Important Information:
Office Number: 847-501-2549  Fax Number: 847-501-3284
Email Address: director@harknesshouse.org
Website: www.harknesshouse.org

Infant Classroom:
847-501-2643
At times the Director is out of the office or in the classrooms, if you have an emergency please call the infant Huggy Bear's phone.

Assistant Director Cell Phone:
847-999-8205
Leave a message and the message will be given to appropriate teacher/classroom.

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Letter from the Director

Thank you again for choosing Harkness House for Children as the early childhood program for your family. We are pleased to be working with you and thank you for the opportunity to watch your child grow and learn.

Harkness House for Children is dedicated to providing an environment where children can grow and learn at their own pace. Through our play-based curriculum, we are able to individualize our teaching to best meet the needs of each child and each family. We support children’s independence and aim to foster a life-long love of learning. We are committed to striving for excellence in the field of early childhood.

Ongoing, two-way communication between home and school is critical to making this a positive experience for you and your child. Each classroom has customized communication systems that are geared to the individual ages of that room. We rely upon parent feedback on how a child is progressing at home and ask that parents share any concerns or suggestions that they have with the staff. In addition, parent-teacher conferences will be conducted twice a year in each classroom.

If at any time you would like to meet with your child’s teacher, please schedule an appointment.

Again, thank you for choosing us as the program for your family. We understand that you are entrusting us with your children and we take that trust very seriously. If there is anything that I can ever do for you, please don’t hesitate to call.

Sincerely yours,

E. Patricia Ruffin MA
Executive Director
Section 1:  
**Introduction to Harkness House for Children**

**Leadership and Organization**

Executive Director: E. Patricia Ruffin, MA  
Assistant Director: Danielle Pavloff  
Board of Directors

The Harkness House for Children (HHC) Board of Directors supervise the Director of HHC, work with the Director to establish personnel, administrative, and program policies of HHC, assist the Director in maintaining proper licensing of HHC as a not-for-profit child care and development center, communicate and uphold HHC’s purpose, mission, and policies, assist with and direct fundraising activities, and prepare annual budgets and reports for HHC.

**2016-2017 Harkness House Board of Directors**

**Executive Board**  
President: Catherine Stickrod  
Vice-President: Christopher Folland  
Treasurer: Dana Jones  
Co-Secretaries: Ryan Buhl, Courtney Doyle

**Board Members**  
Melissa Frick  
Lisa Gray  
Dana Jones  
Kerry Nelson  
Riley Sheehan  
Erin Welch  
Alicia Yamada
Staff
The HHC Board of Directors understood from the onset that what matters most in a high quality early childhood program were teachers. In order to assure that the philosophy of HHC is carried out; an experienced educated professional Early Childhood Director is directing and supervising the Early Childhood Program. The Early Childhood Teachers are selected for their educational background in Child Development and for their sensitivity to the individual needs of the young child. In keeping with our anti-bias philosophy, HHC feels strongly about the need to have a diverse staff. Our teachers consist of different ages, gender, many religions, various nationalities and a variety of abilities.

All of our staff participate in a minimum of fifteen hours of early childhood in-service a year. In addition, all of our staff members attend “Staff Development Week” each May. During this week staff is re-certified in First Aid and CPR, participate in team building, program development, understanding diversity and work to promote advocacy for children and families. Our infant classroom has teachers/assistant teachers who have at least 6 early childhood credits as well as extensive experience with the infant age group. All other classrooms have a lead teacher with a college degree in Early Childhood or a related field. All assistant teachers have High School Diploma, at least 6 Early Childhood college credits. Several of our Assistant Teachers also have a college degree in Early Childhood or related field.

HHC Mission and Philosophy
HHC is a developmentally oriented, not-for-profit childcare and development center founded in August of 1988 to meet the need for quality infant and early childhood care. Fully licensed by the State of Illinois since its inception, HHC provides full and part time care for infants and children from 6 weeks to five years of age. HHC operates without regard to nationality, gender, race, religion, or ethnic background.

HHC was begun in the belief that all families deserve a quality and affordable program based on exemplary childcare practices and procedures, implemented by a well-trained, professional and caring staff. HHC provides a loving, nurturing, multicultural environment, with an anti-bias curriculum, in which children learn to respect and care for themselves and others. HHC is committed to bringing children, parents, and caregivers together to support the family as a nurturing unit in a diverse society and to provide leadership to the larger childcare community.

HHC’s key to success is its ability to establish warm constructive relationships with the children and their parents. In all of our programs, children are encouraged to explore their environment at their own pace. A variety of developmentally appropriate play activities are used for discovery and learning. These include sensory motor and manipulative experiences, music, art, dramatic play,
outings, and field trips. Quiet time for stories and rest is balanced with time to explore and interact with other children, caregivers, and the environment.

**The Developmental Approach of Harkness House for Children**

HHC believes that each child is a unique individual who brings their own personality, temperament, learning style, family background, and rate of growth to our program. Our environment, curriculum, and staff respond to these differences through a developmental program that enhances each child’s growth while challenging the child’s interest in and understanding of their world.

A developmentally appropriate program allows infants, toddlers and preschoolers to experience their environment through their senses, through physical movement, and through social interaction - first with a nurturing adult and then with peers. As the child moves toward developing language, HHC provides conversation, simple books, puzzles, and music. Space is provided for play to develop gross motor skills.

As children get older, they are ready for greater activity and movement with an emphasis on large muscle development. Language development continues to be very important, and stories, music, and verbal interaction with peers increase. Positive relationships are the foundations that enable all learning to occur. At HHC we value and nurture these relationships; between children and teachers, teachers and families, and children with their peers.

