

The Clifton School Parent Handbook



We know the field of early childhood education and development, but you know your child best. Let us share our knowledge with you as you share yours with those of us who surround your child daily. As partners, we can provide quality care as we nurture and facilitate social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. We are here for the sole purpose of serving the best interests of children. With open lines of communication we will be a strong team!

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Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education

The educational philosophy of the Reggio Emilia schools in Italy is recognized around the world as the pre-eminent approach to early childhood education. The Clifton School participates in a series of professional development programs to understand this philosophy and implement it in the classroom. Parents, teachers and children are involved in shaping the program to adapt the strengths of these concepts to our North American context. Working together we can enjoy the excitement of exploration and collaboration that characterize the Reggio Emilia schools.

These are some of the fundamental principles of the Reggio philosophy that inspires us:

- Each child has a strong personal identity and possesses a great learning potential which is recognized and nurtured by educators.
- Teachers are considered researchers in this learning process. They observe, question and interact with the children as they learn and this interaction informs their practice.
- Parents are an integral part of this educational process. The collaboration of parents, children and teachers creates this learning community.
- As children's work progresses, teachers document it and reflect upon it. They share this documentation with the parents, children and community to help enrich and extend the study.
- Children use many "languages" to express their ideas and to explore their world. These languages include symbolic and artistic means, such as drawing, sculpting, painting, dramatizing and making music.
- Creativity is emphasized in the program and incorporated in all aspects of learning.
- The learning environment contributes to the child's experience by providing a rich visual backdrop, along with invitations to explore and communicate discoveries.

The Clifton School welcomes children and their families to our homelike environment – one that is comfortable, naturally lighted and stimulating. We appreciate this opportunity to be a part of your child's lifelong learning process.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

The Clifton School serves the employees of Emory University (including Emory Hospital), Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC) and full time Emory students. The purpose of the school is to provide state of the art growth and development opportunities and to foster a sense of community among the families we serve. The school is licensed for operation by the State of Georgia and can accommodate 216 children at each of two sites.

The Clifton School is a non-profit corporation managed by a Board of Directors composed of representatives from Emory, CHOA and the CDC. The Director operates the school on a daily basis.

The Clifton School operates from two physical sites – the Clairmont site and the Clifton site. Each site has a director and an assistant director. The centers share a Reggio Coordinator who helps ensure that our early childhood professionals provide child focused learning experiences. The Executive Director (housed at the Clifton site) answers to the Board of Directors and serves as the primary liaison between parents and board members. The Executive Director at Clifton and the Director at Clairmont are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the schools. The Administrative Director, Reggio Coordinator, Assistant Directors and Administrative Assistants serve as support staff for both schools. Among other administrative duties, the Directors act as points of contact for the parents, Board of Directors, and school staff members.

The classes for children are organized into four villages at each site – an infant, toddler I, toddler II and preschool village. The infant and toddler villages each have four classrooms that share a common piazza. The preschool village has six classes that share a common piazza. Each classroom is staffed with two full-time teachers and an afternoon assistant. Each site has floating teachers and part-time teachers to provide coverage when teachers are out on leave, lunch breaks, planning time, or staff development.

Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, teachers in the infant and toddler villages will move up with their groups of children each spring in order to maintain continuity of the relationships that develop between children and caregivers. As children move up to the Preschool Village, Toddler II teachers will cycle back down to the Infant Village to start over with a new group of young infants. Preschool classes are multiage, serving three through five year olds. Care is taken to keep groups together from year to year whenever possible.

In the absence of the Director, the chain of command is:

- Assistant Director
- Business Manager
- Administrative Assistant
- Senior Classroom Teacher

The Clifton School is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that learning is natural and that it begins at birth. Young children learn best through play. Play is children's work. Through play experiences, children have the chance to gain meaning from their environment, to construct and refine stories about their world. Play as a vehicle for learning

becomes even more powerful as children interact with concrete, three-dimensional objects and as they engage in pretending—assuming the adult roles that are modeled for them everyday.

We follow the principles of developmentally appropriate practice as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These principles address the pattern and organization of the child's development and characteristic behaviors displayed by children at the various ages/levels of their growth. Further, these principles are based on the concept that the child's development unfolds in a more or less sequential fashion. Skills and concepts build upon one another to produce new and more refined skills and concepts. Offering children experiences that are appropriate for their particular developmental level gives them practice with their current skills and abilities and gently challenges them to perform at a higher level. The following are specific developmental principles on which our program is based:

Developmental rates differ among individuals.

Development usually follows predictable patterns.

Development follows an uneven growth pattern. Children may develop more quickly in some areas than in others.

Development proceeds from general to specific.

Development proceeds from simple to complex.

Development proceeds from dependence to independence -- from helplessness toward ability to manage one's own life.

Development proceeds in stages.

As children develop new abilities, they are highly motivated to practice them.

