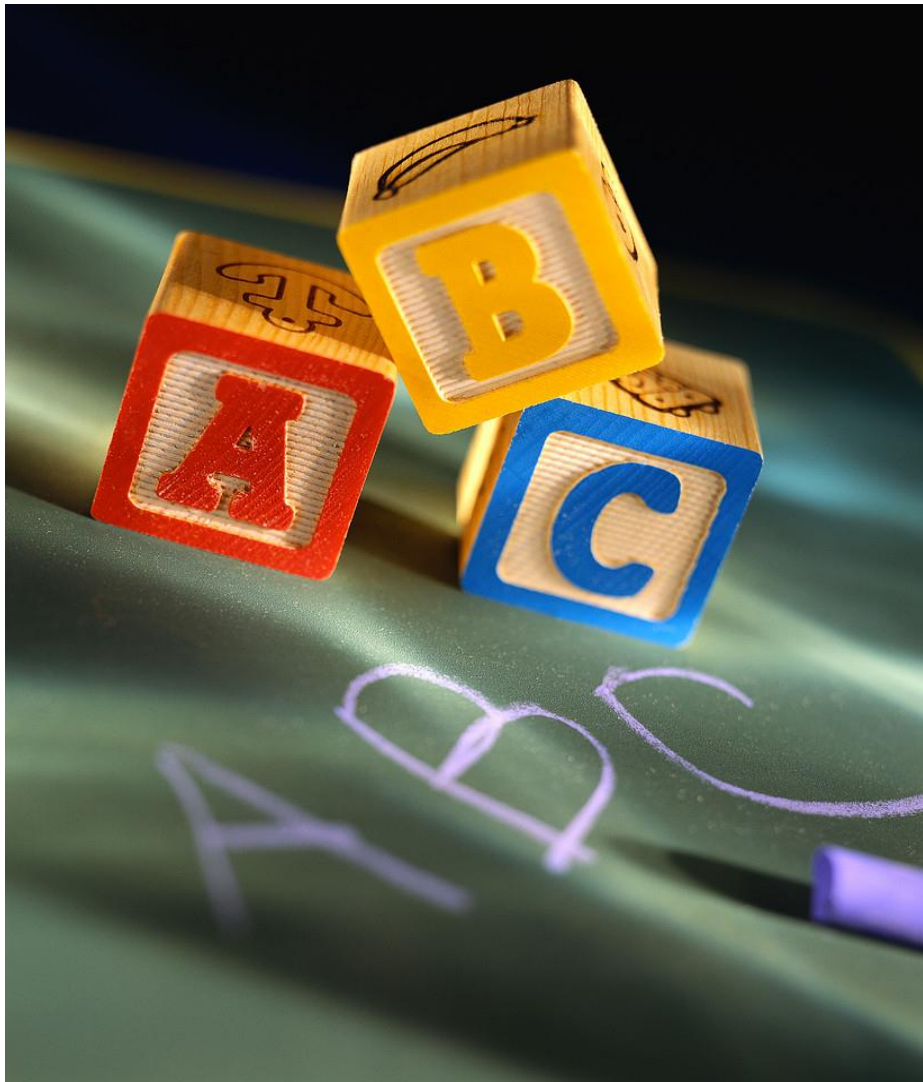


**Reading Children's Learning  
Center, LLC.**

**Parent Handbook**



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# **Reading Children’s Learning Center, LLC.**

## **Organizational Structure**

**RCLC Owner: Education, Inc.**

**Director: Sandra J. Wittrup, M.Ed.**

**Assistant Director: Alisa Pianpiano**

## **Teachers**

## **Teacher Assistants**

**Reading Children’s Learning Center is a year round program. We offer Infant, Toddler, Preschool programs.**

*Our program is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care.*

## **Preparing your child for school**

It is important that you know, trust, and feel comfortable with your provider of childcare. Become familiar with the child care setting and routine. Prepare your child in advance by talking about the childcare and what to expect. Use appropriate language to your child’s age and development. Gather the necessary supplies with your child (food, extra clothes, rest items, etc.) If possible, arrange to phase in your child’s visiting a few times at different parts of the day before they begin.

## **Separation**

It is important that you always say goodbye to your child. Try to leave ample time to say goodbye when you arrive. Be positive in your approach to separation, acknowledge your ambivalent feelings about separating, but try to demonstrate trust in the care giving situation. The staff is there to help you, if your child needs help separating. They may suggest an activity or toy to the child to help ease the transition.

Separation can be hard for many children and parents. One way to help avoid the teary goodbye is to develop a routine in the morning. Come into the classroom, put your child’s belongings away and spend a few minutes exploring what there is to do today. Let your child choose an activity and then say “good-bye”. Leaving a transitional article for your child may also be

helpful (security item or picture of you or the family). If you still experience difficulty, speak with your child's teacher.

Share with the teacher any information you feel may be beneficial for us to know in caring for your child. The more information you give us will help us serve your child emotionally and developmentally. Reading Children's Learning Center has an "Open Door" policy, so you may come in at any time to see your child. Please feel free to call and check on how your child is doing.

## **Departure Time**

Sometimes at the end of the day children may have problems leaving school. Your child may be tired or involved in play and may not have expected you to arrive. Give your child a few minutes to finish what they were doing, clean up and to say goodbye to friends and teachers. Once you arrive, you will be responsible for supervising your child. Being on time picking up makes an easier transition for your child. If you need to have someone else pickup that is not on the list, the director has to be notified in writing and the person picking up must show a current Identification.

Please be aware and respect the teachers' end of the day routines. In order to stay within state regulated ratios, it is important that you follow your schedule. You may change your child's schedule by speaking to the director. ***If you pick up after your scheduled time, you will receive a late fee of \$10 for each fifteen minute period.***

## **Things to consider**

Each child is an individual. Please tailor these guidelines to meet your child's needs. Remember that separation is an ongoing process. Any change in a situation; a new baby, a move, a change in a parents' job, illness, divorce, new developmental stage of your child, etc. may cause a separation issue to resurface. Please make your child's teacher is aware of any changes, so that we can work together to help your child make a smooth adjustment.

## **Things from Home**

**Please do not bring toys from home.** It is hard to keep track of these items and causes sadness when lost or broken. Children may bring in special items on "Show and Tell Days". Items that come in with the children will be put in their cubbies to take home. **No violent toys, weapons, weapon accessories or war toys are permitted. Please be sure that your child does not bring in small items like coins, keys, etc.** These items may be easily swallowed or lost. Please do not send gum, candy, cough, cough drops or Chap Stick to school with your child.

