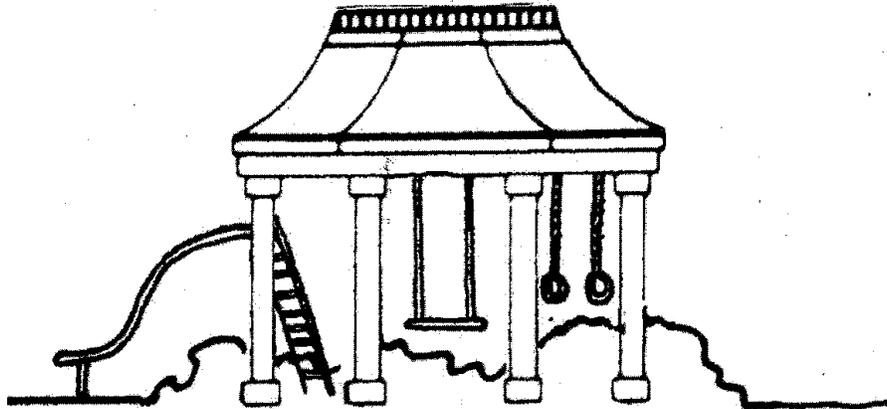


GORHAM HOUSE PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2023



50 New Portland Road
Gorham, ME 04038
Phone: 222-8987

Meghan.Pomelow@GorhamHouse.com

MISSION STATEMENT

Our primary mission is to provide children with a relaxed, safe, and happy environment to spend their days while away from their families, and to provide those families with peace of mind knowing that their most precious possessions are being well cared for. We offer children the opportunities to develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically through play-based activities.

Our secondary mission is to support Gorham House in its efforts to provide the elderly residents who live here with comfort, dignity, respect and the ability to witness a celebration of life that young children present so well. We do this, in part, by helping the children in our care to learn compassion, kindness, patience and tolerance towards others, regardless of age, skin color or ability.



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Childcare Rates
Effective September 1, 2023

**Half Day
Preschool Program (8:00 AM – Noon)**

2 days per week	\$75.00/week	\$320.00/month
3 days per week	\$112.50/week	\$480.00/month
4 days per week	\$150.00/week	\$640.00/month
5 days per week	\$187.50/week	\$800.00/month

Full Day

2 days per week	\$100.00/week	\$420.00/month
3 days per week	\$150.00/week	\$630.00/month
4 days per week	\$195.00/week	\$820.00/month
5 days per week	\$240.00/week	\$1010.00/month

Payment is expected on the first of the month, unless other arrangements are made with the program director. Full-time employees receive a 25% discount. Tuition payments received after the 10th of the month will result in a 10% finance charge. There will be a \$25.00 fee for all returned checks. Rate increases can be expected each school year.

PRESCHOOL POLICIES & INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

Gorham House Preschool is a state-licensed childcare center for children between the ages of three and five years. We are licensed for 15 children. Our teachers and director all meet or exceed the requirements set forth by the State of Maine for education and continuing training. We currently offer a School Year Program, which runs from September through June and a Summer Fun Program for 8 weeks in July and August. Both programs offer both part and full-time enrollment options.

Gorham House Preschool is housed in an adult retirement community, which allows us to offer a wide variety of experiences to our children and Grand Friends we share our days with. Our on-site intergenerational program sets us apart from other centers and makes Gorham House Preschool a wonderful place to learn, play, and grow.

We also have students from local colleges who are majoring in Early Childhood Education interning with us at various times throughout the year. We are proud to be selected as a mentoring site for those thinking about entering our profession.

We are dedicated to embracing people of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It is our responsibility to provide this handbook and any other written or verbal information to families in a language they can understand. Gorham House has a contracted translation service that is available to preschool families whenever the need arises.

PHILOSOPHY

It is our intent at Gorham House Preschool to help each child, both as an individual and as a member of a group, to grow and develop as fully and happily as possible. It is our belief that both children and adults must be in an environment in which all feel respected and safe. It is our wish to always maintain an atmosphere of openness and warmth. Within this atmosphere, children and adults must work together to solve differences by expressing feelings, listening to others' viewpoints, and striving for compromise. Adults must facilitate such interactions among children in concrete and relative ways. Issues of conflict between children should be resolved by those same children with the adult there only to facilitate and model appropriate problem-solving behavior.

At Gorham House Preschool, children will be learning through experience, observation, play, problem solving and creativity. The Get Set for School Curriculum and the Maine Early Learning & Development Standards act as frameworks to guide us in our planning. Within those guidelines, teachers will observe and listen to children to discover what their interests are and use ideas generated by the children to develop activities and learning centers within the indoor and outdoor classroom environments. Our emphasis will always be on the whole child. Children need years of play with real objects and

events before they can internalize and truly understand the meaning of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with materials and interact with people. Our routines are consistent, and our days are balanced with both child-directed and teacher-directed activities. We also strive for a healthy balance of quiet and active times throughout the day.

Children need to repeat all of these activities many times before formal academic tasks are presented to them. Because of our philosophy, you may not see children working on and bringing home “traditional” crafts from preschool. We believe that the process of learning is more beneficial to the children than the product.

We, as teachers, are always there to encourage independent play, plan a variety of activities, get involved with children without directing their behavior, and maintain smooth transitions, as well as a high level of teacher/child verbal interactions. We are the observers, role models, leaders, recorders, and facilitators in the classroom, which guide the children throughout the day as they learn and explore.

“Beginning with birth, the child has one concern: to learn all there is to learn from the world that he is part of. The planet is the child's playground and nothing – neither adult values nor concepts of “normal” growth – should interfere with the child's ‘business’: to play. Raised this way, the magical child is a happy genius, capable of learning anything.”

Joseph Chilton-Pearce
“The Magical Child”

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

Gorham House Preschool is proud to display the Torch Symbol of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for early childhood classrooms and childcare centers.

The heart of NAEYC accreditation focuses on the interactions and relationships between teachers, children and families. The process carefully considers all aspects of a program, including; relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment of child progress, health, staff competencies, communication, families, community relationships, physical environment, and leadership. We are pleased to be part of the movement toward quality early childhood education in Maine.

CURRICULUM

We use Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards and the Get Set for School curriculum to guide us in creating learning experiences and activities for children. The curriculum philosophy in the Get Set for School curriculum is aligned with our own philosophy. It takes the child's developmental level, the domains used for assessment, and the content areas and allows for a great deal of flexibility in subject matter that

teachers can use. This flexibility of subject matter means that children can develop their own interests and teachers have the freedom to be guided by these interests to plan for engaging areas of learning.

