

Pre-School @ Longfellow



PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM AT THE LONGFELLOW HEALTH CLUB



PARENT HANDBOOK
2024 - 2025 SCHOOL YEAR



Welcome to 'Pre-school @ Longfellow'! This pre-school program is under our 'Later @ Longfellow' Group and School Age program at the Longfellow Health Club, Natick. This Parent Handbook provides you with not only the essential information pertaining to our program, but also general information which will answer your questions and help ease the transition of your child to our pre-school program.

We are licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (E.E.C.) and we comply with its guidelines and regulations. We are in compliance with State and local regulations for building codes, fire laws and health and safety rules.

If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please call to talk to a staff member or myself. We are here to provide you with the best quality child care we can for your children.

Program Administrator and Director
Caroline Donahue

OUR PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Philosophy

Our educational philosophy is to provide a nurturing program which enables children to develop self-esteem, confidence and trust, while at the same time learning how important it is to enjoy staying healthy and active. We offer a variety of projects and activities that build established foundations for learning. We work independently with the children and in small groups, and our learning centers offer experiences necessary for exploration, to maintain the child's interests, and activities to encourage fine and gross motor skills as well as academic success.

Program Enrollment

'Pre-School @ Longfellow' is designed to accept children ages 3 - 5 years old. We provide services to children and their families regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or marital status. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment 7.04 (17) (g)

Admissions Procedure

Parents who are interested in enrolling their child in our program will first meet with the Director. The parents will be given a tour of the facility and, if in session, they are invited to observe the program in operation.

Parents will review the Parent Handbook and discuss important and informative issues. We ask that parents bring their child in to visit prior to enrollment. After the application form has been completed, we will discuss when your child can begin 'Pre-school @ Longfellow', or place you on the waiting list until a space becomes available. We typically enroll children year-round, and require a \$100, non-refundable, registration fee.

Age Groupings/Ratio

The program accepts children ages 3 - 5 years old. There will be a mix of individual and group instruction, small group activities and large group activities.

'Pre-School @ Longfellow' meets the E.E.C. regulations regarding staff ratios. Although regulations state that ratios for a pre-school program should be 1:10, we keep our ratios at 1:8. Our program will only consist of one classroom with a maximum of 14 students and two staff.

HOURS AND TUITION RATES

‘Pre-School @ Longfellow’ is open Monday through Friday. The main hours are 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. We follow the Natick Public School Calendar. If there is **No School** in Natick, there is no ‘Pre-School @ Longfellow’

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 per child.

Monthly Fees FOR 9 am to 1 pm:

2 DAYS.....	\$299.00
3 DAYS.....	\$440.00
4 DAYS.....	\$582.00
5 DAYS.....	\$724.00

- ❑ **Extended Day 8**
- ❑ **8:30 am – 9 am & 1 pm -2:30 pm is available** at \$10 per hour.
- ❑ **SIBLINGS RECEIVE A DISCOUNT OF 10%**
- ❑ **FULL FAMILY MEMBERS RECEIVE DISCOUNT OF 10%**
- ❑ **PAYMENTS ARE BASED ON 10 EQUAL MONTHLY PAYMENTS SEPTEMBER TO JUNE.**

Please note that tuition remains the same regardless of holidays, vacations, sickness, snow closings and closings beyond our control.

Tuition is due the first of the month for the following month.

A **30-Day Notice Period** must be given in writing if the parent wants to switch days, drop days or withdraw from the program.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS

See below

STORM & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of SEVERE weather or unusual non-weather-related problems, 'Pre-School @ Longfellow' reserves the right, in consultation with the manager of the facility, to cancel or close early. A TEXT or Group Parent Email will be sent by 6:30 am for cancellations or throughout the day as needed. If there is no school in Natick, there is no pre-school.

If the Governor declares a State of Emergency prior to the start of the school day, the program will be closed.

SCHOOL VACATION PROGRAMS

School Vacation Programs are available. Information will be handed to parents for those December, February and April weeks.

