



# **Family Handbook**

# Welcome to Imagine That!

**At Imagine That we've always been innovators and advocates of early childhood education.**

**We are raising your expectations of early childhood education, by using literacy-based approaches that achieve measurable results.**

**We create the ideal environment for your child to learn, laugh, gather and grow.**

**We make exceptional early education more accessible to working professionals.**

**Every day, we show families what early childhood education should be-and where it's going.**

Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing Imagine That for your child's early education. We recognize that choosing the right school for your child is a big decision. As both parents and professional educators, we understand the need to provide your child with a safe environment in which they can learn, laugh, gather and grow. We also recognize the importance of giving children an early start in education and the amazing impact it can have on their lifelong development. At Imagine That, you have made a decision that you can feel good about.

This handbook details how Imagine That will create a safe, nurturing environment that fosters the daily growth, development, and learning of your child. You will find information pertaining to our program philosophy, curriculum approach, important policies, and much more. Our aim is to make your child's experience at Imagine That a joyful part of your family's history.

We are so grateful to welcome you into our Imagine That family!

Warmly,

Susan Leger-Ferraro  
Chief Curiosity Officer



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# Family Connection

Happiness is our intention. Childhood, celebrated daily.

*Every day we work with children and parents to innovate and elevate early childhood education. With our vision, energy, and passion for progress, we constantly give parents and children the feeling that they are loved and nurtured..*

## Communication

At Imagine That we believe that our connection to your family is critical to your child's development. We strive to create deep, caring connections with each and every family.

### Daily Communication

Information is provided for families daily to give you a sense of your child's day and keep you informed about their experiences. Educators are available to review your child's day with them at pick up daily in person.

### Mailboxes

When the Directors of your school or your child's Educators have information to share with you, they will leave the notices in your child's mailbox/back pack. Imagine That will also email information out to family as things may arise, so please be sure to always have your email accurate.

### Facebook/Twitter/Blog

Social media has become the new way to spread information to a large group of people. For information on the larger Imagine That organization, families are invited to read our Facebook, Twitter and Imagine That Blog.

## Information Boards

Bulletin Boards are located throughout the school and classrooms to communicate news, upcoming events, health alerts, center visitors, and more.

### Family Engagement

We provide many opportunities for families to get involved with the school. We have quarterly events from family cookouts to our yearly preschool graduations. We invite you all to get involved at any level.

### Family Events

Your child's school schedules fun, annual events such as family breakfasts, cook-outs, art fairs, graduation, and more. Please watch for these upcoming events at your child's school. Engaging in these activities is important as it gives your family the opportunity to hear the language Educators use with the children to support active learning and appropriate development of social skills.

### Family Visits

Imagine That has an open-door policy, enabling you to visit your child's school at anytime. We encourage you to come and observe in your child's classroom. However, if your child is experiencing separation anxiety, having family members come and go during the day may be more disruptive than beneficial. If we notice that your child is experiencing this problem, we may ask that you not spend time in the classroom until your child has successfully passed through this phase. We look forward to working together during this transitional time in your family's life.

## Field Trips

There may be occasional opportunities for your child to take educational field trips. You will be notified at least two weeks in advance of the trip and asked to sign a permission slip for your child. You will also be notified of any additional fees before the trip. We encourage family members to chaperone field trips. This is a great way to get to know other families and share an educational experience with your child. \*Please note: any person who chaperones a field trip must undergo a Background Record Check (BRC) prior to the field trip. A Background Record Check includes a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, as well as a DCF (formerly DSS) Background check. If an adverse finding is revealed through the BRC, you may not be allowed to chaperone until proper discretionary procedures are followed. In addition to field trips, special activities (i.e. an animal show, a gym program) will be brought to the school to supplement the curriculum. You will be notified in advance and be made aware of any additional fees.



## Educator/Family Relationships

Imagine That is aware that our Educators often live in the same community as the families we serve. Often times, our Educators may have personal relationships with our families in addition to their professional connections at Imagine That. All Imagine That staff are committed to the confidentiality of our families and children. Educators and Administrators are not to discuss family or child information of any kind with anyone other than their Co-Educator(s) or Administrators. A strong Educator/Family relationship at Imagine That provides the supportive environment in which your child and family will thrive

## Attendance Policy

Each program will keep track of each child's daily attendance in the program. Each child will be signed in from the moment they arrive in the classroom and then will be signed out when a parent/guardian picks them up at the end of the day. Any family that is part of the CCCB will be given the Attendance Notification Letter (below) to have those families sign and date the letter. This letter will be kept in the child's file at the program.

### THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION AGREEMENT

In order to meet the needs of families and children for access to quality child cares it is necessary to make the best possible use of child care resources. Child care providers are required to make every effort to insure that each child care slot is filled at all times. Whenever a child leaves care, the provider must move quickly to make that slot available to another

child who is waiting for care. Subsidized child care policy allows for children's absence due to illness, emergencies, and a maximum of two weeks' vacation per year (explained absences). All other absences are considered unexplained. Excessive absence (11 or more absences for any reason in a 30 day period or three consecutive unexplained absences at any time) will result in reassessment of your need for subsidized child care. In order to be sure that you do not lose your child care slot if your child is absent, and to make sure that your child's slot does not remain empty if you remove your child from care, we ask you to do three things:

- Notify the child care agency at least 2 weeks in advance if you plan to remove your child from care;
- Notify the child care agency immediately to explain any absence of your child; and
- Notify the child care agency immediately if you receive an Advance Notice of Termination and you have withdrawn your child from child care services.

If excessive absence results in a determination that you no longer need child care or that child care services are being misused, you will be sent an Advance Notice of Termination. Your child care services will end on the proposed end date on the Notice (or on the voucher or authorized end date, whichever is sooner), unless you contact the child care agency before that date to explain your child's absence, or to request a Review of the termination decision.

My signature below indicates that I understand the information in this document and agree to notify the child care agency as indicated above.

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# Program Approach

**Transforming early education.**

*When Imagine That first opened in 2005, we knew we wanted to offer families an exceptional experience. We recognized the importance of giving children an early start in education – and the amazing impact it can have on their lifelong development. Also we knew it was important to engage families in creative play. Today we continue to be innovators of early childhood education by creating a learning approach that gives new meaning and dimension to the concept of literacy.*

## Educator Training and Development

Our innovation in early education starts with our educators and our commitment to continuing their professional development and training. Imagine That' comprehensive Professional Development Model provides tiers of training for entry level staff through degreed professionals. Our staff extends to include Literacy Specialists who hold masters degrees in early education. These specialists share hands-on, one-on-one demonstrations of new practices to ensure authentic learning. Annually, each of our educators receives over 100 hours of professional development.

## Budding Scholars

Our Budding Scholars Approach promises you that your child will graduate a Budding Scholar—early reading proficient and set up for lifelong academic success. Our proven method graduates 93% of Imagine That' students as early ready proficient, with over 64% scoring in the advanced range and 25% as gifted. Based on the most effective teaching methodologies and over 30 years of experience, our proprietary approach develops the whole child by focusing on four key areas: the Citizen, the Scholar, the Mind, and the Body. Our goal is to position each child for success in Kindergarten and beyond, and to ultimately inspire a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

**Citizen:** Your child's social-emotional development and ability to share and communicate with others is just as important as learning their ABCs and 123s. Based on NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Imagine That focuses on teaching the value and meaning of community. Your child and their classmates will join in

collaborative activities such as dramatic play, team games, dramatic play, and daily job ownership in order to build confident self-image and enriching relationships, which is the foundation of their ultimate well-being.

**Scholar:** When it comes to language and literacy, research tells us there is no such thing as starting too soon. Our teachers encourage your child's joy of expression and give them plenty to talk about, by introducing a new theme every week. Teachers plan intentional, individualized literacy lessons to ensure your child's comprehension sets the stage for all future content learning. Through our award-winning, research-based literacy program, your child will gain the early literacy skills that will determine their future academic success.