We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to be WELL-ROUNDED. Attention to ALL the developmental areas is key to a happy early childhood. Accordingly, we recognize the importance of providing experiences that facilitate social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development. As educators we consider the whole child when designing learning environments and constructing curricula. The best way to prepare children for kindergarten and future school careers is to help them feel confident, well rounded and well grounded.

ATTENDANCE AT THE CENTER

The center is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 am – 6:30 pm. For your child's well being we ask that you arrange your schedule so that he/she is not in the center more than 10-hours per day. Breakfast is served from 8:30 to 9:00. Children arriving after 9:00 will need to be fed prior to their arrival. Please wash your child's hands thoroughly upon arrival.

HOLIDAYS/OPERATING HOURS

The Clifton School is open year round except for New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, and Christmas. When a holiday occurs on a Saturday, we observe it on Friday. Likewise, a holiday occurring on Sunday will be celebrated the following Monday. Two additional days will be reserved for Teacher Work Days in spring and fall. Typically these will be Veteran's & President's Days. We also close for the four days following Memorial Day weekend. This week gives us time to prepare for the beginning of the new school year, which is the first full week of June.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

During times of inclement weather, the school will be open. It will be staffed by as many employees as possible, depending on the number of employees who can overcome the weather conditions to come in to work.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In the case of any emergency situation or school closing, you will receive a message from the calling post or you may call the school offices.

(Clairmont Site 404-315-6340; Clifton Site 404-636-4073)

YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULE

Young children rely on the routines of their day to provide stability and predictability in their lives. One very important routine is their arrival and departure time at the school. As your work permits, it is preferable to have approximately the same arrival and departure time each day. If changes occur for any reason, such as a change in work schedule, visits from grandparents, or illness in the family, please talk about the changes with your child and your child's teacher.

TRANSITION BEHAVIOR

Changes are often unsettling for young children...and adults as well. When a child first comes to the school, he/she may be uncomfortable with the new surroundings. Your child may cry or display other signs of unhappiness when being brought to the school. Many parents find separating from their children difficult as well.

Take heart! This transitional behavior is a way of coping with change, and usually disappears in a couple of weeks. Once the child settles into the classroom and gets to know the teachers and the other children, smiles and laughter take the place of tears.

Another point to remember is that displays of unhappiness are usually confined to the time of separation from the parent. Typically, several minutes after the parent leaves, the child cheers up and gets down to the business of playing and having fun. Hopefully, parents will realize that their child's unhappiness is temporary. Monitors are available in the Director's office to allow you to observe your child's classroom and see how your child is doing.. Call us if you are worried about how your child is doing. We will connect you with the classroom or check on your child and call you back.

Trust us to recognize and deal with separation anxieties and accompanying behaviors. We provide extra "TLC" to help children settle into the classroom routine as soon as possible. We will use all the techniques at our disposal, and invite your suggestions for helping your child adjust to school.

PARENT/CENTER COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to let us know what is on your mind! The Director and Assistant are available to you to discuss any matter. Of course, your child's teacher will usually be able to answer questions about classroom activities and interactions. You may also be able to obtain information from the Parent Council Representative in your child's classroom. The important point is that your input is valued.

Your phone calls to the school are welcomed. If your call is of a routine nature, please leave a message and one of the teachers will return the phone call between activities, during breaks or at naptime. If the phone call is an emergency or related to time-sensitive issues, please tell the receptionist and you will be connected with the classroom immediately. If you are worried about your child's well being, don't hesitate to call; we will route your call directly to the classroom.

Many problems arise because of miscommunication and can be resolved by talking to the teacher. We strive to build a positive parent teacher partnership for the benefit of your child.

Staff are available on a daily basis to talk informally with parents. Formal parent teacher conferences are held two times per year. We are happy to accommodate additional conferences if needed.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the concern with your classroom teacher.
2. If you are not satisfied after talking to your child's teacher, make an appointment with the director or assistant director at your site.
3. For Clairmont site parents, if your concerns are not satisfied, make an appointment with the Executive Director.
4. If your concerns are not satisfactorily resolved, submit your complaint in writing (within 10 working days) to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board will be final.

TUITION

Please see the tuition schedule for the breakdown of fees and subsidy information. As stated in the tuition schedule, the fees for childcare at The Clifton School are paid through payroll deduction (Emory and CHOA), or Credit Union (CDC). Tuition is due each week during the entire period of a child's enrollment including holidays and teacher workdays. Because our staff and operational expenses continue, we cannot refund tuition for days your child misses because of illness or family vacations. Tuition covers the provision of childcare and learning experiences as set forth in the curriculum of the school, as well as two meals and a snack. Milk is provided with the meals. Meals for infants consist of baby food and strained and/or mashed food. We provide one brand of formula for infants. Parents choosing not to use this formula must provide their own. Parents must also provide diapers and wipes for infants and young children not yet toilet-trained.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL

Program activities at The Clifton School are designed to meet the needs of children for educational experiences within a group setting. If, after a reasonable period of time, a child is unable to adjust to a group setting, or the school is unable to meet a child or family's special needs, the family may be asked to withdraw the child. If such a situation arises, the school will assist the family in finding more appropriate child care arrangements.

