



Community Handbook

Updated July 2017

Our Mission

Redbud Play School is a place where childhood is valued, honored, and protected as an authentic life stage. We believe that play is the great work of childhood, and we commit to providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for creative imagination in everyday life. Our curriculum fosters emotional intelligence, respect for all people, and a strong foundation for academic excellence. Because it takes a village to raise a child, Redbud Play School partners with families, offering guidance, resources, and encouragement to parents and caregivers of young children. Together, we will help to create a world that is happier, healthier, and more playful for all.

Our Program

Redbud Play School was founded out of a love for children and childhood, and out of a desire to meet the community's needs for high quality childcare. Our program is proud to provide care that nourishes the whole child - body, mind, and spirit. Our philosophy is based on the LifeWays philosophy of early childhood education. We believe that:

- Young children thrive in the presence of parents and other devoted caregivers who enjoy life and caring for children. They learn primarily through imitation/empathy and therefore need to be cared for by people with integrity and warmth who are worthy of being imitated. This is the foundation for learning and healthy development.
- Having consistent caregivers, especially from birth to three years old and, preferably, up to primary school age, is essential for establishing a sense of trust and well-being.
- Children need relationship with people of all ages. Infants and toddlers thrive in family-style blended-age care, while older children see nurturing modeled by the adults and experience their

own place in the continuum of growing up. Children of all ages can both give and receive special blessing when in the company of elders and youth who enjoy children.

- Each person is uniquely valuable, gifted with purpose and worthy of respect throughout all phases of his or her life's journey.
- Human relationship and activity are the essential tools for teaching the young child all foundational skills for life.
- Infants and toddlers develop most healthily when allowed to have freedom of movement in a safe environment. For three- to six-year-olds, creative play, not technology or early academics, forms the best foundation for school work and for lifelong learning.
- In infancy and early childhood, daily life experience is the "curriculum." The child's relationships to the caregivers and to the environment are the two most important aspects through which the child can experience healthy life rhythms/routines. These include the "nurturing arts" of rest and play, regular meal times, exploring nature, practical/domestic activities, social creativity, music and simple artistic activities.
- Young children thrive in a home or home-like environment that offers beauty, comfort and security, and connection to the living world of nature. Healthy sense development is fostered when most of their clothing and playthings are of non-synthetic materials and their toys allow for open-ended, imaginative play.
- Childhood is a valid and authentic time unto itself and not just a preparation for schooling. Skipping or hurrying developmental phases can undermine a child's healthy and balanced development.
- Parents of young children need and deserve support in their path of parenting—from professionals, family, and one another. They thrive in a setting where they are loved, respected and helped to feel love and understanding for their children.
- Caregivers also have an intrinsic purpose and need to be recognized and appropriately compensated for the value of their work. They need an environment where they can create an atmosphere of "home," build true relationship to the children, and feel autonomous and appreciated.

Daily Rhythm

8:00 – We start indoors with free play. Often, the caregiver will have projects that the children can apprentice themselves to – laundry, cooking, cleaning, etc.

8:45 - Morning snack. Organic, soaked porridge or sprouted bread with fruit and lots of butter or coconut oil.

9:15 - Outdoor play. Children are encouraged to practice independence dressing themselves for the weather. The caregiver tends to the life of the household while the children play nearby. Often, the children can help out with chores.

11:00 - Lavender face wash and foot bath. Toileting or diaper changing.

11:30 – Lunch. Organic, vegetarian soups with lots of veggies. Full fat greek yogurt & lacto-fermented sauerkraut is always available as a complement to the meal.

12:00– Children bus their own dishes, wipe their place at the table, and wash their face with a lavender cloth. Children are able to play quietly, or help clean up the kitchen. Toileting or diaper changing.

12:45 – Toileting or diaper changing. Afternoon children lay down. Verbal story is told. Kinderharp or calm singing.

1:00 – Rest time.

3:00 – Wake up time. Children are gently awoken and greeted with hair brushing and face washing/oiling. Toileting and diaper changing, then light snack at the table. More outside play follows, weather and time permitting.