Children learn from interacting with their world. They learn from direct experience with objects and the application of logical thinking to their experiences. The teacher's role is to provide an environment that promotes active learning and helps children think about their actions. The adult's role is to facilitate such learning no matter what the subject area. Teachers will listen to children during their observations and try whenever possible to create learning experiences based on children's interests.

Copies of Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards and the Get Set for School curriculum are available in our lending library.

GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Emotional Growth

The child will:

1. Be able to separate from parents.
2. Begin to verbalize his/her feelings.
3. Begin to develop inner control.
4. Be able to take turns and to wait.
5. Begin to assume responsibilities for self toward the role of independence.
6. Be able to try new things without fear of failing.
7. Be able to feel secure in preschool.
8. Be able to trust other adults.
9. Begin to make some choices.
10. Develop a positive self-image.

Social Growth

The child will:

1. Enjoy coming to school and being with other children.
2. Be able to stay with a group for an activity.
3. Begin to share and take turns.
4. Begin to show courtesy.
5. Begin to appreciate the rights of others.
6. Begin to be able to sit through a story.
7. Begin to play cooperatively with other children.
8. Begin to develop a helpful attitude toward the group.
9. Begin to respect the rights and property of others.

Physical Growth

The child will:

1. Improve large muscle coordination.
2. Improve small muscle coordination.
3. Develop eye-hand coordination.
4. Use equipment correctly, safely and appropriately for his/her age.
5. Dress him/herself with minimal help.
6. Use and develop all five senses.
7. Develop acceptable toilet habits.
8. Discriminate likenesses and differences in objects.
9. Respond to listening games.
10. Develop a sense of directionality – the ability to perceive and orient oneself to the top, bottom, sides, front and back of an object.

Intellectual Growth

The child will:

1. Develop greater language skills (including vocabulary).
2. Enjoy learning new things.
3. Follow simple directions.
4. Increase attention span.
5. Match such things as colors, shapes, etc.
6. Develop an inquiring attitude by observing the world and questioning what he/she sees in order to evaluate and assimilate what he/she has experienced.
7. Be introduced to numbers and shapes, measurement, sense of time, sets, and ordinal numbers.
8. Know his/her full name and age and be able to recognize his/her name.
9. Learn songs and finger-plays to develop memory, sequence, ordinal numbers, etc.
10. Begin to develop an imagination and to differentiate reality and make believe.
11. Begin to use his/her own inner resources instead of relying on adults.
12. Develop increased listening skills.
13. Develop increased visual discrimination skills.
14. Use equipment and materials appropriately.
15. Become aware of language symbols.

Language and Literacy

The child will:

1. Develop knowledge and skills related to communicating and listening.

2. Develop knowledge and skills related to books; i.e. showing and understanding that books and other forms of printed material have a purpose.
3. Develop knowledge and skills related to comprehension i.e. understanding that spoken and written words have meaning.
4. Develop knowledge and skills related to sounds in spoken language i.e. the ability to hear and work with the sounds of spoken language and an understanding that spoken words are made up of separate small sounds.
5. Develop knowledge and skills related to print concepts i.e. understanding that words they see in print and words they speak and hear are related.
6. Develop the ability to recognize that sounds are associated with letters of the alphabet and that they form words.
7. Develop the ability to use symbols to represent words and ideas.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Our overall discipline policy is aimed at helping children learn to develop inner behavior control. We use many methods to guide our children toward appropriate behavior. We model appropriate behavior using language, positive affect, and by encouraging children's good choices. *At no time do we use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion* when disciplining a child. Examples of this type of discipline, includes but is not limited to; making harsh remarks, intimidating children, laughing at children, threatening children, or standing by when other adults or children do these things. We also do not withhold physical activity as a form of punishment.

We help children develop awareness of their own behavior by praising, redirecting, giving suggestions in a positive manner, and focusing on the behavior, not the child, when correcting. We develop rules that protect the children's safety and property and which help children learn to respect the rights and feelings of others.

Our rules are consistent, reasonable, and enforceable. Our consequences are immediate and logical. ("Remember I said you can stop pushing in this area and keep playing here, or I'll help you choose a different center to play in.")

Teachers are calm and rational during problem situations. We encourage children to solve their own problems when they occur, with adults standing by to help model the words if needed. We interact quickly if children become violent. We sometimes ignore behavior as a method to eliminate it. We use positive restraints – a gentle hand on a shoulder and a, "Please use walking feet in the classroom" reminder. We move closer to a situation that appears volatile and give children cues to change behavior.

If a child is out of control, we will use proper restraints, so the child does not hurt him/herself or others. If these behavior techniques fail, a meeting will be called with parents to help develop a strategy. After the plan is put in effect, we will have regular contact with parents regarding the success or failure of the plan. All parties will meet to determine if recommendations from outside sources can be met within our center's philosophy.

If at any time, the program director feels that behaviors are no longer manageable, all possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. Our goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures, but if necessary, it will be done in a manner that complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

ASSESSMENT

At Gorham House Preschool we use a variety of assessment procedures to get to know your child and plan an active vibrant curriculum based on the results. Assessments and Screenings guide our planning and our conversations with you about your child. An explanation of our procedures follows.

Purpose of Assessment:

- To support learning and the individual child
- To identify children's interests and needs
- To describe the developmental progress and learning of children
- To improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment
- To plan program improvement
- To communicate with families
- To identify the need for a referral for diagnostic assessment
- To evaluate our program and monitor trends
- To maintain program and teaching accountability

Conditions of Assessment

- Children will be assigned a teacher upon enrollment who will be responsible for taking observations, conducting assessments, and communicating results/findings with the child's family.
- Parents will complete the Ages and Stages questionnaire upon enrollment.
- Children will be assessed in the indoor and outdoor environments by teaching staff using observations, checklists rating scales, individually administered tests, and anecdotal notation.
- Teachers have access to ongoing training in the use of interpreting the Ages and Stages scores, Get Set for School curriculum, assessment methods, and knowledge of child development that will allow them to use their observations and anecdotal notes to gain a picture of where your child is developmentally.

Communications with Families Regarding Assessments

- Families will be made aware of their child's progress verbally or in writing at least quarterly, with written reports at least twice a year.
- In October, designated teachers will meet with parents to discuss their child's progress, accomplishments, goals and difficulties, both in the classroom and at home. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire and the

Family Questionnaire will help to guide this conversation. If there is a need for specialized services, this will be discussed at this time as well.

