

WELCOME

Welcome to the Nursery at UUCSH. Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and fun environment for your child while you are attending service or other related functions. This handbook is intended to inform you of our Nursery policies and procedures. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Director of Religious Exploration, Sarah Ahrens at dre@uucsh.org or by calling the congregation.

WHO? WHAT? WHEN?

Nursery care is offered in Fellowship Hall for children from birth to age four during all Sunday services throughout the year. Please consult our Order of Service or website for the most up to date information about when our services are offered. Children who are 5 years and older are invited to either participate in Religious Exploration classes or join their parent/guardian in the sanctuary during Sunday worship services.

Child care will be offered as well for various other events, such as our auction and congregational meetings. During these special events, we extend the eligible age of child care from birth to 12.

The Nursery will be open 15 minutes before the start of any service/ event for child drop off, and will be open for 15 minutes after the end of service/event for child pick up.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The following pages outline the policies and procedures that our staff is trained in to ensure a quality, safe, and nurturing environment for the children in our care. We ask that you read these carefully and abide by them in order to create the best experience for all involved. Thank you!

Pick Up & Drop Off -

- Parents/guardians must complete either a permanent RE Participation Form or a temporary RE Visitor Form and provide a phone number on which they can be called/texted during services in the event of any issue or emergency
- Parents/guardians must initial our attendance log in order to remove children from our care
- Children will only be released to the parent/guardian who signed them in, or a previously designated individual (not siblings)
- Only children receiving care, approved caregivers, or adults with children in the nursery are allowed in the room (no other children/siblings/adults)
- Parents/guardians must remain on the UUCSH premises (or event site) at all times while children are in our care
- Children in care will remain in the nursery room or on church grounds under supervision at all times

Staffing -

- There will always be a minimum of two caregivers
- The ratio of caregivers to children 4 years old and under is 1:5
- The ratio of caregivers to children 4 years old to 13 years old is 1:10
- Junior high (6-8th gr) youth approved to provide child care may work with children up to age 8; High school youth can supervise any age in nursery care.
- All caregivers must comply with the UUCSH Safe Congregations Policy at all times
- All regular nursery/child care staff will undergo background screening

Food & Drink -

- NO FOOD OR DRINK except water will be given to children in child care by our providers
- Due to allergies, no food with nuts is allowed into the nursery room
- If your child must have food/drink during care, then it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide it with instructions to the caregivers (no nuts are allowed in the food you provide)

Caregiving Procedures –

- Caregivers do not go into the restroom with children behind closed doors
- Caregivers only help children with clothing as needed to use the restroom – children must be able to independently clean themselves when finished
- Caregivers will wash their own hands before and after assisting children in the restroom, and will help children to wash their hands
- Parents/guardians must change their children's diapers or provide restroom assistance beyond helping with clothing or hand washing
- Caregivers will call/text parents/guardians or have the DRE enter the sanctuary in the event that diaper changes or restroom assistance is required from parents/guardians
- If children become sick or inconsolable, parents/guardians will be notified and required to leave the sanctuary to attend to them
- Please express any concerns directly with the child care staff or the DRE immediately so that they can be addressed and resolved

Health & Safety -

- At drop off, advise caregivers of any special needs your children may have – medical/ health conditions, allergies, developmental delays, and personal preferences for care
- For the health and safety of the other children and the caregivers, children who exhibit the following signs of illness will not be accepted into child care: vomiting, diarrhea, fever, prolonged or severe coughing, open blisters/sores (chicken pox), colored discharge from eyes or nose, skin infections, lice, or other communicable diseases
- Children must be fever and contagion-free for at least 24 hours before returning to care
- No medications will be given to any child in child care
- If a life-and-death condition occurs, caregivers will dial "911" and then notify the parents/guardians and the DRE immediately
- Caregivers must notify the DRE and parents/guardians of all incidents/injuries requiring first-aid or medical attention before the family leaves the grounds; an *Incident Report* will be written as well
- In the event of a fire or fire drill, caregivers will take children outside to the park side of Peter's Brook where parents/guardians should retrieve children – DO NOT return to the nursery room to find the children
- In the event of disruptive or threatening persons, caregivers will follow the protocol for a fire drill, or lock the children in the nursery room or office if unable to evacuate

Worship in Child Care -

Once the children have been dropped off and are settled, they will start their time during each Sunday service with a short introduction to worship, including our Unitarian Universalist Principles and concepts. We will include the following elements –

- Lighting the Chalice - “We light this chalice to celebrate being UU. We are a fellowship of open minds, loving hearts, and helping hands.”
- Listening to and/or singing a song together highlighting UU values
- Sharing “Joys and Concerns” for the week
- Reviewing the “Rainbow Principle” of the week
- Discussing a concrete, specific example of this Principle in action
- Reading a character education story together which is then connected to our UU Principles

One caregiver will be responsible for leading the worship, while the other is free to take care of the younger children who are not of age to sit in the group circle for this time. Once this short 10-15 minute worship is completed, the children are able to engage in free play, games, art, reading or music.

RAINBOW PRINCIPLES

Respect the importance of all beings.

Offer fair and kind treatment to all.

Yearn to learn throughout life.

**Grow by exploring ideas
and values together.**

**Believe in your ideas
and act on them.**

**Insist on peace, freedom
and justice for all.**

**Value our interdependence
with nature.**

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOMERSET HILLS

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Child & Nursery Care Handbook for Families
