

# HOPKINS HOUSE

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*A Learning Center for Children, Youth, and Families*  
*Celebrating 75 Years*

## **Helen Day Preschool Academy**

*1224 Princess Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Telephone: (571) 480-4081  
[www.HopkinsHouse.org](http://www.HopkinsHouse.org)*

February 2, 2015

Dear Parents and Family Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for completing the 2015 Preschool Parent Satisfaction survey this past January. Through this annual survey, we gain much insight about our work and areas in which 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**

The survey revealed that there were some concerns about excessive school closings at our Academy. We apologize, in advance, for any inconvenience unexpected closings may cause, but please know that we only close when it is absolutely necessary to do so to ensure the safety for our students and staff. To cut back on our number of closures, we do not follow public schools nor government closures. Unforeseen emergencies might occasionally dictate closures or delays, but those are very infrequent.

The Inclement Weather and School Closings policy was recently changed due to the feedback we received from families. The Principal, in consultation with the Parent Council President and the Business Office Manager, are charged with making decisions about closing the center for weather-related reasons. The new policy allows for 2-hour delayed opening when deemed necessary, and it includes a pledge to inform parents and family members the night before by 11:00 pm, when possible. Details about the new policy can be found on our website, [www.HopkinsHouse.org](http://www.HopkinsHouse.org).

### **Staff Turnover**

Your concern about staff turnover is heard loud and clear. We know that you want consistent care and education for your child at Helen Day Preschool Academy. We want that too. Hopkins House has a strong commitment to hiring highly qualified staff members and to retaining their services for the long term. We do an intense screening process, we pay higher than normal salaries, and provide room for internal advancement. In turn, we require strong credentials and experience for our employment candidates. Nevertheless, we periodically hire people who do not work out. To address this concern, we are exploring ways to retain good people, and we are always open for suggestions. Our commitment to providing high quality education and maintaining our NAEYC accreditation requires that we have a high standard for our staff.

Throughout the year, we will gauge the satisfaction of our employees and consistently address their issues to try to ensure their happiness with us. However, when employees decide to leave anyway, we conduct exit interviews that give us valuable information which can further help us improve our program and our remaining staff member's experiences.

**Improved Communication**

Some of you have expressed a desire to communicate directly and more freely with your child's teacher. Hopkins House is in the process of creating a system through our website by which parents will be able to e-mail the specific classroom teacher. Once this has been completed, we will send the information to the parents. Members of the preschool management team are also available for meetings and conferences at your request. Please feel free to contact me anytime.

There was an indication that the Activity Report that we issue is not as useful as you'd like it to be. We will work to make the reports more informative and comprehensive so that you have a good picture about your children's activities, accomplishments, and experiences.

**Management's Responsiveness**

A few of you signified dissatisfaction with management's responsiveness to your issues and concerns. While we work to respond to each of your concerns individually and collectively, some responses take longer than others. Be assured, nevertheless, that they are being addressed. We will endeavor to give you status reports on issues that are unsettled, but we encourage you to come see us if a concern is long-standing. We value your opinion and welcome constructive criticism that are oriented towards positive outcomes for the children. In order to be more responsive to your immediate concerns, I am happy to accept appointments to meet with you.

We are very grateful that you have chosen the Helen Day Preschool Academy for your child's education and care. The Preschool Parent Satisfaction Survey is our way of getting your feedback and addressing your concerns in a timely fashion. But, as I mentioned above, we welcome feedback. Our goal is to strive for the excellence that your family deserves by providing continuous improvement based on your interests.

Sincerely,

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