



Jump Start Preschool

Working together for a brighter tomorrow

Parent Handbook

Updated February 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE(S)

- Welcome 3
- Philosophy & Mission 4
- Administrative Organization 4
- General Information 5
- Tuition, Payments, Fees 5-6
- Enrollment Procedures 6-7
- Program Procedures & Information 7-10
- Health, Nutrition & Hygiene 10-11
- Educational Practices 11-12
- Safety & Security 12-16
- Behavior Management Plans 16-20
- Program Supports 20-23
- Signed Acknowledgement 24



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Welcome to *Jump Start Preschool!*

We are thrilled you joined our community and look forward to supporting your child's growth and development in a safe and nurturing environment. Our team provides high-quality care and enriching experiences that foster curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning.

This parent handbook is a comprehensive guide to our program, policies, and procedures. It is designed to help you navigate our preschool community, understand our expectations, and stay informed about important information, including registration details, and daily operations.

At *Jump Start Preschool*, we believe that strong partnerships with families are key to creating a successful learning environment. We encourage open communication and invite you to reach out to our staff with any questions, concerns, or suggestions you may have.

We are excited to embark on this journey together and can't wait to see the wonderful experiences and memories your child will create with us!

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Jump Start Preschool believes that all children are unique individuals and deserve individualized attention to ensure they realize their greatest potential for success. We have dedicated our efforts to obtaining the highest quality resources, and training to provide exceptional childcare in an enriched, safe, secure, and loving environment. Our program is geared towards building character, self-confidence, self-esteem, and school readiness while giving your child a strong foundation to manage life's challenges. *Jump Start Preschool* is where your child's success matters!

OUR MISSION

Jump Start Preschool provides a safe, loving, nurturing, and high-quality childcare and education that promotes and enhances each child's development with the assurance of our parents' peace of mind. Our mission is to maintain the highest standards by:

- o Nurturing children with loving care
- o Providing a safe and secure environment
- o Providing a clean, and well-organized facility
- o Offering quality educational programs focusing on:
 - Social/Emotional Development
 - Physical Development
 - Cognitive Development
 - Language Development
 - Whole Child Development
- o Enforce basic core values such as:
 - Respect for self and others
 - Pride in self and community
- o Develop teachers/professional staff members
- o Have a partnership with and provide services to the community

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Owner – Loulou Hannoush

Program Director, Feeding Hills – Erica Allen

Program Director, West Springfield – Lori-Ann Champagne

Licensing Authority* – The Department of Early Education – 1441 Main Street, Suite 230, Springfield, MA, 01103

* Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Feeding Hills: Monday - Friday, 7:00 am - 5:30 pm

West Springfield: Monday - Friday, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

TUITION * Rates effective 8/29/2025

Full-days: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

5 days: **\$285/week**

3 days: (MWF): **\$75/day = \$225/week**

2 days (TU/TH): **\$75/day = \$150/week**

Half-days: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

5 half days: **\$225/week**

3 half days (MWF): **\$45/day = \$135/week**

2 half days (TU/TH): **\$45/day = \$90/week**

Tuition is due in advance every Friday for the upcoming week. If your child will not attend *Jump Start Preschool* for any reason – illness, vacation, or holiday, tuition still applies; this will guarantee the child's space upon return. Weekly statements are available at the request of the Program Director, and tax statements are available at the end of January.

When *Jump Start Preschool* is closed, tuition is still due. This is to offer teachers paid time off.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS & RETURNED CHECKS

Jump Start Preschool will not provide service to families whose account balance is equal to or greater than **three times their weekly tuition charges**. Should your account become delinquent, we will not allow the child to attend until payment arrangements have been made.

For any checks returned, a fee of \$7 will be applied to your account to pay for the bank fees incurred from the returned check.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

Please make every effort to pick up your child on time. If tardiness is unavoidable, notify the center immediately. A late fee of \$1.00/minute will be charged and added to your next week's tuition.

NOTE: If you are more than one hour late and the center has been unable to contact an authorized pick-up person listed on your child's enrollment forms, the law requires that we contact the Department of Children & Families (DCF) who will pick up your child for safekeeping.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

We accept payment in the form of cash, check, and automatic ACH via Brightwheel. ACH charges have an associated fee of 0.6% (\$0.25 min, \$2 max) per transaction. Payments are due in advance every Friday for the upcoming week.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

A tuition discount of 10% is available to families with more than one child currently enrolled at *Jump Start Preschool*. This discount applies to one sibling's tuition only.

REGISTRATION FEE

A **non-refundable registration** fee of \$100 per child is due to secure your child's space in our program after the orientation tour. This fee will be used for field trips and special events your child will participate in at *Jump Start Preschool*.

REFUNDS

Jump Start Preschool requires a written two-week notice for withdrawal from the program. Refunds will only be made in the form of a check when the two-week notice has been upheld.

Note: In the case of an overpayment, a refund will be given unless a balance is due.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

As an equal opportunity preschool, *Jump Start Preschool* considers applications for enrollment, regardless of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. We serve children from the age of 2.9 – 6 years of age. Toilet training is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment. Children are enrolled on a first-come first-serve basis. If the center becomes filled to its licensed capacity, a waiting list will be put into effect and families will be notified of an opening as they become available.

An interest form is submitted through our website and contact from the Program Director is made via email or telephone to schedule an orientation tour.

