

Quick Reference

Contact Information

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ODS OFFICE HOURS: **M-F 8:30 am-3:30 pm**

UUC OFFICE HOURS: **M-F 9:00 am-5:00 pm**

Class Schedules

2's	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
MT(W) 3's	9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
WThF 3's	9:00 AM – 12:45 PM
4's	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
4/5's	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
FD	7:00 AM – 5:45 PM

Emergency Closing Policy

In the case of inclement weather, unless you are notified personally by the school we will close with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system. If CMS calls a 2-hour delay, Half Day will close and Full Day will operate on a 2-hour delay.

On the cover: A student named Sarah drew our familiar "floating head" logo in 1980. She was walking down the hall with her drawing just when the director was thinking about creating a logo for Open Door. The director asked Sarah if she could have the drawing, and the rest is Open Door history!

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History of Open Door School

Integrity,
Honesty,
Individuality,
Self-confidence,
and Wisdom:

the ingredients for a successful life begin at a very early age.

-Sue Spayth Riley
from "How to Generate Values in Young Children"

Open Door School was founded by Sue Spayth Riley, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte, a revolutionary educator, author of the book "How to Generate Values in Young Children" and numerous educational articles.

Back in the 1960's, Sue Riley dreamed big. She saw the need for a truly inclusive school- a school that celebrated diversity for all. She didn't stop working, planning, and most of all teaching, until her dream became a reality and Charlotte's first integrated kindergarten was born (1966). The community responded. Over the years Open Door School grew and changed its composition adding preschool classes, creating a parent co-op for the two-year old children, and establishing a Full-Day program to meet the changing needs of the community.

Open Door School follows its own curriculum guide, *Pathways to Learning*. Sue's pioneering ideas, backed by well known educational theorists J. Dewey, E. Erickson and J. Piaget, have stood the test of time. What was then revolutionary is now an expected part of early childhood education. Sue's philosophy on learning through discovery and modeling respect for even the youngest child have proven successful and won admiration from generations of parents and alumni.

Open Door School continues to influence other preschools in the Charlotte area and beyond. In 2001, under Sue Riley's guidance, The Piedmont Progressive Preschool (PPP), sponsored by the Piedmont Unitarian Universalist Church, opened in Charlotte's University area. The PPP's philosophy is based on that of Open Door School.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte

The Open Door School is a program of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte, yet remains non-sectarian. It reflects the church's values of affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person, of equity and compassion in human relations, and of open search for truth.

For more information on the UUC, call 704-366-8623, or email uucc@uuccharlotte.org, or visit our website, www.uuccharlotte.org.

For more information on the Children and Youth Religious Education program or its sponsored activities, contact Kathleen Carpenter, Director of the Religious Education, at 704-366-8623 or kcreuucc@yahoo.com.

The Management of the Open Door School

The Open Door School is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. The Congregation manages the School through its Open Door School Managing Team.

The Managing Team consists of eight members—five at-large members from the membership of the congregation who each serve a three year term, one of the congregation's professional staff members, the Chair of the Open Door School Parent Council and the Director of the School who serves in an *ex officio* capacity.

The Team is charged to govern the School, providing primary responsibility for financial, facility and policy management. It also serves to support and supervise the Director of the School.

In its role of financial management, the Team is charged to operate the School as a non-profit school that is financially self-sustaining. The Congregation and the School work in a collaborative manner to manage finances and the facility.

The 2011-2012 members of the Open Door School Managing Team include: Donna Fisher, Chair; Mike Long, Treasurer; Catherine Barnes, Communications; Jeter Walker, Church Administrator; Jan McNeely, at large; Nancy Cooke, Personnel; Andrea Ropko, Chair of the ODS Parent Council; and Sheila Locklear, ODS Interim Director.

In the Congregation's Administrative Office area there is a mailbox for the Managing Team. Anyone wishing to communicate with the Managing Team can do so by leaving a message in this box.

The Philosophy of Open Door School

Learning from decision making: to make the complex and numerous decisions required of them as adults, children must begin when they are very young to believe that they are capable of deciding.¹

Open Door School's philosophy is based on discovery learning—the belief that learning, growing, and developing are natural, intuitive and inevitable processes. Children want to learn, be independent and competent. They are naturally curious, innovative and creative. Teachers thus should function as facilitators, protecting children's natural curiosity and encouraging investigation and inquisitiveness, thereby enabling children to develop according to their own potential. Open Door School recognizes each child's strengths and weaknesses at each stage of development and maturity.

Throughout its history the school has embraced racial, cultural, religious and economic diversity and has included special needs children in order to provide an environment in which children may learn to understand and accept each other. Open Door School strives to guard the dignity of each individual so that children feel free to explore, question, experiment and play. Open Door School encourages children to work on resolving conflicts peacefully, to cooperate rather than compete, and to accept and honor the differences among us.

