



Rockland Parent-Child Center

Our Parent Membership Handbook 2009-2010

Inside...

- Our Mission
- Early Childhood Programs
- Membership Policies
- Toddler Play Group Policies
- Registration Checklist
- Important Contact Information



Welcome to The Rockland Parent-Child Center!

Founded over 20 years ago by founding mothers, Barbara Keil and Jean Kelly, the Rockland Parent-Child Center is a family support center that offers a broad range of family support services, including infant/toddler playgroups, parent support groups, educational workshops and support for incarcerated parents.

Our approach is inclusive, open and non-judgmental. We welcome families of all types, incomes and backgrounds. Our goal is to strengthen families and thus strengthen community. Families are the heart and soul of the Rockland Parent-Child Center.

Our Early Childhood Programs:

THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF A CHILD'S LIFE PROVIDE CRUCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. These years are also some of the most challenging and exhausting for parents. Our playgroups are designed to benefit both children and their parents. Our facilitators, early childhood professionals and support group leaders, create a "home away from home" for parents and caregivers where they can find camaraderie, support and information while their children play, learn and socialize in a safe, age-appropriate free-play setting. Expert presentations, informational workshops (with childcare often provided), a reference library, social events, support groups and community referrals provide members with endless opportunities to learn, grow and connect.

Parents of Infants Support Group

(parents/caregivers with infants, birth to 1 year)

Mondays and Thursdays, 1 P.M. – 3 P.M.

This playgroup provides a welcoming atmosphere where a parent/caregiver and infant can interact with a community of peers. Playgroups include activities such as "Tummy Time" spent on mats and the use of age-appropriate toys. The group's facilitator leads parents through discussion and exploration of topics such as bonding with your infant, establishing healthy sleep habits, breastfeeding, weaning, the impact of parenthood on the relationship with one's spouse/significant other, and much more.

Members are encouraged to bring up any topic or challenge they are experiencing in an environment where the input of one's peers is as valuable as that of the facilitator. RPCC also invites a range of experts into the group to address topics including nutrition, pediatric health, safety and accident prevention, motor development, speech and language development, and more.

Parents & Toddlers Together

(parents/caregivers with toddlers, 1 to 3 years)

Monday through Friday, 9:30 A.M. to 12 Noon

In this playgroup, a facilitator greets families each morning and guides them through age-appropriate activities including free play, an art project, snack, sharing and taking turns, story-time, and group activities such as clean-up time and sing-alongs.

Children are encouraged to explore the Center's play spaces, including areas for:

- Dramatic play, including dress-up, housekeeping, and dolls;
- Block-building and vehicle play;
- Table toys, including puzzles and other fine-motor activities;
- Story-time, with children looking at books, as well as being read to by an adult; and
- Outdoor play in the fenced-in yard which includes climbing equipment and other gross-motor activities.

A Typical Day: 9:30 A.M Greetings and Free Play; 10:15 A.M. Snack; 10:45 A.M. Circle/Story time; 11:15 A.M. Crafts; 11:45 A.M. Clean-up and Goodbyes; 12 Noon group ends

Children develop social skills, cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, and become accustomed to an age-appropriate routine. They also begin to understand and follow basic expectations about being responsible for a shared space and materials, as well as functioning as a part of a group or "class". These early experiences lay the foundation for later experiences in preschool and elementary school.

The group facilitator leads parents through discussion and exploration of topics concerning parenting and child behavior, and models helpful responses to challenging situations during the course of a session. Members are encouraged to bring up any topic or challenge they are experiencing in this supportive environment, where the input of one's peers is as valuable as that of the facilitator. Experts in areas of health, nutrition, toddler development and safety are invited to speak during playgroup snack-time. The program also features special activities during normal playgroup hours including music, movement/yoga, special craft days, and more.