For Camp Longfellow:

'Pre-School @ Longfellow' students receive the Family Member rate for the summer camp fees.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We do community projects each year! Community Projects make us feel good!!!

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

There is no transportation required for 'Pre-School @ Longfellow'. **IF** we do go on a field trip, the following Transportation Plan will be used.

Connolly Buses, Natick, or JFK of Natick will provide transportation. All buses carry first aid kits & seat belt cutters. Staff will carry cell phones. They also carry names and addresses of children's parents/guardians, emergency contacts; home and work telephone numbers; information of the nearest medical emergency facility and a CPR manual in preparation of a mildly ill/seriously injured child. Drivers on the 2-way radio are to call 911 in an emergency. If the bus becomes disabled the driver will call THE Transportation company for another bus to be sent out immediately.

The bus company will be responsible for the children on the bus until they reach Longfellow. Longfellow will not be responsible for any child enrolled in the program until they step off their transportation vehicle and are on the premises of 'Longfellow Health Club'.

All children must wear seat belts and must be seated at all times. If a car seat is needed, parents will bring in that day and pick up after the field trip. All accidents/moving violations will be reported to the Natick Police by the Program Administrator and all parents of children on the bus.

All children must be picked up by their parent/caregiver/persons authorized for pick up. If no-one arrives to pick up a child all contact numbers will be called.

All parents will sign a written consent form giving permission for Buses to transport their child when needed.



STAFF AT LONGFELLOW

'Pre-School @ Longfellow' staff has been through Orientation, had a Criminal History check, SORI check and all Staff are finger-printed per EEC regulations. They are also certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff are role-models to all the children in our care, allowing for self-expression, self-confidence, independence, respect, problem-solving and social skills.

PARENT GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The application packet must be completed and returned with the application fee before your child begins attending the program.
- If your child will **not** be attending you need to let us know by 9am by email or phone.
- Please send your child in suitable clothing/shoes for gym/soccer etc. and please write your child's name on all belongings and clothing. Also please bring in swim suit/towel for swimming daily.
- Pack 2+ snacks and a nut-free lunch daily.
- **Please observe the pickup time.** We understand that traffic is a sometimes an issue. Consistent tardiness to pick up your child could result in not only hefty late fees, but also an evaluation to make sure that this is the right program for your situation.
- You may **NOT** leave your car unattended at the front entrance. Please call 508 653 4633 for curb-side service. We are happy to bring your child out for you.
- Please notify us of any changes in address, telephone and email.
- Recycling is part of our program and materials are welcomed!
- We encourage communication and parent input into our program. For September 2021 hopefully - we have an open-door policy and you may visit anytime when your child is here. Parents are required to check in with the Office if visiting.
- Parent Conferences will be held in March regarding your child's progress. A signup sheet will be posted. Progress reports will be sent home in February. Parents may request a teacher/parent conference at any time.
- We will notify you of the following: -
 - a) Immediately of any injury which requires medical care beyond minor first aid or administration of non-prescription medication.
 - b) A change in staffing.
 - c) Of important news and special events.
 - d) If there is a communicable disease or condition that is identified.
 - e) Seven days prior to any changes in program policy or procedure.
 - f) Before any pets visit
 - g) If herbicides or pesticides are used.
- We are in compliance with E.E.C. (Early Education and Care). Parents are welcome to contact the E.E.C. regarding the program's regulatory compliance history: -

Department of Early Education and Care
324R Clark Street, Worcester MA 01609
Tel: 508 798 5180

HEALTH POLICY

In order to provide the best care for your child, as well as other children in our care, and staff, we have developed the following health policy.

Prevention

The following measures are followed to help reduce the spread of infection:

1. Daily washing of equipment and cleaning of all the rooms.
2. Frequent hand washing.
3. Careful snack preparation.

Illness

Even with preventative measures, illness still affects children in school-age care. Children that are ill require the attention and rest that can only be provided at home, while our staff cares for other children in the program.