A written four-week notice (with tuition) is required of parents wishing to voluntarily withdraw children from the program. This gives us an opportunity to offer the space to a child on the waiting list.

THE TEACHING STAFF

Each class has two Full Time Teachers. Many of them have a BA degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field, while others have substantial work toward such a degree. They also have previous teaching experience in a childcare setting. All have a minimum of a Child Development Associate credential or are working toward that credential.

Part-time Assistant Teachers round out the teaching staff. All teachers participate in extensive training in all areas of child development and family involvement.

The school may use volunteers from time to time to enrich the experience of the children or help in the school office. A member of the school teaching staff always supervises volunteers.

All staff members and all volunteers working with the children must have a criminal records check. The director and assistant must also have a fingerprint check through the FBI. Additionally, all employees must receive positive recommendations from persons listed as their professional references. All staff receive training in child abuse awareness.

To keep the staff updated on all relevant information related to caring for young children, the school offers many in-service training workshops. Attendance at these workshops is mandatory. The administration also makes frequent classroom observations and evaluates the staff in writing on a regular basis.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

The Clifton School provides childcare for children six weeks to 5 years of age, including children who are 5 years old after the September 1 cut off for public school.

NAEYC Teacher/Child ratios are maintained at all periods of the day except for naptime, breaks, and teacher planning. They are as follows:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Teacher/Child Ratio</u>	<u>Maximum Class Size</u>
Infants	1/4	8
Toddler Ones	1/5	10
Toddler Twos	1/6	12
Threes - Fives (Preschool)	1/8:10	16/20

Typically children in a class advance together to the next level during the early summer. However, children may be moved during other times of the year under rare circumstances. Because we recognize and value the important friendships among children, we endeavor to move groups of children together. The move from one classroom to another will be planned with input from parents and teachers; the administrative staff makes the final placement decisions.

WAITING LIST POLICY FOR SIBLINGS

As our families at Clifton grow, the need to find space for a sibling often becomes a reality. Clifton attempts to keep families together. Therefore, siblings of children currently enrolled are given priority for enrollment, when an appropriate space becomes available. We keep a separate Priority Waiting List for siblings, which means siblings are listed ahead of new applicants. We add students to this list as applications are submitted and the application fees are received.

Most often the sibling is an infant. A quality environment for children is one in which care is consistent. We attempt at Clifton to maintain as consistent an environment as possible. We normally move children to a new room once a year during the first week of June. This means that most spaces in the infant room will be available at that time. If your need for infant care falls after June 1, there is the option to enroll and pay tuition beginning the first week of June to hold a space until you are ready. Otherwise, it may be a matter of finding some temporary care until a space becomes available. Historically we have very few infant spaces open up during the year, but a few do occur. It is the parents' responsibility to check with the Clifton office regarding the likelihood of upcoming available spaces. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to come by the office or call.

NUTRITION

Notify the school Administration and your child's teacher of any food allergies and/or dietary restrictions when you enroll.

All children are provided with planned nutritional meals and afternoon snacks. Breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. (depending on the child's age). The afternoon snack is available when naptime is over.

We recognize the importance of sound nutrition for growing children. Meals contain a nutritionally balanced variety of foods. Children are encouraged, but not forced to try various kinds of fruits, vegetables, breads and protein sources. We try to serve healthy foods that appeal to children.

We also recognize that some children may be unable to eat certain foods due to allergies and/or dietary restrictions. Vegetarian menus are routinely available. We will work with families to meet special dietary needs whenever possible.

We provide one brand of formula for infants. Parents who require another formula must provide their own mixed, labeled, dated and ready to serve. The school provides water and whole milk when the child is able to make the change from formula. Infants are served baby food and then strained or mashed food.

Children are encouraged to feed and serve themselves as soon as possible. This brings particular delight to their mealtime experience and strengthens their self-help skills. This may mean that mealtime is very messy, but certainly worth the trouble from a developmental standpoint.

Menus for meals and snacks are posted each month. By reading these menus on a regular basis, you will have a clear idea of what your child is eating - or at least what he/she is being offered!

Feel free to discuss the menu or the nutritional value of the foods served with the Director. In response to serious allergies, we maintain a nut-free environment. Nuts and nut products are not allowed in the building or on the playground.

NUT POLICY

The Clifton School is a nut-free school. If you are bringing food into the classroom for special celebrations or projects, PLEASE make sure you carefully read the label to check for any ingredients that may contain nuts. Many – seemingly—innocuous products actually do contain nuts. For example, some products that contain nuts but are often overlooked include some types of chili, gravy, chocolate candies, cereals, protein bars, salad dressings, cosmetics, hamster food, bird food and dog food.

