

Early Childhood Educational Programs Information Package

Fall 2011 Volume 40, Issue 1



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TEAM

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Executive Director:
José V. Torres

Director of Programs:
Marie Del Tejo

Office Manager:
Ariana Ayala Woods

Registrar:
Luz Gomez

**School Age Assistant
Coordinator:**
Orissa Woods

Early Childhood Teachers:

Ann Shepherd
Barbara Ciner
Marie Del Tejo
Melody McEnaney

Assistant Teachers:

Alex Garcia
Mariel Martinez
Orissa Woods
Maya Weaver
Laura Velez

Administrative Information

Office hours 9:00-6:15
Phone number: 212-316-
7530

Inside:

Needs list for Sept.	2
2012-2013 plans	2
One-to-One Toddler	3
Nursery & Preschool	4
Calendar of Events	4

Still going strong at 40!

Welcome to the A.C.T. Early Childhood Educational Program (ECE)

Enclosed are information and pointers to help you prepare for your child's first days of school. The first day of school is an exciting milestone in your child's life. Your child will be embarking on a journey that will lead him/her on many roads of discovery and learning! Toddlers registered in our 90-minute One-to-One classes will begin the term exploring the wonderful world of learning with playing, painting, and singing activities. Nursery and Preschool children will begin the process of separation from parents. Each parent or caregiver will be directed and guided by our teachers to support individual separation processes. Here at A.C.T., we do not have a phasing-in period; full classes begin as stated on our calendar at the end of this newsletter as well as on our website. Sensitive to the separation process, teachers will follow the same classroom routine for several weeks until each child is comfortable in his/her setting. Outdoor activities will begin once the class has completed their separation from parents and/or caregiver.

As wonderful as new experiences are, they can also be stressful for a young child. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious during the first weeks of school. Within this welcome letter, we have provided a few suggestions for assisting you and your child during this time. Our staff will also be available to answer any questions you may have and to provide the support necessary to make your child's school days full of comfort and joy.

In the fall season, the preschoolers will explore the grounds of the Cathedral, tend the ACT garden, greet the peacocks on their nature walks, discover the hiding places of earthworms, and adopt a tree so they can observe its changes throughout the seasons. The 3-Day nursery children begin their outdoor exploration later in the term after they are familiar with the routine and following directions as a group. The 2-day nursery children venture the outdoors in the springtime as they help prepare the garden for new growth.

Each year, our staff focuses on the centerpiece of our learning: the Natural Science Curriculum. We hope you are ready to get your hands dirty! We look forward to a year filled with laughter, learning, and fun. Communication amongst parents, staff, and children has been a key ingredient to 40 years of successful programming. Please share your thoughts, ideas, and concerns with the appropriate management team member listed on the left column or your child's teachers.

We train staff to connect with children and hope you hear of those connections. Please take a moment to review our welcome letter, our website, and have your spouse read it as well. All newsletters will be on our website.

Marie Del Tejo
Director of Programs

Jose V. Torres
Executive Director

Program Philosophy

Our Child-Centered approach aims to provide children and parents with a positive and supportive school experience. Through our secure, stimulating, and nurturing environment, youngsters can develop their ideas and share experiences. Our curriculum permits children to interact in constructive ways with their peers and other adults while learning school readiness skills. Our experienced teachers present children with opportunities to pursue challenges and explore their environment, fostering independence.



Planning for 2012-2013.....

Families of children, who will be 5 years of age between September and December 2012, need to begin their search for private or public elementary schools. When choosing a school, the chemistry has to be right on both sides. There should be a commonality between home and school. Use your gut feeling when attending open houses and please take notes. Manhattan is divided into six districts. The Upper West Side where ACT is located is in District 3 and Region 10. Community School District 3's Office is at 154 West 93rd Street, phone number 212-678-2800. Information about Gifted and Talented Programs in public schools will be emailed to you by the ACT staff. Information is not available until the winter season. Schedule tours and request applications by calling individual private schools in the fall and public schools in the late fall term.

There are deadlines and application fees for submitting some applications. Some schools require children to be tested, so we suggest you make arrangements as soon as possible. Marie Del Tejo will have resources to help you with your search as she receives them and is available to guide you in narrowing your choices. She will post open house and registration information on the bulletin board outside your child's classroom. She will be able to assist you with this process; you are more than welcome to make an appointment.



