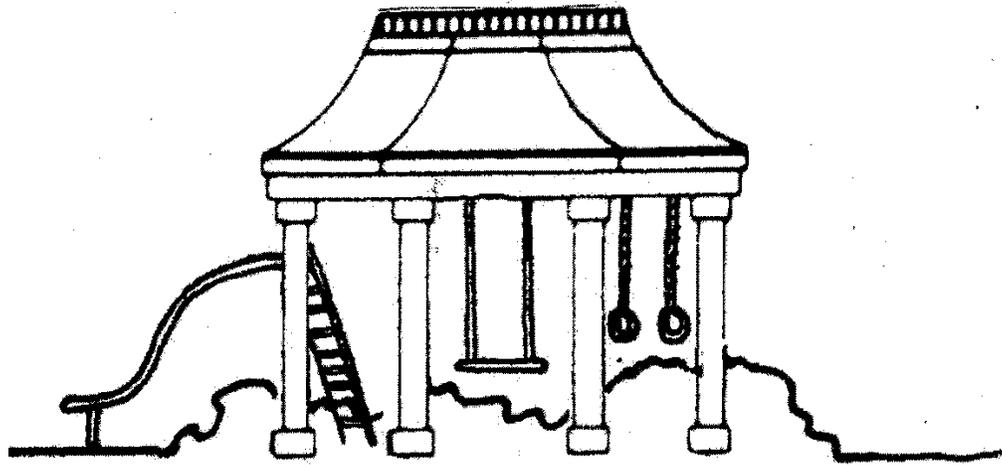


GORHAM HOUSE PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2017



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MISSION STATEMENT

Our primary mission is to provide children with a relaxed, safe, and happy environment to spend their days while away from their families, and to provide those families with peace of mind knowing that their most precious possessions are being well cared for. We offer children the opportunities to develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically through play-based activities.

Our secondary mission is to support Gorham House in its efforts to provide the elderly residents who live here with comfort, dignity, respect and the ability to witness a celebration of life that young children present so well. We do this, in part, by helping the children in our care to learn compassion, kindness, patience and tolerance towards others, regardless of age, skin color or ability.

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Childcare Rates
Effective September 1, 2017

**Half Day
Preschool Program (8:00 AM – Noon)**

2 days per week (Tuesday & Thursday only)	\$69.50/week	\$278.00/month
3 days per week (Mon., Wed. & Fri. only)	\$103.75/week	\$415.00/month
4 days per week	\$137.50/week	\$550.00/month
5 days per week	\$171.25/week	\$685.00/month

Full Day

2 days per week (Tuesday & Thursday only)	\$91.25/week	\$365.00/month
3 days per week (Mon., Wed. & Fri. only)	\$136.25/week	\$545.00/month
4 days per week	\$172.50/week	\$690.00/month
5 days per week	\$211.25/week	\$845.00/month

Payment is expected on the first of the month, unless other arrangements are made with the program director. **Tuition payments received after the 10th of the month will result in a 10% finance charge. Employees receive a 35% discount. There will be a \$25.00 fee for all returned checks.**

PRESCHOOL POLICIES & INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

Gorham House Preschool is a state-licensed childcare center for children between the ages of three and five years. We are licensed for 15 children. Our teachers, substitutes, and director all meet or exceed the requirements set forth by the State of Maine for education and continuing training. We currently offer a School Year Program, which runs from September through June and a Summer Fun Program for 8 weeks in July and August. Monthly tuition remains the same for both programs.

Gorham House Preschool is housed in an adult retirement community, which allows us to offer a wide variety of experiences to our children and Grand Friends we share our days with. Our on-site intergenerational programs set us apart from other centers and makes Gorham House Preschool a wonderful place to learn, play, and grow.

We also have students from local colleges who are majoring in Early Childhood Education interning with us at various times throughout the year. We are proud to be selected as a mentoring site for those thinking about entering our profession.

We are dedicated to embracing people of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It is our responsibility to provide this handbook and any other written or verbal information to families in a language they can understand. Gorham House has a contracted translation service that is available to preschool families whenever the need arises.

PHILOSOPHY

It is our intent at Gorham House Preschool to help each child, both as an individual and as a member of a group, to grow and develop as fully and happily as possible. It is our belief that both children and adults must be in an environment in which all feel respected and safe. It is our wish to always maintain an atmosphere of openness and warmth. Within this atmosphere, children and adults must work together to solve differences by expressing feelings, listening to others' viewpoints, and striving for compromise. Adults must facilitate such interactions among children in concrete and relative ways. Issues of conflict between children should be resolved by those same children with the adult there only to facilitate and model appropriate problem solving behavior.

At Gorham House Preschool, children will be learning through experience, observation, play, problem solving and creativity. The Creative Curriculum and the Maine Early Learning Guidelines act as frameworks to guide us in our planning. Within those guidelines, teachers will observe and listen to children to discover what their interests are and use ideas generated by the children to develop activities and learning centers within the indoor and outdoor classroom

environments. Our emphasis will always be on the whole child. Children need years of play with real objects and events before they are able to internalize and truly understand the meaning of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with materials and interact with people. Our routines are consistent and our days are balanced with both child directed and teacher directed activities. We also strive for a healthy balance of quiet and active times throughout the day.

Children need to repeat all of these activities many times before formal academic tasks are presented to them. Because of our philosophy, you may not see children working on and bringing home “traditional” crafts from preschool. We believe that the process of learning is more beneficial to the children than the product.

We, as teachers, are always there to encourage independent play, plan a variety of activities, get involved with children without directing their behavior, and maintain smooth transitions, as well as a high level of teacher/child verbal interactions. We are the observers, role models, leaders, recorders, and facilitators in the classroom, which guide the children throughout the day as they learn and explore.

“Beginning with birth, the child has one concern: to learn all there is to learn from the world that he is part of. The planet is the child’s playground and nothing – neither adult values nor concepts of “normal” growth – should interfere with the child’s ‘business’: to play. Raised this way, the magical child is a happy genius, capable of learning anything.”

