



ROOSEVELT ISLAND DAY NURSERY

405 Main Street, New York NY 10044 – 212 593-0750 – infant.toddler@ridn.org - www.ridn.org

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2012-2013

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WELCOME to the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery! We hope that this handbook will provide most of the practical information that you will need and we urge you to read it carefully. If you have additional questions, please ask!

Important phone numbers

Red Room:	(212) 935 - 3815
Yellow Room:	(212) 754 - 5989
Blue Room:	(212) 935 - 3923
Office:	(212) 935 - 3747
Fax:	(212) 752 - 5206
Billing/invoice information	(212) 593 - 0750

BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The Roosevelt Island (“RI”) Day Nursery was started by a group of Island parents in 1975 and incorporated as a not-for-profit educational corporation in 1979. The school’s population reflects the rich ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity of the Roosevelt Island community. The RI Day Nursery is run by a Parent Board of Directors with an all-professional teaching staff. The school meets all licensing requirements of the City and State and is a member of ISAAGNY.

The goal of the RI Day Nursery is to help children grow emotionally, socially, and cognitively by providing young children with a warm and supportive environment and well supervised work and play experiences within a community of their peers. The program promotes emotional growth - helping children separate from their parents and learn to be independent, to make choices, and to take increasing responsibility for themselves. The program promotes social growth - helping children learn to work productively with a group of children and to relate to new adults. The curriculum promotes cognitive growth by providing a wealth of firsthand experiences with a wide variety of materials that will encourage discovery, exploration, and learning.

The curriculum is designed to respond to the needs and interests of the children, to reflect each child’s stage of development, and to provide experiences that stimulate and promote growth. Our goal is to teach children how to learn, make choices, ask questions, solve problems, and seek help. Language activities that prepare children for reading and writing are incorporated into the program, along with math, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. Ultimately, the curriculum supports the development of the concepts and skills that underpin formal learning.

The ongoing assessment of each child is invaluable as we work to meet the developmental needs of all children in our program. The assessment of each child is a confidential process and all related documents are maintained in a file accessible only to parents and the professional staff members who are directly involved in the child’s education. In addition to other forms of assessment the teachers at 405 Main Street use an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) to help them prepare for the twice yearly parent/teacher conferences.

Children with special needs can be accommodated in our programs if, with appropriate supports, they can function successfully in a mainstream classroom. The RI Day Nursery must be informed of medical or other information in the possession of the parent when such information is necessary to assist the school in dealing with the special needs of the child. Further, the school will assist parents in accessing an evaluation and appropriate services when intervention is necessary to help the child function productively in school. The RI Day Nursery is wheelchair accessible and built in compliance with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

We want to encourage an active dialogue with families. The enrollment questionnaire gives you the opportunity to share basic information with the teachers that will help them get to know your child. Since children are continuously growing and changing, it is important for you to take the time each year to fill it out as completely as possible.

During the year, we encourage you to let us know about any events, changes, or activities at home that may affect the behavior at our center. The more we can understand what a child is experiencing and how a child is feeling, the more supportive and helpful we can be. If you have any concerns about your child, please talk with us as soon as possible.

Parents have the right to see their child in the classroom at any time. More importantly, we want you to feel welcome in the school and encourage you to visit in your child's class. The following are some of the many opportunities that you have to become involved and share in your child's school experience.

Parent Board of Directors

The Roosevelt Island Day Nursery is a nonprofit run by a Parent Board of Directors. The Board is elected each school year by the current parent body and is responsible for ensuring that the school is being run in an orderly and financially proper manner. The Board acts as a liaison between the staff and the parents. In addition, the Board runs fundraising events to support financial aid and other school programs. The board meeting is held early in the school year and the Board meets monthly except for July and August. Minutes from each Board meeting are posted on the bulletin board located in the front lobby. Parents are encouraged to participate actively in the school by becoming members of the Parent Board or by becoming class parents and helping with fundraising activities, or by volunteering to help in other ways.

Parents are urged to discuss with the directors any difficulties or differences that may arise that cannot be resolved directly with the teachers. If a resolution cannot be found, the matter may be brought to the Liaison Committee of the Board of Directors.

Family Events

A curriculum night is held in each classroom early in the school year. This is the time for parents to visit in the classroom, meet the other parents, see a slide show of the children at work and hear the teachers talk about the curriculum and the programs and plans for the year. In addition we have a family breakfast mid-year and at the end of the year to give the

parents an opportunity to socialize with the children and teachers at school. RIDN also has a number of community and fund raising events that are held throughout the year that bring together families from RIDN at 405 Main Street and RIDN at 4 River Road.