Teaching Focus

The goal of the curriculum is to give children the following skills they need to be competent learners:

- A positive self image
- Problem solving
- Resourcefulness
- Self-reliance
- Observation
- Flexibility
- Adaptability
- Tolerance
- Cooperation versus competition
- Self-direction and self-motivation
- Ability to resolve conflicts peacefully
- Ability to analyze and generalize, associate and differentiate, and integrate information

¹ From How to Generate Values in Young Children by Sue Spayth Riley

Teaching Method

We encourage discovery learning through hands-on activities, open-ended situations and play. (For more information on this topic see Educational Articles Booklet.)

Curriculum

Our curriculum is detailed in our curriculum guide *Pathways to Learning*. In order to create a developmentally appropriate curriculum teachers will:

- Integrate all areas of a child’s development (physical, emotional, social and cognitive).
- Observe and record each child’s special interests and developmental progress.
- Post the curriculum and any changes in activities in the classroom.
- Prepare the environment so that children learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials (art, science, blocks, books, dramatic play, music and movement, manipulatives, playdough and clay, sand and water, woodworking, and outdoors). (See article “Centers” in Educational Articles Booklet.).
- Utilize learning materials that are concrete and relevant to young children’s lives.
- Make a reasonable effort to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interests and skills outside the normal developmental range.
- Present materials sequentially, increasing the difficulty and complexity of an activity as the involved children develop their understanding and skills.
- Engage children with materials and activities by asking open-ended questions or making suggestions that stimulate their thinking.
- Facilitate a child’s successful task completion by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement.
- Recognize that children learn from trial and error and that children’s misconceptions reflect their developing thoughts.
- Provide multi-cultural and non-sexist experiences, materials, and equipment.
- Provide a balance of quiet and active time (both indoors and outdoors), and self-directed (“free choice”) and guided activities.

Discipline & Classroom Management

Discipline teaches a child inner controls so that he may interact comfortably with others.

Discipline at Open Door School takes the form of positive classroom management as we:

- Recognize that children are unique individuals who behave and learn differently. Teachers should be sensitive to each child's individual needs and developmental level. Many conflicts can be avoided by having realistic expectations.
- Respond quickly and directly to children's needs, desires, and messages, and adapt their responses to children's differing styles and abilities.
- Respect the children, their belongings, artwork, opinions, etc.
- Establish a warm atmosphere of cooperation and trust.
- Nurture healthy self-images by expressing respect, acceptance and comfort for a child, regardless of the child's behavior.
- Help children develop self-control by allowing them to experience the intrinsic pleasure in appropriate behavior as opposed to "behaving" solely to please adults.
- Encourage children to be independent and solve their own problems and arguments.
- Be constantly vigilant for potential difficulties and offer assistance through role modeling and brainstorming before a crisis erupts.
- Watch for signs of undue stress in children's behavior and apply appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques.
- Model appropriate behavior so children will know what behavior is expected.
- If a child is behaving inappropriately, a teacher may model how to ask for something (attention or help) in a positive manner. If a child persists in inappropriate behavior, she may be asked to leave that area to pursue another activity.
- Provide varied opportunities for children to communicate. Allow children acceptable means of expressing anger, frustration, sadness, hurt or fear. Crying or hitting a pillow is an acceptable outlet.
- Calm children with a firm, loving hold to help prevent injury to persons or equipment.
- Use body language: hugs, pats, gentle restraint or physical closeness often communicate better than words.
- Speak to a child using a calm, confident, matter-of-fact tone of voice. Get down on the child's level to speak to her. If you have an important message, walk over to the child to say it. Do not shout across the room.
- State expectations in the positive form, such as "walk please" instead of "don't run."
- Speak to the behavior, not the child, such as "Hitting hurts. Let's find another way to solve this problem" instead of "You're a bad girl for hitting."

- Allow children to experience natural and logical consequences of their behavior. For example, the natural consequence of playing too roughly with friends is that they will not want to play with you. The logical consequence of spilled milk is that you need to clean it up. A natural consequence requires no outside involvement. A logical consequence needs an adult to follow through.
- When all else fails, a teacher may ask a child to sit away from the group in order to allow a child to calm down and to call his attention to inappropriate behavior. She should sit in a chair for only a brief time period and the teacher should sit with the child to answer questions and discuss the situation quietly away from the group. The teacher should brainstorm with the child about other alternatives or (as a last resort) the teacher should explain the appropriate behavior briefly and simply. Teachers should take particular care to reinforce the child's positive behavior after the incident, as his self-esteem may need a boost.

...and we never:

- Use corporal (physical) punishment
- Place a child in a locked room, closet, or box
- Delegate discipline to another child
- Humiliate, physically or verbally abuse, or neglect a child
- Deprive a child of meals
- Force-feed a child
- Discipline a child for toilet accidents or for refusing to use the toilet; force a child to remain in soiled clothing or on the toilet or use any other excessive practices for toileting
- Discipline a child for not sleeping during rest period

Attending Open Door School

Talking About Children in Their Presence

In order to model respect for the children, we ask that you refrain from talking about child(ren) with another adult when the child(ren) are present unless you can invite the child(ren) into the conversation.