ORIENTATION TOUR

We require all children to tour *Jump Start Preschool* before enrollment. This visit gives you and your child a chance to meet teachers, and future friends, as well as see the new surroundings.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Enrollment packets are provided to interested families upon completion of the Orientation Tour. All admission-required documents must be submitted and returned at least one week **before** the child's first day of attendance.

Admission requirements are as follows:

- Completed registration forms on Formsite in the Family Portal on the *Jump Start Preschool* website (link shared at orientation tour)
- A **physical or Physician's Health Statement within the past year**
- A **current Immunization Record and Lead screening**
- Completed **Individual Health Care Plan** forms for chronic medical conditions, including allergies, and asthma

Please note: Enrollment forms are to be submitted annually per your child's enrollment date, to the Program Director.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

The main factors for classroom placement are your child's age and developmental stage. Transitions to the next classroom typically happen as early as July for enrollment needs. Transitions can also be determined by what's best for your child. You will be informed in advance of any permanent changes in placement. A transition period can be provided to help your child adjust to the new environment and teachers. A formal introduction to a new classroom begins in September.

CONFIDENTIALITY /CHILD RECORDS

Jump Start Preschool will keep a privileged and confidential record for your child containing required enrollment and medical information, developmental progress, and pertinent documentation. Records must be updated annually and updated forms will be requested by the Program Director. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to access, add, or amend information kept within the record. Information within the record will not be shared with any unauthorized person without written parental consent.

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

Jump Start Preschool has an open-door policy. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the center at any time while their child is present. Feedback and input are encouraged to be shared with the Program Director.

TWO-WEEK TERMINATION NOTICE

If you decide to terminate your child's enrollment at *Jump Start Preschool*, we ask for a 2-week written notification to allow for the appropriate transition for your child out of our program. This also allows us to ensure your tuition billing is accurately stopped.

This also includes if you decide not to enroll your child for the summer. If you un-enroll for the summer, the fall start-up date is after Labor Day, unless enrollment allows for early return.

VACATIONS

Jump Start Preschool is closed for a week for the winter holiday break. Tuition for this week is still due. We have an incentive program to earn one tuition-free vacation week. This is available for referrals, and when the family referred has begun, the family that referred will receive one week of their choosing tuition-free.

PROGRAM INFORMATION & PROCEDURES

ABSENCES

If your child needs to be absent, please notify the center via Brightwheel as to the reasoning. If your child is ill and out for more than 3 days, please bring a physician's note stating that the child is well enough to return to the center. If your child has a communicable disease, please refer to the **PLAN FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES** for guidance on return.

Families are still responsible for tuition even if your child is absent for an extended period of time, or only attends sporadically during the week. Payment reserves your child's space at the center.

ATTENDANCE

Jump Start Preschool tracks and monitors the absences of individual children and contacts families when children are absent more than 3 days a month by:

- Checking daily with parents through Brightwheel or phone for reasons of absence
- Tracking absences on an attendance sheet provided by the program

ARRIVING AND DEPARTING

The parking lot can be a busy place in the mornings and afternoons. Never leave children in the car or leave your motor running! Be cautious of cars entering and exiting the parking lot and hold your child's hand.

Checking In: Upon entering the classroom, please check your child in via the Brightwheel app.

Please accompany your child to their classroom. Help them hang up their coat and wash their hands. Many children enjoy it when their parents spend a few moments in the classroom at the beginning of the day, and we encourage parents to do this when they can. In some instances, long goodbyes can make the child upset. If this is the case, we recommend the parent/guardian leave promptly after saying goodbye.

To ensure a smooth transition, please make sure your child arrives at the classroom before 8:30 am. This ensures the child can engage in free play before transitioning to a structured circle time.

Checking Out: Please come into the classroom or meet at the playground and talk with our teachers about your child's day. Upon leaving, notify the teacher and sign out. Every time you pick up your child from the center, you must sign them out via the Brightwheel app. Parents are responsible for their own children once the child has been taken from the classroom or playground.

If an authorized person is picking up your child, they must show proper identification, such as a valid driver's license, before we release your child. That person must then check your child out on the sign-out sheet.

COMMUNICATION THROUGH BRIGHTWHEEL

You are free to reach out to your child's teacher or the Program Director throughout the day to check on your child. To cut down on distractions, our teachers will respond to messages during rest time (between 1-3 pm). If you have an urgent matter that requires immediate attention, please contact the Program Director.

You can access the following on the Brightwheel app: monthly newsletters, flyers for upcoming events, this Parent Handbook, and classroom lesson plans.

Weekly lesson plans can be found under the "Learning" section in Brightwheel. We encourage you to review these materials regularly to stay informed about your child's activities in our program.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Our structured program day begins at 8:30 am, and ends at 4:30 pm. Daily activities include free play, circle/group activity, small groups which allows for more individualized instruction and activities, gross motor activities like dance and playground time, snacks, lunch, and rest. Each classroom has a posted daily schedule for families to review.