Joseph Chilton-Pearce
“The Magical Child”

GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Emotional Growth

The child will:

1. Be able to separate from parents.
2. Begin to verbalize his/her feelings.
3. Begin to develop inner control.
4. Be able to take turns and to wait.
5. Begin to assume responsibilities for self toward the role of independence.
6. Be able to try new things without fear of failing.
7. Be able to feel secure in preschool.
8. Be able to trust other adults.
9. Begin to make some choices.
10. Develop a positive self-image.

Social Growth

The child will:

1. Enjoy coming to school and being with other children.
2. Be able to stay with a group for an activity.
3. Begin to share and take turns.
4. Begin to show courtesy.
5. Begin to appreciate the rights of others.
6. Begin to be able to sit through a story.
7. Begin to play cooperatively with other children.
8. Begin to develop a helpful attitude toward the group.
9. Begin to respect the rights and property of others.

Physical Growth

The child will:

1. Improve large muscle coordination.
2. Improve small muscle coordination.
3. Develop eye-hand coordination.
4. Use equipment correctly, safely and appropriately for his/her age.
5. Dress him/herself with minimal health.
6. Use and develop all five senses.
7. Develop acceptable toilet habits.
8. Discriminate likenesses and differences in objects.
9. Respond to listening games.
10. Develop a sense of directionality – the ability to perceive and orient oneself to the top, bottom, sides, front and back of an object.

Intellectual Growth

The child will:

1. Develop greater language skills (including vocabulary).
2. Enjoy learning new things.
3. Follow simple directions.
4. Increase attention span.
5. Match such things as colors, shapes, etc.
6. Develop an inquiring attitude by observing the world and questioning what he/she sees in order to evaluate and assimilate what he/she has experienced.
7. Be introduced to numbers and shapes, measurement, sense of time, sets, and ordinal numbers.
8. Know his/her full name and age and be able to recognize his/her name.
9. Learn songs and finger-plays to develop memory, sequence, ordinal numbers, etc.

10. Begin to develop an imagination and to differentiate reality and make believe.
11. Begin to use his/her own inner resources instead of relying on adults.
12. Develop increased listening skills.
13. Develop increased visual discrimination skills.
14. Use equipment and materials appropriately.
15. Become aware of language symbols.

Language and Literacy

The child will:

1. Develop knowledge and skills related to communicating and listening.
2. Develop knowledge and skills related to books; i.e. showing and understanding that books and other forms of printed material have a purpose.
3. Develop knowledge and skills related to comprehension i.e. understanding that spoken and written words have meaning.
4. Develop knowledge and skills related to sounds in spoken language i.e. the ability to hear and work with the sounds of spoken language and an understanding that spoken words are made up of separate small sounds.
5. Develop knowledge and skills related to print concepts i.e. understanding that words they see in print and words they speak and hear are related.
6. Develop the ability to recognize that sounds are associated with letters of the alphabet and that they form words.
7. Develop the ability to use symbols to represent words and ideas.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

Gorham House Preschool is proud to display the Torch Symbol of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC administers the largest and most widely recognized national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for early childhood classrooms and childcare centers.

The heart of NAEYC accreditation focuses on the interactions and relationships between teachers, children and families. The process carefully considers all aspects of a program, including; curriculum, assessment of child progress, health and safety, staff qualifications, community relationships, physical environment and leadership. We are pleased to be part of the movement toward quality early childhood education in Maine.

OPERATING HOURS

Gorham House Preschool is open from 7:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Monday through Friday. We will operate year round except on the following days:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day (also the Wednesday before and the Friday after)
- Christmas Eve through New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Patriots Day
- Memorial Day
- Week after Growing Away in June
- July 4th (will observe on Friday or Monday for weekend holiday-if the 4th falls on a Thursday, we will be closed on the 5th as well)
- Week before start of Fall Session

Half Day/Preschool Only Program Hours: 8:00AM–12:00PM.

STORMS AND DISASTERS

If a storm or other occurrence requires us to close, the director will notify each family by phone between 6:00 – 6:30 A.M. We close only in extreme circumstances, so you can always assume we are open. If you need immediate information, call the director, Meghan Pomelow, at 838-2482. If the center closes early because of inclement weather or other emergency, parents or their emergency contacts will be called. Parents will be given as much notice as possible in these situations.

DROP OFF/PICK UP

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE CHILDREN ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING WITHOUT AN ADULT.

For your child's safety a security code must be used to enter the building from the outside. You will be given the code upon enrollment. The code will change throughout the year to ensure your child's safety.

Parents are asked to park in the circle near the preschool entrance and walk in with their children. **Parents must accompany their child into the classroom and sign in at the door. If the blue sign-in box is not on the shelf, it will be outdoors with the teacher. The blue box attached to the sign in clipboard has the children's emergency information in it. It is locked to protect your private information. This box stays with the children whether we are on the playground,**

on field trips or practicing emergency evacuations. This is our official attendance form. We use this to take attendance during evacuations. It is vital to have your child's name listed if they are in attendance. It is the parent's responsibility to sign your child in and out. If the teacher is occupied with another child at the time, be sure to let her know your child has arrived and "check in" with her.

When dropping off or picking up, be sure to allow your child time to adjust to this transition in his/her day. If separation is difficult in the morning or if your child does not want to leave school at the end of the day, speak to the teacher for advice and assistance. This is normal behavior and we can help with strategies to make the transition smoother.

Pick up and drop off time is the best time to briefly "check in" on your child's day. If you want more information on your child's interactions, development, and behaviors in the classroom, it is up to you to ask for this information. If you have an issue or concerns to discuss with the teachers, please set up a time outside of drop off and pick up time to do so. See the COMMUNICATION section of the handbook for convenient times during the day. We will refrain from talking about your child in front of them or in front of other parents to respect the confidentiality of your child. Drop off and pick up time is the children's time.

If you plan to stay longer than 10 minutes, please find a place to park in the parking lot. Our entrance is also the ambulance pick-up zone. It is important to respect this and park in the circle for quick drop off and pick up only. **Please never block the ramp area.**

LATE PICK UP

The center closes promptly at 5:30PM. Our policy is a charge of \$1.00 per minute past 5:30PM. Please allow enough time to pick up your child and still sign out by the scheduled time. If parents continue to arrive late, we reserve the right to terminate the child's enrollment in the program.