For research supporting this policy see Supplemental Articles Handout “Talking about Children in Their Presence” by Katherine Reeves.

If you wish to talk about problems your child is having with another child in the class, the problem should be discussed in general terms or in reference to the behavior of your own child (and not the other child’s behavior or supposed “problem”). For example, if you are concerned that another child is hitting your child frequently, ask the teacher to discuss strategies your child and the teacher are using in those situations. The teacher may draw on knowledge of the other child; however, it is inappropriate to discuss another child’s behavior or development with anyone other than her own family members. If a parent remains concerned about the behavior of a child other than his own, the teacher may suggest a conference with the director and the parents of the other child.

Traditions

Birthday Book

On your child’s birthday you are welcome to come into the class and read our traditional birthday book, *On the Day You Were Born*, or another book of your choice, and then join us for lunch. We do **not** celebrate birthdays with special snacks or treats and expect that you follow this tradition.

Gifts

If your child wishes to present a gift to a teacher or classmate personally, you may ask that person to meet you in the office, or another place away from the class.

The Candle Song

*Little Candle burning bright,
Won't you share with us your light?
May we always learn to share,
With other children everywhere.*

The Candle Song is sung before or after lunch (or snack in the 2's) to foster a sense of community.

Founders' Day Parade

Every spring, when the weeping cherry in the circle blooms, the school celebrates and honors our founder, Sue Riley. The children and teachers dress up and parade around the circle.

End of Year Ice Cream Party

Closer to the end of a school year, your family will be invited to join your child's class on the playground for a picnic lunch and class-made ice cream. Coming together is a wonderful way to finish out the year and welcome summer.

Children's Portfolios

Throughout the year, the teachers write anecdotal notes about the children, collect some of each child's artwork and take candid photographs during various activities. At the end of the year, children take their portfolios chronicling their school experience home as a memento of their year at Open Door.

Holidays & Holy Days

Research shows that children learn their family and community traditions best from the people who share the same beliefs. In our desire to be inclusive of all people in our preschool community we choose to keep our environment free from the rush of holiday and holy day celebrations. You will see no "seasonal" colors and decorations in the room because we do not want to box in your children's expression of feelings by limiting them to orange and brown, red and green, corn and pumpkins, trees and candles. Instead, we provide them with a rich assortment of materials to express their joy of family and friends coming together in celebrations.²

² While we at Open Door do not celebrate the holidays in the classrooms, the church's religious education (RE) program sponsors holiday activities in which Open Door families are welcome to participate.

Lunch Guidelines

At Open Door, we believe that mealtimes provide opportunities for social interactions, nourishing of our bodies, and being kind to mother earth.

Write the child's name on all containers—tops and bottoms. To encourage independence, children need to be able to open their own containers and lunch boxes. Have the child practice both opening the containers and putting them in the lunch box at home. Completing tasks such as this fosters success and self-esteem.

Ideas for Packing Nutrition into a Healthy Lunch

Make it easy—make everything you pack nutritious. Even better, ask your child to help. This way the child knows what to expect and how everything fits into the lunch box. Teachers do not monitor what the children eat and will not enter into a power struggle over whether a child eats something nutritious or not. Candies, cookies and soda are not allowed.

USDA Meal Guidelines for Lunch:

- 1 serving of milk (fluid milk) – ¾ cup**
- 2 servings fruit/vegetables** (fruit and/or vegetable) – ½ cup
- 1 serving of grains/bread**
 - Bread or - ½ slice
 - Cornbread, biscuit, roll or muffin, or – ½ serving
 - Cold dry cereal or – 1/3 cup
 - Hot cooked cereal or – ¼ cup
 - Pasta, noodles or grains – ¼ cup
- 1 serving meat/meat alternative**
 - Meat , poultry or fish, or – 1 ½ oz
 - Alternate protein product – 1 ½ oz
 - Cheese or – 1 ½ oz
 - Egg or – ¾
 - Cooked dry beans or peas or – 3/8 cup
 - Nuts and/or seeds or - 3/4 oz
 - Peanut or other nut or seed butters or - 3 tablespoons
 - Yogurt – 6 oz

Think of Mother Earth

As you plan your child's lunches, think of earth-friendly packaging. This is a subtle but tangible way of passing on the value of taking care of the earth. To promote the most caring lunch packing, buy in bulk and pack daily servings in reusable containers. Bandanas or terry wash cloths make nice, reusable napkins.

Dress

Remember that your child comes to Open Door to play and explore. Most days this means many children will have paint on their shirts and sand in their shoes. At Open Door, this means that a child was involved in discovery, following his curiosity without the confines of “keeping things clean.”

Make sure your child...