**Mind:** Our teachers plan an array of science, math, and artistic activities to build your child's cognitive development, challenge their minds, and keep them engaged for the whole day. Your child has a natural sense of curiosity, and our teachers cultivate it through inquiry-based learning.

**Body:** Your child will dance, play sports, and paint daily, all while helping them achieve physical developmental milestones critical to overall development. Whether your child is an infant learning to crawl, a toddler practicing putting on their own coat, or a preschooler writing their name, teachers will steadily encourage your child to push them self to the next level. And with one hour of physical activity each day, they'll learn one of the best habits for healthy living.

### **Infants: 4 weeks to 15 months**

Your child's exciting educational journey gets off to a strong start in the Imagine That infant room.

Research tells us that the brain develops more in the first three years of life than at any other point in human development. Each moment is intentionally planned in Imagine That' infant program to ensure your baby will make the most of this period of rapid cognitive, emotional, and physical growth.

We recognize creating a supportive partnership as you leave your baby in our care is a priority. Our infant programs are designed to make the transition between home and school smooth and enjoyable for the whole family. Individualized schedules, nurturing primary caregivers, and safe classrooms will ensure your infant's days are enriching.

### **Toddlers: 15 months to 2.9 years**

Your toddler is going to change from a baby to a preschooler in a short amount of time. She is gaining and asserting independence- through milestones such as first steps, first words, drinking out of a cup, and potty-training. Imagine That will be your partner in supporting this growth.

Our passionate and energetic teachers will provide your toddler with a consistent routine and schedule, filled with exploration and introduction to new experiences. Regardless of their developmental stage, each day will be filled with laughter, building self-sufficiency, books, and hands-on learning.

**Preschoolers: 2.9 years to 4/5 years** As a preschooler, your child is capable of increasingly complex tasks, learning, and thinking. Imagine That' preschool classrooms will prepare your child to enter Kindergarten ready to learn and ready to succeed. Our proven, nationally award winning curriculum includes theme-based units that incorporate language, pre-reading, pre-writing, math, science, social studies, creative arts, motor skills, and social development in hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities.

Intentional, research-based themed curriculum is individualized for 3's, 4's and Pre-K's specific learning goals. Teachers work with their Curriculum Director and Literacy Specialists to plan daily, customized small-group "Teaching Table" activities so even in mixed age groupings, children can learn at their developmental and age-appropriate pace. All activities are linked to the Massachusetts Preschool Learning Experiences, NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practices, and the National Reading Panel and National Early Literacy Panel's recommendations for early literacy.

**Kindergarten: 4.9 years to 6 years** Whether you are looking for a full day kindergarten program, a pre-kindergarten experience for your older preschooler, or a unique, nurturing learning environment that will care for your child's unique learning styles and needs, Imagine That Kindergarten programs can assist. Your child is ready to apply all of the literacy and learning preparation achieved in infants-preschool and begin reading and writing in earnest! Our proven curriculum, linked to research, includes theme-based units and incorporates language, pre-reading, math, science, social studies, creative arts, motor skills, and hands on activities.

All activities are linked to the Massachusetts Kindergarten Frameworks, NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practices, and the National Reading Panel and National Early Literacy Panel's recommendations for early literacy.

**School Age: 5 years to 13 years** We realize that Before and After School Care is a home away from home for your child. And because it is, we are committed to creating a welcoming place where your child can connect to the community, access homework support and receive healthy breakfasts and snacks. Our goal: to empower and engage "Big Imagine That" through creative expression opportunities, field trips and community service projects.

### **Musical Imagine That**

Come Experience music as a teaching tool, not just for enjoyment. Musical Imagine That is the use of music to support our weekly curriculum and help children achieve developmental milestones in cognitive, physical, social/emotional and language areas. Musical Imagine That aligns with classroom learning and curriculum themes. The music program also incorporates music therapy techniques that can address behavior management and special needs. Additionally, the program enhances and supports the work our teachers do in the classroom by using different music therapy techniques, and expanding to individualize services to support children with learning differences. The Musical Imagine That program was designed and will be implemented by our own music therapists. Please see your director for the weekly Musical Imagine That schedule.

### **Principle-Centered Classrooms**

Our approach to classroom atmosphere is based on our Leadership Philosophy supported by HighScope approach with children and 7 Habits of Highly Effective People with Adults. At Imagine That, we believe that not only should all of our staff work continuously to become highly effective people, but also the children in our schools should have the opportunity to develop the critical socio-emotional skills of self-control, self-direction, initiative, and problem-solving that will eventually enable them to be highly effective adults. Therefore, we strive to build a Principle-Centered Climate in our classrooms and organization. On the spectrum of contrasting climates for children, the Principle-Centered Climate is neither highly authoritative nor excessively permissive. Control is shared between adults and children in a balance that we achieve through constant commitment, practice and communication.



## Anti-Bias Philosophy

In addition to a Principle-Centered Climate, our Imagine That organization emphasizes a social anti-bias philosophy. Our goal is to empower children, so they can determine what is fair, feel loved, show love for others, feel respected, show respect for others, question injustice, and stand up for themselves and others. We believe that everyone deserves love and respect and that it is wrong to make assumptions about individuals based on their size, age, socioeconomic status, ethnic background, religious background, family structure, gender, or academic ability. Imagine That celebrates differences and celebrates sameness. We believe that all feelings should be valued and that there is an appropriate way to express them. We practice the use of taking responsibility for our feelings with our children as well as in our organization between adults. We want to build character that empowers each individual to engage in relationships that support their well being. Imagine That does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, cultural heritage, national origin, marital status, religion, political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, color, sex, gender identity, age, veteran status, or ancestry.

In order to promote each child's uniqueness, we must appreciate and celebrate each family. Therefore, Imagine That is a non-political, non-religious organization. Our Educators and staff do not initiate the celebration of any holiday. We do not initiate the decoration of our rooms with items of this nature. As professionals, we are committed to understanding the effects of our educational methods on children and their families, and to revising them when they are problematic. Little

Imagine That feels that celebrating any one religious or political holiday in our program isolates children of minority faiths or political backgrounds, while contributing to the development of ethnocentrism in majority children. Since Educators do not have accurate information as to how each family celebrates its holidays, the practice of "celebrating diverse beliefs" can lead children and their families to feel like guests in their own country. Celebrating holidays guides children in minority groups to be involved in traditions that their families may not observe which can cause them to feel that their differences are only superficially acknowledged and respected by the school. Likewise, the practice of celebrating holidays guides children in majority groups toward ethnocentrism and insensitivity, as they observe the imposition of their traditions on children in minority groups.

While the practice of initiating holiday celebrations within the curriculum does not support Imagine That's philosophy of building individual self-esteem in a social anti-bias environment, we do acknowledge and discuss each child's unique family celebrations. We invite each of our families to share their unique traditions by participating in the experience in their child's classroom. For example, a family may celebrate a specific holiday in their family with special traditional foods or observations.

We invite families to bring this food in and share among their child's class while sharing stories, pictures, books, and songs that help the children embrace the significance of this tradition. In this way, the experience is meaningful and connected to a family, an experience instead of a generalized set of standards and beliefs about the holiday. We encourage Educators to celebrate the differences

in our children's families, while supporting multicultural, multi-religious, multi-political sensitivity. More information on this subject appears in NAEYC's Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children. We encourage our educators to involve families and to use them as a resource to share their special customs and traditions with the class.