Family and Parent-Teacher Conferences

At the RI Day Nursery, we provide opportunities for regular meetings with parents through Parent-Teacher Conferences. Formal conferences are scheduled twice a year with additional conferences scheduled as needed. Parent-Teacher Conferences give parents and teachers the opportunity to share information about the child and his or her development. In addition, teachers are always available throughout the year to answer questions and parents should never hesitate to request additional meetings as needed.

Holiday Celebrations

One of the advantages of our international school population is the wealth of holidays that are celebrated by our families. We are eager to share these holidays with all the children. We celebrate holidays by emphasizing the aspects that are most meaningful for the children. Typically included in the celebrations are music, art and cooking activities. Parents are invited to help plan and participate in these holiday celebrations.

Outings

Outings on Roosevelt Island occur daily, weather permitting. Walks and outings are taken with small groups of two or three children per teacher. Teachers are required to inform the office in writing of their destination and who will be joining them for the outing. Trip information is kept in the office along with the teacher's cell phone number.

OUR DISCIPLINE METHODS

It is important for families to understand the RI Day Nursery's discipline methods so that we can work together productively to promote your child's emotional and social growth.

First, a word about what the law states regarding both school personnel and parents:

(1) The law says that school personnel may not use corporal punishment to discipline children. That is, teachers may not discipline a child by physically hitting or striking a child in any way.

(2) And the law also addresses the issue of parents punishing their children by physical force, because it can become excessive or abusive. The law makes the school (director, teachers, and administrators) responsible for reporting to the authorities any incidents or suspicion that a child is being physically or psychologically abused or neglected. That is, if we see indications that a child is being beaten, abused, or neglected, we are required to report this.

How We Handle Discipline at School

As adults, it is our job to protect children and to help them become caring, responsible, and productive human beings. Our aim at the RI Day Nursery is to help children learn to share, to be considerate and respectful of others, and to use words to solve problems. Since

children learn by imitating, we set the example for this behavior in the way we work with children. We do not hit or yell but talk to children and set a model for the children to follow.

In our classrooms, we set up a child-centered, safe environment, follow a regular schedule, give children simple choices, and establish reasonable and clear-cut limits and rules. We respect and accept the child's upset and angry feelings although we cannot and do not allow the child to hit or hurt another child or break things. We praise appropriate behavior when children work hard, take turns, and help. When necessary, we sometimes remove a child from a situation so that the child can calm down and we can talk about his or her feelings and the behavior. We then help the child re engage in productive play.

ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

Beginning the School Year

We help introduce the children to school by planning home visits and a phase-in period.

We plan **home visits** for all of the children. The purpose is for you and your child to meet the teachers in your own home where your child feels most comfortable. We will set up brief visits during the week before school starts. Although these visits are optional, we hope you will participate.

The **phase-in** period at the start of each New Year sets the necessary groundwork for developing trusting partnerships between children, their families and teachers. For every child the first days of the year at RIDN are filled with new experiences. We will try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as possible by helping you and your child to feel secure in the new environment.

We expect parents to spend time with their child during the first week helping to establish trusting relationships with their new teachers. During this phase-in period, children come in small groups for increasing periods of time (see your child's individual phase-in schedule).

Parents spend time in the classroom playing with their child, participating with daily routines and activities. While the parents are still caring for the child in the room, teachers will observe and ask questions to enable them to maintain a consistency of care after the phase-in period is over. The amount of time that parents will be required to stay in the room depends on the child's own temperament, development, previous experience with child care and the parent's feeling about leaving. Some children may have an easy time in the beginning but weeks or months later they may need extra support as they settle into the day to day routine. Others will stick close by a parent for a long period before beginning to explore the room or meet new people. Still others will cheerfully say good-bye and grow steadily more comfortable as time goes on.

Saying Good-Bye

All parents **MUST** say "good-bye" to their children and tell them that they will return. "I will be back after nap time" or "I will be back after you have your afternoon snack" are helpful ways to say good-bye. Leaving without saying good-bye may be easier for the parents than leaving while a child is crying, but it isn't easier for the child. Their tears and cries demonstrate their attachment to you. Leaving without saying good-bye can also make future good-byes more difficult because the child may fear an unexpected departure or that you may "disappear." This fear can prevent him/her from feeling secure and is counterproductive to the trust that you are trying to build with your child as you leave them in the care of others.

It is necessary and healthy to allow children to express their emotions. Teachers will respond in a way that is most comforting and reassuring to your child. The teacher might hold your child and say, "You are sad and crying because your daddy said good-bye. He will be back. Let's find his picture and look at it together." Acknowledging the emotions and pairing them with appropriate ways to deal with the feelings offers children useful strategies that they can recall in similar situations. As they continue to employ these strategies with increasing success their recovery time from upsets will diminish.

