

People's Institute



After-School Handbook

Let us introduce ourselves

For the past one hundred years the People's Institute has provided educational, recreational and social services to the people of the Pioneer Valley. Our large Victorian building on Gothic Street reflects our pride and tradition of both our past and present programs. We, at the People's Institute, are particularly proud of our Child Care programs. These programs are designed to provide quality care for your child from toddler age through eighth grade. Our programs are state licensed and staffed with warm, caring, competent personnel, qualified under strict Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) standards.

We would be pleased to have your child join us. Our environment is safe and friendly. The programs are packed with fun, creative, and educational activities and spaces designed for the enjoyment of your child. Some of these activities and areas include:

- Playground with structures, slides and more
- Multipurpose playing field
- Wooded area
- Arts and crafts
- Stage area
- Quiet homework and reading areas
- Resource room

Our purpose, philosophy and goals

People's Institute School Age Child Care Program is concerned with providing quality childcare to children in Kindergarten through eighth grade. This care takes place before or after their school day according to family's needs. All of our programs are available Monday through Friday with the exception of school vacation and holidays (see vacation and holiday section of this handbook).

Before School Care-

This program runs from 7:30-8:30 for grades K-5.

After-School Care-

Care is provided for children after their school day ends, usually 2:30-5:30

It is our philosophy that a program should be designed around each child, their needs, likes and dislikes instead of forcing the child into "fitting" in the program. We recognize the uniqueness of each child and believe in providing encouragement toward the child's positive development of self-worth, self-esteem, and learning. We accomplish this through a warm and caring staff. The staff addresses the needs of the total child. The physical, social, emotional needs of every child will be considered daily and the program design will encourage positive growth in these areas.

Our primary goal is to provide safe, affordable quality care based on our philosophy. We believe our foundation is strong and strive for excellence. We cannot achieve this excellence alone. We encourage parent involvement and value your input.

The celebration of multiculturalism and statement of nondiscrimination

One of People's Institutes greatest assets is the variety of backgrounds, religions, cultures, races of its children, their families, and its staff. We welcome all and encourage a sharing of differences. We value what each individual and family has to offer and teach others. People's Institute does not discriminate with respect to employment, volunteer participation (including Board of Directors), or the provision of services on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, political beliefs, or marital status.

Parental concerns and administrative organization

The People's Institute constantly solicits feedback, criticism, and advice from its parents. We have an "open door" so you are always welcome. We believe parent involvement is important to a child's total well-being. Any concerns or questions should be directed at your child's teacher, Program Director, or Executive Director. This is the line of authority for the daily operation at People's Institute.

The Institute is licensed through Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services. A Board of Directors oversees People's Institute's programs, staff, and administration.

Organizational Chart

Early Education and Care (ECC)
Board of Directors
Executive Director-Maryann Ryan

Trial period, termination and suspension policy

The People's Institute has a 30-day trial period for all children entering our programs. This is designed to allow the teachers and administration to evaluate the child's needs and the program's ability to meet those needs. Parents will be informed of their child's progress during this trial period. A child may be terminated or suspended for the following reasons:

1. Excessive absences
2. Nonpayment of tuition
3. Excessive, continual behavior problems that cannot be resolved using the program's behavior management plan
4. A child is undergoing evaluation, which may affect the programs ability to meet the child's needs

When a child needs to be terminated/suspended from the program, the teachers, Program Director, and Executive Director will:

1. Gather Documentation
2. Call and request a meeting with parents to discuss the reasons for termination/suspension
3. Parents will be offered a written reason for termination/suspension

Behavior management/termination plan

Discipline is based on the respect for others and property. It is imperative that the emotional and physical safety of the children and staff member be maintained, as well as the property and environment. If a child is behaving in an inappropriate manner, the staff will handle the behavior as follows:

1. The child will be talked to in a firm manner about the appropriate behavior
2. If the child is unable to gain control of his/her behavior, he/she will be redirected to another area
3. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be offered some time away from the group until he/she can gain control over his/her behavior
4. If the teacher has tried these methods and feels he/she is unable to deal with the situation in an effective manner, the teacher will then seek assistance of the Program Director and/or Executive Director
5. If the behavioral problems with a particular child are a regular occurrence, a parent conference will be arranged with the group leader(s) and administration to work out a plan for behavioral management
6. Should these problems continue, a child may be terminated (see above)

In the event of termination the staff will prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with his/her ability to understand. This will be done with sensitivity and care toward the child to be terminated.