## Outdoor Play

Daily outdoor play is very important for young children, and is included in our program. Per the Department of Early Education and Care regulations, children will receive 60 minutes of physical activity daily. This is usually divided in 30 minute intervals – 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. The children will spend some time outside every day unless the temperature is outside state guidelines or it is raining. It is our philosophy and policy that if a child is well enough to attend the program, he/she is well enough to play outdoors. If children are properly dressed, weather conditions should not pose a health risk. Please provide appropriate clothing, allowing for weather extremes.

## Assessments

At Imagine That, we believe in using scientific based assessments to help us better meet the needs of your child. With this in mind, Imagine That Educators are able to continually assess your child's development and provide individualized instruction in the classroom to better set and meet the learning goals for your child.

## Family-Educator Conferences

Following each assessment period, families are invited to a private conference with their child's Educator to discuss the results of assessment findings and their child's overall progress. This is a valuable time for families and Educators to confer and plan for each child's growth plan. Individual families may request additional conferences. Educators will make themselves available at a mutually convenient time. Daily assessment of your child ensures consistent support and stimulation to create the best opportunity for growth.

## Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

Approved as a high quality screener by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Neurology, and the Child Neurology Society and First Signs, professionals rely on ASQ for the best developmental and social-emotional screening for children from one month to 5 1/2 years. ASQ looks at strengths and trouble spots, educates parents about developmental milestones, and incorporates parents' expert knowledge about their children.

Families are given the questionnaire to complete in November and May, due back in the beginning of December and June. Educators also complete the appropriate ASQ and score each form. During Family-Educator Conferences on Martin Luther King Day and a designated day in summer, results are discussed and compared.

## Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL)

Beginning at age 3, children's literacy scores will be assessed using the TOPEL, a theoretically sound instrument designed to identify preschoolers who are at risk for literacy problems; therefore, allowing early intervention. It provides valid and reliable raw scores, standard scores, and percentiles.

The TOPEL has three subtests. All the results of which are then combined to determine the "Composite Score" that ultimately best represents a child's emergent literacy skills:

- Subtest 1: Print Knowledge — 36 items; measures alphabet knowledge and early knowledge about written language conventions and form; the child is asked to identify letters and written words, point to specific letters, name specific letters, identify letters associated with specific sounds, and say the sounds associated with specific letters
- Subtest 2: Definitional Vocabulary — 35 items; measures single-word oral vocabulary and definitional vocabulary (assesses both surface and deep vocabulary knowledge); the child is shown a picture and asked to tell what the picture is, and to describe one of its important features
- Subtest 3: Phonological Awareness — 27 items; measures word elision and blending abilities; the child is asked to say a word, then say what is left after dropping out specific sounds (elision) for the first 12 items; the child is asked to listen to separate sounds and combine them to form a word (blending) for the remaining 15 items.

Results are discussed with preschool families during Family-Educator Conferences.



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# Safety and Well-Being

## **Peace-of-mind.**

*We understand the well-being and safety of your child is your number one priority. That is why we go above and beyond to make sure your child always feels safe, comfortable and cared for – in all dimensions of our program. From our thorough hiring process to our Quality checklist, we are completely focused on creating an environment where parents and children feel secure every day.*

## Educator Hiring and Screening

At Imagine That, we hire educators who are experts in making the learning process fun for your child. Imagine That has a dedicated Recruiter, who ensures that all prospective staff undergo a Background Record Check (BRC) before they even interview at our site. All candidates are phone screened and then have an interview with a specific school. Our interviews last approximately three hours and include time with the director, curriculum specialist and time interacting in the classroom they will potentially work in. We require all applicants to come prepared for their interview with an age-appropriate activity and written lesson plan.

After careful consideration with reference checks and a cleared BRC, the new Educator will attend a Welcome Session before their first day. Upon hire, they are also required to attend a four hour Imagine That company training, Child Abuse Prevention training, as well as a Susan-Vibe training.

## Quality Checklist

We visit our schools and inspect them inside and out using our Quality checklist. Members of the Imagine That management team complete a comprehensive review of the curriculum, operations, health and safety and outreach of every one of our schools and review with the executive team on a quarterly basis to ensure every school looks and feels just right.

## Hand Washing Policy

Imagine That recognizes the importance of hand washing as the first line of defense against infectious disease. Why, how, and how often you wash are all

more important than what you wash with. In order to promote a healthy and safe environment for children and staff, we recommend the following:

- 1) Use running water that drains out, not stopped-up water.
- 2) Avoid common containers of water, to reduce spreading of germs.
- 3) Use liquid soap, not bar soap.
- 4) Use friction (rub hands together).
- 5) Clean under fingernails.

## Diaper Policy

Educators will turn this frequently occurring routine into a fun-filled learning activity. Educators can build an infant or toddler's skill of listening and communicating by playing simple word and movement games as part of diaper changing. It can be something as simple as having the Educator describe what they are doing and responding to the child's vocalizations, or by turning diapering into a sing-along.

Diaper changes will occur every 2 hours or sooner if the child's diaper is soiled, or based on parent preference. Diaper changes will be recorded on your child's daily note.

## Infant Sleep Safe Policies

Infants nap according to their individual schedules. Every infant 12 months of age or younger will be put to sleep on their backs to reduce the chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). No child under 12 months of age will nap in a crib containing pillows, comforters, stuffed animals or other soft, padded materials.

## Toilet Training Policy

Toilet training will begin when appropriate for each child's age and stage of development. Families will be consulted on the method used at home. Educators and administrators will provide feedback on each child's progress at the school. Children will be offered frequent opportunities to use the toilet, especially after meals and before naps. If the child has soiled or wet clothing, normal diapering procedures will be used. Please provide at least three (3) changes of clothing for each day's use, in case of accidents. If an accident occurs, soiled clothing will be placed in a double bag, labeled with the child's name and sent home at the end of the day.

## Infection Control

All children attending Imagine That are required to have a recent physical and must have up-to-date immunizations, including HIB and lead screening. All of this information must be on the School Health Form, signed and dated by a physician. Health Forms must be updated annually for all children.

All Imagine That educators are trained with regard to proper hygiene practices. Imagine That sanitizes and performs the following duties on a regular basis:

- Cribs and infant toys are washed and sanitized daily or after they have been mouthed.
- Classroom furniture and equipment is washed and sanitized daily or more often as needed.
- Machine-washable fabric toys are washed on a weekly basis or more as needed.
- Sheets, blankets and washable toys that belong

to children are sent home at the end of each week for washing.

- Toilets, toilet seats, flushing handles, containers/lids used to hold soiled diapers/papers, water tables and water play equipment, play tables and smooth, nonporous floors are cleaned daily or whenever there is visible contamination.
- Imagine That hires professional cleaners to thoroughly sanitize the entire school on a weekly basis.

## Wellness Policy

Imagine That Wellness Policy has been created in collaboration with our Health Care Consultant and Massachusetts DEEC Regulations.

Imagine That understands that it is challenging for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work. Therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when your children must remain at home or picked up due to illness. Exclusion from Imagine That is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness. Mild illnesses are common among young children and infections are often spread before the onset of any symptoms. In these cases, we try to keep the children comfortable throughout the day, but will find it necessary to exclude them from Imagine That for the following reasons:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than our educators can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Fever (101 under the arm) accompanied by

unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or other signs of serious illness.

- Diarrhea, stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours or once at the school.
- Mouth sore associated with drooling.
- Rash or fever or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye with eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice until after treatment and all nits are removed.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.

We ask that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of infection, children are to be picked up within 1.5 hours of notification.

Children who have been excluded may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a full 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's health-care provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and:
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If your child is excluded from the program because of a communicable disease, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required.

Adhering to Imagine That Wellness Policy is the best way families and schools can partner together to ensure we create a healthy environment for all.