If your child is having a particularly difficult time with separation at any point in the year we will call you and collaborate together in how to help your child.

Arrivals and Departures

RIDN at Riverwalk Crossing - 405 Main Street, operates between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm. Arrival and dismissal times are flexible and based on the needs of your family. Please keep in mind that a predictable routine helps children develop a sense of security and competence. Teachers work closely with parents in developing a routine that is both familiar and predictable. Please be prepared to discuss your family's individual schedule with the classroom teachers. If it is necessary at any time during the year to arrive later in the morning or pick up early, please let us know in advance.

Our school closes promptly each day at 6pm, and we expect that all children and parents will leave by 6pm. After the children leave at the end of the day our teachers have a lot of work still to do re: cleaning, closing up the rooms, and preparing for the next morning. Our cleaning service comes here soon after 6pm and they need access to the classes to be able to begin to mop, etc. If parents and children linger at the school after 6pm the teachers are not able to lock up the site, and the cleaning company does not have full access to it either. Lateness is difficult for the teachers who have commitments and responsibilities outside of RIDN and who need to leave at a predictable time.

It is also of course beneficial for the children to have a swift transition at the end of the day. Though they may not show it in an obvious way, these young children miss their families and after seeing other friends go home, they are more than ready to go home with their families as well!

If your child is having difficulties with the end of the day transition please ask the director or your child's teachers for some suggestions. If you have any other questions or concerns about pick up please speak with the director.

No child may enter or leave the school unescorted. Each child is to be brought directly to his or her classroom. The parent or escort is responsible for helping with the removal of outside clothing and boots and the putting on of school shoes. If someone other than the parent is escorting the child to or from school regularly (baby-sitter, grandparents or a sibling), an escort form must be completed and retained in the office. For irregular arrangements, a written note or a phone call from the parent is required on each occasion. The school does not assume responsibility or liability for children traveling to and from school.

For playdates and occasional pickups, teachers must be informed verbally at drop off, in writing or by phone that your child will be picked up by another adult. We encourage playdates but sometimes children tell us they have an arrangement with a friend and we do not know if there is an actual plan or if it is just the child's wish. Even if your regular caregiver arranges the playdate, we must be informed by a parent.

If you will be late to pick up your child, you must call your child's classroom, even if finding a telephone may delay you further. (Please carry the telephone number with you or program it into your cell phone.) If you are sending someone other than the regular pickup person, you must call the office to inform us. We will not release your child to someone who is not authorized by you to pick up your child. If a child is not picked up and we cannot locate the people designated on the emergency card, we will be obliged to call Roosevelt Island Public Safety to help us resolve the situation.

Keeping Information Current

It is most important that the office is notified of any changes in address, phone numbers (at home or at work), caregivers, and emergency phone numbers. When parents are away on business or vacation, the school must be given, in writing, the name(s) and contact numbers of the person(s) responsible for the care of your child as well as any changes in pickup arrangements.

Health Regulations

Each child is required by the New York City Department of Health to have a complete medical examination before the beginning of the school year, and no child can be accepted without a complete and current immunization record and medical history. The school provides the medical form if necessary, most pediatrician have an electronic form at his/her office. Please give the office an updated medical every time your child has a routine checkup and/or every time your child has a new vaccination.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THE OFFICE AND TEACHERS ARE INFORMED OF ANY KNOWN ALLERGIES.

Children with signs of contagious illness - fever, sore throat, earache, cough, running nose, red or crusted eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, rash or suspicious skin sores - should be kept at home and the doctor called, if necessary.

Children showing signs of contagious illness during the school day will be separated from their classmates and families will be called to take the child home. An Illness Notice will also be filled out by the child's classroom teachers detailing the reason for the call as well

as guidelines for follow-up. Absences should be telephoned into the office. The school must be notified immediately in the case of a communicable disease.

Children should be kept at home until their temperature has been normal for 24 hours.

The Department of Health does not allow school staff members to give children prescribed or over-the-counter medication. If necessary, a parent or other caregiver can come to school to administer medication or else the child should be kept at home while treatment is necessary.

We are trying hard to keep the children healthy so that they can be at school regularly. Please help us - you don't want your child to pick up an illness from a sick child either!

Rest Period/Nap Time

The Department of Health requires that each child attending a full day childcare program has a rest period. The school provides each child with a cot or crib. The infants follow their own individual rhythms of sleeping, eating, diapering, and playing. As they mature past their first birthdays and spend more time sharing similar schedules with their peers, they become regulated as a group and will rest/nap at a mutual time after lunch. In the Yellow Room we are able to accommodate children who are taking multiple naps a day.