Membership Policies:

Membership Fee & Benefits: A *non-refundable \$50 Annual Membership Fee* entitles families to a quarterly newsletter, free admission to all parenting workshops, reduced fees for support groups, parenting skills courses and any second program, monthly E-News program updates, priority registration for all programs and groups, early invitation to social events and other special RPCC and community events

Membership Responsibilities: RPCC is designed as a membership organization in which parent participation is key to its success and continuation. Through your participation, we keep costs down, maintain a clean and safe environment for our children, and offer a full range of family support programming. Even if working parents are unable to attend playgroups with their children on a regular basis, the family is still expected to fulfill volunteer requirements as outlined in the "Membership Benefits & Responsibilities" form provided to you at registration (which includes attending parent meetings, serving on a volunteer team, participating in a toy wash, supporting fundraisers, etc.). Sign up sheets for volunteer team assignments and toy wash dates are included in your membership packet.

Volunteering also provides opportunities for parents to meet and socialize with other parents outside of the group setting, helping to enliven and strengthen our community even further.

Annual Program Fees: Playgroup registration is on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited. The following fees cover your family for September - June. Fees are based on a sliding scale of family income and are kept strictly confidential. Payment is due in full at the time of registration. Families registering after November 1st will be charged a prorated fee. Families transferring from the Infant Playgroup to the Toddler Playgroup during the year will have their current payment applied toward the Toddler Playgroup fee. **Program fees are non-refundable.** See *Registration Form* for current rate information.

Scholarships: Partial and full scholarships are available. No family will be turned away for lack of ability to pay. Contact Director of Programs for more information.

Attendance: We have an open door policy. Parents or caregivers can come whenever they can during the program's scheduled hours.

Emergency Form: Before a parent or caregiver can participate in the infant or toddler group, a completed emergency contact form must be completed and submitted to the Center.

Holidays and Inclement Weather Closings: The Rockland Parent-Child Center follows the Nyack School District calendar for holidays and school closings. If they are closed or delayed, so are we. Check our phone message at the Center for updates by 8:00 A.M. on these days. Inclement weather closings will be announced on local radio stations 1160AM, 1300AM, 1230AM, 103.9FM, 106.3FM and 100.7FM. Closings will also be posted on the Internet at www.cancellations.com, under the Nyack Public Schools listing.

Illness: The health and safety of your child, and of all children attending the Center, is very important to us. Parents should use good judgment when deciding whether or not their child is well enough to attend playgroup. Your child should not come to playgroup if he or she has:

- fever over 101° or fever within the last 24 hours
- vomiting and/or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- severe colds or flu (runny nose with green or yellow mucus)
- consistent or extreme coughing
- contagious diseases (including pink eye, rash, coxsackie, strep)

Confidentiality:

In order to protect the privacy of families and maintain an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, we ask that matters discussed during playgroups or support groups remain *strictly confidential*. If there is a situation occurring during group that concerns or troubles you in any way, please speak with the facilitator or the Director of Programs, rather than with other members of the group. This is the best way for potential problems to be addressed and avoid ill feelings and miscommunication among group participants.

Toddler Play Group Policies:

RPCC is a hands-on, cooperative organization where our parent members play an important role in ensuring the smooth operation of our playgroup programs.

Although we want to create and maintain a casual and relaxing atmosphere during your time at the RPCC, it is important that participants understand and make best effort to abide by the following guidelines in order to ensure the safest and most positive experience for everyone.

General Guidelines:

Supervision:

- Children cannot be left at the Center without a parent or assigned caregiver at any time.
- For your child's safety, we ask that you be responsible for the supervision of your own child at all times. You can ask another parent to watch your child if you need to leave the room, but it should only be for a few minutes.
- Children should never be in the kitchen unattended.
- Make sure to have a parent's permission before escorting their child to the backyard play area.

Visitors: Please do not bring children other than your own unless they are accompanied by their parent or caregiver. Adult family members who would like to visit and participate with you, or in your place, are always welcome.

Mail/Announcements: Each registered family will receive a mail slot in the front entrance of the building. Please check it regularly for your child's artwork, announcements, flyers, etc.

Clean up: Parents and caregivers are responsible for helping with daily clean up during and at the end of each playgroup session. This includes putting away toys in the playroom and outside play area, cleaning dishes, wiping tables, etc.