The following are never used as a means of discipline:

- any form of corporal punishment
- humiliation or verbal abuse
- denial of food, rest, or bathroom facilities

At People's Institute, we understand that accidents happen. A child under our care will not be disciplined or punished for soiling, wetting or not using the bathroom. A child will also not be punished for eating/not eating snack or lunch. If any of these issues become a continual concern to a staff member, a conference with the parent(s) will be requested.

Referral policy

When staff members have concerns about a child's cognitive, social, emotional, speech/language, or physical growth, they will discuss these concerns with the Program Director, Executive Director, and the parents to determine if help/testing from an outside agency is needed. If it is determined that an outside agency is needed, all known options will be reviewed and be made available to the parents. If requested, the administration will help contract the appropriate services to obtain Parental/ Guardian consent to arrange for services. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services from an outside agency or is ineligible to receive services, the center will review progress as needed. If warranted the procedure will then be followed again. Documentation of all meetings about these concerns will be placed in the child's folder. If a parent or guardian wishes to pursue any issues concerning their child's well-being without assistance of staff members, a list of referrals can be provided upon request.

Abuse/neglect policy

The staff of People's Institute childcare programs is mandated reporters for abuse and neglect. When a staff member suspects this type of mistreatment toward a child, the following steps will be taken:

1. The staff member will report his/her concerns to the Program Director and Executive Director, verbally and in written form.
2. The Directors will file a 51A report with the Early Education and Care (EEC) will be immediately notified.
3. From this point on the Department of Public Welfare will take over the responsibilities of the case. An internal investigation may be conducted.

Transportation plan

Private transportation is provided to and from all Northampton Public and Private Schools through a contracted transportation company. Each driver is given a list of children and their schedule for each pickup time and school. Whenever possible and appropriate, drivers will be informed of any medical or behavioral concerns that will help the in the transportation of the child/children. The following are the usual times for pickup and arrival of the children:

8:20-8:30 am-Departure from People's Institute to the appropriate schools for before school children

3:00 pm- After-school is picked up at their schools and brought to People's Institute

The vehicles used are property equipped for student transportation. Drivers and students are required to wear seat-belts when available. Any inappropriate behavior or disregard for the safety rules on the bus transport will be reported to the administration.

People's Institute also provides a supervised pick up for the Smith Campus School. The scheduled times for this service is at 3:00 pm and 12:00 pm on Wednesdays for grades K-6. An adult staff member meets the children and supervises them as they walk to People's Institute. We provided this service to insure the safe arrival of these children.

Field trips/ transportation

Field trips are both vehicular and ambulatory. When on a field trip requiring vehicular transportation, only the number of children/adults for who there is seating space will be allowed to be transported. The vehicular trips are taken in a contracted transported company. Staff members accompany the children on the vehicle and will take attendance on departure and arrival at each and of the trip.

When on an ambulatory field trip, children will be escorted by the group leader(s) according to EEC ratios.

Snack policy

People's Institute provides a nutritious snack in the morning (approx. 10 am) on no school days and in the afternoon (approx 3:30 pm) for all children. It is important to notify the Program Director and teachers of any food allergies your child might have. If your child is allergic to the food provided at snack, an alternative snack will be provided.

Examples of Snack Served

Crackers with peanut butter/cheese & apple juice

Pasta & lemonade

Yogurt & orange juice

Etc.

On half days and vacation days, snack will be provided on our regular schedule, however People's Institute **does not** provide lunch. Parents should plan on sending a lunch with their child on half days and vacation days.