- Wears non-restricting casual, washable clothes free of commercial characters
- Wears soft-soled shoes that keep feet safe
- Brings raincoats and rain boots for drizzly weather (with extra shoes stored in the child’s cubby)
- Wears layers of clothing during the spring and fall when the day may start out cool and then warm up (i.e., undershirt, short or long-sleeved shirt, sweatshirt, jacket.) This allows a child to take off clothing as the day changes.
- Has clothing that is easy to manage when a child needs to go to the bathroom
- Has labels on all his clothes
- Has an extra set of clothes, including underwear, socks, and shoes in his cubby appropriate for a season

Commercialism

We ask that you refrain from sending items such as clothing, shoes, lunch boxes, food containers etc. displaying popular commercial characters (e.g. Disney, Sponge Bob, Superheroes). Such characters frequently enter children’s play hindering their imagination and ability to think of their own ideas.

Toys from Home

Open Door requires that personal toys be left at home or in the car upon the drop off as they can create an unnecessary competitive atmosphere in the classroom and impose an unreasonable expectation to share the child’s treasured personal toy. One of our play rules is that all the toys belong to Open Door and everyone can play with everything.

If your child has a security type toy (i.e. blanket or certain stuffed animal) please discuss with your child’s teacher the best way to handle the situation. Classrooms that have a sharing time will advise parents as to what kind of objects can be brought into school for that purpose.

Foul Weather Policy

If CMS is closed, Open Door will be closed also, unless you are notified by the school. If CMS calls for a two hour delay, Half Day classes will be closed and Full Day will operate on a two hour delay.

Transportation & Traffic Safety

The parking lot is designed with two areas, one for traffic flow and one for parking, as indicated on the map. The following guidelines will help us transport our families safely and efficiently:

Safety

- **All children must wear SEATBELTS or be in child restraint seats as required by NC state law.** Car seats must be in compliance with the current North Carolina Law on car seat safety. Children are safest in the back seat. **Please buckle up yourself**—in an accident your body can injure or kill others, and it sets a life-saving example. We will help the children get in and get buckled, unless there is no car seat or the teacher has any question whatsoever about the appropriateness of the car seat for the child. If this occurs, you may be asked to park and walk up to get your child so that the responsibility for buckling the child in is yours.
- Children are unpredictable. Please drive slowly and carefully. Hold your child's hand at all times when walking near the parking lot or driveway.
- Please do not drive through the parking area if you are coming into the circle to drop off or pick up at the greeting area.
- At **NO TIME should a child be left alone in the car, even for a moment.** Children are not safe left unattended in a vehicle. Teachers on the playground supervise children in their care and cannot supervise other children.

Parking

- **Do NOT park in the first three handicapped spots** unless you have a disability. These parking spaces are reserved **at all times** for people who need them.
- Do not park on our neighbors' lawns.

Drop Off & Pick Up

- Make sure to escort and sign in/out your children to and from their classrooms when not using carpool.
- Always use the designated Open Door School Entrance. For security reasons, the church is usually locked and having the church staff "beep" in Open Door families is disruptive.
- After Easing-In, Half Day children (3's and older) may be picked up from their classrooms (10 minutes before the dismissal) or from the greeting area through carpool. When you choose to use carpool as a means to pick your child up, you **MUST** remain in the car through the entire process.
- If your child is to go home with a friend, **we must have written notice** before releasing her.

Late Pick-Up Policy

It is important to your child and to the Open Door staff that you pick your child up promptly at his dismissal time. Your predictable punctuality will ease anxiety and nurture trust and confidence in your child. Moreover, our teachers are expected to adhere to their after-class schedules and duties. Our staff and your child need your full cooperation and consideration.

However, in the event that you are late for your child's dismissal time, our Late Pick-up Policy is as follows:

First occurrence: A written warning notice will be issued.

Subsequent occurrences: Lateness fines will be charged at a rate of \$5 for every 5 minutes late.

6-10 minutes late \$10

11-15 minutes late \$15

(And so forth)

The fine must be paid within 24 hours and may be left in the Tuition Box in the school office. An invoice will be issued in triplicate to include a copy for your child's file, a copy for your records, and one for the office manager, who will keep account for the school.

Please note that habitual lateness will be handled as described in the Grievance Procedure on page 20.

In the event of an emergency, please have a back up plan in place and notify the Open Door staff as necessary. Be sure to provide all emergency names and numbers on your Release Form, which is kept in the school office.

Field Trips

Children enrolled in the classes for ages three and older will occasionally participate in field trips that help broaden the children's knowledge and understanding of the community and help them make sense of the world. There is occasionally a small fee, and you must sign a permission slip prior to the trip. Some of our past field trips have included picking berries, riding the city bus, touring the fire station, walking through the neighborhood, and visiting Wing Haven Bird Sanctuary. Sometimes parents are asked to drive and chaperone.

Chaperone parents are expected to have completed a criminal background check, provided a copy of their driver's license, and arranged childcare for siblings to be able to fully participate in a fieldtrip with the class. **When a field trip requires travel by car, parents must install their own child's car seat in the car in which their child will be traveling. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child's restraint system is in compliance with the laws of the State of North Carolina.**

Health Care Policies

To ensure the health of our students and families and prevent the spread of illness, Open Door will contact parents to pick up their child if she has any of the symptoms listed below. In some cases a doctor's note may be required before a child may return.