- In January, we will send home a checklist form of assessment to give parents a progress report with information about how the mutual goals discussed in October are or are not being met as well as progress in all developmental areas.
- In April, a formal parent/teacher conference is arranged where portfolios and other materials will be shared with families regarding their child's development, progress, accomplishments, goals, and difficulties both in the classroom and at home. This will also be a time to talk about activities that will help with transitions to new programs or schools.
- As parents, you know your child best. We will work in partnership with you to derive the best assessment method for your child; one that is sensitive to your values, culture, identity, and home language. If at any time you feel our assessment methods do not meet your child's needs, please reach out and we will make necessary adjustments to appropriately meet the needs of your child. If what we are doing is not meeting your need, please speak to us.

Confidentiality

- All records, including both formal and informal children's assessments and all health and safety records, are kept in the individual child's file, which is kept in a locked file cabinet in the teacher's closet. Teachers and administrators of Gorham House Preschool, who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access these records, will have access to these records.
- The results of these assessments are used for individual planning and overall program improvement.
- Parents need to give Gorham House Preschool written permission in order for us to share any information about your child with a third party, including regulatory authorities.
- The confidentiality of your child's screenings, assessments, and health records are very important to us and will be protected at all times.

If, during the course of our evaluations, we suspect that your child may have a developmental delay or special need, we will alert you in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner. We will provide you with documentation and an explanation for our concern; we will suggest the next steps you can take in the referral process. We will help you through whatever steps are necessary in accessing early intervention for your child. We support and encourage you to make decisions about services that your child may need. We will help and encourage you to advocate for these services. You can be assured that this information will be kept confidential.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At Gorham House Preschool we offer many levels of parent involvement, below are just a few:

- Visit with us informally, anytime!
- Join your child for lunch.
- Schedule a time to do a special art project...share your talents!
- Become a "parent reader". Schedule weekly or monthly times to visit and read to the children.
- Become a "builder". Use your talents to build necessary items for the classroom. Benches, toys, shelves, blocks, etc. You'd be surprised at what we come up with!
- Develop ideas and implement Parent Education Nights (such as Challenging Behaviors, Healthy Eating, etc.)
- Tackle NAEYC issues of accreditation as needed
- Develop ideas, implement and improve Family activities (such as our Back to School BBQ, Lovely Ladies/Gentlemen's Brunch, Growing Away Ceremony, etc.)
- Develop ideas and implement community partnership ideas
- Plan events for parents only and events for shared activities with children

PARENTS ARE WELCOME AT GORHAM HOUSE PRESCHOOL AT ALL TIMES!

COMMUNICATION

As a parent you are our best ally in preparing a nurturing and educational program for your child.

- We encourage you to regularly (both formally through conferences and informally through daily communication) contribute to decisions made about your child's goals.
- We encourage you to let us know what types of activities and services your child requires.
- We encourage you to raise concerns and work collaboratively with us to find solutions for any problems that may arise.
- We encourage you to work with us on shared childcare issues such as separation behavior, special needs, food and daily care issues.

We communicate best when we communicate often.

- We will make ourselves available to talk with you briefly at drop-off and pick-up time. We will refrain from talking about your child in front of them or in front of other parents to respect the confidentiality of your child. Again, drop off and pick up time is the children's time.
- We will be available to speak with you by phone during rest time (between 2 and 3PM daily). We will be available to talk in person by mutually convenient appointment, taking both of our schedules into consideration.
- We send home pictures of your child participating in the daily activity via the Seesaw App, which you will have access to once your child is enrolled. We do this with the hope of inspiring conversations between you and your child about their day at school and also updating you regarding our activities and practices.

We encourage you to leave comments in your child's Seesaw journal, as this helps in our planning and evaluation of our program.

- If it is mutually decided that two-way communication is needed, a notebook format works well.
- Email is also a great way to communicate, and all emails will be responded to within 24 hours, 7 days a week.

We want parents to always feel comfortable communicating with us, no matter what the subject matter, so we encourage families to reach out whenever necessary.

Remember - teachers regard all conversations with families as highly confidential. Anything you share with us will remain private. We are a team in the care and education of your children. No concern or question is unimportant, and we are always available to meet with you.

RESOLVING PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

We are always available to talk to parents about pragmatic issues and policies. We strongly support frequent and effective parent/teacher communications. If a grievance arises, please discuss the issue with the teacher involved and or the director. If the problem is of a business or financial issue, the director and business manager will be happy to meet with parents at a time mutually agreed upon. Our Executive Administrator has an open-door policy for all family members. If for any reason you are not satisfied with the results of a grievance issue or have concerns that we are not meeting within the parameters of preschool our Executive Administrator is available to help. Our Executive Administrator is Michelle Belhumeur. She can be reached at extension 141.

We hope your family values coincide with our program philosophy and policies. In rare cases, these two may not support one another. In this case, the program has the authority to ask a family to leave the program if policies are not followed and become an issue in the classroom. This decision will be made by the program director and the Executive Administrator.

If the issue or concern cannot be resolved by the Program Director or Executive Administrator or you need to report a licensing violation, you may contact:

Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services
41 Anthony Ave, 11 State House Station
August, ME 04333-0011
Phone: 207-287-5020

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Gorham House Preschool takes very seriously the trust that families place in us when enrolling their children in our center. Essential to that trust must be parents' belief that

we consider physical, sexual or emotional abuse intolerable and that immediate action will be taken if such an allegation is made.

Parents should be assured of the following procedures in the event of an allegation:

- The alleged victim will be of primary concern regarding safety, protection, and comfort;
- The staff person, as soon as she or he is accused of abuse, will be suspended immediately until the investigation is complete and a report issued;
- The accusation, suspicion, or risk of harm will be reported immediately to the appropriate state authority;
- Gorham House Preschool will cooperate fully with the investigation;
- Gorham House Preschool will act responsibly when the investigation is over to ensure that all children in our program are protected.

Teachers are mandated reporters of abuse or neglect. In the event of an observation of abuse or neglect by staff or a direct report to staff, the following procedures will be carried out:

- The staff member will report her/his concerns to the Director.
- Together they will determine if a call to DHHS will be made. At this point the staff member or Director will make the report.
- The administrator of Gorham House will also be informed of the action.
- Gorham House Preschool will cooperate with DHHS if an investigation is warranted.

All members of Gorham House Preschool staff are mandated reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect. Failing to report is punishable by law.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

At Gorham House Preschool we welcome all children and families regardless of religious, cultural, language, economic, ability, sexual orientation, race or gender differences. We will make every effort to provide translators and will work closely with each individual family, the Center for Community Inclusion & Disabilities and Child Developmental Services to provide the necessary support and information to make your child's time at Gorham House Preschool meaningful. If language is a barrier, we will provide a translation of our handbook and other necessary forms.

Our program fully complies with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA requires that child care providers not discriminate against persons with disabilities on the basis of disability, that is, that they provide children and parents with disabilities with an equal opportunity to participate in the child care center's program and services. We do not exclude children with disabilities from our program unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others or require a fundamental alteration of the program.