DRESS & BELONGINGS

At *Jump Start Preschool*, we prioritize the comfort and safety of our students as they engage in a variety of hands-on activities, creative play, and outdoor exploration. To ensure your child is prepared for an active day, please follow these guidelines:

1. **Comfortable and practical clothing:**
 - Children should wear clothing that allows them to move freely and participate in activities that may get messy, such as painting, crafts, and outdoor play. Expect your child to come home with evidence of a fun-filled day of learning!
2. **Closed-toe shoes only:**
 - For safety reasons, children must wear closed-toe shoes, such as sneakers. Open-toe shoes, including sandals or flip-flops, are not allowed to prevent injuries during active play and outdoor activities.
3. **No jewelry:**

- Children should not wear jewelry to school. This prevents the risk of injury and the loss or damage of valuable items.
4. **No toys or personal items from home:**
 - Except for the first day of school, to minimize distractions and avoid loss or damage, children should not bring toys or other personal items from home, unless specifically requested by the teacher for a special occasion.
 5. **Labeling belongings:**
 - All personal items, including jackets, bags, hats, and lunchboxes must be clearly labeled with your child’s name to avoid mix-ups and misplaced belongings.
 6. **Responsibility for lost or damaged Items:**
 - *Jump Start Preschool* is not responsible for lost, damaged, or misplaced clothing, shoes, toys, or any other personal belongings. Please ensure your child does not bring valuable or irreplaceable items to school.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In case of inclement weather, *Jump Start Preschool* will follow the local public-school decision for delays and closings. Information will be shared via Brightwheel.

If *Jump Start Preschool* is open for the day and an emergency arises such as the town shuts down and/or the mayor declares a state of emergency, the center will follow the guidance of local authorities and close as required. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone to pick up their child(ren). If parents/guardians are unavailable, then emergency contacts for child(ren) will be notified.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Jump Start Preschool believes in family and community involvement. We facilitate opportunities for parents/guardians to join field trips, and family picnics, contribute to a center-wide potluck, and various other activities during your child’s enrollment. We partner with our local public libraries, share free events sponsored by Pathway for Parents, and other networks that offer online parent workshops allowing families to connect and share resources and support.

FUNDRAISING

Jump Start Preschool offers opportunities to give back to the local community, by supporting Shriners Children's Hospital during our annual fundraiser. We also sponsor T-ball and soccer teams for West Springfield and Agawam. We participate in fundraising provided by Midland Fundraising once or twice a year which allows families to purchase products that give back to the center.

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES

Our school will share our closure calendar at enrollment and again before July. Regular tuition rates apply during holidays, professional development, and days for which the center is closed.

GRADUATION

We work with the public schools to help ensure a smooth transition from *Jump Start Preschool* to kindergarten. Information regarding your child will be shared in written permission granted at enrollment through registration forms. We work to assist with any pre-screenings needed to enroll in kindergarten.

Additionally, an annual graduation celebration is conducted in June for children going to kindergarten in the fall. The excitement of the event helps children with the transition into kindergarten. Specific details will be shared with families in the spring regarding this event.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We would like to have the ability to take pictures of your child(ren) enrolled at *Jump Start Preschool* participating in classroom activities and on field trips. These pictures will be used in our classrooms and as child documentation. Additionally, we use photos for our closed Facebook page, website, and promotional materials **only** if authorized by the parent with written consent during registration.

RELEASE POLICY

It is *Jump Start Preschool's* policy that no one under 18 years of age (except one who is a child's parent/guardian) is permitted to pick up a child. In special circumstances, you must indicate on your enrollment form who the custodial parent/guardian is and who may pick up your child.

If the parent/guardian is unable to pick up the child or wishes to send someone **not listed** on the authorized pick-up list, the building code must **not** be given, and **written notice** (notification on Brightwheel is permissible) must be received before the child will be released.

When making changes and additions to emergency contacts/authorized pick-ups, you must update this in registration forms on Formsite located on the family portal on the *Jump Start Preschool* website. This alerts the Program Director whenever a change has been made.

Your child will not be released to anyone who is not authorized on the authorized pick-up list. Anyone not recognized will be asked to show proper ID, such as a driver's license, and will be confirmed as an authorized person. **ID may be required several times after the individual's first time picking up the child to ensure safety.**

SMOKING

Jump Start Preschool is a non-smoking facility. Smoking and vaping are not permitted on the premises.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Jump Start Preschool does not provide regular transportation. All parents are required to fill out and sign an individual Transportation Plan for their child explaining how they will arrive and depart from the center and by whom. *Jump Start Preschool* does not provide transportation unless it is an emergency evacuation as explained in our **Contingency Plans for Emergency Evacuations Policy**.

During transportation on field trips, *Jump Start Preschool* provides transportation to and from field trips. The Program Director serves as the transportation coordinator and can be contacted regarding field trip transportation issues.

The Program Director and teaching staff are responsible for the supervision of the behavior and safety of the children while being transported. All drivers of Five Star buses are equipped with cell phones to contact the company in the event of a breakdown of the vehicle or any other emergency regarding the vehicle.

In case of a medical emergency, an ambulance will be called.

Children, who are enrolled at *Jump Start Preschool* and attend public schools, depart from and arrive back to *Jump Start Preschool* via public school buses. *Jump Start Preschool* staff are responsible for these children up to the moment we put them on the bus and again when we take them off the bus. If a child whom we put on the bus does not arrive as expected back to our center after school, then *Jump Start Preschool* staff will contact the parent of the child's whereabouts and/or contact the public school in which they attend. A separate transportation plan form is required for children who have this arrangement.

