

**THE
PLEASANT VALLEY
CHILDREN'S CENTER
HANDBOOK**



**P.O.Box 132
Pleasant Valley, CT 06063
(860) 738-3211**

A Preschool Dedicated to Helping Children Grow Since 1972

Who We Are:

The Pleasant Valley Children's Center (PVCC) is a Preschool licensed by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. This Center is a warm, familiar place for young children to grow, play, wonder and learn. It is a preschool where 2, 3 and 4 year-olds feel safe taking risks and reaching out to make friends. For many of them, these will be their first friends outside their families. This is a preschool where teachers and other adults respect each child's individual limits, fears, gifts and abilities. Children learn and develop at their own pace, encouraged by their teachers, classmates and the enrichment of the structured activities that are part of our everyday routine.

Origins:

PVCC was established in September 1972 as a parent cooperative preschool when several women from surrounding communities envisioned a need for a nurturing environment to serve our children. Then, as now, we are professionally staffed, non-profit and non-denominational. The parents of the center are considered members who own and operate the school and are encouraged to participate in various volunteer capacities including serving on its Board of Directors. Board meetings are held monthly and all are welcome. Minutes of these Board meetings are distributed to all PVCC families.

Philosophy & Environment:

PVCC is dedicated to nurturing "The Whole Child" by supporting their language, social, emotional and physical development. Our curriculum emphasizes social skills, creativity and positive self-esteem through a variety of loosely structured play and teacher-directed activities such as Circle Time, Music & Movement and Science & Nature. Our teachers have a clear understanding of childhood development and can guide children and counsel parents accordingly.

We are small by design, allowing us to maintain a child-to-teacher ratio of never more than 8 to 1, 4 to 1 for the younger children. This means children receive lots of individual attention and everyone can get to know each other well. The center has several adjoining rooms which we have broken up into smaller cozy spaces to create a variety of play areas, a play kitchen, a block corner, art table, reading area, water or bead table and a table for using small manipulatives.

We have a variety of small classroom pets throughout the year such as: goldfish, butterflies, a rabbit and visiting frogs and salamanders. The center also has a kitchen that teachers and parents use for preparing snacks, special baking projects or making such things as play dough. Cooking with the children is an important part of our curriculum.

This arrangement creates a safe, relaxed and enriching environment that is "Family Friendly." In practical terms, this means many small things. We are flexible. For instance, we do not require children to be toilet trained before entering preschool. Experience shows that children achieve developmental milestones with gentle

encouragement in a relaxed and supportive environment focusing on success rather than failure.

Moving outside, PVCC has a fenced-in playground with a large sandbox area, climbing equipment and ample room to run around and play with outdoor toys.

Daily activities are often connected to the community and the simple activities of daily life such as, visiting the post office, fire department, local hospital or town hall. We take several field trips beyond the local area during the school year to an apple orchard, pumpkin patch or other places of interest. Parents will be asked to volunteer to drive for some of these trips. Parents who have a special field of interest or whose workplace would make a good field trip destination are invited to suggest these to the teacher.

The seasons and the changes they bring are also reflected in our activities, such as, using colored fall leaves or flowers in the spring for crafts. These activities help small children understand the changes going on around them and the ways in which things fits together. Children may use their "Free-Play" time for this kind of special activity that teachers have arranged for the day or may simply play with the other children and toys of their choice.

Programs:

For the 2017-18 school year PVCC will offer three programs

The **Monday Wednesday Friday** group is a mixed age group of three and four year olds and meets from 9:00am-12:00noon. This group has a maximum size of 16 children with two teachers. There is also an extended day option where children stay until 1:55pm on Friday afternoons only.

The **Tuesday Thursday** morning group is a mixed age group for 2 and 3 year olds and meets from 9:30am-11:30 am. This group has a maximum size of eight children with two teachers.

The **Tuesday Thursday** afternoon class is a mixed age group for 3 and 4 year olds and meets from 12:30pm- 3:00pm. This group has a maximum size of 16 children with two teachers.

Children may be enrolled in both the MWF morning class and the TuTh afternoon group.

Schedule:

The preschool class will meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9-12. To be enrolled in a class a child must be three by December 31st of the year. Our younger class will meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:30-11:30. To enroll a child must be two by December 31st. The classes begins with full days after Labor Day. Thereafter, we will follow the Regional School District 7 calendar with our last day in mid-June.

Parents should feel free to stay awhile if their child is going through separation anxiety or is very upset. Parents should also be aware that even the children who seem miserable as their parents say good-bye, quickly recuperate. Parents need not feel guilty making a quick exit when their child does not want to say good-bye. The teachers are adept at handling these situations. Parents are welcome to telephone during the morning to check on their children.

