

*A Parent's Guide
to the services of the*

Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.



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REVISED 2004

Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.
"A Great Place to Grow"

PURPOSE AND VISION

The Unicorn Children's Centre is a place where all children are accepted and encouraged and where "kids can be kids". It provides an environment that is creative, entertaining and enriching. The Unicorn focuses on the whole person by nurturing the value of learning in a non-pressured environment.

The Unicorn offers affordable child care that provides the flexibility necessary to address the changing needs of the children, their parents and the staff. The Unicorn will excel in the development of the whole child by ensuring that it's staff are current, competent and capable. The Unicorn provides an enriching environment for children to grow and a fulfilling environment for the staff to work.

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The Unicorn Children's Centre Board of Directors and all of our staff aim to provide the highest standard of early childhood care & education for your child and your family.

We hope the information in the Parent Handbook has been helpful and informative. Please contact the Executive Director if you have any questions or would like any further information on any of our programs.

We are here to serve you!

COMMUNITY LIAISONS

The Unicorn Children's Centre Inc. has established a number of community liaisons throughout the years. Each helps to provide a well-rounded program for your children.

Library	Real Atlantic Superstore
R.C.M.P.	Town of Riverview
Fire Dept.	School District #2
VON "Safe Kid" Project	Poison Control
Dental Technician	Frank L. Bowser Elementary
Veterans	Centennial Park
Public Health Nurse	S.P.C.A.
St. Paul's United Church	Magnetic Hill Zoo
Bowling Alley	Crystal Palace
Sobey's	Bowling Alley
CO-OP	United Commercial Travelers
A.T.V.	Lakeside Senior Citizen Home
Block Parents	Royal Court
Moncton Hospital	Moncton Kinsmen Charities
Kiwanis	McDonald's

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FUNDRAISING

When you enroll your child at The Unicorn Children's Centre you become a member of a not-for-profit registered charity. As a result you will be asked to support the fundraising efforts of the Centre from time to time in order to keep our child care fees as low as possible. Each fundraiser is designed to require minimal effort on your part (i.e., selling one box of bars, selling a few books of tickets, baking an item for a bake sale, saving pennies, bringing in Sobey's and Super Store receipts etc.).

Some families prefer to make an annual lump sum donation and receive a charitable receipt rather than participate in the fundraisers. The average family donates approximately \$125.00 by way of fundraising efforts in a one year period.

SECTION E

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

LOST OR DAMAGED ITEMS

The Centre cannot be held responsible for the loss or damage of personal items brought from home.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these policies may be made at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Parents will be notified of amendments with a notice or memo posted at the centre, on the website in the newsletter or sent home on their child's locker.

PARENT/TEACHER MEETING

Twice yearly a report will be prepared by your child's teacher to give you an opportunity to review your child's developmental progress. At these times, parent/teacher meetings will be held to give you an opportunity to speak to your child's teachers in an informal and less harried time in the evening. However, please feel free to speak to the teachers about your child and the program at any time.

COMMUNICATION (GRIEVANCES and SUGGESTIONS)

If at any time you have a question with respect to your child, please speak to your child's teacher. If she/he is unable to answer your concerns they will speak to the Director and get back to you with the requested information. If you feel there is a problem, which the teacher cannot address, or you have a question about your account or policies please speak to the Director.

Also, the names and telephone numbers of the Board of Directors are posted for your convenience in the entryway. The Board of Directors meets on the second Monday of each month. Please advise the Executive Director or the Chairperson of the Board in advance of the meeting if you wish to address a specific issue at a board meeting.

Parents/guardians may visit the Centre at any time. We do encourage you to advise your child's teacher ahead of time so that they can make the experience for both you and your child a constructive one (also to ensure you do not arrive when the children are on an outing).

It is important to us that we maintain open communication with each parent/guardian on all matters affecting their child. This is achieved through personal contacts, monthly newsletters and information meetings.