## **Mission Statement**

Collaborating with families, we will ensure a safe, nurturing environment where children can learn and explore in creative ways. Using our knowledge and education, we will provide experiences and materials that will foster the cognitive, physical, social and emotional growth of each child.

## **Philosophy**

Our philosophy in Early Childhood Education is guided by the basic understanding that each child is a unique individual with differing needs. The growth and development of a child requires creative interaction with teachers and peers in a positive learning environment. The whole child is nurtured in a gentle, constructive, caring atmosphere, where social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth is encouraged. Our school strives through the curriculum frameworks to create a climate where children can develop confidence, sensitivity and a healthy self-esteem.

## **Curriculum**

We believe that the child defines the curriculum and that children learn best through play. We follow the guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which suggest that *Developmentally Appropriate Practices* are those that provide opportunities and activities for children related to their individual interests and institute's levels of development and ability. Our curriculum supports the development of children through cognitive, language, social, emotional, creative, and physical activities. Active exploration of the environment through child-initiated experiences comprises the majority of each child's time at the school.

Teachers provide opportunities for individual, small group, and large group experiences to enhance the child's own choices, and direct their own learning throughout the day.

The focus of the curriculum is in interest areas such as: blocks, house corner, table and floor toys, art, sand and water play, music and movement, story time, cooking, and outside play. Children are provided opportunities for learning language through community perspectives and family perspectives and within the program philosophy.

## **Environment**

All classrooms are set up to meet the developmental needs of the children and to provide them the opportunity to make choices. They contain the following areas of learning:

**Language and Literacy, Science and Math, Music and Movement, Dramatic Play and Art.**

## **Infant Program**

Our Infant program serves children ages 12 weeks through 15 months. Reading Children's Learning Center serves infants by recognizing their individual differences and needs. The infant program is designed to help children feel secure, with attentive adults warmly responding consistently and supportively to each child. Routine care giving such as diapering and feeding provide opportunities for significant one on one interaction with adult caregivers.

The physical environment is also an important aspect of the program. We provide materials, experiences, and the physical space for children to explore through touch, sight and sound which will foster cognitive growth.

The move to the young toddler side of the infant classroom occurs as the children gain mobility and need a more active play space. An area where the older babies can use balls and push toys, along with a low climbing structure, encourages free movement. Teaching staff regularly implement carefully planned activities to foster cognitive, emotional language, physical and social growth.

Our infant room is a shoeless environment. We ask everyone who enters our room to remove their shoes. This keeps our floor clean for babies who are crawling and playing.

Infants unable to sit are held for feedings.

Infants do not feed from propped bottles at any time.

Parents and teachers decide when the children are ready to use a sippy cup.

No bottles will be used when infants are in cribs.

No cloth diapers are allowed without written doctor's order. If they are used, they need to have an absorbent lining and be changed as a unit.

Infants are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the CPSC 16 C.F.R. part 1219 or 1220. Infants may then allow assuming any comfortable sleeping position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

We will not allow infants to sleep in equipment such as bouncers, swings, or infant car seats.

Pillows, comforter, blankets, quilts, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft items are not allowed in cribs or rest equipment for any infant.

Infant's head remains uncovered during sleep



## **Feedings**

RCLC supports breast feeding in ready to feed containers labeled with the child's name and date. Liquids, including water, milk, human breast milk, and formula, will never be warmed in a microwave. We have specific bottle warming regulations, which consists of placing the container (bottle or pouch) in a bowl of warm tap water for no more than five minutes.

Breast milk will be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 48 hours.

Bottle feeding cannot contain solid foods unless directed by the child's health care provider.

Teaching staff will not offer solid food and juice to children until they discuss it with the parents.

Whole milk will only be given to infants 12 months and older.

### **What to bring for infants:**

- 3 crib sheets (they will be sent home on Fridays to wash)
- pacifier (if needed)
- diapers & wipes
- diaper ointment (if needed) you will need to sign a permission form
- formula or breast milk
- extra formula
- extra empty bottles
- food when eating solid foods
- appropriate outdoor clothing
- sunscreen (you will need to sign a permission form)
- 3 changes of clothes (including socks)
- Cloth laundry bag with child's name.
- **Parents must be timely with bringing supplies for their child when RCLC's staff requests them.**

**Infants and Toddlers are changed every 2 hours or more as needed.**

**Infants transition to Infant/Toddlers at the minimum age of 12 months.**

**Infant/Toddlers transition to Toddler/Preschool at the minimum age of 24 months.**

**Toddler/Preschool transition to Preschool between 33-36 months.**

## **Infant/Toddler Program**

The toddler years are truly amazing. They are filled with magical discoveries, developmental achievements, and strides in independence and a multitude of challenges. The toddler staff is

dedicated to ensuring that not only your child's needs are met in a stimulating and developmentally appropriate environment, but also to helping parents embrace and savor the wonderful adventures that their toddler will lead them on.

The toddler classroom is set up to meet the developmental needs of the children and to provide them the opportunity to make choices. They contain four learning zones:

All classrooms are set up to meet the developmental needs of the children and to provide them the opportunity to make choices. They contain the following areas of learning:

*Language and Literacy, Science and Math, Music and Movement, Dramatic Play and Art.*

### **What to bring for toddlers:**

- Disposable diapers and wipes
- At least 1 change of clothes including socks labeled with your child's name
- Sheet and blanket for rest time
- Closed toe shoes must be provided for toddlers to go outside and play
- Sunscreen and diaper ointment, if applicable
- Lunch – can be reheated but not refrigerated
- Sippy cups – will not be used when walking or crawling
- Toothbrush

### **Toddler/Preschool**

Our Preschool program, for children 2.9-3.9 years old, introduces the small children to that larger world outside of the home. We help children develop good personal habits and self-help skills. We hope to provide a secure and safe environment where children can feel free to experience new ideas and test their skills. Initial skills in language, math, science and the arts are introduced in hands on open ended ways. Social, gross and fine motor skills are developed at this age. The teachers' help children learn how to interact socially with their peers, as well as taking turns and listening skills. By helping to develop self-esteem and confidence, teachers provide the emotional security children need to develop curiosity and enjoyment in the process of learning.

