

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success."

—Henry Ford



CAROL'S CORNER: PARENT NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER, 2024

Dear Parents,

I wanted to get this newsletter out to you before the new school year starts so, **WELCOME** to the new 2024-2025 school year! The VCCC Board of Directors, the Staff and I are so excited to start a brand new school year with all of you! We're happy to be welcoming back our returning families, as well as welcoming all our new families into our "Circle of Friends!" The staff is gearing up for Work Week next week and will be raring to go for our start 8/26 start date the following week. We're sure it's going to be another banner school year!!!

First off I would like to apologize for the length of this newsletter but it was hard to avoid as there is LOTS of information to go out at the beginning of a new school year, so get comfy and please do read through the end so that you don't miss any important information, THANK YOU!!!

A new school year typically brings change and transition, especially as children move into new classrooms with new teachers, new friends and new routines. As children move through all the stages in their development, change and transition become an ongoing occurrence. While starting in an early learning/childcare environment for the first time, or moving up into a new classroom with new teachers and new peers who have yet to become "friends" has the potential to cause anxiety in some children, more often, it is us adults who struggle more with those new changes. Because we want all the children to have enjoyable experiences while they are in our care, it is important for parents to remember that children can and do very easily sense the feelings of the adults in their lives. If parents are feeling nervous, uncomfortable or ambivalent when talking about VCCC in the presence of their children, or are feeling like that during drop offs, the children will then sense those feelings and may subsequently experience the same anxiety. If parents exhibit a positive attitude (and don't forget body language which most often speaks louder than words!!) the children will then feel your confidence and calmness and will they have a much easier transition. So to help you and your children, here are a few suggestions:

- If you haven't already done so, have positive conversations with your child about coming to school, answering any questions they might have directly and honestly.
- Convey a positive attitude as you talk to them about going to school. Young children are very aware of your feelings even if you are not actually verbalizing them. If you seem excited about school, your child will then sense your enthusiasm and it will reassure them and help relieve some possible anxiety for them.
- Clearly state to your child who will be dropping them off and picking them up each day.
- Establish a definite routine for the night before a school day and for the morning of. Routines and rituals allow for a sense of predictability that allow children to feel comforted during unfamiliar situations.
- Create a little family photo book that your child can keep in their backpack that they can look at during their school day during times that they might be "missing you".
- Maintain a clear and positive goodbye routine—a kiss, a hug and the promise that you'll see them later. Once you tell your child goodbye it is important to follow through and just go (as hard as this often is). Extending the goodbye with "okay just one more kiss or one more hug" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Also avoid sneaking out as this will only serve to have the child lose their sense of trust in you and will make the following days of drop-off that much harder.

Please remember that the VCCC staff are all **very** experienced in helping children with the transition of separating from parents and are **very** skillful in redirecting them into a fun activity to help them feel happy and comfortable. I promise you that if there are tears, they are most likely gone before you make it to the end of our driveway! Please know that if your child has been inconsolable for any great length of time, we would call you. And also know that you are more than welcome to call us to check in on your child as many times during the day that you may need to! (And don't be surprised if the child you left crying in the morning because they didn't want you to leave cries when you come to pick them up because they had so much fun all day that they don't want to leave their classroom!!!) So please stay positive, create an encouraging drop-off routine, and feel comfortable knowing that all of us at VCCC are here to ensure that your children are happy, safe and well cared for.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce my amazing star-studded VCCC Staff with whom it is my immense pleasure and honor to be working with:



Our Infant Team

Chyann Nenonen
Tarryn Williams
Jayne Franklin
Avery Kavanaugh
Ashley McElwain

Our Toddler Team

Becky Beauchemin
Michelle Rautiola
Shannon Manuel



Our Preschool/PreK Team

Joshua Coffey
Greta Wilkinson
Stephanie Sarsfield



Your children are so very lucky to have this extremely dedicated, highly educated and exceptionally experienced group of early childhood professionals to care for and educate them every day!!

So next week is our "Work Week". The staff will be working so hard getting the Center ready for the new school year! All the toys, furniture and equipment will be cleaned, scrubbed and sanitized. All the floors throughout the building are being professionally cleaned and waxed and painting touch-ups to the classrooms will also be done. We will also be doing a clean-up on the playground! Phew, I'm exhausted already!! In addition to all this, the teachers and I will be participating in some state license required yearly staff trainings. Throughout the school year, we will all continue to participate in different professional development opportunities which will not only satisfy state license requirements, but help us stay up-to-date on new practices in the field, as well as hopefully give us ideas for new activities to try in our classrooms!



