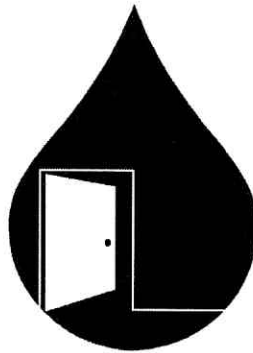


**THE CENTER:
A DROP-IN COMMUNITY
LEARNING & RESOURCE CENTER, INC.**

Serving the community of New London since 1970

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood #15959



**The Drop-In Learning Center
After-School Family Handbook**

Contact Information:

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WELCOME PARENTS

Welcome to the After-School Program! This handbook is designed to give parents and guardians a helpful insight into the After-School Program offered by The Center: A Drop-In Community Learning & Resource Center, Inc. (The Drop). It includes information about After School Program activities, procedures, and policies. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it for easy reference during the school year. If you have questions or comments, please call The Drop at 860.442.4466.

AFTER-SCHOOL GOALS

The After-School Program strives to provide an atmosphere where children can enjoy, grow, and learn. The staff always welcomes suggestions and ideas that will help us to make your child's time at the After-School Program beneficial and rewarding. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us at any time. We strive to maintain an atmosphere that balances student learning, enrichment, physical activity, and free time in a stimulating and enjoyable setting. The After-School Program provides parents with safe, convenient, reliable, and affordable out-of-school time care for their children. The programs maintain clear policies and procedures and actively encourage and welcome open communication and parent involvement.

The After-School Program will forward an attendance and bus list to each elementary school before the beginning of the school year. Please send a written note to your child's teacher confirming your child's enrollment in the After-School Program and detailing your child's daily dismissal schedule.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Absences

If your child is not going to attend for the day, please report his/her absence by calling the administration office @ 860.442.4466

After-School Program Site / Address

76 Federal Street, New London, (St. James Church)

Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday: 2:45pm to 5:30pm.

Arrival

Attendance will be taken, and a Drop staff member will sign your child in once the bus drops them off.

Pick-Up

Parents or designated pick-up person must sign your child out when leaving the program. If someone other than yourself or the persons authorized on the registration form will be picking up your child, The Drop must be notified prior to pick up time. This person must also bring a photo ID with them when they pick up the child. **Note: Appropriate legal paperwork is required to be on file with the Drop when the custodial parent requests the center not to release the child to the other parent.

Late Pick-Up

We close promptly at 5:30pm. For all children not picked up by the end of the program, the following late policy will be strictly enforced:

First 5 minutes: Grace Period

Each 5-minute time span, thereafter: \$5.00 late fee per child. The late fee is in place to compensate staff members for their time. If you know you will be late, please attempt to make alternate pick-up arrangements. The Drop should be notified if you foresee late arrival, as it is often stressful for a child when parents are late.

NOTE: When a child is not picked up in emergency situations including, but not limited to: inclement weather or natural disasters, we will follow the "late pick-up" policy listed above starting 45 minutes from when the parent has been informed of the need for campers to be picked up.

CHILDREN AT RISK

Parents who arrive at The Drop in an incapacitated condition (i.e. alcohol, drugs) present a risk to their child. The staff in charge will advise the parent of their options regarding the transportation of their child to his/her home. Some options that may be exercised are:

- Call another person on the child's emergency contact list.
- Call the other parent.
- Call a taxi or Call a nearby neighbor / friend.
- If a reasonable conclusion cannot be reached, the parent will be advised that either Child Protective Services or the Police will be called.

CONDUCT

We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all our students, families and staff. To ensure safety and comfort for all, we ask individuals to act appropriately while they are or participating in our program. We expect all persons to behave in a responsible way and to respect the rights and dignity of others. We do not permit language or actions that can

hurt or frighten another person or that falls below a generally accepted standard of conduct, this includes:

- Angry or vulgar language including swearing, name calling, and shouting;
- Physical contact with another person in an angry or threatening way;
- Any demonstration of sexual behavior or sexual contact with another person;
- Harassment or intimidation with words, gestures, body language or other menacing behavior;
- Behavior which intends to or results in the theft or destruction of property;
- Carrying or concealing any weapons or devices that may be used as weapons.

Staff are trained and expected to respond to any reported violation of our code of conduct. Please do not hesitate to notify a staff person if you need assistance. We want to help! The Drop-In Executive Director will investigate all reported incidents. Dismissal from a program or termination of After-School privileges may result from any violation of the code of conduct. No refunds will be given.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

If your child needs to be disciplined acceptable measures may include; verbal warnings, timeout from activity, removal from activity and placed with staff away from group, suspension from program or removal from program.

BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE

To promote your child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being and growth, staff shall interact with the child and one another to provide needed help, comfort, and support and:

- Respect personal privacy
- Respect differences in cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds
- Encourage decision making abilities
- Promote ways of getting along
- Encourage independence and self-direction
- Use consistency in applying expectations

Behavioral guidance will be constructive in nature, age and stage appropriate, and will be intended to redirect children to appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts. Parents will be notified when persistent behavioral problems are identified and will include any disciplinary steps taken in response.