### **Older Preschool**

Our Older Preschool/Pre- Kindergarten program, for children 2.9 -5 years, continues to build and enrich children's skills and strengths. Gross and fine motor skills are refined. Cognitive and critical thinking skills are continuing to develop. Pre- reading, early math, science and social studies activities are introduced. Our goal is to help your child find out what their interests are and develop them as well as try out new experiences. We are working towards developing life-long learners as your child develops into a unique individual in this complex, exciting world.

### **What to bring for Preschoolers:**

- One change of clothing including socks, all labeled with your child's name
- A sheet and blanket for rest time
- Closed toe shoes must be provided to go outside and play
- Sunscreen
- Lunch – can be reheated but not refrigerated. Please include drink with lunch
- Toothbrush and toothpaste (toothpaste is optional)

### **Daily Schedule for Toddlers and Preschoolers:**

7:00 – 8:00	Arrival and breakfast
8:00 – 8:30	Free choice
8:30 – 9:00	Circle time (stories, songs/finger plays, poems, games)
9:00 – 9:20	Diapers or toileting and hand washing
9:30 – 10:30	Outdoor weather permitting or indoor gross motor activity
10:30 – 10:45	Morning snack
10:45 – 11:25	Free choice and teacher directed activity
11:25 – 11:45	diapers, toileting and hand washing
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch & tooth brushing
12:15 – 12:30	Clean-up
12:30 – 2:30	Rest time
2:30 – 3:00	Diapers or toileting and hand washing
3:00 – 3:30	Afternoon snack
3:30 – 5:45	Departure and free choice

### **Curriculum**

Our program incorporates Developmentally Appropriate Practices as set forth The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our curriculum is an emergent curriculum and the activities implemented by the teaching staff reflects the developmental needs and upcoming milestones of the particular children in each group. Most of the activities will be hands

on enabling the children the opportunity to explore the world around them in a secure and safe environment.

## **Assessments**

On-going assessments will be conducted throughout your child's time with us. The assessment tool we use are Ages and Stages Evaluations and are used to determine the curriculum for not only the whole class, but to also develop individual curriculum goals for your child. The assessments will be shared with parents at the scheduled Parent Conferences, which will be held two times each year. If at any time a parent wishes to meet with a teacher to discuss issues that may arise, you may contact the teacher to schedule a meeting. We do ask you to ask for a conference to discuss issues in depth, and not try to discuss them during drop off or pick up.

## **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING!!**

## **Activities and Celebrations**

At RCLC, we celebrate holidays with the children by doing special crafts or cooking activities. Parents are encouraged to come lend a hand and join in the festivities. Birthdays may be celebrated at RCLC. Please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements. Please keep celebrations low key and appropriate for the group.

## **Field Trip Policies and Procedures**

Field trips will be limited to toddler and preschool age children. Infants will not participate in field trips.

The following procedures should be followed when taking a field trip:

- \* Staff must get approval for the field trip from the director.
- \* Staff must provide the following information about the field trip:
  - Location
  - Time
  - Cost
  - Lunch or snacks needs
  - Number of children attending
  - Number of teachers and chaperones attending

- Teacher should visit the field trip site ahead of time.
- A chaperone should always be teamed with a staff person. No chaperones are to be left alone with the children.
- All children will wear yellow T-shirts with the name, address and phone number of Reading Children's Learning Center.
- Each staff member will wear red T-shirts with the same information as above.
- Items to be brought on the field trip include:
  - Cell phone
  - First aid kit
  - Copies of the authorization and consent forms signed by parents for each child outlining emergency numbers.
  - Any emergency meds (epi-pens, Benadryl)

**All permission forms must be updated and signed by a parent or guardian.**

Staff will take attendance (face to name recognition) before they leave the building, when they get to the destination, before they leave and when they return to the building.

### **Snacks and Lunches**

RCLC offers breakfast foods of cereals, bananas, mini muffins, mini bagels, milk, and 100% juice to children who arrive between the hours of 7:00 – 8:00 a.m. We find that some children may not want to eat very early in the morning and can be hungry upon arrival. We also provide two planned snacks each day. A list of snacks provided is posted at the school. At snack time we serve 100% juice, milk or water. Nutritious snacks are provided and may include unsweetened cereal, whole grain crackers, cheese, yogurt and fresh fruit and vegetables.

Please send a nutritious lunch and a healthy drink with your child in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack. We do not have refrigeration available for all of the lunches. Make sure your child's name is clearly labeled on the lunch box. We suggest heating food at home and putting it in a thermos or covering the Tupperware with aluminum foil. We promote good nutrition at lunch and snack times. It is part of our curriculum. Good nutrition is necessary for growth and development of good eating habits. Please do not send in candy with lunch and minimize sugar-laden snacks.

**All food is prepared, served and stored in accordance with the USDA and Child and Adult care Food Program guidelines.**

**RCLC will not offer children younger than 3 years of age the following foods: hot dogs, whole grapes; nuts; or popcorn. Families are asked to cut foods no larger than ¼ inch square for infants and ½ inch square for toddlers. Here are some ideas to guide you in preparing healthy lunches:**

### **Dairy**

Yogurt

Cheese

Cottage cheese

### **Fruits/ Vegetables**

fresh or dried fruit

raw & cooked vegetables

applesauce

### **Drinks**

100% fruit juice

Milk

Water

### **No sugar or high fructose corn syrup drinks**

### **Grains**

pretzels

granola

oatmeal - cereal

graham crackers

whole grain bread

### **Proteins**

chicken/turkey

ham

Cheese

beef

beans

### **Breakfast Foods**

yogurt

whole grain cereals

fruit

Whole grain waffles

Bagels

### **Staff**

We are proud of the wonderful staff we have at Reading Children's Learning Center. All teachers are certified as teachers with the Department of Early Education and Care and are certified in CPR and First Aid for infants and children. The staff works towards the common goal of fostering the social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of each child. Our dedicated staff continues to grow and strive toward their professional goals by attending workshops, college courses and attending conferences.

### **Questions and/or concerns**

Please talk with your child's teacher, if you have any questions or concerns. They will answer your questions or seek an answer. Parent's questions and concerns are taken seriously. If you are not satisfied with the teacher's response, please speak to the Director. The Director will work with you to resolve the problem. We will also survey parents at least once a year so you can share your thoughts for improvements in our program.