HEALTH, NUTRITION & HYGIENE

HEALTH CARE POLICY

Please see the Health Care Policy for more detailed information regarding emergency procedures, injury prevention, managing injury and first aid, emergency preparedness, infection control, the plan for medication administration, meeting specific health care needs, safe sleep policy (SIDS), and the procedure for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

IMMUNIZATIONS & PHYSICALS

The program requires, in advance of the child's first day, an up-to-date copy of a physical, immunization records (by the Department of Public Health's recommended schedule) and lead screening, submitted to the Program Director. No child will be admitted into the program without the required documentation for immunizations.

Childhood Lead Screening must be done on all children; it is not considered an immunization. The Massachusetts Immunization Program provides free childhood vaccines. The toll-free telephone number is 1-888-658-2850.

No child shall be required to have any such immunization if their parents/guardians object, in writing, because of conflicts with their religious beliefs or if the child's physician submits documentation that a vaccine is contraindicated. This must be maintained in the child(ren)'s file.

Jump Start Preschool will maintain a list of the children who have documented exemptions from immunizations and these children will be notified and excluded from attending when a vaccine-preventable disease is introduced into the program.

NAP TIME

Jump Start Preschool offers a rest period for children in care for more than four hours. We recommend each child bring a small blanket, a travel-size pillow, and a cot sheet for nap time. These items will be kept in the child's cubby during the week and should be taken home on Friday to be washed and returned on Monday. Soiled items will be sent home during the week and should be replaced the following day.

PLAN FOR MANAGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Staff will take extra special precautions when children who are ill are diagnosed at *Jump Start Preschool* and when children who are mildly ill remain at the center.

Children DO NOT NEED to be excluded for other minor illnesses, *unless*:

- They are too sick to participate comfortably in program activities
- They need more care than staffing levels allow, or,
- They have unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible severe illness

Children who exhibit symptoms of the following types of infectious diseases, such as gastrointestinal, respiratory,

skin, or direct contact infections, may be excluded from care if the following exist, and return as indicated below:

- Fever of 100.4 or greater – can return after 24 hours fever-free without the use of a fever-reducing medication
- Chicken Pox – for 5 days after the onset of the rash or when all lesions are crusted, whichever is later
- COVID-19 – remain at home until at least 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication
- Diarrhea, two or more times – for 24 hours especially if the stool contains blood or mucus
- Head lice – must be nit and lice free before returning, and checked by Program Director prior to entering the classroom
- Hepatitis A – for one week after the onset of the illness
- Impetigo – for 24 hours after the treatment has begun
- Influenza – remain at home until at least 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication
- Measles – for 4 days after the rash appears
- Mouth sores – unless the physician states the child is noninfectious
- Mumps – for 9 days after the onset of gland swelling
- Pertussis – after 5-day antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctivitis with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids) – until examined by a physician and 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Rash with a fever or behavior change – until the physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease
- Ringworm – after treatment has begun
- Rubella – for 7 days after the rash appears
- RSV – remain at home until at least 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication
- Scabies – until treatment is completed
- Strep infection – until 24 hours after treatment and the child has been without fever for 24 hours
- Tuberculous – until the child’s physician or local health department states the child is non-infectious
- Vomiting – remain home for 24 hours

Documentation will be requested for any child who has been evaluated by a physician to help determine if they pose no serious health risk to themselves or other children.

If a child has already been admitted to *Jump Start Preschool* and shows signs of illness (a fever equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees by the oral or auxiliary route, a rash, reduced activity level, or diarrhea) they will be offered their mat, cot, or other comfortable spot in which to lie down. If the child manifests any of the symptoms requiring exclusion (as listed above) or it is determined that it is in the best interest of the child that they are taken home, their parent/guardian will be contacted immediately and asked to pick the child up as soon as possible.

When a communicable disease has been introduced into *Jump Start Preschool*, parents will be notified immediately, and in writing by the Program Director. Information regarding communicable diseases shall be made available to parents. The Program Director shall consult the Child Care Health Manual for such information. Department of Public Health must be contacted when there is a reportable communicable disease in the program.

SCREENINGS

Jump Start Preschool can provide vision, hearing, dental, and OT screenings in our center through various organizations – the screening is obtained with parental consent, and results are shared with the parents afterward.

Our registration forms include a consent of these screens for each child. If consent is not provided, the program will refer parents to local providers.

SNACK

Jump Start Preschool provides an AM and PM snack for children in our care. We ask that families provide water bottles for their child(ren) to stay hydrated all day.

TOILETING & DIAPERING

There is considerable cultural variation in toilet training practices. Staff will be sensitive to these differences and maintain communication with parents and their preferences. Staff will encourage children to try to use the toilet to reinforce appropriate toileting habits, as they pertain to the child.

Children are free to use the bathroom on an as-needed basis with adult supervision, as well as during the following scheduled group bathroom times:

- **Before snack times**
- **Before playground times**
- **Before lunch time, and**
- **Before and after rest time**

Toilet training is an important developmental milestone usually beginning in toddlerhood. At *Jump Start Preschool*, each child is observed to monitor their bathroom needs. Teachers discuss any bathroom concerns with parents on an individual basis and will work on a plan with parents for toilet training. Children are treated respectfully and not disciplined for toileting accidents. Staff will be consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities.