If additional medical needs are present, it will be up to the discretion of the program director to decide whether the program will perform additional medical procedures on an individual basis. This decision will be made on two factors; whether the medical

procedure can be performed safely and effectively in the program space, and whether the program can perform the medical procedures without effecting the teacher/child ratio, regulated by the State of Maine, therefore impacting the well-being of the other children enrolled in the program.

LENDING LIBRARY

Gorham House has an extensive Early Childhood Library of resource books relating to parenting strategies, teaching strategies, developmental stages, challenging behavior, public policy issues in child care, health and safety, and activity books for young children. This collection is kept in the teachers' closet and is always available for families to borrow.

OPERATING HOURS

Gorham House Preschool is open from 7:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Monday through Friday. We will operate year-round except on the following days:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day (also the Wednesday before and the Friday after)
- Christmas Eve through New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Patriots Day
- Memorial Day
- Week after Growing Away, in June
- July 4th (will observe on Friday or Monday for weekend holiday; if the 4th falls on a Thursday, we will be closed on the Friday after as well)
- Week before start of Fall Session, in August

Half Day/Preschool Only Program Hours: 8:00AM–12:00PM.

DROP OFF/PICK UP

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE CHILDREN ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING WITHOUT AN ADULT.

For your child's safety a security code must be used to enter the building from the outside. You will be given the code upon enrollment. The code will change at least annually to ensure your child's safety. Due to COVID, parents are asked to stay outside the classroom door during drop off and pick up times.

Parents are asked to park in the circle near the preschool entrance and walk to the door with their child. **Teachers will sign your child in each day when you arrive at the**

door on the sign in sheet, which is always with the blue attendance box. This attendance box stays with the children whether we are on the playground, on field trips or practicing emergency evacuations, and contains all necessary emergency information. This is our official attendance form. We use this to take attendance during evacuations. At pick up time, if the teacher is occupied with another child at the time, be sure to let her know your child has arrived and "check in" with her. All children should arrive by 9:00am so they are given the opportunity to participate in morning activities/free play.

When dropping off or picking up, be sure to allow your child time to adjust to this transition in his/her day. If separation is difficult in the morning or if your child does not want to leave school at the end of the day, speak to the teacher for advice and assistance. This is normal behavior and we can help with strategies to make the transition smoother.

Pick up and drop off time is the best time to briefly "check in" on your child's day. **If you want more information on your child's interactions, development, and behaviors in the classroom, we strongly encourage you to ask for this information.** If you have an issue or concerns to discuss with the teachers, please set up a time outside of drop off and pick up time to do so. See the COMMUNICATION section of the handbook for convenient times during the day. We will refrain from talking about your child in front of them or in front of other parents to respect the confidentiality of your child. Drop off and pick up time is the children's time.

If you plan to stay longer than 10 minutes, please find a place to park in the parking lot. Our entrance is also the ambulance pick-up zone. It is important to respect this and park in the circle for quick drop off and pick up only. **Please never block the ramp area.**

Please also remember to shut your engine off during drop off and pick up times to reduce emissions into the air. Extreme weather is the only exception for this rule.

LATE PICK UP

The center closes promptly at 5:30PM. Our policy is a charge of \$1.00 per minute past 5:30PM. Please allow enough time to pick up your child and still sign out by the closing time. If parents continue to arrive late, we reserve the right to terminate the child's enrollment in the program.

FEES AND PAYMENT

Payment is due on the first day of each month, which can be made via ACH or by check. Checks should be made payable to Gorham House Preschool and placed into your child's "Communication Folder," which is kept in their backpack to go back and forth from home to school. Monthly rates are based on 48 weeks divided into twelve equal payments. Financial contracts are in effect from September 1 to June 30 and separately from July 1 to August 30 for the summer program.

No deductions from tuition will be made for absences, family vacations, staff training days, school vacations, emergency closings or holidays.

A month's written notice to the director is required for withdrawal during the contracted time or tuition for that month will be due in full. Thirty days' notice will also be given to families if a child is deemed inappropriate for our center. Every effort will be made to work with families to maintain the relationship.

A late charge of 10% will be applied if payment is not in before the 10th of each month.

If payment is not in by the twentieth day of the month, a meeting will be called with parent, director and business manager to determine whether child will be permitted to stay in the program. If something is not satisfactorily agreed upon, the relationship will be terminated.

Rate increases can be expected each school year.

ABSENCES/DISMISSALS

We would appreciate notification for any reason your child will not be here on a regularly scheduled day. You can call, text or send an email to inform us of an absence. If your child is to be picked up early, this is also something we should know to ensure that we are in the classroom. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself, we need to be told in advance, preferably in the morning, so that we can discuss this with your child. In an emergency, a phone call will be acceptable. If we have not met the person picking up or if they are not on your emergency contact or escort list, we will require identification in the form of a driver's license or other picture ID. For your child's safety, please cooperate with this policy. The safety of your child is extremely important to us. You can reach us in the classroom at 222-8987 or on our cell phone at 838-2482.

STORMS AND DISASTERS

If a storm or other occurrence requires us to close, the director will notify each family by email/Seesaw between 6:00 – 6:30 A.M. We close only in extreme circumstances, so you can always assume we are open. If you need immediate information, email the director, Meghan Pomelow, at Meghan.pomelow@gorhamhouse.com. If the center closes early because of inclement weather or other emergency, parents or their emergency contacts will be called. Parents will be given as much notice as possible in these situations.

SUMMER PLANNING

If a family chooses to keep their child home in the summer but still wishes to re-enroll your child in the fall, we will hold that space open as long as we can. If an application for immediate enrollment is received from another family, we will notify parents holding

the space and allow them first refusal. This means that the lowest summer (July and August) tuition rate would have to be paid even if child does not attend in order to hold the space open. The lowest summer tuition rate would be the Tuesday and Thursday half-day program. If this affects more than one family holding spaces for the summer, the most recently enrolled child will be affected first.

TRANSITIONS

When your child is ready to move on to kindergarten, we will provide you with a list of private kindergartens in the area, along with public school information as it comes to us (found in the resource binder on the parent shelf).

We can also provide you with information about enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities, and options in other early education programs and special service programs should your child need them. We will not provide another program with information about your child without your written permission.

CLOTHING AND REST TIME NEEDS

As many of the activities we provide can be messy, please be sure to send your child to preschool in loose, comfortable PLAY CLOTHES. Play clothes are clothes that can get dirty! **Children should not feel required to avoid certain activities because they are concerned about soiling their clothing.** A change of clothes (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt) should be in your child's cubby at all times. Teachers will check extra clothes frequently and ask you to replenish them as needed. Please label all items brought to Gorham House Preschool. This small effort helps our staff immensely when we straighten the cubby area and help children find their things. Also remember that the cubbies are small and usually shared by two children, so please only send essential items with your child each day.