When your child is absent due to being sick, please notify the school. We will alert other parents if there is a communicable disease concern.

When to Stay Home

Children who have the following symptoms **MUST** stay at home until they are symptom free for twenty-four (24) hours:

- Fever—an axillary temperature 100° or more, without fever reducing medication
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea or loose stools inconsistent with usual bowel movements
- Any suspicious rash
- Lice (until a child is nit free)
- Persistent colored nasal discharge (longer than five days)
- Any contagious illness, unless it is being treated with prescription medication for a minimum of 24 hours
- Any symptom requiring one-on-one care or causing severe discomfort
- Any open, oozing sore, bacterial infection or bloody gums
- Chicken pox—lesions must be completely dry and the child must have no other symptoms. (Please note that the chicken pox vaccine is not completely effective and a vaccinated child can get this illness)

Surgery

A child must remain home for a minimum of 24 hours after the time of surgery and must present a physician's permission before returning. Please assess your child and determine if she is capable of participating in school activities.

Prescription Medication (APPLIES TO FULL DAY ONLY)

Open Door staff members may administer prescription medication under the following guidelines:

- Medication must be in its original container.
- Parents must complete and sign a medication slip every week. Teachers document the time, dosage and date medication is given. This is completed monthly for children with chronic conditions.
- Teachers will not administer medication if it is different from a doctor's prescription.
- In the case of inhalers for children with asthma, teachers may administer inhalers according to the doctor's instructions.

Non-Prescription Medication (APPLIES TO FULL DAY ONLY)

Open Door staff members may administer non-prescription medication under the following guidelines:

- Medication must be in its original container.
- We must have a physician's orders on file.
- Parents must complete and sign a medication slip every week. Documentation of the time, dosage and date medication is given is completed monthly for children with chronic conditions.

Topical, Non-Prescription Medication (APPLIES TO FULL DAY ONLY)

Open Door staff members can administer topical, non-prescription medication, such as diaper cream or sunscreen, **with a written statement from a parent giving blanket permission which is good for up to one year.**

Disclosure of Medical Conditions

Parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and education. For the safety of all children at Open Door School we ask that parents notify the director in writing via registration form, emergency card and medical report regarding any special physical, emotional or health concerns of their child. Special concerns include (but are not limited to) children with chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, psychological illnesses, developmental disorders or severe allergies. Open Door School reserves the right to assess a child's condition and the school's reasonable ability to keep the child safe while respecting the rights of other children and families. Once enrolled, some children will require special consideration and an extra effort on the part of ODS staff, the child's parents, and (in some cases) classmates' parents in order to keep the special needs child safe.

A Special Medical Conditions chart listing all of the children with such conditions is composed before the beginning of each school year and posted in the office, every classroom, and (in the case of food or chemical allergies) in the kitchen and on supply closet doors.

Special Needs Children³

When a child with special needs is initially enrolled, the director may request a meeting with the child's family and teachers before the school year begins in order to discuss what information should be communicated to other children in the class and to their families. ODS believes that sharing simple, accurate information about special needs children helps everyone involved be more caring and understanding.

Chronic or Severe Medical Conditions⁴

In cases of a child with severe allergies (such as an allergy to peanut butter or cleaning supplies) or chronic medical conditions (such as epilepsy, diabetes, or asthma), the parents of

³ Special needs children refers to children with physical disabilities, psychological illnesses or genetic disorders (such as Downs Syndrome).

⁴ "Chronic or severe medical conditions" refers to children with conditions such as severe allergies, chronic asthma, diabetes or epilepsy.

a child are asked to complete an Emergency Medical Plan(EMP) chart, get it approved by the child's medical doctor and arrange staff training on a specific medical procedure if one is required through the EMP. The EMP charts are posted in the child's class and in the ODS office and are used to train staff, substitute teachers, and volunteers.

Environmental Health Policies and Procedures

Open Door School is a preschool of Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte. The school and the church share the responsibilities for the upkeep of environmental wellbeing of the building and grounds.

ODS school environmental responsibilities include:

- maintenance of wooden equipment/safe surfacing on the playgrounds
- upkeep of the classrooms (furniture, rugs, educational materials)
- annual inspections of fire extinguishers
- monthly fire drills
- annual painting of the classrooms

We limit the use of products that contain pesticides/herbicides and other chemically toxic and hazardous products on the premises of the school and make conscientious efforts to use natural products as substitutes when possible. If chemically hazardous products are to be used, we make sure that NO CHILDREN are present at school and enough time is allocated between the use of the product and the return of the children to assure the safety of the children.

The use of any chemical product labeled "keep out of reach of children" must be approved by the administration. This includes but is not limited to: shaving cream, spray paints, polishing and waxing materials.