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Welcome to the Unicorn Children's Centre

The Unicorn began providing child care services in 1982 and moved to its present location on Cleveland Avenue in the summer of 1986. The first after school program was added in the fall of 1989.

In September 1994 the Unicorn became the first child care centre in the Greater Moncton Area to obtain integrated status and has continued this commitment to meeting the needs of every child.

All childcare professionals employed at the Unicorn Children's Centre are chosen with the highest standard of care. We strive to hire experienced Early Childhood Educators who have either completed or are taking courses in Early Childhood Care & Education (or an equivalent program). We are dedicated to continued professional development and attend, whenever possible, various conferences and seminars, which facilitate our ability to provide quality programs and care for, the children enrolled in our programs.

The Unicorn is also a member of the Canadian Child Care Federation as well as a local coalition Childcare Connexions garde a l'Enfance. These memberships affirm that we care enough about children to work in a united effort with other childcare organizations to improve the status of children in New Brunswick.

The Unicorn Children's Centre acts as a model for Early Childhood professionals in training through Cooperative Education Programs of various educational organizations. Therefore, one may occasionally see students from various institutions, observing and interacting within our various programs.

Finally, the Unicorn Children's Centre Inc. is a not-for-profit educational centre for both pre-schoolers and school aged children, run by a volunteer board of directors.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Should an emergency arise at the main centre, the rally point will be St Paul's United Church. Should an emergency arise at either the Super Kids Club or the Junior Super Kids, the rally point will be the Unicorn Children's Centre. Parents will be contacted by telephone in the event of an emergency.

SECTION D PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As a member of the Unicorn Children's Centre, parents are encouraged and welcomed to participate in the Centre. Examples of ways for parents to become involved are:

- < Donations of toys and/or supplies
- < Financial donations (charitable receipts can be issued)
- < Simple maintenance jobs
- < Baking for special events
- < Attending Annual General Meeting in January.
- < Attending Parent/Teacher Meetings
- < Joining your child's class for lunch
- < Providing suggestions for overall improvements
- < Serving on the Board of Directors
- < Helping with fundraising
- < Serving on the fundraising committee
- < Serving on the phone committee
- < Assisting with Fix Up Day
- < Speaking to your child's class
- < Help during our Silent auction

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting is held in January of each year. The new Board members will be elected at this time.

- Providing age-appropriate explanations and reminders, for the limits that have been established, in order to promote the children's development of independent self-control
- Consistently modeling appropriate and acceptable behaviors such as respecting the children's need for personal space, using manners and abiding by the same 'rules' as have been established for the children
- Ignoring minor incidents, as long as no other individual is at risk, in order to avoid negatively reinforcing an inappropriate and unacceptable behavior
- Focusing on the behavior rather than the child and establishing limits in a positive and specific manner i.e. "put your feet on the floor please, chairs are for sitting on"
- Using "time outs" appropriately and **only** when **absolutely** necessary. Time outs will **not** exceed one minute per age of the child

We will **NOT**:

- Under any circumstances, threaten or punish any child physically or emotionally
- Withhold food from a child due to misbehavior

Parents will be kept informed of their child's behavioral development and notified of any behavioral incidents. Information regarding your child and your cooperation in determining the causes and the best possible solutions for your child's inappropriate behavior is both appreciated and expected. We, as your partners, in your child's early childhood care & education need and appreciate your support in helping your child to develop into a confident, respectful and caring individual.

DISMISSAL

If a child's disruptive behavior (either physical or emotional) continues after attempts by staff to work, together with parents, to resolve the difficulties, childcare services may be discontinued. Should your child be found in this situation a more detailed format of the steps implemented can be obtained at the office.

UNICORN PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The following statements describe the beliefs, values and principles, which guide the development of all programs developed and offered at the Unicorn Children's Centre.

