

Dear Families,

NAEYC Accreditation

We are proud to announce that both the Clairmont and Clifton Road sites have been reaccredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The accreditation process was different this year due to the limitations caused by the pandemic. Typically, NAEYC sends assessors on-site to review program practices documented in portfolios and to conduct classroom observations. On-site visits were restricted due to the pandemic. NAEYC modified the assessment process by only reviewing portfolios electronically. Each village, and the program administrators had to submit a detailed portfolio with photographs, policies, statements, and lesson plans providing evidence as to how our program meets the ten NAEYC standards. The standards are: relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment of child progress, health, staff competencies, families, community relationships, physical environment, and leadership and management. We are so proud that each program had a comprehensive score of over 95%. This was an amazing feat to accomplish in the midst of a pandemic. We pushed through, worked hard and we have been awarded accreditation! We want to shout-out our teachers and staff for this achievement. You should be proud knowing that your child attends a NAEYC accredited program. We will celebrate with staff and families in August. Once things with the pandemic are stabilized, NAEYC will conduct the on-site visit. Our accreditation is provisional until that time.

Early Intervention Program

Did you know that TCS has early intervention support staff at each site?

Kari Ford-Saxton, Early Intervention Program Manager has an office at our Clairmont location. Aleece Beattie, the newest member of the EI team has an office at our Clifton Road location. Kari and Aleece support teachers and families by using developmental standards to identify potential red flags of development in children. If developmental concerns are recognized, they work with teachers to support children in the classroom setting. In addition, they work with families by giving them strategies to use at home and connecting them to resources that help children receive the services needed to support their development.

What is early intervention?

Early intervention is a system of services that ***helps babies, toddlers and preschoolers with developmental concerns, delays or disabilities***. Early intervention focuses on helping eligible babies, toddlers, and preschoolers learn the basic and brand-new skills that typically develop during the first years of life, such as:

- *physical* (reaching, rolling, crawling, walking);

- *cognitive* (thinking, learning, solving problems);
- *communication* (talking, listening, understanding);
- *social/emotional* (playing, feeling secure and happy); and
- *self-help* (eating, dressing).

Examples of strategies used in the classroom:

- Schedule adjustments
- Visual schedules
- Oral motor supports
- Sensory materials added to the environment
- Technology added to support communication
- Visual timers
- Materials added to support development
- Teacher training

Examples of third-party connections for early intervention services:

- Assistive technology (devices a child might need)
- Audiology or hearing services
- Speech and language services
- Public system services
- Counseling and training for a family
- Medical services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services

If you have a concern or specific question regarding your child's development or need for early intervention services please contact:

Kari Saxton: kford-saxton@thecliftonschool.org

Aleece Beattie: abeattie@thecliftonschool.org

Program Hours

We are currently operating with adjusted hours. We have been considering extending our closing hours to 6:00 PM beginning in August. To institute that schedule, we would need to combine children from multiple classrooms within a village to accommodate teachers' schedules. Bright from the Start, the state child care licensing agency has updated their policies to allow for the combining of children with other groups for the first and last hour of the day. As we learn more about how easily the Delta variant spreads and how active it has become in our community, we have grown more concerned about combining groups of children. Many in our TCS community have children returning to K-12 schools. This increases the potential for exposure in our program. We will maintain our current hours of operation: 7:15 AM to 5:30 PM. All families will be able to drop children off at 7:15 AM. We are closely watching how COVID-19, and the Delta variant

impacts the program. If we do not see an uptick in cases in August and September, we will reassess our operating hours. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause families. The health and safety of the children is a priority for all of us.

Staff Vaccination and Testing

Beginning August 2, any teacher or staff member who is not fully vaccinated (two weeks past receiving both doses of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single-dose vaccine) will be required to conduct a bi-weekly screening test for COVID-19.

Child Care Licensing Updates

Bright from the Start, the state child care licensing agency has lifted many of their COVID-19 restrictions for child care programs. They are now allowing visitors into childcare facilities, classrooms to combine, increases to group sizes in classrooms, and are ending health screenings. They have allowed programs to choose whether or not they want to continue to implement these practices. We are continuing to adhere to the restrictions. They are also allowing custodial parents to have access to all areas of the child care program. While we are currently allowing families to access the building, we are still asking families to refrain from entering the classroom environment. Since children are not currently vaccinated, limiting the number of individuals who have access to the classroom environment is one of the best ways to reduce potential exposure to COVID-19 and the emerging variants.

There are instances when families may need to access the learning environment:

- to help a new child transition and become acclimated to the new environment.
- to observe a particular behavior their child is exhibiting in the classroom.

These instances are limited to custodial parents, and families who enter the classroom for such purposes will adhere to social distancing and masking requirements.

While we ask that families limit their time in the building, all classrooms are observable by a window. If there are instances when you would like to observe your child's classroom, please contact the site director at your child's school. Please remember to not congregate outside of the classrooms, in hallways, front lobby, or parking lot. Please ask children to keep their masks on until they have exited the building.

Be well,

Natalie Feagin
Executive Director
www.thecliftonschoo.org