Clothing and toys

Children should wear clothing that is suitable for play. These clothes should be comfortable and able to get dirty. Your child may be working with paints, glue, chalk, or just playing outside. They will get dirty simply because they are kids! A change of clothing is suggested for Kindergarten children. It is also suggested that your child's hats, mitten/gloves, boots, etc. be marked with the child's name to avoid confusion. Remember that other parents shop where you do and duplicates happen all the time. We cannot be responsible for any lost articles. If a child brings in a toy to share with others, please put his/her name on it. It is the child's responsibility to keep track of their toys. Please do not allow your son or daughter to bring in toy guns, weapons, or violent superheroes! These toys are not permitted at People's Institute.

Calendar year, vacations, holidays, and snow days

People's Institute follows the Northampton Public School calendar for vacations and holidays. We will be **closed and no childcare will be provided during December school vacation.** During February and April vacations, People's Institute offers a separate vacation camp. These are full day camps to accommodate working parents. Extra activities, crafts, and trips are provided to create a fun "vacation" environment. The tuition for these camps is \$175. Remember these are full day camps which is why there is an increased fee for them.

Throughout the school year there are a few holidays that both Northampton Public Schools and People's Institute are closed. These are holidays that are paid by parents. These holidays include:

HOLIDAYS (paid by parents)

Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Friday after Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Eve
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
President's Day
Good Friday
Patriot's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day (Summer Program)
2 Professional Days

***We are also typically closed for the week before the school year begins (not paid by parents)**

When the Northampton Schools have decided to close due to snow or ice, People's Institute will be open for school aged children. In the case of extreme weather, (city offices close down etc.) listen to WHMP or watch News 40 for closure. We do not like to close but must consider the safety of our staff, children and their families.

A fee for a full day care will be charged when school is not in session. These days include snow days, emergency days, teacher curriculum days, etc. The charge for these days is \$35.00.

Absences

If your child is ill, has a play date, or taking a vacation day, **please call.** We worry when they are not here. Please note that even if your child is not here, you will be billed for their regularly schedule days.

Tuition

Every program has a three-day minimum enrollment. Each family will receive a bill at the beginning of each month for their child's regularly scheduled days. It is your responsibility to pay in full by the last school day of each month. A \$35.00 late fee will be charged for balances unpaid after that day.

Before School	\$12.00/Day
7:30 am to start of school day	
*3-day minimum	
After-School Care	\$22.00/Day
2:30-5:30 transportation from school included	
*3-day minimum	

Additional Fees

The Northampton Schools close a handful of times per year for Teacher's Professional Days. More frequently do they have ½ days for Parent/Teacher conferences, etc. We offer additional care for all of these days. Special rates are necessary due to the fact that it requires additional staffing.

Public School Professional Days	\$35.00/Day
8:30 am-5:30 pm	
Public School ½ Days	\$25.00/Day
12:30 pm-5:30 pm	

Late pick up policy

All programs close at 5:30 pm Please be considerate and pick your child up by the programs closing time. Our staff has families and personal lives too and greatly appreciate your punctuality. Parents whose children remain past the time their program ends **must pay overtime fees as follows:**

Every 15 minutes late	\$25.00 per child
1-15 Minutes: \$25	
15-30 Minutes: \$50	
30-45 Minutes: \$75	
45-60 Minutes: \$100	

Late fees are paid directly to the staff member who stays with the child/children. We are finding it necessary to enforce this policy due to past abuses. We understand if an emergency occurs, or a car breaks down, please call and let us know what is going on. We ask that you also understand that consistent late pick up is frustrating for staff. Please note that childcare services may be withdrawn if consistent and repetitive lateness occurs.

Withdraw policy

If you choose to withdraw your child from the program, for any reason, we require a two-week written notice. Parents are responsible for the full tuition for the two week notification period regardless of your child's attendance during the notice period. After the two weeks, any personal items left by the child (clothing, toys, etc.) will be disposed of.

Regulatory Compliance

Parents may contact the Department of Early Education and Care for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history. The Western Mass Regional office is located at 1441 Main St #230, Springfield MA 01103. They can be reached by telephone at (413)788-8401.