



Mile Square Early Learning Center Parent Handbook

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to give each child a warm and safe environment that encourages the development of academic, emotional, social and self regulation skills, which fosters a healthy, independent and strong self image. Our teachers manifest their respect for children by encouraging children to think for themselves, make decisions, work towards their own solutions, and express their own ideas and feelings. To support successful learning, Mile Square encourages an active partnership between home and school.

NON- DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Mile Square Early Learning Center provides services to children and their families regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or family status.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

To provide an organized process to address any questions, concerns, or issues you may have, we ask that you please follow this chain of command:

- **Classroom Teachers:** They can help you answer any questions you may have regarding your child's day, daily schedule, and upcoming events.
- **Family Advocates:** Advocates are assigned to each classroom and can help you with school reminders and events, medical information, and communication throughout the school day while the teacher is with your child.
- **Program Director:** Site directors can help you answer questions about the program, operational decisions, questions related to general school operations, classroom curriculum, or any general concerns you may have.
- **Executive Director:** This director oversees the program across all site locations. She/ He can assist in regards to educational and operational concerns at the highest level for each provider. All questions and concerns regarding programmatic needs, structuring, and safety are best addressed by these directors. The Executive Director is the last step in the Mile Square system. She/ He is responsible for reporting and resolving any issues that cannot be resolved by any of the previous three (3) levels of management. When appropriate, she/ he will report critical issues and/ or information to both the Mile Square Board of Directors and the Hoboken Board Of Education.
- **Hoboken Director of Early Childhood:** Principal Sandra Rodriguez-Gomez has direct oversight of the programmatic aspects of the Early Childhood Education Program. Her lens is reserved for curriculum and the highest of management needs.

THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MILE SQUARE

Mile Square Early Learning Center established in 1979, has offered neighborhood children and their parents daily, dependable and safe early childhood educational experiences. Through the years the notion of child care has changed to reflect developmentally appropriate practices much like the protocols set by the Hoboken Public School District Early Childhood Program. A new level of service is now emerging with parents and educators expecting child care centers to provide educational tools and concepts formerly taught in kindergarten or even first grade. It is no longer acceptable for children to just "*play*". Our parents, like most parents, want the best for their children, but what is really the best? We have found, and educational research has supports the idea, that an individual developmental approach to learning best suits the needs of very young children. We take into consideration that play is the vehicle used by our children to learn complex concepts and skills.

Although we attempt to satisfy the yearnings of the parents, and to meet the public school's expectations, Mile Square continues to implement its programs considering its original philosophy that children learn best through play and hands on activities. We offer two structured curriculums that are research based and developmentally age appropriate.

1. The "Creative Curriculum" is used for children younger than 3 and/or for children in our Infant/ Toddler and Transition Programs.
2. The "Tools of the Mind curriculum", selected by the Hoboken Board of Education, is used for 3 and 4 year olds.

We continue to present an environment that fosters creativity using the resources at hand, and the diversity of the multicultural atmosphere that is both, the Center's and Hoboken's strong point. Opportunities for learning are readily available in such an urban environment, and we utilize them whenever possible. This type of collaborative effort, with other community agencies, has proved very fruitful to our educational philosophy and has enabled our staff to enhance their classroom teaching skills. Our staff is encouraged to continue their education, attend workshops, seminars and training.

We attempt to provide a stimulating environment but also realize that often too much stimulation is as bad as too little. Children today have very hectic lives and busy schedules, in some cases, a child's life may even be chaotic. We try to tone it down by presenting an aesthetically pleasing environment and a selection of age appropriate educational materials, books, and activities.

Our classrooms have a light and airy atmosphere. Colors are subdued and the furniture is meant to encourage children to be active. MSELC has classrooms divided into areas of interest filled with a great deal of books, puzzles, manipulative and concept games. Learning centers are set up to give the children choices. The children are allowed to choose from a variety of interesting activities. We encourage children to choose and use artistic expression and analytical thinking to solve problems. Children have daily opportunities for art with easels, drawing, coloring, pasting, and cutting as well as pre-math and science activities.

- A great amount of time is spent on language development and literacy activities. Children experience poetry and rhyming focusing on pre-reading skills as well as numerous language charts, daily story time, dramatic play and the learning of songs and finger plays. Our focus is on readiness skills for reading and speaking at all age levels so that children about to enter kindergarten are ready for this new challenge, emphasizing the importance of listening, talking, and role modeling for our children.
- The classrooms are "print rich." Everything is labeled. The children's names appear many times in the classroom. We expand verbal capabilities by encouraging children's conversation at Meal Times, Circle Time, and Dramatic Play. Children's work is labeled using their words to express their ideas. Children begin to use language expression to help diffuse anger. Children learn to speak and talk about their feelings.
- Children have many opportunities to enhance math and science skills by using their environment, weather charts, graphs, and surveys. Daily outdoor activities and special trips allow the children to expand their experiences.
- Children playing with blocks teaches balancing, measuring, and geometrics as well as math concepts. Sand and water table play, enables children to learn about pouring, measuring, science etc. Puppets, dolls, housekeeping and dramatic play encourages creativity and develops language skills. All are readiness concepts, and yet they require no flash cards or ditto sheets or drilling children in boring circle time activities. The experience of the staff

at Mile Square enables us to advance the notion that children need guidance but can really teach themselves through an appropriate environment with willing and creative teachers.

Collaboration between parents and staff is needed to help the children learn how to make decisions, regulate their behavior, and prepare them to be successful lifetime learners. The point of early childhood education is to allow each child to develop natural areas of interest and comfortable learning styles.

