

WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

Children's Connection

Positive social relationships build healthy, caring children. Healthy, caring children become confident and independent individuals. Confident, independent children become successful learners.

Start your child's future off the right way.



The Waukegan Park District prides itself on delivering quality programs and meeting the developmental needs of young children through age appropriate activities and strict safety guidelines.

Thanks for being a part of our Program!

WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

Children's Connection

Pre-School Enrichment Program



2009-2010

Parent Handbook

**2008-2009
CHILDREN'S CONNECTION
TENTATIVE CALANDAR
* - No School**

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September 7*	Labor Day– No School
September 8	First Day Of School For The T/Th Classes
September 9	First Day Of School For The MWF Class
September 15	Parent Orientation 6:00-7:00 pm *Parents only
October 12*	Columbus Day– No School
November 11*	Veteran's Day– No School
November 25-27*	Thanksgiving - No School
December 21-January 1*	Winter Break - No School
January 4	School Resumes
January 18*	Martin Luther King Day - No School
January 22 & 23*	Teacher In-service Days—No School
February 15*	President's Day - No School
March 29 - April 2*	Spring Break - No School
April 2*	Good Friday– No School
May 20	Last Day of School For Tu/Th Class
May 21	Last Day Of School For M/W/F Class

**Children's Connection is in session on some days that
the School District is not.
Please mark your calendars to help you plan accordingly.**

POWER OUTAGES

The Children's Connection facility cannot maintain state childcare safety regulations regarding minimum safe light levels and temperature control without electrical power. For this reason, classes may be cancelled due to a power outage. Tuition will not be pro-rated.

VISITING CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Any parent who has a child enrolled in the program may visit the program at any time. The staff encourages parents to visit, observe and participate in the experiences of their children. We also welcome visitors who may want to observe the program before deciding to register their child. However, these prospective parent visitors need to call in advance to make an appointment. Education students and others may also visit the classroom, but they must call in advance to make an appointment. (847-360-4700, Ask for the Children's Connection Supervisor.) **Only children registered for the Children's Connection program are permitted to attend class. Siblings, cousins, friends, etc. who are not registered for the program may not attend.**

Numbers to Remember:

Belvidere Recreation Center: 847-360-4700

Bevier Center: 847-662-0270

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to Children's Connection It's the Natural Choice!

Located in Bevier Park, the Children's Connection program provides a uniquely beautiful and rich natural environment where children can explore, learn and grow healthy in the open air. The outdoor environment is a fascinating extension of our classroom.

The Waukegan Park District's Children's Connection offers an enriching learning experience to children three to five years old. At Children's Connection, children learn in a free choice, play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to foster children's social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative growth.

We take advantage of children's natural interests and abilities to explore and learn. At Children's Connection, children get lots of opportunities to investigate and discover more about the world around them. The program is designed for your child to experience success each and every day. Our program fosters a love of learning that children will carry with them in the years to come. We plan math, music, movement, literacy, art, dramatic play, science, computer, and large motor activities. We provide opportunities for your child to become an active, self-motivated, independent and confident learner who is prepared to succeed in school.

At Children's Connection, we provide a relaxed and supportive social environment where your child is treated as a unique and valued individual who learns at his or her own pace. Teachers foster children's social relationships and nurture developing social skills—how to initiate friendships, how to maintain friendships and how to solve conflicts through negotiation and compromise. Here, children are encouraged to express opinions and ideas, and to respect their friends' ideas.

CURRICULUM GOALS

Curriculum goals have been developed in accordance with guidelines described by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Social/Emotional Development

- develop a sense of security
- provide opportunities for the child to succeed
- build a positive self-concept
- develop creativity
- develop responsibility
- develop rewarding relationships with others
- work and play in large and small groups
- learn to accept limits and routines
- make a successful transition from parent/guardian to independence



Fine and Gross Motor Skills

- develop a positive attitude toward active, healthy exercise
- enhance body awareness
- develop self-expression through movement
- provide opportunities to explore the outdoor environment
- improve coordination and balance
- provide the opportunity to challenge and develop large and small muscles

Children entering after April 1, will not receive a formal conference; however, the teacher may talk informally with parents, informing them of their child's adjustment to the program.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Information pertaining to an individual child shall not be disclosed to persons other than the Waukegan Park District's Children's Connection staff unless the parent(s) of the child has granted permission to do so. If individuals, agencies, or schools, request information, or if outside consultants are utilized, the parent must sign a special consent form obtained from the Children's Connection supervisor before any information will be given.

SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES

The Children's Connection will be closed only if the weather is so bad that the teachers cannot get to the facility. If the Waukegan Public Schools are canceled due to severe weather, Children's Connection will also be cancelled.

Please tune to radio station WKRS (AM 1220) or WXLC (FM 102.3) for any school closing announcements. Tuition will not be pro-rated.

If a tornado warning is heard over our weather radio, the instructors will take the children to the bathrooms of the Bevier Center. We will be practicing this procedure so that the children will be less frightened if we ever have a real tornado warning.

Parents are asked to refrain from picking up children until the storm has passed. All children will be held at the program until the storm is over and parents can come to pick them up.

SEPARATION

When your child first starts this program, he or she may want you to stay for a while. We strongly encourage you to stay with your child for a little while on the first day of the program. Walk around the classroom and help your child explore the learning activities and locate the bathroom to help make them feel safe and comfortable before you leave. Make sure you introduce yourself and your child to all of the teachers.

Some children separate from their parents more easily than others do. This is very normal because children's personalities are unique. Sometimes it is necessary for a parent to stay for the entire first day or stay several days in order to give additional support to the child. Please do not be alarmed if this happens as it is very normal.

Remember, your child is entering an unfamiliar building with unfamiliar adults and children. Your child may need a little more patience, time, and understanding in order to make a successful adjustment to the program. It may be helpful to develop a plan with the teachers about how to build your child's confidence about being away from you. Please talk with a teacher or the Recreation Specialist if you have questions about how to help prepare your child.

CONFERENCES

Special conferences are held at any time the parent, teacher or supervisor feels a conference is necessary. Parents are encouraged to talk with their child's teachers and/or supervisor at any time. We always want the lines of communication between parents and staff to be open.

Conferences will be scheduled for all parents. The purpose of this conference is to inform parents of their child's progress in the motor, concept, language, and social-emotional development.

Cognitive Abilities

- develop children's abilities to solve problems and make good decisions
- encourage children's natural interests in exploration and experimentation
- help children learn to question in order to learn
- develop a growing attention span
- encourage a joy of learning

Language

- encourage positive interactions with both peers and adults
- develop a love of stories and books
- provide exposure to the rhyme of songs
- support children to use language as a tool to further their curiosity
- help children express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and needs
- support creative self-expression

Positive Social Interaction

- provide opportunities to meet new friends
- provide activities to promote communication skills
- gear activities where listening skills are needed
- offer opportunities of individual leadership
- provide group activities rather than independent activities

If you have questions about our curriculum goals or how the activities we plan achieve those goals, please feel free to ask the Recreation Specialists, Program Staff, or Recreation Supervisor.

REGISTRATION, TUITION, REFUNDS AND WITHDRAWAL

REGISTRATION:

- The registration fee and first and last month's tuition must be paid at the time of registration.
- Registration must be made at the Belvidere Recreation Center.
- Children ages 2-5 are eligible to participate in the program.\ however, must be the appropriate age by September 1, 2009.
- Health forms must be returned to the Belvidere Recreation Center within two weeks of registration.
- Application / Medical information must be filled out at the time of registration.

TUITION AND FEES:

During the year, the tuition is due by the first of every month. Checks should be made payable to: **Waukegan Park District**

Payments are to be mailed only to:
Waukegan Park District
2000 Belvidere Road
Waukegan, IL. 60085

Payments may also be brought to the Belvidere Recreation Center at 412 S. Lewis Ave. in Waukegan.