- ⊃ A Child's development of values, such as respect, trust and honesty, is promoted when the significant adults in their lives model these values by demonstrating them consistently with both children and adults.
- ⊃ A child's development of autonomy and self-confidence is enhanced when he/she is consistently and appropriately challenged and encouraged to strive for her/his highest level of achievement.
- ⊃ A child development of self-esteem thrives when he/she is given opportunities and encouragement to develop and perform according to her/his own unique needs and abilities.
- ⊃ Quality programs include a variety of activities through which children experience physical, social, emotional and moral growth.
- ⊃ Quality programs focus on how children learn and develop within an environment that is stimulating, caring and nurturing.
- ⊃ The formative years (birth to five) are crucial to child development. High quality childcare experiences significantly increase a child's potential for later success.
- ⊃ Children benefit from a "**Whole Child Approach**" to teaching. Through which, each child's unique social, emotional, physical, cognitive and moral qualities and differences are valued.
- ⊃ Parents need to know their children are safe and happy.

- » Parents' participation is valuable and should be encouraged in any possible capacity.

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PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The programs developed and offered at the Unicorn Children's Centre are developed with the following objectives for each child:

Short Term

- < to provide a healthy environment, which promotes the optimal physical, cognitive, social, emotional and moral development of all
- < to provide an environment rich in multi-sensory stimulation and educational opportunities, promoting the desire to attend school
- < to provide quality and nutritious meals and snacks which will promote healthy development and lifelong healthy eating habits
- < to provide an atmosphere from which the children can depart, each day, with a better sense of self-awareness and an appropriate level of sense of control
- < to facilitate the development of positive and respectful relationships among the children and their teachers
- < TO HAVE FUN!!

Long Term

We hope that children will leave the centre having learned and developed in a variety of area. Throughout the program, we strive to provide opportunity for each child to:

- < develop a sense of self-awareness and self-efficacy, promoting the development of self-confidence and a positive self-image
- < develop social responsiveness and the potential to form lasting, positive relationships with others
- < develop stable and enduring relationships with their teachers and the individual children in their groups
- < develop an appropriate level of security, curiosity and enthusiasm to explore their surroundings
- < develop the ability to effectively communicate needs and desires in a socially acceptable manner

- < develop an awareness of themselves and others as separate individuals with distinct thoughts, needs and abilities and develop respect for both their own and others' differences

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BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The Unicorn Children's Centre emphasizes the provision of well planned programs which meet the individual needs of all children, thereby, greatly reducing the frustration or boredom which so frequently leads to disruptive, inappropriate behavior.

Children will learn, through interaction with their teachers, other children and his/her environment, that he/she is capable of success and self-control.

All interactions at the Unicorn, including those that are disciplinary in nature, will provide the children with learning experiences and opportunities to develop an understanding of moral values and a sense of security and will promote the development of a positive self-concept.

Appropriate and consistent limits will be set, based on the children's ages and development abilities, in order to ensure a safe and healthy environment for both the children and our staff.

Our Early Childhood Educators will optimize the development of self-control and minimize cause for inappropriate behavior by:

- Providing a sufficient number of interesting and stimulating activities
- Giving advance warning about transition times so the children will know what to expect
- Being aware of the environment and interactions occurring within the classroom and redirecting inappropriate behaviors
- Providing positive reinforcement for all positive behaviors in order to promote the children's recognition of which behaviors are expected and encouraged
- Allowing children to make choices as often as possible, while making expectations clear when it is not a matter of choice
- Using proximity and touch to remind children that they are available to help them through a difficult situation
- Providing clear, consistent and appropriate limits based on the children's needs and developmental levels,

preventing confusion as to which behaviors are expected

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NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Weekly menu plans of the daily meals and snacks are prepared in accordance with Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and Child Day Care Facilities Operator Standards. The menu plan for a four week period is posted outside the kitchen and entry way.

Snack's are provided every day in both the morning and the afternoon programs, other snacks need not be brought to the Centre. Please do not allow your child to bring in junk food, candy or gum.