## Medication Administration

Prescription or non-prescription medication will be administered to a child only with the family's authorization and written order of a physician that indicates the medication is for the specific child. The official prescription label on the container may be counted as the physician's written order. The original label must carry the following basic information:

- The name of the child who will be receiving the medication.\*
- The name of the child's doctor.\*
- The name of the medicine.
- The issue date of the medicine.\*
- The dosage.
- How often to give the dosage.
- The route of the administration (i.e. Oral).
- Storage requirements (i.e. refrigerator).

*\*Prescription medication only*

Non-prescription medication will be given only with written consent of the child's physician. The school will accept a signed statement from the physician listing the medication(s), the dosage and criteria for its administration. This statement will be valid for one year from the date that it was signed. Along with the written consent of the physician,

the school will also need written parental authorization. The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication form, which allows the school to administer the nonprescription medication in accordance with the written order of the physician. The parent statement will be valid for one week from the date it was signed and will need to be reauthorized weekly as needed.

***For non-prescription medicines, the following must be adhered to:***

- The family must provide all non-prescription medication, including but not limited to Tylenol. No medication may be administered to a child if the family does not provide it.
- An attempt must be made to notify the family before administering medication.
- The child's name must be labeled on the medication.
- Directions for safe use must be in writing on the container along with a list of active ingredients.
- All families with children under 15 months will strive to have their consent updated every three months to ensure proper dosage

***Staff will not administer:***

- Any first dose of medication. This must be given by the parent/guardian at home in case of an allergic reaction.
- Any prescription medication that is not in the pharmacies bottle with the prescription label.
- Any medication which the family's instructions differ from those on the prescription label.

(If the family request the medication to be given by a different method,(I.E. fluid medication be put in a bottle or a tablet crushed into food, a doctor's note would have to be provided stating that the alternative method of administrating the medication has been authorized.) The child would need to be directly supervised until all the medication is consumed, to ensure the medication was not accidentally consumed by another child.

- Any over the counter medication without a doctor's note.
- Or allow parents to add medication to bottles or sippy cups.

***All Medication:***

- The first dose must be administered by the parent at home in case of an allergic reaction.
- All medications must be provided to the Educator or Director by the parent.
- Medication is kept in the Director's office or in a lock box located in the refrigerator in the kitchen. Medications that may be needed immediately are kept secure and out of reach of children in the classroom, or carried outside when the child is outside.
- The Lead Educator in the classroom will be responsible for the administration of medication. In his/her absence, the Director will be responsible.
- All Staff administering medication will be trained via the DEEC Medication Authorization Training and must demonstrate competency in medication administration. Staff who have not taken this training will not administer medication.
- All administered medications (excluding topical ointments and sprays applied to normal skin) will be logged on the EEC Medical Consent

Form and the School will maintain a written record. The form must be completed, signed and dated by the family member. The form will include the child's name, the time and date of each administration, the dosage, and the name of the staff person that administered the medication.

- Any unused medication is returned to the family.
- Upon completion of the medication, the consent form is kept in the child's file.

## **Individual Health Care Plans**

An Individual Health Care Plan must be maintained for each child with a chronic medical condition, which has been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner. The plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered.

## **Injury Prevention**

Educators for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area and equipment. Defective equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible to prevent injury.

Playground safety is a major concern. Parents/guardians should be aware of the potential strangulation hazards of drawstrings on clothing. Please check your child's clothing carefully and remove all drawstrings. Footwear, such as sneakers, appropriate for active, outdoor playing, climbing, running and jumping is strongly recommended. Bibs will not be left on infants when they are placed in cribs.

# Medication Administration Chart

Type of Medication	Written Parental Consent Required	Health Care Practitioner Authorization Required	Logging Required
All Prescription	Yes	Yes, must be in original container with original label containing the name of the child affixed.	Yes, name of child, dosage, date, time, staff signature, missed doses must also be noted along with the reason(s) why the dose was missed.
Oral Non- Prescription	Yes, renewed weekly with dosage times, days and purpose	Yes, in Large and Small Group. Must be in original container with original label containing the name of the child affixed.	Yes, name of child, dosage, date, time, staff signature, missed doses must also be noted along with the reason(s) why the dose was missed.
Unanticipated Non-Prescription for Mild Symptoms (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprofen, antihistamines)	Yes, renewed annually	Yes, in Large and Small Group. Must be in original container with original label containing the name of the child affixed.	Yes, name of child, dosage, date, time, staff signature.
Topical, Non-Prescription (when applied to open wounds or broken skin)	Yes, renewed annually	Yes, in Large and Small Group. Must be in original container with original label containing the name of the child affixed.	Yes, name of child, dosage, date, time, staff signature.
Topical Non-Prescription (not applied to open wounds or broken skin)	Yes, renewed annually	No, items not applied to open wounds or broken skin may be supplied by program with notification to parents of such. or parents may send in preferred brands of such items for their own child(ren)'s use.	No, for items used solely for prevention, such as sunscreen, insect repellent and chap stick.

In the event that your child does sustain a minor injury, you will receive an Injury Report outlining the incident and course of action taken by the educator. You will be contacted immediately if the injury is to your child's head, produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, accompanied by an Imagine That educator, while the school's Directors or educators contact you or a designated emergency contact.

## Child Guidance

One of the most important areas in which we put our philosophies into practice is in the area of discipline. At Imagine That, children are never hit, slapped, spanked, withheld food or withheld bathroom privileges - even at the family's request. Children are not ridiculed, teased, humiliated, threatened, or embarrassed. When discipline is used, it is positive and consistent. The age and individual needs of the child are considered.

Our goal with discipline is to develop a child's sense of self discipline, self mastery rather than the process for punishment. We encourage your child to learn from challenges and develop a sense of resiliency with the desire to grow. We also encourage a High Scope method of encouragement versus praise. Research shows that when you praise a child, for intelligence or talent, he or she sees failure as something undermining it and becomes so afraid of making mistakes that motivation is stunted. But if you put the emphasis on the process or the effort the child is putting in, the child learns to be resilient in the face of setbacks and is more open to seeking challenges.

Positive Discipline includes:

- Acknowledging the child's feelings and redirecting
- Conflict resolution using the High Scope Approach
  - Approach calmly
  - Acknowledge feelings
  - Gather information
  - Restate the problem
  - Ask for ideas and solutions and choose one together
  - Give follow-up support
- Teaching by example
- Logical consequences
- Building self-concept by separating actions from self
- Respecting the child's boundaries and needs
- Preparing for challenges in advance

Learning to express emotions verbally and honestly is a normal part of childhood. At Imagine That, Educators encourage children to "use their words" to express their feelings. In many cases, the Educator will provide the child with words to use (ex: "I don't like it when you hit me. It hurts"). Overall, behavior guidance at Imagine That maximizes growth and development, protects the group and individuals within, sets reasonable and positive expectations, offers choices, provides opportunity to verbalize feelings, and encourages self-control through understanding. When appropriate, children participate in their own behavior plans and creation of classroom rules.

## Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even preschoolers. It is something that almost all children will try at least once. When it happens, it is scary, frustrating and stressful for everyone involved. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families or educators.

Brief episodes of biting do not mean that a child is having a social or emotional problem. It also does not mean that the family is to blame. It does mean that your child is going through a stage in his/her development. As with all developmental stages, biting will end.

Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:

- Oral exploration
- Teething
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts
- Frustration, anxiety
- Inability to express feelings or needs verbally
- Mimicking behavior
- Inexperienced peer interactions
- A way of showing affection
- Exploring cause-and-effect
- Exploring holding on and letting go
- Impulsiveness and lack of self control
- Excitement and over stimulation

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the

specific reason for biting. Delayed punishment at home will not be understood by the child.

An injury report will be written for the child who was bitten. The family of the biter will be notified by the child's educator. We will work together with the families of the biter and the bitten child to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. We will make every effort to modify the behavior quickly. The name of the child who has bitten will remain confidential.