Reasons For Dismissal or Exclusion

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Fever of 100 or over | 3. Conjunctivitis | 5. Undiagnosed Rash |
| 2. Diarrhea and/or Vomiting | 4. Lice | |

If a child develops these symptoms at home, the child must be kept home. A child must be 24 hours free of illness before they return.

If your child develops these symptoms at the program, you will be called. **Please come within one hour.** If we cannot reach you within 30 minutes your emergency contacts will be called.

If your child needs medication at the program you must call the Director and sign an **Authorization for Medication** form. **If an antibiotic is prescribed for your child, your child must be on the medication for a full 24 hours before returning to the program.**

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

This policy is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of the child. The goals of this policy are to maximize the growth and development of the children and to protect the group and individuals.

Necessary components of our policy are:

Having a caring staff that not only respects children, but also accepts each child as an individual and poses as a role model.

Having a setting where Staff and children can talk and listen to each other with understanding and to encourage independence.

Developing the child's own awareness of their behavior.

Having the child gain a positive self-image to feel good.

We encourage children to verbalize their feelings to help develop their self-control through understanding.

We encourage children to make their own choices and help establish rules, procedures, and policies.

Children will learn the natural consequences of their own actions and learn problem solving skills. They will learn to balance their needs and wants with those of others. We provide expectations that are clear, age-appropriate and applied in a consistent way.

Praise and encouragement are the focus of our program. Positive behavior is always noted and negative behavior is addressed and corrected in a positive manner. The Director directs corrective measures if the child's behavior is extreme or aggressive. **Our goal is to avoid suspension or termination by trying support services in and outside of the program.**

Our policy does not include the use of negative, punitive measures by its staff for a child's inappropriate behavior.

The following practices are strictly prohibited: -

- Corporal punishment shall not be used including physical restraint.
- Spanking or other corporal punishment of children.
- Depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks, force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence.
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.
- Confining a child to a piece of equipment for an extended period in lieu of supervision.
- Excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.
- No child shall be subject to any cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, physical or verbal abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats or derogatory remarks.
- No child shall be denied any basic needs as punishment.

E.E.C requires Parent Conferences and Progress Reports, which will be completed after 6 months each school calendar year (every 3 months for a child with an identified special need) to maintain communication with families and help transitions into other programs.

SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION POLICY

'Pre-school @ Longfellow' will use the following guidelines for warnings, termination or suspending a child from the program if there has been no success in behavior management or discipline: -

- **If the safety and well being of other children in our care cannot be assured because of this child's behavior.**
- **If the health or safety of a child while at our facility cannot be assured.**
- **If the child's developmental needs are not being met.**
- **A child may be suspended if the required E.E.C. documentation is not up to date/complete or payment is not received.**

Behavior not tolerated here at 'Pre-school @ Longfellow' includes: arrogant, abusive, aggressive or rude behavior in any form towards other students, staff or members.

Parents/Guardians are notified after each incident and the incident is logged. After the first written warning a telephone conversation is required. After two written warnings, a meeting is required to discuss alternate options. After a third written warning a (suspension) or 'termination' will be put into effect.

The Director will request a meeting with the parents to discuss the circumstances and other options. Parents will be given documentation with specific reasons why termination or suspension has been put into effect and if there are any conditions for returning into the program. A copy will be placed in the child's file. The Director will inform the parents of the availability of information and referral for other services within and outside of the program. If the parents are unable to meet in person, they will be sent written notification.

If parents wish to withdraw their child from the program, **a 30-Day notice must be submitted in writing.**

PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The staff at 'Pre-School @ Longfellow' shall protect children from abuse and neglect while the children are in the program's care and custody. All staff members are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse and/or neglect. The report shall be made to the Director and he/she shall report the issue to the DCF immediately.

The Director shall call the E.E.C. after filing a 51A report, or learning that one has been filed, alleging abuse/neglect of a child while in the care of a program.

