

Clarke Caregiver Handbook

2023-2024



**Clarke teaches children who are deaf
or hard of hearing to listen and talk.**

1 Whitman Road, Canton, MA 02021
P: 781.821.3499 | F: 781.821.3905 | Info@clarkeschools.org

clarkeschools.org

Melanie Austin, Director

June 2023

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

June 16, 2023

Dear families:

We would like to welcome your family to ours and thank you for choosing Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech Boston for your child's education! Clarke Boston is part of the first and largest nonprofit organization of its kind, offering a continuum of services for students and their families at home, at sites along the East Coast, in mainstream classrooms and remotely through teleservices. In 1867, the Clarke School for the Deaf was founded in Northampton, MA, where Clarke maintains its home base. Clarke's focus in 1867, and today, remains the same – to provide children who are deaf or hard of hearing with the skills to listen and speak. Our goal is to prepare children to succeed in mainstream classrooms alongside their peers with typical hearing. You may learn more about Clarke's history here - <https://clarkeschools.org/about-us/history/>

By choosing Clarke Boston, you have already made the important decision to help the child(ren) in your life develop listening skills to learn spoken language on the same level as their peers with typical hearing. Clarke Boston uses a strong listening- and speaking-based approach to prepare children who are deaf or hard of hearing to mainstream into the public or private schools of their choice, learning alongside their peers with typical hearing with minimal support. At Clarke, you will find a specialized learning environment, which has been designed to maximize each child's listening and speaking skills and prepare them for grade-level, mainstream academics, while learning and working with them in a "whole child" approach. At Clarke, we help each child develop a foundation comprised of confidence, love, sense of self-worth and pride.

This handbook provides you with our goals, expectations, policies and procedures. You have entrusted us to partner with you to provide the child in your life with the best possible education. As we embark upon a new school year working together as a team, may the spirit of cooperation, support, and encouragement lead to a wonderful and successful year at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Melanie Austin MS, CCC-SLP".

Melanie Austin, MS, CCC-SLP
Director, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech Boston

Clarke admits children who are deaf or hard of hearing, providing services to our families regardless of race, color, gender, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, or marital status.

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared as an informational guide regarding Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech (Clarke) policies and procedures. It is an important reference to save and refer to throughout the school year. You are requested to review and discuss its contents with your child, especially sections dealing with child/student responsibilities and behavioral expectations. The handbook was revised in response to suggestions from caregivers and staff while still meeting regulations of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) under which Clarke operates. Clarke is a state approved private school, which accepts students from public sources. As such, it retains autonomy over admissions. It is important that caregivers read and understand the information in this handbook.

Please sign and return the Signature Page found in the appendix to the Office Manager, indicating that you, as a member of the Clarke community, have read, understand, and agree to follow these policies and procedures. The school must have on file the completed signature page as a requirement for admission.

Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination

Clarke does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. Clarke Schools is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 not to discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. The Senior Human Resources Manager, 45 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060, telephone number 413-582-1155, has been designated as the employee responsible for coordinating Clarke efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 to Clarke Schools may be referred to Andrea Harkins or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, telephone number 800-421-3481.

Table of Contents

Statement of Purpose	6
Objectives.....	7
Program Goals.....	8
General Program Information	8
Daily Schedule	8
2023-2024 Calendar	9
Transportation	10-11
Arrival and Departure	10
Van Transportation	10
Parent/Caregiver Transport	10-11
Curriculum	11
Core Early Learning Standards	11-12
Speech and Language Therapy	12
Audiology	13-14
Library	14
Family Communication	14-17
Family Visits/Guided Observations	14
Transitioning From Clarke	15-16
Caregiver/Family Rights	16
Progress Reports	17
Health Policies	17-21
Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures	20
Food: Snacks, Lunch, and Nutrition	21-23
Helpful Hints	23-24
Social and Emotional Learning and Behavior Supports	25
Anti-Bullying Policy	25-26
Visitor’s Policy	26
Releasing Children From School	27
Building Security	27

Sexual Harassment 27
Special Events/Celebrations/Holidays 27-28
Research, Funding, Publicity, and Student Clinician Policies 29

APPENDICES

Families in Temporary Housing 30
Payment Options/Billing 30
Back to School Packet Forms 30
First Day of School Checklist 31
Family/Caregiver Signature Page 32

Statement of Purpose

At Clarke, we teach children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

Children served by Clarke use advanced technologies, including cochlear implants and hearing aids, to maximize their access to sound. We work with children and their families from infancy through their teen years. Our teachers of the deaf, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists have the background, training, and experience to prepare children academically and socially for a world of limitless possibilities. Clarke children listen and learn in the classroom, run, and laugh with their friends on the playground, and have lives filled with music, sports, family, and community. Many children who come to Clarke are ready to attend their neighborhood schools by completion of preschool or kindergarten. In addition to our work with children, we serve families and adults through a wide range of programs and services. With our extensive staff of experts, physical locations along the Eastern Seaboard, and a robust teleservices program delivering remote services, we strive to reach people with hearing loss at all stages of life.

We believe that the home environment is the most influential factor in a young child's life. We strive to have teachers and families collaborate to ensure the safety, happiness and overall development of children enrolled at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

1. We have an open-door policy for caregivers and families and encourage families to visit at any time their child is at school. Caregivers are encouraged to spend time in the classrooms to participate or lead activities related to our classroom themes.
2. Clarke staff use various platforms to promote home/school communication, including home/school notebooks, blogs, etc. to collaborate with families and other caregivers to ensure ongoing communication across the child's daily environments. We are happy to arrange progress meetings and or phone calls with the child's teachers or the director at any time.
3. Families are encouraged to participate in caregiver-teacher conferences, guided observations, family fun nights, and caregiver workshops presented by Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

We believe that educational planning for children who are deaf or hard of hearing must consider the whole child, and not just the communication needs. Educational experiences should support learning across all developmental domains: cognitive development, social and emotional development, motor development and communication development. We believe that children learn best when curriculum is presented in theme-based units, including hands-on experience with the materials and high levels of teacher guidance and interaction.

1. We provide a comprehensive preschool and kindergarten program with an enriched language component. The children's educational needs are addressed in a structured, well-ordered, child-centered, process-oriented developmental curriculum designed to promote the acquisition of age-appropriate conceptual and problem-solving skills.
2. We provide age-appropriate activities and materials that encourage children to explore and build foundations for knowledge in Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and History and Social Sciences, Health Education and Arts.
3. Each child is provided with activities and instruction to promote acquisition of new skills based on their individual level of development.

4. Our typical class has four to nine students, providing a small student/teacher ratio which allows for ample individual instruction and attention in the classroom. Each child also receives 30 minutes of daily audition, speech, and language instruction outside of the classroom. These sessions may include a peer at times to provide opportunities for peer-to-peer communication and practice around social routines and conversational skills.

Our team has extensive knowledge in child development, hearing loss, audiology, and speech and language development as it relates to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

1. We have a multi-disciplinary team of educational staff here at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, including teachers of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and early childhood teachers. Our staff works collaboratively to ensure that all the children's needs are met.
2. All staff hold certification specific to their position and participate in ongoing professional development activities.