About Our Teachers:

Molly Sexton-Read, M.S. Ed. ,(Head Teacher) has been teaching at PVCC since 1993. She is also an adjunct professor at Northwestern Community College. She lives in Barkhamsted with her husband Tom.

Amanda Carrozzo joined the teaching staff at PVCC in the winter of 2013. She is a PVCC alumni parent, having sent all of her children to PVCC and served as Treasurer for several years. She lives in New Hartford with her husband and family.

Ashley Incillo joined the teaching staff in September 2016. She is a present PVCC parent and assists in the afternoon class. She lives in Winsted with her husband and son.

Drop Off and Pick Up:

School begins at 9:00am, 9:30 am or 12:30pm. Please be sure to sign your child **IN**. We like everyone to begin school together. We realize, however, that there are always those last minute emergencies (someone can't find their favorite hat or the younger sibling needs a diaper change etc.) we have all been through it.

Pick up time is 12:00pm , 11:30pm or 3:00pm. Parents should collect their children's belongings (artwork, cubby stuff, clothes, etc.) sign your child **OUT** and wait at the playground gate or inside the school entrance during bad weather until their child is ready.

We are emphatic about releasing children to their parents **ONLY**, unless other prior and specific arrangements have been made. Parents must give teachers direct notification if their child is to be picked up by someone else. This enables our staff to ensure that children are dismissed only to authorized people. Obviously, we are firm in this policy for the safety of our children. If you are going to be late in picking up your child, for whatever reason, please call the center to tell the teacher. Your child and his/her teacher can then wait without worry.

Disciplinary Measures:

Disciplinary measures for typical early childhood behavior problems include discussion of the classroom rules, other ways of letting your wants and feelings known, the feelings of others and possibly the removal of the child from the group activity for a designated period to a specified, supervised location within the classroom. The PVCC disciplinary measures prohibit abusive, humiliating or frightening punishment and physical restraint, unless such restraint is absolutely necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people.

School calendar & Bad weather:

PVCC follows the Regional School District 7 calendar for holidays, vacations, closings, etc. During bad weather when the school may possibly be closed or late opening you should be tuned in to 1060AM, 1080AM or 610AM(WSNG) or channel 3/WFSB TV for these reports. The schedule is as follows:

NWR 7	PVCC
Delayed opening	Open at 10
Closed	Closed

School Attire:

Play clothes are a must. We want children to feel at ease participating in all activities PVCC has to offer, including the messy ones (which we all know are the most fun). We do use smocks for painting and similar activities. We ask that children are dressed appropriately for the weather. The children play outside on our playground daily, weather permitting. Therefore, during the winter months, children need hats, mittens/gloves, boots, snowpants/snowsuits and warm coats. Please mark all outdoor clothing with your child's name.

Parent Involvement:

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. Teachers encourage parents who are interested and willing to share a special talent or hobby with the class. Parents are needed as drivers and chaperones on class field trips. We believe the interests of the children are best served by an open and collaborative relationship between parents and teachers.

Health Policy:

A medical form from the State Department of Public Health must be filled out and signed by a child's physician before school starts. This Health form will reflect an annual physical and up to date immunizations. In addition each child is required to receive a flu vaccine during each year enrolled at PVCC before Dec. 31. Returning students may use the previous year's form as long as a child has been examined within the last 12 months. Prior to your child having his/her check-up, please pick up a new health form from the teacher or registrar.

We ask parents to inform us of a contagious disease that a child or any family member has contracted upon diagnosis, such as:

Chicken Pox – The child should stay home for at least six days, until the rash has begun to subside and the child is feeling well enough to attend.

Hepatitis A – The child should stay home until all those who should be protected have received gamma globulin shots.

Impetigo – The child should stay home until treatment starts.

Infectious Conjunctivitis – (Pink Eye) The child should stay home until the day after treatment begins.

Infectious Diarrhea – The child should stay home until diarrhea stays in the diaper or the child can get to the toilet and is feeling well enough to participate.

Lice – The child should stay home until the day after treatment starts.

Ring Worm – The child should stay home until treated for 24 hours.

Scabies – The child should stay home until treatment starts.

Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever – The child should stay home until the day after treatment with antibiotics.

When a child has certain symptoms, he/she should stay home. The child may return when a physician has said that the child does not put other children at risk of becoming ill and the child is well enough to participate fully in the activities. These symptoms may include:

A fever and the child is feeling or acting ill. The child needs to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Vomiting or upset stomach. If the child vomits in the morning before school, he/she should not attend that day.

Diarrhea

Too sick to fully participate.

If a child is going to be kept home, please call the center. If children become sick at school, parents will be called to come pick them up.