## **Children Developing Unacceptable Behavior Challenges**

It is the ultimate goal of all Imagine That employees to support children and families. All children and families deserve love and respect. Some children and families will require more of our attention and support, which neither increases nor diminishes their value. Imagine That is committed to working with families and children to the best of our ability. This commitment requires us to have a high degree of tolerance with children who exhibit developing unacceptable behavior challenges. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, kicking, throwing or damaging school property, hitting, spitting, biting, and disrespectful language or actions. While some early education centers will terminate a child after the first incident of unacceptable behavior, Imagine That believes that behaviors can change and will take every possible step to help a child self-regulate. While we do occasionally ask a family to seek a more appropriate environment for their child, we will make every effort to find a solution that enables the child to stay. Every situation is different, and we address behavior challenges on a case-by-case basis.

## **Behavior Plans**

Behavior plans are written to help support the families and the educators when a child is continually presenting challenging behaviors in the classroom. Behavior plans are written after teachers have gathered at least two weeks of documentation, describing negative, unsafe behaviors in a classroom. A behavior plan will have expectations that will need support and follow through by the educators, parents, specialists, and directors. An example of an expectation that would be in a behavior plan is that parents may need to contact their pediatrician to seek a referral for additional services (i.e., speech, OT, etc.). Educators and parents will keep an open line of communication daily about child's behavior. Behavior plans are reviewed monthly to review progress or make modifications.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Procedures common to all Imagine That schools include:

### ***Evacuations***

If at any time staff members question the children's safety inside the building; they must evacuate the children immediately. The evacuation plan is posted near each classroom's exit. Drills are conducted every month, with date and time recorded in the school's log. In addition to an attendance sheet, the classroom keeps a sign in/sign out sheet, which records the time of arrival and departure for each child. In case of evacuation, the Educator will use the sign in/sign out sheet in order to conduct an accurate attendance count. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director on site to check for stragglers.

In the event of a temporary evacuation, the Director on site will consult with Imagine That management and local officials in person or by cell phone to determine whether it is safe for the children to re-enter the facility. In the event that the school must be closed, the school directors will contact each family and inform the emergency contact that the child will need to be picked up.



### **Natural Disasters**

In case of tornado, earthquake, hurricane, flood, snow storm, or other event that affects the power, heat, or water to a degree that Imagine That cannot offer complete or comparable early education services, families will be notified of the Schools' closing, or alternate plan.

### **Reporting Abuse and Neglect**

All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General Law C119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, he/she must file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The following procedure will be followed:

- 1) If abuse or neglect of a child is suspected or observed by an employee, that employee must immediately bring the information to an Imagine That director at the school.
- 2) Once the employee has given all relevant information to a Imagine That director, the director will make a determination if a 51 A needs to be filed as a mandated reporter.
- 3) The director will report back to the reporting employee of any appropriate action taken.
- 4) The director will confirm the employee is satisfied with the action taken. If the employee is not satisfied with the action taken, the employee will make the director aware that they are not satisfied and the director and employee will request support from the Regional Director.

If the employee is not satisfied with the action taken with the support of the Regional Director, the employee will make the Regional Director and Imagine That director aware and they will file a 51A together.

Imagine That will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of abuse or neglect. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect**

It is the school's commitment to protect all children in care from abuse and neglect. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child while the child is in the school's care will be immediately reported to the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Early Education and Care. A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform him/her of the filed report. The staff member in question will immediately be placed on an unpaid leave of absence from the School pending the outcome of the DCF and EEC investigations.

Department of Children and Families (DCF)  
Telephone Number: (800) 792-5300.





# Organizational Policies

Creating the ideal environment for your child to learn, laugh, gather and grow.

*You know you've chosen the right early childhood education program when it "just feels right". Our policies and procedures are designed to ensure that everything we do makes children feel happy – and parents feel confident.*

## Registration Process

In order to enroll, you will need to make an appointment with a school director to tour the facility and see your child's classroom. After the tour, the director will meet with you to discuss the program's philosophy, policies and procedures, and the specific program amenities as outlined in this Family Handbook. This meeting is the best time to ask questions about the program and the organization, but you can feel free to call the school at any time if more questions arise. We encourage you to bring your child so that he/she can visit the classroom and observe and participate with the group. A complete tour helps you and your child feel comfortable with the school and enthusiastic about your first day at Imagine That.

During the registration process, you must complete forms required by the state of Massachusetts, including a registration form and a food program form. An updated physical and immunization record is required for your child prior to enrollment. All forms in your child's file must be updated each year at your annual registration meeting. Please remember to provide your child's school with additional updates as needed (i.e., change of emergency contact information). Furthermore, Imagine That does not require children to be toilet trained as an eligibility requirement.

In order to ensure appropriate staffing at all times of the day, you will need to provide your child's school with the specific hours of care needed for your child. Prior to your child's start date, please feel free to schedule visits to help familiarize you and your child with the school. This is a great way to help your child feel comfortable and enthusiastic about your first day at Imagine That.

## Tuition/Fees

Imagine That will collect a Registration and Tuition Fee at the time of your child's enrollment. This payment reserves your child's enrollment at Imagine That. Re-registration fees and new enrollment paperwork are due one year from the date your child was enrolled and must be renewed annually thereafter. These fees are non-refundable. We require a two-week, non-refundable deposit, in addition to the registration fee, at the time of registration. This deposit will be applied to your last two weeks of tuition.

Because the annual tuition is pro-rated, we do not reduce the tuition charge in weeks that include closures, even though you will need to arrange alternate care on those days. The same policy applies if you must miss a scheduled day for any reason. We cannot provide make-up days and we do not reduce the tuition charge if your child is absent. We do not provide unpaid "vacation weeks." Families who do not attend are required to pay their regular tuition in order to retain their day and time slots. If a child is absent for two weeks, without notice to a director and without payment, the child may be dropped from the enrollment list and the vacancy may be filled. If the family wishes to return, they must wait for an available day and time slot and must pay a new registration fee. Please understand that if you terminate your child's enrollment for the summer months, you do so at risk of losing your child's spot.

Families on the wait list will be eager to take the opportunity to get into the school. Even if there is not a wait list when you leave for vacation, all spots may be filled upon your return.

Tuition rates vary from school to school depending on the community. While we will make every effort to provide ample notice of tuition increases, all fees and tuition are subject to change with written notice. Typical factors across most schools include:

Hours of Operation: 6:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Monday through Friday

### Full-Time Options:

Option 1: Monday – Friday 2:00pm-6:00pm

Option 2: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday  
2:00pm-6:00pm

Option 3: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00pm-6:00pm



## Registration Fees

\$75.00 per child

\$140.00 for 2 children

\$65.00 ea. for 3 or more children

Annual Registration (Due one year from the date your child was enrolled and then renewed annually thereafter):

\$50.00 per child

\$90.00 for 2 children

\$45.00 ea. for 3 or more children

A two week, non-refundable deposit is required at the time of your child's registration. This deposit will be applied to the last two weeks at Little Sprout

Imagine That requires a 4-week written notice prior to withdrawal.

## Sibling Discount

10% off the less expensive tuition rate.

## Late Fee Policy

It is important that children be picked up at their scheduled time of departure. If a child is left in the school after closing time, we will keep the child in the classroom while a teacher tries to call the numbers listed on the authorized pick up form after trying to reach parent/guardians. A late fee of \$1.00 a minute will be charged for every minute a child is picked up after closing time. If we cannot get a hold of a parent/guardian, or anyone from the authorized pick up list, after an hour of trying, than the local Department of Social Services will be called.

## Schedule Changes

In order to provide appropriate supervision for children and to appropriately schedule educators, families are asked to follow the schedule they set for their child. Schedule changes should be made at least 2 weeks in advance, in writing, to the school Director. If you have an emergency and need to change your schedule, please do not hesitate to contact your school director.