Most of the Parent Policies are designed to keep our children safe and to ensure that the children receive quality educational services consistent with the program's design. Although these rules may seem inconvenient to us as adults, they have been put in place to protect the integrity of the services your children receive and are consistent with systems put in place to educate very young children.

Our policies reflect the 40 years of experience Mile Square has in the Early Childhood Field; a mixture of mandated regulations produced and revised periodically by the State of NJ's Office of Licensing; and Protocols set by the Hoboken Board of Education for its Early Childhood Program.

We encourage parents to use the program with these following policies in mind so that your child gets the most out of the group process.

The policies are as follows:

1. Getting your child ready for school
2. Hoboken PS Early Childhood Program Drop Off/Arrival Routine & Policy
3. Infant/Toddler Program Drop Off and Pick-Up Policy
4. Policy and Procedure on the Release of Children
5. Reporting Child Absences and Attendance Policy
6. Policy on Sick Children
7. Policy on Administering Medication
8. Procedure on the Management of Communicable Diseases
9. Lice Policy
10. Wrap Information
11. Meals and Food Program
12. Incident and Accident Reports
13. Our Discipline Policy
14. Our Safe Learning Environment Policy
15. Social Media Policy
16. Photo Consent
17. Naptime Policy
18. Our Bathroom Policy
19. Outdoor Activity Policy
20. Fire Drill and Lockdown Procedure
21. Our Policy on Security
22. Loss of Service
23. Reaching Us

1. GETTING YOUR CHILD READY FOR SCHOOL

- **Preschoolers**

Parents must provide labeled fitted sheets and blanket every Monday. Your child's blanket and sheet must go home to wash every Friday and returned clean on Monday. Extra clothes (weather appropriate), underwear and a labeled water bottle should also be provided.

- **Infants and Toddlers**

Please provide: blankets, diapers, baby wipes, 3 bottles, extra clothes and baby ointment.

Things to Leave at Home

Jewelry - Please do not send your child to school wearing jewelry. These items sometimes get tangled or caught on something becoming a safety issue.

Toys - Additionally small items or toys can be dangerous or swallowed and are best left at home. In order to protect your children and their precious items, we ask you to leave these items at home.

In order to provide a cooperative atmosphere in the classroom, we have purchased a full array of age appropriate classroom materials and supplies; therefore, children are not allowed to bring their own toys to school. In addition, we do not accept responsibility for lost or damaged items.

Diapers and Pull Ups

Toileting is an important part of a young child's emerging independence. Positive adult-child interactions and convenient toileting provisions (e.g. child-sized toilets, where available and sinks, accessible soap and paper towels for hand washing) can facilitate self-help skills.

It's okay for children to start the first day of school not potty trained. However, we ask that parents cooperate with their child's teacher in working together to ensure and monitor the progress of the child's toileting independence. Consistency is the key to a smooth transition. If your child is still toilet training, we suggest you provide several changes of clothes, pull-ups, etc.

2. Hoboken PS Early Childhood Program Drop Off/Arrival Routine & Policy

Please understand that even though there is no statewide policy on attendance and lateness, as a provider of this service, we are serious about the education of young children. Our expectation for all children is that they are in school regularly and report in a timely fashion.

However, please keep in mind that children are not permitted into the classroom before their designated time of arrival:

- Morning Care (WRAP Around) Children - no earlier than 7:30 AM
- Hoboken Early Childhood Program (not in WRAP) - no earlier than 8:30 AM

Since the curriculum begins at exactly **8:30 AM**, it is imperative that students arrive on time; Children who arrive after the designated time are disruptive to your child's teacher and to his/her classmates. More importantly, your child loses precious learning time.

The classrooms operate on a daily schedule; late arrivals can be very disruptive to the teaching routine. We realize that extenuating circumstances do crop up from time to time. Therefore, at these times we will allow **8:45 AM** as a late cutoff. In cases of lateness **after 8:45 AM**, only a doctor's note will be considered acceptable as long as the office staff has advance notice and the child arrives to school before **11:00 AM**. Please note, two late drop offs after 10:00 AM will equal an absence. Also, if your child will need school lunch on a day when you plan to arrive late, please notify the office by **8:45 AM**.

In an effort to minimize classroom interruptions, we will be implementing the following late drop-off policy and procedure:

- **Procedure:** When a child is dropped off after the 8:45 AM late arrival time, parents will be asked by the teacher or security to go to the office where the parents will sign a “lateness log.” The office will document lateness. The parent can then take the child to their classroom, for a quick drop off to minimize classroom interruptions.
- **Aftercare Children:** The Wrap Around Program is meant to extend the school day for families that need longer service. Therefore, children who do not arrive to school by **11:00 AM** will not be allowed to stay for aftercare for that day.

3. INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM DROP OFF AND PICK-UP POLICY

Children, even at this young age, are learning an important variety of pre-reading, literacy and math skills as well as self-help skills; toileting, sharing and communication skills. Please make sure your child is in school by 9:00 AM and is picked up after 3:00 PM, but no later than 5:30 PM. It is imperative that students arrive on time, since the curriculum begins exactly at **9:00 AM**, and it becomes disruptive to teachers and students when arriving after the drop off time.

In an effort to minimize classroom interruptions, we will be implementing the following late drop-off policy and procedure:

Procedure: When a child is dropped off after the 9:00 AM late arrival time, parents will be asked by the teacher or security to go to the office where the parents will sign a “lateness log.” The office will document lateness. The parent can then take the child to their classroom, for a quick drop off to minimize classroom interruptions.

