



## Families in Distress

Preschool families encounter the same conflicts as other families in our community. These conflicts can have a substantial impact on the children involved, and in such cases, we try to help your children cope with the problems they encounter at home. Obviously, however, we cannot allow the problems of any family, no matter how serious they may be, to adversely affect the other children or the overall operation of the school. As a result, we have adopted policies designed to aid your children while, at the same time, preserving our role so as to provide the maximum benefit for all of our children.

We will strive to remain impartial in all family disputes. We are frequently contacted by attorneys representing parents involved in divorce proceeding where child custody is an issue. These attorneys usually ask for the opportunity to meet informally with our teachers and administrators to discuss particular children. We have found that these meetings usually lead to attempts to engage us as an advocate in the dispute of one parent against another. In order to avoid being put in this position, we will not voluntarily meet with, or assist, a parent's representatives involving a dispute between parents.

Disputes between parents as to the custody of their children are no longer uncommon occurrences. We will not allow the school to become involved in these highly emotional situations. For example, it is not uncommon for one parent to tell us that the other parent is not to be permitted to pick up the child. In such an instance, we are put in the middle, and no matter what we do, one parent or the other will try to make us responsible for allowing the child to leave school with the other. We have even been threatened with legal action. These types of problems require an inordinate amount of our staff's time, and sometimes even require that our attorney become involved. In order to avoid being put in this position, we require that parents agree that either one, both or neither will be permitted to pick up the child. If the parents cannot agree, we have no choice but to require that the child be removed from the school.

As a social service agency, we take very seriously our responsibility to help families in crisis. We want to help our children and their families. We believe that we do this best by remaining impartial, and by following the policies which allow us to serve all of our children.