Objectives

1. To provide a strong academic base by (a) employing a staff that is certified, well-prepared, and up to date on current educational best practices for children who are deaf or hard of hearing; (b) continuously updating curriculum to meet educational needs and prepare students for a mainstream education; (c) increasing the literacy skills of all students.
2. To provide direct instruction on developing self-awareness and self-advocacy skills to promote confidence with their hearing loss by (a) improving their ability to explain their own hearing loss and equipment, (b) advocating for appropriate accommodations, (c) troubleshooting their own equipment in a variety of settings.
3. To promote the development of listening and spoken language skills throughout the school day by (a) attending daily audition, speech and language therapy sessions, (b) embedding focused auditory targets into academic curriculum.
4. To provide sound training in communication (speech, language, listening and social skills) by (a) providing adequate amplification devices; (b) providing acoustically sound classrooms; and (c) providing sufficient print and non-print materials to promote development of articulation, voice, language, pragmatic and social language skills.
5. To provide optimal access in all settings by maintaining the integrity of the hearing technology equipment and ensuring the environment is accessible for each child. Individual auditory, speech, and language services are also available for children in mainstream programs.
6. To analyze each child's ability to hear specific sounds, identifying auditory, articulation, and language concerns, and dedicating time to building the speech and language skills needed for success in a hearing world.

Program Goals

1. To provide a curriculum that meets each student's educational needs and prepares them for competition in mainstream educational settings and beyond.
2. To develop age-appropriate social skills, decision-making skills, and problem-solving skills.
3. To encourage and support opportunities which require the use of these skills in a variety of settings; and
4. To maximize time- on- task in small group settings with specialized technology in order to facilitate the development of speech, language and listening skills.

Additionally, each child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with individualized goals and objectives. The goals and objectives for each child are based on his or her skills and abilities in the areas of auditory, speech, expressive language, receptive language, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, life skills, and social-emotional development.

General Information about Educational Programs

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is a national nonprofit organization using a listening and spoken language approach with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Clarke's continuum of services includes a Birth to Age Three Program, Preschool/Early Childhood Program, Mainstream Services (Massachusetts and Philadelphia) and teleservices. Services are customized to fit various needs and ages.

Clarke Schools Boston Daily Schedule

Preschool (3-4 yr. old): Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Extended day (5+ yrs): Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech in Boston 2023 - 2024 School Calendar

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

12 Student Days
13 Staff Days

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1 Student Days
4 Staff Days

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

20 Student Days
20 Staff Days

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

20 Student Days
21 Staff Days

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

18 Student Days
19 Staff Days

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

16 Student Days
16 Staff Days

- JULY**
- 10 Summer Session Begins (9 a.m.-1 p.m)
Week 1 July 10 through July 13
Week 2 July 12 through July 20
Week 3 July 24 through July 27
 - 27 Last Day of Summer Session
 - 28 Professional Development Day (No students)

- AUGUST**
- 28-30 Professional development days
 - 31 First day of school (9 a.m. - 1 p.m)
9-10 a.m. Boo hoo, yahoo parent gathering

- SEPTEMBER**
- 4 Labor Day (School Closed)
 - 20 Back to School Night (6 p.m. - 8 p.m.)
 - 22 Grandparents/Special Person's Day

- OCTOBER**
- 9 Indigenous People's Day (School Closed)
 - 20 Professional Development Day (No Students)

- NOVEMBER**
- 7 Professional Development Day (No Students)
 - 10 Veteran's Day (School Closed)
 - 22 Early Release (1 p.m. dismissal)
 - 23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday (School Closed)

- DECEMBER**
- 25-29 Holiday Recess (School Closed)

- JANUARY**
- 1 New Year's Day Observed (School Closed)
 - 15 Martin Luther King Holiday (School Closed)

- FEBRUARY**
- 19 President's Day Holiday (School Closed)
 - 19-23 Winter Recess (School Closed)

- MARCH**
- 15 Professional Development Day (No Students)

- APRIL**
- 15-19 Spring Recess (School Closed)

- MAY**
- 3 Professional Development Day (No Students)
 - 27 Memorial Day Holiday (School Closed)

- JUNE**
- 14 Last Day of School for Students
 - 19 Juneteenth Holiday (School Closed)
 - 25 Last Day of School with 5 Snow Days

Staff Days	200
Staff Summer Session	13
Student Days	192
Student Summer Session	12

	School Closed For All
	Professional Development Day - No School for Students
	Early Release Day
	Special Event Day

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

21 Student Days
21 Staff Days

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

16 Student Days
16 Staff Days

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

20 Student Days
21 Staff Days

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

17 Student Days
17 Staff Days

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

21 Student Days
22 Staff Days

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

10 Student Days
10 Staff Days

Transportation

Transportation, Arrival and Departure

The safety of the children at Clarke is of the utmost concern. A Transportation Authorization Plan must therefore be on file with Clarke School. While children are in the care of our staff, they are carefully supervised, and it is important for caregivers to follow and enforce Clarke safety rules when dropping off or picking up your children. Therefore, we ask that during drop off and pick up caregivers or other authorized adults closely supervise your children. Please do not allow children to run through the parking lot or to play around the cars and vans. While we encourage socialization between families, we respectfully ask that you arrange to do so off Clarke property and exit the parking lot to ensure the area remains as quiet and safe as possible.

Van Transportation

Van transportation is approved and coordinated by the student's school district if requested by a family. Clarke School requires that each driver present a valid driver's and 7D license. If Clarke Staff are concerned for your child's safety, your child will remain at school until an alternative arrangement can be made. In addition, the parent, van company and school district will be immediately notified in the event of an unsafe situation.

Children should arrive before the 9:00am start of school. The van should arrive 10 minutes prior to the child's designated dismissal time in the afternoon. If a van is late in the morning or afternoon, the parent should contact the van company and then update Clarke Boston at 781.821.3499 or via email at clarkeabsent@clarkeschools.org.

Once transportation is established, the following are the responsibilities of the parent:

- Contact the van company several days before school starts to confirm service
- Communicate any absence directly with the van company and Clarke Boston at ClarkeAbsent@clarkeschools.org.
- Securely buckle the child in the age and size appropriate car or booster seat in the morning
- Communicate any concerns regarding the transportation service to the school district's transportation coordinator and Clarke School.

Parent/Caregiver Transport

- Children are expected to **be at Clarke by 9:00** am. so that they are able to capitalize upon the entirety of their school day
- Children are escorted in and out of school by Clarke staff.
- Parent/caregiver must stay with their child until a Clarke staff member greets you to escort your child.
- If late, the caregiver must wait with their child outside until a Clarke staff member is available to check in the child

- Parent/Caregiver should arrive at Clarke 10 minutes prior to their child’s dismissal time.
- Additional caregivers or family members who do not typically pick up a child must have written permission from primary caregivers to do so
- Caregivers should be prepared to show picture identification.

Curriculum

Preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary classroom activities are designed to enhance children’s listening and speech and language abilities while supporting their pre-academic/academic, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative skill development. Children engage in problem-solving, discovery, exploration, reasoning, and experiential activities in a joyful, nurturing environment. Classrooms are designed for the unique acoustical needs of children with hearing loss, and curriculum is aligned with state and national standards. Classes are led by experienced professionals. Classes are taught by master’s-level teachers who are educated in the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) approach to intervention. All children receive daily individual auditory speech and language therapy with a speech-language pathologist or speech-language pathology assistant trained in auditory-verbal therapy and/or listening and spoken language.

- Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech Boston campus works hard to ensure that its curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks issued pursuant to the Education Reform Act of 1993. All staff at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech Boston campus are given a copy and/or access to the Early Childhood Program Standards for Three- and Four-Year Olds and The Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. All of our teachers, but specifically our kindergarten teachers also use the kindergarten and first grade Curriculum Framework materials to assist them in planning for their students and to become familiar with what children will be expected to know and what curriculum goals will be in place in the receiving school. This is especially important as we prepare children to move out of our program and into their public schools. Our teachers and staff work closely with the public schools, sharing curriculum materials, ensuring that our student is exposed to the public school's curriculum materials, and communicating about progress and assessment data
- **Individualized audition, speech, and language sessions:** In addition, thirty minutes of individualized work is provided daily to address: 1) those speech and language patterns which fail to develop during regular classroom work and 2) the development of error-patterns in danger of becoming habituated. Individual work includes the development of auditory, receptive/expressive language, and speech skills as indicated by results of the child’s evaluation and as documented in the educational plan. Individual work supports topics being addressed in the child’s classroom (e.g. pre-teaching/review of vocabulary, concepts embedded within the curriculum).
- **Self-help, daily living skills:** A major component of the curriculum addresses these areas by incorporating a core set of skill development into center play, story time and other supporting activities related to the classroom themes. Some of the basic skills addressed include:
 - Buttoning, fastening, buckling, and tying
 - Pouring liquids and solids, cutting spreading foods during snack activities
 - Measuring, stirring during cooking activities
 - Acquisition of appropriate toileting behaviors including hand washing
 - Acquisition of appropriate tooth brushing skills
- **Social/emotional needs:** The social science curriculum is designed to help children explore the people, places, cultures, and communities in their world. The teaching staff has access to a variety of

social/emotional curriculums including Second Step, The Pyramid Model, and the Social Thinking curriculums. As a preschool and kindergarten program in which social emotional development is a major focus, the bulk of information provided within these curriculums are designed to promote self-esteem, self-confidence, and age appropriate social-emotional skills. Social concepts which are embedded throughout each students' day include but are not limited to: recognition and expression of feelings and emotions, working as a group, social problem solving, and perspective taking. Additional themes targeted throughout the year include families, communities, countries, travel and transportation, a variety of cultures (with emphasis on the cultural makeup of the class), occupations, seasons, celebrations, and holidays.

- **Prevocational, vocational, career education:** This area is addressed through several thematic units including: our community and community helpers such as Firemen, Policemen, Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, Teachers, and Armed Services. The local Fire Department visits every school year during Fire Safety week, as does a Dentist during Dental Hygiene week. Each class also makes field trips where the students learn about careers in other areas.
- **Pre-Reading and Writing:** Even the youngest classroom at Clarke Boston is introduced to the concept that print has meaning. Print is used in the classrooms in many forms such as the children's printed names, calendar materials, written numerals, daily news, and printed vocabulary. Both in school and at home, the children share daily what is written in their home-school notebooks. Teacher and parent-prepared books are used to provide a context for sharing past experiences or preparing for upcoming events across environments. Children's literature plays a central role in creating a language rich environment, including picture books, poetry, rhymes, songs, newspapers, magazines, and teacher made materials, and are used as part of the curriculum.

Auditory Speech and Language Embedded into the Curriculum and Instruction

Students receive intervention and education from master's degree level teachers of the deaf and ASHA and State Board certified speech-language pathologists. The staff are supervised by professionals who are Listening and Spoken Language Specialists, Certified Auditory-Verbal Educators or Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVEd/AVT) and who also provide direct service to children as part of their daily responsibilities. All professionals work to foster development of age-appropriate listening, vocabulary, language, and social communication skills. All interactions promote the basic goals of early childhood education and include structuring the environment to provide opportunities to aid in each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Auditory Speech and Language Therapy (Speech Therapy)

Auditory, speech, and language development and strategies are embedded into the curriculum and instruction in addition to being targeted during individual speech and language therapy sessions. Each student at Clarke Schools Boston receives 30 minutes per day of individual auditory, speech, and language therapy. Treatment goals are based upon the individual needs of each student as based on assessment results, data collection, and progress monitoring. As previously indicated, treatment activities will align with the curriculum theme being presented within the child's classroom. Collaboration between therapist and teacher will take place regularly to promote carryover between the therapy and classroom environments.

Audiology

Clarke recognizes that children who are deaf or hard of hearing need appropriate hearing technology to maximize the use of residual hearing. Clarke audiologists are licensed and certified health care professionals who have training, expertise, and knowledge about state-of-the-art amplification devices for children/students. Our audiologists work to ensure that each student's hearing technology works optimally. In addition, our audiology teams follow recognized protocols for audiological assessments.

Clarke offers audiological services and support for our birth-through-high-school-age population including:

- Audiology consultation for young children, as well as students in the mainstream
- Screening and assessment at some locations
- Full-service audiological care for adults at some locations (hearing aid testing and selection)
- Recommendations for local resources

Some Clarke sites have limited audiological services on site. In these cases, the teacher and SLPs work closely with the child's private audiologist to communicate and troubleshoot equipment. Teachers and SLPs perform sound checks daily in the classroom and in individual therapy. Caregivers send spare batteries in their child's backpack. HAT (Hearing Assistive Technology) and compatible equipment (e.g., receivers) are provided by the family. Clarke uses the Roger Sound Field System in each classroom. Private audiologists provide loaner equipment if needed and respond quickly to requests to help with equipment issues through email or text message. The audiologists consult with the Clarke program regarding children on their caseload with their child's teacher and/or SLP. Some offer complimentary services on site. Examples of services include participation in caregiver meetings, staffing for a particular child, earmolds, impressions and mapping services if warranted on a case-by-case basis.

Spare Parts and Batteries for Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids:

In preschool, caregivers are responsible for providing this equipment to Clarke to assure a child always has full auditory access.

- Children should wear their hearing aids or cochlear implants during all waking hours. Research shows that children need to wear their technology (hearing aids, BAHA, cochlear implants, etc.) at least 10 hours per day to develop age-appropriate listening skills (caregivers are encouraged to discuss wear time with their child's audiologist).
- Please send a supply of these replacement parts and batteries to be left at school.
- Please call or email Clarke in the morning if a child's hearing aid or implant processor did not work prior to the child getting on the bus.
- Caregivers must notify their child's primary audiologist or implant center when replacement parts are needed. Please have at least one spare for each external component of a child's implant and a three-month battery supply at home.

- If your child is sent to school without their hearing aids or cochlear implants, caregivers will be called to bring the device to school immediately.
- Caregivers may be called to pick up their child to bring them immediately to their audiologist, especially if not having amplification creates a safety and health concern for your child.

Library

Clarke Boston has a large children’s library that brings curriculum support and greater knowledge to everyone at Clarke. The library has a wide selection of books which vary by reading level, children’s author, and themes. The books are available for classroom and home use, as well as during instruction with our on-site literacy specialist. Each book is color coded by topic and author, and includes subject matter related to diversity and social-emotional concepts.

