

# HOPKINS

*A Learning Center for Children,*



# HOUSE

*Youth, and Families*

## **Alexandria Center**

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## **Fairfax Center**

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March 27, 2014

Dear Parents and Family Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for completing the 2014 Preschool Parent Satisfaction survey this past February. Through this annual survey we gain much insight about our work and areas we might need to improve. The purpose of this letter is to share how we intend to use your feedback to improve the Helen Day Preschool Academy.

We were excited and pleased to learn that the overwhelming majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the care and learning opportunities provided at the Helen Day Preschool Academy, as well as satisfaction with the performance of our highly-qualified staff.

Following are specific areas around which you provided feedback, current activities related to the topic, and actions we plan to take:

### **Inclement Weather & School Closings**

Many families expressed great concern regarding the number of school closings that occurred this year. The decision to close the academy due to inclement weather is made with great care and consideration for families and staff. Hopkins House is a private entity and we do not close our facilities based on school district or government closings. The current policy in place was made in consultation with Parents Councils following the severe snowstorms that occurred just a few years ago which closed schools in the area for more than a week. Please visit the Hopkins House website [www.HopkinsHouse.org](http://www.HopkinsHouse.org) for a full explanation regarding the recent inclement weather school closings. Mr. Hopkins recent blog post explains this issue in great detail.

### **Tuition Increases**

As with all businesses, costs at Hopkins House rise on an annual basis. We are committed to keeping our tuition and fees affordable for all families who wish to enroll their child in our preschool academy--especially those least able to afford the high-quality care and education we offer. Over the past seven years, Hopkins House has provided more than \$500,000 in scholarships to help children from low-resourced families stay enrolled in the Preschool Academy. Maintaining a top-notch, highly skilled faculty at the Preschool Academy is another Hopkins House priority. To remain competitive, Hopkins House pays better than the industry standard in childcare—and we offer health and other benefits rare in this field. Maintaining such a program as ours comes at a cost.

## **Staff Turnover**

National estimates put child care staff turnover between 25% and 40% annually. Hopkins House has a turnover rate of approximately 15%, well below the national average. We have a strong commitment to staff retention which is evident by our low turnover rate and our highly competitive salaries. Staff salaries at Hopkins House are higher than the industry norm. In order to continue to positively reward staff for merit, we began an annual staff appreciation brunch and employee of the month program. Staff has voiced their excitement regarding the changes we have implemented. They continue to provide feedback and we will continue to make improvements in this area.

We understand that children need the opportunity to develop loving and stable relationships with teachers and caregivers who know them. We know that this teacher/child relationship is critical to a child's education and development. Our hiring process includes an observation of the potential employee to determine if they will be a good fit for our program. Should an employee decide to leave for any reason, an exit interview is completed with the human resources department to gain valuable information which can be used to improve our program.

## **Parent Participation/Parent Council**

Members of the Executive Parent Council are elected by parents with children enrolled in our program. The Executive Parent Council meets monthly to discuss issues related to Helen Day. A General Parent Council meeting is held quarterly and is open to all parents with children enrolled at Helen Day Preschool Academy. All classrooms have representatives and parents are advised to contact their classroom representative with issues, comments, or concerns. Contact information for the classroom representative is available on the Parent Information Board in the lobby. Parents are invited to volunteer for membership on any Hopkins House policy committee. These committees meet monthly to guide the development of policies and practices at Hopkins House. Members of the preschool management team are also available for meetings and conferences at the request of parents. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Shelley Keith, M.Ed.  
Principal  
Hopkins House Helen Day Preschool Academy

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