### **Hours of Operation**

We are open 7:00 AM – 5:45 PM year round. RCLC has part time and full time programs. Minimum hours/day for the Infant and Toddler program are 6 hours. Minimum hours for Preschool are 4 hours. **Please be sure to adhere to your scheduled times of arrival and**

**departure so we can ensure proper teacher staffing. This is very important to meet the Department of Early Education and Care state regulated teacher/child ratios.**

## **Enrollment**

Children will be enrolled after an appointment with the parent/s and child/children. The child/children will have an opportunity to visit in a classroom and get acquainted with the school.

***Children do NOT have to be toilet trained before acceptance to Reading Children's Learning Center.*** Before your child begins at Reading Children's Learning Center, we must receive the following:

1. A current physical exam form and immunization record with the date of the last exam, and any allergies, chronic conditions and ongoing health problems. ***A lead test must be given to children at 12months, 2 & 3 except if you live in a high risk town, then until age 4.***
2. Non-refundable application fee of \$50.00 and a non-refundable deposit of 2 weeks tuition will be required to hold a spot for the month of your choice for your child, which will be held and used as your last two weeks in care. If you choose to pay by the month, a one month non-refundable deposit will be required and will be used towards your last month of care with a two-week notice.
3. Registration form/Financial Agreement signed as well as the Parent Handbook Sign-off Sheet.
4. Enrollment form, authorization & consent form, developmental history and master permission form.

## **Diversity**

RCLC strives to enroll children from different cultures and language backgrounds, which broadens and enriches cultural awareness for all of the students attending our school.

## **Non-Discrimination**

RCLC does not discriminate against any child, parent or family for reasons of race, color, sex, religion, cultural heritage, marital status, age, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, or economic status.

## **Relationships**

Positive relationships between teachers and children are essential. We strive to engage children in meaningful conversations using open-ended questions and offer choices to problem solving

whenever possible. We look for opportunities throughout the day to support the development of language and encourage children to share their ideas and encourage positive peer interactions.

## **Family Involvement**

Families are encouraged to volunteer by joining us and sharing cultural and language traditions or other interests, such as jobs and hobbies. Families are also encouraged to come to the program and participate in reading or storytelling.

## **Home Visit**

We would like to have the opportunity to visit you and your child at your home either before your enrollment or after. A home visit can create an invaluable connection between home and school. Many times children enjoy a visit from his or her teacher and or Director. This can provide us with an insight to your child's lifestyle and interests, which helps to create a curriculum and environment inclusive to his or her needs.

## **Tuition**

- **Two weeks of tuition must be received upon enrollment and the first week due on the first day. After your child starts, tuition must be paid on Monday for the week.** Online payments and credit/debit card payments are some payment options and we have a tuition box both upstairs and down for your convenience if you would prefer to write a check. If you choose to pay monthly, your tuition will be due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. **In the event that you decide to withdraw your child from RCLC, any tuition paid will be non- refundable, but can be used to pay for the remaining time that your child is attending.**
- A rate sheet is available upon request.
- If tuition is one week in arrears, a reminder will be sent home. If there is a problem with payment, please speak to the Director immediately.
- Failure to make payments will result in having your child dropped from enrollment, and/or assessment of late fees of \$20.00 if not received by Wednesday of that week.
- Online payments must be made on Monday for the upcoming week because it takes four business days after payment is made to go into RCLC account. If online payment is made after Monday for that week, a fee of \$20.00 will be added to your tuition.
- If payment is by check, please put the dates you are paying for on the check.



- Returned checks will be charged a fee of \$50.00. Future payments will be accepted by cash, bank check or money order only. This is in addition to any fees that the bank may charge you.
- There is no reduction in tuition if your child absent for reasons of illness, vacation, snow day, holidays or any other reason during the week.
- Due to limited space and staffing requirements, we are unable to offer make up opportunities in the case your regular scheduled class day is missed.
- If you decide to withdraw your child, a two week written notice is required. The initial two-week deposit of tuition will be used toward your last two weeks of school. If you pay monthly, a one-month written notice is required and your one-month deposit will be used towards your child's last month of care. If you choose to pay your tuition in advance and decide to withdraw your child, no monies will be refunded, however, your child will be able to attend for the remaining time covered by the tuition.
- We expect children to be picked up on time. A late fee of \$1.00 for each minute late will be assessed. This payment will included on your next invoice. If your lateness becomes habitual, the director will contact you for a plan to pick up on time.

## **School Closings**

Reading Children's Learning Center will be open on school vacations and snow days unless there is a state of emergency declared. The center may also delay the opening or close early to ensure a safe commute home for all.

**If any of these situations occur, please watch Channel 7 new for information concerning closure or delay. You will be notified as soon as possible in the event of an early closure.**

## **Holidays**

- *New Year's Day;*
- *Martin Luther King Day;*
- *President's Day;*
- *Memorial Day;*
- *Independence Day;*
- *Labor Day;*
- *Columbus Day;*
- *Veterans' Day;*
- *Thanksgiving Day;*
- *Day after Thanksgiving;*
- *Close at :300 day before Thanksgiving;*

- *Closed at Christmas Eve Day.*
- *Closed at 3:00 on December 31<sup>st</sup> (New Year's Eve.)*

**There is no reduction in tuition for these days.**

**In addition to the above-referenced holidays, RCLC will close for two professional development days each year, which will be scheduled on the last Friday in April and the last Friday in October. A list of specific dates of the holidays will be handed out to each family twice each year on January 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> as a reminder.**

## **Arrival**

RCLC is ready to greet parents and children at **7:00 AM**. Parents are greeted by the opening staff persons and /or Director. Parents are expected to escort their children into the school and put all their belongings in their cubby. A staff member will help with good-byes if needed. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure a staff person knows your child has arrived. To ensure staff/child ratio, please do not come to the center before 7:00 AM. The opening staff person will arrive at the school earlier than 7:00 AM, but will need time to set up for the day, therefore, cannot take children until we open at 7:00 AM.

**Please do not send your child inside the building unattended.**

Our program begins at **8:30 AM** and our teachers have planned schedules and activities for the children. In order to ensure the full program benefits, we ask that you please have your child to RCLC by **8:30 AM**.