Be sure to read food labels for these nut-and-peanut-based ingredients before bringing them to school: arachis, artificial nuts, boullion, emulsified ingredients, food additive 322 (lecithin), hydrolyzed vegetable protein; lecithins, mandelonas, and marzipan (almond paste).

Our nut policy includes not only peanuts but also ALL tree nuts (such as walnuts, acorns, almonds, cashews, and pecans), sunflower seeds and sesame seeds. However, we do not exclude products with labels that say the product may have been processed in a plant with nuts and therefore may contain traces of peanuts.

If you serve nut products to your children prior to arriving at school, please check to make sure your children have washed their hands and that they do not have trace pieces of nuts on their clothes or body.

Many severe allergic reactions occur in children who were previously undiagnosed with an allergy. Therefore, it is imperative that we avoid nuts and nut products altogether at the school. Universal “Allergy” Precautions: **Treat all children as potential carriers of allergies.**

If you would like more information, we have handouts at both centers and there are several informative websites that you can visit:

www.foodallergy.org

www.healthy-kids.info

www.nih.gov

If you have a child with allergies, your responsibilities are to:

1. Notify the school of the child’s allergies.
2. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician. (Food Allergy Action Plan must be completed.)
3. Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or upon expiration.
4. Educate the classroom teachers about your child’s food allergies including safe and unsafe foods; strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods, symptoms of allergic reactions; how to read food labels; procedures to take after a reaction has occurred.
5. Work out an agreement with the teachers about whether your child can have any outside food.
6. Review policies/procedures with the school staff periodically.
7. Provide updated emergency contact information to classroom teachers and administration.

The Clifton School responsibilities include:

1. All permanent staff (full-time and part-time) will watch “The Food Allergy and Anaphylactic Network DVD” and practice using the EpiPen during their orientation.
2. All permanent staff will review and be familiar with the school’s nut policy, the best ways to prevent and deal with allergies, and the school’s emergency response protocol for allergic reactions.
3. The classroom teachers will post your child’s picture with allergies on the classroom parent

board, lunch tray, and food prep area.

4. The classroom teachers will post allergy signs on the classroom door.
5. The teachers will keep the EpiPens in a secure and readily available designated spot—most likely the red evacuation bag and will make sure that the EpiPen is always in reach during classroom outings.
6. The classroom teachers will share any pertinent allergy information including each child’s “Food Allergy Action Plan” with all substitutes and part-time staff in their classroom.
7. The administrative assistant will inform substitutes and temporary part-time staff about our allergy policies and procedures.
8. In the event that a nut product is accidentally brought to the school, the item will be immediately taken to the outside dumpster and the area of exposure will be immediately washed with soap, water, and bleach.
9. The administration will send out periodic reminders to parents and teachers (such as prior to Harvest Festival) that we are a “nut-free” school.

CLOTHING

Children are to wear comfortable, washable clothes in which they can play freely. During various play and learning activities, children will get dirty. Children should not be afraid to participate for fear of getting their clothes dirty. Each child needs to bring an extra set of clothing, including underwear, to be used as needed. Check to make sure your child’s extra clothing is seasonally appropriate. All children’s clothing must be labeled. Use a laundry or permanent marker for labeling.

All children, except infants, must wear shoes at school. Rubber-sole shoes that close over the top of the foot with ties, buckles, or Velcro straps are the best for play at the school. Slip on shoes such as flip-flops, clogs or cros without straps are not appropriate for outdoor play. If your child insists on wearing slip-on shoes, please bring a pair of sturdy shoes (tennis shoes or other closed toed shoes) and socks to keep in the cubby for outside play.

In cold weather, children must have suitable outer garments to ensure their comfort and safety when playing outdoors. A coat or jacket, hat and gloves are recommended.

Parents provide diapers for children not yet toilet-trained. During toilet training, 5 pairs of training pants and 3 changes of clothes must be sent each day. After the child is toilet-trained, one or two extra pairs of underwear should be kept at the school for occasional “accidents”.

PERSONAL ITEMS AT THE CENTER

Your child may bring:

- A sheet, blanket and naptime cuddle toy for rest-time. These items help provide security and the familiarity of home.
- Objects from nature that the child has found while at home (for instance, fall leaves, flowers or

pine cones). Such items may be shared with the class and used to provide rich connections between home and school experiences.

- Extra clothing - how much will depend on the age and developmental level of the child. Please discuss the amount of extra clothing with your child's teacher.
- Books from home. Give the books to the teacher upon arrival and the teacher will find a time to read them during the day.

