original prescription label on the container, including the child's first and last names, date prescription was filled, medication's expiration date and legible instructions for use. ICC cannot administer sample medications, medications prescribed for a sibling, or medications packaged in any container other than the original. Give all medication/over-the-counter substances and their respective administration forms to the teachers or Director. Give sunscreen, chap-stick, and cough drops directly to a teacher or administrator.

Hint: Ask your pharmacist for 2 labeled bottles so that you can keep one at home and one at ICC.

Communicable Disease Policy

Prevention

ICC aims to prevent the spread of communicable diseases by practicing careful sanitation. Children and staff wash hands upon entering the classroom, before and after using the bathroom, and before eating. Toys are washed regularly, and bedding is sent home to be laundered once a week. Each child uses only his or her own cot and bedding. Staff take First Aid and CPR training as required, and stay aware of possible safety hazards in the environment.

Illness

A day at Indianola Children's Center is easy and fun for a child in good health, but exceedingly demanding for one who is not feeling well. Sick children need the one-on-one care and unlimited rest and fluids that they can get at home. Bringing a sick child to school exposes him/her to other secondary illnesses, and exposes the staff and other children to illness. Bringing a child back to school before all symptoms have subsided risks a relapse and further delays recovery. (Doctors recommend that children who have had a fever stay home one full day after the fever subsides).

Children who show signs of illness as follows should not be brought to ICC. ICC does not have sufficient staff to keep a child indoors. If a child is well enough to come to, they should be well enough to play outside. The State of Ohio Department of Health issues the following guidelines on keeping children home. ICC adheres to these standards and guidelines:

A child is isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:

- ³⁵₁₇ Within sight and hearing of a staff member at all times until family arrives. The child is cared for in another room or portion of a room away from other children. Teachers will provide a cot and the child is made comfortable.
- ³⁵₁₇ After cot use, the cot shall be disinfected and sanitized with an appropriate germicide. If soiled with blood, feces, vomit or other body fluids, the cot shall be cleaned with soap and water, then disinfected and sanitized with an appropriate germicide.
- ³⁵₁₇ If your child is diagnosed as having a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, scarlet fever, mumps, hepatitis, herpes, infectious diarrhea, or any other disease or parasites, ICC will notify other families by posting a "Parent Notification of Exposure" on the doors of the classroom/s effected, so other families are made aware. Your child's name will be kept confidential and will not be mentioned on this notice, or told to any families.
- ³⁵₁₇ Children with communicable diseases such as impetigo will not be readmitted until ICC has received a statement from the doctor indicating that the child has been treated for at least 24 hours.
- ³⁵₁₇ Children with head lice will not be readmitted until the child has been treated with an approved medication and is free of all nits.
- ³⁵₁₇ If your child has a contagious condition, parents are contacted to come and pick up the child. A written instruction is sent home to let parents know when it is acceptable for your child to return to ICC.

Tuition is still due, as usual, for the day/week that your child is out sick. Families whose work schedules do not allow them to stay at home with a sick child need to plan ahead for the inevitable day when their child will be excluded from care. Back-up child care is needed in the event that your child has a condition which could be contagious or interferes with your child's ability to maintain a normal classroom routine.

Keep me home if...

Keep your child if he or she is experiencing any of the following. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian or person designated by the parent or guardian:

1. Temperature of at least one hundred degrees Fahrenheit when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness. Temperature shall be taken by the axillary (armpit) method with a digital thermometer. The thermometer shall be sanitized after each use.
2. Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a twenty-four hour period).
3. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
4. Difficult or rapid breathing.
5. Yellowish skin or eyes.
6. Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain.
7. Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
8. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
9. Stiff neck with an elevated temperature.
10. Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations.
11. Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
12. Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness.

Food and Nutrition

Eating at ICC

ICC recognizes the importance of a healthy diet for a child's physical health and well-being. Staff members allow children to decide how much to eat. They encourage, but never force, children to eat certain foods or certain amounts of food.

