



Playdates Program Handbook

2020 -2021

Maureen Bloom's Playdates, LLC

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Dear Playdates Families,

With an abundance of caution, preparation and enhanced health and safety measures in place, I'm grateful to welcome you to Playdates 27th School Year Session! I am both proud and humbled by the trust of our Playdates community and commitment of our amazing staff. We look forward to seeing our returning families and meeting our new Playdates families and friends.

Please review the contents of this Handbook carefully. It is important that you are aware of the policies, health and safety requirements and guidelines. Support and adherence of the policies and procedures is vital to the success and well-being of our Playdates community and beyond.

For the healthiest and most enjoyable experience, we appreciate your open communication, patience and flexibility. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this Handbook and throughout the session, please contact me without hesitation.

Cheers to a happy and healthy year together with your children. Let the wonder and discovery begin!

Sincerely,

Maureen



Mission

Playdates Mission is to foster social, confident, independent and compassionate children in a pressure free, natural home environment.

History

Over twenty-six years ago, when a popular Darien, Connecticut playschool program closed, parents encouraged Maureen Bloom to continue teaching their two year olds in their homes. Maureen then developed the unique model for **Playdates**, Fairfield County's innovative at-home play group program for children 18-36 months of age. The play groups are run by nurturing, experienced and trained staff at the participants' homes on a rotating basis.

Curriculum

Every child is uniquely and wonderfully different. The child-centered curriculum is directed by the child's inclinations and abilities. Designed to be fun, creative and spontaneous, the seasonal and sensory rich developmentally appropriate activities build skills in all areas including fine motor, self-help, visual motor and social emotional. The pressure free, natural environment encourages a child's confidence, self-esteem and mutual respect for individual differences.

School Year Session Dates: September 21, 2020 – May 13, 2021

Time: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Days: Monday/Wednesday OR Tuesday/Thursday

Weather Related Cancellations

* Playdates follows the Public Schools for weather related cancellations and delayed openings. There are no make-up days or reimbursements for cancellations.

Home Visits

The teachers will schedule a home visit prior to the start of Playdates to meet you and your child, while practicing social distance measures. They will assess the play areas inside and outside for safety, activity planning and logistics.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

- * All Playdates Staff will wear a child-friendly, light weight mask.
- * Daily temperature monitoring: At drop off, the Parent or caregiver will take their child's temperature in front of a staff member and wash hands. MBP will provide non-contact temperature monitors.
- * Any child with a temperature above 99.5 degrees, will not be allowed to stay.
- * All participants including staff are required to receive a **FLU SHOT**, current throughout the Playdates session.
- * Following the American Academy of Pediatrics vaccination schedule, all children are required to be fully up to date with their vaccinations.

NO EXEMPTIONS WILL BE PERMITTED.

- * Surface areas will be continually sanitized and hands washed thoroughly throughout the morning.
- ** **Social Distancing:** Playdates Staff will do their best to adhere to social distancing of the children during activities. However, given the nature of activities and temperament of 2 - 3 year olds, **Playdates does not guarantee** the enforcement of state guidelines for social distancing.
- * Children potty training will bring their personal portable potty seat from home.
- * Children are required to bring their own labeled water thermos.
- * Snack will be a Nut-Free, healthy, individually packaged and provided by the host family.
- * Prior to the first class, your teachers will contact you schedule Home-Visits to meet you and your child.

INTERRUPTION POLICY

- Playdates classes will continue to operate “in person” as long as it is safe, in the event the public schools operate virtually.

Under the guidance of Public Health and town officials, in the event Playdates is required to close early due to Covid-19 or any unexpected circumstances, tuition refunds will be issued for the remaining session time less 15%.

Drop Off/Pick Up Safety Procedures:

DROP OFF: Please be prompt and patient as we initiate New Safety Protocols:

- A staff member will greet you at the check-in station located at the entrance to the host home. The staff will be wearing a child-friendly mask and gloves.
- Please use the provided hand sanitizer to wash your hands and your child's.
- The parent or caregiver will **monitor the child's temperature** in front of the staff greeter using the non- contact thermometer provided. Any child with a temperature above 99.5 degrees will not be permitted to stay.
- The Staff Greeter will note your child's attendance on the attendance/destination sheet and place a smiley face sticker on your child's back. The sticker will serve notice your child is healthy for Playdates.

Drop Off Procedures continued:

- Locate your child's labeled, color foam "cubby" mat. Place backpack on the mat to keep your child's belongings organized and separated from the other children's mats.
- The staff will quickly engage your child in an activity. This is time for a ***quick "good bye, have fun, I'll be back soon" and reassuring kiss. This is best!*** Please do not linger or leave without saying good-bye.
- If your child experienced difficulty settling in and can't be comforted by the staff, we will call your cell or the number provided on the destination sheet to pick your child up.