FEES AND PAYMENT

Payment is due on the first day of each month. Checks should be made payable to Gorham House Preschool and placed into the "Communication Basket" below the parent board in the cubby area. Monthly rates are based on 48 weeks divided into twelve equal payments. Financial contracts are in effect from September 1 to June 30 and separately from July 1 to August 30 for the summer program.

No deductions from tuition will be made for absences, family vacations, staff training days, school vacations, emergency closings or holidays.

A month's written notice to the director is required for withdrawal during the contracted time or tuition for that month will be due in full. Thirty days notice will

also be given to families if a child is deemed inappropriate for our center. Every effort will be made to work with families to maintain the relationship.

A late charge of 10% will be applied if payment is not in before the tenth of each month. If payment is not in by the twentieth day of the month, a meeting will be called with parent, director and business manager to determine whether child will be permitted to stay in the program. If something is not satisfactorily agreed upon, the relationship will be terminated.

Rate increases can be expected each year.

ABSENCES/DISMISSALS

We would appreciate a phone call for any reason your child will not be here on a regularly scheduled day. You can call or send an email to inform us of an absence. If your child is to be picked up early, this is also something we should know to insure that we are in the classroom. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself, we need to be told in advance, preferably in the morning, so that we can discuss this with your child. In an emergency, a phone call will be acceptable. If we have not met the person picking up or if they are not on your emergency contact or escort list, we will require identification in the form of a driver's license or other picture ID. For your child's safety, please cooperate with this policy. The safety of your child is extremely important to us. You can reach us through the switchboard, 839-5757, ext. 102, or our cell phone, 838-2482.

SUMMER PLANNING

If a family chooses to keep their child home in the summer but still wishes to re-enroll your child in the fall, we will hold that space open as long as we can. If an application for immediate enrollment is received from another family, we will notify parents holding the space and allow them first refusal. This means that the lowest summer (July and August) tuition rate would have to be paid even if child does not attend in order to hold the space open. The lowest summer tuition rate would be the Tuesday and Thursday half-day program. If this affects more than one family holding spaces for the summer, the most recently enrolled child will be affected first.

TOYS FROM HOME

Although we understand that children want to share their toys and new possessions with their friends, we ask that toys from home not be brought into school. Our classroom materials and supplies are selected for their developmental and educational merit. When toys are brought in from home, the focus changes. Also, staff will not accept responsibility for any personal toys that are broken, lost, or damaged in any way. It is our **strongest recommendation** that items other than the one soft stuffed animal for rest time remain at home. If toys are brought from home, they will need to stay in the child's cubby or in the teachers' closet until pick-up time. We will always make time for children to share special items that are discovered at home or while vacationing. We also provide limited "Show & Tell" days throughout the year to give children the opportunity to share something special with their peers. Show & Tell items must fit inside the provided Show & Tell bags, found in the children's cubbies the morning of Show & Tell.

CLOTHING AND REST TIME NEEDS

As many of the activities we provide can be messy, please be sure to send your child to the center in loose, comfortable PLAY CLOTHES. Play clothes are clothes that can get dirty! **Children should not feel required to avoid certain activities because they are concerned about soiling their clothing.** A change of clothes (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt) should be provided in your child's cubby at all times. Please check extra clothes frequently and replenish them as needed. Please label all items brought to Gorham House. This small effort helps our staff immensely when we straighten the cubby area and help children find their things. There is a marker near the sign-in sheet for your convenience. Also remember that the cubbies are small and usually shared by two children. Please keep only essential items overnight. Your child will need a crib sheet and light blanket. If your child needs a pillow during rest time, please provide a small pillow with removable pillow case that will fit into the provided rest time bag. No sleeping bags, large blankets, or large pillows please. Gorham House provides bags for storing sleep items and all items need to fit in the bag comfortably. Please do not send bulky items. They will be returned to you. Gorham House will wash bedding each Friday.

TOOTHBRUSING

All full day children have the opportunity to brush their teeth after lunch. Children's toothbrushes and toothpaste are provided by the center. They are changed bi-monthly or after an illness. Children brush at the sink in the classroom for two minutes. They are supervised and use a cup with the toothpaste on the bottom so cross contamination does not occur on the toothpaste tube. They use the same paper cup for rinsing.

LET'S GO! 5-2-1-0

In 2013, our program teamed up with *Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 Goes to Child Care*. This program is designed to increase healthy eating and active living in children from birth to age 18 by working with children and families. This program also provides professional development opportunities for Gorham House Preschool staff to increase our skills and knowledge regarding healthy eating and active living. Our daily activities as well as a number of our policies are created with the common message of 5-2-1-0 in mind.

- 5** or more fruits & vegetables
- 2** hours or less recreational screen time*
- 1** hour or more of physical activity
- 0** sugary drinks, more water & low fat milk

*Keep TV/Computer out of the bedroom. No screen time under the age of 2.

OUTDOOR PLAY

We at Gorham House Preschool understand that active play is important for healthy growth and development of young children. Since we know that children stay healthier if they play outside every day, we play outside at least once a day, usually twice, unless there is extreme weather. All preschoolers will receive at least 90 minutes of active play (indoor and outdoor) each day. Children who are here only half day can expect to receive at least 45 minutes each day. It is especially important to send your child well-bundled (mittens, hat, boots, snowpants, jacket) in the winter months. Extras during mud season! During the summer, a bathing suit, towel, and water-shoes should be left at school for use with water play and wading pools.