ICC models eating food in "family style," sitting down at the table and eating at the same time. Staff members consume the same types food and drinks as the children. Staff sit with children while they eat snacks or lunch. If children come in with drink or breakfast in hand, they are to sit at the table to finish eating/drinking.

Nutritional Guidelines

Nutritional guidelines recommended by the State of Ohio will be provided to each parent or guardian for each child. Lunches should be made up of the four basic food groups. We recommend that parents pack only foods that meet these food groups into their children's lunches.

A meal shall meet one-third of the recommended daily dietary allowances as most recently specified by (USDA the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) child and adult care food program child care component as identified in 7 CFR 226.20 (Sept. 1, 2004). This serving includes at a minimum, one serving of fluid milk, one serving of meat or meat alternative, two servings of vegetables and/or fruits (one serving of each is recommended) and one serving of bread or grains.

The sizes of individual food servings may be varied according to the developmental needs of the child being served, but additional amounts of food shall be prepared and ready to serve in order to meet one-third the recommended daily dietary allowance for each child in attendance. The requirements are listed the weekly snack menu.

Healthy Snacks

ICC provides a morning snack and an afternoon snack. ICC's snacks adhere to nutritional value in addition to calories and contain at least one food from two of the four basic food groups. The basic food groups are: Meat/meat alternate; bread/grains; fruit/vegetable; milk.

ICC provides milk and water to go along with lunch. ICC offers only lower fat milk (2%, 1% or skim) to all children 2 years and older. [If offered, though rarely, ICC will offer only 100% juice and limit the portion size to no more than 4-6 oz. once a week.] Instead, ICC offers the whole fruit, attempting to serve fresh and local produce when possible.

ICC encourages the use of whole foods, fresh, and local (if possible), seasonal produce. ICC chooses to *limit* serving foods that are over processed, or items high in refined sugars, high fructose corn syrup/sugars. ICC encourages families to do the same. The weekly snack menu is posted on the bulletin boards in or outside the classrooms.

Families provide a healthy sack lunch. Children's lunches need to include a cold pack as refrigeration is not available. ICC suggests sending a cold lunch or pre-heated thermos hot lunch, if possible.

Food and Behavior

Staff members never use food to reward good behavior. Nor is food used as an incentive or punishment for behavior. Teachers do not reward or punish children for what they choose to eat or not eat..

Allergies/Modified Diets

ICC makes an effort to accommodate each child's food allergies and dietary choices/restrictions, including vegetarian, vegan, kosher, and dairy-free options. Modified diets are defined as a diet eliminating the use of one or more of the food groups or altering the amount of food served. ICC respects dietary needs whether dictated by medical necessities or by lifestyle choice. Discuss your child's needs with the Director. There are enrollment forms to outline dietary restrictions and health/religious eating habits.

Any special dietary choices (including allergy-related foods) are supplied to ICC by the family. For severe, life threatening allergies, a written emergency action plan is required and posted.

What if I forget my child's lunch?

If you happen to notice that you've forgotten your child's lunch, let one of the classroom teachers know. If we notice after your departure that your child doesn't have a lunch, we will call you to ask if you can bring a lunch.

ICC will make an effort to find snacks that can supplement a missed lunch. However, when families chronically forget their child's lunch, they will be charged \$2/lunch and an additional \$15 fee after 6 times. This charge is added to your tuition bill.

Food for Birthdays, Special Events or Holidays

ICC wants parents to be aware of what your children are eating at school each day. Therefore, ICC asks parents to *refrain* from bringing in sweets/treats for a holiday or birthday acknowledgment.

Due to the variety of sensitivities and special diets, ICC encourages parents to find a non-food, non-sweet way to share such a celebration with your child's classroom. Instead, ask a special visit by Mom, Dad or Grandma to come and sing a song or read a book; gift a copy of your child's favorite book; or purchase a teacher-suggested new classroom item. All such can be given in lieu of food/sweets for a birthday or holiday event.