Program Name:

**One-to-One
Toddler Classes:**
*90 minute classes
w/ adult
18 - 36 month olds
Tuesdays-Fridays
AM classes*

**2-Day Nursery
9:30-12**

**3-Day Nursery
9:00-12:30**
*2.3 - 4 year old
AM classes*

**Preschool
Classes:**
*8:30 am - 2:30 pm
12:30 - 3:30 pm
preschool classes
for 3.5 to 4.6 years
of age.*

**AfterCare for
preschoolers
only:**
*2:30 pm - 6:00 pm
Extended program
must register five
days a week on an
annual contract.
No single days are
available.*



One-to-One Toddler Classes

90-minute classes

Siblings

We ask that you **not** bring older siblings to the classrooms when elementary schools are on break. You will be asked to leave and arrange for a make-up class. Their presence may distract adults and other children from fully participating in class, and the odd number of participants in the classroom inhibits the sharing of experiences.

Open House

Families interested in our nursery and preschool programs are welcome to attend our open house. We offer monthly opportunities. Check out the web-calendar.

Winter Term

Due to the popularity of our toddler classes, we encourage families to enroll for our winter term by the second of November. We cannot guarantee availability.

Our Instructors

Under the supervision of the director of programs, our instructors plan and execute age appropriate activities. Young children find comfort in routines, and therefore, we use repetition of songs, activities, and crafts in our classes. After such repetition, children often feel proud of their success once they are able to participate in the songs, activities, and crafts independently.

Program Philosophy

The One-to-One Toddler Program provides a unique opportunity for toddlers and parents or caregivers to experience a stimulating and enjoyable time together through a series of carefully planned activities. Our program aims to enrich and encourage your child's growth and development while demonstrating activities that can be replicated at home.

Registration Policy

Families are welcome to enroll in classes year-round or per semester. Because of the limited number of spaces available in each class, we suggest you register several months in advance. We honor a first-come, first-serve policy. The registration office cannot hold space in classes. You can confirm a class by submitting full payment to ensure space, provided space is available. Upon registration, we ask families to indicate a second preference in the event your first choice is not available. Families interested in attending our nursery or preschool programs in the Fall of 2012 are welcome to take advantage of priority registration before January 8th. Information will be sent out during the month of November.

Dress Code

We ask that you and your child dress appropriately for our program. For gym activities, we recommend no-skid socks or indoor slippers. Street shoes are not permitted on the mats. Additionally, there is to be no eating or drinking in the gym or classrooms. On a separate note, children will be painting, gluing, and sculpting, and all children and adults are required to participate in such art activities upon arrival in the classroom. Dress for a mess, please! Please note that ACT is not responsible for replacing paint-stained clothing.

Class Participation

Our curriculum provides a stimulating and enjoyable time with others through a series of carefully planned gym, snack, and classroom activities that can be replicated at home. For each pair of participants to receive the most rewarding and educational experience, the one-to-one ratio must be maintained at all times. The instructor will lead children as well as the adults in all activities. If you are sending a caregiver with your child, please explain the importance of participation and your wish to replicate activities at home.

Snack Time

Children participate in social snack activities. If your child has any food allergies, please inform the instructor on the first day of class.

Make-Up Policy

Each family is entitled to two make-up classes per registered class — by appointment only. Please call the office to schedule make-up classes. To cancel make-ups, we ask families to call at least one day prior to the date of make-up, otherwise you will be credited that class as a make-up class.

NURSERY & PRESCHOOLERS NEEDS LIST

A complete change of clothing in a plastic shoe box (no bags or paper boxes please).

SNACK

ACT provides a buffet snack each day. Snack selections include vegetables, fruit, crackers and non-stove cooking activities. If your child has any food allergies, please inform both your child's teacher and the office. We will assist children who are food restrictions or diets.

DRESS CODE

Children are to dress comfortably and wear sneakers or comfortable shoes to school each day. Flip flops and open toe shoes are not allowed. We sometimes do messy work here at ACT. Although children will wear smocks, accidents do occur. Dress appropriately for the weather. We will go outside unless the temperature is below *40 degrees*. We do want to enjoy snowy days and ask that children wear boots, gloves, and a hat on those days.

FULL-TIME PRESCHOOL CHILDREN ONLY

Please bring a labeled crib blanket, lunch box with containers your child can open without much assistance. We can microwave food. No soda or glass containers please.

Before Nursery and Preschool Programs

Prepare your child:

Talk to your child about what school will be like. Point to the calendar and talk about what days of the week are work days for you and school days for your child. Have your child help select his/her clothing each day. If you maintain a happy, positive attitude and use a calm tone of voice, your child will be assured that ACT is a wonderful place to be and to learn!

Read and look at picture books about school. Select books that explain school, deal with feelings a child may experience, and provide opportunities to ask questions.