For your child's safety we monitor the temperature, wind chill factor, and air quality daily. This information is noted on the Weather Chart that is located on a clipboard in the teachers' closet. This information guides us when we make decisions about how long to remain outdoors and during which period of the day it will be safest to have the children outside. We will take the children outside as long as it is above 15 degrees F and as long as the air quality is safe, so please have appropriate outdoor clothing available to your child at all times. "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

SCREEN TIME

Our program understands that television and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others. These are essential in learning and developing physically and socially, which is why we limit screen time to a maximum of 30 minutes per week. On occasion, an age appropriate/educational movie will be shown to the children pertaining to current curriculum. An IPAD is available in the classroom to enhance the

children's learning, but is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes total per day, if used at all. It is always used in the presence of a teacher and is for educational purposes only.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

We ask that your child bring a lunch from home. Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We ask that you remember this when packing your child's lunch. We would prefer that parents send only healthy foods. We highly recommend packing fruit and/or vegetables in your child's lunch box every day. We are more than willing to provide you with a list of healthy snack options. We would prefer that children self-select from an assortment of soups, pastas, sandwiches, fresh or dried fruits, vegetables, yogurt, breads and crackers, cheeses, etc. There are seldom food issues when children can decide what to eat first. This also fosters independence and a sense of well-being. Teachers will not indicate in what order your child should eat his/her food. If you send pudding, kids' yogurt, and a granola bar, remember that each of these foods has an extremely high sugar content and your child may choose to eat all of these while leaving his/her sandwich or apple in the bag! Make your selections carefully.* We have a microwave for your convenience. We will provide 1% low fat milk and water with lunch. We limit the availability of sugary beverages (such as soda, fruit drinks, sports drinks, and sweet teas, etc.) to less than one time a month, if served at all. We also limit serving 100% fruit juice to 4-6 ounces per day, if served at all. We routinely send home un-eaten portions of sandwiches and heat ups. We believe that this enables parents to see what their children have eaten and discuss other choices - less food or different foods, etc. We have at least one luncheon with the residents each month and various Gorham House lunch functions during the year. Your child will not need a lunch on these days. They will be marked on our monthly calendars. **Because of space restrictions, we regret that both regular and special lunch functions are available only to children who are with us for the full day program.**

- Lunch boxes need to be labeled with your child's name.
- Cereal and milk are always on hand in the event of forgotten lunches.
- Please pack an ice pack and place lunch boxes in children's cubbies.
- **Soda, gum, and hard candy are not allowed at school.** We will ask your child to take these items home. **Juice and other sugary beverages are STRONGLY discouraged at school.** Water is clearly visible and freely available to children at all times.

We will provide two healthy self-serve snacks during the day. In the morning, cereal, fruit, English muffins, toast, rice cakes, yogurt, bagels, cheese sticks and crackers, etc. will be offered on varying days. Water and 1% low-fat milk is available to children at snack times. Afternoon snacks are typically, cheese and crackers, rice cakes, applesauce, fruits and veggies, or a snack that we have prepared ourselves as part of our curriculum.

Healthy snacks (especially fruits and vegetables) and non-food treats will also be provided by the program for celebrations and holidays. We ask that snacks brought in from home for special events are also healthy choices (fruits and vegetables recommended). We will not serve unhealthy snacks brought in for the class, including cakes, cupcakes, etc. Please check with program director before bringing in snacks. A list of healthy, age appropriate snacks are available if needed.

Food will never be used as a reward in the program.

***Hidden Sugars:**

If these ingredients are listed as one or more of the first three ingredients, the product is considered high in sugar:

Dextrose	maltose	granulated sugar	sorbitol	lactose
corn syrup	fructose	turbinado	levulose	milk sugar
Mannitol	honey	maltitol	xylitol	
molasses	Invert sugar	high fructose corn syrup		

Choking Hazards

The following foods will not be offered at preschool because of the choking hazard to children below four years of age. If your child is four or older you may include these items in their lunch; however, we ask that you not bring them to school if you are providing a special snack for all of the children. They include: "...foods that are round, hard, small, thick and sticky, smooth, or slippery. Examples of these foods are hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds), raw carrots (cut into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonfuls of peanut butter and chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole." **If your child is younger than 4 years of age, please refrain from including the above-mentioned items in his/her lunchbox.**

Caring for Our Children
Nutritional Health and Safety Performance Standard 4.03

Allergies

In the event that a child with severe food allergies (ie. peanuts, milk, etc) is enrolled, we reserve the right to ask all families to respect the health of that child and refrain from sending the indicated foods to school. These restrictions will be posted.

ILLNESS POLICY

We understand how difficult it is for you when your child is sick. Our primary goals are to make sure the child is as comfortable as possible and to prevent various illnesses from spreading throughout the center. If your child comes to school, he/she will be expected to take part in the whole program, including outdoor time. We do not have enough staff to keep a sick child inside. If a child is not well upon arriving at the center or becomes ill during the day, parents will be expected to pick him/her up from the center within a half hour.

A child is required be kept out of the center if he/she has:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more
- Stomach ache
- Swollen glands
- Chest Congestion
- Earache
- Constant cough
- Sore Throat
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Conjunctivitis: an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye". The eye is generally red with some burning and thick yellowish discharge.
- Bronchitis: This can begin with hoarseness, cough, and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful but gradually becomes more productive.
- Rashes: that you cannot identify or that have not been diagnosed by a physician.
- Impetigo of the skin: This presents as red pimples that eventually become small weeping areas. Lesions may occur in moist areas of the body such as creases in the neck, groin, underarms, face, or hands.
- Diarrhea: watery or loose bowel movements that look different and are more frequent than usual. Sometimes accompanied by stomach ache.
- Vomiting: Child should be kept home for at least 24 hours after the last incidence of vomiting.
- If a child is really sick with no obvious symptoms: The child may look or act tired, show lack of interest or display other unusual behaviors.
- Contagious diseases for which the child must be kept at home: Influenza, Measles, Chicken pox, Scarlet Fever, Hepatitis, Mumps and Roseola are a few examples.
- An ear or throat infection that has been diagnosed by a doctor: If the child has been placed on an antibiotic he/she should not be brought back to the center until he/she has taken the medication for at least 24 hours.
- Head Lice: Severe itching of the scalp. Children with head lice should remain home until at least 24 hours after effective therapy and there are no visible nits in the hair. Teacher's will check for nits upon arrival and will send children home if any are found then or through out the day. We know this is an inconvenience to parents, but it is in all children's best interest to keep lice out of the classroom. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

If a child has a cold, an allergic rash (as diagnosed by a doctor), loose bowels due to medication or diet, she/he may still be brought to the center.