Snack: Parents in the Toddler Group are asked to bring snacks and drinks for snack time on a rotating basis. The facilitator will coordinate a working schedule. Please keep all snacks healthy and refrain from bringing foods that pose a choking hazard (e.g. popcorn, raisins) and highly allergic items (i.e. peanuts). It is your responsibility to find another parent to cover for you if you are unable to provide snack on your assigned date(s).

Clothing We would like children to feel free to engage in messy activities without concern for keeping clean. Parents and children are encouraged to dress accordingly. We do have a limited supply of smock/shirts for children to use for some activities but feel free to bring your own.

Hygiene: Every effort is made to prevent the spread of germs. Please wash your hands before and after preparing/serving snack and as many times as necessary during the session (i.e. after wiping child's nose, supervising outside play, assisting child in bathroom). It's also important to encourage your child to wash his/her hands as needed.

Phone Use: RPCC phones are for emergency use only. We also discourage cell phone use during the session, except for emergencies.

Participation Guideline:

The ideas and skills presented here are part of a process, and are intended to help you during your time interacting with other parents, their children, and your own child. The most important thing is to relax and enjoy sharing your child's first "school-like" experience.

Use of First Names: In keeping with a feeling of warmth and a community atmosphere, all parents and teachers are addressed on a first name basis by both children and adults.

Getting Involved: During Toddler Playgroup sessions, parents/caregivers are expected to help the RPCC facilitator prepare and serve snack, participate and assist your child in art activities, sing-alongs, story-time and clean-up time.

Active involvement with your child during group is vital as it provides optimum opportunities to learn from the facilitator, from other parents, and by observing your child interact with other children and adults.

Encouraging Participation: Parents should gently encourage participation. Children should not be forced to participate in activities. If the child does not want to participate, help the child find another activity and try again another day.

Being a Role Model: Children learn best when behaviors are modeled for them and expectations are clear. Parents are their children's greatest role models. By modeling participation in group activities and clean-up time, parents provide their children with the opportunity to learn by example and by doing.

For example, parents are asked to assist their child with putting away at least three toys the child has played with that morning, even if you are leaving before the end of the session. This is an ideal age to help your child develop many of the skills he or she will need for successful participation in later group experiences, including taking turns, caring for toys and other shared materials, and understanding that each toy has a proper place and should be returned to that place when playing is done.

Important Contact Information:

RPCC Office: (845) 358-2702

Molly Gibeau-Griffin, LMSW, Exec. Director ext. 11
Wanda Octaviano, MA, Director of Programs ext. 12
Pam Moskowitz, Office Manager ext. 10

Family Connections

Anthony Porter Program Director ext. 14
Selena Nixon, Associate Program Director ext. 14

Facilitators

Lisa Kloenne, Parents & Toddlers Together ext. 15
Katie Berry, Support Group Facilitator ext. 16
Adoptive, Parents of Adolescents
Kathy Hugh, Support Group Facilitator ext. 13
Single Mothers Group
Kim Cross, Head Start Parenting Group (845)358-2600
Amy Bamberger, Autism Spectrum Program
Deirdre McLary, Expectant Parents
Special Events ext. 20
Weather Closings, Main Message www.cancellations.com

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Jane Graumann, President
Stephanie Baumes, Vice-President
Merrill McGarity, Secretary
Scott Behson, Treasurer

Board Members

Gina Rosado Alcruz, Publicity
Harriet Dunkerley, Programming
Betsy House, Outreach
Laurie Sobler, Outreach
Ruth Waldman, Programming

Visit

www.rocklandparentchild.org

For RPCC calendar of events, community announcements, program updates, and links to other community organizations.

Become a Fan

RPCC Newsletter

Contact the office to contribute articles to our quarterly community newsletter.

Advertising in our Newsletter

Contact our office for rates and discount packages.

Rockland Parent-Child Center

137 First Avenue • Nyack, NY 10960
P: 845-358-2702 F: 845-358-2050