Physical Activity and Outdoor Play

Indianola Children's Center recognizes the importance of daily activity for the physical health and well-being of children. ICC ensures that all children accumulate at least 30 minutes teacher-led physical activity throughout the day. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or activities as appropriate. Staff will not use physical activity or withhold opportunities for physical activity as punishment.

Note: ICC rarely utilizes television or multimedia "screen time." Early childhood research shows that using screens is not as developmentally appropriate as the activities that ICC already provides for these ages. If television, video, and computer time are used, they may only be used in conjunction with director's pre-approved curriculum idea.

Outdoor play is a highlight for most young children! Children need to go outdoors every day. They need to fill their lungs with fresh air, and have space to develop their large muscle skills. In order to understand the seasons, they need to experience them: hot, cold, wet or dry. The warm sun, cool wind, crackling leaves, wet rain, dry air and the smell of green spring leaves are all wonderful sensory experiences. Teachers will avoid taking the children out when lightening is present, but you may see us out in a rain.

Our outdoor policy states that the children spend at least thirty to sixty minutes a day outdoors every day during "good weather". What constitutes "good weather?" Taking wind chill into consideration during the winter months, ICC might consider "good weather" below or above freezing. ICC considers summer's heat and humidity as well. However, ICC makes every attempt to have children go outside in every weather. The climate and weather conditions of Ohio offer children a variety of experiences and adaptability. At the same time, if ICC deems the weather conditions as unsafe or unsuitable for outdoor play, children will do large motor activities indoors. During the very cold months of winter, or the very hot days of summer, we abbreviate this time, accordingly. Some days, the group may go outside for only five minutes.

Indoor and Outdoor Clothing

Because ICC embraces a nature-based outdoor education perspective, children need proper clothing to be comfortable for each season. *If the children are dressed appropriately, outdoor play is fun and the fresh air is extremely healthy! Make sure that you always send clothing to keep your child warm, and dry.*

Raincoats and boots are great for the rainy spring and summer weather. If children get wet while playing outside, ICC will make sure that they are changed into dry clothing as soon as possible. During the summer months, hats and water shoes are helpful. Athletic shoes rather open-toe shoes are preferred and are more comfortable for your child. Remember that your child must come to ICC prepared for cold weather play. Your child will not be excused from outdoor class time. So bring layers: a warm jacket, snow boots, a hat and mittens. Teachers will attempt to keep children warm and dry, by using extra clothes. (Children usually don't like this option, though.)

Children do a great deal of physical movement both in the classes and on the outdoor classroom. Children WILL get dirty, embrace the elements and be empowered to face challenges in a supportive and safe outdoor environment. Although teachers try to protect children's clothing from such mediums as paint, play dough, snacks, water, etc., keep in mind that spills and messes happen. For these reasons, parents need to send their children in appropriate, comfortable clothing that is durable and highly washable. While most of the art materials we use are washable, some fabrics do not wash well. Also there may be occasions when the materials used are not washable. In these instances, you may receive a communication advising you to send your child in clothing that may be stained.

Finally, replenish your child's supply of clean and dry clothing on a weekly basis, and as needed. Underwear, pull-ups, socks, tights, etc are especially important to keep 3-5 changes available.

Note: When your child outgrows clothing, shoes, boots, and outer wear, ICC loves your donated hand-me-down's for our extra supplies boxes. Thank you.

Miscellaneous Classroom Details

Naps

It is an ODJFS licensing requirement that children in the Toddler and Preschool classrooms rest for at least one hour each day. Naps are taken on cots in the classroom. Each child brings a favorite small, child-sized blanket, small child-sized pillow and soft toy from home.

Children generally start their rest time between 12:30 and 1:00, and get up between 2:30 and 3:00, depending on the age group. Quiet activities (books, stories read aloud, quiet toys) may be provided for those children who do not sleep.

Parents are expected to take bedding home at the end of each week and wash it. Make sure to bring it back to school on your child's next school day.