Teachers promote rest time in a variety of ways and will like to know of the routines and methods that are familiar to your child. Lights will be dimmed and teachers may read play quiet music to help a child fall asleep.

For children less than a year old: Please bring a crib sheet in for your young child and a sleep sack if you would like the teachers to use one. We follow the SIDS "back to sleep" campaign for infants. The teachers place all infants enrolled at the school on their backs. We keep the cribs free of toys and stuffed animals. A teacher monitors the children and conducts sight check-ins. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with the Director.

For children older than one year:

Please bring in a crib sheet or sheet and a small blanket **labeled** with his/her name. Children may bring a special stuffed animal or similar toy from home to be kept in his or her cubby for rest time. The Department of Health will not permit the use of pillows without a note from a doctor saying it is medically necessary.

In the Blue and Red classes, children rest after their lunch. They sleep as long as they need and are not wakened by the staff unless they are still asleep at 4pm, at which point they are woken. The children's nap times vary individually. If a Blue or Red child has a short nap a teacher will bring them to the Yellow Room to play, or engage them in a quiet activity such as doing a puzzle or looking at a book.

Clothing

Children should be dressed so that they can participate fully in all activities. Comfortable, washable clothes are best for school. Even though we provide smocks, children will inevitably get stains on their clothes.

Pants with elastic waistbands are easy for young children to pull up and down and when worn support a child's independence while dressing and toileting.

Dress your children in warm and comfortable clothes but please avoid overdressing. The children are quite active and may get overheated. They do not need long underwear in school because we do not take them outside to play the temperature is below freezing. Let your child wear an extra sweater or sweatshirt (or leave one in the cubby) so that if the child is cold the extra layer can be put on.

Children should be dressed so that they can go outside to play year round. Unless it is raining, freezing cold, or there is a heat advisory warning, we like to take the children outdoors for a little while. **THEY NEED CLOSED SHOES OR SNEAKERS (NO PARTY SHOES, FLIP FLOPS OR CROCS), LONG PANTS, HATS AND GLOVES OR MITTENS.** Let them wear **BOOTS** if it has been raining or snowing so that we can take them for walks.

Please bring a pair of SCHOOL SHOES for your child that can be left in school to wear inside the classroom. Since young children sit and play on the floors, this policy is good for the children's health.

We suggest that indoor school shoes be either a pair of sneakers or pair of rubber soled (or non-slip bottom) slippers. To make it easy for the children to take on and off (as well as for families and teachers), we suggest that the shoes or slippers have Velcro closures or zippers rather than laces. In the morning when you remove your child's coat, please put on these school shoes or slippers. When we take the children outside, we help them change back into their outdoor shoes.

Each child should have a complete set of back-up clothes in the school at all times. Please include a top, bottom, underwear, and socks, and light jacket or cardigan, labeled with the child's name.

Diapering and Toileting

If children are using diapers, parents must provide disposable diapers and wipes clearly marked with their child's name. Unfortunately, cloth diapers are not recommended by the Department of Health and will not be permitted for use at RIDN.

Children's diapers are changed regularly. Children who have learned to use the toilet will be encouraged to continue to do so and will have unlimited, supervised access to the classroom toilets.

Food Policy

Parents provide all food for infants, including baby foods and prepared formula or breast milk in labeled plastic bottles. Bottles need to be taken home and washed each day, as we do not have adequate facilities for sterilizing bottles or preparing formula.

All children bring their own lunches and snacks. Please print your child's first and last name clearly on his/her lunch containers and include protein (meats, cheese, yogurt, etc.), carbohydrates (bread, pasta, etc.), vegetables, and fruit. We provide utensils, bibs, cups and plates.

Because of allergies, we ask that you do not send your child in with any peanuts or peanut products.

Please send healthy food only, no junk food. We define junk food as any food that is high in fat, sugar and/or salt and low in nutritional value. Young children should not be given choking hazards such as: hot dogs sliced into rounds, whole grapes, uncut baby carrots, hard candy, nuts, raw peas, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of nut butter or chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

We encourage toddlers to feed themselves. Parents should provide lunches that are prepared in a way that is easiest for their child to handle independently. All foods should be prepared so that they are ready to eat (i.e. cut into small pieces, peeled, etc.). We will send home leftovers so you can see how much was eaten that day. We do not heat food here, many of our families use thermoses which keep foods warm.

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating the children's birthdays in school and usually reserve snack time on your child's birthday for a party. Families should make a plan with the teachers. If you are having a party at home, it is our policy to distribute invitations at school only if they are going to all the children in the class. We do not want any child to feel left out. Please do not send goodie bags with candy, toys or balloons to school parties.