3:30 – Pickup

Child Guidance

Our discipline style is inspired by the RIE philosophy (www.rie.org). Since we have a predictable routine, take time daily to connect with each child, share consistent boundaries, and provide ample opportunities for physical exercise, disciplinary issues tend to be minimal. We allow children as much freedom as possible within boundaries. When children do test boundaries, they are enforced fairly and consistently with a loving authority. Our discipline style is positive, respectful, and firm. We calmly and confidently set age-appropriate limits without punishment. Example:

"Climbing the bookshelf is not safe. Do you need my help coming down or do you want to do it yourself? Okay, looks like you need help. I'm going to pick you up now."

Children learn how to coexist peacefully by having safe, experiential learning opportunities for both harmony and conflict. The caregiver's role is to facilitate these opportunities while protecting against physical harm (pushing, hitting, biting, breaking one's work). Instead of solving problems for the children, we prefer to give children a safe space to arrive at a resolution or table the disagreement on their own. By acknowledging children's emotions, and providing limits for behavior, we help the child to develop emotional awareness, impulse control, and empathy. It is our belief that children who are allowed to experience age-appropriate conflicts with their peers in childhood will learn valuable communication skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Hitting, biting, pushing, etc are all normal and age-appropriate behaviors in toddlerhood. We do not support the idea that children who lose control occasionally are "bullies." That being said, while these behaviors are normal, they are of course not allowed. The teacher supervises the children at all times and protects children from harm by blocking these behaviors before they occur, taking into account the temperament of each individual child. That being said, in a group care situation hiccups and accidents occasionally occur. If your child is hurt by another child, you will receive an incident report the same day. We do not share the name of the child who hurt your child in order to protect privacy. By the same token, if your child hurts another child you will also receive an incident report describing the situation and a plan for how the caregiver will address the situation going forward.

In addition to acting as facilitator and protector for struggle, we also might offer some gentle guidance to help the children arrive at a solution if they are feeling particularly stuck. Example:

"You were both reaching for that shovel at the same time. Both of you really want it - you're both holding on so

tight! I think that there are several more shovels in the shed. Shall we go look together?"

Undesired Behavior

If a child persistently displays behavior that severely affects the tranquility of the program, a parent-caregiver conference will be scheduled to collaborate on a mutually agreeable solution. If the undesired behavior persists three weeks beyond the meeting, RPS reserves the right to exclude the child from attendance, on a temporary or permanent basis.

Child Development

In keeping with recommended practices in early childhood education, we engage in ongoing reflection on your child's learning and development. Strategies might include reflective journaling, portfolio assessments, or published developmental questionnaires. In addition to sharing the stories, observations and experiences surrounding your child through ongoing daily communication and parent teacher conferences, we will also contact you directly with any concerns about your child's development as they arise. We will make every attempt to be inclusive of all children, however If it becomes apparent that we are unable to meet your child's specific needs, enrollment may be terminated at that time.

Toileting

We are available to assist your child in learning to use the bathroom whenever he shows interest.. Your child will assisted with toileting in a way that is encouraging and pleasant. He will need to wear a Pull-Up or a cloth trainer at school until he (and the caregiver) is confident in the ability to answer nature's call on time. We will not incentivize toileting with candy, toys, or other treats. We find it important to develop internal motivation for learning new skills. There is no rush to learn how to use the potty - all children do it when they are ready.

Diapers

You will be expected to provide adequate diapers and pull-ups for your child daily. We provide natural, unscented wipes at no extra cost.

Medications

Medications must be discussed with the caregiver no later than the evening before the child arrives for care. All medications should come in a sealed waterproof bag, labeled with your child's name, and written instructions on how to administer. Medications must be received in their original container. Medications will be stored in the refrigerator separate from food. RPS reserves the right to suspend attendance until a child does not need medications during the hours of care.

Minor Injuries

We will take every precaution to keep your child safe from harm while in care. That being said, bumps, bruises, and scrapes are a normal part of childhood and are likely to occur during the course of routine play. To minimize risk of serious bodily harm, we allow children to move freely during play and take age-appropriate risks at their own discretion. Children who are allowed to navigate the consequences of the small risks naturally learn good risk management skills, which helps keep them safe from danger long term.