HHC utilizes a published research based guide called The Creative Curriculum (by Diane Trister Dodge, Laura J. Colker, and Cate Heroman) as a tool for planning curriculum activities and assessing children’s progress as they get older.

HHC’s curriculum is responsive to each child’s level of maturity and development. For example, toddlers will explore blocks by touching them and putting them in their mouth. Later, simple stacking of blocks may occur, and then more complicated structures may appear, incorporating other toys, such as cars, small people, or animals. Blocks of different sizes and shapes will be introduced at different times during this process. Blocks are not set up in a pattern for a child to copy. This enables each child to feel successful about the product.

The following are descriptions of the developmental tasks of childhood and our developmental goals, which occur and are assessed according to a child’s individual growth.
Social Development and Emotional Development

Social development refers to a child’s ability to interact with people. Relationships are the bedrock or foundation for all positive social and emotional developmental milestones. For toddlers, this interaction involves many new skills, including turn-taking, sharing, and communicating with others. Some of these skills may be difficult for young children, but with proper modeling and open-ended activities, the child will learn to incorporate these skills into his or her social interactions. Examples of activities that serve to develop social skills include dramatic play, block construction, sensory play as well as structured games like "Duck, Duck, Goose," "Ring Around the Rosie," and "Musical Chairs." For infants this social interaction involves such skills as visual and verbal communication, cause and effect relationships and imitation.

Over the course of the preschool years, children are developing their own self-identity and their ideas about others. They are gradually figuring out that they are like other people in many ways and different from others. Children’s learning experiences in these early years can help them to form a strong, positive self-concept and grow up to respect and interact comfortably with people different from themselves. As a part of our anti-bias philosophy HHC provides books, dolls, toys, wall decorations (paintings, drawing, photographs), and records that reflect diverse images that children may not likely see elsewhere. We encourage the children to discuss differences among people and talk positively about each child’s physical characteristics and cultural heritage.

Emotional development is just that, the development of the emotions. Any activity in which a child experiences happiness, sadness, self-esteem, insecurity, calmness and uneasiness and is positively responded to by a caring adult will encourage emotional development.

Social and emotional readiness can be taught and nurtured most effectively when children are young. Because preschool is a prime setting for obtaining social and emotional competence, social/emotional development is an important focus for our program.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development refers to the mind and how it works. It involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn. Cognitive development, from a Piagetian perspective, involves children’s creation of increasingly complex relationships that result in a more complex framework for understanding reality. This framework is constructed through the child’s interactions with the environment. Such interactions may include matching, sorting, problem solving, and block construction. Matching and sorting develop classification skills, problem solving develops cause-and-effect relationships, and block construction develops spatial relationships.
Physical Development

Physical Development includes children's gross (large muscles) and fine (small muscles) motor skills. The two overall goals for physical development are:

Achieving gross motor control: moving the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately. Gross motor control includes balance and stability; movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping; and physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking, and catching.

Achieving fine motor control: using and coordinating the small muscles in the hands and wrists with dexterity. As these fine muscles develop, children are able to perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools. (The achievement of fine motor skills generally lags behind gross motor development.)

Language Development

Language is an important aspect of a child's life that allows the child to 1) encounter a wider world of ideas, 2) to shape his/her own talk and 3) to express his/her own thoughts. Language development occurs through a variety of ways, 1) everyday speech, 2) reading, and 3) singing. Through the constant repetition of these three activities a child learns language. Some activities that foster language development are reading, singing, finger plays, and dramatic play.

Creative Development

Creativity is the child's ability to use his/her mind in different or more flexible ways. Creative development occurs through such activities as art and dramatic play. Through open-ended art activities such as easel painting or collage making or sensory play a child can express him/herself. Creativity is also enhanced through dramatic play. Dramatic play begins with using one object to represent something or someone else. As a child's creativity grows, so does the imagination that allows them to pretend to be something else. Through fantasy play, the child rehearses life experiences and roles.
**Hours of Operation**

HHC is open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The center is closed on the following holidays: Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, day after Thanksgiving, December 25th to January 2nd, and the first two weeks of May. We are off all of these holidays and if any of these holidays falls on a weekend day, the center is closed on the commonly observed day. Closing dates are posted on our web site and on each classroom bulletin board.

Because we share the building with Harkness Outreach Center, the rummage sale (benefiting the Winnetka Congregational Church) that occurs annually, uses our classroom space for two weeks and we close our program.

**Parking, Arrivals and Departures**

**Parking**

The parking lot adjacent to HHC can be used for drop-off and pick up. However, parents are NOT permitted to park in this lot all day. The parking lot is shared space with the Winnetka Community House and needs to be available for patrons of both facilities. You may contact the Village of Winnetka to purchase a Zone C parking permit for use in Village lots.

**Arrivals and Departures**

Parents are responsible for signing in their child into and out of the building each day. You must sign your child in each morning and sign him/her out, with your full signature, at departure time. Please remember – for HHC to accept legal responsibility for your child, your child must be signed in by the person bringing him/her to the center, and signed out by the person picking him/her up each day! If you wish to have someone pick up your child other than those persons listed on your emergency card please notify HHC’s administration. Anyone picking up your child must have permission, photo identification and be at least 18 years of age or we will be unable to authorize pick up.

**Arrivals**

For continuity of care for all of the children, children in the Bumble Bee, Quacker, and Explorer rooms are dropped off prior to 10:00 in the morning. Exceptions will be made for doctor’s appointments if requested. When you drop off your child, we ask that you:

1. Sign him/her in with full signature.
2. Assist your child in hand washing. This will help us to keep all of the children healthy.
3. Always say goodbye. It is important that you say goodbye to your child every day. We know that this can be hard at times. However, by acknowledging them when you leave, you are helping to instill a sense of safety and security for your child.