4. OUR POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

- **Release Policy:** No child will be released to an unauthorized or impaired individual.
- **Pick-Up List:** At the time of enrollment, parents are asked to give the names of individuals authorized to pick-up their child and the relationship of those individuals to the child. All individuals on the pick-up list must be at least 16 years old and have proper identification on file including their name and photo.
- **Unauthorized Individual:** It is very important that parents keep the pick-up and contact information updated by contacting their Family Advocate whenever they need to add or remove an individual from the list or make phone number or address changes. This includes Court Orders as described below.
- **Impaired Individual:** We will not release a child to someone who seems impaired either for health, drug or alcohol related reasons. In this case, we will call the parent to provide an alternate choice.
- **Emergency Pick-Up:** In an emergency, your child will be released to a designated person of your choice. However, you must notify the office and the person must meet the criteria above. Most importantly, if the individual isn’t on the pick-up list they must present proper ID at the Center before the child is released in their care.
- **Court Orders:** If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by court order, the custodial parent must secure and present documentation to that effect. We will maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order. In addition, if the court order is revised or changed, that order must also be presented.

- **Pick-Ups After Closings:** The procedure to follow in the event that the parent or designated person failed to pick up or is late in picking up a child at the time of the center's closing is:

1. All children not picked up by the agreed time at registration will be supervised by a staff member in the general office area. A late pick-up sign out sheet will be located in the office for parents/guardians to sign once the child is picked up.
2. Every effort is made by the Center staff to contact the parent(s) and/or other person(s) authorized by the parents to care for the child.
3. Whenever the custodial parent or person authorized by the custodial parents fail to pick up the child one hour or more after closing time of the child's program, a Center staff member shall call the Division's 24 hour State Central Registry Hotline (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until his/her custodial parent, or person authorized by the custodial parent, is available to care for your child.
4. Mile Square makes every effort to keep your child safe. If the authorized person appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Director and/or staff member in charge, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the Center reserves the right to refuse pickup privileges to such an impaired individual.
5. Although this happens very rarely, should this happen, staff members will make several attempts to contact the child's other parent or an alternative pick-up person from the authorized list. However, if the Center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Division's 24 hour State Central Registry Hotline (1-877-652- 2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

5. REPORTING CHILD ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

If your child is going to be absent due to illness or for any other reason, please notify the office no later than **8:45 AM**. You may also email your Family Advocate, Office Manager and/or your child's teacher.

Children may be, on occasion, out sick or on vacation for extended periods of time. It is necessary to inform the site about these occurrences as they come up. Absences, whether 1 day or more and regardless of the reason, need to be reported only to your child's site. In the case of vacation, families must get approval for these absences before they are taken. In general, our protocols follow State of NJ Licensing requirements. They are as follows:

- a. If a child is out sick for 3 days or more, a doctor's note indicating the dates of absence must be presented to the site office before a child can be returned. The note must say that the child is not contagious and is able to return to school.
- b. If a child has been hospitalized for any length of time, a release form from the doctor and/ or medical facility must be presented to the office.
- c. If a child is sick or hospitalized for a long period of time, in the case of the Hoboken Early Childhood Program, an email will be forwarded on the 9th consecutive day of absence to the school nurse and the Early Childhood Director by your Family Advocate. The Family Advocate will let the HBOE know the status of your child. Children can be dropped from our programs if they are out for more than 9 consecutive days.

- d. If you are going on vacation or need to be out of the area for more than 9 consecutive days, you must write an email to either the Program Director and/or in the case of the Hoboken Early Childhood Program, to your Family Advocate.

Approval must be granted for this time off. Children without advanced approval, who are out for more than 9 consecutive days, will be dropped from the Hoboken Early Childhood Program by the HBOE and must make arrangements to re-register upon returning. This can be coordinated through the office at your site.

- e. Children must be in attendance in the Hoboken Early Childhood Program in order to attend Wrap.

6. POLICY FOR SICK CHILDREN

In the event your child becomes ill at school, the following procedures are put into place:

- We will assess the child's condition. If we feel it is necessary, we will notify parents. If we cannot reach a parent or guardian we will call the emergency contacts on your list.
- In the case of a very high fever, accident, or any illness we feel needs immediate attention, we will take the child to Hoboken University Medical Center and continue to try and reach the parent, guardian or emergency contacts.
- When the child has a forehead or ear temperature of 100.5° or higher, the child must be to be taken home and kept home until they are fever-free, without the use of fever reducing medicine, for 24 hours. Medicine will be given according to guidelines in the Medicine Administration Policy.
- Children with a contagious illness or lesions of any kind must return with a note from the physician noting the child is not contagious and is able to return to school as well as any accommodation the child may need.
- Absences of three days or more require a physician's note to return to the Center.

It is necessary to follow these guidelines to control the spread of any illness to other children and also to keep children as healthy and safe as they can possibly be.

7. POLICY FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

As a help to the parents, Mile Square Early Learning Center will provide medication to children as long as certain guidelines are met, and for safety reasons ask for the utmost compliance and cooperation regarding very specific district and state requirements. Most medication (even those scheduled for three times per day) can usually be given outside of school hours.

Medicine is to be signed in and properly stored. Please bring all medication to the school's office. Only the school nurse and trained office staff is authorized to administer medication to children.

Please do not send any medications to school with your child or in his/her belongings because we may not know it is there; they need to be safely stored away from other children.