Minor scrapes and cuts will be cleaned with soap and water and bandaged. We may use natural, gentle oil salves to soothe minor skin irritations. The products we use may contain the herbs arnica, echinacea, calendula, comfrey, nettles, and lavender. We do not use antibacterial soaps or sprays, as an overwhelming amount of evidence suggests that their usage contributes to resistant bacteria. Since each parent has different preferences for lotions applied on their child, we ask that you apply sunscreen or insect repellent before school.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency requiring immediate hospitalization, 911 will be called immediately, followed directly by contacting both parents. Please understand that the caregiver may not be able to accompany your child to the hospital due to responsibility to the other children.

Illness

Parents must make other arrangements for alternate care if children show symptoms of any deviation from wellness. When a child develops any of the following symptoms at school, the child will be sent home immediately. If any of these symptoms appear at home, the child must remain at home until symptom free for 24 hours, even if the child has been cleared by a doctor as non-contagious. *These precautions are taken very seriously.* Your child needs a non-stimulating environment during both illness and convalescence, and the school needs the illness to remain contained. In the event that your child is unable to attend school due to illness, you are responsible for an alternate care plan.

- Fever of 100 and above
- Excessive lethargy
- Diarrhea (at caregiver's discretion)
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Severe cough

Severe skin or eye lesions with pus

Health & Nutrition

We take pride in our extremely high quality food program. A wholesome diet provides a strong foundation for excellent health and a happy child who is ready to learn. All of our meals are well - balanced, made from scratch, and are lovingly served at a beautiful table with real dishes. We use predominantly organic, vegetarian ingredients and lots of healthy fats. Children are encouraged to pour and serve for themselves, and the adult models fine table manners as an example for the children to follow. Menus are updated weekly and posted on the refrigerator.

Lunch is a light hearted, enjoyable experience for all, and children are never forced, cajoled, or bribed to eat. We follow the Ellyn Satter method of feeding and encourage you to do the same at home. Please check out <http://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/> for more information.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction (Kosher, vegan, etc) that you feel would be incompatible with the meal program described above, please contact the caregiver as soon as possible to discuss your options. Every attempt will be made to modify our meal program to include your child, however due to budgetary constraints and the needs of other children, you may be asked to provide your child's food daily.

Rest

All children will be expected to quietly rest or sleep on their mat from 1-3. If your child no longer needs a nap, or you do not want your child to rest/sleep in the afternoons, you will be encouraged to find a program that better meets your child's needs. Due to the nature of our program and the ages of children in care, our daily afternoon rest time is sacred.

Gratitude

Our program is non-secular, but we do find it important to cultivate gratitude for the earth, the food we eat, and the people of the world through song, verse, and blessings

We sing this blessing at lunch:

*Earth who gives to us this food,
Sun who makes it ripe and good,
Dear Sun, dear Earth by you we live,
Our loving thanks to you we give.
Amen.*

Outdoor Play

We play outside every day, rain or shine. We only remain indoors if unsafe weather occurs - lightning or freezing rain. Outdoor play is one of the cornerstones of our curriculum, and being outside in the weather daily, whatever it may be, deepens your child's relationship with the world. Children will be supervised when playing outdoors, whether in the backyard or away from the home. Every precaution will be taken to make sure that the play environment is safe and comfortable. Water will be available to children at all times.

Clothing

As we intend for your child's surroundings to be as homelike as possible, we prefer to use real furniture for children's spare clothes instead of institutional furniture like cubbies. At the beginning of the year, each child will be assigned a drawer (or half of a drawer). It is your job to tend to this drawer on a regular basis. The caregiver will try to let you know when it needs replenishing, but we encourage you to make it a habit to check the drawer every day. At minimum, we should have three complete sets of clothes on any given day. Please also include several plastic bags (or a dedicated wet bag) when you replenish it. We will use these to send home soiled clothes daily.

Since the caregiver will be changing several outfits at once, multiple times per day, without (adult) help, it is likely that from time to time items of clothing will become mixed up. To ensure that these items find their way back to their rightful owners, we ask that you label your child's clothing. This can be done easily by writing in Sharpie on the clothing tag, or by using iron-on labels. Please check that other children's clothes have not made their way home with you at the end of the day.