Holidays

During the early childhood years, traditional cultural holidays may or may not be as important to the young child as they are for older people. In honoring authenticity for young children, ICC acknowledges what the children find important. They may celebrate the loss of their first tooth, but be scared for a holiday such as Halloween. Because other children here may celebrate different holidays than their own families, and because some holidays are not developmentally understood for young children, ICC may not express a popular holiday (such as Valentine's Day, or Christmas) as a major event.

There are many different kinds of holiday celebrated: Diwali, Chanukah, Christmas, Ramadan, Easter, Passover, Rosh Hashannah, Kwanzaa, etc. Each is special and wonderful to the families who celebrate them. It is our goal at ICC to craft an approach to holidays that reflects the children and families in our program which acknowledges the wider world in which we live. Holidays are an opportunity to live our commitment to anti-bias practices at ICC. Families are welcomed to come and share their holiday traditions with your child's classroom. Make your arrangements with the Director or lead teacher.

Animal Policy

To insure children's health and safety, ICC follows licensing guidelines regarding animals and pets. If there are any classroom pets, they are kept in well-managed, clean cages and containers. Classrooms with these pets make it a part of their weekly routine to ensure that these pets are well cared for and that the space is kept clean and free of germs. On the rare occasion that children touch the animals, they are asked to wash their hands with soap and water immediately afterward. We understand the desire to bring family pets into the classroom. However, prior approval from the office must be obtained before doing so. Leash your family pet safely away from where children play.

ICC Staff as After-Hours "Babysitters"

ICC is privileged to have many talented and dedicated teachers and aides who love children. Naturally, many families seeking after-hours babysitting want to ask a trusted ICC staff. ICC discourages this practice. It undermines us as professionals and educators. ICC teachers are not babysitters. They earned college degrees with professional credentials. Babysitting can blur the boundaries between staff-family, causing favoritism or inappropriate teacher-family relationships.

Ultimately, ICC wishes to promote professional, healthy, and respectful relationships between ICC professional staff and your children. Babysitting compromises ICC staff when they assume role of "family babysitter." Thank you for your understanding and respect.

Safety and Emergency Policies

While your child is at ICC the following safety procedures are followed:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Children are supervised at all times.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Parent (or persons dropping off or picking up children) MUST accompany the child in and out of the building to their classroom/staff.
- ³⁵/₁₇ All children (including schoolagers) are not to be left unattended or sent up the hallway without the accompaniment of an adult.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Parents are to use the Waldeck Avenue delivery zone parking or IPC Main Church lot.

- ³⁵/₁₇ Parents are not to pick up or drop off using the back staff/IPC lot (nearest to the outdoor classroom on Iuka).
- ³⁵/₁₇ When parents leave from the Outdoor Classroom behind the church, keep hold of children, preventing them from running into the parking lot or street.
- ³⁵/₁₇ ICC tells children that "teachers/grown-ups" open doors or fences/gates, which ICC would like parents to follow while at ICC, as well.
- ³⁵/₁₇ If there is a stranger at the entrance door, ICC families are not to let persons in the building.
- ³⁵/₁₇ However, if a stranger or uniformed person enters with you, accompany the stranger/uniformed people to the church or ICC office. Do not leave unfamiliar people into the building unattended.

Fire Drills

A monthly fire drill will occur at varying times of each month. Records of these drills are kept in the office. Plans for evacuation are posted near the door in each classroom. ICC staff is familiar with these posted plans and are ready to evacuate the children when it is necessary. Parent Aides, volunteers and interns are asked to study these, so they also know the plans. The building is equipped with a monitored fire alarm system. ICC receives annual fire inspections for this equipment.

Staff will follow these procedures in the event of a fire or fire drill:

- Evacuate children according to the established routes posed in each classroom.
- Staff will take the attendance clipboards with them.
- Staff will count all children and other staff members when they arrive to their designated areas, and they will then compare their count to the attendance sheets.
- Staff members are to close doors upon exiting the building.

Tornado Drills

Tornado drills are held monthly during tornado season. Records of drills are kept in the office. Plans are posted near the door of each classroom to facilitate procedures in the event of a tornado or a tornado drill.