Departures
When picking up your child, be sure to sign your child’s cubby for any clothes to take home, communication / notices from HHC, art projects, or other items. As stated above, HHC closes at 6 p.m. In accordance with HHC’s: Late Pick-Up Policy, a charge will be assessed if your child is left beyond the center’s operating hours.

Late Pick Up Policy
We understand that on occasion a Harkness House family may run into a situation which would cause them to be late picking up their child. We ask that a courtesy call be made if at all possible to inform the staff that you will be late and what your expected time of pick up will be. There is an additional charge if your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m. (12:15 for half day families) and needs to be paid at the time of pick up. If payment is not made within 24 hours, you will be invoiced and late charges (of 1.00 a day) will accrue from the date of the late pick up. We appreciate your consideration in making every effort to pick your child up on time.

If it is necessary for you to pick up your child late, the base charge will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Day Enrolled Children</th>
<th>Half Day Enrolled Children</th>
<th>Base Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:01 p.m. to 6:05 p.m.</td>
<td>12:01-12:05</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:06 to 6:10</td>
<td>12:06-12:10</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11 to 6:15</td>
<td>12:11-12:15</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:16 to 6:20</td>
<td>12:16-12:20</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:21 to 6:25</td>
<td>12:21-12:25</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:26 to 6:30</td>
<td>12:26-12:30</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The time of pick-up is determined by the time that the child no longer is in the care of a Harkness House staff member. The late fee will be determined by the time you arrive in the classroom to pick your child up.

The base charge will be multiplied by the number of times the child has been picked up late in the current calendar year. For example, if the child is picked-up at 6:12 and this instance is the third time the child has been picked up late this year, then the fee is $20.00 x 3 = $60.00.
If your child has not been picked up by 6:30, we will begin to contact the emergency back-up people. If no one can be reached, your child will be released to the care of the Winnetka Police Department.

Any family that picks up their child past 6:00 more than five times in a calendar year may be disenrolled at the discretion of the Board. Families who are disenrolled will forfeit their security deposit.

**Release of Child**

Your child will only be allowed to leave with a person whose name is on file as an authorized pick-up person. If a person not on the list is asked to pick up, we will need verbal or written consent from the family in order to release the child. The person will be REQUIRED to show identification prior to the child’s release.

If parent/guardian arrives intoxicated or under the influence of drugs in the opinion of the provider, all reasonable steps will be taken to avoid releasing the child to that person and an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. If an emergency contact cannot be reached, we will call a cab for the parent. If the parent should refuse this offer, the Police will be called, given the car license plate number, and informed of a suspected impaired driver.

**Food**

HHC will meet the nutritional needs of our children for the part of the day which is spent at the center. All children eat food provided at HHC daily as required by DCFS. If your child has severe food allergies and is unable to eat the food a doctor’s note is required and is to be renewed annually. We provide organic milk, breakfast snack, organic catered lunch, and afternoon snack. Vegetarian meals are also provided for lunch. Lunch and Snack Menus are provided monthly and are also posted in the classroom.

**Allergy**

HHC’s environment is a PEANUT FREE environment which means we do not serve peanut products to the children nor do the adults eat food items with tree nuts in the classrooms. We ask that any food brought in from the outside for birthday parties or other special occasions has ingredients that are “nut-free”.

**Breast Feeding Accommodations**

Our staff promotes and supports breast feeding by accepting, storing, and serving expressed milk for feedings. We ask that you bring the milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant’s
name and date. We will store this milk in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than
24 hours if it was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer
than three months. Teachers in the Huggy Bear room are trained in the special handling of breast
milk and for warming and feeding it to the babies. If your schedule allows you to breast feed here
during your work hours we welcome you to do that in the Huggy Bear infant room.

Emergency Closings
HHC will make every effort to remain open during regularly scheduled hours. In an emergency
situation, the assistant director will email all HHC families; your child’s teacher will leave a text
message on your cell phone, you may also call our 24-hour voice mail for updated information on
school closings and check our website.

Emergency Procedures
HHC reserves the right to call 911 in the event of an emergency.

Parent Involvement and Parent Hours
Parents are encouraged to become involved in our program and we rely on your connection to our
program for our success. There are a variety of opportunities get involved:

Parent Hours
The link between home and school is critical to a child’s development. Research shows that having
parents involved in school increases the success of the child. Each family is required to do a minimum
of 6 hours of volunteer time per year. Please refer to the, director or assistant director as well as
review your classroom newsletter and the bulletin Board outside the office for opportunities.

Fundraising / School Events / Board Participation
1. Assist with / volunteer with Fundraising Events (See Section II.H for more information).
2. Attend class field trips
3. Assist with organizing, set-up, or clean-up of school events such as the Halloween Party,
   Holiday Show, or Staff Appreciation Day.
4. Participation on our Board of Directors
Fundraising
HHC relies upon fundraising as a part of our budget. There are several fundraising events throughout the year. The preschool board and director determine fundraising events each year. We welcome all parent volunteers for these events.

Grand Food Receipts – Located directly west of HHC, at Green Bay and Pine Street, the Grand is a local grocery store dedicated to not-for-profit organizations. Save your receipts from the Grand and submit them to HHC. The Grand donates a portion of the total receipts to HHC.

HHC has an account with Amazon Smile which supports not for profit organizations. If you purchase items through Amazon Smile a small percentage is donated to HHC.

Disenrollment Policy
HHC must ensure the safety and welfare of all children enrolled in the center. Certain behaviors may cause a risk to other children and staff: physical assault of another child or staff member, substantial damage to personal property, etc. Harkness House may immediately dis-enroll any child whose behavior creates a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of other children or staff members.