We encourage children to dress themselves at school. Pants with elastic waistbands, slip-on or Velcro-style shoes, and hats with ties under the chin are preferred. **Laced shoes are not allowed.** Take care to ensure that your child's clothes fit them well, and that they can move freely. We encourage you to dress your child in natural fibers like wool, linen, and cotton because these fibers breathe and do not trap moisture against the skin.

First-of-the-year Inventory

At the beginning of the year, please bring the following items. These will remain at school until the end of the school year.

-pair of soft, low-key slippers to be worn inside

- soft plush toy to nap with
- blanket and/or pillow to cover up with (cotton/wool preferred)
- pacifier if necessary

Toys from Home

We have a wide variety of toys available to support healthy play. Though children might naturally want to bring toys from home, doing so can be detrimental to the dynamic between the children. Please take care that no toys arrive with your child each day. If your child eats breakfast or has a drink in the car, please ensure that he is finished by the time he arrives. If your child arrives with a food item in hand, you will be asked to sit down with your child outside while he finishes the snack. ***If your child arrives with a toy, you will be expected to take it back to the car.***

Changes in the Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in the home that could cause distress to the child, parents should inform the caregiver as soon as possible. Examples may be: a new person in the home, divorce or separation, separation from a parent for an extended period, birth of a new baby, moving, death of a pet or loved one, home renovations, etc. All information will be kept confidential.

How to be Involved

When children see their parents helping with school chores, it gives them an example to imitate, and serves to bridge the connection between home and school. We also find that there are fewer disciplinary issues when adults are engaged in work. Please check out the ideas below:

- wash, dry, or put away children's dishes
- wipe the table or chairs
- fold blankets and nap mats
- sweep the kitchen
- help serve snack
- check your child's drawer
- weed the garden
- toy repair or book lending

Business Policies

Licensing

We are licensed through Oklahoma DHS. This means our home is inspected for health and safety, and we receive three unannounced compliance visits per year. Our license is displayed next to the front door. We

keep a record of DHS compliance in the filing cabinet in the office. You are welcome to view this file at any time - please ask for assistance if you would like to see it.

Open Door Policy

As a parent, you are welcome in our program any time your child is in care. Our front doors are kept locked for the safety of the children, so please check the back yard first or knock. Please be mindful of our daily rhythm when dropping in or visiting. During your visit you will be asked to engage in meaningful work similarly to the caregiver. Usually there is an ongoing project of some sort that you can work on while you observe your child at play, or you are welcome to bring your own small handwork project.

Operating Hours

We are open from 8:00 - 3:30, Monday - Friday. Our "school year" runs from August - May, and Summer Program is held during the months of June & July. We are closed the first three weeks of August each year, plus varying weeks in the summer.

Communication

The caregiver will be available by phone and in person between the hours of 4:00-5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. If you would like to schedule a conference, please email the caregiver with a brief agenda for discussion and a preferred meeting date. Please note that emails received after business hours may not be returned until the next business day. Children benefit when their caregivers and parents maintain a mutually-respected open line of communication, and we encourage you to contact us directly with any questions, concerns, or feedback concerning your child's care.

Arrival

Please arrive between 8:00 - 8:30. Tardiness is strongly discouraged as it holds up our daily rhythm. Please call ahead if your child will be more than 10 minutes late or absent for the day.

Upon arrival, your child will take off her shoes and change into her slippers if needed. After a loving goodbye, please leave promptly and confidently. We welcome a brief check-in upon arrival with any necessary updates about your child, but request that extensive discussions are reserved for a private conference after school. The caregiver will need to be attentive to the other children, and your prolonged presence can impede your child's segue into the daily rhythm.

Dismissal

Pickup will occur at the front door or in the side yard, weather permitting. When you arrive on school

property, you assume sole legal responsibility for your child. If we are out in the front fenced area when you arrive, please open the gate and come completely inside to collect your child - do not lift your child over the fence or allow him to climb the fence. **Please do not allow or encourage your child to try to open the gate.**

If you need to take a few minutes to talk on the phone or send a text when you arrive please park on the street where your child cannot see you. Your child is often waiting for you at the snack table or on the patio and is ready to see you.

The caregiver will sign your child out at the time he was picked up. Children will not be released to any unauthorized persons, even if the child appears to know them. Only individuals listed as authorized on the Child Information Form can be allowed to pickup your child. This person must present valid photo ID when arriving to pick up your child. This policy is strictly enforced.