Also attached to this email is a list of "New School Year Reminders". Please know that we are not trying to make things harder for parents in any way with all we have to ask you to do. We clearly know how challenging life can get juggling home life, work life and getting children to school every day, so please understand that most of our "reminders" have to do with complying with our state licensing regulations. You may continue to receive "reminders" throughout the school year from myself or the classroom teachers as situations arise that warrant us to do so. If you ever have any questions regarding our "rules", policies and procedures, please do not ever hesitate to just ask us. Also, everyone was given a VCCC Parent Handbook—our Handbook is updated every year before



the start of our yearly registration in January so please be sure you read it through to stay up to date on all our policies and procedures.

A few more **IMPORTANT** reminders:

- **Please do not bring your children into the classroom in the mornings before 7:00AM. While staff are usually here before 7:00AM, they are busy getting the classroom ready to receive your children for when we technically open at 7:00. And because they are doing things that may take them out of the room (such as getting materials from the closets out back) they cannot be monitoring children who obviously cannot be left alone in the classroom. Also, for any children registered for the 9:00-12:30 or 9:00-3:00 class time in the Preschool/PreK room, it is also important not to bring your child into the classroom before 9:00 as it could possibly compromise our classroom ratios. Also, at the end of the day, again, please be sure you are picking up your children by the time noted on your registration form, picking up earlier than your noted time is obviously fine, but if you happen to need a later pick-up time, we would need to know that ahead of time so that we can ensure that our ratios are not affected. Please understand that staff are scheduled to work according to the schedule that all parents are registering for and even one child dropped off early or picked up late can potentially put us over in our ratio numbers which then puts us in non-compliance of our licensing regulations, which would not bode well for us if our state licensor made one of her many unannounced visits. We clearly understand that sometimes things happen that are out of your control that necessitate the need to drop off early or pick up late. Please just call us as early as possible to notify us of the issue so that we then have the opportunity to compensate for the staff necessary to keep us in compliance with our state license. Thanks so much for your attention to this very important reminder. *Please note that late pick ups, regardless of your phone call may result in late fee charges to offset staff overtime costs to our payroll.**
- Please be sure to look at your child's classroom's daily schedule that is posted outside each room. Please note your child's outside time and understand that the classes do not only use this time for outside time on the playground, they often use it to take the children for walks either through the back neighborhood or on the new rail trail. If your child arrives later than the scheduled time you've registered for and you arrive past the scheduled outside time and the class has gone on a walk, you will then run the risk of having to wait with your child until the group returns.

- **EACH AND EVERY TIME** your child goes to the pediatrician for a physical, please be sure to bring me a copy for your child's file. **VERY IMPORTANT!**
- If you signed up for Sunscreen and/or Bug Spray application, you must send in sunscreen and bug spray labeled with your child's name. Please note that these items must be cream or pump spray, we cannot have any aerosol sprays. AND please remember that parents should be applying sunscreen and/or bug spray to their children BEFORE they come to school each morning. Staff will re-apply before taking the children outside again in the afternoons. Also, please be sure to hand these items directly to your child's teacher, please do not leave them in your child's backpack or cubbie for safety reasons.
- **Reminder from our bookkeeping service:** Please remember that tuition payments are due every Friday for the following week of service, and payment should be placed in the white tuition box that is located in the Preschool hallway above the cubbies on the right side. And please note that you **DO NOT** need to put your check in an envelope or baggie, just drop the check into the secure slot, the box is always locked.

Some parents are unaware that VCCC has a Board of Directors, I would like to make sure that everyone knows that as a non-profit we do in fact have a Board of Directors that is comprised of a very dedicated and generous group of individuals who work diligently behind the scenes to help keep VCCC up and running. Carole Gustafson (also lovingly known as Carole G!!) (President), Barbara Goodwin (Treasurer/Finance Director) Kelly McNabb (Educational Consultant/Board Secretary) and myself (VCCC Administration) currently make up the VCCC Board of Directors. We are so very lucky and thankful to have their ongoing and supportive assistance.

Before I sign off (it's about time, right???)!!!!) I just want to thank all of you for entrusting your children to all of us here at VCCC, but especially to me as the Director and leader of this program. It truly is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. Many years ago someone asked me "what do you think a successful early learning center looks like?" I think it is a center that focuses on the children learning through play in a nurturing, supportive and developmentally appropriate environment where they are happy and excited to come each day. It is a place where parents can drop off their children each day and leave with peace of mind that their children are going to be happy, safe and well cared for. And it is a place where staff are happy and eager to come to each day because they are valued and respected for their hard work and commitment to children. Throughout my very long tenure in the field of early childhood education I have enjoyed substantial experiences as both a classroom teacher and as an administrator. I have also

been a parent for all of my adult life and I am a grandmother to 6 beautiful grandchildren and great-grandmother to 1 beautiful great-granddaughter. This has allowed me the unique perspective of being able to assess situations and make decisions through the eyes and mindset of a parent, a teacher, and a director. My goal as an administrator has always been to create positive relationships with all the parents and families that are in the program, as well as to confirm for them that they have made the right early learning environment choice for their children. It is also my responsibility to ensure that all children in the program have the best early learning experiences possible. As an educator I have always nurtured, supported and challenged children in an age-appropriate manner that has allowed them to move successfully towards the next level of their development. I've also wanted to empower the children with the idea that learning is FUN!!! With this in mind, it has also always been my goal to inspire the teachers I work with that teaching should be as much fun for them as it is for the children to learn. So please know that I will always do my very best to continue to follow through on all of those goals here at the Village Common Children's Center.