Your child will need a crib sheet and light blanket. If your child needs a pillow during rest time, please provide a small pillow with removable pillow case that will fit into the provided rest time bag. No sleeping bags, large blankets, or large pillows please. Gorham House Preschool provides bags for storing sleep items and all items need to fit in the bag comfortably. Please do not send bulky items, as they will be returned to you. Gorham House Preschool will wash bedding each Friday.

TOYS FROM HOME

Although we understand that children want to share their toys and new possessions with their friends, we ask that toys from home not be brought into school. Our classroom materials and supplies are selected for their developmental and educational merit. When toys are brought in from home, the focus changes. Also, staff will not accept responsibility for any personal toys that are broken, lost, or damaged in any way. It is our **strongest recommendation** that items other than the one soft stuffed animal for rest

time remain at home. If toys are brought from home, they will need to stay in the child's cubby or in the teachers' closet until pick-up time. We will always make time for children to share special items that are discovered at home or while vacationing. We also provide limited "Show & Tell" days throughout the year to give children the opportunity to share something special with their peers. Show & Tell items must fit inside the provided Show & Tell bags, found in the children's cubbies the morning of Show & Tell.

LET'S GO! 5-2-1-0

In 2013, our program teamed up with *Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 Goes to Child Care*. This program is designed to increase healthy eating and active living in children from birth to age 18 by working with children and families. This program also provides professional development opportunities for Gorham House Preschool staff to increase our skills and knowledge regarding healthy eating and active living. Our daily activities as well as several our policies are created with the common message of 5-2-1-0 in mind.

5 or more fruits & vegetables
2 hours or less recreational screen time*
1 hour or more of physical activity
0 sugary drinks, more water & low fat milk

*Keep TV/Computer out of the bedroom. No screen time under the age of 2.

OUTDOOR PLAY

We at Gorham House Preschool understand that active play is important for healthy growth and development of young children. Since we know that children stay healthier if they play outside every day, we play outside at least once a day, usually twice, unless there is extreme weather. All preschoolers will receive at least 90 minutes of active play (indoor and outdoor) each day. Children who are here only half day can expect to receive at least 45 minutes each day. It is especially important to send your child well-bundled (waterproof mittens, hat, boots, snow pants, jacket) in the winter months. An extra set of waterproof mittens will also need to be provided during the winter and during mud season! During the summer, a bathing suit, towel, and water-shoes should be left at school for use with water play and wading pools. Each family will be asked to provide a non-aerosol sunscreen for teachers to apply to children when the UV index is moderate to extreme.

For your child's safety we monitor the temperature, wind chill factor, and air quality daily. This information is noted on the Weather Chart that is located on a clipboard in the teachers' closet. This information guides us when we make decisions about how long to remain outdoors and during which period of the day it will be safest to have the children outside. We will take the children outside as long as it is above 15° F and as long as the air quality is safe, so please always have appropriate outdoor clothing available to your child. "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

SCREEN TIME

Our program understands that television and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others. These are essential in learning and developing physically and socially, which is why we limit screen time to a maximum of 30 minutes per week. On occasion, an age appropriate/educational movie will be shown to the children pertaining to current curriculum. An IPAD is available in the classroom to enhance the children's learning, but is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes total per day, if used at all. It is always used in the presence of a teacher and is for educational purposes only.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

We ask that your child bring a lunch from home. Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We ask that you remember this when packing your child's lunch. We would prefer that parents send only healthy foods. We highly recommend packing fruit and/or vegetables in your child's lunch box every day. We are more than willing to provide you with a list of healthy snack options. We would prefer that children self-select from an assortment of soups, pastas, sandwiches, fresh or dried fruits, vegetables, yogurt, breads and crackers, cheeses, etc. There are seldom food issues when children can decide what to eat first. This also fosters independence and a sense of well-being. Teachers will not indicate in what order your child should eat his/her food. If you send pudding, kids' yogurt, and a granola bar, remember that each of these foods has an extremely high sugar content and your child may choose to eat all of these while leaving his/her sandwich or apple in their lunchbox! Make your selections carefully. * We have a microwave for your convenience. If you are packing food that needs to be heated, please ensure it is in a glass container. Microwaving plastic, Styrofoam, or metal containers is prohibited. We will provide 1% low fat milk and water with lunch. We limit the availability of sugary beverages (such as juice, soda, fruit drinks, sports drinks, and sweet teas, etc.) to less than one time a month, if served at all. We routinely send home un-eaten portions of sandwiches and heat ups. We believe that this enables parents to see what their children have eaten and discuss other choices - less food or different foods, etc. We have at least one luncheon with the residents each month and various Gorham House lunch functions during the year. You will be informed whether your child will need a lunch on these days, depending on the menu. They will be marked on our monthly calendars. **Because of space restrictions, we regret that both regular and special lunch functions are available only to children who are with us for the full day program.**

- Lunch boxes need to be labeled with your child's name.
- Cereal and milk are always on hand in the event of forgotten lunches.
- Please pack an ice pack in your child's lunchbox to keep their food cold.
- **Soda, gum, and hard candy are not allowed at school.** We will ask your child to take these items home. **Juice and other sugary beverages are STRONGLY**

discouraged at school. Water is always clearly visible and freely available to children.

We will provide two healthy self-serve snacks during the day. In the morning, cereal, English muffins, waffles, toast, rice cakes, yogurt, bagels, cheese sticks, crackers, eggs, etc. will be offered on varying days. Water and 1% low-fat milk are available to children at snack times. Afternoon snacks are typically, cheese and crackers, rice cakes, veggie sticks, fruits and veggies, quesadillas, or a snack that we have prepared ourselves as part of our curriculum. All snacks are served with fruits and/or vegetables, which are washed thoroughly before consumption.

Healthy snacks (especially fruits and vegetables) and non-food treats will also be provided by the program for celebrations and holidays. We ask that snacks brought in from home for special events are also healthy choices (fruits and vegetables recommended). We will not serve unhealthy snacks brought in for the class, including cakes, cupcakes, etc. Please check with program director before bringing in snacks. A list of healthy, age-appropriate snacks are available if needed.

Food will never be used as a reward in the program.