Family Involvement and Communication

Caregivers and families are the child’s primary educators; therefore, we encourage and promote your involvement during these exciting and crucial years. Many caregivers of our young children are still learning how to meet their children's listening and spoken language needs.

All caregivers are strongly encouraged to observe at Clarke Boston at least twice per year. **Families are welcome to visit and to observe as often as they wish.** You may wish to schedule your observation with your child's speech and language and/or classroom teacher, but **you are welcome to visit unannounced at any time that your child is present.**

Parent/Caregiver conferences are offered twice per year in November and March. We encourage caregivers to attend conferences to receive updates on their IEP benchmarks and academic goals. Caregivers may request a conference with teachers, therapists, or supervisors at any time. Caregivers may want to schedule a conference following receipt of their child's Progress Reports, which are written three times per year.

The teachers want to hear from you often. If there are any changes in your child's life at home, including special events, new accomplishments, stressful situations, or anything which may inform your child's moods, feelings and behaviors - please let the teachers know. You can convey this information in a written note or leave a message for the teachers and we will return your call. It is important that caregivers communicate important events, because the children are not always able to inform staff on their own. A short note regarding occurrences big and small helps the teacher to understand your child better and to provide an opportunity to shape conversation and expressive language skills.

Guided observations are excellent opportunities for you to observe your child in the classroom and within speech-language therapy as guided by a school administrator. At these observations we will discuss ways that you can carry strategies from the classroom or a speech session into your daily lives. Guided observations take an hour and a half to complete and include 30 minutes observing your child in the classroom, 30 minutes observing a speech therapy session, and up to 30-minutes conversing with the administrator. Guided observations are available twice per year, in the fall and spring.

Clarke Schools Boston teachers and caregivers will maintain a **communication notebook** to promote carryover between environments. Caregiver-teacher conferences will occur twice per year during which the teachers and speech-language pathologists will meet to discuss each child's progress and areas being targeted within both the classroom and therapy environment.

Groups and family activities are also available throughout the school year to provide caregivers with access to other people caring for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. These events are opportunities to address the impact of deafness on a child's overall development, as well as on the family. Virtual Caregiver Connections with Clarke meetings will be held 4 times annually, and additional family activities will be announced throughout the year.

Family Visits and Observations

You are welcome to observe any day that your child is in school. You will be asked to sign in as a visitor at the front desk and to sign our nondisclosure policy. Once receiving your visitor's pass, a designated member of the Clarke staff will escort you to the observation booth. **Families are welcome to visit and to observe as often as they wish.** You may wish to schedule your observation with your child's speech and language and/or classroom teacher.

We also will ask you to schedule "**Guided Observations**" at least once per year. This is an opportunity for you to observe your child in the classroom and within their speech and language session while guided by a school administrator. At these observations we will discuss ways that you can carry over strategies from the classroom or a speech session into your daily lives. Guided observations take approximately an hour and a half to complete, which includes 30 minutes observing the classroom, 30 minutes observing a speech session and a 30-minute meeting with the administrator. In addition, we welcome parents to plan to participate in classroom activities as well. Let the director and teachers know if you would like to participate!

Parent/caregiver conferences are offered twice a year by appointment, although caregivers may request a conference with teachers, therapists, or supervisors at any time. We encourage caregivers to attend these conferences to receive updates on your child's IEP benchmarks and academic goals. We work hard to coordinate these meetings with the release of quarterly progress reports written by the teachers and therapists. Team meetings with public school departments are held one time per year (or more if requested). Please note, your child's teacher wants to maintain consistent communication with you, especially regarding notable changes in your child's life at home, special events, new accomplishments, or anything that might be important to the understanding of your child's moods, feelings, and behaviors. You can convey this information in a written note, send an email or a note through the Remind app, or leave a voice message for the teachers and who will return your call. This communication is very important because the children are not always able to tell us themselves. For some children, a short note about a visit to a friend's house, making a cake or going to grandma's would be helpful to the teacher to understand your child better and to provide context for conversation.

Transitioning from Clarke

Transitioning from a specialized program like Clarke to a mainstream school is an exciting time for each child and family. While each child is different, the age of transition to mainstream settings has decreased to the preschool level over the last 15-20 years. The reduced age of transition is directly related to newborn hearing

screenings, early identification, early amplification, and early education around deaf or hard of hearing children. Clarke guides families through the transition process, providing step-by-step instructions and offering support and guidance throughout this important period of change. During these early years, the staff will provide a continuum of relevant information to assist with suitable school placement and to establish appropriate IEP goals, benchmarks, and accommodations.

Once a school is selected, a Clarke professional begins to prepare the staff of the school to receive the student and is available to provide ongoing support through our itinerant services. Some questions that may come up include:

- What is the best placement for my child?
- What kind of support services will my child need?
- How will the environment be modified to suit my child's needs?
- How do we educate our child's teachers and classmates about hearing loss?
- What do we do if something unexpected comes up?

Families form partnerships with Clarke's experienced mainstream staff or the district's teachers of the deaf to create a supportive team dedicated to the success and development of each child.\

Caregiver-Family Rights

Caregivers of children with disabilities from ages three through 21 have defined educational rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These rights are called procedural safeguards. Procedural safeguards are the specific rules that make sure that you know what the school district is proposing to do ("receive notice"), agree with the school district's plan ("give parental consent") and have a range of opportunities for resolving disagreements with the school district ("due process"). When a caregiver has a concern, it is important that they contact their child's teacher or Clarke Boston administrators. Caregivers must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding their child's special education program. Caregivers have the right to participate in individualized education program (IEP) meetings to discuss and determine special education eligibility, assessment results, educational placement of their child and other matters relating to their child's free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Some basic rights you have as a caregiver are:

- To have your child receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE)
- To be a member of the team that develops your child's education program and to attend meetings about that program
- To understand every document, you sign
- To know and understand your rights in the language you understand best
- To pursue other options if you disagree with your local education agency (LEA)

For more information about your rights as they relate to your children, you may refer to Wrights law [here](https://www.wrightslaw.com/) - <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>

The Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards through the Department of Secondary Education (DESE) can be found here - <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>

Progress Reports

Clarke students' progress towards IEP goals and general curriculum acquisition are provided to the caregivers and to their public schools on an annual basis according to the school's calendar. In addition, progress towards IEP goals is measured and documented quarterly in November, March, and June. Progress notes are sent home to the parents and provided to the school district upon completion.

Health Policies

Where Clarke is a licensed Early Education and Childhood Center, we closely follow the EEC Health and Safety guidelines, which can be found in section 7.11 at the following website:

https://www.sec.state.ma.us/reg_pub/pdf/600/606007.pdf

Health and Infectious Disease Reporting

Our goal is to keep your child and all the children at Clarke Boston healthy and as free from illness as possible.

The occurrence of certain diseases is required by law to be reported to the local Board of Health by the person making the diagnosis. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health list of reportable diseases is on file and at our reception desk. We will report any of these diseases at our center by telephone or in writing within 24 hours.

Clarke School Boston will report an outbreak of a suspected infectious disease. An outbreak is defined as more than three children or staff with the same disease symptoms. Parents will be notified by letter, or telephone, if any communicable disease such as chicken pox or salmonella, has been introduced to the school.