The HHC administration is authorized to dis-enroll a child/family under certain circumstances which include but are not limited to:

1. A child's excessive, inappropriate behavior;
2. When a child poses a risk of harm to self and/or others;
3. A parent’s or guardian’s excessive, inappropriate conduct;
4. Failure to meet any and all financial obligations and other HHC requirements;
5. Failure to comply with State of Illinois and HHC regulations and requirements regarding children's records.

Staff Terminations and Resignations
We understand that the relationship between families in a child care center and the staff is unique. However, as with all employee/employer situations, we are obligated to uphold confidentiality in all staff related matters. If an employee resigns, we require a minimum of two weeks' notification. The other teachers in the classroom will work with your family to assist your child and family through the staffing change. If an employee is terminated, you will receive notification that that employee is no longer on staff at HHC. However, we will be unable to share the circumstances regarding that termination.
Confidentiality

In order to participate in our program, parents/guardians will be asked to share private and confidential information with us. The information on all forms, including screenings, and assessments, is considered confidential, and only teachers, the school director, and consultants will have access to it. Others will not be given access to this information without parents/guardian’s written consent, unless it becomes necessary to ensure you or your child’s immediate safety or welfare. All information is kept in each child’s file in a locked drawer. Information such as family history, professional reports, assessments, and medical reports will be used to create and develop a curriculum and an environment that meet the needs of each child. Parents may request access to their child’s file.

Photographs, Videotaping, and Social Media

Photographs/ videotapes of children participating in HHC programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, social media (HHC’s Facebook Site) or other publicity materials. Your permission to take photographs/videotapes of your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this Center Policy Handbook. A permission slip will be provided to state whether or not you agree to these terms.

Grievances / Parent Feedback

HHC strives to make sure that our program meets the highest standards and the needs of our families each day. Our growth is dependent on parent feedback. Please feel free at any time to share your thoughts and ideas with the teachers in the room, the Lead Teacher, the Assistant Director, or the Director. We will do all that we can to incorporate your feedback into our program. If you have feel as if you have addressed the issue with the classroom teachers and it has not been resolved, please bring your concern to the management so that we can assist you.

Staff as Babysitters

HHC understands that teachers may be used for private babysitting purposes. Harkness House does not assume any liability for use of staff members in this capacity. Staff members are not permitted to make babysitting arrangements on their work time or to allow babysitting to interfere with their
work performance. If you need to make babysitting arrangements, please do so outside of Harkness House. Harkness House strives to hire quality staff and train them intensively. They are here to benefit all of the children. Any family that attempts to hire a staff member for a position that will conflict with that staff member’s duties or position at HHC will be dis-enrolled immediately and family deposit forfeited.

**Pest Management**

Structural and landscape pests can pose significant hazards to people, property and the environment. Harkness House incorporates Integrated Pest Management Procedures for control of pests to ensure the health and safety of children, staff and all others using our buildings and grounds. Integrated pest management is a method of pest management that addresses the prevention of pest problems through natural, nontoxic measures. These measures include improved sanitation, the addition of physical barriers and the modification of habitats that attract or harbor pests. Integrated Pest Management relies primarily on nontoxic cultural and natural agents in managing and only uses chemical pesticides when necessary. When it is determined that a pesticide must be used, the least hazardous material and method of application will be chosen.

**Classroom Policies**

**Classroom Organization**

HHC offers exceptional childcare and educational curriculums for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Small class sizes, caring staff, and low student/teacher ratios make HHC a warm, nurturing, and enriching environment, with individualized feedback for parents and detailed information on children’s daily activities. Children are placed in classrooms according to age and developmental readiness. Each classroom has a lead teacher. Infants and Toddlers are paired with a primary teacher in their classroom, allowing caregivers and children to develop strong relationships, a nurturing environment, and a solid foundation for learning. All staff are dedicated professionals, trained in infant and early childhood development. The HHC Director has a Master’s Degree and more than fifteen years’ experience in teaching and child development. We maintain a teacher-to-child ratio consistent with DCFS requirements. Classroom and Ratios are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>DCFS Ratio (Teacher: Student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huggy Bears</td>
<td>6 weeks - 15 months</td>
<td>1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumble Bees</td>
<td>15 Months - 2 Years</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quackers</td>
<td>2-3 Years</td>
<td>1:8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Separation and Transition Periods

Transitions from classroom to classroom are based on your child's age and developmental readiness. When making these decisions, we take into consideration a variety of factors including: age, space availability, the enrollment dynamics in the next classroom, family dynamics, scheduled vacations, etc. The lead teacher will provide a conference, written transition plan and arrange a tour of the new classroom.

If a transition to a new room changes your tuition rate, the new rate will apply the first day of the month after the transition period is complete; all families are required to give 30 days' written notice for any change in enrollment. Priority is given to families who have siblings currently enrolled and employees of Northwestern University.

**Infants/Toddlers – Huggy Bears/Bumble Bees**

In order for our staff to learn about your family and your child's needs and preferences, we require that you plan approximately three days for a transition period with your child. This transition period is required of all new infants/toddlers starting at Harkness House and begins on the initial day of enrollment. The transition period is meant to be a time for the teachers to become familiar with your child and for you to become familiar with our program. As the period progresses, we will begin to lengthen the amount of time that your child attends without you present. It is possible that some children may need less time and that others may need that time extended. We will determine this based on the needs of the individual child and cannot project this until enrollment has started.

