

# Real Life Nursery School



## Parent Handbook

## **WELCOME TO REAL LIFE NURSERY SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN**

**[www.reallifenurseryschool.com](http://www.reallifenurseryschool.com)**

All of us here at Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten welcome you to our program. Please read this parent handbook carefully and save it for future reference. Along with the policies and procedures outlined in this book, we will also do our best to keep parents informed by posting newsletters, schedules, menus and information about our teachers on the parent bulletin boards next to each classroom. School newsletters, classroom newsletters and monthly menus can also be found on our website.

Join the **REAL LIFE NURSERY SCHOOL EMAIL LIST** by going to the website and typing in your email address and you will receive information about our school, farm and upcoming events sent directly to your email.

Information will also be placed in your child's folder in their classroom. Please check their folder each day before going home. We'd love to talk to each of you often. Feel free to visit your child's classroom at any time. You are welcome to call at anytime to check in on your child. Each classroom will offer different opportunities throughout the year to volunteer in the classroom.

Ongoing interaction and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two way street. You can help by sharing information about your child with us. Especially during any crisis or period of change when your child may be under stress and act or react differently ...please keep us informed. Obvious times include a change in jobs, a move to a new house, an illness or death in the family. They could also include stopping or starting medication or a change in eating or sleeping habits. Of course anything you share with a member of our staff will be held in confidence. Likewise, we'll also alert you to anything out of the ordinary that we might notice here at school. Only by sharing information can we build a bridge strong enough to support our children.

### **HISTORY OF REAL LIFE**

The Real Life Nursery School and Kindergarten is a family owned and operated business. Founded in 1957, the original Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten was located in Dearborn Heights, Michigan and was owned and operated by Jim and Mary Ellen Fraser. In the mid 60's Jim Fraser (Farmer Don's father) purchased the land in Canton for the summer camp program. After Jim's death in 1986, Don and Mary Ann Fraser took over the Real Life Day Camp and Farm, operating school field trips, hayride parties, and the summer day camp.

For quite some time we felt the need to expand our business to a year round school. The surrounding development and access to sewer and water hook ups made this dream a possibility. On July 15, 2002, Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten on Geddes Road in Canton, Michigan opened. After 6 years of operation Real Life expanded by adding four more classrooms and an activities room which opened in September of 2008.

It is our desire to make a significant difference in the lives of the children and the families we come in contact with through our year round school and summer camp. We maintain a strong commitment to this goal and a genuine desire to serve our community. We invite you to view the pictures and newspaper articles in our front foyer which document the history of Real Life. We are proud of our heritage and will strive to continue to provide high quality and culturally sensitive child care services.

Don and Mary Ann Fraser- Owners/Directors

## **PHILOSOPHY**

We believe in providing the kind of environment and influences that encourage all children to become creative, independent, responsible, self-directed adults who can make decisions for themselves.

We believe:

- The home is the most important factor in a child's development. We will always strive to support the family in order to promote the healthy development of children and parents.
- The dignity and worth of each child and the family unit is important.
- That loving, trusting, and respecting each child makes that child capable of loving, trusting, and respecting others.
- Each child should be guided towards a positive self image.
- It is important to meet each child's needs for physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth.
- Children deserve a nurturing, safe, and happy environment that promotes their natural curiosity and desire to learn.
- Children deserve to have teachers who are capable and caring and whose values enable them to be excellent role models.

Recognizing that children grow in predictable stages, we treat each child as an individual, working from the level each child has attained and moving forward one step at a time. We model a "love of learning" by allowing children to experience their own stage of development and by helping them to feel success without pressure.

## **PROGRAMS OFFERED**

**Little Lambs Preschool (2 ½ years -3 ½ years)...children are not required to be potty trained.**

**Preschool Pals (3-4 years)...children are required to be potty trained.**

**Kindergarten Readiness (4-5 years)...children must be 4 by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> to be eligible for this program.**

**Kindergarten (5-6 years)...children must be 5 by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> to be eligible for Kindergarten.**

**Preschool/Junior Camp...Summer Program...(2 ½ -6 years)...summer months only.**

## **AGES OF CHILDREN ACCEPTED**

Real Life Nursery School and Kindergarten is state licensed to accept children ages 2 ½ through 6 years of age are accepted year round.

## **PLACEMENT**

Children will be initially assigned to a class according to their chronological age and developmental level.

## **CURRICULUM**

Our curriculum is theme oriented and based on the belief that play is the best way for children to learn. Our approach is individualized to meet each child's needs and interests.

Each classroom is organized with centers for creative art, literature, writing, science, math, dramatic play and small and large motor development. These centers encourage both individual and cooperative play and focus on the theme of each week. The environment is planned to stimulate imagination, creativity, socialization, exploration and discovery.