With advance planning, an informed staff, and cooperation from parents, we *can* minimize the spread of infectious disease. Parents are asked to be watchful for signs of infectious disease; to call us when their child is ill; to call us when a specific diagnosis is made (i.e., strep throat); to tell us immediately if a diagnosis of Hib or meningococcal disease is made; and to inform us of any changes in emergency telephone numbers.

For additional information on infectious diseases, your child's teacher will be glad to help find websites or other resources.

Illness and Exclusion Policy

Any child who is ill should not be attending school. Control of communicable illness among children is of significant concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness at Clarke School Boston have been developed in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control in the Department of Public Health. **To protect all other children and staff at Clarke Boston, we ask that parents assist us by keeping sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms in the previous 24 hour time period:**

- vomiting
- complaints of sore throat headache, stomachache
- a fever of over 100 degrees, orally

- persistent, bothersome cough
- conjunctivitis
- impetigo
- pinworms
- frequent diarrhea
- unexplained rash
- scalp itching (which may indicate head lice or other parasites)
- other diagnosed or suspected communicable disease

A child may return to school once the infectious disease is *under* control and the child is no longer contagious. **Caregivers must wait 24 hours after a child's fever has broken before sending the student back to school.** A child returning to the school should feel well enough to participate in all activities (including outdoor play and field trips).

Meeting the needs of mildly ill children while at school

Staff at Clarke School Boston are not equipped to care for sick children, and our exclusion policy outlines the procedures that we will take when a child becomes ill while at the school. If your child becomes ill with any of the symptoms listed above during the school day, we will contact the caregivers to come the student. However, there are times when children are tired, ill, upset, or are waiting to be picked up by their parent or emergency contact person. The procedure we follow for meeting the needs of mildly ill children while in our care is as follows:

1. Children who are tired or upset but not otherwise showing symptoms of illness will be given a chance to rest in a quiet area of the school classroom, such as in the book area window seat. Close supervision is made possible by keeping the child in the classroom.
2. Children who are suspected of being ill will be given a health appraisal by the classroom teacher, which includes checking for: general mood, activity level, fever, breathing difficulties, skin color, rashes, sores, swelling or bruises, severe coughing, and discharge from nose, eyes, and ears. Although we are not qualified to diagnose a specific illness, based on the child's symptoms, we will decide if the child should rest for a short time or be sent home.
3. If the decision has been made to send the student home, he/she will be removed from the classroom and given space in an area of the school separate from peers while pick up arrangements are made. Clarke staff will contact primary caregivers or the emergency contact person if the parent is unavailable. A staff person will stay with the child until his/her ride arrives. The child will be provided with food, water, and rest as deemed appropriate.
4. If the decision is made that the child may benefit from rest alone, he/she will be monitored and allowed to participate in activities as desired. A caregiver will also be notified of the child's need for a rest. If the child's symptoms progress, a parent will be contacted and asked to pick him/her up.

Plan for administering medication (prescription, non-prescription and topical medications)

No non-prescription medication may be administered to children at Clarke School Boston. We ask parents to plan to give their child any necessary prescription medications at home before and/or after school. Should it become necessary for prescription medication to be administered at school, we follow the policy outlined below:

1. The parent must contact the school for the required permission forms that must be signed by both a doctor and parent.
2. All medication must be in its original, clearly labeled prescription bottle with the child's name, medication name, and specific dosing directions.
3. In the unusual circumstance in which a child requires medication to be administered during school hours, the child's health care practitioner will designate an appropriate individual to train a specified member of the Clarke school staff in the administration of the medication and will certify the training and annual review of competence.
4. A medication log will be completed each time the medication is administered. The log will include the name of the medication, the name of the person administering the medication, and the time and date the drug was administered. This log and the original permission slip will be placed in the child's file.
5. The medication will remain in a locked drawer, and any unused medication will be returned directly to the parent. Medications will not be kept at the school for any student.
6. If the medication requires refrigeration, then it will be placed in the refrigerator in the staff kitchen which is not accessible to students.
7. If any students require epinephrine auto injector for an allergy, it will be kept in the classroom and easily accessible to staff. They will be clearly marked with the child's allergy plan with it.
8. School staff will not administer the first dose of any medication unless in an unusual event and will only do so with caregiver consent.
9. All medications will be administered in accordance with the consent and document requirements.

Should it become necessary for a child to receive a topical, non-prescription medication at school, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The caregiver must give written authorization. We will also provide the caregiver with a permission slip, a signed copy of which will be placed in the child's file.
2. The medication must be in its original, clearly labeled container, including directions. It must also be marked with the child's name. It may only be used for the child to whom it belongs.
3. A medication log will be completed each time the medication is administered. The log will include the name of the medication, the name of the person administering the medication, and the time and date the drug was administered. This log and the original permission slip will be placed in the child's file.
4. If the medication requires refrigeration, then it will be placed in the refrigerator in the staff kitchen which is not accessible to students.
5. If a student has a diaper rash and a staff person administers a diaper rash cream, the parents will be notified at the end of the day.

Physical Examination and Immunization Records

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Education, the Clarke School Boston licensing agencies, require that each child have a yearly physical examination by a physician. Please fill out the health forms that you received in your enrollment packet. If you cannot schedule an

appointment right away, fill out all but the physician's report yourself, keep the form to take with you to the appointment, and notify us in writing of the date of your child's physical. Your physician may mail or fax the completed and signed form directly to the school if you wish.

It is especially important that we have your child's immunization records on file (this is also monitored by the Department of Public Health). Therefore, please make sure that this section of the Health Form is complete and accurate.

Emergency Medical Plan

The emergency care of injuries shall be limited to simple first aid procedures. Parents must be notified of all injuries on the same day that the injury occurs. The procedure that Clarke School Boston follows when a child is injured is as follows:

1. The teacher-in-charge is notified immediately of any injury to a child.
2. The teacher-in-charge will call the parents, or if the parents are unavailable, the emergency contact person.
3. When ambulance transportation is necessary, a staff person will accompany the child if the parent is not able to do so.

Additional information regarding procedures followed during emergencies can be found in the Health Care Plan addendum.

Smoking/Tobacco

Clarke is a tobacco-free location. Smoking, vaping, and chewing tobacco are prohibited on all school grounds and on and off-site activities.

Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures

Fire drills, emergency evacuation routes and “alternate” routes are posted within each classroom and throughout the building. Practice emergency procedures will be held periodically throughout the school year. The function of these drills is to practice a rapid, safe and organized method of keeping everyone safe whether in the building or when exiting the building. Practicing the procedures also helps students and adults remain calm and prepared in the event of an actual emergency. Practiced procedures include scenarios for severe weather emergencies and lockdowns, which would be implemented if there were a possibility of a person within the building or in the vicinity of the building that might cause a risk to students. All drills are treated as an actual emergency and all people present during a drill or actual emergency will be expected to follow the established procedures.

Due to the age of our students, explanations about the emergency procedures will be age-appropriate and will be explained to students prior to any of the practices. If the building must be evacuated, all students and staff will report to their predetermined emergency location immediately. No one should return to the building for any reason until the all-clear signals have been given. Emergencies are unexpected, unpredictable and take many forms. No one can be fully prepared for everything that may happen, but guidance, strategies, and practice are helpful in any emergency. Clarke’s primary goal is to ensure that our students are safe in any situation.