UUCC environmental responsibilities include:

- maintenance of HVAC equipment (United Mechanical Company)
- Elevator Service (Thyssen Krupp Elevator Service and NC State)
- Pest control of the building (Orkin Man)
- Fire alarm monitoring (ADT).

(Logs can be obtained from the UUCC front desk)

Animal and Pet Policy

Immunized pets are welcome to our school under the following conditions:

- ❖ Animals must remain in cages
- ❖ Immunization certificates need to be delivered to the Open Door School office prior to or at the time the pet is brought to school.
- ❖ A pet must receive an approval to be on premises (classroom or playground) from the Open Door School office.

Reptiles, turtles, snakes and lizards are prohibited from school. They are a common source of Salmonella in children under the age of five years old.

Safety Drills & Procedures

Fire Drills

The law requires the school to perform a monthly fire safety drill. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

One teacher will quickly gather the children. Using a calm and reassuring voice, s/he will explain what they are to do and remind them not to run. S/he will count the children, determining everyone's whereabouts and head outdoors to the Far Playground.

The second teacher will help count and locate children; check bathrooms; close windows; and shut doors after the class is gone, leaving the lights on. There should always be one teacher in front and one teacher behind the children.

During the safety drill the classroom teachers are responsible for bringing the class emergency bag with completed attendance rosters, emergency cards, and first aid kits with them.

Severe Storm or Tornado Procedure

In the event that the weather becomes life threatening while the children are in school, we will adhere to the following procedure. The children may not be drilled on this procedure.

In the event of severe weather, all children and adults will move to the downstairs hallways, closing all windows and doors to rooms and avoiding the windows. The children will sit on the floor facing the walls. Before allowing the children to leave the hall, an adult will check the conditions of the classrooms and playground.

Financial Obligations

Registration fees are payable when you apply for a child's enrollment at Open Door School. No application will be considered if the registration fee is not paid. Fees are NOT refundable after the child is accepted and an enrollment slot is reserved. If a space is not available for your child, he will be placed on a waiting list and your registration fee will be refunded until a space is available at which time registration will be due upon acceptance of the space. Failure to remit registration fees within 5 days will result in forfeiting your child's space.

Infrastructure fees are payable with the tuition deposit, upon acceptance of your child's space. Infrastructure fees are NOT refundable after the child is accepted and an enrollment space is reserved.

TUITION PAYMENTS are due on the FIRST of each month and are considered late after the 5th of each month.

A **\$10 late fee** will be assessed each time tuition is received after the fifth day of the month it is due, regardless of the date on the check. You will be notified in writing if payment is not received by the 15th of the month that payment must be received in order to avoid further penalty. If payment is not received by the last day of the month, you are required to set up a payment plan with the office manager **for the past-due balance only**. Failure to follow said plan or failure to respond to requests for contact by the office manager will result in the child's position being terminated as of the last day of the current month, tuition deposits will be forfeited, and the past-due balance will be turned over to a collection agency. Failure to make all subsequent payments on time will constitute immediate dismissal, forfeiture of tuition deposits, and past due balances being turned over to a collection agency. If extenuating circumstances exist, please refer to our policy on tuition assistance.

A **\$20 fee** will be assessed for any check returned for insufficient funds. This fee covers costs incurred by the school.

Tuition payments may be made early—just be sure to indicate on the memo portion of the check what the funds are to be applied to. You may also submit post-dated checks in advance, but they cannot be dated after the first of the month.

Acceptable forms of payment include checks, money orders, or cash. Make checks payable to Open Door School. If you pay in cash, **please** be sure to get a **receipt** from the office.

Use your memo section of our check! Please include your child's first and last name, as this serves for an account number.

Do not give any payments to teachers! Their responsibility is to take care of our children and not our money. Please bring all payments, tuition and other, to the office and leave it in the tuition box (putty colored steel box).

Half-Day Tuition: Your registration is an agreement for a nine-month term. For your convenience, tuition is divided into nine equal payments. The first payment is due on May 1st for the next school year, or within one month of notification by the school that a space is being reserved for your child if accepted after May 1st. The second payment is due on the first day your child attends school in September, and payments are due on the first of every month October through April. If your child is withdrawn before the end of the term, subsequent payments will be waived only if the slot is filled by another child. There will be no refunds.

Full-Day Tuition: Your registration is an agreement for a one-year term. A tuition deposit equal to one monthly payment is required to hold your child's slot. For new families tuition deposits may be

paid in two equal installments: the first payment is due April 1st (or one month after registration for families enrolling after March 1st) and the balance is due one calendar month after that. Tuition payments are due on the first of every month September through July. The tuition deposit will be used to pay August 2012 tuition. Returning families will pay new tuition amount in August 2012 that will be applied as their tuition deposit for August 2013. If the child is withdrawn before the end of the school year, tuition deposits will be forfeited unless the slot is filled by another child. Written notice of your intention to withdraw your child early is required thirty (30) days prior to planned withdrawal date, and you will be responsible for the regular tuition payment for the month that included your child's last day of attendance.