NUT PRODUCTS

The Unicorn Children's Centre adheres to a "**NUT FREE**" policy. Our menu has been planned and all possible efforts have been made to eliminate food products from the menu containing nuts and/or nut products. Further, the Centre will strongly encourage the parents and guardians of other children attending the Centre to refrain from bringing such food products into the Centre. For the purpose of our policy "coconut" is not considered a nut.

SCENT FREE ENVIRONMENT

It is strongly encouraged that staff, as well as parents and guardians of children attending the Centre, refrain from wearing scented products (i.e. perfumes or colognes) at the Centre.

CHILD ABUSE

If the staff of the Centre has reason to suspect there is a possibility of child abuse, they will immediately advise the Director. We, the staff, will record what we find and take steps to report it to the Screening Unit at the Department of Family and

Community Service.

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I. PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Children must be between two and five years of age and 'toilet trained' before attending the Junior or Senior Preschool Programs.

WHAT TO BRING

- < A labeled full change of clothes (pants, shirt, underwear, socks)
- < White soled sneakers for indoor use and gymnasium
- < A labeled blanket
- < A labeled toothbrush
- < **APPROPRIATE OUTDOOR CLOTHING** (according to the season ie rubber boots, raincoat)
- < A hat in hot weather
- < Brush and comb

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Unicorn Children's Centre is open from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm Monday to Friday year round. A late service will provide you with childcare until 6 p.m. available for an additional fee if arranged in advance with the office.

II SCHOOL AGED PROGRAMS

The Unicorn Children's Centre offers quality out of school care programs that service the needs of school aged children from Frank L. Bowser, Gunningsville, West Riverview, Claude D. Taylor and Riverview Middle School before and/or after school.

SCHOOL AGED PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The following statements describe the beliefs, values and principles, which guide the development of all programs developed and offered at the Unicorn Children's Centre.

- ⊃ Quality after-school programs focus on how children learn and develop within an environment that is stimulating, caring and nurturing.
- ⊃ Children must be given opportunities to develop according to their individual needs.
- ⊃ Children need a safe, reliable and stimulating environment before and after school and during days when school is not in session.
- ⊃ Children have been in a highly structured school environment all day and need time to unwind and relax.
- ⊃ Children are individuals. Their individual differences must be respected by providing choices in their activities.
- ⊃ Children need a supportive ear to tell their day's adventures to.
- ⊃ Parents need to know their children are safe and happy.
- ⊃ Parent participation is valuable and should be encouraged.
- ⊃ Children need opportunities to grow in all areas of development.
- ⊃ Children benefit from a "**Whole Child Approach**" to teaching. Through which, each child's unique social, emotional, physical, cognitive and moral qualities and differences are valued and celebrated.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Only medication (over the counter and prescribed) that has been brought into the Centre by a parent/guardian may be administered to a child.

Written authorization from the parent/guardian must be obtained before *any* medication will be administered.

A medical form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian *each time medication is administered*.

All medication must:

- < Be in the original container with original label,
- < Be identified with the dosage and name of the child for whom the medication is intended,
- < Prescribed medication must have the name of the physician, instructions and time period of the use.

No medication can be administered to a child via a phone call. You must come in person to sign the consent form in the event your child becomes ill at the Centre and requires medication. We regret any inconvenience this may cause in your day but it is for the safety of your child.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

If your child is absent due to illness you will be charged regular fees. If it is an illness of 5 or more consecutive days, you may submit a **doctor's certificate** and the office will credit your account for **half of the regular fees for the days absent**. This is special consideration is available to once per year per child.

SECTION C

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A child with a contagious illness is required to be kept home as per Provincial standards and regulations. Your child will be required to be picked up within the hour should they develop symptoms of illness during the day. In such a case, your child will be isolated from the others and you will be contacted.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

KEEP YOU CHILD AT HOME IF HE/SHE HAS:

- < Fever
- < Persistent dry cough
- < Heavy nasal discharge
- < Symptoms of a communicable disease
(these are redness in the eye and/or discharge from the eye, sore throat, headache, rash, abdominal pain, fever).