Jump Start Preschool will be in full compliance with the Department of Early Education and Care's policy regarding universal precautions when handling body fluids, contaminated surfaces, sanitation, and proper disposal of pull-ups. Families are to provide the center with pull-ups, as well as a change of clothing labeled with their child's name. The school also maintains spare clothes for emergencies. Any soiled clothing is placed in a plastic bag and is sent home to be laundered.

STEPS IN CHANGING SOILED CLOTHING & PULL-UPS:

1. The necessary items are gathered before entering the bathroom (fresh pull-up, clean clothes, wipes, gloves, disposable bags, etc.).
2. Staff wear gloves to assist the child in changing soiled clothes or pull-ups. The child will assist as appropriate, including disrobing, using the toilet and wiping themselves.
 - a. Staff will help wipe children with diaper wipes or toilet paper per parental consent and availability.
 - b. Soiled clothes are placed in a disposable plastic bag and sent home that day to be laundered.
 - c. Soiled pull-ups are put in a diaper genie or in a disposable plastic bag and placed in the trash.
3. Child washes hands.
4. Staff disposes of gloves and washes hands.

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

ASSESSMENTS

At *Jump Start Preschool* we are committed to the assessment of each child in our program. Our teachers will document your child's progress as they play, learn, and engage with their peers and in the classroom. This documentation is used in understanding their strengths, needs, and interests.

Forms of documentation may include observations, checklists, work samples, conversations between the classroom and families, and photo documentation. From this information, we can plan an age-appropriate, challenging curriculum, document the specific needs of a child, arrange for developmental screening and referrals for diagnostic assessment when indicated, adapt the teaching practices in the environment, and plan for program improvement. This information is shared with the parents in the form of progress reports, conferences, and additional meetings as required. All staff involved in the assessment of children receive ongoing training and teaching resources to support their understanding of the assessment process.

Progress reports are done twice a year and are based on observations within the classroom setting and input from parents. Progress reports are shared with families through scheduled conferences in which the parents have the chance to take part in setting goals for the child and can list any concerns.

CONFERENCES/PROGRESS REPORTS

We hope that parents and staff will become partners in the education of your child(ren). Since you know your child better than we do, we ask that you share any information that may help us to understand your child better to meet their needs. We will also share the progress your child is making. This partnership requires two-way communication. We will keep you informed in the following ways: Open House, parent meetings, informal chats at arrival or departure time, conferences, phone calls or notes, and resources on parenting, child development, and other relevant information.

CURRICULUM

We utilize the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool and Kindergarten Learning experiences to plan curriculum and play. The main areas of development that are assessed throughout the year are social and emotional development, English language arts, mathematics, science, technology and engineering, history and social science, health, and the arts. Both indoor and outdoor activities are planned to encourage development in all developmental areas and their sub-areas. A weekly lesson plan is completed by the classroom teachers, shared with the parents through Brightwheel and posted in the classroom.

EDUCATORS

We take great pride in the competency of our staff. Each member of our team strives to maintain the highest integrity and professionalism while making every child and family feel loved. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents and colleagues.

Every member of our *Jump Start Preschool* staff is required to complete training before being placed in a classroom. All classroom staff attend professional development as part of their ongoing training. There is at least one staff member in each classroom who is First Aid and CPR certified. A background check is completed for each employee before the first day of employment.

SAFETY & SECURITY

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Jump Start Preschool has put forth the following policies should an emergency arise:

In case of a fire, a natural disaster, or an emergency where the center needs to be evacuated or shelter-in-place:

- *Jump Start Preschool*, when appropriate, will listen to and follow the advice given to the public and be alerted by the National Safety Council, as well local authorities. In certain situations, not involving the public, *Jump Start Preschool* will be evacuated to either a designated area or, when necessary, an alternate location. For our Agawam location we will relocate to Line St. sidewalk, or Lighthouse Christian Church on Springfield St. For our West Springfield location, we will relocate to the Church parking lot or Fausey Elementary School on Amostown Rd. For any emergency that requires transportation away from the neighborhood, the designated location will be shared with parents directly at that time.
- Once it is determined where the center will evacuate, the Program Director will contact the local authorities by cell phone about the center's relocation. Staff and children will access whatever means of transportation necessary, be it on foot, or Five Star buses. All necessary emergency numbers, information, medication, and equipment will be taken by classroom teachers and families will be notified of the situation.

In the case of power outages where there is a loss of heat, hot water and electricity:

- *Jump Start Preschool* will determine, depending on the estimated length and time before services are restored, whether the center will remain open. If such a scenario should take place before noon and during extremely cold weather, parents would be notified that the center is closing. If later in the day and temperatures are reasonable and above 65 degrees, the possibility of the center staying open for the remainder of the day is high. Factors considered before making such a decision would include but are not limited to the loss of telephone service, fire alarms, lighting, electricity, running water, proper food storage, heat, and hot water.

In the case of a neighborhood wide evacuation:

- The Program Director would first attempt to reach families to pick up their child(ren) from the site. If it was deemed necessary to move swiftly off-site and out of the neighborhood, the Program Director would reach out to Five Star buses at 413-789-4780, to initiate the *Emergency Evacuation Transportation Contract*. The bus would transport children and staff to the designated off-site location for emergencies. All classroom emergency bags would be taken, including medications, and sign-in/out sheets. The Program Director would reach out to families by cellphone when the children safely arrived at their off-site location for pick-up. The designated locations are noted in the Emergency Binder at each site.