In general, we will follow the following procedure when administering medicine to your child:

- Medication will be given only after written approval, from both the child's physician and the child's parent(s), is given to us. Parents must complete the medication log in the office to provide all the medication information.
- Prescription medication for a child must be prescribed for the child it is to be given to. We do not administer non-prescription medicine.
- Medication must be in its original properly labeled container with child's name, name of medication, dosage amount, date it was prescribed and directions for its administration. Medication should be age appropriate in dosage. Please check expiration date before bringing it to school. This includes prescribed over the counter medication.
- Unused and expired medication will be returned to parents when no longer administered. Medication will also be returned to the parents at the end of the school year.
- We will not dress or treat burns, wounds, open sores, skin lesion, etc.

In the event that a parent or other appropriate person fails to pick up or is late in picking up a child at the time of the center's closing, we are not responsible for administering a dose of medicine falling after our closing time.

8. PROCEDURE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Mile Square follows the guidelines set forth by the State of New Jersey (NJAC: 3A:52-7.1) and/or the Center for Disease Control. The following is the policy of Mile Square Early Learning Center concerning communicable diseases. Please make a note of this policy so that in the event your child becomes infected, you know what is expected.

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms or illnesses, he/she should not attend school. However, if such symptoms are noticed at school, a child will be separated from his/her classmates, and you will be called to take him/her home. At no time, will your child be alone without adult supervision.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute or bloody diarrhea (twice the child's usual frequency to bowel movement)
- Acute vomiting (two or more episodes within a period of 24 hours)
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or auxiliary of 100.5 with behavioral changes
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a healthcare provider
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff neck
- Blood in urine

Once the child is symptom free and has a physician's note stating that he/she no longer poses a serious health risk to themselves or others, he/she may return to school. Children without a doctor's note for these events will not be accepted into attendance.

If your child contracts any of the following diseases, please report it to us immediately. The child may not return to school without a doctor's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

TABLE OF EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

<u>RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES</u>	<u>GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESSES</u>	<u>CONTACT ILLNESSES</u>
Chicken Pox	Campylobacter*	Impetigo
German Measles*	Escherichia coli*	Lice
Haemophilus Influenzae*	Giardia Lamblia*	Scabies
Measles*	Hepatitis A*	Shingles
Meningococcus*	Salmonella*	
Mumps*	Shigella*	
Strep Throat		
Tuberculosis*		
Whooping Cough*		

Diseases asterisked above are reportable diseases as required by N.J.A.C. 10:122-7.10(a). If it comes to our attention that the children have been exposed to a communicable disease at school, you will be notified in writing as will the appropriate authority.

9. LICE POLICY

Any time children come together, particularly at school or social events, head lice cases commonly increase. Anyone can get head lice. Direct head to head contact and sharing of hats, brushes and other personal items are the most common ways they are spread. Head lice are fast crawlers that do not jump or fly. An itchy scalp is a common symptom that can be uncomfortable. Head lice multiply quickly and can be much easier to treat if detected early.

We are asking you to do your part to prevent the spread of head lice by checking your child at home and by encouraging them not to share or wear personal items of other children. If you should find head lice on your child, please notify the school and keep your child home until the head lice is properly treated.

The school will do their part in preventing the spread of lice by washing all the dress up clothes and soft toys in the classroom. Please note this is precautionary because lice cannot live on these items.

In the event that a child in the classroom has a case of head lice, the families in the classroom will be notified through a letter/email. Parents of children who are in Wrap Around - Morning Care and/or After Care will also be notified if a child with head lice attends that program.

Your child's confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us. Children returning to school, must be brought into the office to ensure their privacy and that he/or she is lice free. Once office staff confirms that a child is lice free, the parent will be able to bring the child to the classroom.

If you would like more information and resources about lice, feel free to ask your child's Family Advocate.

10. WRAP PROGRAM

We offer a safe, reliable, familiar and a fun filled Before and After Care program. Activities are planned based on the interests of the children in the group and, therefore, vary from site to site. In past years activities have included: music, art, a variety of gym activities, sign language, science projects, Spanish as a second language. Activities reflect seasons and current events.

The purpose of the Wrap Around Program is to extend the day for children in the Hoboken Early Childhood Program who need additional care. It is available if you need extended school hours before and after school and when school is not in session during some holidays.

Our staff consists of experienced professionals along with students enrolled in programs and/or colleges in the area of Early Childhood Education and Childcare. We encourage and invite you to reach out to our families past or present to ask what their child's experience was with our Before and After Care programs.

For the most part, Wrap Around is broken down to give families the following choices:

- Wrap Around on School Days - Morning and After Care
- Summer Enrichment

These services are available on a fee for service or voucher basis in order to assist parents who need a longer day for their children.

- **Before care** is a great way for parents to get to work early or on time! Mile Square opens 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM. Our staff is welcoming and creative to help make a smooth transition for those parents that are working on a timely fashion.
- **After care** makes it easy for those parents that have to work past 2:30 PM or just need that extra hour to complete some chores. Its creative, fun, and most of all, relaxed. These extra hours allow children to explore using their own creativity. Services provided are as follows:

Wrap Services Daily Closing	5:30 PM	All Sites
Wrap Extended Daily Services Closing	6:00 PM	Some Sites
Infant/Toddler Daily Closing	5:30 PM	Rue Site

- **Summer Enrichment:** More information will be shared during the school year.

Registration Fees-

The Registration Fee for fee based programs (Wrap Around- Before and After Care as well as the Infant Toddler and Transition Preschool Programs), is meant to hold a spot for your child. As each program is scheduled to open, parents are sent a survey and a registration fee is requested. The registration fee is \$100 to hold a place in each program. If you are eligible for a voucher (subsidized care), the registration fee is also subsidized at the rate of \$25.