The Licensee shall cooperate in all investigations including in the identifying of parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the program; providing consent for disclosure to the E.E.C. of information from any person/agency and allowing the E.E.C. to disclose any information to any person/agency the E.E.C. may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and protection of children. Failure to cooperate may be grounds for suspension, revocation or refusal to issue or renew a license.

The Director shall ensure that an allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member does not work directly with children until the DSS investigation is completed and for such further time as the E.E.C. requires.

'Pre-School @ Longfellow' has a written plan describing procedure for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational and medical services, including dental check-up, vision or hearing screening, should the program staff feel that an assessment for such services would benefit the child.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICIES

Longfellow is a busy place. In order to make the transition to and from the classroom a smooth one, please follow our guidelines: -

- For Drop Off – please park and walk your child into the preschool room.
- Only people listed on the 'Authorization and Consent' form will be allowed to take your child. Parents must give us **prior notice** if sometime listed on the authorization form is picking up his or her child. We will accept a written or email notice. This person must show identification until we know them.
- For pick up at 1pm a teacher will be waiting outside with your child IF you arrange this with the teacher. Please be prompt. **You will need to get out of your car** so we can hand your child to you.

NUTRITION POLICY

Parents are required to supply a NUT FREE lunch and 2+ snacks. Food is not withheld for punishment or used as a reward. Teachers will sit at the tables with the children, encouraging them eat their snack and chat amongst their peers. Teachers will make sure that children's hands are washed before and after snack and lunch.

TOILETING POLICY

When entering 'Pre-School @ Longfellow', children are usually toilet trained or actively toilet training with their families. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment 7.04 (17) (g). They are also learning to attend to their own hygiene. Families play a big role and we want to help with this process too. Pull-ups are allowed in our preschool classes, if needed. Parents provide their child's pull-ups and wipes and develop a plan with staff for times when they should be used throughout the day. When toileting accidents happen, teachers will help the child wash him/herself and change clothing. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

The children are allowed and encouraged to go to the bathroom at any time throughout the day. Children should wear comfortable clothes so they can easily pull down and pull up their pants. Teachers will help with difficult snaps, buttons, and fasteners. All children should have an extra change of clothing to leave at preschool. Staff will assist the children with washing their hands with soap and water, using friction, and assist drying hands with disposable paper towels, after going to the bathroom and before eating.

WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Every Day

Back-Pack
NUT FREE Lunch
2 snacks
Change of clothes
Sneakers for gym time
Swimsuit and towel for swimming

Winter

Shoes for indoors
Winter coat, Hat and mittens
Snow pants and snow boots

Summer

Hat for outside play
Sunscreen - labeled

BIRTHDAYS

Due to many allergies, you may only bring popsicles to celebrate birthdays here at Pre-school. If you would like to donate a book to Pre-school on your child's birthday, we have Book Donation Stickers for the inside cover, and you can come in and read a special story or have a special guest reader come in (after COVID!).

Example Daily Schedule

9:15 am – 9:30 am – Circle Time
9:30 am – 10:15 am – Curriculum Time & snack
10:30 am – 11:00 am – Swim Time
11:15 am – 11:45 am – Curriculum Time
11:45 am – Lunch Time
12:15 pm – 12:45 pm - Creative Movement Yoga, soccer.
1:00 pm Home time
1:15 pm – 2:30pm- Rest Time & free play.

Preschool @ Longfellow 2024 - 2025

Important Dates and Information

Contact Information

Director: Caroline Donahue

Lead Teacher: Ms. Hillary Mabardy

Contact email: -longfellowkids@gmail.com

Tel: 508 653 4633 x 217

Tuesday September 3, 2024

First Day of Preschool 😊

Closed 2024: -

Monday October 14 – Columbus Day/Indigenous People Day

Friday November 11– Veteran's Day

Thursday/Friday November 28/29- Thanksgiving

December Break - TBA

Back to preschool Tuesday January 2, 2025

2025 Holiday Dates TBA