Please also consider donating a children's book to the school library in honor of your child's birthday. We will put a label with your child's name and birthday in the book.

Strollers

Help us avoid stroller traffic jams in our foyer! The front door is our primary exit. It is extremely important that the teachers are able to help the children exit our school quickly and safely without having to take time out to move strollers around. Like most New Yorkers, we are a little short on space. If every child who was enrolled here brought a large stroller, our primary exit would be blocked on a daily basis.

With this in mind, we request that those of you that can will bring a lightweight umbrella stroller and fold it and hang it on our stroller railing in the foyer. For those of you who have older children and/or live close by, if you are able to leave the stroller at home and have your child walk to school with you or ride a scooter, that would be a tremendous help.

Security Door

Our inner foyer door cannot be opened from the foyer without entering a security code. The code right now is 5504*, it may change in the future. This door also cannot be opened from our hallway without first pressing a red button to the right of the door. Please **do not** give or teach the security code to any child, and please do not teach any child that if she/he

presses the red button they can open that door from the hallway! We encourage the children's independence, but it is not safe for the children to open that door independently. If you forget the door code or it is not working there is a button to the left of the door you can push, which rings an intercom system in the classrooms, and the teachers can let you in that way.

EMERGENCY PLANS

These are the plans which the RI Day Nursery will follow in the event of an emergency. These are in addition to the regular fire drills which are held to practice how to evacuate the building quickly and safely. After 9/11, we extended our emergency plans in cooperation with the Roosevelt Island Public Safety Department and we want you to know what we will do in case there is an emergency in New York City.

1 - We will remain in our school building and wait with the children until all are picked up by their parents, unless informed otherwise by Public Safety, the Police Department or the Fire Department.

2 - If we must vacate our building (on instructions from Public Safety, the Police Department or the Fire Department), we will go to The Roosevelt Island Racquet Club or the playroom in 415 Main Street.

3 - Any further evacuation of Roosevelt Island would be done only under instructions from the NYC Police or Fire Department which will be operating under orders from the Office of Emergency Management.

4- FIRE SAFETY: Fire drills are conducted to ensure that the children and staff are practiced in the procedures for evacuating the building in the event of an actual fire-related emergency.

5- LOST CHILD PLAN: In the event that a child enrolled in the program becomes lost both the child's family and the Public Safety Department will be notified.

Copies of the children's **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER forms** will be in classroom backpacks that the teachers will take with them if we have to leave the building. **Make sure that all the information on your card is up to date. If we must leave the school or if school is closed for any reason, the school's answering machine will have a message of instruction to families.**

PROGRAMS AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

School Year Programs

The RI Day Nursery offers the programs described in the school's brochure. To accommodate parents who must leave the Island early, the school opens at 8 a.m.

Registration Information

Registration for the next school year opens in the spring. All places are filled on a first-come, first-served basis and families are urged to re-enroll their children promptly. Current and alumni families are eligible for priority enrollment for both RIDN at 4 River Road and RIDN at 405 Main Street.

Financial Policies

The RI Day Nursery's financial policies are as follows:

1. Payments may be made on a 4-payment or 10-payment schedule, as indicated on the school contract.
2. Registration deposits are non-refundable, even if the child is withdrawn prior to the beginning of the school year.
3. ALL PLACES ARE TAKEN FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR (September through August).
4. No refund or reductions will be made for withdrawal, absence, illness, suspension, or dismissal of your child for any reason.
5. There will be a charge of \$10.00 for any checks returned by the bank for insufficient or uncollected funds.
6. The school reserves the right to cancel a program before the start of any quarter should there be insufficient interest for the class to be financially viable. In this event, the registration fee would be refunded if the children affected could not be accommodated elsewhere in the school.
7. The school reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment in the school at any time if, in its judgment, special circumstances or failure to make tuition payments warrant this action.

Extra Days at RIDN

Parents may request to bring their child in on days that the child is not enrolled. We can accommodate these requests, if space is available. If a parent is interested in an extra day please speak to the Director. There is a fee of \$100 per day which will be added to your tuition payment.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to families who qualify from the RI Day Nursery's Scholarship Fund. The RI Day Nursery's Scholarship Fund is limited as these funds are generated by fundraising events sponsored by the Parent Board of Directors. Families needing financial assistance should see either director for information about qualifications and application procedures.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

PLEASE CHECK THE SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR ALL SCHEDULED HOLIDAY CLOSINGS, HALF DAYS, AND CONFERENCE DAYS. We suggest that you post this in a prominent place in your home.