In order to attend the program or return the following conditions must be met:

- A child must be free from fever, vomiting, diarrhea (without symptoms) for a **full 24 hours**
- Any child prescribed an antibiotic for a current contagious bacterial infection must take the prescription for a **full 24-hour course** before returning.
- A child must be able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- The child must be free of open, oozing skin conditions unless 1) a health care provider signs a note stating that the condition is not contagious and 2) the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- A child excluded because of lice, scabies or other infestation may return 24 hours after treatment is begun as long as they are nit free.
- If a child was excluded because of a reportable contagious illness, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious is required prior to readmission.

The final decision whether a child may attend or is to be excluded from the program is made by the program director. We have several excellent reference books of common infections and conditions of children including symptoms and treatment. They can be found in the Preschool Library located in the teachers' closet. You are always welcome to read or borrow the following:

A Sigh of Relief
Caring for our Children
Healthy Young Children
Managing Infections Diseases in Child Care and Schools

MEDICATION

If your child needs medication while at school, please see the teacher for the permission form (it is located on the refrigerator). Only medicine that has been prescribed by a physician and is in the original container marked with the child's name, dosage and date will be administered. Medications will be stored in the locked container in the refrigerator and the locked cabinet on the wall. Long-term medications need to be accompanied by a special permission form signed by the doctor and renewed every six months or annually, depending upon the condition. **Over-the-counter drugs also need a physician's permission.** Staff cannot administer ANY DRUG, including Tylenol or cough syrup, without written notice from a doctor. Forms can be found on the Parent Shelf and may be faxed to us by your doctor.

ALLERGIES

All children with allergies or special needs will need a Plan of Care written and signed by their physician. We will provide you with the necessary forms. Please let us know immediately if your child will require special care.

INFLUENZA AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY, PRESCHOOL

- **Purpose:** To prevent the spread of infection when flu vaccine is not available or present strain of flu is not covered in current vaccine
- **Policy Statement:** This facility will institute a plan to help protect the preschool children and staff from contracting the flu.
- **Signs or Symptoms of the flu in the building:**
 1. This facility will isolate the children as needed, until signs and symptoms have ceased for 48 hours.
 2. Staff that have signs or symptoms are required to stay home until signs and symptoms have ceased for 48 hours.
 3. Group activities will be suspended as needed to prevent the spread of the virus.
 4. The Medical Director will be notified.
- **Positive Case in the Building:**

This facility will restrict all visitations, i.e. unit visits, activity coming into building.

CLASSROOM PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

- Tables washed after each activity, before and after lunch and snack.
- Silverware, plates, cups, etc. all washed in dishwasher.
- Water table cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Each child has his/her own individual resting mat. Individual sheets and blankets are washed weekly. Mats are sanitized monthly.
- Classroom surfaces cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Hand washing after messy activities, after playing with pets or other animals, before and after sensory table play, before eating and after toileting.
- Toys and dress-up clothing are washed/sanitized weekly or when visibly soiled.

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

Medical Emergencies/Accidents

Teachers at Gorham House are trained in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. All accidents or injuries requiring more first aid than a band-aid or ice pack will be reported on an Accident Report form. Parents are required to read, sign and return to the teacher. Minor scrapes will be cleaned with soap and water; bruises and bumps, treated with ice. Immediate care for more serious injuries will be referred to our Childcare Health Consultant, Director of Nursing Services or the RN on duty, depending on availability. Rescue (911) will be called to transport a seriously injured child. Parents or their emergency contacts (in the event the parents cannot be reached) will be notified immediately.

Please make sure your emergency phone numbers are up to date. You **MUST** have an alternative adult who can pick up your child if you cannot be reached. Parents must make arrangements to pick up a sick or injured child within a half hour.

Fire Drills

We hold fire drills once a month for each program (M/W/F and T/TH) in order to prepare for emergency evacuations. Children are escorted out either the main or Great Room door. In case of a split group we meet in the far corner or the playground. The teacher takes the red sign-in clipboard, first aid kit, walking rope, the cell phone, and makes sure everyone is accounted for by taking attendance. **IT IS VITAL THAT PARENTS REMEMBER TO SIGN CHILDREN IN EACH MORNING.** We use the red sign-in clipboard by the door for evacuation accounting since this also holds our emergency numbers. In the event of a real fire or disaster, children will be taken to the Village School or wherever instructed by Public Safety personnel. Parents will be notified immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so.

Lockdown

In the event of a lockdown we will use the nationally accepted "Red Bird Plan." This plan has been used successfully for many years as a way of preparing children for dangerous situations in a developmentally appropriate way.

The classroom has a place designated as the Red Bird Nest. The phrase "red birds fly to your nest" is the signal for children and teachers to go to the designated area. We will remain there until the all-clear signal is given. We will have the cell phone, red sign-in clipboard/emergency number box, snack bag and activity bag with us. We will be crowded and a bit uncomfortable...but safe. Our administrator has access to our emergency numbers if needed.

This plan is used as a preventive and proactive response to anticipated emergencies. Due to the unpredictable nature of these types of situations, no guarantee of safety shall be implied through the use of the Red Bird plan. However, the regular practice and training of staff will be a step in response to dangerous or threatening situations. We hope, as you do, to never have to use this plan in a real situation.

Tornadoes/Hurricanes

If children are on the premises in the event of severe weather, we will proceed to the Gorham House basement using the stairs nearest the classroom. The red sign-in clipboard with emergency numbers, the first aid kit, the cell phone, the snack bag and activity bag will be brought with us. Attendance will be taken and parents will be notified immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so.

