

Dear Parents and Staff:

This letter is written to request that each family and staff member assist us in providing a **“NUT FREE ZONE” within the lobby and classroom areas**. Not just peanuts but **all nuts**. We have been made aware of the tremendous risk children and adults who are allergic to nuts can face from even the smallest taste of peanut butter or a piece of nut. The consequences are life threatening in many cases and require immediate intervention with medication, hospitalization or even life support. We want to do all we can to eliminate the possibility of such an occurrence in our center in the future. We need your help to do this.

We are asking you to assist us in implementing guidelines to provide a **NUT FREE ZONE** in the lobby and classroom areas:

1. Please do not allow your child to bring any food items into the center in the a.m. or store them in their cubby for after school consumption. Consume all foods before entering the building. Parents choosing to bring their food for their child to eat at mealtime are asked to honor the **no nut policy** as well. Please keep this in mind when planning and packing your child's food for the day. We ask that no foods containing nuts or nut products be brought into the lobby or classroom areas under any circumstances.
2. We ask that no food items be brought to school for children's consumption under most circumstances (parents bringing their child's mealtime food is one exception. Please refer to food policy in Parent Manual for specific information on this policy). This may disappoint many families who enjoy baking and cooking treats and goodies to share with their child's class. However, it does help prevent a possible risk of inadvertent exposure to nuts or nut products. In addition, there are increasing requests by families that children not be exposed to high sugar items as well as religious or personal beliefs against birthday party celebrations with the typical cake, cupcakes and/or ice cream. By not making food the focus of special events such as these in the classroom, all children can feel comfortable honoring classmates in more non-traditional but just as meaningful ways that honor the uniqueness of each child. Each classroom will honor children on their birthday with a special classroom acknowledgement unless parents request this not be done. For more specific information, please talk with your child's Master Teacher.
3. We encourage families who wish to do so, to donate their child's favorite children's book to the classroom on their child's birthday. The teacher will read the book to the class at circle time and acknowledge the gift from the child to the class. Parent and child can write a special inscription or the teacher will do so, to include the date and the child's name on the inside cover of the book. This is a wonderful way to encourage literacy and share something special about each child with their classmates. Parents

are welcome to invite classmates to their child's birthday events outside of school by leaving invitations in parent mail files. **Remember that it has always been our policy to personally check with the Master Teachers in the classroom before bringing anything into the classroom.**

Please continue to honor that policy.

4. If you would like to donate food items for the mid-morning or late afternoon snack, please leave all foods in the kitchen immediately upon entering the building, prior to entering the classrooms. There is a red crate labeled: FOOD DONATIONS placed just inside the door to the kitchen for your use. There is a clipboard asking you to sign in your donation and to verify that it is **NUT FREE**. Please specify in which classroom you wish the item to be used. All donations must be unopened and in their original container/package with a list of ingredients on the package. A staff member will re-verify that the item is nut free. The Master Teacher will sign out the item to her classroom and sign off that she has verified the item is nut free as well. Items not signed in or properly labeled will be disposed of in the trash. Please be sure to sign in all items on the clipboard. A list of suggested donations is available from the Master Teacher in each classroom who requests special snack items.

There are special events throughout the year when food items are brought to school for special center wide events. Generally, the food brought is not for children's consumption. Special events will be handled on an individual basis and families will be informed as to appropriate guidelines.

Your understanding and support in helping us to provide a **"NUT FREE ZONE" within the lobby and classroom areas** is greatly appreciated. The center continues to work toward an inclusive environment that supports and acknowledges the right of each person to be fully included in all activities that occur at our center.

Please feel free to discuss with us your ideas, suggestions and to ask questions about this subject or others. We value your input.

Sincerely,

AS Children's Center Administrative Staff and Master Teachers