Monthly Fees-

1. All Fees for fee based programs (Wrap Around - Before and After Care as well as the Infant Toddler and Transition Preschool Programs) are due on **the 25th of the month before the services are rendered**. We only accept checks or money orders.

Timely payment of fees is important to Mile Square. As a non-profit, we use these fees to pay for the services we provide to you and your child. Because your fees support services to all of the children involved in these programs, we reserve the right to suspend and/or terminate services for late and/ or non-payment of fees.

Late Fees-

Late Fees are put in place to encourage families to pay on time. They fall into 2 categories:

1. Late Fees are charged for any payment received after the 5th of the month. If there is a family emergency that affects a payment, please call and speak with someone in the office at your site. The late payment for non-payment of fees is \$25 per occurrence. Services may be discontinued upon 10 days notice.
2. Late Fees may also be charged for late pick up of a child. Parents who are late picking up children after their contracted time will be charged a late fee. This fee will be added to the following month's payment. Lateness fees are as follows:
 - 1-15 minutes late= \$10.00
 - 16-30 minutes late= \$20.00
 - 31-45 minutes late= \$30.00
 - 46-60 minutes late= \$40.00
 - Add \$10.00 for each additional 15 minute increment

11. MEALS AND FOOD PROGRAM

As an organization, we encourage children to eat health conscious meals. **All Mile Square Early Learning Center Sites are nut free environments**. In the case where we provide children, breakfast, lunch and snack, we prepare meals that are nutritious, meeting the requirements of the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In the case where parents are permitted to supply a child's meals, we encourage parents to provide nutritional food for their children. We supply children with regular milk and fruit juices. We encourage parents to do the same.

In any case, we **do not** provide or allow children to bring in **candy, cookies, or gum** as a part of their snack choices. This does not meet the requirements and it creates conflicts with other children.

- **The Rue Site - (Food provided by Mile Square)**

In the case where we provide children, breakfast, lunch and snack, we prepare meals that are nutritious, meeting the requirements of the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Children in the Abbott Preschool Program are served an additional AM snack because of their age and the Hoboken Early Childhood requirements. Rue children may not bring food to school. Infants are provided food as they need it. Menus are available in the office and in your child's classroom.

All food must be provided at the site by Mile Square. Special meals for children with documented food allergies will be prepared appropriately at the site. The NJ Department of Agriculture does not allow families to bring food from the outside, if the site prepares the meals.

The following are guidelines for sites where parents may provide food:

- **St. Francis, Demarest, Brandt and Wallace Sites - (Parents can provide food)**

In the case where parents are permitted to supply a child's meals, we encourage parents to provide nutritional food for their children. You are welcome to provide your child with a bagged lunch. Children may also bring up to two healthy snacks- one snack is in lieu of breakfast and the 2nd as an afternoon snack. Students in After Care need two additional healthy snacks daily. We also supply children with regular milk and fruit juices. We encourage parents to do the same.

1. The Hoboken Board of Education Breakfast and Lunch Programs

The Hoboken Board of Education provides Breakfast and Lunch as a choice to children in attendance when the meals are served. Monthly menus are emailed to each family and are also available in your child's classroom and site office(s).

In order to have your child participate in the Hoboken School Lunch program you must sign up for it. There will be a packet available from the Hoboken Board of Education to explain the process. As you go through it, you'll find that based on income-eligibility you will either be in the "free", "reduced" or "paid" category for these services. Free services are for families that are low income, reduced are for families that are low-middle income and paid is everyone else. Lunch is still inexpensive even for those in the paid category. You can use the service as you need it. However, in order to continue to use the program throughout the year, you must maintain a positive balance in your child's account.

To get you started, we are asking reduced (\$25) and paid (\$100) families to provide a deposit to open their child's account with a balance. Your check or money order must be written out to the **Hoboken Board of Education**. Once you have established this balance you should get into the habit of checking it at least once a month to monitor the balance so that your child can continue to get lunch when needed.

Please note that this is extremely important to keep current. Balances will be brought forward from year to year so long as your children remain in a Hoboken Public School. Families who have a negative balance will need to provide food for their children.

Children transferring out of the district or to a private school will not receive a transfer card from the Hoboken Board of Education until the food program account has a zero balance.

2. Providing Children With Your Own Food

In thinking about what food to send with your child, please consider the following guidelines:

Meal Guidelines-Ages 3-5 Updated 7/01/18

Source: Child and Adult Care Food Program, USDA Food and Nutrition Service (www.nal.usda.gov/childcare/Cacfp/index.html)

BREAKFAST

Food Components	Ages 3-5
1 milk Fluid milk ¹	3/4cup
1 fruit/vegetable Juice ² fruit and/or vegetable	1/2 cup
1 grains/bread³ Bread or Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta or noodles or grains	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup

LUNCH

1 milk Fluid milk ¹	3/4cup
2 fruits/vegetables Juice ² fruit and/or vegetable	1/2 cup
1 grains/bread³ Bread or Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta or noodles or grains	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup
1 meat/meat alternate Meat or poultry or fish ⁴ or Alternate protein product or Cheese or Egg ⁵ or Yogurt ⁶	1 1/2 oz. 1 1/2 oz. 1 1/2 oz. 3/4 6 oz.