Please do not send:

- Toys from home. Children feel very possessive of their own toys so it is most difficult to share them in a classroom. Toys brought from home often bring about great unpleasantness in the classroom. The center is not responsible for any lost or broken toy. The only exception to this would be a teacher planned "show and share" activity for a few children at a time.
- Special costumes or outfits (unless requested by the teacher). These garments restrict the child's ability to play and engage in the usual classroom activities.
- Candy, chewing gum, sweets of any kind.
- Nuts or nut products.
- Money (unless designated for a specific purpose such as a special class project or field trip).
- Jewelry. Jewelry is easily lost, broken, or the focus of arguments among children. It can also be dangerous. Children are not permitted to wear necklaces, scarves, pacifiers or other items around their neck (pacifiers may not be attached to clothing).
- Videos not related to class studies and investigations.

HEALTH POLICIES

Exposure to many contagious diseases is a normal part of childhood. The most common illnesses are associated with the upper respiratory system and the gastrointestinal system. Infants and toddlers are particularly vulnerable to some diseases because certain components of their general immune system are not fully developed.

In an effort to manage and prevent the spread of disease, the state requires us to keep on file children's immunization records and regular updates. Parents are expected to stay current with their child's immunizations and to observe strictly the Health Policies. The parents should report instances of exposure or illness to the school administrative staff and take appropriate action when symptoms of illness have been identified.

The state requires that children with fevers over 100 axillary (101 orally) and another symptom such as sore throat, diarrhea, rash, etc. must not be allowed to attend the school. In this instance, the parent must pick up the child. Fever is defined as temperature over 100 degrees axillary (101 degrees orally).

Temperature will be checked if the child shows signs of illness, such as listlessness, flushed cheeks, discomfort, pain or pulling at the ears. At times children can have no fever, but still exhibit other signs of illness and can find it difficult to be in a group situation. You may also be called to pick up your child in this instance.

A child with any communicable disease must not attend the school during the contagious period.

The school administrators must report some communicable diseases to the DeKalb County Health Department. Parents in the ill child's class must also be notified.

Children must have a note from their pediatrician to return to the school when they have had any type of reportable communicable disease.

In addition to the restrictions cited above, The Clifton School follows The American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendations for excluding children from school, which is:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- The illness results in greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Any child with diarrhea of unknown origin should not attend the school. Children who develop diarrhea at the school need to be picked up by their parents. Diarrhea is defined as loose stools of large volume and/or abnormal frequency.
- Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores associated with the inability of the child to control saliva, unless the child's physician states the child is not infectious.
- Pink or red eyes with white or yellow discharge that may indicate conjunctivitis, unless checked by a physician and cleared for readmission.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment is initiated.
- Children with impetigo or skin sores must have sores completely covered when attending the school. Parents must present evidence that the child is being treated for the skin sores.
- Head lice, until the child has been treated and all nits are gone. Pediatrician certifies that they are totally free from infection.
- Scabies, until after final treatment.
- Ringworm infection, until 24 hours after treatment has begun and infection must be covered.

- Pertussis, until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- Chicken Pox, until sixth day after onset of rash or when lesions have dried and crusted.
- Children with a BAD COLD should not attend the school. A bad cold has some or all of the following symptoms:
 - heavily running nose, colored mucus - frequent coughing
 - runny eyes
 - hoarseness
 - general listlessness

An isolation/sick room is provided (the administration offices). Children who are ill or injured at the school may be taken to this room until their parents can pick them up. Parents should arrive within an hour of the initial call. One of the administrative staff will stay with and comfort the child until the parent arrives. When a parent is unavailable by phone the center will contact the next person listed on the emergency card.

Any changes in a child's behavior that may indicate the onset of illness will be reported to the parents by the staff.

PROCEDURE FOR MEDICATION

The staff person working at the front desk administers medicine. Staff can administer no medication unless the Medication Authorization Form is filled out completely. ALL medicine-prescriptions and over-the-counter medications must be:

- In original container
- Labeled with the following information:
 - Child's first and last name clearly marked
 - Name of the health professional that prescribed the medication, or a note from the health care provider recommending the over-the-counter medicine
 - Date prescription was filled and prescription number (if prescription)
 - Expiration date
 - Specific instructions for giving, storing and disposing of medication from the health professional (instructions for over-the-counter may be faxed in)
- Authorization for medicine can be for no longer than two weeks
- Medication will be administered at 11:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m.
- In case of adverse medical reactions, parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, staff will call the emergency numbers listed on the enrollment application. If the situation is critical, we will call 911

NOTE: We encourage parents to ask their doctor to prescribe medicines that can be given in 12 hour cycles, if possible, so that medicine can be administered at home and not at the center. Medicine that is to be given only twice a day will not be dispensed twice at the center. Therefore, please choose a time at home to dispense the medicine and another time (11:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m.) for the center.

SMOKE AND DRUG FREE ENVIRONMENT

We provide a smoke and drug free environment for the health and safety of our children and staff. No one is permitted to smoke or use tobacco products on the premises. Having or using drugs or alcohol

is not permitted.