***Hidden Sugars:**

If these ingredients are listed as one or more of the first three ingredients, the product is considered high in sugar:

Dextrose	maltose	granulated sugar	sorbitol	lactose
corn syrup	fructose	turbinado	levulose	milk sugar
Mannitol	honey	maltitol	xylitol	
molasses	Invert sugar	high fructose corn syrup		

Choking Hazards

The following foods will not be offered at preschool because of the choking hazard to children below four years of age. If your child is four or older you may include these items in their lunch; however, we ask that you not bring them to school if you are providing a special snack for all of the children. These food items include; whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, and chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed. **If your child is younger than 4 years of age, please refrain from including the above-mentioned items in his/her lunchbox.**

Allergies

In the event that a child with severe food allergies (ie. peanuts, milk, etc.) is enrolled, we reserve the right to ask all families to respect the health of that child and refrain from sending the indicated foods to school. These restrictions will be posted.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Effective September 1, 2021, all children will be required to be fully immunized to attend our program, unless the child's licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant has deemed one or more required immunizations as medically inadvisable. In this case, the parent or guardian of the child must provide a statement from the child's licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, stating that the child is medically exempt from one or more of the required immunizations and that the parent or guardian has been made aware of the risks and benefits associated with the choice to immunize. The required immunizations include:

4 DTaP • 3 Polio • 1 MMR • 1 Varicella (chickenpox)

Your child's most recent immunization record will be required before your child can attend the program, and will need to be updated annually. In the event of a disease outbreak, children not vaccinated for medical reasons must be excluded from the program until the outbreak no longer exists, or until the children receives the necessary immunization.

ILLNESS POLICY

We understand how difficult it is for you when your child is sick. Our primary goals are to make sure the child is as comfortable as possible and to prevent various illnesses from spreading throughout the classroom. If your child comes to school, he/she will be expected to take part in the whole program, including outdoor time. We do not have enough staff to keep a sick child inside. If a child is not well upon arriving at preschool or becomes ill during the day, parents will be expected to pick him/her up from the center within a half hour.

- A child is required to be kept out of school if he/she has any of the following conditions:
 - **Appears to be severely ill** (lethargic/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash)
 - **A fever of 100° or above:** Child must be kept home for 24 hours after fever has subsided WITHOUT fever reducing medicine.
 - **COVID-19 Symptoms:** Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever of 100° or above, chills or repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, congestion, runny nose (in conjunction with other symptoms), diarrhea and/or nausea or vomiting.
 - **Vomiting:** Child must be kept home for at least 24 hours after the last incidence of vomiting.
 - **Diarrhea:** watery or loose bowel movements that look different and are more frequent than usual. Sometimes accompanied by stomachache.

- **Influenza:** Child must be kept home for 7 days after the onset of symptoms or 24 hours after all symptoms have subsided, whichever is longer.
- **Conjunctivitis** (Pink Eye): After diagnosis from pediatrician or health consultant. Bacterial- Child must be kept home for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started. Viral- Child can return to school.
- **Impetigo:** Child must be kept home until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- **Streptococcal pharyngitis** (i.e., strep throat or other streptococcal infection): Child must be kept home until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started.
- **Head Lice:** Child must be kept home for 24 hours after the first treatment, and there are no visible nits in the hair.
- **Hepatitis A:** Child must be kept home for 7 days after the onset of symptoms.
- **Scabies:** Child must be kept home until after treatment has been given.
- **Chickenpox** (varicella): Child must be kept home until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after onset of rash).
- **Rubella:** Child must be kept home for 7 days after the rash appears.
- **Pertussis:** Child must be kept home until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been given.
- **Mumps:** Child must be kept home for 5 days after the onset of parotid gland swelling.
- **Measles:** Child must be kept home for 4 days after onset of rash.
- **Blood or mucus in the stools** not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- **Abdominal pain** that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs of symptoms.
- **Mouth sores** with drooling unless the child's physician or program health consultant states that the child is noninfectious.
- **Rash** with fever or behavioral changes, until a physician has determined the illness is not a communicable disease.

If a child has a cold, an allergic rash (as diagnosed by a doctor), loose bowels due to medication or diet, she/he may still be brought to the center.

In order to attend the program or return the following conditions must be met:

- A child must be free from fever, vomiting, diarrhea (without symptoms) for a **full 24 hours**
- Any child prescribed an antibiotic for a current contagious bacterial infection must take the prescription for a **full 24-hour course** before returning.
- A child must be able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- The child must be free of open, oozing skin conditions unless 1) a health care provider signs a note stating that the condition is not contagious and 2) the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- A child excluded because of lice, scabies or other infestation may return 24 hours after treatment is begun as long as they are nit free.

- If a child was excluded because of a reportable contagious illness, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious is required prior to readmission.

The final decision whether a child may attend or is to be excluded from the program is made by the program director and program health consultant. We have several excellent reference books of common infections and conditions of children including symptoms and treatment. They can be found in the Preschool Library located in the teachers' closet. You are always welcome to read or borrow the following:

Caring for our Children
 Healthy Young Children
 Managing Infections Diseases in Child Care and Schools

MEDICATION

If your child needs medication while at school, please see the teacher for the permission form. Only medicine that has been prescribed by a physician and is in the original container marked with the child's name, dosage and date will be administered. Medications will be stored in the locked container in the refrigerator and the locked cabinet on the wall. Long-term medications need to be accompanied by a special permission form signed by the doctor and renewed every six months or annually, depending upon the condition. **Over-the-counter drugs also need a physician's permission.** Staff cannot administer ANY DRUG, including Tylenol or cough syrup, without written notice from a doctor. Forms can be found on the Parent Shelf and may be faxed to us by your doctor. Benadryl is kept on hand in case an unknown allergic reaction occurs unexpectedly. All parents will have the option to sign a permission slip to authorize teachers to administer Benadryl for an unknown allergic reaction.

ALLERGIES

All children with allergies or special needs will need a Plan of Care written, signed by their physician. We will provide you with the necessary forms if needed. Please let us know immediately if your child will require special care.

INFLUENZA AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY, PRESCHOOL

- **Purpose:** To prevent the spread of infection when flu vaccine is not available or present strain of flu is not covered in current vaccine
- **Policy Statement:** This facility will institute a plan to help protect the preschool children and staff from contracting the flu.
- **Signs or Symptoms of the flu in the building:**
 1. This facility will isolate the children as needed, until signs and symptoms have ceased for 48 hours.

2. Staff that have signs or symptoms are required to stay home until signs and symptoms have ceased for 48 hours.
 3. Children that have signs or symptoms are required to stay home for either seven days or 24 hours after all symptoms have subsided, whichever is a longer period of time.
 4. Group activities will be suspended as needed to prevent the spread of the virus.
 5. The Medical Director will be notified.
- **Positive Case in the Building:**
This facility will restrict all visitations, i.e., unit visits, activity coming into building.