SNACK: *Choose 2 of the 4 components*

1 milk Fluid milk ¹	3/4cup
2 fruits/vegetables Juice ² fruit and/or vegetable	1/2 cup
1 grains/bread³ Bread or Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta or noodles or grains	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup
1 meat/meat alternate Meat or poultry or fish ⁴ or Alternate protein product or Cheese or Egg ⁵ or Yogurt ⁶	1 1/2 oz. 1 1/2 oz. 1 1/2 oz. 3/4 2 oz.

Footnotes

[1] Milk served must be low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) for children ages 2 years and older and adults.

[2] Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength.

[3] Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

[4] A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry or fish.

[5] One-half egg meets the required minimum amount (one ounce or less) of meat alternate.

[6] Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.

Please provide:

- ***healthy lunch and snacks for your child like the ones noted above. If your child is a picky eater, let us know and we will take the responsibility of introducing him or her to the new foods you provide.***
- ***We are a nut free environment.***

12. OUR SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Young children sometimes present challenging behaviors as they learn to interact appropriately with their peers and various adults in an educational setting. Mile Square Early Learning Center is committed to using positive strategies when teaching young children how to manage their own behavior.

The types of positive behavioral techniques to be used by all staff are included in the general category of guiding and managing the behavior of the children in the classroom. They include but are not limited to the following list:

- Using praise, encouragement, and other means of recognizing appropriate behavior. Clearly stating behavioral expectations in a warm classroom environment and stating those expectations on a daily basis to reinforce rules.
- Teaching children positive social skills including conflict resolution, through direct teaching, modeling, and using practice with peers.
- Providing children with alternative choices, redirecting away from inappropriate behaviors, and avoiding power struggles with children whenever possible.
- Developing classroom rules at the beginning of the program year that are clear and consistent and reintroducing them as new children enroll.
- Rules are posted in classroom and will include pictures as much as possible.

However, occasionally, young children present unsafe behavior in the educational setting, with the potential to hurt themselves or others. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Biting
- Fighting with students and/or staff members
- In addition, should another child be affected by the incident, a report will be done for that child as well. Due to privacy considerations children's names are not shared.
- Inappropriate language topics including, but not limited to, talking about killing or hurting other people, explicit/sexually inappropriate language are unacceptable.

In these circumstances, they may need more intensive strategies to help them learn appropriate behavior.

This Safe Environment Policy mirrors Expulsion Policy defined in N.J.A.C. 3A:52-3.6 required by the NJ Office of Licensing. This policy is meant to inform parents of the center's policy on the 'expulsion' of children from enrollment. We support a softer approach, whenever possible, than the state policy that falls within the guidelines; however, the safety of all children and adults is paramount and children will be separated, if we cannot identify a strategy that works.

13. INCIDENT AND ACCIDENT REPORTS

Should your child be involved in an incident or accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident and/or Accident Report. An accident is when a child gets hurt and an incident is when your child or another child may be involved but did not get hurt. When an

accident occurs above the shoulder area and/or if the child falls from a height taller than themselves, parents will be contacted by phone. Parents will be given the written report during pick up time or during drop off the next morning (whichever comes first) to read and sign. A copy of the report will also be provided to the parent. If another child is involved in the accident or incident, the child's name will be omitted in order to respect the confidentiality of each child.

The report is used as a communication tool letting parents know that something happened during the school day. We ask parents to sign the report only to show that you received it. Our main purpose is to teach children how to regulate their behavior in a group setting.

Some children take longer than others to regulate themselves. We develop strategies in the classroom for children to get along. If we feel a child would benefit from a stronger school to home connection, we will request a meeting with the family.

14. OUR DISCIPLINE POLICY

The purpose of our Discipline Policy is to teach the children self-control and self regulation. The long term goal is to teach children to make independent choices about how they treat themselves and others as they grow. Discipline is not considered punishment, but a guide for appropriate behavior. It is a pro-social behavior, and is an effort to make children part of a process leading up to appropriate behavior. Children will learn the rules of the classroom better when they can help create them; if they are developmentally appropriate to their age level; and if they are clear and understandable.

- MSELC, uses the technique of redirection for all age levels including our Infant/Toddlers. The teachers will speak with the child at his/her eye level. Speaking in soft and well modulated tones, using words the child can understand. The teacher will help the child gain control, and then attempt to redirect the child to another more suitable activity. No harsh tones or words are to be used.
- Occasionally, the child may be escorted to another room for a "change of scenery". The child will never be alone or isolated at any time, and may or may not, depending on circumstances, participate in that classrooms activities while there.
- Some teachers may use a quiet area to separate a child from the activities of the group. The teacher will talk with the child, and attempt to help the child gain his/her composure by asking the child to sit away from the larger group for a specific length of time. The rule of thumb we use is one minute for each year of child's age.
- There will be no isolation, the child will never be alone, and the child will be able to see the teacher and other children at all times. There will be no corporal punishment or denial of food, drink, rest, or bathroom use.
- In the case of more extreme behaviors such as hitting, kicking, cursing, scratching, or hitting adults, etc. the teacher will notify the parents by phone, email, or by a note depending on the circumstances, at arrival, dismissal, or by conference.
- The Director or a Family Advocate may also be informed, and the Director may set up an appointment with the parents and/or the teacher if the behavior continues or circumstances warrant it.
- The age of the child will always be a consideration as some of the above mentioned behaviors will be considered differently for a toddler than a preschooler. The duration of time the behavior continues will also be another factor.

We expect parents and teaching staff to work together to help the child begin the process of socialization, and acceptance of the “rules and routines” of the Center as well as those at home, and in public places. The Director is available and so is the Social Service person to assist in any way possible and as a resource referral if that is necessary.