Staff is familiar with posted plans and are ready to evacuate the children whenever necessary. Parent Aides, volunteers and interns are asked to study these, so they also know the plans. Staff will follow these procedures in the event of a tornado or tornado drill:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Take the attendance clipboard and move to the designated space.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Count the children and other staff and compare to the attendance sheets.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Close all doors and remain in designated are until the All Clear is sounded

Building Emergencies

Building

In the event that the church/ICC experiences a critical building emergency that necessitates the closing of ICC, staff will notify parents immediately. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the staff and children will be relocated to **Summit United Methodist Church on 16th and Waldeck, just south of the church's parking lot. This is the ICC designated safe place.**

Child abuse and neglect policy

ICC is required by law to report suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, or exploitation to Child Protective Services immediately. ICC is not required to notify parents.

When a child is of concern

Occasionally, a child may have difficulty adjusting. If a child is creating a hazard to him or herself or to others, or when teachers must devote an inordinate amount of attention to that one child over a period of time, ICC care may be terminated. Any persistent behaviors that interfere with the function of the program and the safety needs of children and staff will be considered grounds for termination.

The following steps will be observed prior to termination of enrollment:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Teachers and director will have frequent, on-going communication with parents.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Teacher and director will observe and document child's behavior.
- ³⁵/₁₇ The director will investigate with parents/guardians possible medical/physical reasons.
- ³⁵/₁₇ The director and teachers will discuss and implement positive approaches to dealing with the behavior.
- ³⁵/₁₇ An outside resource professional will be consulted and asked to observe the child, with parent permission.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Director and teachers will follow through to document implementation of suggestions from outside resources.
- ³⁵/₁₇ If there has been no change in the disruptive behavior within the agreed upon time limits, the child's enrollment at ICC may be terminated.

Accidents and Injuries

If your child is injured while at ICC, an Incident form will be filled out, noting the time of the injury, what happened, how the injury was treated and by whom. Upon pick-up, parent will review the incident report and sign. ICC is limited to standard first aid procedures: Teachers will only apply soap and water to a cut, and ice to a bump or bruise.

On a case-by-case basis, ICC may contact you to simply tell you that your child got injured but is OK. This might be a scratch or bruise to the face, lips, etc. which will be noticeable. If an injury requires treatment beyond what can be provided at ICC, you will be contacted. In the event that a parent or approved guardian cannot be contacted, ICC will call the person that you have listed as an alternate in case of emergency. If we are unable to reach this person, your physician will be called. If medical attention by a physician is required and we have been unable to contact any of the people you have listed, ICC will call 911.

If a child becomes ill or injured and requires emergency treatment, the child will be transported to the location specified on the emergency transportation authorization form. A child safety restraint will be used if traveling by car or emergency vehicle. A staff member or the director will travel along with and stay with the child until parents or guardians arrive. This staff member will have the child's health records and other forms with them. Parents will be called immediately.

Family - Center Communication

Staff-Family Communication

There are many avenues for communication between families and staff. Teachers strive for clear and open communication among families, staff, and children. Each day, it is important to check the bulletin board or dry erase boards, or entrance ways for postings from ICC administration, and from teachers regarding daily activities. Classroom boards will give information on monthly classroom themes and planned activities.

The cubby may contain individualized communications, including billing statements and receipts. Check your child's cubby to collect the day's creations.

ICC-Family Communication

For general announcements, ICC will email parent. Check for posted signs for center closures, communicable disease notification and related information. ICC highlights activities and upcoming events in a center or classroom newsletter. ICC asks parents to respond and reflect when necessary.

Parents need to keep ICC administration up-to-date on your current/correct email, text, phone, and home address. This information is used to form an emergency contact list for staff, as well as to send out financial and tax information.

Special Concerns

Any important personal communication is done in person. It helps teachers when families notify us when any important changes or information occur regarding their child's health, attendance, schedule, home life, etc. You are encouraged to communicate directly with the Lead classroom teacher. Lead teachers can arrange a special time to share a nap-time phone call or in-person appointment when not supervising a classroom and not in front of your child or other children.