Water Front Activities

Providing children access to waterfront activities is an important part of our summer curriculum. While we are not able to provide swimming lessons to the children, we do visit lakes and beaches weekly in the summer. We believe that by providing this experience to children they will become more comfortable with water, have an opportunity to practice the skills they have developed on their own, and will benefit from exposure to the vast natural resources that our state has to offer. Children's safety around water is a concern for us all. We follow the rules as stated in the Childcare Licensing Regulations and have at least two teachers certified as Water Safety Attendants. One of those teachers will always be with the children when they are near any body of water. Children will wear life vests when in the water. On the playground during summer session, there is a wading pool available to the children on the playground. Parents will sign a special permission form that will allow children to participate in these activities. Water front activities will only occur when the weather permits.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Gorham House Preschool takes very seriously the trust that families place in us when enrolling their children in our center. Essential to that trust must be parents' belief that we consider physical, sexual or emotional abuse intolerable and that immediate action will be taken if such an allegation is made.

Parents should be assured of the following procedures in the event of an allegation:

- The alleged victim will be of primary concern regarding safety, protection, and comfort;
- The staff person, as soon as she or he is accused of abuse, will be suspended immediately until the investigation is complete and a report issued;
- The accusation, suspicion, or risk of harm will be reported immediately to the appropriate state authority;
- Gorham House Preschool will cooperate fully with the investigation;
- Gorham House Preschool will act responsibly when the investigation is over to ensure that all children in our program are protected.

Teachers are mandated reporters of abuse or neglect. In the event of an observation of abuse or neglect by staff or a direct report to staff, the following procedures will be carried out:

- The staff member will report her/his concerns to the Director.

- Together they will determine if a call to DHHS will be made. At this point the staff member or Director will make the report.
- The administrator of Gorham House will also be informed of the action.
- Gorham House will cooperate with DHHS if an investigation is warranted.

All members of Gorham House Preschool staff are mandated reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect. Failing to report is punishable by law.

DISCIPLINE AND MANAGEMENT

Our overall discipline policy is aimed at helping children learn to develop inner behavior control. We use many methods to guide our children toward appropriate behavior. We model appropriate behavior through the use of language, positive affect, and by encouraging children's good choices. *At no time do we use shaming, withholding of food, corporal punishment or threatening.* We also do not withhold physical activity as a form of punishment.

Our environment is set up so that children have many choices of materials to allow for independence. Choice making empowers children and allows them to resolve a problem independently. We give them two choices and then say, "If you cannot choose, we will choose a solution for you." If they are not able to make a choice within a few seconds, we may have to make one for them.

We help children develop awareness of their own behavior by praising, redirecting, giving suggestions in a positive manner, and focusing on the behavior, not the child, when correcting. We develop rules that protect the children's safety and property and which help children learn to respect the rights and feelings of others.

Our rules are consistent, reasonable, and enforceable. Our consequences are immediate and logical. ("Remember I said you can stop pushing in this area and keep playing here, or I'll help you choose a different center to play in.")

We encourage children to solve their own problems when they occur, with adults standing by to help model the words if needed. We make use of "peace chairs" to help children solve conflicts that may arise between each other. Sometimes the cooperative act of finding the chairs and bringing them to the peace corner is just enough to get them giggling and back on the road to friendship.

Teachers are calm and rational during problem situations. We interact quickly if children become violent. We sometimes ignore behavior as a method to eliminate it. We use positive restraints – a gentle hand on a shoulder and a "We walk in the classroom" reminder. We move closer to a situation that appears volatile and give children cues to change behavior. If a child is out of control, we will use proper restraints so the child does not hurt him/herself or others. If these behavior techniques fail, a meeting will be called with parents to help develop a strategy. After the plan is put in effect, we will have regular contact with parents

regarding the success or failure of the plan. All parties will meet to determine if recommendations from outside sources can be met within our center's philosophy.

CURRICULUM

We use the Maine Early Learning Guidelines and the Creative Curriculum to guide us in creating learning experiences and activities for children. The curriculum philosophy in the Creative Curriculum is aligned with our own philosophy. It takes the child's developmental level, the domains used for assessment, and the content areas and allows for a great deal of flexibility in subject matter that teachers can use. This flexibility of subject matter means that children can develop their own interests and teachers have the freedom to be guided by these interests to plan for engaging areas of learning. Children learn from interacting with their world. They learn from direct experience with objects and the application of logical thinking to their experiences. The teacher's role is to provide an environment that promotes active learning and helps children think about their actions. The adult's role is to facilitate such learning no matter what the subject area. Teachers will listen to children during their observations and try whenever possible to create learning experiences based on children's interests.

Copies of the Maine Early Learning Guidelines and the Creative Curriculum are available in our lending library.

ASSESSMENT

At Gorham House we use a variety of assessment procedures to get to know your child and plan an active vibrant curriculum based on the results. Assessments and Screenings guide our planning and our conversations with you about your child. An explanation of our procedures follows.

Purpose of Assessment:

- To support learning and the individual child
- To identify children's interests and needs
- To describe the developmental progress and learning of children
- To improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment
- To plan program improvements
- To communicate with families
- To identify special needs
- To evaluate our program and monitor trends
- To maintain program and teaching accountability

Conditions of Assessment

- Children will be assessed in the classroom and outdoors by teaching staff using observations, checklists and anecdotal notation.
- Children's assigned teacher, using individually administered tests to acquire a more detailed picture of their skills, may assess children.
- Parents will complete the Ages and Stages questionnaire upon enrollment
- Teachers have access to ongoing training in the use of interpreting the Ages and Stages, Creative Curriculum and knowledge of child development that will allow them to use their observations and anecdotal notes to gain a picture of where your child is developmentally.

Communications with Families regarding Assessments

- Families will be made aware of their child's progress formally, four times per year.
- In October designated teachers will meet with parents to discuss the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, to discuss goals for the child and any other concerns.
- In January we will send home a checklist form of assessment to give parents a progress report about their child with information about how the mutual goals discussed in October are or are not being met.
- In February, an optional parent/teacher conference is available to discuss children's development update mutual goals.
- In late May a formal parent /teacher conference is arranged where portfolios and other materials will be shared with families and talk of transitions to new programs or schools will be discussed.
- As parents, you know your child best. We will work in partnership with you to derive the best assessment method for your child; one that is sensitive to your values, culture, identity and home language. If what we are doing is not meeting your need, please speak to us.

