

**LAKE FOREST COOPERATIVE
NURSERY SCHOOL**

PARENT'S HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The Lake Forest Cooperative Nursery School is a non-profit organization formed and operated by its members to provide nursery school education for their children. It is licensed by the New Jersey State Department of Education and meets all State standards in staff, facility, and program.

Classes are held Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and afternoons. School opens in the middle of September and closes the 1st week in June. School vacations coincide with the Jefferson Township Public School dates including closing of school due to inclement weather.

Cooperative nursery schools have the unique feature of being organized and administered by the parents who in turn employ qualified teachers to direct the educational program. In cooperatives, parents can assume some of the responsibilities. Mothers, and occasionally fathers, take the place of teacher's aides. All parents assume the responsibility of membership in a non-profit cooperative organization, which involves attendance at bi-monthly business meetings and also volunteer jobs for each member.

Special values accrue to parents as well as to children in this type of nursery school: a new appreciation for each parent for his/her own child as a person; a new insight about supporting his/her own child's sense of adequacy while grooming him/her emotionally for comfortable social living; new understanding of the patterns of child growth; a sense of comradeship with teachers; skills in group membership; and community service that is integrated with family life.

GOALS OF THE SCHOOL

The Lake Forest Nursery School does not propose to teach academic subjects per se. It seeks to provide a well-equipped and happy social environment away from home and to help the preschool child develop as an individual in the following areas:

1. **Making a Successful Break from Home**

A child needs a feeling of belonging, one of being in a world which is interested in him/her and makes him/her feel secure. The nursery school provides this atmosphere. It is a place where he/she can feel comfortable and have a good time because the teacher and helping mothers try to be as warm and protective as the child's own mother.

2. **Learning to Be With Other Children**

Some children are very social and enjoy group experiences. For others, the shy or introverted child, these experiences may be frightening. We try to be attentive to this child and encourage him/her in quiet play (a game or a book or perhaps painting at the easel), always making sure that he/she realizes that we understand his/her need and approve of it. Perhaps this child will never be an outgoing, extraverted type; but by gradually including him/her in group play or discussion, he/she will keep growing at his/her own rate of speed and will begin to enjoy being part of the group.

3. **Developing an Interest and Joy in Learning**

By planning experiences that will be meaningful so that he/she will begin to form a good image of him/herself; by letting the child discover what an interesting place the world is; by encouraging the child in all his/her experiences and answering his/her questions with honesty and consideration for his/her age level; with simple experiments, field trips, and observations about his/her world; by learning to listen, to speak in front of a group and not be afraid, and to take direction. All of these lead to more important lessons in the future.

4. Developing Security and a Feeling Of Success

A child must feel that he/she can do things successfully so that he/she can be proud of him/herself. Nursery school encourages this by providing the right materials and the time and space in which to use them. Freedom and creativity are essential to the child. Praise, interest, and affection for the child and his/her work give him/her incentive and a feeling of security and success.

5. Developing Self-Expression

If a child has not had the opportunity to paint or otherwise express him/herself in an art medium, he/she will usually start this new experience by experimenting. When the child becomes more at home with the medium and when praise and encouragement are given his/her own feelings and ideas will find expression.

6. Developing Responsibility

Taking care of the toys and materials in school, helping to clean the play areas, handling different materials, improving health habits, and learning basic safety rules – all of these are ways of developing responsibility in a young child.

APPROACH TO CHILDREN

1. In giving help of any kind, aim toward a growth in independence and self-reliance.
2. When a child is in difficulty, offer help before he/she reaches frustration level. Show or tell him/her what to do, don't do it for him/her. Give him/her only enough assistance to get him/her started on his/her own again.
3. Dressing for outdoors – show child how to spread leggings on floor to make dressing easier. Get zipper started but let child pull it up.
4. Give reasons for requests, i.e.; “let's move this board because it's not steady”.
5. When either decision is acceptable, let the child make the choice, i.e.; “would you like to paint or do puzzles?”
6. Let children know when they will need to finish an activity and give incentive to the dawdler by focusing interest on what comes next.
7. If a child shows strong resistance to a suggestion, drop the matter if unimportant. Otherwise, turn the problem over to the teacher. She is better able to understand the child's reaction and needs because he/she sees him/her every day. Unconditional surrender sometimes helps!

MOVE-INS & MOVE-OUTS

A “move-in” refers to moving the nursery school furniture from the storage area into position in the all-purpose room. For a “move-out”, all furniture is moved back into the storage area

It is the responsibility of the designated parent to obtain the key to the building from the Chairperson or Treasurer.