EXPECTATIONS

Good behavior will be encouraged in a positive manner. Before the first day of the After-School Program, you and your child are required to read through and sign the “Behavior Agreement” form, found in your registration packet. This way you will both be aware of the rules and consequences. The staff will work cooperatively with parents, keeping them informed of behavior problems and methods used to teach and guide them toward socially acceptable behavior. The Drop reserves the right to remove a child from the program due to behavioral or other concerns. Every attempt will be made to work with children and their families through conferences and direct communication.

Behavior problems that cannot be resolved cooperatively will result in your child’s dismissal from the program. Certain abusive behaviors will result in immediate dismissal.

If your child has been receiving assistance in behavior management during the school year, it is imperative that this information be shared with the After-School staff. This will enable us to work more effectively and productively with your child.

DISABILITIES

In order, for The Drop to provide the best experience for your child, we ask that prior to registration, you consult with the Executive Director regarding any special needs of your child. Since there are some medical treatments and procedures that legally, The Drop staff is not trained nor qualified to perform, children will be enrolled on an individual basis. We will make every attempt to serve all children.

ENROLLMENT & PAYMENT POLICIES

There is a \$30.00 enrollment fee (non-refundable)

NO child will be accepted into the program unless any old balance has been paid in full by the start date of the After-School Program.

The After-School Program’s weekly tuition is based on the family size and total family income. Payment is due in advance of services. When the Program is open on half-days, vacation days, or staff development days, an extra charge will apply. Monthly statements will be left in parent mailboxes and payments are due within seven (7) days.

FIELD TRIPS

At times, we participate in field trips or have special guests coming to the After-School site. You will be notified of such outings prior to any trip. Please read all notices and announcements. In case of rain, a field trip may be changed or cancelled. On trip days, Permission slips must be signed in advance for your child to attend. Please read all notices and announcements. Trips may or may not include transportation, or walking. You will have the option for your child not to attend field trips or special events. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend our field trips.

LOST AND FOUND

We do have a lost and found area. It is highly recommended that you label all items with your child's name. While all students are encouraged to keep belongings in their backpack or on their person, the After-School program will not be held responsible for lost or stolen items. At the end of each week, we will display the found items, and then take any remaining items to Goodwill. Please make a quick check of your child's backpack at the end of the day before leaving. Lost items are much easier to recover on the same day they are lost.

MEDICAL/ EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Address & Telephone Numbers:

Please inform The Drop writing of all changes to address and phone numbers. If your emergency numbers change, it is important that we are notified immediately to ensure proper notification of parents in case of an emergency. Also, please notify The Drop if you are going out of town; this allows us to quickly contact others on your emergency contact list if necessary.

Illness Policy:

All children must have a current physical on file. Physical examinations must be complete and signed by a child's physician. All immunizations must be current. Children must be healthy enough to participate in the program's daily routine. We do not have the facilities to care for sick children and therefore do not allow them to attend the program. For the safety and comfort of your child, please keep them home until they feel better and no longer present the danger of passing on their illness. If you are keeping your child home due to illness, please contact The Drop and let the staff know of your child's absence. When your child has a fever (fever of 101) or vomiting/diarrhea, please make sure they remain at home 24 hours after their temperature and symptoms returns to normal. We may require a physician's release for any medical or health condition. If your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be asked to pick up your child as soon as possible.

The following are defined as illness or communicable health problems:

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- A chronic runny nose with colored discharge
- A chronic cough
- A fever
- Vomiting or upset stomach
- Signs of general fatigue or discomfort
- An open rash
- Head lice
- Knowledge that the child has had a fever within the past 24 hours

In the case that your child becomes ill during the program, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If the parent or guardian is unable to be reached, the child's emergency contact will be notified. It is the responsibility of the parents to arrange for the child to be picked up from the center as soon as possible.

ACCIDENTS/EMERGENICES

All precautions will be taken to prevent serious health risks to all students. If a minor injury occurs, First Aid will be administered by the staff. The following procedures will be followed:

- First Aid will be provided, and the incident recorded on and Accident/Injury form.
- The child will periodically be observed after First Aid has been applied.

In the event of a medical emergency, immediate action will be taken by the staff as per your orders on the registration form and policies and waivers. Please be sure to keep these forms updated always. If parents or other responsible adults are unable to be reached, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital for any necessary treatment. In general, if a major injury or health problem arises and professional medical care is required, the following steps will be taken:

Immediate First Aid will be administered by The Drop staff person until professional services arrive.

- You will be contacted. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be notified.
- 911 will be called.
- A staff person will accompany your child to the hospital and remain until you or your emergency contact person arrives.
- The incident will be described in writing on The Drop Accident/Injury report.