In keeping with our practice of peaceful conflict resolution, if a family has a concern that did not seem to be adequately addressed by the ICC staff, they may first follow the **Concerns and Grievance process (Page 36)** before seeking an appointment with the Board of Directors.

Parent-Parent Communication

ICC witnesses that many ICC families become lifelong friends. ICC encourages healthy and supportive relationships among ICC families. ICC, however, will not give out parent contact information without your permission. If a family wishes to gain the contact information of another family, ICC will forward on your request to that family and allow the family to then contact you directly.

If you would like to invite ICC families to a personal (non-ICC) event such as a birthday party or holiday gathering, parents are able to leave fliers/invitations in the classroom cubbies. Let teachers know when you are doing this.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

In early childhood education, teachers conduct parent-teacher conferences twice a year. In preparation, teachers will use The Creative Curriculum's Developmental Continuum. This tool is a road map where each child's developmental progress is tracked. It enables teachers to plan for your child's learning experiences. Teachers will collaborate with you regarding your child's emotional, social, and physical skill development goal. Parents will receive a communication for the sign up of a 20-minute slot to meet with one of the lead teachers.

Parent Involvement

ICC is a small and community-minded non-profit organization. Our most valuable asset is the ICC families. The quality of the ICC program is greatly enriched when parents and family members directly participate in the school's activities and projects. There are a number of ways that families can get involved with the school, including;

1. Classroom Support: Storytelling, circle time presentations, classroom cleaning, classroom supply acquisitions, classroom recycling, and outdoor classroom work.
2. School Maintenance: Gardening, painting, repairs, carpentry, outdoor upkeep and renovation, bookshelf construction.
3. Fund Raising: Annual OSU Football parking fund raising, online fund raising, special events, grant writing, corporate and community center development.
4. Oversight Committees: Board of Directors, parent resource, or teacher appreciation.

If you have a special skill, project idea, or community resource connection you would like to share with us, let the teachers or Director know. Your contribution of time and energy helps bring you and your child closer as you become an active part of their world at school.

Quarterly Parent/Family Events

ICC hosts a quarterly parent and/or family event. It may be a special gathering, an educational parent topic, an interactive parent-child event, a summer picnic, etc. These events are important for families get a better chance to get to know other parents in their child's classroom. It offers teachers a chance to interact more fully with parents. ICC invites and encourages families to fully participate in such events especially when it involves the children. Often times, child-parent events are topics of special group discussions or day time activities. ICC considers the busy schedules of parents and attempts to have these parent/family events be magical, special, and time-limited. (It's been known that sometimes these events include a take-home family meal you didn't have to cook!)

Family Observations and Visits

Families have access to all areas of used by the children any time that your children are in attendance. You are welcome to drop in and observe whenever you like, but advance notice is helpful for both you and the teachers. The class may be out of the building at the time you decide to drop by, or they may be involved in planned activities that could be disrupted by the unexpected appearance of someone in their family.

Children get excited to see their family, and this wonderful surprise can disrupt a child's focus or interrupt their social play. By the same token, if you do make a plan with your child and the teacher to visit, attend as planned, or inform the teacher if there is a change in your plans. For safety reasons, upon entering the building, notify the Director or a staff member of your presence.

Custodial Policy

The non-custodial parent or guardian is permitted unlimited access to during open hours. ICC makes every attempt to include the non-custodial parent in the communications (including email and newsletters) regarding the child. A non-residential parent is permitted unlimited access unless a court order is on file with ICC which legally limits access.

Concerns and Grievance Policy

ICC adheres to the Peaceful Conflict Resolution model. We will do our best to take care of any concerns that you may have in a peaceful and respectful manner. ICC requests that you use this model when communicating any grievances or concerns. ICC likes to keep the context of peaceful conflict resolution as a "practice". As partners in caring for your children, ICC takes your comments, concerns and grievances seriously. We wish to fully resolve any problems or concerns in a respectful manner. ICC asks for you to first communicate and/or resolve your concern directly with the person or persons involved, if appropriate. Follow the below process in resolving your concern:

1. Speak directly to the person/staff member. Speak with the classroom's Lead Teacher.
2. If not resolved fully, speak to the Director.
3. If not resolved fully, request and work with a 3rd Party Mediator.
4. If not resolved fully, request a meeting or agenda time with the ICC Board of Directors.