CLASSROOM PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

- Tables cleaned and sanitized after each activity, before and after lunch, and snack.
- Silverware, plates, cups, etc. all washed in dishwasher.
- Water table cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Each child has his/her own individual resting mat. Individual sheets and blankets are washed weekly. Mats are sanitized monthly.
- Classroom surfaces cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Hand washing after messy activities, after playing with pets or other animals, before and after sensory table play, before eating and after toileting.
- Toys and dress-up clothing are washed/sanitized weekly or when visibly soiled.

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

Medical Emergencies/Accidents

Teachers at Gorham House Preschool are trained in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. All accidents or injuries requiring more first aid than a band-aid or ice pack will be reported on an Accident Report form. Parents are required to read, sign and return to the teacher. Minor scrapes will be cleaned with soap and water; bruises and bumps, treated with ice. Immediate care for more serious injuries will be referred to our Childcare Health Consultant, Director of Nursing Services or the RN on duty, depending on availability. Rescue (911) will be called to transport a seriously injured child. Parents or their emergency contacts (in the event the parents cannot be reached) will be notified immediately.

Please make sure your emergency phone numbers are up to date. You **MUST** have an alternative adult who can pick up your child if you cannot be reached. Parents must make arrangements to pick up a sick or injured child within a half hour.

Fire Drills

We hold fire drills once a month for each program (M/W/F and T/TH) in order to prepare for emergency evacuations. Children are escorted out either the Preschool or Great Room door. In case of a split group, we meet in the gazebo outside the playground.

The teacher takes the blue sign-in clipboard, first aid kit, cell phone, and makes sure everyone is accounted for by taking attendance. We use the blue sign-in clipboard by the door for evacuation accounting since this also holds our emergency numbers. In the event of a real fire or disaster, children will be taken to the Baxter Memorial Library or wherever instructed by Public Safety personnel. Parents will be notified immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so.

Lockdown

In the event of a lockdown, we will use the nationally accepted "Red Bird Plan." This plan has been used successfully for many years as a way of preparing children for dangerous situations in a developmentally appropriate way.

The classroom has a place designated as the Red Bird Nest. The phrase "red birds fly to your nest" is the signal for children and teachers to go to the designated area. We will remain there until the all-clear signal is given. We will have the cell phone, blue sign-in clipboard with emergency numbers, snack bag and activity bag with us. We will be crowded and a bit uncomfortable...but safe. Our administrator has access to our emergency numbers if needed.

This plan is used as a preventive and proactive response to anticipated emergencies. Due to the unpredictable nature of these types of situations, no guarantee of safety shall be implied through the use of the Red Bird plan. However, the regular practice and training of staff will be a step-in response to dangerous or threatening situations. We hope, as you do, to never have to use this plan in a real situation.

Tornadoes/Hurricanes

If children are on the premises in the event of severe weather, we will proceed to the Gorham House basement using the stairs nearest the classroom. The blue sign-in clipboard with emergency numbers, first aid kit, cell phone, snack bag and activity bag will be brought with us. Attendance will be taken, and parents will be notified immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so.

Waterfront Activities

Providing children access to waterfront activities is an important part of our summer curriculum. While we are not able to provide swimming lessons to the children, we do visit lakes and ponds weekly in the summer. We believe that by providing this experience to children they will become more comfortable with water, have an opportunity to practice the skills they have developed on their own, and will benefit from exposure to the vast natural resources that our state has to offer. Children's safety around water is a concern for us all. We follow the rules as stated in the Childcare Licensing Regulations and have at least two teachers certified as Water Safety Attendants. One of those teachers will always be with the children when they are near any body of water. Children will always wear program provided life vests when in the water, no exceptions. On the playground during summer session, there is a wading pool available to the children on the playground. Parents will sign a special permission form that will allow children to participate in these activities. Waterfront activities will only occur when the weather permits. All children will complete the Longfellow's WHALE

Tales Training, provided by American Red Cross, prior to participating in any waterfront activities.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ENROLLMENT

Children must be three years old on or before September 1st for the Fall program and on or before July 1st for the Summer session.

Children must be toilet-trained, meaning they are able to be independent in the bathroom. Our staff will not regularly help a child with clean up after an accident or with daily toileting activities. We do not allow diapers or pull-ups. Children should be beyond the need for these items if they are enrolled at Gorham House Preschool. We encourage children to use the bathroom before outdoor play and before rest time. We will regularly remind children to flush and wash their hands after using the bathroom. Bathroom time is private time.

Children must be able to drink out of a cup independently. Sippy cups are not to be used unless recommended by the child's pediatrician for medical reasons. Pacifiers are also not allowed while at school. Pacifiers prevent children from communicating with their peers and teachers effectively. If either of these items is brought to school, they will not be used while the child is in our care and will be sent home.

Severe aggressive behavior is frightening to both children and adults. Gorham House Preschool reserves the right to request that parents remove their child from the program if behaviors such as biting, punching, kicking, spitting, or throwing objects with the intent to hurt another child or adult continue beyond a reasonable time. We will do our best to work with families; however, the safety of all adults and children in the classroom or outdoors is our primary concern.

For the safety of our teachers, we have a "no lifting" policy with children. Teachers will get down to the children's level to give a hug or to offer comfort and support. Only in an emergency will teachers lift children, so please keep this in mind if your child has additional needs that require them to be lifted or transferred. This should be a discussion that takes place with the program director before enrolling to ensure we are able to make the properly meet the needs of your child.

We require parents and children to visit at least once before your child's starting date during Meet the Teacher Open House, which is scheduled the week before school begins. We expect parents to be with their child during these visits and explore the classroom together. We find that if parents are comfortable, they communicate that feeling to their child. Teachers are available for home visits if families desire; however, this is not a requirement.

On the following page, you will find a list of self-care skills that children ages three, four, and five are developmentally appropriate to master. They are all great skills that can be worked on at home to help set them up for success before beginning Preschool!