Our hired moving team will be responsible for the bulk of the move in/out, while the designated parent is responsible for the following:

Move In parents will complete the vacuuming of all rugs, change the vacuum cleaner bag as needed, disinfect the tops of the furniture and clean the toys according to the rotation list below:

*Week 1: Dress-up clothes, shoes and accessories and toys near circle time/sbc rug.

*Week 2: Play kitchen, dishes, food, etc. (anything in center area)

*Week 3: Arrange activity shelves neatly (all toys on table toy shelves)

*Week 4: Arrange blocks on block shelf, also the tracks, legos, tools and any other toys in this section.

The Move Out parent will completely mop the floors in the all purpose room and kitchen area, and windex the glass doors.

In general, Move-ins are scheduled on Mondays and Move-outs are scheduled on Thursdays, at either 3:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m., depending on which time is most convenient for all parties. It should be noted that other arrangements may be made by the individuals to fit their schedules. It should only take 30-45 minutes for a move to be completed. If you cannot make a scheduled move, you must call every mother in your class in order to find a substitute. If you are unable to find a substitute, call the Chairperson or Co-Chairperson.

There is an area in the storage room designated for the large furniture. The floor has been marked with tape to show the section provided for the nursery school. It is important that all of our equipment be behind these taped lines.

A fine will be levied if a move-in or move-out is missed and no substitute is found. (See “FINES”)

BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

Bi-Monthly meetings are generally held the first Monday of September, November, January, March and May. Meeting attendance is required. The meetings will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. This is a time for the important business of running our school. It is also a time for questions and sharing ideas. Any suggestions for the improvement of our school are always welcome. Children are discouraged from attending meetings. If a meeting is missed, it is the duty of the family to read the minutes. The minutes will be posted on the bulletin board. If you are unable to attend, please call a board member -- two excused absences per family will be accepted. Any unexcused absence from a monthly meeting will result in a fine. (See “FINES”)

TEACHER'S AIDES/SUBSTITUTES

Each week, one-two parents are required to act as teacher's aides for class. Depending on the class size, you will be required to serve approximately every six weeks. Helping parents are assigned alphabetically for the AM class and reverse alphabetically for the PM class. AM helping parents should arrive 15 minutes prior to the beginning of class, PM helping parents should arrive 5 minutes before class and be prepared to stay 10 minutes at the end of class. There is a list of available helping parents to act as substitutes. If your substitute is not another helping parent, they must fill out the necessary paperwork (i.e. conviction disclosure, character references, health report, Mantoux test, fingerprinting and CARI) before they arrive in school. It is your job to make sure your substitute is aware of the duties that need to be performed. Failure to attend as a helping parent or provide a substitute on your assigned day will result in a fine. (See "FINES")

DUTIES FOR THE MORNING TEACHER'S AIDES*

1. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to beginning of class.
2. Open all wooden doors and unlock back exit door.
3. Check all outlets to make sure there are outlet covers in the sockets.
4. Make sure "Disinfecting" Wipes and Sprays are always being used
5. Wipe down toilets and sinks with wipes, bleach spray or antibacterial spray.
6. Make sure classroom furniture is in correct position.
7. Prepare art or other project materials (teacher will direct you).
8. Check all bags for correspondence and library books after all the children have arrived. Mark in returned library books.
9. Play and talk with the children.
10. Help direct clean up. Remember: Direct – do not do it for them.
11. Help take the children to the bathroom in an orderly fashion. Wash up one at a time. Again, direct.
12. Help with snack. Feel free to join in. Bring a snack and sit with the children.
13. All tables need to be wiped once with a disinfecting wipes and then sprayed with a disinfecting spray after every use (i.e. snack time, art project, etc.). Also sweep under and around all tables.
14. Assist the teacher with the art projects. Usually prepare table while teacher and children are engaged in another activity.
15. When the children's art projects and paintings are dry, put them in their bags.
16. Learning time – sit by the children who need a little extra help and direct individually.
17. Help the children dress for outdoor play. While the teacher has the children outside for playtime, straighten up the classroom in preparation for the afternoon session. Vacuum the rugs.