Strategies for the Infant Toddler and Transition Program:

In the event that extreme behavior continues such as tantrums, throwing furniture, toys, excessive hitting, biting or if the child runs out of the classroom (away from the group in the park or in streets, etc.), every reasonable effort will be made to enable the child to continue in the program. These and other behaviors have the potential to hurt other children, adults, or the child themselves.

Examples of the strategies we use for the youngest children are as follows:

- Staff will try to redirect child from inappropriate behavior
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, activities, and supervision
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules
- Child will be given verbal warnings
- Child will be given time to regain control
- Child’s disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the inappropriate behaviors that might lead to expulsion
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises
- Recommendation of evaluation by local district child study team

All reasonable efforts will again be made to return the child to the classroom, and each case will be handled on an individual basis. We will take into consideration the age of the child, the parent’s willingness to cooperate with recommendations, and the potential for the destructive behavior to continue. The Program Director has the option to suspend the child for 1-3 days.

Please understand that in this program, we have the ability to exclude a child if we feel it is necessary. However, in our 40 year history this has never happened.

Strategies for Hoboken Early Childhood Program:

Although we employ the same strategies listed for infants and toddlers and transitioning preschoolers, the Hoboken Board of Education offers additional resources for preschool children in the Hoboken Early Childhood Program. After consultation with the Master Teachers, PIRT, and Child Study Team, the staff may supplement our usual strategies listed above with one or more of the following interventions. These strategies attempt to link the inappropriate behavior to the loss of privileges, objects, or activities. Examples of such consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Acknowledge the child’s feelings and ask how the teacher can help him/her
- FIRST/THEN prompts – having child FIRST do designated task and THEN do the activity he/she desires

- Natural Consequences – explaining that when he/she hits other children, that child will not want to play with him/her

Unfortunately, inappropriate behavior and questionable language may be dangerous and/or may occur with little warning. Intervention for the child will not exceed gentle but firm guidance, holding a child only long enough to get him/her to a safe place to calm down.

If such a situation occurs, staff will contact the child’s parent in writing and/or via a phone call to explain the incident and a report will be written. A meeting with the parent will be arranged immediately to develop a behavioral plan. Furthermore, behavior that is chronically inappropriate may indicate the need for further intervention such as:

- Referral to district Board of Education to determine eligibility for special services through school district (i.e. PIRT – Preschool Intervention and Referral Team)
- Home to school communication (daily journal)
- Shortened classroom hours or exclusion from Wrap Services for the child to be determined by the Child Wellness Team (including PIRT)
- Daily parental assistance in the classroom by the parent of the child in need of the intervention
- Request for the Board of Education to provide one-on-one support/aid

15. OUR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The following policy applies to families and all visitors to Mile Square Early Learning Center.

The policy includes but is not limited to the following:

- Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
- Blogs
- Discussion Forums
- Media sharing service (e.g. YouTube)

It is an essential part of our duty to safeguard our children and maintain privacy and security for all of the families here at MSELC, therefore we require that:

- Photographs taken in the school setting or at any special school event should not be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child/children. Parents are advised that they do not have the right to photograph anyone else’s child or upload photos of anyone else’s child/children. (Please note this excludes photos taken by staff for the children’s use or for display in the school setting.)
- We ask that parents and families alike refrain from public discussions on social media sites regarding any child, staff member, or family in the MSELC program that may be construed to have an impact on the reputation of or offend any staff member or parent in our program.
- Under no circumstances is a staff member to share personal contact information, such as phone numbers or personal emails with any parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. (If you are requesting or sharing information regarding your child within the classroom, please refer to your assigned Family Advocate).
- Staff will observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues related to school/work.

We ask that all staff and families remember that information sent through the web is not always completely secure and that we always use “good judgment”.

16. POLICY FOR PHOTO CONSENT

During the school year, the teachers take photos of the children which are used for classroom décor, newsletters or curriculum activities. These photos of your children are used in the day to day operations of our programs.

However, parents are asked to sign a consent form, allowing Mile Square to use their child's/children's photographs for additional purposes such as advertising and promotional brochures. These photos may be used for our school website, newspaper releases or other educational material including The Herald Newsletter and the Class Dojo app.

The Class Dojo app connects teachers, parents, and students who use it by sharing photos, videos, and messages throughout the school day. The app helps users work together as a team, share classroom experiences, and bring ideas to life in the classroom and at home.

17. OUR POLICY ON NAP TIME

The Center will provide children 18 months and younger with opportunities for daily rest and sleep according to their individual needs. Children under 12 months will initially be placed in a face-up sleeping position unless indicated otherwise in writing by the child's health care provider. Children over the age of 18 months and under the age of 4 years will be provided rest and/or sleep opportunities. An alternative quiet activity will be provided for each child who is awake after having rested or slept for 30 minutes. 3-4 year old children's nap time will be during the hours of **12:35 - 1:35 PM**, and Infants and Toddlers will be **12:30 - 2:30 PM**. Infant and Toddler teachers will pat the back, rub softly, or rock any children who need the comfort of such bedtime rituals. A small stuffed animal or other sleeping type toy-"rag dolls" etc. will be permitted. No child who is sleeping will be awoken before 1:30 PM. Infants and Toddlers will not be woken up before 1:45 PM. Swaddling of children is prohibited and children shall not use pacifiers with straps or other types of attachment devices.