Sensory, motor, perceptual, and language skills are introduced through materials and activities which are both child centered and teacher guided. Work is planned which emphasizes "process" rather than the "product," fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten encourages children to choose freely from a wide variety of play and learning experiences, and in doing so helps them to recognize, understand, and express their own emotions as well as empathizing with the emotions of others.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Days are planned so the children will:

- Be safe.
- Feel secure.
- Receive individual attention and affection from their teachers.
- Develop positive relationships with other children and adults.
- Develop self discipline.
- Experience success in order to develop a positive self image.
- Learn to respect the personal and property rights of others.
- Develop intellectual and physical skills.

## **STAFF/CHILD RATIO**

The ratio of children to adults is as follows:

2 ½ -3 year olds: 1 teacher for every 6 children.

3-4 year olds: 1 teacher for every 10 children.

4-5-6 year olds: 1 teacher for every 12 children.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

There will be a minimum of two scheduled conferences per year. Teachers will keep developmental portfolio assessments on each child. These can be shared with parents at any time. It may be necessary for more frequent conferences between you and your child's teacher.

## **BEHAVIOR AND GUIDANCE POLICY**

We encourage self control, self direction, self esteem and cooperation.

Teachers foster the development for age appropriate self-help skills such as picking up toys, wiping spills, personal grooming (toileting and hand washing) obtaining and caring for materials.

Teachers set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior and in the case of older children help them to set their own limits.

Teachers use the children's mistakes as learning opportunities, describing the situation and encouraging children's evaluation of the problem rather than imposing the solution, thus teaching them life long problem solving skills.

Teachers anticipate and eliminate potential problems by redirecting children to more acceptable activities.

Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations and respond with respect.

Teachers guide children to resolve conflicts, and model skills that help children to solve their own problems.

Teachers encourage appropriate behavior, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.

Teachers abstain from corporal punishment, humiliation, or frightening discipline techniques. Food or beverage is never withheld as a form of punishment.

## **STATE LICENSED**

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten is licensed by the state of Michigan. We adhere to all state and local policies, rules and regulations. A copy of our license is posted in the front lobby.

Don and Mary Ann Fraser are the owners of Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten. Mary Ann Fraser is the director. She is a state certified teacher for grades K-8. She has a BA in Child Development from Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan, and a Masters in Early Childhood from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan. She has 20 years of teaching experience in second grade, kindergarten and preschool as well as 11 years of experience directing preschool programs.

All of the lead teachers at Real Life have a two to four year Early Childhood degree or maintain a Michigan Child Development Associate degree. Our assistant teachers also have early childhood experience. Many are pursuing careers in education. All teachers are required to attend a minimum of 16 hours of training each school year in the field of early childhood.

All teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid annually.

Our staff is chosen for their experience, education, dedication, and strong moral character.

All staff is screened for prior child abuse and/or neglect through the Family Independence Agency.

### **SCHEDULE OF OPERATION AND FEES**

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. In order to receive the full benefit of our educational program, children are encouraged to be in attendance by 9:00 a.m. Kindergarten begins at 8:30 a.m.

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten is closed on the following days...

Martin Luther King Day (tuition due).

Good Friday (no tuition due).

Easter Monday (the Monday following Easter)- (no tuition due).

Memorial Day (tuition due).

Fourth of July (tuition due).

Thursday before Labor Day- Staff Training Day (no tuition due).

Friday before Labor Day (tuition due).

Labor Day (tuition due).

Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday (tuition due).

Two weeks at Christmas (no tuition due).

### **ADMISSION POLICY**

The following forms are required for admission at the Real Life Nursery School.

1. Completed enrollment application
2. Completed child information card.
3. Completed health appraisal form filled out by a licensed physician
4. Parent Release Form
5. Parent Policy Agreement
6. Registration Fee and Two week tuition deposit.

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Real Life Nursery School requires a two week written notice when withdrawing your child from our program. If you fail to comply, you will forfeit your two week tuition deposit.

### **DISENROLLMENT POLICY**

Real Life Nursery School reserves the right to discontinue service to a child for reasons of continued discipline confrontations, lack of cooperation from parents, continued acts that jeopardizes the safety and well being of other children and staff, or delinquency in payment of fees.

### **CHILDREN'S PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

All children are given a place to hang their coats, and a storage bin for nap time supplies which is labeled with the child's name. Please leave your child's toys at home. Children are encouraged to be responsible for their personal belongings. Blankets and pillows are sent home weekly to be washed.

### **FOOD SERVICE**

A nutritious morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack is served each day. The menu for the month is posted on our website and a paper copy is available at each front desk. Please let us know of any food allergies that your child may have. We will work with you to accommodate your child's needs.