DUTIES FOR THE AFTERNOON TEACHER'S AIDES*

1. Please arrive at least 5 minutes prior to beginning of class. Plan to stay 10 minutes after school is over to complete clean up and prepare classroom for the following day.
2. Prepare art or other project materials (teacher will direct you).
3. Check all bags for correspondence and library books after all the children have arrived. Mark in returned library books.
4. Play and talk with the children.
5. Help direct clean up. Remember: Direct – do not do it for them.
6. Help take the children to the bathroom in an orderly fashion. Wash up one at a time. Again, direct.
7. Help with snack. Feel free to join in. Bring a snack and sit with the children.
8. All tables need to be wiped once with a disinfecting wipes and then sprayed with a disinfecting spray after every use (i.e. snack time, art project, etc.). Also sweep under and around all tables.
9. Assist the teacher with the art projects. Usually prepare table while teacher and children are engaged in another activity.
10. When the children's art projects and paintings are dry, put them in their bags.
11. Learning time – sit by the children who need a little extra help and direct individually.
12. Help the children dress for outdoor play. While the teacher has the children outside for playtime, wash paint brushes, cap paints, etc. Straighten up the classroom. Vacuum the rugs. Wash out squirt bottles on Thursday's.
13. Close wooden doors and lock and lock back exit door.

*For detailed info please refer to the Teacher's Aide Handbook

TUITION PAYMENT

Monthly tuition fee is due by the 1st of each month. Payment can be made in one of the following ways:

1. may be put in the Treasurer's folder;
2. may be paid directly to the Treasurer at the monthly meeting.

A late fee of \$1.00 each day will be charged if payment is not received by the 8th of the month.

FINES

If a parent fails to participate as **helping parent** on an assigned day without providing a satisfactory substitute, a \$15.00 fine payable with the following month's tuition will be levied on that family. A satisfactory substitute is another participating parent or adult who has met the health requirements.

If a parent cannot take his/her assigned turn and does not provide a satisfactory substitute for **move-in or move-out**, a \$25.00 fine will be levied with the next month's tuition and distributed to other team members by the Co-Chair. A partial fine will be levied for more than one late arrival

Failure to attend **monthly meetings** (only two "excused" absences permitted) will result in a \$15.00 fine.

SMOKING

There is to be no smoking on the premises when school is in session. As a safety precaution, it is suggested that you not smoke while driving car pools or on trips. Thank you.

FUNDRAISERS

A variety of fundraisers are provided throughout the year. Each family will have an annual fundraising requirement. Should you not wish to participate in the fundraising activities, you have the option of writing a check to cover your fundraising requirement – except for raffles in which participation is mandatory.

BIRTHDAYS

We encourage the celebration of birthdays and "half-birthdays" (for those children born in the summer months). Let the teacher know what day you'd like to celebrate your child's birthday and fill out the no-snack forms for distribution by the helping parents. It is then your responsibility to provide the snack, drink, plates, napkins, cups for that day. Parents may also choose to do some special activity with the children such as a puppet show, nature walk, exercise class, slide or movie presentation, storytelling, or make a craft. Use your imagination!

OTHER PARTIES

We have special parties for Halloween, Winter Holiday, Valentine's Day, and Spring. Parents will be asked to donate something for at least one of the parties...sign-up sheets will be distributed by the teacher.

BULLETIN BOARD

Your link with the school between meetings is the Bulletin Board. Important notes, changes in calendar, and trip/party reminders will all be posted. If you are switching a day as helping mother, please note the change on the calendar. This is a courtesy to the teacher so that she will know of the change in schedule.

EQUIPMENT REPAIRS

If you come across any broken toys or furniture, please be sure to make the teacher or Chairperson aware of the problem.

CALENDARS

Your link to the events of the school will be the monthly calendar. All helping mothers, special events, trips, and meetings will be printed on this calendar. Calendars are usually given out at the monthly meeting or placed in your child's book bag. In the event you do not receive one for the current month, it is your responsibility to pick one up at the Bulletin Board. You can also check our website for the most up to date information: www.lfyc.org and click on nursery school.

CLOTHING

It is advisable that you use discretion in the clothing your child wears. Casual play cloths usually are most comfortable and practical at nursery school. Children often participate in activities that prove messy. During the colder months, children should come prepared every day to play outside. Boots, mittens, hats, leggings or snowsuits are a must. The clubhouse is often cool during the winter months so it is also advisable to send your child with a sweater every day. Please be sure that every article of clothing that your child removes is marked with his/her name.

SNOW DAYS AND DELAYED OPENINGS

Closing of school due to inclement weather shall coincide with Jefferson Township Public School closings. These closings can be heard on the local radio stations, as well as receiving a phone call from a board member.

Should the Jefferson Township Schools have a delayed opening for inclement weather, our nursery school will open ½ hour later at 9:45 for the A.M. class. There will be no change in time for the P.M. class.

TRIPS

We have approximately 4-5 field trips per year. Attendance to all field trips is encouraged, but not required. Should you be unable to attend, you may send your child with another parent. It is your responsibility to provide that parent with your child's emergency information and carseat. That parent shall be responsible for your child for the duration of the trip.