Emergency information is very important for us to provide the safest possible environment for your children. *** Please notify us right away when there is a new work or home phone

number, or if you have moved and have a new address. If your child is sick or injured, it is important for us to be able to contact you right away. Please keep these accurate always. The Drop does not incur the cost of medical treatment and it is imperative that you indicate on your child's health history / registration form what type of health insurance you carry.

Emergency Plan

Each After-School site will have a site-specific emergency plan including an assembly area program, facility evacuation plan, notification system, shelter-in-place plan, locations of fire extinguishers and first aid kits, etc. Staff have been trained and are expected to be well-versed in emergency procedures. We will conduct both a fire drill and shelter-in place drill, so that students are aware of what to do in an emergency. The following are general procedures for the After-School Program in case of emergencies:

Shelter-in-Place: In the event of an emergency that requires an on-site shelter-in-place, students, members, and staff will assemble in the designated area on site (please refer to site-specific plans for actual locations). In the event of an emergency that requires students, or staff to be moved to an alternate location, participants and staff will be transported to the following location:

Facility Evacuation (in case of fire, or another emergency):

In the event of an emergency requiring facility evacuation, students and staff will exit the building through the nearest exit and meet at pre-determined assembly areas. The Drop staff will take roll of students and will take a total count to assure that all children have left the building safely. The Drop staff are responsible for medication, first aid kits and evacuation kits.

Chemical / Biological / Terrorist Emergency Plan:

In the event of any of these emergencies, students and staff are required to relocate to the on-site shelter in place location. Once there, no one (including parents and children) will be allowed to enter or exit the building until there is further notification from Executive Director.

Severe Inclement Weather:

In the case of severe inclement weather students will meet at their designated After-School area. All students will remain in their groups under until the weather passes, or the parents pick their children up. Parents, please create an emergency plan to have your child picked up during emergency situations. Be aware of local weather conditions that you feel may warrant your child being picked up from the program. The Drop staff will not call you to pick up your child unless the program is canceled.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Our medication policy is primarily established to accommodate the administration of medications(s) commonly prescribed by physicians for the treatment of short-term illnesses. Prescription and "over-the-counter" medications will not be dispensed without written consent from the child's parent:

- Complete the medication authorization form included in your registration packet.
- Keep all medication in the original container with the prescription label / direction label attached. Medication must be labeled with the child's name, the name of medication, the dosage amount, and the time or times to be given.
- Hand all medication (including inhalers, etc.) to The Drop staff. Students are not allowed to keep medications on their person, in their backpacks.
- All medications will be locked up and given to your child at the prescribed time. Medication authorizations are only valid for 10 days, at which time, all unused medication will be returned to the parent or disposed of, unless a new form is completed. If a child is taking medication for an extended period, a note with these specifications and signed by a physician must be submitted.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please do not allow your child to bring personal belongings to the program. The Drop cannot be responsible for the loss or damage of toys, games, clothes or other personal belongings.

Please do not bring the following to The Drop:

- Any electronic games / devices (including, but not limited to: iPads, CD Players, etc.)
- Money
- Cell phones
- Valuable items
- Weapons of any sort - fake or real

CLOTHING AND OTHER BELONGINGS

All belongings brought to the program should be properly marked with the child's name. Should children need to bring specific items from home for activities, a notice will be given to parents ahead of time.

RULES & SAFETY

General Rules:

- Exit the bus safely. Look both ways before crossing.
- Stay with your group always.
- Cross in the crosswalks. Always walk. Never cross between cars.
- No climbing on gates, fences, or trees.
- No horseplay, screaming, or yelling while in the bus.
- No inappropriate or abusive language is permitted.
- No hitting, kicking, or other physical abuse is permitted.
- Listen to and respect the rules and boundaries of any games played in After-School.
- Participate and cooperate during activities.
- All students will be expected to display good teamwork. How we play is more important than whether we win or lose!

TRANSPORTATION

Children will be transported to The Drop from the Public Schools by their transportation system. Parents are responsible for pick-ups.

SPECIAL NOTE TO PARENTS

As a provider of children's programs, the Drop strives to effectively screen and train all staff and volunteers. The Drop After-School Program is licensed by the state. Our quality programs enrich the lives of children each year and the safety of every child is a top priority for us. To make sure your child remains safe outside of the Drop's supervision and to protect our staff and volunteers, the Drop encourages your cooperation in the following areas:

- It is a violation of the Drop's policy for a Drop employee to baby-sit, host sleepovers, or spend time one-on-one with your child outside of the programs.
- Talk to your child about the importance of telling you if someone does or says something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Emphasize that adults should not ask them to keep secrets from you.
- Explain to your child that s/he has a basic right to privacy and that no one should touch them inappropriately or compel them to touch someone else inappropriately.
- Instruct your child to always remain part of the group. Stress safety in numbers.
- Be concerned if your child suddenly becomes withdrawn or balks at attending certain activities or being around a particular person. Gently seek to find out why.
- Report any actions by Drop staff or volunteers that you deem to be inappropriate to
- The Executive Director. If these actions involve suspected child abuse, contact Department of Children and Families (DCF) or call your local police department.