A service charge for late payments will be administered if a payment is not received by the first of the month. The service charge will be \$1 per day beginning on the second day of the month. If the tuition is not paid by the fifth of the month, a \$10 late fee will be assessed. Tuition sent via mail must be postmarked by the first of the month. If the first is a holiday or a Sunday, the payment will be due on the next business day. Special arrangements are available for family emergencies, temporary financial difficulties, etc. The Children's Connection supervisor must approve exceptions. Please call the Children's Connection supervisor at 360-4700 as soon as you are aware of a difficulty.

MONTHLY CALENDAR AND WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Bi-weekly, parents will receive a lesson plan outlining program activities. Each month parents will receive a monthly newsletter informing them of art projects, classroom visitors or special events at school, and Park District happenings.

Please be aware that occasionally, we will deviate from the planned activities due to weather, because children bring their own ideas, or because of a scheduling conflict.

From time to time special notices will be sent home with each child. Please check your child's bin each day for these notices and for your child's artwork and belongings.



Label Everything!

WHAT TO BRING TO THE PROGRAM

Your child should bring a backpack everyday with a change of clothes (everything marked). The change of clothes is helpful in case of spills, messy projects, or toilet accidents.

If your child would like to bring personal items, remind them that it is their responsibility to keep track of the items. Please do not allow your child to bring anything that would be catastrophic to lose.

In cold weather, your child should bring appropriate coat, hat, mittens, snow pants and boots for going outside everyday. When the weather is changing in the spring and the fall, it is handy to put an extra sweater or sweatshirt in the backpack.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES

At the time of registration, you will sign a consent form authorizing the Waukegan Park District to seek immediate medical attention for your child in the event of an emergency or serious injury.

It is our policy to contact a paramedic service first and the parent second. The costs associated with this service should be covered by your health insurance and will not be assumed by the park district.

SNACKS

ALL FOODS BROUGHT FROM HOME MUST BE PRE-PACKAGED.

Each day a snack will be served with juice to drink. The children enjoy this time to relax and socialize with their friends and teachers. We will provide juice and crackers for children, but we also appreciate when families send snacks occasionally.

There will be a snack sign-up calendar posted. It is best to keep snacks simple and nutritious. Good nutrition for children is important. Seeing other children enjoying fruits and vegetables often encourages children to try these foods. We discourage cookies, cake and other foods high in sugar and fat.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL SNACKS

Parents are welcome to send snack on birthdays or other special days. Please let the teachers know in advance if you will be bringing snack or planning anything special: there will be a sign-up sheet in your child's classroom.

Treats with some nutrition mixed in with the fun are encouraged even for these celebrations. Compromise ideas include: muffins instead of cupcakes (even topped with Ready Whip!), bananas with chocolate sauce or Cool Whip for dipping, apples and caramel sauce.

Please DO NOT BRING PEANUTS or items containing peanuts to our program.

REFUND/WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

There is a \$5 administrative fee on all refunds. To receive a refund on tuition fees, the request **must be made in writing no later than one week before payment is due** on the first of the next month. Withdrawal forms can be obtained at the Belvidere Recreation Center, 412 South Lewis Ave.

If notice is given **less than one business week** before the first of the month, your last month's tuition is **not refundable**.

This written withdrawal notice must be given to the Recreation Supervisor at the Belvidere Recreation Center, *not to the teachers*.

A refund will NOT be offered due to failure to attend the program.

We do not pro-rate tuition for classes missed due to vacation or illness.

❖2009/2010 School Year Fees❖

The registration fee (\$40/\$44) and first and last month's tuition must be paid at the time of registration.

Sun Rays– 2-3yrs

Registration # 2134

Monthly Payment: \$93 resident / \$103 non-resident

Days: Tuesday & Thursday

Program Dates: 9/8-5/20

Time of Class: 9-11:30am

Shooting Stars-- 3-4yrs

Registration # 2135

Monthly Payment: \$165 resident / \$182 non-resident

Days: Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Program Dates: 9/9-5/21

Time of Class: 9-Noon

Children's Connection Daily Schedule

Sun Rays Schedule

9:00-9:15 - Arrival of Children

Teachers greet children and parents. Parents sign-in. Parents let teachers know of special circumstances of the day such as fatigue, special events, or if someone different will pick up the child.