Emergency evacuation drills:

- *Jump Start Preschool* will conduct emergency evacuation drills monthly, at various times of the day, using different evacuation routes. Drills are documented in the Fire Drill Logbook. Documentation will include the date, time, number of children and staff, exit route used, and place of meeting. Teachers will be responsible for leading the children out of the building and taking their attendance sheets, first aid kit, medication, and child emergency contact information with them. Daily attendance lists will be kept current, and staff are responsible for documenting the arrival and departure times of the children in their classrooms. The Program Director is the last person to evacuate the building after checking all classrooms and bathrooms for any children left behind. Emergency exit procedures are posted at each exit in all classrooms, and all areas of the building children and staff occupy.

In the case of a missing child:

- The Program Director will quickly search the center and the surrounding outside area. If the child is not located, the local authorities will be notified as well as the parents of the child and the Department of Early Education and Care.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

At *Jump Start Preschool*, ensuring the safety of our students is our highest priority. Emergency exit routes are posted near each exit, and in the event of an emergency, it is essential that staff respond calmly and in an orderly manner. To prepare for potential emergencies, your child will regularly participate in safety drills, including evacuation procedures, and intruder and fire drills.

In the event of a real emergency, we will notify you as quickly as possible. To facilitate this, the Program Director maintains an up-to-date file of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the individuals you have authorized to pick up your child during an emergency. This information must remain current.

When making changes and additions to emergency contacts/authorized pick-ups, you must update this in Formsite located on the family portal on the *Jump Start Preschool* website. This alerts the Program Director whenever a change has been made. As a safety precaution, please inform the Program Director if there are any changes to your contact information or that of your emergency contacts.

BUILDING MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

Our doors are always locked, and parents have a specialized code to enter. This is given out before the first day of school and should not be given out to anyone who is not an authorized pick-up. Codes are updated/changed annually. Please note: your code will only work during operational hours.

Video cameras are in all areas of the building, except the restrooms. Areas they are located, but not limited to: entry way, classrooms, parking lot, and playground. Videos are used solely for the Program Directors' classroom monitoring, safety of the building, and the children. Videos are not used outside of the Program Director's office. For the confidentiality of all individuals, only management views the videos. Video recordings only record for 7 days and then gets overwritten.

PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General Law C119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, they must file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The following procedure will be followed:

- A staff member who suspects abuse or neglect must document their observations including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior, and any other pertinent information. The staff member will discuss this information with the Program Director.
- The Program Director will make a verbal report to DCF, to be followed by a required written 51A report within 48 hours.
- If a staff member feels that an incident should be reported to DCF, and the Program Director disagrees, the staff member may report to DCF directly.
- All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect that are reported to DCF will be communicated to the parents by the Program Director unless such a report is contraindicated.

It is *Jump Start Preschool's* commitment to protect all children in care from abuse and neglect. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child will be immediately reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

If the abuse or neglect involves a *Jump Start Preschool* employee, a meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform them of the filed report. The staff member in question will be immediately suspended from the program with pay pending the outcome of the DCF and EEC investigations.

If the report is screened out by DCF, the Program Director has the option of having the staff member remain on suspension pending the EEC investigation or allowing the staff member to return to the classroom. This decision will be made by the Program Director and will be based on the seriousness of the allegations and the facts available.

If the allegations of abuse and neglect are substantiated, the staff member will be terminated. The Program Director and *Jump Start Preschool* staff will cooperate fully with all investigations.

- Department of Children and Families (DCF): 413-493-2600
- Department of Early Education and Care (EEC): 413-788-8401

VISITORS

At *Jump Start Preschool*, the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. To maintain a secure and nurturing environment, we have established the following visitor policy:

- 1. Authorized Visitors Only:**
 - All visitors must be authorized by the Program Director. Unauthorized individuals are not permitted on the premises, including those with a legal restriction or court order, will not be allowed on the premises. Proper documentation must be provided to enforce any legal restrictions.
- 2. Sign-In and Sign-Out:**
 - All visitors are required to sign-in and sign-out at the office upon arrival and departure.
- 3. Supervised Visits:**
 - Visitors must remain under staff supervision at all times while on the premises unless specifically authorized by the Program Director for unsupervised access (approved specialists or volunteers).
- 4. Scheduling Visits:**
 - Visits must be scheduled with the Program Director.
- 5. Health and Safety Requirements:**
 - All visitors must adhere to the center's health and safety protocols, including hygiene and any infectious disease prevention measures in place.
- 6. Visitor Conduct:**
 - Visitors are expected to conduct themselves respectfully while on the premises. Disruptive behavior or failure to follow staff instructions may result in the visitor being asked to leave.
- 7. Emergency Situations:**
 - In the event of an emergency, visitors must follow all safety protocols and directives from staff to ensure the safety of students and others.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLANS

We take a preventative approach to discipline that teaches children positive behaviors rather than punishing them for misbehaving. Our goal is to provide children with the opportunity and motivation to make choices, function independently, and learn social skills through gentle, encouraging guidance, respect the needs of others, adapt to routines and simple rules, and become responsible group members.

We will use positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, positive self-esteem, and cooperation.