WATER MAKES YOU SMARTER

Research demonstrates that water enhances brain alertness. Please bring a small plastic drinking bottle with a straw and a cap that can be labeled and kept at the center. This will allow your child to have water available at all times.

INSURANCE

The Clifton School carries secondary insurance to pay for expenses should your child be involved in an accident while attending school. A secondary policy means that you must first file with your personal insurance carrier and then submit an “EOB” to the schools insurance carrier. If you have a claim, contact our administrative director.

OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

Health experts are unanimous on the importance of fresh air, and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. If a child is well enough to be in the school, the child is generally assumed to be well enough to go outside. Except in extreme weather, children play outside every day. Please be sure to send appropriate clothing so your child will be comfortable. Exposure to the cold, when appropriately dressed, does not cause illness; it actually kills germs that cause illness.

What if a parent asks that their child stay indoors? We usually have to say no. While we would like to individualize, staff-child ratios rarely allow us to stay with one or two children while the group goes outside. It is difficult for the staff to try to find another classroom for the child and going into another room makes some children uncomfortable.

We monitor outdoor play based on recommendation from the Clean Air Campaign. In “code orange” we go outside for a short period of time, but do NOT engage in strenuous play. In “code red” we will not go outside.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When emergencies occur, the teacher immediately notifies an administrator or the designated “Person in Charge” at the school. This individual will carry out any needed triage activities and will coordinate and oversee all related activities. In the case of a “life threatening” emergency the administrator or designee will call 911 for emergency transportation to Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. Parents will be contacted, informed of the actions being taken, and asked to contact the child’s pediatrician, in the event that the pediatrician wants to meet the child at the hospital. In the event of any other emergency, parents will be contacted.

Upon enrollment, parents are required to sign a form giving the school permission to follow the above medical procedures. It is important to maintain a current list of work and cell phone numbers as well as at least two contacts outside the immediate family should parents be unavailable by phone.

For general emergencies the school does have lockdown procedures and evacuation procedures. Children and teachers practice fire drills so that they become very familiar with evacuation procedures and are less likely to panic or be alarmed if a true emergency occurs.

INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

When accommodations make it possible, children with special needs are included at The Clifton School. These children have the opportunity to share learning experiences with their peers, and including them fosters compassion and acceptance. We see all our differences as a means for teaching interdependence and tolerance.

COMMUNICATION OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

Staff and parents should communicate with each other daily regarding any symptoms that may suggest a medical problem. Staff and parents should communicate with each other regarding injuries sustained at home or at school.

Staff will contact the parent in the case of illness (as defined by the school's health policies) or injury that may require medical evaluation. Parents will need to pick up these children as soon as possible.

Any instance of suspected child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) must be reported to the appropriate state agency as prescribed by Georgia law. A copy of this law is displayed in our lobby.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS TAKEN BY THE CENTER

Staff members are required to have health examinations to verify that they have the good health and vitality to work with young children. Staff members must wash their hands after changing diapers, assisting children in the bathroom, and before handling food. Children routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

Each infant has his/her own crib with cleaned and sanitized sheets and linens.

Each child older than 12 months needs to bring a sheet and blanket for his/her sleeping mat. These linens should be sent home each Friday for washing.

Toys in the infant and toddler classrooms are sanitized daily. Toys in the preschool are sanitized weekly.

Staff members are trained in First Aid, CPR and recognition and reporting of child abuse. There is a primary first aid kit in the copy room and additional supplies in each classroom.

Emergency telephone numbers are available in the school office and are posted on each telephone.

The parent must escort children into the school and out of the school. Staff members will make sure parents wash children's hands upon arrival each morning. Parents must update enrollment information as changes occur.

SECURITY

Because of the world we live in, we must be very security conscious at The Clifton School. Our primary point of security is the front door. There is a camera monitoring the school entrance. Parents must walk their children in each morning and pick them up in the classroom each evening. Parents are issued a fob to unlock the front door. If you do not use your fob to unlock the front door, please be prepared to show identification to the receptionist. Children are released only to persons authorized on the parent emergency information form. They will be asked to show a picture ID if they do not have a fob. Please be patient with the extra time it may take to exercise these precautions. If you are planning to have your child picked up by someone the teacher has not met, please inform the teacher when you drop your child off or call the school before evening pick up. Changes to the authorized pick up list

must be made in writing. Staff members wear name badges so they are easily recognizable. We photograph substitutes and tape their pictures to the doors of the assigned classrooms. Let us know if you have any concerns about security.

INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS

Because the school acts as a family support system and because it is located in close proximity to parents' places of employment, there are numerous opportunities for parents to be involved with the school. Parents are welcome at the school at any time, and their participation is always appreciated.