## Absences

Please call the school as soon as possible if your child is going to be absent. If we do not hear from you, we will be concerned about your child. If your child is absent due to a contagious illness, please let your school directors know so that they can alert other families in the school.

## Annual Schedule

Imagine That follows the Boston Public School Calendar. We are closed all days that they are closed otherwise, Imagine That is open.

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, Imagine That may be forced to close for safety reasons. We will make every effort to remain open, provided that doing so does not compromise the safety of our Educators, administrators, or families. Imagine That does not provide reimbursement for these closures.

## Daily Schedule (full day programs)

Imagine That schools are open from 6:00am to 6:00pm. Each room has an individual daily schedule depending on the curriculum and age of children, but the general template is:

- 6:00-8:30 Breakfast
- 10:00 Snack
- 9:00-12:00 Morning Curriculum and Instruction\*
- 12:00 Lunch ( provided by families)
- 12:30 Pre-Nap story time
- 1:00-3:00 Naptime
- 3:00 Afternoon Snack
- 3:30-6:00 Afternoon curriculum and Gross Motor activities

The vast majority of explicit instruction in preschool classrooms occurs between 9:00-12:00. This time is sacred to the learning and development of our young students. If you are enrolled to attend at this time, we ask that you please arrive by at least 9:00 to ensure your child receives the instruction that will have impacts throughout their learning career and that the classroom can follow the daily lesson plan with minimal interruptions. Research shows that children who attend academic and social-emotional classes 3-5 times per week an average of 6 hours per day have long-lasting, positive consequences for success in school and later in life (Barnett, 1995; Frede, 1995).

## Infant Feeding Guidelines

In order to maintain consistency from home to school and to meet the individual needs of each child, infants will be fed according to their individual feeding schedules or needs.



A current feeding schedule must be maintained, documenting either the use of breast milk or formula and if applicable, new foods introduced and food intolerances and preferences. You will need to supply enough prepared, pre-made formula or breast milk bottles and baby food. Please bring them to the school daily. Your infant's bottles should be plastic and capped and all bottles and caps should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. Bottles can be stored by bringing in an insulated lunch bag with ice packs to keep either in your child's cubby or in the classroom. Parents may also store bottles in the classroom refrigerator.

Once a formula bottle feeding has begun, the formula must be used within 1 hour. Any formula remaining after 1 hour must be discarded. Once a breast milk bottle feeding has begun, the breast milk can "safely stand for 6 to 8 hours and need not be discarded if the first feeding attempt is incomplete" (Breastfeeding, A Guide for the Medical Profession by Ruth Lawrence, MD p.438). If you request that the partially consumed breast milk bottle be refrigerated, it "can be used for one more feeding no more than 4 hours later." Per Jan Barger, RN, MA, IBCLC. Educators will record the infant's feeding on their daily note. Feeding time is always recorded as when the baby begins to eat. All remaining bottles will be sent home at the end of the day.

## Breast Feeding

If you are a nursing mother, Imagine That will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant at anytime. If the school is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to

feed your baby. We can store a frozen supply for you up to one month from the date expressed, or you may provide milk daily. Frozen breast milk that is kept at the school does not have to be returned at the end of each day.

## Meals and Snacks

Imagine That believes that meals and snacks are critical to a child's health and development. Snacks and breakfast, along with milk, juice and water are provided by Imagine That and follow a 4-week rotating menu which follows the USDA guidelines for food groups and portion sizes for both toddlers and preschoolers.

We have found that children eat more consistently and completely when their lunches are provided by their families, who are familiar with their customs and preferences. Please make lunches nutritious and enjoyable. All food should be cut into bite-size pieces that are easy to swallow. Please make sure that all lunch boxes, bags and containers are labeled with your child's full name. Lunches are kept in your child's cubby. We suggest that you use ice packs to keep food cool and thermoses to keep food warm.

Please Note: All of our schools and classrooms are nut-free. It is very important that you respect our nut-free environment because allergic children can have a reaction not only from a nut product that they ingest or touch, but also from a nut product that is opened by another child in another part of the room.

## Nap and Rest

We are required by state regulations to give every child the opportunity to rest for a period of no less than 45 minutes per day. Naptime is generally 1 to 2 hours long. Children who do not sleep will be given a quiet activity, such as coloring or reading, while other children sleep. A restful naptime gives all children the boost of energy necessary for a successful afternoon.

During naptime, we give each child his or her own mat or cot. Each child is required to bring a sheet and blanket. With the exception of infants, each child may bring a small pillow or soft item.

## Inclement Weather

We realize that our families depend on us to be open on a consistent basis. Therefore, we work very hard to remain open every day, regardless of weather conditions. We will remain open on snow days unless there are extreme conditions and Imagine That Management determines the school should not open or we are unable to operate the school due to the loss of power or the storm is so strong that our Educators cannot get to the school. Our closings are not tied to local schools, so if there is an announcement of local schools being delayed or closing that does not mean that Imagine That will do the same.

We do expect the cooperation of our families on snow days. It is especially important that families leave work early enough to pick up their children

by 6:00pm. This is so that educators can leave the school in time to begin their commute. The late fee is \$1.00 for every minute on snow days.

When a major storm hits, our Educators may be unable to attend work, causing us to combine classrooms for the day. If we are forced to close early due to extreme conditions, we will contact all families at the earliest possible time. If we must close for the entire day, we will contact all families at the numbers provided using our Parent Reach service. Parent Reach is an emergency notification system which will inform you via phone/e-mail of school cancellations or emergency closing situations.

An important reminder: snow closures will not affect your tuition charge. Because the annual tuition is prorated, we do not reduce the tuition charge in weeks or months that include closures, even though you will need to arrange alternate care those days.

## Children's Arrival and Departure

To ensure that each child is safe and supervised at all times and to foster daily communication between families and educators, a parent or guardian must accompany each child into the school each morning and get him/her settled. Your child's educator has a specific attendance procedure, so please be certain that the educator is aware of your child's arrival before leaving the school. If you will not be available at your usual contact numbers for the day, please leave a phone number where you can be reached in case you are needed for an emergency.

Children will only be released to a parent/legal guardian or to persons whose names are listed on the authorized pick up list. Families should advise the school directors in advance, in writing, if a person not listed on the original form is to pick up their child. For the safety of each child, official photo identification will be required of all authorized persons picking up children.

Imagine That cannot legally deny access to a parent/guardian unless copies of legal documents have been provided to the school's directors.

In the event that your child has not been picked up by closing time, we will take the following steps (in order):

- 1) Attempt to reach you at the contact numbers you have provided.
- 2) Call the persons listed on the Emergency Contact and Authorization form as persons to contact in the event that we cannot reach you.
- 3) Call the authorities.

As Mandated Reporters, all Imagine That staff are required to question any family member or authorized pick-up person who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance that could impair that person's ability to drive or otherwise safely care for a child. In the best interest of the child, we will attempt to arrive at an alternative transportation solution, such as calling another person or calling a cab. If the pick-up person refuses these options, we are required to inform the proper authorities.

## Transportation

Transportation services are offered at some of our locations. Imagine That contracts with transportation providers. A family can request transportation services by informing the Director of their interest and completing a "Transportation Emergency Card" and a "Transportation Schedule Information Form". Imagine That will forward the card to the transportation provider specific to the Imagine That School and the provider will then determine if the pick-up and/or drop-off address can be included in a route. The approval process may take about 5 business days. The transportation provider and Imagine That may not be able to serve all of the family's needs if an address does not integrate into an existing route.

When the transportation request has been accepted, the director will inform the family of a start date, driver name, bus number and transportation provider contact number. All transportation provider drivers will utilize cell phones and two way radios as their means of communication during transport.