Food, Snacks and Nutrition

Nutrition

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations require programs to follow USDA guidelines for nutrition and food service. All educators at Clarke School Boston are trained in the USDA nutrition requirements, good nutrition, and the “My Plate” guidelines (see below), the importance of physical activity, the importance of teaching children about healthy eating and food choking hazards. The program director manages the food program and assists the EEC Director with preparing the snack menu.

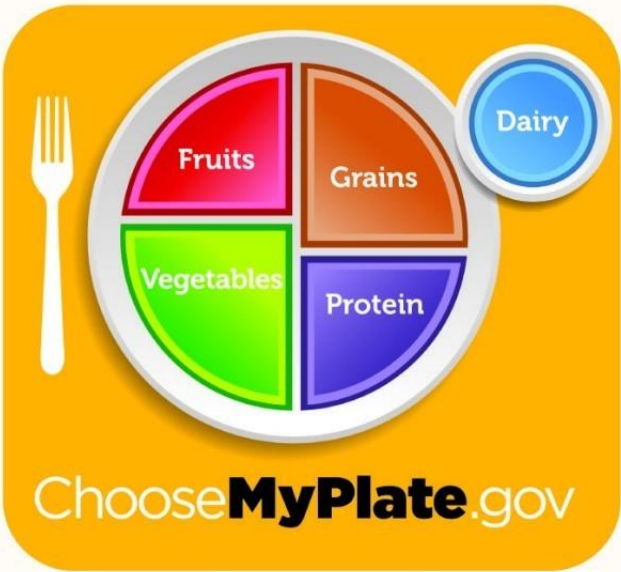
MyPlate is **the newest version of the United States Department of Agriculture's** (USDA's) Food Guidance System (replacing the Food Guide Pyramid). MyPlate depicts proper meal portions of the five food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy), helping Americans build healthy meals.

See the Pack Smart Graphic on the next page for guidance when packing your child’s lunch.

Pack Smart!

Help your kids stay healthy and focused in school—pack them a nutritious lunch. Each lunch should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ **Fruits** and **Vegetables**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **Grain**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ **Protein** with one serving of **Dairy**.

Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun. Provide healthy ingredients like the ones below and **let kids help with preparation!**



Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
<p><i>Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple Orange Pear Peaches Grapes Melon Dried Fruit 	<p><i>Use dark green and orange veggies.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broccoli Carrots Cauliflower Red Peppers Zucchini Broccoli Cucumber 	<p><i>Make half of the grains whole grain.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole Wheat Bread Pita Bread Brown Rice Cereal Pasta Salad Sunflower Seeds 	<p><i>Use low-sodium, lean or lowfat meats.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken Turkey Fish Nuts Seeds Peas Beans 	<p><i>Choose lowfat or fat-free dairy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yogurt Milk Cheese <div style="border: 1px solid white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px; font-size: small;"> <p>TIP Mix yogurt with cinnamon or garlic to make a delicious dip for fruits or veggies!</p> </div>

Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture

Snacks

We strive to provide wholesome, natural, and nutritional food within the Clarke Boston School as much as possible. We will provide mid-morning snacks every day. The weekly snack schedule is posted in each classroom and in the kitchen. Each day's snack follows USDA nutrition guidelines for preschool-aged children and includes at least 2 food groups. An alternative snack choice is available each day. Filtered water is available to children at any time throughout the day and is always offered during snack. Milk or juice will also be offered on occasion.

Lunch

Parents will need to send in lunch for their child daily. We encourage you to send in nutritious and well-balanced meals that will not spoil while stored in their cubbies during the morning hours. Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in a thermos, because we will not have time to heat everyone's lunch. We will provide water but understand that a child may request a special drink in their lunch box from home and welcome them to bring them to school.

In accordance with EEC policy, parents are asked to prepare children's food in small, manageable, ready-to-eat portions. The EEC provides a list of foods that are considered choke hazards for young children. The list is available below. We ask parents to please review the list and to properly prepare food, or to avoid those that present choking hazards. For example, for children under four years of age, grapes must be cut in half, skin removed from apples, string cheese must be cut lengthwise and then sliced, and popcorn must be avoided.

Children will be allowed to eat the food in their lunch box in whatever order they choose, and we will not insist that a child eat specific food. Parents should be aware that children may choose to eat a treat or sweet dessert before or instead of more nutritious food. We will send home all uneaten food so that parents are aware of what foods their children eat each day. Some healthy lunch ideas include: sandwiches (ham, turkey, tuna, etc.), bagels with cream cheese, cut up cold meats, leftovers (pizza, chicken, pasta, mac and cheese), cheese and crackers, whole grain waffles or pancakes with jam, soups (in thermoses), yogurt, cut up steamed vegetables with dip, pasta, peeled and cut up fruit and whole grain cereal mixes.

Choking Hazards

Parents are advised that children younger than four not be fed round firm food, unless it is cut into small, non-round pieces. Young children may not chew food properly before swallowing, increasing the risk of swallowing the food whole and choking. Foods to avoid, particularly for children under age four include:

- Hot dogs or sausage, whole or cut into rounds (may be sliced lengthwise and cut)
- Nuts
- Tough or large chunks of meat
- Grapes
- Hard Candy
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Chunks/spoonful of peanut butter (may be spread thinly)
- Raisins
- Raw carrots
- String cheese (may be sliced lengthwise and cut up)

Birthdays

If you would like your child to celebrate his or her birthday at school, please notify the teachers several days in advance. You may send in cupcakes, muffins, doughnuts, cookies, or ice cream. Individual servings are much easier for the teachers to handle within the classroom than one large cake. Parents are welcome to attend their child's party. If you would like to send a special snack to school with your child to share with the class at any other time, please feel free to do so. As a reminder, we are a nut free school. Please keep this in mind when preparing birthday treats.

Helpful Hints

Adjustment to School

Children may respond to starting school in a variety of different ways. The transition from home to school is a major one in the child's life. Effects of this stress may be observed in a child's behavior and are considered normal and healthy. Some children may cry when they leave home, others may revert to earlier behaviors such as bed-wetting or baby talk, and others may simply refuse to talk about school with their families. It is helpful to be patient and supportive of your child's feelings and to share changes in behavior at home with the teachers.

In the classroom, children adjust to being in a group with other children in different ways as well. Some children join the group right away, seem comfortable from the start, and experience few problems with separation. Other children may seem to adjust easily at first but show signs of stress after a week or two. We will try to make this transition as smooth as possible for your child and will let you know how your child is adjusting in the form of frequent notes and phone calls during the first few weeks of school.

One of the best methods for a smooth transition in the morning is a hug, a kiss and reassurance that "I'll be back" or "I'll see you soon," then a quick exit versus remaining with your child for an extended period of time.

The staff realize that the separation of a child from their caregiver(s) is filled with emotion for the caregivers, as well as the child. The beginning of school is especially difficult for those caregivers who will be separated from their child on a regular basis for the first time. Clarke's goal is to be supportive of families as well as to their children. Please feel free to talk to staff if you are having difficulty adjusting to separation from your child.