**Preschoolers – Quackers, Explorers**

It is very important for toddlers and preschoolers to have an opportunity to become familiar with new surroundings and new people. When your family begins at HHC, we require a transition period which will provide you and your child an opportunity to become familiar with the program. When your family is ready to start at Harkness House the teacher will contact you to arrange a transition period. Please know that your participation in this transition process is vital. Some children need only a day while others may need three days.

**Parents’ Role in Separation**
We encourage all parents to ALWAYS say goodbye when leaving your child at HHC. This builds and maintains a trust relationship with your child. As part of this leave-taking process, HHC suggest parents develop a routine which may include hand washing, smiling, kissing, hugging or waving, and saying goodbye. It is very important to be positive at this time. You should leave your child with a positive message saying something like, “I will come back to pick you up later,” giving an approximate time. This is not a time to verbalize your worries. Your positive and decisive attitude will help your child feel secure and that things are in control.

At the time of separation, it is normal for children to cry and cling to the parent. Some children need a security object (blanket or toy). The staff is always prepared to comfort your child. We try very hard to assist parents with the separation while not stepping in too early. We ask that you let the teachers know when you are ready for them to step in and assist your child. We will wait until you let us know that you are ready to leave. Some children do well with quick drop offs while others need a little longer.

HHC has an open door policy and parents are welcome to visit their child. Please feel free to call and check on your child as well. If you would like to visit your child, however, and you are not taking your child with you we ask you observe discreetly through the door or from a distance. If your child sees you most likely they will want to leave with you and become upset which is disruptive to their friends as well as the classroom routine.

**Assessment of Child Progress / Teacher Family Conferences**

Assessment in Early Childhood is the process of gathering and analyzing information about children in order to make decisions about future learning goals or experiences. Teachers at HHC observe children naturally during play and document their observations on paper. Sometimes photographs or pieces of the children’s work are attached to the observations as part of the documentation. Each child at Harkness House has a child portfolio or notebook with their documentation notes that will follow them from room to room. Teachers record what children are doing, saying and asking about while they are at school. At points during the year teachers may evaluate individual children for certain skills (for example, in the older classroom children that are beginning writing letter forms) with a check list based on our State of Illinois Benchmarks for early learning. These benchmarks are indicators of pre-kindergarten skills that we hope to help each child achieve before going to elementary school. Teachers will share the benchmarks and our observations of your child at your conference times during the school year. Twice a year in fall and spring you will be provided with a written assessment of your child’s progress at HHC. Conference meetings are a time that we invite you to share any information about your observations from home which is very useful in helping us
assesses the whole picture of your child. Assessments include observations from all learning domains; cognitive, physical motor, language and social/emotional development.

**Discipline**

Part of HHC's developmental philosophy is to encourage a child's positive self-image and self-confidence. We strive to teach children acceptable ways to change their own behavior in ways that will not damage their sense of self-worth. Therefore, at HHC, respect for others is always demonstrated. Part of a child's growth is learning to balance their needs with those of other people. In doing so children feel good about themselves and become more independent. Children also feel more secure when they have consistent limits which are established in a nurturing environment. Through staff words and actions, the child realizes how this behavior, positive and negative, makes other children feel. Thus each discipline situation is a learning experience.

Some positive principles of discipline used at HHC include: diverting the child's attention to another toy or activity (also called "redirection"), anticipating conflicts and substituting the toys involved, and encouraging appropriate choices of behavior. HHC staff will speak at eye level with the child, explaining what is expected in a loving but firm manner. Staff will speak in a conversational tone. A child may be separated from the situation for a few minutes in order for the child to calm down, regain control and transition back into the group. At NO TIME will corporal punishment be permitted.

In order to ensure that children are aware of the limits of behavior required for the protection of the group and individuals, written rules will be made available. These rules are developmentally appropriate and posted in the classroom to serve as a reminder to the children. In order to ensure that discipline is a positive learning experience, these rules will be stated in a positive manner. For example, “we use walking feet in our room” is more appropriate than "Don't run".

Classroom rules are created to meet the following guidelines:

1. Pertain to important situations particularly safety of self and others;
2. Be understandable to children;
3. Be stated in the positive whenever possible;
4. Be enforceable;
5. Provide an opportunity for children to learn conflict resolution.

As a parent, you can be assured that the following actions will never occur at HHC:
1. Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce pain or fear.
2. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom;
3. Abusive or profane language
4. Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
5. Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child
6. Punishment for toilet accidents is prohibited.

Finally, we believe that communication between home and school is vital to ensuring the best possible program for all children. If at any point you have concerns about your child’s behavior either at home or at school, please feel free to set up a conference with your child’s teachers. In turn, we will do the same. We will communicate with you on a regular basis regarding your child and make you immediately aware of any discipline concerns. If we find that a certain behavior becomes ongoing, we will set up a conference with you to discuss the situation and to work together to come to a solution. Our intention is to always assist a family and child in discovering the cause of a behavioral challenge and to work together for a solution. If after working together we find that the behavior is continuing, HHC reserves the right to dis-enroll your child. (For more information, please refer to our Disenrollment Policy).

Prohibited Behavior in All Child Care Settings by All Present on School Premises
Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear; threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom; abusive or profane language; any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child are prohibited.

Code of Conduct Policies
To ensure that our school environment remains safe and comfortable for families, children, and staff, we ask that everyone adhere to these policies. No verbal or physical abuse is to be displayed toward any child or adult within the center or surrounding property. Any display of inappropriate behavior will be addressed immediately. All members of the center staff are mandated reporters, and any sign of physical or mental abuse of a child must, by law, be reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Weapons of any kind are prohibited. DCFS screens all staff for criminal background.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please feel free to speak with the Director or Assistant Director.
Children with Special Needs

Many circumstances may warrant extra attention for some children in terms of development while they are enrolled at HHC. We welcome and support parents who are in need of supplemental services for their child that compliment or extend our approach so children can grow and thrive in a healthy way. If special services are necessary, a meeting will be set up with the parents and staff to formalize a plan that is developmentally appropriate for the child in group care.