Please know that myself and all the staff are looking forward to being partners with all of you during your children's wonderful journey through early childhood, and we are all here with one goal in mind—that the children have positive, happy, safe and fun-filled early learning experiences during their short time with us. **Please remember that I am always here for you—should you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not ever hesitate to contact me. You can visit me in person at the Center, or reach me by telephone at 978-597-0834 or by email at dragonfly8265@aol.com any time.**

On behalf of the VCCC Board of Directors, the staff and myself, WELCOME to the 2024-2025 School Year, it's going to be an AWESOME year!!!

Best,
Carol Ciccolini, VCCC Director





NEW SCHOOL YEAR REMINDERS:

- Upon entering the building, please take your child to the bathroom (there is one located in the hallway immediately upon opening the hallway door to the Infant/Toddler wing)(the keypad code is the same for both hallways) and have your child wash their hands before they come into their respective classrooms.
- Despite the fact that life has gone back to some semblance of normalcy, it will continue to be VCCC's policy that parents do not enter the classrooms at drop-off and pick-up. Please continue "handing your child off" at the classroom doorways to the teachers.
- If your child is not coming to school for any reason, please be sure to call the center to let us know.
- Please remember to ALWAYS SIGN YOUR CHILD IN & OUT EVERY DAY. Sign in/out sheets are hanging on the walls outside classroom doors.
- Due to the severe food allergies of many of our students, please remember that VCCC is a **PEANUT and NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT**. Please do not send any food items containing any kind of nut products or products that are labeled "may contain" or "have been manufactured in a facility that processes nuts" etc. Additionally, please note that our INFANT and TODDLER classrooms are also **EGG-FREE** due to significant egg allergies. Please do not send in hard boiled, scrambled or fried eggs. We most appreciate your help in keeping all our children safe and healthy.
- Please remember to label ALL of your children's belongings with their name. This includes the outside of their lunchbox as well as any food containers and water bottles or thermos's.
- Extra clothing bins should hold a complete set of current weather-related clothing including underwear and socks. (Infants and toddlers would benefit from at least 2 or 3 sets of extra clothing.)
- Please make sure that children are dressed for play and please remember our motto "Messy is Fun!". We will often get MESSY during our activity times and while we will offer the children use of smocks, clothing may still get wet, dirty or stained so please send your children to school in "play" clothes that can possibly get dirty or wet.
- All TODDLERS and PRESCHOOL/PRE-K children should be wearing sturdy,

CLOSED-TOED shoes every day, no open-toed shoes or flip flops are allowed for safety reasons, sneakers are really the best option especially for outside play.

- If your children are staying with us for rest time they will need a sheet to cover the mat (crib size sheets fit the mats perfectly). They may also bring a **small** blanket, **small** pillow and **one** stuffed toy if they so desire. Please, no full-size bed pillows and blankets as rest materials need to fit inside a jumbo size Ziploc bag (with slider closure)(which the school will provide for you) in order that they fit in the cubbies. And please remember that at the end of each week these rest materials **must** go home for washing and then returned the following week.
- During the COVID pandemic, EEC rescinded their regulation on toothbrushing so for the time being, we will not be following the toothbrushing policy that is noted in your Parent Handbook and Enrollment Forms. We will let you know if EEC puts the original regulation back into effect at which time you will then follow the choice you chose on the tooth brushing authorization form that was included in your enrollment form packet.
- While we do understand that this is often easier said than done, please refrain from allowing your children to bring toys from home (outside of a rest time lovey) unless it is a request from the teachers for a particular activity, like "sharing time" for example. If your child does bring unrequested toys from home, he or she will be asked to leave it in their cubbie so that it does not get lost or broken.
- Please remember to bring in an updated medical form every time your child goes to their pediatrician for a physical.
- All correspondence to parents, including monthly newsletters, will be done through email. Please make sure that the Director and Classroom Teachers have your correct email address. And please be sure to take a peek at the Parent Bulletin Board too every week!!

**WE MOST APPRECIATE & THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION TO THESE REMINDERS!!**