## Children's Belongings

Imagine That classrooms are filled with toys and activities for the development and enjoyment of your child. We ask that families leave their child's personal toys at home. It is a natural desire for a child to bring personal items, to bring a "part of home" to school, we encourage that children bring items as a favorite blanket or soft item for rest time. Imagine That provides cubbies, but we cannot assume responsibility for items brought from home. Please label all items clearly. A lost and found box is available in the school. Articles not claimed

may be donated or discarded.

By regulation, the state requires that all children always have an extra change of clothes within the school. Please label all clothing clearly with your child's first and last name. If your items are not labeled, Imagine That Educators may label the items for you.

## Non-Violent Toys

Imagine That supports a loving, peaceful, non-violent environment. We do not allow toys or books that could be interpreted as violent on school premises. This includes any toy that appears to be a gun, knife, or any other weapon, as well as war-related items or images. Imagine That requests that all families leave the personal toys of children at home. Our Educators will ask families to remove such items from the school.

## Mixed-Age Groupings

Imagine That provides mixed-age groups, acknowledging that children develop at different rates, especially when they are very young. Mixed-age groups enable children to learn from others who are at more advanced stages, as well as to be supportive of and sympathetic to children in less advanced stages, much like in a family setting.

Our philosophy of building self-mastery in a non-competitive atmosphere supports a mixed-age approach, which creates a warm, nurturing, stimulating environment in which children are aware of individual differences among their peers.

## Birthdays and Holidays

In recognition of each child as a special individual, we invite your family to share their unique cultural birthday traditions with your child's class. However, in accordance with our Anti-Bias Philosophy, we do not initiate birthday celebrations.

Also, in accordance with our Anti-Bias Philosophy Imagine That Educators do not initiate celebrations for other holidays, such as Valentine's Day, Easter, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Halloween, or Thanksgiving. We do invite and encourage families to share their holiday traditions with their child's class, provided that the celebration will not make children or Educators uncomfortable

Please check with your child's classroom's primary Educator and a school director before bringing food or any other item in to celebrate your child's birthday. This will prevent disappointment or any other problem. (For example, balloons are dangerous to infants and toddlers and are not permitted in the school.) The Educators will do their best to meet your needs as we support our commitment to celebrating special events in the life of your child.

## Transitions

It is the goal of Imagine That to ensure that all children are transitioned into new classrooms in a systematic way. Imagine That also understands that these times are transitioning periods for parents as well. When your child is ready to transition to a new classroom, you will receive a transition packet that includes a letter outlining the transition process one week prior to the start of your child's transition. Also included in the transition packet is information about your child's new classroom.

The Associate Director will notify and review the transition packet with both classrooms' teaching teams so the Educators are prepared to answer any questions you may have.

Please be aware that the transition process may vary from child to child, depending on their individual needs. Some children need shorter transitions while others might need a longer period of time to become accustomed to a new classroom.

## **Babysitting Policy**

Some parents may wish to engage an Imagine That employee for the purpose of babysitting outside of the school. Educators may decide to do so at their own discretion, but we assume no responsibility for any individual who cares for a child outside the school program. As part of the enrollment process, you will be asked to sign a Babysitting Authorization Form indicating that you understand that Imagine That is not responsible for the care of your child while he/she is not in attendance at the school, nor are we responsible for the actions of any staff member during the employee's non-work hours. Babysitting should not interfere with the employee's work schedule.

## **Confidentiality**

Imagine That programs are designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn. Imagine That views each child as an individual with a unique learning style and way of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities we serve, Imagine That recognizes and appreciates the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our program. Our hope is

to build programs that are responsive to the wide range of individual learning styles and needs – programs that truly celebrate and value the individuality of each child.

Imagine That's confidentiality policy and those of our licensors are intended to demonstrate the utmost respect for every child and family we serve. We place a high value on the confidentiality of each child. Consequently, we will not reveal the identity of a child who has engaged in an aggressive act against another, even at the request of the family whose child has been the target of that aggressive incident. We understand the concerns of families in this situation. However, knowledge of the identity of the aggressor is not significant to families' understanding of the incident or of actions taken by school staff to ensure the well being of the child who has been hurt. Knowledge of the aggressor's

identity can stigmatize the aggressive child. The inter-family conflicts that could result from sharing the aggressive child's identity may hinder a speedy and natural resolution. The policy of maintaining confidentiality in such cases is consistent with what we know to be the standard for excellence in early childhood education.

It is Imagine That's policy that any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with school management or staff will be held in the strictest confidence.

## **Records and Data Privacy**

The information in your child's file is considered privileged and confidential. No one who is not directly related to the care of your child, school management, or part of the Department of Early Education and Care, will not have access to the record without your written permission. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's record. You have the right to add information, comments, or other relevant material to your child's record.

## **Prevention of Double Billing**

Each parent/guardian has the option to pay their tuition my credit card, check and/or money order. Cash is not accepted in our programs. Copies of any credit card and/or checking account information will be kept in the child's file that will be located in a locked filing cabinet to help prevent any fraud. The corporate office located in Lawrence will be in charge of billing all families on a weekly or monthly basis. A ledger is kept on each parent to keep track of when they pay their tuition and total amount they pay. Each family that is part of CCCB will be tracked in the ledger by code to ensure that the family is only billed once. A voucher binder per state agency



will be kept in the corporate office as well to help keep track of each child and what agency they receive funding from. This way all families can be double checked that they are being billed to the accurate agency.

## **Late or Non-Payment of Parent Co-Payment**

Parents are required to pay tuition either weekly or monthly, on the Friday of each week. They are allowed to pay through credit card, money order, or check. Cash is not accepted at our programs. If a parent/guardian is late on their tuition payment, a letter is given to them the following day to remind them of payment. This letter reminds the parent the balance that is due for payment and also gives them an option to call the Director of the program to set up a payment plan if necessary. After 2 weeks of a family being late with tuition, the program Director will speak to the family about the possibility of care being terminated from the program if a payment plan cannot be agreed upon and paid.

## **Tuition Fees Charged Policy**

All tuition is charged on a weekly or monthly basis. All families are required to pay tuition on the Friday of each week. If a family cannot pay or needs to be put on a payment plan, they are required to speak to the program Director ASAP. If a parent is funded through a state agency and their voucher has expired and/or they are no longer eligible, it is the parent/guardians responsibility to pay the program the private rate for any care provided after the end date of the voucher. If the parent/guardian neglects to pay this that their child is no longer allowed in the program until parent/guardian agrees to pay tuition rate. The program Director is also required to inform the state agency they are a part of as well.

## **Provider Waitlist Policy**

If a parent requests to be part of our program and there is currently no space available, the parent has the option to be part of the internal waitlist. Any parent that requests to be on this waitlist will pay a \$50 fee. If a family is part of any state funded internal waitlist already than they are not required to pay this \$50 fee. The family will still have the opportunity to be part of the internal waitlist for our program. Once a slot is available, the program will contact the family on the waitlist based upon age and where they are on the list.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Imagine That values every child, every family, and every employee. We feel that the most positive emotional environment exists when families and staff work together as partners. Over the years, families have provided us with valuable input that we have used to consistently improve our program. We solicit this feedback with periodic questionnaires, and we hope that you will take the time to fill them out and return them so that we may learn from you.

In the event that you are displeased with something about our service, please raise your concern directly and respectfully to your school's Executive Director, who can address your concern. Our administrators are trained to welcome feedback and will make their best effort to deal with your concerns in a fair, reasonable, and timely manner. If, after speaking with the Executive Director, the response is not meeting your needs and you believe there is a concern that is in conflict with Imagine That's philosophies, or you allege that there is a violation of state or federal laws and regulations, please follow Imagine That's Grievance Procedure below. Even if you believe that Imagine That has violated a state or federal law or regulation, provided that the health or safety of a person is not at immediate risk, we ask that you follow the Grievance Procedure before

taking other action. You may not be aware of the exact details or circumstances of the situation, and we would like to have an opportunity to address your concern directly and quickly.