PICK-UP:

- If you need to pick up early, please make arrangements with the staff in advance.
- If running late for pick up please call the staff's cell phone with your ETA. A teacher will reassure and stay with your child until you arrive.
- If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, please inform the teachers at drop off and remember, no child will be permitted to leave without being secured in a car seat. ***Playdates staff are not allowed to transport any child.***

**** Student Illness Policy**

If your child, you or anyone in your household is sick, please stay home! If your child or a family member is ill with a cold, flu, fever, respiratory or any covid related symptoms, please keep your child home from *Playdates* for 48 hours after their illness and symptoms subside. If your child has been in contact with or diagnosed with a contagious illness and/or virus, a 14 day quarantine period and a doctor's note is required to return to *Playdates*. Please carefully read additional Covid related safety policies and guidelines provided separately to this handbook.

Attendance: Please text your teachers if your child will be absent.

Disciplinary Policy

Teachers incorporate positive language and feedback with direct modeling to ensure understanding and success. At *Playdates*, discipline is presented in a positive manner. Inappropriate behavior is discouraged in ways that help to prevent the development of a negative self-image. We insist that no child be allowed to harm another child. We use positive reinforcement, redirection, and set clear limits with consistency. Children will be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Items to Bring:

- Please clearly label EVERYTHING with your child's name.
- Dress your child in play clothes and outdoor shoes/boots.
- Apply sunscreen at home. Staff is not authorized to apply sunscreen.
- Pack a Backpack/tote bag with a change of clothes, diapers, wipes and **labeled water thermos**.
- Please DO pack a special stuffed animal, blanket or transition object that will comfort your child in the event of separation anxiety.
- Please do NOT bring food or toys from home.

Host Reminders:

- Make your designated indoor and outdoor play areas as safe and tidy as possible. Put away any potential dangers and choking hazards.
- Cover your furniture with a protective sheet if concerned with stains.
- Provide a low table with at least four chairs for crafts and snacks.

- **Pets:** Keep pets away from the play area. If you have a dog, clean up the outside play area prior to hosting.

Greeting and Helping with the Group:

- Greet the teachers and parents when they arrive. If possible, assist directing other parents to the check-in entrance to the play area.

Scheduling Changes

If you are scheduled to host and your child becomes suddenly ill, send a group email/text ASAP saying: *HOST SUB NEEDED TODAY! Contact the teachers and they will assist you with the securing a substitute host if needed. All moms/caregivers are required to “reply all” to confirm the host location change.*

- Please switch dates with the substitute host.
- Check your texts/emails/phone before leaving your house for the Playdates drop off and pick up in the event of a last minute host change or another important message.

Emergency Procedures

Playdates Staff will take whatever steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care if warranted. The steps may include but are not limited to the following:

- Administer CPR and First Aid.
- Attempt to contact a parent or guardian.
- Attempt to contact you through any person listed on the emergency contact form.

If we cannot contact you or your emergency contacts, we will call an ambulance and have the child taken to the hospital emergency room in the company of a staff member.

Any expenses incurred above will be paid by the child’s family. The Playdates’ Director and Teachers will not be responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false or lack of written information given at the time of enrollment.



About the Director and Teaching Teams

Maureen Bloom: Playdates, LLC Founder/ Director

Education: BS in Education, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

A native of Massachusetts, Maureen was a Teacher and Educational Program Coordinator prior to moving to Darien, Ct where she and her husband raised their 3 sons. Maureen's passion is early childhood education. Twenty-six years ago when a popular Darien playschool where Maureen was teaching closed, the parents asked Maureen to continue teaching the class in their homes. Thus, Playdates, the innovative and acclaimed at-home play program, was born. Maureen brings energy and a positive attitude to everything she does. Maureen is a sports enthusiast and enjoys volunteering in the community as well as supporting numerous charitable organizations. She can not imagine a more rewarding and enjoyable career and is proud and grateful to *Celebrate 27 years of Playdates!*

The Playdates Staff: An impressive collective of highly educated women from varied professions with a genuine enthusiasm for young children and learning. The Playdates teachers hold bachelor degrees and advanced degrees from colleges and universities throughout the United States and abroad. They bring a wealth of wisdom, maturity, and first-hand experience; understanding the importance of *Social and Emotional learning* from raising their own children. The staff is certified in infant and child CPR and First Aid. Please visit the Playdates website for detailed teacher information.

Playdates continued success and highly regarded programming is credited to the partnership and trust between the parents, teachers, and children. Parents are naturally a child's first and most important teacher. Understanding this, the

Playdates teaching staff views their responsibilities to you and your child as a privilege and honor.

Notes