House Expectations

Our house is not intended to feel like an institution - it is a family home that specifically set up to accommodate young children. That being said, we still have expectations for behavior that help keep us all safe and in good spirits.

1. Outside. Please hold your child's hand when approaching and leaving school. Please do not allow your child to play in the unfenced area of the front yard when entering or leaving the property. Please do not allow your child to pick plants from the garden, throw items over the fence, or otherwise damage property.

2. Inside. Please ensure that your child sits at the table with an adult while eating. Because this rule has been enforced consistently from your child's first day of care, children who leave the table are indicating that they are not hungry, and will not be allowed to return. This boundary is consistently enforced during the day while you are gone, and we appreciate you doing your part to keep food at the table and not in shared living areas.

3. Safety with others. Please ensure that your child behaves in a safe way around his peers and other adults. If your child is hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, excessively screaming, throwing or grabbing things from other children or adults, please stop him by blocking his hands and saying "I can't let you hit." If your child is behaving this way at pick up, it is a sign that he is overstimulated and ready to leave, and your job is to help him do that confidently and non-shamefully.

Transportation

Redbud Play School will not transport children in motor vehicles for any reason at this time.

Animals

Two friendly dogs and a small flock of chickens live at school. They are kept in a secure fenced area separate from the children's play areas. The children are part of feeding and caring for the school's chickens. The caregiver will supervise this activity. The children will wash hands after coming in contact with animals on school property.

Breastfeeding

All mothers are welcome to nurse their children or pump breast milk on school property at any location. Covering the breast is not required while nursing or pumping.

Walks

We go on regular nature walks in our program. When away from home, we will all hold hands with each other while we walk if there is a busy street nearby. For safety purposes, the caregiver may need to use a backpack leash, stroller, wagon, or infant carrier with some children. The caregiver will have a cell phone on her person at all times. Trips may include, but are not limited to, the following locations in Central Norman:

Andrews Park

Lions Park

Norman Public Library

Ruth Updegraff Park

Disaster Plans

Upon enrollment, you will receive a detailed handbook that covers how we approach emergency preparedness protocols in the event of natural disasters, outside threats, or power outages.

Photographic Permission

Unless otherwise specified, enrollment in our program permits the caregiver to photograph your child in the course of daily life during the hours in care. These photos will be kept private or shared with you periodically through a password-protected online gallery. They will not be published on the school website, social media, or other promotional materials without your express permission.

You will be given a Photography Consent Form to complete at the beginning of the school year indicating your permission. Please know that the caregiver will ensure that the photos are tasteful and that the child gives consent to be photographed if the images contain her likeness. Photos published on the website are conceptual and intend to showcase ideas, rather than specific children.

Late Pickup

We thank you for promptness in picking up your child. Any family picking up their child after their scheduled departure will be charged \$15 for any portion of 15 minutes late. If you are more than 15 minutes late, the fee will be doubled, even if you call to notify us of your lateness. We understand that extenuating circumstances occasionally occur, but chronic late pick-up means that your child's enrollment does not suit your family's needs. Chronic lateness will be grounds for termination.

Intentional Damage

Wear and tear on toys and home furnishings is normal and expected in a childcare situation. We happily replace and repair toys and supplies as they are broken or worn during the course of normal play, however if your child is intentionally destructive to property you will be responsible for the repair or replacement of the item(s), at the caregiver's discretion.

Tuition

We increase tuition yearly to provide regular raises to our staff and to keep up with rising costs of materials. We will give families at least 12 weeks notice of any tuition increase, and will always try to give more. Our rates reflect our commitment to provide you with the highest level of care for years to come. Your tuition payment ensures that your child is cared for by a loving, dedicated, and calm professional who loves life and working with little children. Our rates are competitive for the caliber of services provided, and are non-negotiable. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to quality care.

Payment Policy

Tuition is due in full on the first business day of each month. You can pay online, in cash, or by check. If the full payment is not received by 3:30 PM on the second business day of the month, a \$30 per day late fee will be assessed until the account is current. After five days of incomplete payment, you may be asked to find other care for your child.

You may pay tuition online with credit card, by cash, or by check. A small fee is charged by our credit card processor if you pay online.