### **MEDICATION**

A medication request form must be obtained and fully completed by the parent before any medication can be administered. These forms are available at either front desk. All prescription medication must be in the original container with the child's name on the container. Many pharmacies will give you two half bottles, one for home and one for child care. For the parents who wish to have over the counter medications administered, the staff will only give the amount listed on the packaging for your child's age. If a different dosage of over the counter medication is requested, a doctor's note will need to be submitted. The doctor's note should contain the child's name, the name of the medication, appropriate dosage, and time to be given.

For children who are involved in prescribed therapeutic treatment, the parent or guardian must also fill out a medicine request form on a weekly basis.

All medications shall be placed in a separate container outside the reach of children. This includes cough drops, lip balms, etc. For medications that require refrigeration, the medicine will be placed in a separate container in the kitchen refrigerator.

### **VACCINATIONS, CONTAGIOUS DISEASES**

We will keep you informed of any instances of serious contagious diseases affecting the children at Real Life. All such diseases will be reported to Wayne County Health Department. Real Life follows the state of Michigan's regulations regarding immunizations, and recommends consulting with your pediatrician concerning medical matters.

## **MEDICAL RECORDS**

Your child's current medical and immunization record must be submitted prior to your enrollment and updated annually according to state law.

## **ALLERGIES**

Frequent visits are made to the Real Life petting Farm. Please alert the director and your child's teacher of any allergy problem your child may have. This will help us take the right precautions to protect your child's health.

## **WASHING HANDS**

In an effort to help teach the children personal hygiene skills, we require hand washing before and after eating, after bathroom visits, and other appropriate times.

## **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

It is the policy of Real Life to accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please discuss your child's needs with Ms. Mary Ann (director) prior to enrollment. We will do our best to make reasonable accommodations for your child. If your child is in a special education classroom at a public school, we ask that you supply us with a copy of your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) to keep in their file. Having this plan will help the teachers at Real Life provide the best possible care for your child.

## **ILLNESS**

Children will not be allowed to attend Real Life if they are ill. Children will be sent home if they have a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, or show signs of any communicable disease, or contagious illness. Children who are hospitalized for any reason will need a doctor's written permission to return to school. Look your child over very carefully every morning before sending them to school to see if they show any symptoms of illness.

## **LOOK FOR:**

- Red or watery eyes
- Ear ache or runny ear
- Runny nose...green or yellow
- Red or sore throat
- Swelling about the neck
- Feverish appearance (take temperature if suspicious)
- Rash or spots on the skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea or loose stool



For the protection of all of the children in the center, if your child has any of the above symptoms do each of the following things...

1. Keep your child at home
2. Call the doctor early.
3. Notify the school on the first day of absence (734-495-0833). Please give the reason for absence and state whether the doctor has been called.

### **WHEN A CHILD CAN RETURN AFTER AN ILLNESS**

Your child can return to school when:

- Your child has been fever free for 24 hours without taking any medication for fever.
- Your child has been on antibiotics for a full 24 hours.
- It has been a full 24 hours since experiencing vomiting or diarrhea.
- The nasal discharge is not thick, yellow or green. If your child has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours this does not apply.
- Eyes are no longer discharging.
- Rash has subsided or the doctor has confirmed through written communication that the rash is not contagious.
- Your child has a note from their pediatrician stating they are not contagious.

### **IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES ILL WHILE AT SCHOOL**

If your child becomes ill while at school he/she will be separated from the other children and cared for by a member of the administration until he/she can be taken home. We ask that you pick up your child within one hour after being called. Please make arrangements in advance to have a friend, relative, or babysitter available in the event that you cannot pick up your child. If your child is sent home sick they may not return the next day to school. They can return the day after being sent home as long as they are symptom free for 24 hours without taking medication.

### **INJURIES**

Every precaution is taken to make sure your child is safe. Daily inspections of the building, playground, and equipment are conducted. For severe or questionable injuries, the parent/guardian will be called. For bumps, scratches, scrapes, bruises, etc. the parent will be notified by means of verbal communication and through a written form called and "Ouchie Report."

### **MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

It is state law that child care staff report any suspicion of child abuse. If your child has had an accident away from our program, please report this to your child's teacher upon arrival at Real Life.

### **BAD WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten will do its best to remain open regardless of weather conditions. In the event of bad weather conditions we will inform you if we are closed through email and our Teacher Apps. If we close early due to inclement weather conditions, you will be notified by phone, text, or email. Please come for your child as soon as possible for everyone's safety. Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten will not be responsible for refunding tuition when we must close due to inclement weather or other conditions beyond our control.