If your child will be coming to HHC and already has an IFP (Birth-three years old - Individualized Family Plan) or an IEP (3-5-year-old - Individualized Educational Plan) a meeting will be set up with the Director and the Lead Teacher to discuss that plan prior to enrollment to ensure we are able to meet your child’s needs. Each situation is very unique and specific in terms of what different children need and so a thoughtful approach is required.

Outside Services

It is not unusual for young children to be receiving educational or special services outside of school. It is important that the school have access to any information from these outside services which would help to facilitate the child's adjustment to preschool as well as to maximize his/her educational and social experience.

In order to facilitate the child's success in our center, HHC will ask that the parent sign a release of information to allow the Early Childhood director to receive reports from professional service providers and communicate directly with them. This exchange would enable the center to:

1. Understand the child's need and help the child;
2. Be consistent with the approach taken by the family and outside consultant/professional;
3. Focus on those developmental areas which require the most attention.

All information exchanged will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No information will be sent to any other school, agency, consultant, or therapist without the parents' written permission.

Infant Sleeping and SIDS

In order to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) we will do the following:
1. Infants, unless otherwise ordered by a physician, are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured for the sale as infant sleeping equipment that meets the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.

2. Pillows, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys or any other items are not allowed in cribs.

3. After being placed down for sleep on their backs, infants may then be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

We will give you a brochure that explains safe sleep for your baby and ways you can reduce the risk of SIDS. We need to have this above statement acknowledged by your signature. As stated above, we will proceed with your child’s sleep this way unless contraindicated by a physician in which case you will need a written note signed by you and your doctor.

Toys and Other Objects from Home

Parents are asked to help your child understand that it is not wise to bring to the center toys or other objects that they may not wish to share with the group. However, bringing a stuffed animal at the beginning of a transition may assist your child in adjusting to the newness of the center. A soft stuffed animal for naptime is appropriate. HHC cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal possessions children bring to the center. Toys from home are permitted only on show and tell day. Guns, knives and or any type of weapon or violent toy are not acceptable at HHC.

Clothing

Please dress your child in washable and comfortable play clothes. Clothes should be easy for the children to manage especially during potty learning. We also request that you bring at least two complete set of extra clothing; extra clothes are sometimes needed for emergencies caused by anything from a toileting problem to an occasional excessive zeal for mud pies. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set of clothes the next school day. Please remember that children are taken outdoors daily (weather permitting) and should be dressed accordingly: light jacket, cap, and rain boots (for damp days) in Fall and Spring; heavy winter jacket, mittens, scarf, and snow boots in Winter. Please remember to label everything with your child’s first and last name.

Diapers and Changing Supplies

Parents are responsible for providing a sufficient amount of disposable diapers and wipes ("changing supplies") for the day. If your child does not have enough changing supplies for the day, you will be asked to provide such supplies for that day or will be asked to take your child home.
Cloth diapers are not permitted.

**Birthdays and Special Occasions**

Parents are welcome to send cookies, cupcakes or cakes to share with their children's friends on birthdays or special occasions. Please check the ingredients for peanuts or other tree nuts. For the safety of all the children HHC maintains a nut-free environment. Please make prior arrangements with the teachers in order to confirm time/date and any allergy restrictions. Please note: The State of Illinois Childcare Licensing requires that all food brought to the school must be in original store package. No home baked foods are allowed.

Balloons are welcome as long as they are Mylar. Latex balloons pose a choking hazard and are not permitted.

**Extracurricular Activities**

HHC offers children a number of fun, age-appropriate activities during the school day, including outdoor play, yoga class, Spanish class, field trips, tumbling class, gross motor development, swimming, and more.

**A Note about Field Trips**

Field trips are planned months in advance and take into account the opportunity for children's learning and appropriate entertainment. Most of our field trips occur in the spring/summer months when the weather is nice. Teachers will inform parents of an upcoming trip at least two weeks prior to the trip. Children are required to have signed permission slips from their parent before going. We do not transport children in employee's cars; we hire a school bus with safety restraint belts. Teachers carry a cell phone for emergency use, a first aid kit, emergency cards and any other necessities depending on the weather. A sign will be posted in the classroom door window informing the school of that classroom's whereabouts. We always welcome parent volunteers to assist on these trips. Your teacher will let you know how you can help.
Section 3: Medical Policies

Harkness House for Children’s medical policies are in compliance with Illinois Department of Public Health and Department of Children and Family Services regulations regarding the health and safety of all children in a day care facility and will be adhered to at all times.

The staff of HHC has the authority to determine whether a child may attend school due to illness and will do so based on the ability of each child to participate in group care and the impact of the illness on the other children in the group.

Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements

HHC requires that all children have an updated physical form on file every 2 years. The initial medical report shall be dated less than 6 months prior to enrollment of infants, toddlers and preschool children.

The medical report shall indicate that children have received appropriate immunizations as required by the Illinois Department of Public Health. These include: poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus influenzae B, hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox) as age appropriate or provide proof of immunity according to requirements of the Department of Public Health.

All children enrolled at HHC are required to be fully vaccinated prior to their first day at HHC. Children whose immunizations and physicals are not kept current (within two months of the required time) are subject to dismissal from the center, unless there are well-documented medical reasons.