Self-Care Skills for 3-year old Child	Self-Care Skills for 4-year old child	Self-Care Skills for 5-year-old child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dress self (may need some help, esp. with buttons & zippers) ○ Practice using Snaps, zippers and buttons ○ Explore what weather appropriate clothing means ○ Put on shoes (it's helpful to avoid laces) ○ Explore taking shower alone (Supervised) ○ Hang up own towel (make sure hook is height accessible) ○ Put away a few items of clothes from a laundry basket ○ Explore how to make own bed ○ Explore basic cooking (measuring, pouring, mixing) ○ Pour glass of water/milk/juice from a pitcher (see next!) ○ Wipe up own spills (helps to keep towels stored where child can reach) ○ Get a snack from the pantry (Try to keep healthy choices in reach) ○ Use a napkin at the table ○ Learn part of own address (Town and own last name) ○ Help set table (give choice of one responsibility such as napkin buddy or place mat setter) ○ Remove own plate from table ○ Explore using the kitchen sink to rinse fruits/veggies/cups ○ Play alone for up to one hour* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue practicing skills from the 3-year list above ○ Explore washing hair alone in shower (may need help to complete) ○ Explore more cooking skills (cracking eggs alone, making simple sandwich, cutting banana slices) ○ Learn house phone number ○ Learn own address ○ Set / remove own place setting at table ○ Learn a bit about how to work the washing machine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dress independently (may still wish for help, but in general capable of doing alone) ○ Brush hair independently ○ Brush teeth independently ○ Shower independently (may still need assistance with hair washing) ○ Replace toilet paper roll if finished ○ Understand and choose weather appropriate clothing ○ Explore tying laced shoes ○ Explore what a balanced meal contains ○ Use the kitchen sink with confidence to wash fruits, veggies, plates, cups ○ Learn how to use microwave (with supervision) ○ Explore more cooking skills (peeling vegetables with supervision, chopping ingredients with safe knife) ○ Learn how to place item in oven using mitts (with adult nearby) ○ Learn about emergency numbers (how to dial for police & fire)

Independent play is a really important self-care skill, like any other skill, children reach this at varied ages so the time one child may play alone is different from another. Having nearby supervision but not interference is the goal here. Children make amazing discoveries when immersed in independent play.
 Ref: www.positiveparentingconnection.net

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00am	Gorham House Preschool Open
7:00-9:00am	Arrival/ Free Play/ Table Activities
8:00am	Half Day Program Begins
9:15am	Snack (self-selected)
10:00 – 10:30am	Clean-up/Morning Meeting
10:30 – 11:00am	Together Time with Grand Friends/Small Group Time
11:00 – 11:30am	Story time/Activity/Toileting
11:30 – 12:15pm	Outdoor Play/Indoor Gross Motor activities during severe weather
12:00pm	Half-day program- Parent Pick Up
12:15 – 12:45pm	Lunch
12:45 – 1:15pm	Clean-up/Make Mats/Toileting/Quiet Activities
1:15 – 1:30pm	Story time
1:30 – 3:00pm	Rest time
3:00 – 4:00pm	Wake up/Snack/Free Play/ Story time
4:15 – 5:15pm	Outdoor play/Indoor Gross Motor activities during severe weather
5:15 – 5:30pm	Classroom End of day chores
5:30pm	Gorham House Preschool Closed

This schedule is subject to change, most often because of "teachable moments", weather, and Gorham House Preschool activities.

STAFF INFORMATION

Meghan Pomelow, Program Director

Meghan received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Social and Behavioral Science with a minor in Early Childhood Education from the University of Southern Maine in 2011. She also holds an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Southern Maine Community College. Meghan began her experience at the Gorham House as an intern while completing her Associate's Degree at SMCC. She was hired as a full-time teacher after completing her internship in December 2008 and became the director of the program in November 2012. Meghan has over sixteen years of experience working with preschool age children. Teaching children has been a dream of hers since she was very young. She enjoys reading, sewing, camping, and spending time with family during her free time. She currently resides in Standish with her Husband, Shane and Son, Connor.

"Be a wonderful role model because you will be the window through which many children will see their future"-*Thomas Mckinnon*

Renee Bridges, Teacher

Renee received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education with a minor in Psychology earned in 2008 from the University of Maine at Farmington. While attending UMF, Renee worked during her summers with school age children implementing a summer program. After graduating from UMF, Renee began to teach three-year olds. After a year of working with that age group, Renee began teaching Pre-Kindergarten. During her time teaching Pre-K, Renee began to believe that children learn best through play. She also believes that each child should be given an equal opportunity to learn and grow in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Renee began at Gorham House in September of 2012 and has loved every minute of working with the children! When not teaching, Renee can be found spending time with her family, baking yummy treats, cooking, and camping!

Jennifer Boisvert, Teacher

Jennifer received her Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education from Southern Maine Community College in 2004 and is currently working towards completing her Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education at the University of Maine at Farmington. Jennifer worked as a preschool teacher in Windham for eighteen years prior to working at Gorham House Preschool. Jennifer has been part of the Gorham House family since July 2022. She feels children learn best by doing and will provide lots of hands-on learning opportunities for children to grow and learn. Jennifer can often be heard singing with the children as they transition from activity to another. When not in the classroom, Jennifer can be found being outdoors and spending time with her family.

The Heart of Our Preschool

The day was perfect for a cookout. The children were sitting in a circle on the lawn finishing their cheeseburgers and watermelon. They couldn't wait for their ice cream, but then the music began and most of them stood up and started to dance. Under the tent on that same lawn, the residents of Gorham House – all at least seventy years older than the children – many in wheelchairs, looked on with eyes filled with tears or twinkles. As the little ones marched through the tables clapping and singing, the residents' faces brightened, and they reached out to touch the children's hands or pat them on the head. The children greeted them with smiles and hugs.

You have just met the Gorham House Children. Fifteen children ages 3 through 5, who, along with quality childcare and a great preschool education, are on the leading edge of intergenerational experiences. The picnic described above is just one example of how we touch each other's lives here at Gorham House. Each day our preschoolers travel to different parts of the facility. We share stories, engage in activities, and sing with the residents. Bringing youth, spontaneity and companionship to the elders here is one of our most important jobs, right alongside learning the ABC's and making friends. The children never tire of seeing their Grand Friends in their own homes and the conversations are delightful. We also take part in the monthly luncheons, cookouts, holiday celebrations and the resident chorus.

Gorham House Preschool can be seen all over the building waving, singing and often being silly, offering the joy of life, the gifts of sunlight and smiles, to our residents. Helping them remember "the old days", listening to their stories, feeling their warmth and often their sadness. The children ask why the wheelchairs, why the comments that often don't make sense. We tell them about aging and illness and about love and kindness. We all share stories of our own grandparents. It's a little bit mystery, a little bit science, and a whole lot of miracles. Children and elders share so much and are so often kept apart in our modern society. In our small way we are bridging that gap. Official studies have shown that children help elders by enriching and enlivening their lives when they are in adult communities.

The Little Boy and the Old Man

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon,"
Said the little old man, "I do that, too."
The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."
"I do that, too," laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, "I often cry."
The old man nodded, "So do I."
"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems
Grown ups don't pay attention to me."
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.
- Shel Silverstein

If you have any questions regarding any of the information or policies in this handbook, please contact the program director, Meghan Pomelow.

Email: meghan.pomelow@gorhamhouse.com

Call: 207-222-8987

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