**If you are going to be late or your child is not coming in for the day, please call us. If we do not receive a phone call or an email from a family letting us know that a child will be out, we will exhaust every effort to contact parents, guardians, or emergency contacts to find out if the status of the child. This is a state regulation to ensure the safety of all children. In the event that we need to consistently utilize time and effort to contact a parent to locate a child, there will be a fee of \$5.00 for each phone call or email that is sent on their behalf.**

## **Departure**

At the end of the day, please notify the closing staff that you are leaving with your child. The staff person will say good-bye and pass on any important information. Once you have your child, you are responsible for supervision. Please do not allow your child to leave the school without you. Children will not be released to anyone not on the authorization form or without written permission from you. Please include the person's name that will be picking up your child in the orange log book located to the left of the door. We will ask the person picking up your child for identification. RCLC closes at **5:45PM**. Please make arrangements to have your

child picked up at this time. Chronic tardiness will be assessed by the Director and will be billed accordingly.

**Please be sure to adhere to your scheduled times of arrival and departure so we can ensure proper teacher staffing. This is very important to meet the Department of Early Education and Care state regulated teacher/child ratios.**

## **Clothing**

Infants will need 3 complete changes of clothing to keep at school. Toddlers and Preschoolers will need 1 complete change of clothing to keep at school. Please mark every item. Please dress your child for play. Play is a child's work and comfortable clothing helps them to be able to explore their world. **No Crocs, Flip flops or Dress shoes.** Sneakers or close toed tied or Velcro shoes only for your child's safety. Outside play is important in your child's development. We take the children out every day, even during the winter months unless the temperature drops to freezing. Please send in snowsuits/pants, boots, hats, and mittens in the winter. In the fall and spring, please send in a jacket even if it's warm.

## **Rest time**

Any child in school for more than four hours will be involved in rest time. Please send in a small blanket and pillow for toddlers and preschoolers. Blankets and pillows will not be used for, infants under the age of 12 months; however, sleeping sacs are acceptable. Store these items in a large laundry bag. **Please label all items.** All children are expected to rest at this time. They do not have to sleep, but give their bodies a chance to rest. Children may be given quiet activities (books, puzzles) on their mats after resting for 30 minutes. Rest time will be between 1 ½ to 2 hours depending on the age group. If your child is having difficulty at rest time, we will meet to discuss ways to smooth over any issues.

## **Toileting Procedure**

Good Health habits and personal hygiene skills are extremely important. To help children learn these necessary skills, please observe the following procedure:

1. Children will be supervised in the toilet area at all times.
2. Children may use the bathroom whenever needed. They will be encouraged to use the toilet at certain times of the day.
3. Children will wash hands with soap and running water after toileting, before eating and after messy activities or outside play, and before and after water play. Individual paper towels will be used to dry hands.

4. If a child should wet or soil him/herself, he/she will not be verbally humiliated or abused, but treated in a warm consoling manner.
5. The child will be cleaned up and given clean clothes. If the child does not have their own extra set of clothing, the school will loan Reading Children's Learning Center clean clothing to the child.
6. Wet/soiled clothing will be double bagged as is and placed in plastic bags and stored away from other items in the child's cubby.

## **Potty Training**

Potty training is an important milestone for toddlers and young preschoolers. The process of learning to recognize when they have to go, getting to the bathroom on time, unfastening clothes, wiping, refastening clothes, flushing and washing hands is quite long. This is not a simple process. It takes a lot of patience on the part of everyone involved- parents, teachers and most importantly the children.

Signs that your child may be ready to use the toilet are an awareness of what is happening, the ability to communicate, and the motivation to be out of diapers. Children should stay in diapers or pull-ups until potty training has progressed to the point of just a few accidents. The more accidents there are in the classroom, the more difficult it is to keep sanitary.

We will continue to encourage those children beginning to toilet train by giving them opportunity to visit the bathroom. To introduce the children to the potty we have them sit down on the toilet for a very short period of time, to get used to the idea of sitting there. We repeat this every so often. Using the toilet is a skill that takes most toddlers several months to figure out.

If your child is consistently using the toilet, **please try to avoid "onesies"** as these can make it more difficult for children to get out of and can be frustrating if your child is in a hurry. Unless your child is consistently using the toilet and staying dry, please only use "Pull-ups" with Velcro. The time required to completely undress and re-dress your child after wetting or soiling takes away from daily activities and programming. Elastic waist pants, regular T-shirts and beltless pants make toilet training easier and more successful for your child.

We have many children toilet training at this time and following these guidelines will make toilet training a more positive and rewarding experience for your child and allow us adequate time for our activities and outside play. Criteria for wearing underwear is staying dry and being able to ask to us the toilet. Of course a few accidents are expected, but continued accidents will require to the return to diapers or Velcro sided Pull-ups.

## **Diapering procedures**

1. Gather all necessary materials.
2. Place disposable paper on the changing area.
3. Lay child on changing area
4. Remove diaper wearing disposable gloves and clean child with disposable wipe.
5. Using a clean glove, apply cream or other skin care product as directed by parents as needed.
6. Place clean diaper on child.
7. Place any soiled clothing in labeled bag to send home.
8. Throw away disposable paper, diaper and gloves.
9. Wash child's hands with soap and water as well as teachers.
10. Disposable diapers are required unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use.

## **Child Care Health Care Policy**

Teachers and Parents need to work together to ensure the health and safety of our children at RCLC. In order to prevent the spread of diseases, we have set the following guidelines.

### **Illness, Health and Safety Policy and Sick Child Policy**

RCLC will not send a child home with a common cold unless it is accompanied by a fever or other symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhea. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will isolate your child, with supervision, from the other children and call you to pick up your child. We expect you to pick up your child within one hour of notification. We will notify you of any exposure to contagious illness, disease, or infection in my program within 24 hours of my becoming aware of it. In the event of head lice, the child must be treated and nit-free before returning to care. If a case of head lice is at school, all parents will be notified.

We expect to be notified if your child will not come to care due to illness, contagious disease, or for any other reason. If a child has any of the symptoms listed below, he or she will not be permitted to attend care until 24 hours after the last bout of fever, vomiting, or severe diarrhea, or until 24 hours after medical treatment has begun as prescribed by a physician:

- A fever of 100 degrees or higher;

- A skin rash (other than diaper rash or prickly heat). The child will not be allowed to return to care without a written statement from a doctor that the rash is not a communicable condition;
- Diarrhea (increased number and water content of stools that cannot be contained within the child's diaper). The child needs to have a solid bowel movement before returning to daycare;
- Vomiting;
- Any parasitic infestation (lice, scabies, etc.);
- Pink-eye;
- Discharge from the eyes or ears;
- A runny nose with colored discharge;
- Chicken pox (the child may return when all the blisters have dried and formed scabs, usually about 6 days after the onset of the rash.);
- Any other communicable disease (tuberculosis, etc.).