Bringing Items from Home

We discourage children from bringing their own toys to school, as they might be lost, misplaced, or broken. In addition, it is often difficult for children to share their special possessions. The classroom teachers will often have a weekly designated "sharing" time when children can bring special things from home and tell the other children about what they have brought at group time.

However, we also realize that sometimes children need a "transitional object" to help them through the transition from home to school. This is especially true of those children who ride the bus to and from school. A book, a favorite stuffed animal, a photo of the family or a blanket could all serve as transitional objects. We welcome these objects but ask that they remain in the child's cubby during class time. Caregivers can help by assuring the child that while it is fine to bring a reminder of home to school, their item will stay in their cubby during class time.

Clothing

Each child should wear comfortable play clothes that they can manage for toileting. Clothes with elastic waists are ideal. Sneakers are preferred and sandals with backs and straps are permitted. Please, **no flip-flops or heels allowed**. Children in the preschool and pre-kindergarten classes are required to wear shorts under dresses/skirts. Please send weather appropriate clothing-hats and lightweight clothes in the summer, snowpants, hats and gloves in the winter and layers in between seasons. Do not dress your child in clothing that has to be kept especially clean. We encourage the child's use of materials, and we would not want their clothing to inhibit their freedom to investigate and explore.

Accidents Happen

We have many potty-training or newly potty-trained students. In working with young children, we expect that bathroom accidents, spills, and general messes will occur. As such, **we ask that each child have a bag with-two complete changes of clothing** (e.g., underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc.). Your child's name should be marked clearly on the bag. In December we will need another two sets of clothes that are appropriate for the cooler temperatures. If back-up items are used and soiled, the dirty clothing will be sent home. At that time, please be sure to send in replacements for the classroom.

Pets

As of this writing there are no classroom pets living at Clarke. From time to time, families may have a pet they would like to introduce to their child's class. Arrangements for pet visits should be made in advance with your child's teacher to make sure we can accommodate all safety concerns. There may also be opportunities for community organizations to offer animal visits to our location. Should any such visits be planned, we will inform families in advance in the event they would prefer that their child not participate. Any visiting animals should be leashed and/or crated and in the sole supervision of their owner.

Social-Emotional Learning and Behavior Supports

Clarke Boston is committed to providing discipline and guidance that is consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of each child. Discipline is directed to the goal of maximizing growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and the individuals in it. Clarke uses elements of curriculum from the Strong Start, Pyramid Model, and Social Thinking Programs which provide a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.

When a child's behavior is deemed inappropriate or endangers others, they will be redirected to another activity. The child is welcome to return when they are ready to do so. A teacher may ask the child if they need a "body break," this gives the child a few minutes to gain control of themselves. When an inappropriate behavior is consistent and chronic, a teacher may request a meeting with the caregiver(s) to develop a plan to modify the behavior to be followed at school as well as at home.

Our curriculum goals and objectives support children to learn social, communication and emotional regulation skills. When students demonstrate challenges regulating their behaviors, we use a wide variety of sensory and self-regulation strategies or other redirecting techniques.

Clarke's mascot "Millie the Hearing Monkey" is a tool to help create a positive atmosphere and promote positive social-emotional development. Your child will have opportunities to bring Millie home for weekend adventures. A chart is prominently displayed in each classroom so that students have a visual aide to help them regulate their own behavior. We also use visual timers and other picture cues to assist with transitions between activities and environments throughout the day. These environmental and activity modifications are effective ways to prevent challenging behaviors.

Staff have been trained through on-going professional development to recognize triggers for children that mark an escalation in challenging behaviors. Therefore, they can intervene quickly and redirect the student.

In the beginning of the school year, teachers spend time teaching the students the classroom routines and establishing expected classroom behaviors. The children participate in regular discussions about their emotions, the emotions of others with whom they are interacting, and the impact that their behaviors have on others within their environment. Role-playing and puppets, part of the Pyramid Model curriculum, are also used to help students begin to verbalize their feelings. At times positive reinforcement is implemented when trying to help a child to generalize a specific skill.

Under no circumstances do we use corporal punishment (including spanking), severe or cruel punishment, humiliation, neglect or verbal or physical abuse. We do not use any type of physical hitting inflicted in **any** manner upon the body, shaking threats or derogatory remarks. We do not deny children snacks or outdoor time as a form of punishment. Under no circumstances do we force-feed children or make them eat any food item against their will or use food consequently. We do not discipline or punish children for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. We do not force children to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet. Clarke has appropriate clothing in the event a child does not have an extra set of clothes in their cubby.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Clarke Boston community is committed to making our school a safe and caring environment for all students. We treat each other with respect.

Bullying is not always easy to define but is unfair and one-sided.

Young children at times may put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported, and that young children do not intentionally wish to cause harm. Strategies that are used in our program include:

- Recognizing that young children are not always able to manage their own feelings and deliver them appropriately. Clarke staff work hard to model and promote vocabulary required to label and express emotions, problem solve social situations, and comprehend the impact of their behavior on themselves and others
- Offer support to all children who may be involved in order to help them comprehend and discuss the issues through play, stories, and other age-appropriate methods

Clarke staff will teach the students to do the following things to prevent bullying and everyone feels safe at school:

- Treat everyone with respect and kindness
- Will not bully others
- Will not let other students be bullied
- Include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out

Teachers and staff do the following things to prevent bullying and help children feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground
- Watch for signs of bullying behavior and stop it immediately
- Explore all reported bullying incidents
- Assign consequences based on the school social, emotional, and behavior supports

The role of caregivers:

- Caregivers who are concerned or have questions about bullying should contact the child's teacher and the program director
- Caregivers are encouraged to support Clarke's policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the Clarke community
- Work closely with Clarke staff to promote healthy social-emotional development

Visitors Policy

All visitors to the building must be allowed entry to the locked building by a staff member. Upon entering, the visitor must sign in, sign a nondisclosure policy, and will be provided with a visitor badge to be worn throughout their time at Clarke. Please reference the **Clarke Health & Safety Policies & Procedures Handbook** for information regarding visitation procedures and health and safety guidelines all are required to follow (available upon request).

Release of Children from School

Please remember that we cannot release your child to anyone other than a parent, legal guardian, or bus driver without written permission. We will review proof of identification when anyone other than the parent, legal guardian or bus driver picks up a child. Please send an email to ClarkeAbsent@clarkeschools.org to notify and authorize your child's teaching staff and administration if someone different is picking up your child from school.

Building Security

Clarke has a security system in place for the safety of families, staff, and students. Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated. All visitors, including families, staff from various school districts, and other Clarke campuses must ring the bell and be allowed into the building through the front door. They must sign in and take an identification badge to be worn throughout their time in the school. The sign in allows Clarke Boston to have an accurate count of the individuals who are in the building in the event of an evacuation such as a fire. All doors are always securely locked.

Sexual Harassment

There is nothing more important to us than the children we teach and support. We understand that children and youth are not only our future; they are a valuable part of the community. However, our students are also vulnerable. Sadly, because of their vulnerability, they can be taken advantage of or become victims of abuse. Therefore, it is imperative that we are proactive in protecting them and in providing safe environments.