Separation Policy: We strongly recommend you walk your child into the class as you enter the school. The first day of school is an exciting milestone in your child's life! Your child will be embarking on a journey that will lead him/her on many roads of discovery and learning. As wonderful as new experiences may be, they can also be quite stressful. For many children, this may be their first experience of separation from parents or caregivers. Please know that it is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of school. As a result, we have provided a few suggestions for assisting your child during this time. The teachers will also be available to provide support and assistance in order to make your child's first school days full of comfort and joy. Please prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining to him/her what he/she should expect, answer all questions directly and honestly, and convey a positive attitude. Young children are very aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure your child that school can and will be a fun and exciting place! We also suggest you establish a routine for each night before a school day as well as for each school morning. Rituals and routines add predictability and comfort to unfamiliar situations. Please be clear to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited later in the day. We suggest you maintain a clear good-bye routine as well. This may include warning your child you are leaving in three minutes, a kiss and hug, or a wave from the window. Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the good-bye with, "Ok, just one more kiss," and then, "I really, really have to go" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking out; this often breaks children's sense of trust and makes the second day of school even harder. Again, please know we are here to help make your child's transition into his/her first day of school a happy, smooth one, and we look forward to an exciting and fun year!

WHAT IF...

Your home or work telephone number changes... Inform the office staff promptly.

Changes in the family situation or living arrangements occur... Inform staff. Such changes may affect a child's behavior. Knowing that changes have occurred will help staff work more effectively and supportively with your youngster.

Your child is absent... Inform the ACT office staff by calling 212-316-7530.

Your child has contracted a contagious disease... Let the ACT office know. Children recovering from a contagious disease must submit a doctor's note to the office before returning to ACT.

Your child becomes ill during Nursery or Preschool... The parent will be called to arrange for pick-up of the youngster. The child will be kept isolated and comfortable until she/he is picked up.

Someone else is picking up your child at school... Arrange "play dates" or other plans ahead of time. The person picking up your child must be listed on the "pick up authorization" form. We will not release a child unless the name is listed or written authorization is provided.

September 2011

September 12: Full-time and Part-time preschool section begins
September 19-23: 3-day and 2-day Nursery classes begin this week
September 24: Early Childhood Program tours (Saturday 10:00 am to 12:00 pm)
September 27: One-to-One 90-minute Toddler Classes begin

October 2011

October 5: Meet-Greet Potluck Dinner for Nursery and Preschool (5:30-7:00 pm)
October 10: ACT is closed for Columbus Day
October 19: Preschool full day parent orientation (8:30 am)
October 20: Preschool part-time parent orientation (12:30 am)
October 20: Two-day Nursery section parent orientation (9:30 am)
October 21: Three-day Nursery section parent orientation (9:00 am)
October 22: Early Childhood Program tours (Saturday 10:00am to 12:00pm)
October 31: Early Childhood Program Halloween celebration (1:00-2:30 pm)

November 2011

November 8: Nursery/Preschool Parent-Teacher Conferences: no nursery/preschool classes in session
November 12: Early Childhood Program tours (Saturday 10:00 am to 12:00pm)
November 18: Preschool and Nursery classes are closed - Staff Development Day
November 24 & 25: ACT is closed for Thanksgiving!
November 28: Play Station Begins

December 2011

December 10: Early Childhood Program tours: Saturday 10:00am 12:00pm
December 13: Last week for parent toddler classes
December 19: Preschool & Nursery Classes winter recess begins
December 19-20: Toddler Make up classes are scheduled
December 21- 23: Play Station closed

January 2012

January 3: Preschool programs resume
January 7: Last day for parent-toddler classes and nursery priority registration
January 9: Nursery classes resume
January 16: ACT is closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 17-20: New semester of One-to-One toddler classes begin
January 30: 3-day Nursery & Preschool Photo Day
January 31: 2-day Nursery photo day

February 2012

February 13-17: Annual Scholastic Book Fair
February 20: ACT is closed for Presidents Day
February 20-24: Midwinter Break - No classes are in session

March 2012

March 8: Last Day of Play Station. Special Event Day for guests
April 6: ACT Closed: in observance to Good Friday.
April 9-13 Spring Break: No classes are not in session.

May 2012

May 7-11: Last week of One-to-One Toddler classes
May 17: Last Day of 2-Day Nursery class
May 18: Last Day of 3- Day Nursery class
May 18: Early Childhood Program End-Of-Year Children's Performance (10 am)
May 28: ACT is closed for Memorial Day

June 2012

June 1: Last day of Pre School sections, Part-time and Full-time Preschool graduation 10:00 am. Program ends at 12:00.

All dates are subject to change with notice.