**Children may return to school when they have been symptom free for 24 hours without use of medication or have a Doctor's note explaining their condition as non-contagious.** Director will post any communicable diseases that have been introduced into RCLC.

### **Procedure for emergency and Illness**

- We will assess the situation, administer first aid and notify parents immediately if child needs to be transported to the hospital for either a medical or dental emergency.
- The Director or another staff person will call ambulance and parents while the staff person attends to the child.
- The child will be transported by ambulance accompanied by a staff person.
- The child's folder will be taken with the necessary permission slip to administer first aid signed by the parent.
- Parents will be notified by phone.
- Work numbers are listed in the child's folder along with an emergency contact person.
- If we are unable to contact the parents, we will contact the person listed on the emergency contact list from the face sheet.
- We will continue to call each person on the list until we have contacted a person to notify.

**Any illness that does not require emergency treatment or transportation will be handled in the following manner:**

- Staff person will inform the Director (or person in charge when the Director is out of the building) of the illness.
- The child will be made comfortable, away from the group and supervised by the Director.
- Parents or other emergency contact will be called and asked to pick up the child from school.

## **Medication**

We cannot administer prescription or non-prescription medication without the written order of a physician (which may include the label on the medication) which indicates the medication is for your child.

- No medication will be administered without written parental authorization.
- No medication will be given contrary to the label without written MD authorization.
- All medication is kept in a locked container.
- All staff will undergo an annual evaluation of the ability to administer medication and to follow the medication administration procedures specified by the Department of Early Education and Care.
- The first dose of a medication cannot be administered at the program.

Please give the medication to the staff person in charge and sign the authorization medication form. Leftover medication will be given back to the parent.

**Topical medications, such as lotions, petroleum jelly, insect repellent and sunscreen require written parental permission, which is good for one year.**

### **Authorization of medication:**

A signed and dated medical authorization is required for every child receiving medication

- Medication must be in its original container with the child's name, drug name, directions and storage.
- Non-Prescription medications will not be given unless there is a note from the physician and signed permission from parent.
- Any leftover medication will be given to the parent. If the child has left the program, medication will be disposed of at the Reading Board of Health.

## **Plan for managing infectious diseases**

Children are checked for signs of illness upon arrival at the school and their health is monitored by staff throughout the day. If an infectious disease is suspected upon arrival, the parent will be asked to remove the child and seek medical advice. If symptoms appear after the child is in the center, the child will be taken out of the group, supervised and made comfortable. The parents will be contacted and asked to pick-up the child at the school.

The “Health & Safety in Child Care” and Nursing Care of Infants and Children” manuals as well as Web MD will be used along with the Health Care Consultant and the child’s pediatrician to determine if an infectious disease is present and how long the child must be excluded.

**Notification of a contagious disease will be posted on the parent information board as well as the front door at the school.**

## **Exclusion policy**

Parents of children exhibiting symptoms of illness will be contacted regarding the child’s health. Consultation with parents, Director and when necessary, the child’s physician will determine whether or not a child remains in school. If determined that a child needs to be sent home, the child will be removed from the group, kept comfortable and supervised until the parent arrives. Parent/s will be asked to keep child home until the child is symptom free for 24 hours, without the use of medication, or until the child has been treated by a physician and evidence of the child being non-contagious has been verified by the physician.

## **Plan for Meeting the Needs of Mildly Ill Children While in School**

The staff will meet the individual needs of a mildly ill child. If necessary, the child will be isolated with supervision, and all materials used by the child will be cleaned and disinfected before being returned to the classroom.

## **Plan for Meeting Specific Health Needs**

**Please notify the Teacher of any allergies.** All allergies will be posted in each classroom and kitchen area.

All Allergies noted on the child’s enrollment application or health form will be posted in the classroom.

- All staff will be informed of the allergies and directed to protect the child from exposure to the allergens.



- All food served to the children is either sent from home for their individual use or served at the school.
- On other children's birthdays/special snack day, we ask the parent of the child who has allergies to provide us with a special snack for their child.
- A Food Allergy Plan will be written for any child with a food allergy.

### **Allergy Action Plan for Staff**

When a new food is being served, we will review the following:

1. Review of the allergy list posted in the classroom.
2. Review the ingredients listed on the box, comparing it to the allergies noted in the classroom.
3. Review the food box looking for any warnings about trace food items that may produce an allergic reaction (nuts, milk products, wheat, etc.).
4. Children who have allergies to any listed food ingredients, including trace amounts, will be provided a safe alternative to snack.

**Parents may request a copy of the complete health care policy from the director at any time.**

**A plan will be written to allow parents with written permission of their child's health care practitioner to train staff in implementation of their child's individual health care plan.**

### **Injury prevention plan**

- Each teacher will check the classroom daily for hazardous materials or conditions and will remove them from the area.
- The school is checked continuously by the Director/staff for any items that are in need of repair or replacement.
- All toxic substances, medications, and sharp objects will be stored out of the reach of children.
- All poisonous plants are banned from the center.

Any accidents and first aid administered to a child are recorded in the log book on the day of the occurrence. The Director or staff person responsible for the care of the child will record the incident and any first aid administered in the log. Parents are notified verbally and are given a written record of any injury requiring first aid. Parents will sign all accident reports at the time of

pickup. If the Director feels it is necessary, we will call the parent before they arrive to let them know their child has been injured and what first aid procedures were administered. First Aid kits are located in each classroom.

**Please make sure children are dressed appropriately for the weather.**

### **Definition of Child Abuse**

**Child Abuse is a non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker which causes a substantial risk of harm to a child's physical and emotional well-being.**

### **Definition of Child Neglect**

**Child neglect is the failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, safety, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision or other essential needs.**

**Procedure for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families and to The Department of Early Education and Care.**

**The program will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care and custody. All staff are mandated reporters and must report suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Staff should document any suspicions or signs of abuse and neglect and include the date and their signature. Any suspicions should be shared and discussed with the director.**

**All suspected cases are reported by the director, with the reporting staff person's assistance, to the Department of Children and Families immediately, with written follow-up (51A report) within 24 hours. A copy of the information sent to DCF and the center's documentation is kept in the child's file.**

**The director will immediately notify DEEC after filing a 51A report, or learning that a 51A report has been filed alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program or during a program related activity.**

**The program will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the program; providing consent for disclosure to DEEC of information from, and allowing DEEC to disclose information to, any person and /or agency that DEEC may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and protection of children. Failure to cooperate may be grounds for suspension, revocation, or refusal to issue or renew a license.**

**Any staff member suspected of any incident of child abuse or neglect shall be immediately suspended without pay and benefits until an investigation is completed. The director will report these suspicions or allegations to the Department of Children and Families and the DEEC immediately by telephone and writing within twenty-four hours. In accordance with the DEEC regulations (7.11(4)), the center ensures that this allegedly abusive or neglectful**

**staff member will not work directly with children until the Department of Children and Families investigation is completed and for such time as the DEEC requires.**

### **Phone numbers for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect**

**Department of children and Families – Malden                      781-388-7113**

**Department of Early Education and Care                              978-681-9684**

### **Child Guidance Plan**

Part of a young child’s learning experience is learning which behaviors are acceptable and which are not. Preschool teachers help children learn to control their own behavior in socially acceptable ways. This will help the growth of self-discipline and self-control in each child, consistent with individual needs and development.