18. OUR BATHROOM ROUTINE

- **PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (3-5 YEAR OLDS)**

Throughout the day, staff members will take the children to the bathroom as it is part of the daily schedule. If a child needs to go to the bathroom outside of the scheduled times, a staff member assigned to the classroom will accompany the child to the bathroom. In order to meet classroom ratio requirements, additional children accompany the child and staff member to the bathroom.

In the case that a child has an accident that requires a change of clothing and/or physical assistance, they will be accompanied by two staff members to the bathroom. One staff member will verbally direct the child with the toileting and changing process. The additional staff member will witness the toileting process.

- **INFANT TODDLER PROGRAM**

Around the age of twenty months our Infant Room caregivers begin to introduce the child to our toilet training chairs or potties. Most of the children have observed other toddlers using the potties by this age, and are curious enough to want to sit on them. During everyday activities the children gradually become aware of their own bodily functions and the teachers are calm and reassuring in helping them learn the proper words for bathroom functions. Toddlers usually indicate some sign of readiness such as being regular in bowel movements or staying dry for an extended periods or not wanting to stay in soiled clothes and beginning to complain as soon they have a bowel movement.

The teachers will praise for any success and will explain that when they "use the potty" or wear underpants they are like a big boy/girl. It is important to note very little pressure is put on the child. Gentle reminders work best. Parents and teachers must both be involved and must be calm and reassuring. They must present a relaxed atmosphere for the child to have success. Anger or punishment for regression or loss of control is inappropriate for the child, and not productive from adults and therefore never permitted. Patience and confidence in the child's ability to master the skill are important and provide the surest guarantee of success in the shortest amount of time.

NOTE: Parents must provide an adequate supply of "training pants" and be sure to bring clean change of clothes to be kept at center in case of training accident.

19. OUR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY POLICY

Rule 10:122-61 Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers Program requirements with regard to children's outdoor experience are as follows:

Child Care Centers in New Jersey who provide care for at least four hours shall take children outdoors daily.

Since our Child Care Center provides child care on a full day basis we are required to take the children out daily. We take the children out except when the temperature is below 32 degrees or above 90 degrees with high humidity as announced by the weather bureau. Very inclement weather or in any circumstances deemed to be unhealthy or unsafe for the children are considered as well.

It is our policy that outdoor activity is essential to the child's health, well being and development. Much of the research in early childhood education supports this. It is also our belief that a child can go outdoors as long as appropriate clothing is worn.

We have limited staff and cannot allow children to remain indoors when the majority of children are outdoors. We cannot make individual arrangements for those children whose parents feel it is not appropriate for them to participate in outdoor activities on any given day. There are about 90 children enrolled at each site and this would be very difficult to accomplish.

In such cases as mentioned above, other arrangements should be made by parents, until they decide the child is able to fully participate in all center activities.

20. FIRE DRILL, LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE, and EVACUATION DRILL

From time to time, your child may report there was a fire drill, lockdown or evacuation drill. If the drill happens during drop off or pick up time, you will also be directed to participate. Because the children practice these drills, they are, generally, unconcerned about them; although they may not like the sound of the alarm.

These drills are important so that in the case of an actual incident, we can keep the children safe and perform the drill as efficiently and safely as possible. Each teacher leaves the building with her class, an emergency backpack with the children's contact list, and necessary emergency supplies.

- **FIRE DRILL** - Child Care Centers in New Jersey shall have at least one fire drill per month/per session and at least one fire drill per year must be conducted during nap time. Each of our locations has designated spots to wait outside of the school. All children and

adults present must be evacuated outside of a one block radius, within three minutes and wait to be called back inside until it's safe and clear.

- **LOCKDOWN** - A lockdown drill must also be conducted a minimum of two times per year/per session. During a lockdown, doors are locked, windows and shades are pulled down, lights are turned off, and children and staff quietly hide in the classroom in a designated area away from the door. The teachers will quietly read them a book until it is safe to open doors and resume to the class schedule. Teachers do explain to the children about practicing safety during these times.
- **AN EVACUATION DRILL** - The procedures following an emergency evacuation involve walking or being transported to a designated evacuation location. Teachers and staff will have class attendance, family emergency numbers, child's medical information, first aid supplies, and cell phones to contact families. All children in attendance will be counted before leaving the center, while walking to the evacuation site, and while at the new location. The following locations are where each site will be evacuated to within Hoboken, NJ:
 - The Brandt site will go to Hoboken High School located at 800 Clinton Street or the CVS store at 811 Clinton Street
 - The Demarest site will go to the David E. Rue School located at 301 Garden Street or the Hoboken Public Library at 500 Park Ave
 - The Rue site will go to the AJ Demarest school located at 401 Garden Street or the Hoboken Public Library at 500 Park Ave
 - The St. Francis site will go to the Multi Service Center located at 124 Grand Street
 - The Wallace site will go to Fox Hills located at 311 13th Street

After any drill, parents will be advised by email and or phone what took place during the drill.

21. OUR POLICY ON SECURITY

Our policy on security is to always be prepared. Each site is evaluated and protected to ensure that our children are safe.

In accordance with the City and State Policies, we practice drills to better help prepare us for potential incidents. Practicing also helps children so that they can proceed to safety without a negative outcome if an incident occurs. Each month there is a set of drills practiced by the children and staff. One is a fire drill and a 2nd is either a lockdown or evacuation drill.

22. LOSS OF SERVICE

Although we prefer that you report complaints to us directly either to the Program Director at the site or the Executive Director of the agency, a child will not be denied services if a parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements
- Reported possible abuse or neglect at the center
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures
- Without giving the parent sufficient time (at least 10 days) to make other child care arrangements