In accordance with the Child Care Act of 1969, a parent may request that immunizations, physical examinations and/or medical treatment be waived on religious grounds. A request for waiver shall be in writing, signed by the parent or parents, and kept in the child’s record. HHC shall maintain an accurate list of all children enrolled in the center who are not immunized, as required by Illinois Department of Public Health rules. The number of non-immunized children on the list shall be available to parents who request it.
Wellness Policy

The staff of HHC works hard to promote a healthy environment for all children. Our teachers make sure children wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival to the center, before and after meals or using the toilet, after wiping or blowing their noses, after outdoor play and after coming into contact with any soiled objects. Our teachers also wash their hands before serving meals and snacks, and wear gloves while diapering or assisting a child with toileting or when coming into contact with any bodily fluids. These policies, together with your cooperation in keeping a child home if he/she is showing symptoms of illness will help cut down on the spread of illness through our school. By maintaining a healthy environment and reasonable health policies, all of our children will benefit in the long run.

Exclusion for Illness

If a child should arrive in the morning showing signs of ill health, the school will be unable to accept him/her. A child may be removed from the center for illness if keeping the child poses an increased risk to the child or to other children with whom the child will come in contact, the illness prevents the child from participating in routine activities, or the illness requires more care than the child care staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.

Examples of health symptoms that require exclusion from the program include (but are not limited to):

1. Fever: Temperature at or above 100.4 F (38.0 C). Children who develop a fever while at HHC will not be re-admitted until their temperature has been normal for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or other fever reducing medicines.
2. Eye symptoms: Purulent conjunctivitis or pinkeye—white of the eye is pink or red, with ocular discharge. Your child will be allowed to return when he/she has been on a prescribed appropriate medication for 24 hours AND discharge has resolved.
3. Upper Respiratory Symptoms: Colds with extreme symptoms of excessive coughing, difficulty breathing, sneezing or nasal drainage that interferes with a child’s ability to eat, sleep or play are reason for exclusion. If your physician determines that your child’s symptoms are non-contagious, he/she may return with a physician’s note. If your physician determines that your child has an infection requiring treatment, documentation following treatment stating that student is not contagious is required prior to return to center.
4. Strep throat: Your child may return when he/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours, no longer has a fever, and is able to participate in activities.
5. Diarrhea: Your child must remain at home until he/she is having formed, non-loose stools, or until your medical provider indicates in writing that the diarrhea is of non-contagious nature and your child is well enough to participate in all activities without risk of dehydration.
6. Vomiting: Children who experience vomiting at HHC will be sent home and will be re-admitted after they have gone a 24-hour period without vomiting.

7. Undiagnosed skin rash (excluding diaper rash): If a rash or skin lesion is suspected to be contagious, your child will be required to see their medical provider for assessment and treatment as appropriate. If the rash or skin lesion is of communicable nature, your child must remain home until resolved or a medical provider deems it is acceptable for them to return to HHC. If rash is determined to be non-contagious, a note from your medical provider is required prior to re-admittance to school.

8. Head lice: Presence of lice, eggs, or nits. Student may return after receiving one treatment.


10. Symptoms of a serious communicable disease identified in the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Control of Communicable Diseases code

**Please report any communicable illness to your child’s teacher so that a health alert can be posted on classroom doors.**

### Notification of a Sick Child

Parents will be notified if their child becomes ill at HHC and needs to be sent home. A parent or emergency contact will need to pick up the child within one hour of notification. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the emergency contact card is updated and that a parent or emergency contact is reachable at all times. We will attempt to contact the parent/guardian for 15 minutes and then will begin calling emergency contacts next. In an effort to decrease the spread of illness, the ill child will be isolated from the group whenever possible.

Please note that if a parent/guardian or emergency contact is unreachable or unable to pick the child within the one-hour time frame, the family may be disenrolled, at the discretion of the Director and Board of Directors.

### Re-admittance after Illness

Parents will be asked to sign a form upon pick-up of their sick child from Harkness House. This form will contain information regarding the symptoms that were observed and the conditions that must be met prior to the child being readmitted to the center.

The administration of HHC will inform you when you pick up your sick child if a doctor’s note is required in order for your child to return. If a note is required, your child will not be readmitted to
school until appropriate documentation has been received. Please understand that a parent informing us that the doctor says the child may return is not sufficient.

To be cleared by a pediatrician for group care, we request:

1. the child to be seen by a doctor
2. a note from the doctor stating
   a. diagnosis
   b. that the child is not contagious
   c. the date that the child may return to group care.

AIDS Policy

The Illinois Department of Human Rights has determined that Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a physical handicap under the Illinois Human Rights Act (IL Rev. Stat., Ch. 68, Sec. 1-101, et. Seg.). Children with a chronic communicable/infectious disease may be readmitted to HHC if their health, developmental level, behavior, and immune status are deemed appropriate by a designated multi-disciplinary team including the Director of HHC. The procedures related to this are outlined in a separate Harkness House for Children Infectious and Communicable Disease Policy, which is available upon request.

Health FAQ's - Frequently Asked Questions

When can I expect my child to return to Harkness House?

1. Fever: once temperature has been normal for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
2. Conjunctivitis (pinkeye): after 24 hours of treatment AND resolution of discharge.
3. Strep throat: after 24 hours of treatment AND 24 hours’ fever-free.
4. Persistent congestion, persistent cough: once your physician determines your child is not contagious or child has received appropriate treatment and is no longer considered infectious.
5. Whooping cough: after completing 5 days of antibiotic treatment.
6. Measles: 4 days after rash is completely gone.
7. Mumps: 9 days after parotid gland swelling starts.
8. Diarrhea: once having formed, non-loose stools, or medical provider indicates that the cause of diarrhea is non-contagious and child is well enough to participate in all activities without risk of dehydration.
9. Vomiting: after a 24-hour period without vomiting.
10. Head lice or scabies: the day after the first treatment.
11. Impetigo: after 24 hours of treatment, if affected area is covered.
12. Chickenpox: typically 6 days after the rash began and lesions are crusted over.
13. Mouth sores: when health care provider says child may return.
14. Other serious, communicable diseases noted in the IDPH Code: after the health care professional states it is safe for the child can return to a child care setting.