Children are expected to take part in all activities at the Centre, including outdoor play. If they are unable to participate due to sickness they are **not** well enough to attend the Centre.

In the case of a communicable disease the parent is to notify the Executive Director of the diagnosis provided by the child's physician as soon as possible so that the Centre may notify the other parents of their child's possible exposure to the disease, in compliance with the Department of Family and Community Services Standards.

OBJECTIVES

The after-school programs developed and offered at the Unicorn Children's Centre are developed with the following objectives for each child:

- < to maintain a desire to attend school.
- < to develop a positive attitude toward other children, teachers, parents and others.
- < to develop an awareness of the importance of community services, such as the library, churches, recycling services, etc.
- < to develop meaningful social relationships with peers.
- < to develop a stable routine they feel comfortable in.
- < to allow children to have input in the programs.
- < to provide a wide variety of activities that each child will be enriched by.
- < to meet the needs of the "Whole Child".
- < to help the children to learn more about themselves
- < to provide opportunity for parental involvement.
- < TO HAVE FUN!

WHAT TO BRING

- < Non-marking sneakers for gymnasium.
- < A labeled full change of clothes (pants, shirt, underwear, socks)
- < A toothbrush.
- < A brush or comb
- < **Appropriate outdoor clothing** (according to the season).
- < A hat in hot weather.

UNICORN SCHOOL AGED PROGRAMS

ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT

UNICORN AFTERSCHOOL GROUP

Children must be attending Kindergarten and grade one attend this program.

JUNIOR SUPER KIDS CLUB

Children in grades 2 and 3 may attend this program held at St. Paul's Church.

SENIOR SUPER KIDS CLUB

Children in grades 4, 5 and 6 may attend the Senior Super Kids Club at St Paul's United Church.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The school aged program operates 12 months of the year. From September until the end of June the program is divided into three components:

- 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (before school care)
- 11:50 p.m. -12:30 p.m. (lunch hour)
- 1:50 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (after school care)

For the summer months, and during school closure the program runs between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m..

Late service until 6 p.m. is also available for an additional fee of \$ 5.00 per week.

HOLIDAY TIME

Only after full time children have been enrolled in the Centre for one year is the child's family entitled to two free weeks of holiday time. This means two weeks without charge but the child must not attend the centre during this two-week period.

School Age programs have the option of a two week or four week vacation contract. This contract must be selected upon registration in the program. Some extra fees and conditions may apply should the start dates be after September.

Holiday time is to be taken between September 1 and August 31, Holiday time is **not** eligible to be carried forward to the next year.

TWO WEEK NOTICE OF DEPARTURE

Two weeks notice is required prior to the removal of a child from the Centre. Should you fail to provide the two weeks notice you will be charged two weeks fees in lieu of notice.

N.S.F. CHEQUES

The Centre will charge a fee of \$25.00 for N.S.F. cheques. All other fees charged from the bank will be the responsibility of the parent.

RECEIPTS

Receipts are issued upon each payment when paying by cash and a monthly report of your account when paying by cheques. Your official childcare receipt will be issued annually to accounts that are in good standing.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation on outings is supplied in most cases by our van. All van drivers hold valid Class 4 Driver's Licenses. There are still times, however, when we could use some help from parents.

VAN COST

There will be minimal fee charged for the use of the van for special outings (\$0.50-\$2.00) depending on the distance traveled.

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SECTION B

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Parents, upon enrolling their child, are responsible to pay a non-refundable registration fee of \$25.00 per child as well as, fill out all appropriate application material and ensure their child has an orientation visit.

Appropriate application materials should have been given to you with this document and must be completely filled in and returned to the office prior to the child being permitted to attend the centre.

CHILD CARE FEES

The Board of Directors sets childcare fees annually, having regard to the budgetary needs and the non-profit status of the Centre. We are sensitive to the need for affordable childcare as well as our objective of not compromising the high quality of care provided. Reasonable notice will be given prior to any change in fees.