9:00-9:45 - Free Choice Learning Activities Are Available

Activities include: art project, writing table project, special science area exhibit and/or materials, math materials, music, sensory activities, dramatic play area. Teachers support social and cognitive learning through play.

9:45-10:00 - Clean Up Time

Children participate in clean up as an activity that teaches cooperation, responsibility, sorting, pre-reading, and organization.

10:00 -10:20 - Story Time

Children will be exposed to numerous stories, songs, rhymes, and fingerplays that will help them to grasp the day's themes and ideas .

10:20-10:45 - Hand washing and Snack

Children learn hygiene, self-help skills, and good nutrition by washing their own hands, pouring their own juice, enjoying a healthy snack, and throwing their trash away.

10:45-11:15 - Outdoor Play

Children exercise large muscles, develop a positive attitude toward healthy exercise, and learn to enjoy the outdoor environment. In warmer weather, outdoor learning activities are also planned.

11:15-11:30 - Parents Pick Up Children

Return to the classroom, collect belongings, papers and projects from the child's bin. Teachers let parents know how the day went for children.

HEALTH

A report of a recent physical examination is required within two weeks of registration. This is necessary for your child's safety as well as the safety of others in the program. Make sure your doctor has noted any special needs— allergies or motor difficulties, etc.

If a child will be absent, please call an instructor by 9:00 a.m. at the Bevier Center at 847-662-0270. There are two reasons children need to stay home when they are sick.

First, precautions need to be taken to prevent illnesses being spread to other children, their families, and the staff. Second, children who are ill will not be comfortable in the hustle and bustle of the classroom even if contagion is not an issue.

For the protection of all children, a child who is showing signs of illness should not be sent to the program. Your child must be kept home if he or she shows any of the following symptoms within the preceding 24 hours:

fever	continual cough	diarrhea	rash	vomiting
sore throat	discharge from nose, ears or eyes			

Parents will be notified that they need to pick up their child if the instructor feels the child is sick and should not be at the program.

A child must be fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the program. If your child requires Tylenol , Ibuprofen or other medication to lower a fever, your child is still sick and should not be at the program. Should a child develop a contagious disease, the parent should notify teachers immediately so that proper precautions can be taken and all other parents notified. The following illnesses require a doctor's note before returning to the program:

strep throat	chicken pox	mumps	influenza
pin worms	head lice	scarlet fever	pink eye
scarletina	measles		

We want children to stay healthy all year long. Keep in mind that children tend to stay healthier when they have the proper amount of rest and good nutrition as well as the appropriate dress for the weather each day

Children are not permitted to walk around in stocking feet for safety reasons. Our program encourages independence. Preschool-age children are learning to dress themselves with little assistance. Please dress your children in clothing that they can manage on their own in order for them to experience success.

A limited supply of clothes is kept at school for toilet accidents. These accidents are normal and common with young children. Clothing will be changed without comment or recrimination from teachers. When clothing is used, the parents are expected to return the school's clothing laundered.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is designed to help children develop internal controls for their behavior. Children learn to accept responsibility for their actions as well as how and why to follow rules. Discipline shall be in the form of clear, positive statements along with redirection toward more appropriate behavior and a clear statement of natural or logical consequences if a negative behavior continues.

When conflicts arise between children, we use a problem solving approach involving both children explaining their perspectives in order to resolve the situation. Time-outs are used only if redirection is persistently ignored. Time-outs last no more than one minute for each year of age. Parents will be notified at the end of the day if a child has had a time-out.

Aggressive, destructive or dangerous behavior that is severe or chronic will be addressed on an individual basis. Parents will be made aware of both the behavior and how the behavior is being addressed in the classroom. If aggressive, destructive, or dangerous behavior continues, the Recreation Specialist will meet with the parents to develop a plan to help the child function appropriately in the classroom.

If, after these steps have been taken, the child is unable to function appropriately in the classroom, it may become necessary to dismiss the child from the Children's Connection program and, if possible, refer the child to another program that can meet the child's needs.