Our trained staff can administer only emergency medication. A physician's written permission and administration instructions **MUST** accompany the medication as well as a parent's written permission to administer it in case of an emergency (e.g. bee sting, asthma attack, etc.). All medication will be stored in a locked box. If the need to administer arises, it must be documented on a State Department of Public Health form posted in our kitchen. Parents will be notified upon administration of medication. In all cases of medical emergency, staff will call 911 first, administer first aid and then contact parents.

PVCC Policies:

Copies of all PVCC operating policies, including but not limited to, personnel, discipline and abuse & neglect, are available to all parents/guardians upon request.

School Security Policy

The staff at PVCC will work to ensure the safety of all children at all times. This includes planning and preparing for emergencies, and following procedures described in the Emergency Plan.

In addition the staff will continuously monitor the school environment, maintaining an awareness of any person approaching the building. The front door will remain locked at all times. If a person unknown to the staff approaches the building the staff member closest to the rear entrance will meet the person outside the door, closing the door behind them. The staff member remaining in the classroom will get the phone. In the event that the situation becomes confrontational or dangerous, 911 will be called and the children will be gathered together in the front room.

Once the authorities have arrived and the situation has been resolved, parents will be notified.

PVCC Social Media Policy

Employees of PVCC shall not use social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, to network with families of children currently enrolled in a program at PVCC. All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our school. Because readers of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the school, the Board requires employees to behave in a professional and ethical manner when referring to the school, students, programs, activities, employees, volunteers and communities on any social networks. Any violation of this expectation may result in disciplinary action, possibly including suspension or dismissal. It is the Board's policy that the families of children enrolled at PVCC must be thoughtful about any postings on their personal accounts which reference PVCC. While the Board recognizes that networking through these sites provides the opportunity for families to promote our programs it is imperative that the confidentiality of all students be preserved and respected. At the start of every school year, parents will have the opportunity to request that no photographs including their child(ren) be used on social media sites. The school community will be made aware of these requests and asked to honor them. Confidentiality must also be maintained in reference to any statements, behaviors or actions observed during our programs. At no time should an incident which took place at school be shared through social media without permission from the families involved. Any violation of this policy may result in sanctions issued by the Board.

All student files are kept confidential.

Enrollment Information & Tuition:

There is a \$25.00 non-refundable registration fee for enrollment per child for each school year. The monthly tuition fees are: \$170 for the three day a week program, \$115 for the two mornings a week program or \$130 for the two afternoons program. We ask that payments be left in the tuition box on the first class day of each month. Payment is required no later than the 10th of the month, since we have a financial commitment to our staff, payments after the 10th should include a \$5.00 surcharge. Families with 2 or more children enrolled receive a 15 percent discount. If parents wish to withdraw their child, we ask that you give 15 days notice before the child's final day.

Provisional Enrollment/Withdrawal:

PVCC is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate experience for all children. However, if following 1 month of attendance in a class the staff concludes that placement at the center is not appropriate for a child, the Board reserves the right to request that the child be withdrawn from the program within 15 days after the initial 1 month attendance. Every effort will be made to help the parents find a more suitable placement.

If parents wish to withdraw their child, we ask that you give a 15 day notice before the child's final day.

Snacks:

Being a parent cooperative preschool, we ask parents to bring a snack for their child's class for two or three weeks of the school year. We celebrate birthdays during our snack time on the appropriate day. Parents can make arrangements with their child's teacher to bring in a special snack for that day. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. A list of suggestions is attached.

Snack Ideas

Any combination of the suggestions below or new ideas you have are most welcome. Please note that we do not want to use "Juice Drinks" or "Kool-Aid", nor any products that contain artificial sweeteners such as Nutrasweet. Please make snacks in advance and allow a half gallon of drink per class per week. We have paper goods.

- 1) Fresh fruit - fruit salad, apples, oranges, grapefruit, pears, pineapple, bananas, green or red seedless grapes, watermelon, dried apricots, raisins, etc.
- 2) Vegetables - carrot sticks, celery, sliced cucumbers, etc.
- 3) Cheese or yogurt dips
- 4) Popcorn (plain or sprinkled with cheese)
- 5) Toast or bagels
- 6) Cheese fingers
- 7) Cottage cheese
- 8) Crackers or pretzels
- 9) Muffins or breads
- 10) Trail mix or Chex mix
- 11) Mini pizzas
- 12) Applesauce
- 13) Jello
- 14) Birthday cake or cupcakes

Milk or Chocolate Milk

100% Fruit Juices

Homemade Soda (Seltzer with juice)

****Please note that due to allergies, Peanut Butter is not an option**