#### **Children will learn:**

- to be safe with themselves and with others
- to feel good about themselves
- to develop self-control and good coping skills
- to become more independent
- to balance their needs and wants with those of others
- to learn new problem solving skills, including non-violent conflict resolution
- to learn about conservation-to use equipment, materials and other resources in caring, appropriate ways

#### **Teachers will:**

- Plan for appropriate behavior through the environment by arranging furniture and other materials to encourage active learning and independence.

- Plan daily scheduling that prevents boredom, waiting, hurriedness with time to relax and enjoy activities.
- A daily routine with ample opportunity for children to select activities and move between them at their own pace and one that gives children ample notice of transitions ahead of time.
- Provide children with expectations that are clear, age appropriate and applied in a consistent way. Allow children to participate in the establishment of rules, policies and procedures where appropriate and feasible.
- Reinforce positive behavior by recognizing children's positive actions.
- Model appropriate behavior by being consistent with the program's expectations of the children.
- Redirect children toward positive activities by interrupting a child's negative behavior and steering the child toward an acceptable substitute activity.
- Teach children new skills and encourage them to discuss and resolve their conflicts on their own or with the adult's assistance when necessary rather than imposing an adult's solution on them. Encourage children to express their feelings in words and to resolve problems peacefully.
- Ignore simple inappropriate negative behavior that is unpleasant.
- Work in close partnership with parents to address children's difficulties at home and at the program. Develop shared understanding to develop consistency between home and child care.
- Observe and document children's behavior.
- Meet with parents, keep them informed of their children's behaviors and document your parent discussions.
- Assess specialized support services if a child's behavior continues to be harmful to themselves or others. With written parental permission, refer the family for mental health counseling or other specialized services.

Refer to Referral Plan for appropriate community supports.

Staff shall attend training regarding child guidance techniques and good early childhood practices based on their individual needs.

**The following will be prohibited:**

- Spanking or other corporal punishment.
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment, or forcing toileting.
- Depriving children of meals or snacks.
- Using methods such as force feeding children.
- Teachers will not confine children to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision.

**Reading Children's Learning Center Referral Plan**

RCLC will use the following plan for referring parents to appropriate social services, mental health, educational and medical services for their child should the Staff/Director feel that an assessment for such services would be helpful to the child and family.

The Director will maintain a current list of referral sources in the community including the chapter 766 contact person and Early Intervention Programs.

When a staff person has concerns about a child's development, they should discuss it with the Director. Written concerns or situations should be documented by the Teacher for a two week period. The Director will do several observations over the two week period.

If the observation supports a cause for concern, the Director and Teacher will schedule a meeting with the parent/s. The Director will prepare a list of appropriate referral sources.

The Director and Teacher together will give the parents a written statement explaining the reason for recommending a referral, the observations of the child's behaviors and actions taken by RCLC to meet the child's needs.

The parents will be encouraged to call or write to request an evaluation. If necessary, the Director will contact the referral agency with the parent's written permission.

If the child is under three years old, they will be informed of services available through Early Intervention Programs.

The Director may, with parental permission, contact the agency or service provider who evaluated the child, for consultation and help in meeting the child's needs at RCLC. If it is determined that the child does not need services, the Director and Teacher will evaluate the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral may be needed.

Documentation of observations, parent conference, any referrals and results of evaluations will be placed in the child's file.

## **Transition to another classroom**

Transition from one classroom to the next is an exciting time as your child's development makes him/her ready for new challenges and opportunities. But we know that meeting new teachers and learning new classroom routines can make this time a little stressful. We will help you and your child adjust to the new classroom, ready for new adventures in learning. And rest assured, if you have questions or concerns we're here to help. Children are enrolled in a classroom based on their age and emotional, cognitive and physical development. Transitions are based on developmental criteria first, the age considerations and family preferences. In order to ensure that the children derive the maximum benefit from the curriculum and classroom environment, we adhere to a developmentally appropriate age range for each classroom.

Each classroom has the established milestones to guide the teacher's decision about readiness to transition to the next classroom.

**Infants:** Infants may start thinking about transitioning at the age 12 months to the Infant/Toddler class. They will start to have one afternoon nap on a mat, become steady on the feet, sitting in a chair at a table to eat, experimenting with using utensils, consistently finger feeding solid foods and drinking from a sippy cup.

**Infant/Toddlers:** Infant/Toddlers will start transitioning at 2 years (24 months) to the Toddler/Preschool class. Children will walk; eat independently, napping once per day, and able to follow predictable routine. They are learning to be less reliance on pacifiers, gaining verbal skills, exploring their environment with interest, and beginning to understand rules and structure.

**Preschool/Pre-K:** Children will start transitioning from the Toddler/Preschool class to the Preschool/Pre-K class at the age around 2.9-3 years of age. Children in this class are learning to independently navigate the classroom, making choices with and without peers and teachers. They show interest in all curriculum domains (math, science, literacy, cultural studies), and have a strong social and emotional foundation. They participate in group experiences- attending to content, responding to open ended questions and making predictions. They are able to consistently follow an activity through completion. Children are capable of caring for their own personal needs (toileting, dressing, safety).

## **Partnering with Your Child's Teachers**

Our staff knows that there are many reasons families become anxious about transitions between classrooms. Often, it's because there is an uncertainty about new staff, new routines, or new challenges ahead. The teaching teams will help you feel like partners in the process:

They'll discuss the transition process with you, and share specific information about the signs of readiness your child may or may not be showing

They'll help you connect with families of other children who are transitioning so you know which of their friends is also moving.