Confidentiality

- All records of children's assessment both formal and informal are kept in the individual child's file, which is kept in a locked file cabinet in the teacher's closet. Teachers and administrators of Gorham House Preschool will have access to these records. The results of these assessments are used for individual planning and overall program improvement
- Our interpretations of the results of screenings and assessments will be shared with parents quarterly in October, January, February, and May.
- Parents need to give Gorham House Preschool written permission in order for us to share any information about your child with a third party.

- The confidentiality of your child's screenings, assessments, and health records are very important to us and will be protected at all times.
- In June a final progress report will be given to families at conferences wrapping up the year and indicating what activities can be worked on during the summer.

If, during the course of our evaluations, we suspect that your child may have a developmental delay or special need, we will alert you in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner. We will provide you with documentation and an explanation for our concern; we will suggest the next steps you can take in the referral process. We will help you through whatever steps are necessary in accessing early intervention for your child. We support and encourage you to make decisions about services that your child may need. We will help and encourage you to advocate for these services. You can be assured that this information will be kept confidential.

Our program fully complies with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA requires that child care providers not discriminate against persons with disabilities on the basis of disability, that is, that they provide children and parents with disabilities with an equal opportunity to participate in the child care center's program and services. We do not exclude children with disabilities from our program unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others or require a fundamental alternation of the program.

LENDING LIBRARY

Gorham House has an extensive Early Childhood Library of resource books relating to parenting strategies, teaching strategies, developmental stages, challenging behavior, public policy issues in child care, health and safety and activity books for young children. This collection is kept in the teachers' closet and is available at all times for families to borrow.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

At Gorham House we welcome all children and families regardless of religious, cultural, language, economic, ability, sexual orientation, race or gender differences. We will make every effort to provide translators and will work closely with each individual family, the Center for Community Inclusion and Child Developmental Services to provide the necessary support and information to make your child's time at Gorham House meaningful.

If language is a barrier, we will provide a translation of our handbook and other necessary forms.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At Gorham House we offer many levels of parent involvement, below are just a few:

- Visit with us informally, anytime!
- Join your child for lunch.
- Schedule a time do a special art project...share your talents!
- Become a "parent reader". Schedule weekly or monthly times to visit and read to the children.
- Become a "teacher's helper". Schedule weekly or monthly times to join us during rest time so teachers can meet as a whole staff for precious joint planning time.
- Become a "builder". Use your talents to build necessary items for the classroom. Benches, toys, shelves, blocks, etc. You'd be surprised at what we come up with!
- Become a member of our Accreditation Team. A very rewarding experience with monthly evening meetings for parents.
 - Develop ideas and implement Parent Education Nights (such as Challenging Behaviors, Healthy Eating, etc.)
 - Tackle NAEYC issues of accreditation as needed
 - Develop ideas, implement and improve Family activities (such as our Back to School BBQ, Parents Day, Growing Away Ceremony)
 - Develop ideas and implement community partnership ideas
 - Plan events for parents only and events for shared activities with children
 - Curriculum development
 - The Accreditation Team is a parent's forum to become involved in leadership roles in the school, community and beyond.

PARENTS ARE WELCOME AT GORHAM HOUSE AT ALL TIMES!

COMMUNICATION

As a parent you are our best ally in preparing a nurturing and educational program for your child.

- We encourage you to regularly (both formally through conferences and informally through daily communication) contribute to decisions made about your child's goals.
- We encourage you to let us know what types of activities and services your child requires.
- We encourage you to raise concerns and work collaboratively with us to find solutions for any problems that may arise.
- We encourage you to work with us on shared childcare issues such as separation behavior, special needs, food and daily care issues.

We communicate best when we communicate often.

- We will make ourselves available to talk with you briefly at drop-off and pick-up time.
- We will be available to speak with you by phone during rest time (between 2 and 3PM daily). We will be available to talk in person by mutually convenient appointment, taking both of our schedules into consideration.
- We are available by email and send home the "Daily News" via email. This is a daily report, with photos, of our day at Preschool. We do this with the hope of inspiring conversations between you and your child about their day at school and also updating you regarding our activities and practices. We encourage your reactions and comments about the "Daily News". This helps in our planning and evaluation of our program.
- If it is mutually decided that two-way communication is needed, a notebook format works well.

Remember - teachers regard all conversations with families highly confidential. Anything you share with us will remain private. We are a team in the care and education of your children. No concern or question is unimportant and we are always available to meet with you.

RESOLVING PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

We are always available to talk to parents about pragmatic issues and policies. We strongly support frequent and effective parent/teacher communications. If a grievance arises, please discuss the issue with the teacher involved and or the director. If the problem is of a business or financial issue, the director and business manager will be happy to meet with parents at a time mutually agreed upon. Our Executive Administrator has an open door policy for all family members. If for any reason you are not satisfied with the results of a grievance issue or have concerns that we are not meeting within the parameters of preschool our Executive Administrator is available to help. Our Executive Administrator is Michelle Belhumeur. She can be reached at extension 141.

We hope your family values coincide with our program philosophy and policies. In rare cases, these two may not support one another. In this case, the program has the authority to ask a family to leave the program if policies are not followed and become an issue in the classroom. This decision will be made by the program director and the Executive Administrator.

If the issue or concern cannot be resolved by the Program Director or Executive Administrator or you need to report a licensing violation, you may contact:

Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services
41 Anthony Ave, 11 State House Station
August, ME 04333-0011
Phone: 1-800-791-4080

TRANSITIONS

When your child is ready to move on to kindergarten we will provide you with a list of private kindergartens in the area, along with public school information as it comes to us (found in the resource binder on the parent shelf).

We can also provide you with information about enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities, and options in other early education programs and special service programs should your child need them. We will not provide another program with information about your child without your written permission.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ENROLLMENT

Children must be three years old on or before October 1st for the Fall program and on or before July 1st for the Summer session.

Children must be toilet-trained, meaning they are able to be independent in the bathroom. Our staff will not regularly help a child with clean up after an accident or with daily toileting activities. We do not allow diapers or pull-ups. Children should be beyond the need for these items if they are enrolled at Gorham House. We encourage children to use the bathroom before outdoor play and before rest time. We will regularly remind children to flush and wash their hands after using the bathroom. Bathroom time is private time.