What do we need to provide HHC in order to return to school?
The staff of Harkness House will inform you if a physician’s note is required for your child to return. If documentation is required for re-admittance, your physician may fax information to HHC at: (847) 501-3284. Please note that if we have not received required documentation, your child will not be readmitted to the center. If you have any questions regarding whether your child should attend school, please contact our 24-hour voice mail at (847) 501-2549.

Reasons to Keep Your Child Home from School

1. Fever of or greater than 100.4 F (38.0 C).
2. Vomiting or diarrhea
3. Undiagnosed rash
4. Conjunctivitis
5. Colds with extreme symptoms of excessive coughing, difficulty breathing, sneezing or nasal drainage that interferes with a child’s ability to eat, sleep or play
6. Strep infection
7. Any communicable disease
8. Head Lice
9. Mouth sores, especially if drooling occurs
10. Any illness that prevents your child from participating comfortably in program activities
11. Any illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
Medicine Administration

1. All medications should be brought to the office and be approved by the Director or Assistant Director. When bringing in medication, you will be provided with a Medication Administration Form. Please ensure that proper physician documentation is provided.

2. Anything administered to a child, including prescription and non-prescription medication, including sunscreen, requires a consent form signed by the parent or legal guardian authorizing Harkness House staff to give the medication/product to your child. Teachers will sign and date the form, and write the dose and time the medication was given. These forms will stay in your child’s record.

3. Prescribed medications brought to the center must be in the original labeled container showing the child’s name, directions for administration, the date, the physician’s name, the prescription number, and the name of the pharmacy. In addition, we will need an official note from the doctor authorizing use of the medication. Please contact the office for information on what needs to be contained in the note.

4. Over-the-counter medications: HHC will only administer over-the-counter medications with a written doctor’s note. This note must contain the same information that is required for prescription medications. Over-the-counter products shall be clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name. The container shall be in such a condition that the name of the medication, the expiration date, and the directions are clearly labeled. Medication shall only be used for the child named on the label.

5. We will not administer medication in any food or beverage.

6. It is expected that children who are taking prescribed antibiotics, and need to receive a dose while at HHC, will have the medication with them daily. Parents are required to supply the proper medicine dropper or measuring spoon.

7. Nonprescription/over-the-counter medication may be administered for no longer than one week without the child visiting the physician and receiving an updated note signed by the physician.

**A child whose parents fail to comply with HHC’s medical policies will be disenrolled.**
Section 4:
Financial Policies

Initial Enrollment

- A nonrefundable enrollment donation of $250 is due upon placement on our wait list or enrollment list. This donation is deducted from your 1st invoice after your child has enrolled.
- A deposit of $750 (per family) is to be paid in full upon receipt of the first invoice for children enrolled in Full-Day care for 3 or more days per week. A deposit of $500 (per family) is to be paid upon enrollment in all other Full-Day and Part-Day programs. The deposit is refunded upon disenrollment provided written 30-day advance notice is given and all other account balances are paid-in-full. In the event 30-day notice is not given, the full amount on deposit will be forfeited.

Monthly Tuition

- Tuition is pre-billed on a monthly basis (i.e. the payment for the month of September is due no later than September 1). Invoices are emailed during the last week of the previous month (i.e. last week of August).
- Tuition is due on the first business day of the month.
- Mailed payments or electronic payments directly from a bank, must arrive by the 5th business day of the month or late fees will apply. There is also a lock tuition box outside the director's office for your convenience.
- Late fees are $5/day until payment is made. For example, if payment is made on the 6th business day, the late fee is $25.00.
- An online bill and pay system has been established. Families can choose whether to pay via the online system or to provide payment manually. There is no fee to use the online billing system.
- If we have not received payment by the 10th business day of the month, we will notify you of the past due amount. If payment arrangements are not made, your child care can be interrupted or your family may be dis-enrolled. Late fees will continue to be assessed until payment is made.
- If your family requires an alternate payment schedule, arrangements must be made with the Director. We will attempt to make a mutually acceptable agreement and a new Financial Agreement will be implemented.
- Newly enrolled children – tuition rates go into effect at the start of the transition process.
• Transitioning children – if a child transitions to a new classroom, the tuition rate change will go into effect at the end of the transition process.
• Full monthly payment is due by the 1st business day of the month. Accounts must be kept current. A retroactive late payment fee of $5.00 per day will be assessed as of the 6th business day. Accounts not paid by the 15th business day of the month are considered delinquent and you risk loss of childcare.
• A charge will be assessed if your child is left beyond the center’s operating hours. (See hours of operation policy)
• A charge for returned checks is $25. Two bounced checks in one calendar year will require cash only future payments.

Changes in Tuition and Enrollment
All families are required to give 30 days’ written notice for any change in enrollment and/or for any tuition rate change to apply

Tax Credits
Tuition payments to HHC qualify for a federal tax credit for most families under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. Upon request, we will provide a tax statement of charges and payments for the months of enrollment.

Please see the Director for any questions relating to the financial policies.
PARENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURES

I acknowledge receipt and have read and understand the Harkness House Family Handbook and its content listed below:

Section 1: Introduction to Harkness House for Children
Section 2: Operational Policies
Section 3: Medical Policies
Section 4: Financial Policies

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