If payment is not received within the guidelines listed above, or a payment plan is not set up with the Office within 10 business days from the date of notification that a space is being reserved for your child, you will forfeit your child's placement in the class.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to students who qualify on the basis of need. Applications are available upon request from the office. Eligibility requirements and application deadlines are included on the form that can be obtained from the Open Door School's office.

In special cases and when a classroom is not at capacity, a hardship case may be considered, if for financial reasons the student is unable to remain otherwise. After completion of the financial aid form a tuition discount of no more than 50% may be granted for a period of three months at which time the circumstances will be re-evaluated. All decisions are made on a case by case basis, jointly by the Director and the Managing Team whose decision is final. (amended December 2012)

Grievance Procedure

If you have concerns or grievances, first address the parties directly involved. If concerns remain, bring them to the attention of the director. If concerns still remain, notify the Managing Team in writing. Concerns may be addressed by the Managing Team, who will determine if any policies have been violated.

Evaluations

At the end of every school year, Open Door takes the opportunity to elicit feedback on our program, teachers, and staff. Please look for these evaluations and complete them. The results are tabulated by the Managing Team and are reported in aggregate in order to maintain confidentiality. We would like to hear from you what is working and what is not. These evaluations are taken very seriously. We appreciate your input.

Inclusion Policy

When a child enters our program, and at some point during the year it becomes evident that his needs are greater than what Open Door School can reasonably provide, we will take the following steps:

- The child will be observed in the classroom setting by teachers, the director, and with permission from the parents, professionals from outside agencies;
- After observation, the director, parents, teachers, and/or other professionals will meet to discuss and develop a strategy determined to best meet the needs of the child;
- If a child's needs are found to put an exceptional stress on the classroom, the parents may be asked to financially support the hiring of a temporary third teacher to help their child.
- Once a developed strategy has been put in place, times to meet for periodic review are scheduled. Open and frequent communication among all involved parties is imperative during this time to make a child's experience successful. Assessment will be based on input from parents, classroom teachers, the director, and special service professionals, as well as the behavior of the child while at school. After sufficient time a determination is made about the child's continued presence in the classroom.

There are three possible decisions at this time:

- The classroom is a suitable placement for the child;
- A recommendation for professional consultation or special services is made, with the expectation that temporary intervention will enable staff and children to develop skills necessary for the mutually beneficial relationship;
- Open Door is unable to meet the child's needs.

When the staff sees the necessity for professional consultation, but the parents decline to use the offered services, the parents may be asked to seek placement for their child in another program.

In rare instances, and after professional consultation, the school may determine that it is unable to meet a child's needs. The director will notify the parents of the decision and offer assistance in finding a more suitable placement for their child.

At Open Door, the safety and well being of the entire class must always have priority over the individual needs of any given child.

Anti-Bias Policy

Open Door School provides an environment welcoming to all people regardless of gender, race, age, culture, religion, sexual orientation, special needs or abilities, economic level or family configuration. We take an active role in counteracting biases by providing opportunities to understand how and why we differ from one another, as well as how and why we are alike.

Open Door School encourages children to value differences in themselves and others through the following methods:

- Modeling openness and respect for all people;
- Including classroom materials that depict peoples of diverse cultures, colors, genders, ages, abilities and lifestyles in a positive manner;
- Integrating diversity into our environment through the use of toys, music, art, books, cooking, stories, and activities in a developmentally appropriate way;
- Talking straightforwardly about biases and prejudices when they occur spontaneously in our environment;
- Asking families to keep religious traditions and holiday celebrations in the home where they can remain vital and meaningful;
- Creating shared traditions and celebrations from the common and valued experiences of the Open Door School Community.

Child Abuse Policy

In 1980, North Carolina passed a law that anyone suspecting child abuse must report it to the Department of Social Services. Knowing that no subsection of our population is immune to this problem, we take this responsibility seriously at Open Door. In the case of suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse, the school will take the following steps:

If a teacher suspects child abuse, she will go immediately to the director. If there is some physical evidence or if the child is acting out, the director should be informed and be able to observe signs or behavior first hand. If appropriate, the director will then call the Department of Social Services and notify the Full Day Licensing Consultant. In the director's absence, the lead teacher will make these calls and also call the director.

Because it is important that the child's information remain pure for the investigation, the school will not notify the parents or caregivers before making the call to the Department of Social Services. Open Door reserves the right to withhold information specific to cases of abuse or neglect.

Doing Your Part at Open Door School

Volunteering at Open Door School

Open Door School is a nonprofit organization with no financial support from state or other government sources. We rely heavily on parent involvement and fundraising.

We all have different reasons for coming to Open Door and different future educational goals for our children. The one thing we all have in common is the desire for our children to enjoy themselves and have a positive preschool experience. By becoming involved with our school, your entire family benefits enormously. Children learn by imitating their parents.

Volunteering expresses your enthusiasm for Open Door, and your involvement demonstrates community spirit. Helping out at Open Door is also a great way to get to know other parents and meet the people who make it the outstanding place it is.