LATE FEE

There will be a \$5.00 charge for every 15-minute interval after 5:30 p.m. that the parent is late in picking up their child. There is a maximum late charge of \$20.00. This money is paid directly to the staff member who has stayed late with your child.

Should you require service between 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., on a regular basis, the office can arrange to have your child added to late service at a charge of \$5.00/week.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Childcare fees will be made in advance of services rendered; in the form of cheques or cash and may reflect a weekly, biweekly

or monthly payment, as may best suit the member's needs. If paying by cheque, three months postdated cheques are requested.

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ALL PROGRAMS

Our qualified staff plan age appropriate programs, which emphasizes cooperative play, problem solving, independence and fun. This may include outdoor play, science, language and math activities including such things as grace and other rhymes and jingles. A schedule of activities is posted and/or sent home for the parents and children. Parents will be advised prior to any special outings. Some typical field trips and outings include library, bowling, skating and swimming to name a few. Special courses such as Karate, art, tole painting, sewing are offered from time to time for those interested in participating. An additional charge may be required for these courses.

SECTION A

HOURS OF OPERATION ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All children may be dropped off at the main Centre after 7:00 a.m. each morning and must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. each day. Late closure, until 6:00 p.m. is available for an additional fee of \$ 5.00 per week (arranged in advance). Your child must be escorted by an adult to and from the centre. ***This means bringing your children into the Centre and into their respective classrooms before leaving.*** Please make eye contact with the teacher so you are assured that they know that your child has arrived or has left.

SIGN OUT SHEET

For the safety of your child, your child will not be permitted to leave the Centre with any unauthorized person. If you are unable to pick up your child, please contact the Centre with the name of the person who will be accepting responsibility for your child that day. **That person will be required to sign a SIGN -OUT sheet**

before they leave with your child. If this person is someone that our staff have not met before they will be asked to present photo identification.

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PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The Unicorn Children's Centre is closed on public holidays with regular fees charged for these days (fees are prorated for the year).

Public holidays include:

- < New Year's Day
- < Good Friday
- < Victoria Day
- < Canada Day
- < New Brunswick Day
- < Labour Day
- < Thanksgiving Day
- < Remembrance Day
- < Christmas Day and Boxing Day

The centre **will be open** on Easter Monday dependant on the number of children who need child care on that day. A notice will be posted asking parents if they require service.

EARLY CLOSURE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

The Centre will close at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve as a gesture of respect to the families who await our dedicated teachers and staff.

FIX UP DAY

One week day in May of each year will be assigned to the general repair of the classrooms. The Centre will be closed on that day and the parent's will be notified at least 4 weeks in advance of the closure.

(* Established program rates include this Fix Up Day)

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DISTRICT #2 CLOSURES

When School District #2 is closed, so are all our Pre and Playschools. The children who attend the Junior and Senior Super Kids Club, are to go directly to St. Paul's Church for the full day (i.e., March Break, storm days, in service days, etc.). All other children are to meet at the Unicorn's Main Centre.

CLOSURE POLICY

The Unicorn Children's Centre will make every attempt to offer service regardless of the weather and other circumstances but does recognize that circumstances beyond our control may arise from time to time and we reserves the right to close the centre should we experience loss of power, no running water, fire exits are not clear, storm makes weather conditions dangerous for staff to travel home. Parents will be given ample time to make arrangements to pick up their children.

GIVING THANKS

The Unicorn Children's Centre believes and promotes the philosophy of encouraging children to give thanks for their food and Teachers use this as a teaching tool to:

- ✓ Promote appreciation
- ✓ Teach respect for
- ✓ Increase language development (rhyming, sequence)
- ✓ Expose children to music
- ✓ Help children during a high stress transition time

Teachers will be responsible for the frequency and choices in their individual classes but will be encouraged to use graces that are fun, challenging and non-denominational.