### **1) *Submit a written grievance to the Executive Director at your school.***

You may acquire the Grievance Form from your school's Executive Director. If you do not feel comfortable approaching the Executive Director, you may contact the Regional Director by calling 978-291-0256. The Grievance Form includes the name and address of the person filing the complaint, a description of the complaint or the alleged action prohibited by laws and regulations, and the date on which the concern allegedly occurred. The Grievance Form should be filed no more than 30 days after you become aware of the concern or the action alleged to be prohibited.

### **2) *A Senior Administrator will investigate the complaint.***

A member of the Stewardship Team will investigate the complaint. The investigation will be informal but thorough, affording all parties and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit information relevant to the complaint.

### **3) *The Stewardship Team will issue a written decision.***

The decision will determine the validity of the complaint and will be returned to the complainant no later than 30 days after the date on the Grievance Form. Where necessary, the written decision will include a corrective action plan.

### **4) *The Stewardship Team will maintain files and records.***

Grievance Forms, information gathered, and written decisions will be filed in Imagine That schools' offices. The Stewardship Team may assist persons in the preparation and filing of Grievance Forms.

The Stewardship Team may also participate in the investigation of complaints, and may notify the President of the resolution of complaints.

## Referral Services

Our goal is to work with families to meet the unique needs of each individual child. Imagine That Administrators often make referrals to community resources, in response to individual child needs for assistance with social behavior, mental health, educational development, and medical services (including dental and vision). A referral most often begins with a concern voiced by an educator, an administrator, or a parent. Educators and families should bring these concerns to the school's Executive Director. While the process for referrals varies on a case-by-case basis, the Executive Director will typically review the child's record and schedule a time for an administrator to observe the child. When the observation(s) is complete, the Executive Director will then arrange a meeting with the child's family to discuss the observations and create a Positive Guidance Plan. If the Executive Director wishes to make a referral, he or she will ask the family to sign a "Consent for Referral" form. If a referral is made, the Executive Director will follow up with the family on a periodic basis.

Imagine That remains committed to working with children who are experiencing educational delays, difficult social behaviors, illnesses and other disabilities. However, there may be cases in which Imagine That determines that a child's presence

would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

In compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and pursuant to the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, 102 CMR 7.10, an individualized assessment will be made of each child to determine whether Imagine That can meet the particular needs of the child. If Imagine That determines that any necessary accommodations required to serve the child would cause an undue burden to the program, Imagine That shall notify the parent(s) in writing that the child's enrollment is suspended or terminated Pursuant to 102 CMR 7.05 (8). If the child's enrollment is suspended or terminated, Imagine That shall set forth in writing the reasons for the suspension or termination and inform the parent(s) of other available services. Additionally, Imagine That shall prepare the child for termination from the program.

### ***Procedure for Communicating Concerns, Observing and Recording a Child's Behavior***

- 1) In response to a concern voiced by a staff member, a parent, or other authorized party, the Executive Director will review the child's record and schedule a time for an administrator to observe the child.
- 2) The observing administrator should record the child's behaviors on the Observation Narrative Form. The observer will record facts in the briefest and clearest possible language.
- 3) If the administrator is not the Executive Director, then the administrator should review the Observation Narrative Form with the Executive Director and discuss next steps prior to contacting the family.
- 4) After reviewing the observations with and receiving approval from the Executive Director, the administrator will arrange a meeting with the

child's family to discuss the observations and create a Positive Guidance Plan.

- 5) During the meeting, the administrator must obtain written parent/guardian consent on the Consent for Referral Form.
- 6) The Administrator will give the family copies of:
  - (a) Positive Guidance Plan
  - (b) Consent for Referral Form
- 7) The Administrator will give the parent/ guardian(s) the current Regional Resources list (Attachment specific to each school, which includes the current list of the referral resources in the community, including early intervention program) and will assist the family in making and following up on the referral – for example, providing phone numbers and contact information, participating in any observations, and responding to requests from specialists.

Upon completion of the referral, the Executive Director will complete the Referral Follow-Up Form to assist families in implementation of referral plan, decide on any accommodations to be made to serve child's needs, obtain a signed copy from a parent/guardian, and give the parent/guardian a copy. If necessary, the Executive Director will schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss results and update the Positive Guidance Plan in person.

- 8) All information must be filed both in the child's main file and in the Child Service Log. If services are determined to be unnecessary, or if the child is determined to be ineligible for services, the Executive Director must review the need for referral every three months

## Disenrolling

We require two weeks written notice to drop a day in your child's schedule or to voluntarily terminate your child's enrollment. This policy is by no means intended to be punitive, but is necessary to ensure

program continuity, especially for Educators, whose hours may be affected by terminations. While it is our desire to embrace everyone, Imagine That reserves the right to refuse service to anyone. We will terminate families for non-payment at our discretion. Families whose payments are delinquent will receive notice by telephone or in writing and will be terminated if they do not bring their account current. Upon termination for non-payment, families will lose their priority placement and will move to the end of the wait list. and we will ask families to leave when we believe that their behavior is unacceptable within the Imagine That community.

## Termination and Suspension

Imagine That will occasionally terminate families for children's behavior problems when they are persistent, or when they are threatening or harmful to other children, other families, or Imagine That staff. It is our desire to work with challenges rather than reject them, but every behavioral situation is different and complex, so these issues are handled on a case-by-case basis. When possible, Imagine That administrators will assist families in finding alternate care. If termination is set as a possible outcome in a child's Behavioral Plan, the child will be transitioned from the program as gently as possible and prepared for program exit. Imagine That will occasionally terminate families at our discretion for adults or disenrolled children's unacceptable behavior. We must consider the safety and happiness of all of our stakeholders.

## Changes to Services Needed/Income/Household Policy

All families that are part of a state agency are required to inform the program Director of any changes that may occur in the family, such as but not limited to, service needs, income and household size.

Once this information is shared with the program Director, it is the Directors responsibility to ensure that the parent also shares this information with their state agency worker immediately. If there is a change that results a change in an increase in the parent fee, reduction to part time eligibility, or ineligibility for subsidized care, the parent/guardian is now responsible for repaying funds to the CCR&R and/or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## Licensing Authority

Imagine That is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). You can reach EEC at [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us) or by phone:

- DEEC Northeast Office (978) 681-9684
- DEEC Metro Boston Office (617) 472-2881
- DEEC Southeast and Cape (508) 828-5025

## Your Imagine That School

Imagine That currently runs inside both Public and Charter Schools in Boston, Lynn and Lawrence. Each location differentiates on pick up location, please be sure to speak with your child's teacher/director for further information. All Imagine That schools follow all guidelines and policies noted in handbook. Any site-specific information on your child's school will be given to each parent during the time of enrollment. Every parent has the opportunity to contact the director at any time for any concerns, and/or suggestions on the program at [Jessica@imaginethat.com](mailto:Jessica@imaginethat.com).



## Parent Acknowledgement and Agreement Form

I have received the Family Handbook, I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures of Imagine That. I understand that it is my responsibility to go directly to school management with any questions I may have regarding the policies, procedures and information contained in this Handbook.

Please sign this Parent Acknowledgement and Agreement Form and return to your child's school management.

Thank you, we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

Signature: .....

Print Name: .....

Date: .....

*\*Information in the Family Handbook is subject to change. All family members will receive copy of new policies 30 days in advance to policy going into effect. All parents will be required to sign and date new policy to state they understand and will adhere to new policy changes.\**