Open Door understands that not all parents have the time or skills they feel are necessary to contribute. Be assured, there is something for every level of expertise, interest, and commitment. Sometimes we just need folks with an opinion. If you still don't feel you have enough time to volunteer, maybe you have a family member or close friend who could help out in your stead.

Open Door volunteer activities are great fun. Please consider volunteering. You just might enjoy yourself!

Criminal Background Check Policy

Due to volunteerism being a vital part of our preschool's operation, we assure safety of all children (following the UCC child and youth protection plan) by performing criminal background checks on all parents when their children start attending Open Door School. If one's criminal background report indicated criminal history that might be harmful to the children, Open Door School reserves the right to limit their ability to volunteer at school; all decisions to restrict volunteering for this reason are communicated in writing.

Guidelines for Parents in the Classroom

The following guidelines, as well as the policy on Discipline & Classroom Management, are designed to help you learn and adhere to Open Door's philosophy while in the classroom:

- Get the child's attention before speaking to him. Children are often so absorbed in what they are doing that they do not hear us when we speak. Putting your hand on his shoulder and repeating his name helps.
- Give children only the help they need.
- A child may be given a choice between two things. You may say, "Will you wash yourself or shall I do it?" This means the child will be washed in any case. Never give a choice if there is not one.
- Foresee troublesome situations and prevent them.
- Know what children are capable of achieving at their age level.
- Encourage cooperation (thereby discouraging competition).
- Be consistent.
- Accept individual differences in children.
- Speak to behaviors, not the child.
- Allow the children to learn from experience.
- Use a pleasant, well-modulated voice, enunciating and articulating clearly.
- Try to interact at the children's level, e.g., sitting on the floor or in chairs.
- Defer difficult discipline issues to the teachers.

Remember to...

- Be friendly and interested, calm and unhurried.
- Wear comfortable, washable clothing.
- Stoop down often in helping children.
- Get involved by asking open-ended questions if needed.
- Use few, well-chosen words.
- Avoid using "no," "don't," and "mustn't" when possible.
- Be consistent in routines.
- Remain out of the children's play when possible.

Remember the child...

- Is an individual.
- Is eager, active, and curious.
- Needs as much freedom as the environment permits.
- Needs to know what behavior is inconsiderate and harmful to others.
- Needs to know what limitations exist in the use of equipment and materials.
- Needs to know that you are there to help and support him.

Have fun! Relax and enjoy the group in your time with your child's class. Join with the singing, sit on the rug at story time, and rest with us during quiet time.

The Woodworking Room

Each week, all classes, except for the 2's, spend a morning in the woodworking room. Parent volunteers help supervise children in the classroom, allowing one of the teachers to take small groups of children to the woodworking room. Please look for the sign-up sheet in your child's classroom. (See article "Woodworking with Children" in Educational Articles Booklet.)

Parent Education Forums

In an effort to support parenting in our community, we offer parent education forums throughout the year. These forums, led by child development experts, give parents opportunities for learning more about the Open Door philosophy, asking questions regarding parenting and child development, and building relationships with Open Door families.

Conferences & Meetings

There are two scheduled parent-teacher conferences each year. In addition to conferences, parents and teachers regularly communicate informally by telephone, notes, email etc.

Based on the needs of individual children and/or the whole class, additional meetings between parents and teachers can be arranged.

References

Open Door School Booklet of Supplemental Articles includes the following:

Educational Philosophy

Who Said, “But All They Do Is Play?”
21 Memos from a Child
Talking about Children in their Presence
Helping that Hinders
Five Reasons to Stop Saying “Good Job”
Emotional Development: Beyond Being Just Happy

Curriculum

The Benefits of Ease-In
Centers
The Woodworking Room
Why Red Paint?
The Little Boy

Discipline

Living with a Small Child Can Be Fun! Setting Limits
A Note on “Time-Out”

Conflict Resolution

Process for the Parents’ Concerns

Additional Educational Opportunities

Open Door School

2011–12 Handbook Acknowledgement

Dear Parent or Guardian,

All of the information in our handbook is intended to help families understand how our school functions. Some policies, however, stand out as critical to helping us all work together. Please sign and return this entire page after you have read the 2011–2012 Open Door School Family Handbook found at www.opendoorschool.org.

Please return to the Open Door School Office by September 15, 2011

Class(es): *(please circle)* MT2s ThF2s MT/W3s WF3s 4s 4/5s FD

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____
(please print)

I have received a parent handbook, have read and understand its contents, and agree to abide by the following policies:

- _____ Discipline & Classroom Management
- _____ “Talking About Children in Their Presence”
- _____ Late Pickup Policy
- _____ Health Care Policies
- _____ Financial Obligations
- _____ Inclusion Policy
- _____ Child Abuse Policy
- _____ NC Summary of Child Care Rules & Regulations, insert/separate link

Parent or Guardian A: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Guardian B: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____