Children's Connection Daily Schedule

Shooting Stars Schedule

9:00-9:15 - Arrival of Children

Teachers greet children and parents. Parents sign-in. Parents let teachers know of special circumstances of the day such as fatigue, special events, or if someone different will pick up the child.

9:00-9:45 - Free Choice Learning Activities Are Available

Activities include: art project, writing table project, special science area exhibit and/or materials, math materials, music, sensory activities, dramatic play area. Teachers support social and cognitive learning through play.

9:45-10:00 - Clean Up Time

Children participate in clean up as an activity that teaches cooperation, responsibility, sorting, pre-reading, and organization.

10:00 -10:20 - Group Time

Children develop attention span using letter activities and learning games, and language and listening skills during group discussions. Children participate in group math, language and science games and activities.

10:20-10:45 - Hand washing and Snack

Children learn hygiene, self-help skills, and good nutrition by washing their own hands, pouring their own juice, enjoying a healthy snack, and throwing their trash away.

10:45-11:15 - Story time and Songs

Children will be exposed to numerous stories, songs, rhymes, and fingerplays that will help them to grasp the day's themes and ideas .

11:15-11:45 - Outdoor Play— 32 degrees or higher only

Children exercise large muscles, develop a positive attitude toward healthy exercise, and learn to enjoy the outdoor environment. In warmer weather, outdoor learning activities are also planned.

11:45-12:00 - Parents Pick Up Children

Return to the classroom, collect belongings, papers and projects from the child's bin. Teachers let parents know how the day went for children.

Please note that time spent in activities may vary according to weather or special activities. At the beginning of the year the weather is often very nice so more time will be spent outdoors, for example. At the beginning of the year, group time is often very short. As the group's attention span develops, more time is spent at group time.

We strive to allow children to have large motor exercise every day. When we can't go outside, we have large motor movement games and exercise activities inside.

Please note that the Shooting Stars spend a little more time engaged in group learning activities. **Please feel free to ask about our curriculum and activities if you have any questions.**

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, AND LATE PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Always accompany your child into the classroom and sign-in.

For your child's safety, make sure that a teacher knows you have brought your child and that you are leaving. A child should never be left in a hall or in an empty classroom.

Children may not be dropped off earlier than 9:00 a.m. Children must be picked up inside the classroom no later than 11:30 a.m. for the Sun Rays program and 12:00 p.m. for the Shooting Stars program. Please be sure to sign your child in and out of the program everyday.

Dismissal time is 11:30 a.m. for the 3 yr. old program and 12:00 p.m. for the 4/5 yr. old program. **There is a \$7 charge for every 10 minutes a parent is late for pick-up.** Please let us know as soon as possible if an emergency will keep you from picking up your child on time. If late pick-up is frequent, it may become necessary to dismiss the child from the program and, if possible, refer the child to another program that can meet the child's needs.

If a child has not been picked up one hour after dismissal, contact cannot be made with parents or emergency contacts, we must call the police because the child is considered abandoned. Staff will make every effort to contact everyone listed on your child's registration form before calling the police.

Do not double park. Park only in the marked areas in the parking lot. Please do not leave children in car unattended.

The authorized release names listed on your application form are the only people to whom a child will be released. Parents may submit a signed note to a Children's Connection teacher to add names to this list at any time. For your child's safety, if an unauthorized person comes to pick up a child, the child will not be released, and the parents will be called. Please keep this list up to date.

The doors to the facility will be locked 15 minutes after drop-off time and unlocked when the class returns from outside or 10 minutes before pick-up time. If you come when the door is locked, ring the doorbell located to the right of the outside double doors.

DRESS

Children should come to school in comfortable, sturdy, and washable clothes. Some projects and activities **WILL** be messy and tough on clothes. We also suggest gym shoes or other soft-soled shoes—no sandals—for comfort and safety. All outside clothing such as hats, boots, and mittens must be labeled with your child's name. Many parents shop at the same local stores and we see many duplicate jackets, boots, hats, etc. Labeled articles are almost always quickly returned to their rightful owners.

We will go outside when weather permits, so children should be suitably dressed for the weather. If your child is going to wear snow boots, be sure to send a pair of shoes.