The child's level of understanding is considered, and discipline efforts will be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Our staff are instructed to follow these guidelines:

- We will use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior
- We will remind children of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements
- We will monitor and analyze the situations and redirect play and learning activities when necessary
- We will guide the child toward more appropriate behavior using positive statements
- Rules that are developed will focus on health/safety, consideration of others and their feelings, and care of materials and equipment
- Limits and rules will reflect the children's stage of development
- We will handle disagreements between children fairly
- We will encourage children to handle non-dangerous situations by themselves
- We will step in and take control of the situation when other children or adults are being hurt, when children are hurting themselves, and when property is being destroyed
- We will remember it is misbehavior we dislike and not the child
- In some instances, a brief, supervised separation from the distressing situation may be used to allow the child to refocus before rejoining the group. During this separation, the child will be redirected to a calm activity such as self-soothing activities in the quiet area

There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, toilet training, or outside play; pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on the child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods for the child's age

No child may be physically restrained in any way. If a child poses an immediate risk to others, they may be physically moved to an area to prevent injury. The Program Director may become involved if the child is not responding to the teacher's efforts. Depending on the severity of the behavior, parents may be contacted, and temporary suspension may occur.

If your child is experiencing a change in their home environment that may affect behavior, please let your child's teacher or the Program Director know. Communication is important to your child's progress. *Jump Start Preschool* will keep you informed of any issues we feel should be addressed.

If all the above have failed, a meeting will be set up with the parents to determine a positive Individualized Behavior Plan focused on the child's maladaptive behaviors for change.

If the implementation of an Individualized Behavior Plan does not resolve a maladaptive behavioral issue, or if a child's behavior threatens the safety of themselves or others, we may be unable to continue providing care for that child. The child may be temporarily or permanently unenrolled from *Jump Start Preschool* at the Program Director's recommendation.

TERMINATION & SUSPENSION

Termination: The end of a child's enrollment in the program.

Suspension: A temporary pause in attendance until specific actions, such as teacher training or consultations, are completed.

Jump Start Preschool reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment, with written notice, under the following circumstances:

- Non-cooperation by a child or parent, including rude or abusive language to staff or other children
- Failure to pay tuition or other fees on time
- Repeated tardiness dropping off and picking up the child
- Health and safety risks to the child, other children, or staff are present and unresolved
- The child's needs cannot be met after appropriate referrals have been made
- Unresponsive to the Individualized Behavior plan and maladaptive behaviors continue

Parents will be informed verbally when a concern arises and will be asked to meet with staff for a conference. During the meeting, the issues will be discussed, and a reasonable time for improvement will be outlined. Problem-solving strategies will be used to address the issue, and more than one meeting may be necessary, depending on the agreed-upon time frame.

Teachers will keep written observations of the child to present at the conference. Discussions will be documented, a written individualized behavior plan will be created in the program, and suggestions for home will be given. Both parents/guardians and staff will be responsible for supporting the plan, with copies provided to the families and kept in the children's file.

Every effort will be made to collaborate with the family and prioritize the child's well-being. This includes seeking support services, such as consultations and educator training. Referrals for evaluations, diagnostic services, or therapeutic interventions will be offered to parents if they could benefit the child.

Termination or suspension will only be used as a last resort. If termination occurs, suggestions for alternative childcare will be provided. Whether initiated by the parents/guardians or the center, *Jump Start Preschool* will help prepare the child for termination or suspension in a positive way that aligns with the child's developmental level, whenever possible.

Additionally, the program reserves the right to terminate enrollment at any time if it is determined that the program cannot, in good faith, meet the family's needs.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

At *Jump Start Preschool*, we are committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all children, parents, staff, and visitors. To uphold this commitment, we have established the following Parent Code of Conduct. By adhering to this Code of Conduct, we can work together to ensure that *Jump Start Preschool* remains a nurturing and supportive place for all.

1. **Respectful behavior:**
 - All interactions should demonstrate respect for others. We expect families to model appropriate behavior that promotes a positive atmosphere.
2. **Inappropriate conduct:**
 - Behavior that is inappropriate, illegal, threatening, or disrespectful will not be tolerated. This includes any abusive language or actions directed towards staff, children, or other parents.
3. **Trust in the Program:**
 - While we encourage open communication and feedback, we expect parents to approach concerns in good faith. If a parent consistently accuses the program of untrue claims or expresses a lack of trust, it may be in the best interest of both the family and the program to reconsider enrollment. A collaborative and trusting relationship is essential for fostering a positive environment for children.
4. **Consequences of Violating the Code:**
 - We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone who violates the Parent Code of Conduct.

GRIEVANCE POLICY FOR PARENTS

At *Jump Start Preschool*, we value open communication and believe that addressing concerns promptly and respectfully benefits everyone. We are committed to working together to ensure that any concerns are addressed in a professional, timely, and respectful manner. If a family has any concerns regarding the program, staff, or children, we encourage the following steps to resolve the issue:

1. **Direct communication:**
 - Parents should first attempt to address their concerns directly with the relevant staff member. Open dialogue can often resolve issues quickly and efficiently.
2. **Escalation to the Program Director:**
 - If the concern remains unresolved after speaking with the staff member, or if the concern pertains to a broader issue within the program, parents should bring the grievance to the Program Director. The Program Director will work with all parties involved to seek a resolution.
3. **Concerns regarding policies:**
 - If a grievance involves a program policy, parents should approach the Program Director directly to discuss the policy in question.
4. **Written complaints:**
 - If verbal discussions do not lead to a resolution, parents may submit a written complaint to the Owner. The Owner will review the complaint, investigate as needed, and provide a formal response within a reasonable timeframe.
5. **Follow-Up and Resolution:**

- After addressing the grievance, the Owner will follow up to ensure the grievance has been properly resolved. The goal is to maintain a positive, cooperative relationship between families and staff while ensuring the best interests of the children.