Withdrawing from ICC

ICC delights in children and their families. We are sad when it is time for children to leave, whether going to a new school, moving or making more workable child care arrangements. ICC hopes to have families leave on favorable terms. As mentioned earlier, referrals are our greatest compliment.

When you are planning to withdraw your child from ICC, we require **at least a 2-week WRITTEN notice**. Written notice is given or emailed to the Director. All fees must be paid before child is withdrawn. Any fees not paid will be turned over to an agency for collection. Account discrepancies must be addressed and resolved prior to last day.

2-Week Security Deposit Return

When you give written notification to withdrawal from ICC, you continue to pay your tuition, as usual. ICC regularly provides balance statements and can provide one upon request, including amount of your 2-week security deposit. If you have a dispute about your balance due or credit, resolve it prior to your child's last day at ICC. See **Page 9** for details about 2-week deposit.

If your child withdraws from ICC prior to a 2-week written notice, your deposit will be applied toward the final weeks' time frame. You are still responsible for paying any outstanding balance due and are subject to credit collections. ICC will refund any remaining amount of the 2-week deposit amount after the final enrollment date, within 30 days. Provide us with accurate forwarding address and information, if applicable. This address update will also apply to the Child Care Tax statement issued at the end of the year.

Because you are officially withdrawing your child, and you will receive your deposit back, if for some reason, you were to re-enroll your child at ICC, you will be expected to pay a new 2-week deposit at that time.

Once the ICC office receives your written notification, you will receive a follow-up confirmation.

Closure and Feedback

ICC enjoys feedback about you and your family's experiences at ICC. Feel free to give us your feedback and let us know if we may share it, with/without your name. If the feedback is negative, it will help us improve our services to families and children. If the feedback is positive, it will lift our spirits and be our "paycheck" (in a low-paying profession). Such feedback may also be added to our website or Facebook page to help other potential parents make a decision about attending ICC.

**Email or write the following information to notify ICC of your child's withdrawing from ICC
Give this notice to the Director two (2) weeks prior to the child's withdrawal**

Today's Date: _____ Name of Child/Children: _____

Classroom: Toddler Preschool School Age

I/We, _____, are withdrawing _____ from Indianola Children's Center. This is our official written 2-week notification that my/our child will no longer be attending ICC, as of _____ Effective Date.

I am aware that any unpaid tuition or past due amounts will be deducted from my 2-week deposit. I am also aware that any co-payments, late fees, unpaid tuition, etc. will be sent to a collection agency until paid in full. If I am eligible for ODJFS, I am aware that I may not be eligible for other such child care services until my past due amounts with ICC are paid in full.

For those of you who have taken the time to read this document, thank you.

ICC is grateful for your attention, support, care and willingness to partner with us in care and education of your child.

ICC Handbook Acknowledgment

Please read, sign and return to the ICC office:

I/We _____ have read and reviewed the above policies and understand them fully. I/We agree to adhere to our scheduled days/times that my/our child is attending ICC. We agree to request, in writing, any changes in our schedule. We are aware that any changes in the schedule are subject to Director's Approval and/or Staff Availability.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix & Attachments

- ³⁵₁₇ For further information about Ohio Department of Job and Family Services rules and regulations, see their website: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/childcare.stm>.
- ³⁵₁₇ Attachment JFS 01268 (Rev. 10/2011): Center Parent Information Required by Ohio Administrative Code - Page 13 of 13.
- ³⁵₁₇ Sample ICC Transition Letter (ODJFS): Per the JFS 01229 (<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/findform.asp?formnum=01229>)

<c://mydocuments/icchandbook> as of (date)

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