In addition, we must protect those who work with our students. Our school personnel need the security of knowing that they are working in a setting where processes and procedures are in place to minimize any possibility of an erroneous accusation.

Clarke's Plan to Protect[®] Policy establishes the criteria for the provision of a safe environment for all children, youth, and school personnel.

Special Events

Celebrations and special events are an important and exciting part of Clarke Boston throughout the school year. Such celebrations can range from a more formal event that includes food and drink to something as small as extra impromptu outside activities. Five ways in which special events tie into the curriculum and promote educational/social skills include:

- Helping to build connections between students and teachers or peers
- Helping to develop social skills
- Helping to build positive relationships with the community
- Helping children practice and develop social expectations in real-life situations
- Helping to support academic achievement by targeting language and academic concepts

- One of our goals at Clarke is to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our school so that all children bring their whole selves to school, feel safe and welcome, and embrace their differences. I am writing to clarify

Holidays

No holidays will be *celebrated* at Clarke Boston and there will not be a focus on one singular holiday. Instead, throughout the year, the emphasis will be on learning what various holidays mean to different students and the numerous ways that even the same holiday may be celebrated in different homes. A non-exhaustive list of holidays that some of our families may celebrate are listed below.

Clarke Boston staff encourage you to reach out with additional holidays that you would like included and we invite you to observe in the classroom or participate at ANY time.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| -Hanukkah | -New Year | -Lunar New Year | -Thanksgiving |
| -Christmas | -Diwali | -Eid | -Ramadan |
| -Kwanzaa | -4 th of July | | |
| -Special People’s Day (an inclusive version of Mother’s and Father’s Day) | | | |

The focus throughout each holiday activity will remain on each child’s specific academic, audition, and speech/language goals which include but are not limited to the list below. Your teachers will be sure to send home information so that you can carry the vocabulary and concepts over into your home environment.

- literacy skills
- math skills
- following directions
- increasing receptive and expressive vocabulary
- articulation and overall intelligibility
- comparing and contrasting
- improving narrative development/storytelling
- promoting social interactions (asking and answering questions, being respectful of differences, recognizing and expressing emotions, strategies for self-regulation, etc.)

We here at Clarke hope you know how important every single one of your children is to us. They deserve to be recognized and to share all the differences that make them the wonderful little people they are today.

Research, Fundraising, Publicity and Student Clinician Policies

From time-to-time Clarke participates in research projects with other institutions. When such projects arise, we will request permission for your child's participation and will provide detailed information regarding the nature of the research study. Clarke saves data related to children's enrollment, services, demographic characteristics, assessment, and testing. The data is used to monitor each child's progress, to assist in program improvement and to document listening and spoken language outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Fundraising and Publicity

To continue remain such an excellent and transformative program, Clarke depends on the support and generosity of those in our community who recognize the crucial the that we do with young children. Clarke conducts necessary fundraising and publicity for programs and services. If you would like to become more involved with efforts to support fundraising and Clarke's long-term sustainability, please contact develop@clarkeschools.org.

Observations and Student Clinicians

Clarke is committed to training future professionals, such as teachers and speech-language pathologists, to work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- College students and professionals often visit Clarke for the opportunity to observe and learn more about the work we do with Listening and Spoken Language. Observers are not allowed to have any direct, unsupervised interaction with any child.
- Graduate student clinicians, typically speech/language interns or student teachers, are often accepted for placement at Clarke as they complete a required component of their professional training. They come from a variety of colleges and universities, such as Fontbonne University, Columbia University, Brooklyn College, NY Medical College, and the CUNY schools. All student interns and student teachers undergo the same rigorous background checks that employees go through. You will be notified if your child's teacher or speech-language pathologist will be mentoring a student clinician.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies or any information contained within Clarke's handbook, please contact:

Melanie Austin, MS, CCC-SLP, Director

maustin@clarkeschools.org

(781)821-3499, x2201

APPENDICES

Families in Temporary Housing

Please let us know if you/your child are in temporary housing, such as a shelter. There are special regulations to support your child in enrolling in school and providing more time, if needed, to get some of the health requirements to us.

Payment Options/Billing

We accept most insurance and Medicaid. We also accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover credit cards for payment for speech services and/or summer school year when applicable.

Back to School Packet Forms to be Completed Prior to the First Day of School

- Enrollment/Application Form
- Medical Form: documenting current health, immunizations, and special needs. This form must be consistent with the individual health care plan
- *Plan Individual Health Care Needs- This is for children with allergies, asthma, cochlear implants, or other health needs. This must be completed in full by a doctor and it must be consistent with the Medical/Physical form.

*Children with EpiPens cannot be in school without this form completed and an unexpired EpiPen on site.

- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick up:
- Clarke must have at least 3 contacts to call in case we cannot reach you.
- No child will be released to a non-parent caregiver if they are not listed on this form.
- Consent to Obtain/Release Information
- Permission Slip-neighborhood walks
- Email Consent
- Media Release and Consent

Additional Forms

These are needed for a child to receive services or required by regulation:

- Parent Handbook/Orientation Review Acknowledgement of receiving the orientation and enrollment material, including the Parent Handbook and all its information
- Assistive Technology Intake Form: This form provides us with information about the technology your child uses and the audiologist your child sees outside of Clarke. It also includes specific consent for data logging.

First Day of School Checklist

- All required paperwork must be submitted before your child can start, including:
 - Medical/Physical Form with up-to-date immunizations, including the flu vaccine
 - Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
 - Plan for Individual Medical Needs (required for every child with allergies, regular medication, asthma, cochlear implants, etc.)
 - Permission slip for neighborhood walks (including going to the playground.)
 - Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick-up
- Notification about any urgent medical concerns, such as allergies.
- Backpack-To be brought to school each day. Backpacks should be of reasonable weight. Each child should be able to carry his/her own backpack without assistance. The backpack should fit your child's lunchbox, notebook, and other items.
- Lunch in a lunch box (each day). No nut products. Clarke does NOT heat food.
- Marble bound notebook/Communication Book (This should be checked by parents daily.)
- Change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) appropriate for the season to be left in school. All items should have your child's name on the tag
- Supply of spare batteries for your child's hearing aids or cochlear implant
- Pull-Ups for children not yet toilet trained (Pull-Ups with velcro side tabs are preferred)
- A package of wipes

The following items are not mandatory but would be appreciated by your child's class:

- Packages of unopened wipes
- Glue/glue sticks
- Magnetic tape
- Construction paper
- New non-toxic, washable markers
- New, unopened crayons
- Boxes of unopened, soft tissues
- Unopened boxes of healthy snacks- animal crackers, pretzels, rice cakes, etc. to share with class (NO NUTS)
- Cake, muffin, or brownie mixes (NO NUTS in ingredients) for special occasions.

Connect with the Clarke Community and Online Resources

Clarke produces a variety of resources for caregivers including tips, at-home strategies, blogs, newsletters and more. Visit clarkeschools.org/resources and follow @ClarkeSchools on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay connected.



FAMILY/CAREGIVER SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read the Clarke Caregiver Handbook. I/we agree to abide by the policies written within.

Please sign and date below, detach and submit to your school's office manager.

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Parent or Legal Guardian Name Printed

Student Name

Date