PROGRAM SUPPORTS

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Jump Start Preschool ensures children and their families have access to developmental, mental health, and nutrition services either through private pay arrangements or through other programs. This is done through our referral program.

The following procedures will be used for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, physical health, educational, and medical services for their child should the *Jump Start Preschool* staff feel that an assessment for additional services would benefit the child.

- The Program Director will be notified by staff if there is a concern regarding a child.
- The Program Director, along with the staff will document any behaviors supporting their concerns with dates, times, and explanations.
- Parents/guardians will then be notified by the Program Director of the concerns, and a conference will be scheduled.
- A list of referral resources in the community will be made available to parents/guardians.

Referral Requirements:

- A meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardians.
- *Jump Start Preschool* will provide parents with a written statement including the reasons for recommending additional services. Included in this statement will be the center's observations and the efforts the center has made to accommodate the child's needs.
- *Jump Start Preschool*, with parental/guardian permission, will help in making a referral.
- *Jump Start Preschool* will inform the child's parents/guardians of the availability of services and their rights, including their right to appeal under Chapter 766.
- If the child is less than 3 years of age, *Jump Start Preschool* will inform parents/guardians of the availability of services provided by the Early Intervention Program.
- *Jump Start Preschool* will follow up on the referral, with parental/guardian permission, involving agencies who have evaluated the child. If it is determined that the child does not need services, or is ineligible, *Jump Start Preschool* will review the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

Jump Start Preschool will maintain a record of all referrals, including meetings. *Jump Start Preschool* reserves the right to terminate/suspend a child's enrollment if their needs cannot be met through the center. These needs may include but are not limited to areas of development socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Parents/guardians will be notified verbally regarding placement at an alternative center more adequately suited to their child's needs. *Jump Start Preschool* will prepare the child and family, regarding the termination of enrollment, in such a manner that is consistent with the child's ability to understand.

Please reach out to the Program Director for a list of referral services available.

CONSULTANT USE

Jump Start Preschool educators are provided with opportunities to use outside consultants or staff with expertise in the age of the children served to assist them in implementing strategies that support positive relationships, interactions, prevention, and intervention techniques. The Program Director will help in applying and getting consultations from local agencies such as, but not limited to, the Behavioral Health Network, or the Support Network.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs)

At *Jump Start Preschool*, we are committed to supporting each child's individual educational journey, particularly those with special needs. As part of our partnership in the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), we play a crucial role in ensuring that the child's developmental, educational, and emotional needs are met comprehensively. Here's how *Jump Start Preschool* collaborates with public schools, and families:

1. Collaborative Approach with Public Schools

Jump Start Preschool works closely with public schools to ensure a seamless transition and ongoing support for children with IEPs. Our staff will:

- **Coordinate with School Personnel:** We maintain open lines of communication with teachers and special education staff in the public school system and strive to align our preschool activities with the goals outlined in the IEP.
- **Share Observations and Progress:** Our educators provide valuable insights into the child's progress, strengths, and areas of improvement. This information is shared with the public school to help inform instructional strategies and adjustments.
- **Implement IEP Goals:** We strive to integrate the goals and accommodations specified in the IEP into our classroom practices, ensuring that children receive consistent support both at preschool and when transitioning to kindergarten.

2. Partnership with Families

We believe that families are integral partners in the educational process. At *Jump Start Preschool*, we:

- **Engage in Regular Communication:** We keep families informed about their child's progress, any concerns, and strategies used in the classroom. We also encourage and value family input and feedback.
- **Support Family Involvement:** We strive to provide resources and strategies for families to ensure that learning and development continue outside of the preschool environment.

3. Active Participation in IEP Meetings

Jump Start Preschool is committed to being an active participant in IEP meetings to ensure that the child's needs are thoroughly addressed. Our role includes:

- **Attending IEP Meetings:** Our educators and specialists strive to attend IEP meetings to contribute our observations, insights, and recommendations. We ensure that our perspectives as preschool providers are represented in the discussion.
- **Implementing Recommendations:** We strive to act on any recommendations or changes resulting from IEP meetings and monitor their impact on the child's learning and development.

TRANSLATOR AVAILABILITY

Jump Start Preschool will work to have translators available as needed at meetings, workshops, and conferences to ensure strong communication between families and the program.

We have a Russian, Arabic and Spanish translator who are part of our team in Feeding Hills. We also integrate the use of translation apps in the classroom to aid the children and families in communication and understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARENT HANDBOOK, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

I, the Parent/Guardian of _____, acknowledge that I have received a digital copy of *Jump Start Preschool* Parent Handbook. I understand that it contains important information about the center's policies. I understand that this Parent Handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise.

I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the materials and I will abide by the policies and procedures implemented to provide a safe, nurturing environment for all children. I understand that failing to abide by these policies and procedures can impact my child's enrollment.

Additionally, I understand this parent handbook is shared via brightwheel. It is the expectation that once uploaded or updated, I am expected and held accountable to read it.

I further understand that this Parent Handbook supersedes and replaces any prior handbooks or materials previously distributed.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Program Director Signature

Date