They'll work with you to be fully informed about the transition based on your child's individual needs. Every step along the way, we'll keep you informed of how he or she is doing!

## **Suspension Policy**

Under some circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend a child from the program for a determined amount of time. If a child is exhibiting extremely dangerous behaviors that may cause a safety issue to themselves and/ or other children, a child may be suspended while a plan of action is put into place. Each case will be evaluated individually to determine what the next step would be.

## **Termination policy**

RCLC will make every effort to have a child remain in the school whenever possible. In the great majority of cases, termination is due to relocation, child entering school, etc. However, we also recognize that not every situation is appropriate for every child. We will make every effort to discuss with the parents any issues and try to make adjustments if necessary. We will provide an opportunity to meet with the parent to discuss options other than suspension or termination. Referrals for evaluation, diagnostic, or therapeutic services will be offered to the parent. Options for supportive services to the program including consultation and educator training may be pursued. A development plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program may be written. If this is not possible, the parent and /or the school may choose to terminate the arrangements on a time line that is in the child's best interest.

Circumstances under which a child may leave the program include, but not limited to the following:

- **Parent Choice-** when a **parent decides to terminate the childcare arrangements, a minimum of a two week written notice to the school is required. If you pay monthly, a one month notice is required.**
- Aging out and going on to school.
- Parental violation of policies and practices of RCLC (failure to pay tuition on time, failure to provide updated information for child's record, chronic lateness).
- Safety of the other children in the program.

- Abusive behaviors and/ or verbal threats by parents towards staff or other parents.

## **Plan for evacuation of the school in an emergency**

**If at any time, the children have to evacuate the facility the following is in place:**

**-The director will stay in constant contact with the local authorities to determine whether to evacuate or shelter in place in the event of a natural disaster.**

**- The director will contact the local authorities to inform them that the facility has been evacuated.**

**- The director will have in their possession a complete list of parent's emergency numbers along with the numbers of the local authorities in order to keep in constant contact.**

**- The director will have a cell phone at all times to keep in constant contact with the local authorities and parents.**

**In the event that the emergency does not require leaving the property, the staff and children will evacuate the building and meet at the dumpster outside of the back entrance and at the telephone pole outside of the front entrance.**

## **Emergency Contingency Plans**

### **Toxic Spill / Natural Disaster**

- Director or designated staff person will call Little Treasures School to bring their bus to bring the children to their school at 311 Haverhill St. Reading, MA.
- Attendance (face to name recognition) will be taken before they leave and when they get to the site). Clipboards with emergency numbers and allergy lists will be brought.
- Director or staff member confirms attendance with each class.(name to face recognition).
- Parents will be called to pick up their children.
- The director will be in contact with the Reading Police and Fire Department until the disaster is over.

### **Fire**

- Call 911
- Evacuate children from the building.



- Attendance (face to name recognition) making sure the number corresponds with the children present before they leave and when they get to the site. Clipboards with emergency numbers will be brought.
- The director will make sure all children are accounted for.
- The director will speak to the Fire Department officer in charge who will determine whether the children can return to the building.
- If the Fire Department declares the building unsafe for the children to return, the parents will be called to pick up their children.

### **In the case of a power outage**

- All efforts will be made to keep the center open and operating.
- The staff will contact the appropriate agency to determine the cause of the outage and how long before it can be corrected.
- If the length of time is undetermined or longer than 2 hours, parents will be notified and the center will close as soon as all the children can be picked up.
- The center will maintain emergency lighting which will operate for a minimum of 2 hours and will maintain a fire detection alarm system with battery backup.
- Meals and snacks will be provided with nonperishable foods during this time.

### **In case of loss of heat**

- The center will remain open as long as the minimum temperature of 65 degrees can be maintained.
- At such point the Director/designee will decide if the sufficient temperature cannot be maintained, parents will be notified of the situation and asked to pick up their child/children.
- The center will remain open until all children have been picked up.

### **In the event of a loss of water**

- The staff will contact the town water department to determine the severity of the situation.
- If the center will be without water for 30 minutes or more, or the town does not know the length of time before the water will be turned on, parents will be notified of the situation and asked to pick up their child.

**Reading Children's Learning Center will remain open as long as a safe condition for the children can be maintained.**

## **Communication**

Please feel free to speak to your child's teacher about any concerns you have or any developments that may occur. The more parents speak to the teacher, the better the teacher can assist your child during the school day. Please let your child's teacher know of any changes that have occurred that may affect your child's mood or behavior (moving, new sibling or other addition to the family, illness, etc.)

We will involve you if we decide to change curriculum and/or assessment practices and will provide any documentation on assessments we use. Assessments will be sensitive to family & cultural values.

RCLC has a monthly newsletter and calendar that will keep you informed about the "goings on". Teachers will also have information posted to keep you informed about the daily schedule and activities planned for your child's classroom. Please check your child's mailbox daily for any information, activities, etc. They are located in each classroom.

## **Progress Reports/ Conferences**

**Infants:** Parents will receive a written progress report every three months.

**Toddlers and Preschool:** Parent will receive a written progress report in December and June. Parents or Teachers may request a conference at this time or any other time during the year. The progress reports will be signed by the parent and a copy will be kept in the child's file.

Any child with a Special Education Plan will receive a progress report every 3 months.

**Parent Visits:** Parents or guardians have the right to visit the center any time your child is present without disruption to the program.

**Children's Records** – Children's files are kept confidential and access is limited to RCLC staff and governing agencies. Any additional request for your child's records will require written parental request. You are entitled to have access your child's records at reasonable times on request. You have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's records. You also have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record.

**Transfer of Records** – When your child is no longer in care, a copy of your child's record will be given to you or any other person you identify upon your written request.

**Charge for copies** – RCLC may charge a reasonable fee for copies of any information in your child's records.

Parents may also contact the Regional Office of the Department of Early Education and Care regarding the program's regulatory compliance history. Contact information as follows:

**Department of Early Education and Care**  
**360 Merrimack St. Bldg. 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**  
**Lawrence, MA 01843**  
**Tel.: 978-681-9684**

**Reading Children's Learning Center**

**Parent handbook sign off sheet**

**SCHOOL YEAR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I have received and read the Parent Handbook from Reading Children's Learning Center and agree to abide by all policies.**

**PRINT NAME OF PARENT**

**OR GUARDIAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT**

**OR GUARDIAN:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINTED NAME OF DIRECTOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_