Children must be able to drink out of a cup independently. Sippy cups are not to be used unless recommended by the child's pediatrician for medical reasons. Pacifiers are also not allowed while at school. Pacifiers prevent children from communicating with their peers and teachers effectively. If either of these items is brought to school, they will not be used while the child is in our care and will be sent home.

Severe aggressive behavior is frightening to both children and adults. Gorham House Preschool reserves the right to request that parents remove their child from the program if behaviors such as biting, punching, kicking, spitting, or throwing objects with the intent to hurt another child or adult continue beyond a reasonable time. We will do our best to work with families; however, the safety of all adults and children in the classroom or outdoors is our primary concern.

We require parents and children to visit at least once before your child's starting date. A week before is ideal. We expect parents to be with their child during these visits and explore the classroom together. We find that if parents are comfortable, they communicate that feeling to their child. Teachers are available for home visits if families desire; however, this is not a requirement.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00 – 10:00	Arrival/ Free Play/ Table Activities
8:00	Half Day Program Begins
8:30	Great Room opens
9:30-10:00	Snack (self-selected)
10:00 – 10:30	Clean-up/Morning Meeting
10:30 – 11:00	Circle with Grand Friends/Small Group Time
11:00 – 11:30	Story time/Activity/Toileting
11:30 – 12:15	Outdoor Play/Indoor Gross Motor activities during severe weather
12:00	Half-day program- Parent Pick Up
12:15 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:15	Clean-up/make mats/brush teeth/Great Room play
1:15 – 1:30	Story time
1:30 – 3:00	Rest time
3:00 – 4:00	Wake up/Snack/Free Play/ Story time
4:00 – 5:15	Outdoor play/Indoor Gross Motor activities during severe weather
5:15 – 5:30	Inside/End of day chores/Parent Pick up

This schedule is subject to change, most often because of “teachable moments”, weather, and Gorham House activities.

STAFF INFORMATION

Meghan Pomelow, Program Director

Bachelor of Science Degree in Social and Behavioral Science with a minor in Early Childhood Education from the University of Southern Maine. She also holds an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Southern Maine Community College. Meghan began her experience at the Gorham House as an intern while completing her Associate's Degree at SMCC. She was hired as a full-time teacher after completing her internship in December 2008 and became the director of the program in November 2012. Meghan has experience working with preschool age children and also with infants. Teaching children has been a dream of hers since she was very young. She enjoys reading, sewing, camping, and spending time with family during her free time.

"Be a wonderful role model because you will be the window through which many children will see their future"-*Thomas Mckinnon*

Renee Bridges, Teacher

Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education with a minor in Psychology earned in 2008 from the University of Maine at Farmington. While attending UMF, Renee worked during her summers with school age children implementing a summer program. After graduating from UMF, Renee began to teach three year olds. After a year of working with that age group, Renee began teaching Pre-Kindergarten. During her time teaching Pre-K, Renee began to believe that children learn best through play. She also believes that each child should be given an equal opportunity to learn and grow in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Renee began at Gorham House in September of 2012 and has loved every minute of working with the children! When not teaching, Renee can be found spending time with her family, baking yummy treats, cooking, and camping!

Ashley Poidomani, Teacher

Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maine at Farmington. While doing an internship for Southern Maine Community College, Ashley interned at Gorham House in 2014. At the time she was working at a center with infants and two year olds. After a year of teaching those two age group she moved into a preschool classroom. Ashley began her journey at Gorham House as a full time teacher, January 2015. Ashley has had experience working with children from birth to age 5. Ashley's experiences have allowed her to gain more knowledge in a wide range of ages. She believes all children need a nurturing environment that encourages their development and independence. When not in the classroom, Ashley enjoys spending time with friends and family, reading, cooking, and being outdoors.

The Heart of Our Preschool

The day was perfect for a cookout. The children were sitting in a circle on the lawn finishing their cheeseburgers and watermelon. They couldn't wait for their ice cream, but then the music began and most of them stood up and started to dance. Under the tent on that same lawn, the residents of Gorham House – all at least seventy years older than the children – many in wheelchairs, looked on with eyes filled with tears or twinkles. As the little ones marched through the tables clapping and singing, the residents' faces brightened and they reached out to touch the children's hands or pat them on the head. The children greeted them with smiles and hugs.

You have just met the Gorham House Children. Fifteen children ages 3 through 5, who, along with quality childcare and a great preschool education, are on the leading edge of intergenerational experiences. The picnic described above is just one example of how we touch each other's lives here at Gorham House. Each day our preschoolers travel to different parts of the facility. We share stories, engage in activities, and sing with the residents. Bringing youth, spontaneity and companionship to the elders here is one of our most important jobs, right alongside learning the ABC's and making friends. The children never tire of seeing their Grand Friends in their own homes and the conversations are delightful. We also take part in the monthly luncheons, cookouts, holiday celebrations and the resident chorus.

Gorham House Preschool can be seen all over the building waving, singing and often being silly, offering the joy of life, the gifts of sunlight and smiles, to our residents. Helping them remember "the old days", listening to their stories, feeling their warmth and often their sadness. The children ask why the wheelchairs, why the comments that often don't make sense. We tell them about aging and illness and about love and kindness. We all share stories of our own grandparents. It's a little bit mystery, a little bit science, and a whole lot of miracles. Children and elders share so much and are so often kept apart in our modern society. In our small way we are bridging that gap. Official studies have shown that children help elders by enriching and enlivening their lives when they are in adult communities.

The Little Boy and the Old Man

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon,"
Said the little old man, "I do that, too."
The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."
"I do that, too," laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, "I often cry."
The old man nodded, "So do I."
"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems
Grown ups don't pay attention to me."
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.

- Shel Silverstein

If you have any questions regarding any of the information or policies in this handbook, please contact the program director, Meghan Pomelow.
Email: gorhamkids@mainecare.com or meghan.pomelow@gorhamhouse.com
Call: 207-222-8987

We at Gorham House Preschool shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children and/or families by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, language, ability, or the status, behavior, or beliefs of their parents.

Gorham House is an Equal Opportunity Employer.