

Happy Spring! We hope that everyone is having a great year.

Children First has made **FALL APPLICATIONS** available to all of our current families and has now opened up enrollment to new families. We urge families to complete and return their Fall Applications (as well as summer if not already turned in) as soon as possible.

If you are interested in having your child attend Children First this **summer** and/or next **fall**, it is important to know about some upcoming **CHANGES**:

- 1.) Children First has maintained a licensed, academic year-only, satellite site at West St. School for many years. With the imminent completion of our new “West Wing,” we will be closing that satellite site and transferring all staff, equipment, records, etc, to our main site at 40 Pleasant St., Granby as of July 1, 2017. The new “West Wing” is expected to be ready for occupancy sometime in early August, at which point the school-agers will be moved from the “East Wing” (where they occupy the gym and the “Willow Room”) into the new wing.
- 2.) WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?
  - a. **We will continue to offer full-coverage, year round care – academic year and summer contracts available - for all school-agers at our expanded 40 Pleasant Street site.**
  - b. Children needing **Before School** care may be dropped off at 40 Pleasant St. as of 6:30 AM and the public school bus will pick them up in front of our building. Our staff will accompany them to the bus stop. We predict that this pick-up will be approximately 8 AM.
  - c. Children needing **After School** care will be transported to 40 Pleasant St after the conclusion of the school day, where they will be met by our staff as they come off the school bus.
  - d. **“Special Days:”** half day, curriculum (full day), snow day, vacation days, and summer program will all be offered in the new “West Wing.”
  - e. Essentially only the location changes for children who attended West St.
  - f. *Bus information will come from the bus company after routes are established.*
- 3.) WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CHILDREN?
  - a. While we have deeply appreciated the support of the school system in renting us the cafeteria and gym over the years, we have often felt that the children deserved **dedicated** space that supports a variety of interests and learning environments.
  - b. The school-age portion of the new “West Wing” (designed by the staff and children together) provides a number of unique areas that “flower” off of a large gathering space, called the **“Common Room.”** There are “Nooks” and “Pods.”
    - i. **Nooks** are like restaurant booths – a table with built in benches and/or chairs: areas for children to have snack and lunch, to do homework, play board games, etc.
    - ii. **“Pods”** are developed around interest areas that the children requested that we create. There is a **Science Pod**, an **Engineering Pod**, an **Art/Creative Pod**, and a **Chill/Technology Pod**. The Science Pod and the Common Room open directly out onto a 28-foot porch and the “Big Back Yard” (natural playground). **SEE DIAGRAM OF NEW SPACE (ON BACK)**
  - c. Even with a large group of children with multiple ages, we can offer lots of configurations that will support individual interests as well as group learning opportunities.
  - d. This amazing dedicated space is also allowing us to offer a **private (DEEC-licensed) Kindergarten** to children who have attended our preschool program. The CF K will follow the Granby Public Schools calendar, allowing our K to use the West Wing school-age space from 8-3 daily and to offer the same Before/After/Special Day care to our own K participants.



4.) WHAT OTHER IMPACTS MIGHT BE EXPECTED?

- a. Based upon the success and growth of our preschool program (which is also adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> preschool classroom and a small, mixed-age, toddler/pre classroom) after expanding in 2010, **we expect that demand may increase for school-age slots**. We will have a licensed number that we cannot exceed. We urge families to sign up for the care that they need and to pre-contract whenever possible for “extra care” days (like half-days and curriculum days) – as those were the most full this past year. On several occasions we turned “add-on” participants away. For those who are pre-contracted, space is, of course, guaranteed.
- b. We expect that there may be some minor logistical issues that will arise as we get closer to opening the new wing. As these arise, we will communicate them to families.
- c. We believe that children will be happier, more engaged, with more options available to them. When this is true, behavioral issues decrease and overall satisfaction increases.
- d. **In addition to the amazing new INDOOR spaces, children will have access to our “Big Back Yard” playground: over 4 acres of natural playground that encourages creativity, use of the imagination, and lots of hands-on experiences in natural surroundings.**

5.) HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- a. First and foremost, **please be patient as we grow** – both in square footage as well as in students and staff! Between construction, renovation, and staffing, enrolling and equipping these spaces, our plates are overflowing.
- b. **Watch for donation requests** – books, magazines, toys, science and art materials, building materials, and monetary donations toward larger items all needed!
- c. **If you have questions, PLEASE let one of us know!**