Volunteer Action List

Each parent that is not part of the executive board must volunteer for at least one activity per school year. The board will distribute this list at the first meeting in September. The executive board may change, combine or add activities based on the needs of the school. Listed below are the responsibilities associated with each of our current volunteer activities:

Holiday Dinner:

Plan and execute the event.

Invitations

Making the reservation, collecting fees and/or working with the restaurant

Teacher does not pay

Publicizing event: make calls etc. to invite present, future & past parents.

May Mothers' Dinner:

Plan and execute the event.

Make the reservation at restaurant of choice.

Collect fee from all moms or work out arrangement with restaurant – Teacher does not pay.

Graduation:

Two volunteers will be needed. One to coordinate the task list and the other will coordinate the meal

Work with all parents to assign specific tasks and food donations

Tasks include: working with teacher executing theme with decorations, props, stage setup, etc., setup and cleanup of the event, and creation of children's certificates and programs.

Planning the meal – assignment of food and beverage items to parents of the Nursery School.

Maintenance:

Check the following supplies once a month.

*Paper towels

*Antibacterial soap refill in both bathrooms

*Toilet paper

*Kitchen size trash bags

*Tissues

*Baby wipes

*Disinfectant sprays and wipes

Create and distribute a donation list to the parents at the beginning of each month

Teacher Recognition:

Coordinate events surrounding Teacher's Appreciation Week and Teacher's birthday.

Choose, collect and present a joint teacher's gift at our Holiday Dinner.

Create an end of year gift from the students.

Class Trips:

One Volunteer will be needed to plan and execute each of the following trips:

Sept- October

January-February

March-April

End of year, June trip

FIND PLACES TO VISIT through newspaper articles, trip folder information from previous years or from suggestions from Nursery School members.

MEET WITH TEACHER to brainstorm ideas for trips and determine appropriate times of the year to visit select locations. This will enable the teacher to tie-in the field trips to the theme of lessons.

Contact the place we would like to visit and MAKE ARRANGEMENTS for an available day and time. Consult with the teacher and Executive Committee to be sure that the scheduled trip does not interfere with any school activities.

PERMISSION SLIPS. Fill out, distribute and collect permission slips. Place all permission slips in the "Trips" folder before the day of the trip. The State requires that these slips be saved for a seven-year period. The permission slip should be signed by the parent with the date and the name of the child along with the name of the field trip location. If the child's parent will not be attending, the permission slips should indicate who the parent chooses to accept responsibility for their child – stating that it is the parent's responsibility to provide that "substitute" parent with the child's emergency information and carseat. The "substitute" parent shall be responsible for that child for the duration of the trip.

COLLECT ALL FEES, if required, pertaining to the trip – Teacher does not pay.

Consult with teacher to determine whether or not siblings may attend the scheduled trip.

Arrange for an adequate number of DRIVERS if not all parents are attending. Each child must have a seat belt.

COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS as to whether food is to be taken on the trip, or if special clothing should be worn.

INFORM CO-CHAIRPERSON (responsible for calendar) of the date and time of the trip, so that she can include it in the school's calendar.

PRINT DIRECTIONS for destination, if not local.

Send out reminder notes the week before the trip.

Take pictures and send to local paper.

Ways & Means: Fundraising

One volunteer will be needed to run each of the 4 fundraisers, and additional volunteer may be needed to execute Supermarket Gift Cards.

Responsible to plan and execute one fund-raiser at Lake Forest Nursery School.

The Executive Board will decide the financial goal/need of the school. It is required to brainstorm fund-raiser ideas with the Board before presenting them to the parents.

The following are the suggested fundraisers, based on past profit and success:

Supermarket Cards (Pathmark and Shoprite)

50/50 raffle

Kids Stuff Coupon books

Flowers

After type of fund-raiser is decided, company must be contacted to have order books/forms sent, tickets printed etc.

Distribute sales packets to all parents and teacher, if desired. Include a letter of selling instructions along with due date of sale.

After sale is over, collect all paperwork and money. Fill out any master order forms, tally sheets etc. Count money to verify correct amount.

Turn money into Treasurer; get check for company if necessary. Also turn in receipts for any expenses incurred during sale (i.e. Advertising, ticket fee) to Treasurer for reimbursement.

Report profit made to parents at the monthly meeting.

Approximately halfway through the school year, update parents as to where they stand in achieving their fundraising goal.

*** Because state laws are so detailed regarding 50/50 sales, it is suggested either a person from Ways & Means or a person from the general membership be solely responsible for all 50/50 raffles. Specific procedures, written follow up reports, local permits are all essential and **must not be overlooked**. If state and local requirements are not properly met our gambling license could be permanently revoked. It is not complicated; it just needs someone who follows through with details.