The children's' experience at the school is best when the school staff and the parents are a team which communicates well and often. Beyond regular communication with the teacher and other school staff, there are many ways for parents to participate in school activities:

Membership on the Parents' Council (Joint Council for Both Sites)

This Council is a committee of parents who are interested in contributing their time to the school. Any parent can join the Parent Council. Each classroom is represented on this Council. The purpose of this Council is to provide a vehicle for parents' input on issues relating to the school and to coordinate parent participation in school projects and activities. The proposed calendar of Parent Council sponsored events will be distributed at orientation.

Visitation at the School

Parents are invited to visit the school at any time. Parents may choose to have lunch with their child. Parents may want to visit the classroom and read a book to the children or help facilitate a learning activity.

Making or gathering materials for the classroom

Many classroom activities require materials that are made by the teachers. Help from parents in this area is greatly needed and appreciated! For instance, a math readiness game using the flannel board may require 20 leaves cut from felt. A parent who volunteers to prepare these leaves is helping the teacher a great deal.

Working on a project team

These teams implement a school activity such as the Harvest Festival or the Annual Spring Fling. Find out more about these teams from your parent council representative.

Nursing Mothers

Nursing mothers may come to the school to feed their infants. We hope that nursing mothers will take advantage of the school's close proximity to their work place. Mothers may choose to nurse their infants in the privacy of one of the "quiet rooms" or remain in the classroom.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special events in the life of each child. We certainly want to share in the celebration if that is the wish of the family. However, we believe that the celebration should be as simple as possible. Please let the teacher know if you want to celebrate your child's birthday at the school and let the teacher know if you will be able to attend. The class will recognize the birthday by giving the child special attention. If you want to provide refreshments, please bring enough to serve all the

children. We prefer that refreshments be low in sugar. Please check all ingredients and make sure the refreshments are nut-free.

Please do not bring party favors. Latex balloons are known choking hazards and a major cause of eye injuries. We cannot allow them at school.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY TRADITION

Because birthdays are a special time of celebration and giving, we have a special birthday tradition at the school. On the occasion of your child's birthday, you may want to have your child give a book to his/her class. The book should be inscribed with the child's name and birth date. By giving this book, your child will be sharing the birthday celebration with the class in a way that can be enjoyed by everyone. Your child will feel special each time the book is read or shown to the class.

SPECIAL FAMILY TIMES

Please let us know about special times in your family, such as the birth of a sibling, a visit from grandparents, a move to a new house or special trips. By knowing about these times of excitement, change and wonder, we will be able to incorporate family experiences into the child's life at the school.

REST TIME

Young children who are growing and playing vigorously need to rest each day.

Infants sleep in their cribs according to their individual schedules. To prevent SIDS, infants are placed on their backs to sleep. Blankets when needed are tucked into the mattress to prevent tangling or smothering. We must have a note signed by the child's physician in order to place an infant on his or her stomach to sleep.

Children over the age of 12 months will have a rest time immediately following their lunch. Children rest on mats. Each child has a sheet and blanket brought from home, and any naptime "loveys" that help provide security. The duration of the rest period depends on the age level of the children. Younger children typically need a longer rest time than the older ones.

Preschoolers are beginning to read their internal cues of sleepiness and are learning to self-regulate their timing for sleep. Teachers should not be asked to keep a child awake or make them sleep at naptime. According to the National Sleep Foundation, restricting naps will not help a child sleep better at night. Quite the opposite – it can lead to overtiredness and more sleep problems. However, a child who's learned to fall asleep on his or her own will experience less sleep difficulties and will learn how to return to sleep at night without help from adults. Therefore, teachers will provide a consistent, calming naptime where children are encouraged to sleep or rest quietly on their mats. Music of various types will be played, as well as recorded stories.

TOILET TRAINING

Your child will let you know in many ways when he/she is ready to begin toilet training. We are glad to help your child make this important leap toward independence. You will need to bring 5 pairs of training pants and 3 changes of clothes each day during the training process. Training pants are extra thick and absorbent. We discourage the use of pull-ups as they typically prolong the toilet learning process.

The procedure for toilet training at the school typically takes place in the two-year-old classrooms. Children are introduced to the small toilets by watching their classmates in the bathroom. Classmates are praised for using the toilet, and the “trainee” is then invited to use it. Encouragement and praise from the teachers, coupled with sharing the experience with a classmate, usually make the process easier.

The child’s inability or unwillingness to use the toilet for elimination is referred to as an “accident” and treated in a matter-of-fact sort of way. Children are never humiliated or punished for having an “accident.” We recognize that toilet training takes time and we do not rush the process. Clothes soiled during any accident are not washed at school. They are bagged and sent home.

We know that children learn about their bodies and sexual differences in the same way they learn other information – in a simple, gradual and natural way. Therefore, children use the bathroom together regardless of sex. If or when a child begins to request privacy, it will be honored.

Toilet training can be a time of concern for parents. We urge parents to share their ideas about the method of toilet training they prefer. A partnership approach usually makes the whole process easier and shorter in duration.

HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Staff use correct names for body parts and bodily functions with children of all ages: penis, vagina, breast, bowel movement and urine.
- We answer children’s questions about their bodies and about reproduction as simply and clearly as possible. We do not volunteer additional sexual information.
- As much as possible we try to complement and support what parents say to their children at home to help them develop healthy attitudes about their bodies that promote positive adult sexuality.
- We gently and clearly redirect typical sexual behavior (playing “doctor”, removing clothing, masturbation) and involve the children in more appropriate activities.
- We never use shame, guilt, or punishment to stop children from exploring sexual behaviors or language.
- We teach children the differences between “good touch” and “bad touch” as appropriate. E empower them to stop or get a teacher to stop anyone from touching them in a way that they do not like, or that is in a place a bathing suit would cover.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE POLICY

We want to look at the positive side of the children’s behavior. We want to build our relationships with them through nurturing and positive attention. To this end, we organize the children’s day to promote appropriate behavior. We set up the classroom equipment and materials to facilitate positive play and social experiences. The activities offered to the children are appropriate for their developmental level. We use our knowledge of developmental principles to give us reasonable and appropriate expectations for each child’s behavior.

One of the most important ways to guide children’s behavior is to give them the skills to manage their own behavior. Primarily, we teach children to use WORDS to express themselves rather than inappropriate actions or gestures. Helping children learn to use language as the primary tool for

handling conflict is one of the greatest gifts we can offer our children.

Of course, there will be times when children behave inappropriately. In these instances, the teachers will use positive reinforcement, redirection and discussion to handle the misbehavior. There may be times when a child needs a short time away from the current activity to calm down, but this is not viewed as a punishment or “time-out”... just a time we all sometimes need to regroup and reframe our responses.

Children are NEVER hit, humiliated or frightened as a form of punishment. Food is never withheld as a form of punishment.

Please feel free to discuss our behavior management policy with your child’s teacher, the Director or the Assistant Director. This is your child’s place, and we want to make all his/her experiences as positive and meaningful as possible.

BITING

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers are often unable to communicate effectively with words and may sometimes bite another child. Periodically, in even the best childcare program, outbreaks of biting occur. When this happens, it can be frightening, frustrating, and very stressful for children, parents and teachers alike. But, however unfortunate, biting is a natural phenomenon, not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers. It is a disturbing stage some children go through. It has virtually no lasting developmental significance. A child who bites is not on a path toward being a discipline problem. Unfortunately, there are no quick and easy solutions.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: the simple sensory exploration of babies, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or the intense desire for a toy or the attention of the teacher. Children often bite because they lack the language skills to communicate what they need. Some children become “stuck” for a while in a biting stage and it is frustrating for the parents of victims that we are unable to “fix” the child quickly or have them removed from their child’s classroom.

We accept responsibility for biting and other hurtful acts and for protecting all children. We recognize our responsibility to provide a safe setting where no child needs to hurt another to achieve his or her ends. We make every attempt to prevent a child from being bitten. Once teachers become aware that a child is in a biting stage, they try to stay close to that child to prevent continual biting. It may not always be possible for us to prevent an injury. At some point your child may be bitten or may bite another child. We treat the wound and notify you on our medical response form. Biting incidents are confidential. We cannot inform you of the child who bit your child. If a child is frequently a biting victim we encourage that child to say “No, Stop, Leave me alone” in order to help prevent injury.

BABYSITTING POLICY

Arrangements made for private sitting are between the individual and the family and are outside the responsibility of The Clifton School. We do not endorse or recommend individuals beyond their work in our supervised setting. Please refrain from asking teachers who baby-sit for you about children, families, or other teachers.

FIELD TRIPS

Because opportunities extend beyond the classroom into the community, the older children go on field trips from time to time. These field trips offer the children a chance to visit places and participate in

events that interest them and expand their knowledge. Often, children take field trips in conjunction with a particular classroom theme or to explore nature.

Teachers accompany children on field trips, and parents are invited to join when they can arrange to do so. For the protection and safety of the children, they will wear badges showing school's name and telephone number.

Teachers schedule the field trips with the Director. Specific permission slips are sent home, along with all the information concerning the field trip. You are encouraged to contact your child's teacher if you have questions about any aspect of a field trip. The school's field trips are generally limited to walks in the area, such as to the Fire Station or Lullwater Park.

PICTURES OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

We want to have a strong tie between home and school so your child will have a better sense of continuity and security. One way to facilitate this is to have an area with pictures of family and friends in each classroom.

Children may bring any pictures they would like to share. The pictures are displayed in full view of the children so they may look at their own pictures and the pictures brought by their classmates. Teachers refer to these important pictures several times during the day.

We welcome you to The Clifton School Family. Our goal is to create a mutual support system with a loving and nurturing atmosphere. We look forward to having you in the Clifton family.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

This program will not discriminate in any of its policies or practices dealing with children and/or families on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, disability or economic status.