### **SEVERE STORM SHELTER AND GENERATORS PROVIDES PEACE OF MIND**

Our school has an extremely safe and secure basement in both buildings designed specifically for children and staff to take shelter in should the need arise. Our generator system is capable of keeping the entire school powered up should we lose power.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is healthy for children! All children go outside twice a day (weather permitting). Our wrap around porch provides us with access to the outdoors even if there are a few sprinkles! Please send your child with the appropriate gear for outside play...depending on the season. The state law requires that children must go outside when the temperature is 20 degrees Fahrenheit or above. In the summer it may be necessary to avoid outside play in the case of an extremely high heat index of 100 degrees or higher. When it snows remember that boots cannot be worn into the classrooms. Please leave wet boots on the mats in the hallway, and remember to bring a pair of shoes to be worn during the day. When it rains, please leave umbrellas at home. Umbrellas are unsafe in a group of children.

### **REST TIME**

There will be a quiet rest time each afternoon after lunch. Depending on their age, children are expected to rest quietly on a cot, or engage in quiet activities, allowing those who need to sleep the opportunity to do so. Little Lambs (2 ½ -3 years) rest from 1:00-3:00. Preschool Pals (3-4 years) rest from 1:00-3:00. Kindergarten Readiness (4-5 years) rest from 1:00-2:30 and Kindergarten (5-6 years) rest from 1:00-2:00.

### **CLOTHING**

Be sure your child's clothing is comfortable, washable, and it allows for self dressing. We get "involved" in activities! We climb on playground equipment, ride bikes, run, and travel to the farm! Please send your child to school in "play clothes." Tennis shoes must be worn when traveling to the farm or playing on the playground. Shoes must have a closed toe and closed heel. Sandals, flip flops are not permitted.

### **NUT- FREE SCHOOL**

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten is a peanut free school. Absolutely no nuts or nut products are allowed within the building due to very nut allergies.

## **SCHEDULE OF FEES**

Annual registration fee: \$95.00

Tuition rates vary according to the number of days your child attends. Please refer to the tuition schedule for our current tuition rates for two, three, four or five days per week.

Two weeks tuition is held as a deposit. This deposit along with the registration fee is to be paid upon enrollment.

Real Life Nursery School & Kindergarten requires a two week written notice if you intend to withdraw your child from our program. Your deposit will be applied to your final two weeks your child attends. Failure to notify the director of your withdrawal will result in the forfeit of your deposit.

Tuition is due on the first day of the week that your child attends.

Tuition may also be paid on a monthly basis and is due on the first day your child attends each month.

There are no tuition adjustments for daily absences due to weather, holidays, illness, or circumstances beyond our control.

A late charge of \$30.00 will be added to your bill for all late payments.

A \$25.00 fee will be assessed for all returned checks.

Late pick up fee is \$1.00 per minute after our 6:00 p.m. closing time. Late charges are to be paid in cash at the time of pick up.

## **VACATION TIME**

Each family is allowed a vacation period of one week during the school year where there will be no tuition charged. For example if your child attends 3 days per week you are allowed 3 days of vacation time with no tuition charged. If your child attends 5 days per week you are allowed 5 days of vacation time with no tuition charged. If you choose to split up your vacation days among different weeks you will be charged the daily rate for the number of days your child is in attendance. For example if your child attends 5 days per week and you choose to use three days one week you will be charged the two day tuition rate for the two days your child attends.

A maximum of one week of vacation per child per school year is allowed regardless of whether or not a child is dis-enrolled and re-enrolled within the same school year.

A one week written notice of a vacation is required in order to receive vacation credit. Vacation request forms are located at each reception desk.

## **RECEIVING CHILDREN**

Real Life Nursery School opens each weekday at 6:30 a.m. All children must be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult. Parents need to allow enough time to assist their children in bringing them into the classroom and hanging up their coats or other belongings. The teachers will greet you and your child and welcome them for the day. Be sure to sign in your child on the sign in board in your child's classroom before you leave. Check the communication board for any messages from your child's teacher. Parents may also write down any issues to discuss on the communication board. We request that children arrive by 9:00 a.m. so they may take full advantage of the entire morning program.

## **ENTRANCE CODE**

Upon registration you will be assigned a security code which will allow you to enter the building. This code is confidential and should not be given out to anyone. Upon withdrawal from our program, your code will be deleted.

## **RELEASING CHILDREN**

Children are released to their parent, legal guardian or to any designated person listed on the child information card. Identification of the person picking up a child will be verified through a picture ID. Please be sure to sign out your child in their classroom before you leave.

For the protection of your child, no information will be given over the phone unless the staff person on the phone can verify the identity of the caller. This can be done through social security number or your four digit code. This includes verification of enrollment or attendance. Parent or legal guardian should alert the office in advance when anyone such as a doctor, counselor, etc. will need information over the phone regarding your child.

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