If your child needs to miss school for any reason (including prolonged illness or family vacations), please know that we cannot and will not give tuition refunds under any circumstance. You are encouraged to plan for these occurrences, both logistically and financially.

Deposit

Before enrolling your child, you will be asked to pay a deposit equal to one month's tuition. This deposit will be applied to your child's final month in care. If you choose to terminate your child's enrollment, the deposit will be applied to the mandatory one month notice period, whether the child attends for that period or not. If the caregiver chooses to terminate enrollment, any unused portion of the deposit will be refunded to you.

School Closures

Breaks

We close for regularly scheduled breaks throughout the year. Please refer to our School Calendar and the website for a list of scheduled breaks. There will be no tuition refunds due to planned breaks.

Illness

We will close for illness when the teacher is too ill to provide quality care. She will follow the same rules for illness as the children (see above). There will be no tuition refunds for closures due to illness.

Personal Days

Our teacher prides herself on staying healthy both mentally and physically so that she can be available for care as much as possible. For this reason, she is given 10 days of paid leave each year to use for doctor visits, funerals/grieving, professional training or conferences, etc. While the teacher will always try to schedule routine doctor visits, etc on planned school breaks, sometimes "life happens" and this is not possible. Having the option for personal days is part of an overall paradigm that ensures the continued health and wellbeing of the teacher, and thusly our entire community.

You will be given as much advance notice as possible if we need to close for a personal day. You are encouraged to have multiple sources of backup childcare in the event that we need to close unexpectedly. These days will not roll over from year to year; they begin on the first day of school each August. If we need to close in excess of 10 days for personal reasons, you will be given a tuition credit of \$20/day closed.

Weather Events

We will close for weather events when the University of Oklahoma Norman Campus closes. If the weather event occurs during the school day, parents are advised to pick up their child as soon as possible, in case of road or travel complications. No refunds of tuition will be given for closures due to weather events.

Social Media Policy

All employees are prohibited from interacting with parents on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, unless such a relationship existed previously. This is to ensure that staff-parent interactions remain

positive and professional. RPS has a dedicated school Facebook page so that parents can keep up with news and events about our program.

Lending Library

When your child is enrolled at Redbud, you will have access to a lending library full of resources on respectful/peaceful parenting, simple living, health and nutrition, as well as crafts, songs, and children's stories. You are free to check out as many books as you like, but please be mindful of the other parent's access to the library. Please make sure to return the books within 2 weeks.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

We will report child abuse/neglect if we have reason to believe it exists. Reports can be made at any time to the DHS Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-522-3511. The hotline is available 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week.

Special Events

Home Visits

At the beginning of each year, you have the option to schedule a visit to your home with the teacher. This is intended to be a casual, fun visit for all, not a "white glove test." We do this so that we can strengthen the connection between home and school life for your child. It is wonderful for the caregiver to see the child in his home environment, and the child is delighted to show the caregiver all his toys, introduce pets, etc. When the teacher is visiting it is fine to talk or ask questions about your child's development/behavior, but we do ask that you wait until the child is engaged in play before doing so.

Conferences

We will schedule an end-of-year conference with you to review your child's school year, progress, and development. One or both parents are welcome to attend. You will need to arrange alternative childcare for the conference, children are not welcome.

Festivals

Twice a year, we will have a seasonal festival celebrating the current season. They are a wonderful way to connect with other families and gain a deeper understanding of your child's school life. Each festival will likely follow the form of arrival, crafting, circle time, and sharing food (potluck).

Birthdays

On the day of your child's birth (or the weekday closest to it), you and any other members of your family who wish to attend will be invited to school for an afternoon birthday celebration. The caregiver will tell a birthday story for the celebrant with one candle for each year, sing a special birthday song, and bestow a gift and cards from her classmates. For a snack, you may want to send a special treat for the class to enjoy. If you won't be providing a snack, please let the caregiver know in advance.

We wish you a happy birthday

A joyful and celebrated birthday

To our friend _____

May she live a long, long life!

Adults are asked to model reverent joy at birthday celebrations, taking cues from the caregiver, and refrain from engaging in raucous play. There is a time and a place for raucous play with children, but birthdays are exciting enough as is. We want the celebration to be special for the birthday child, and ensure that he gets the attention he is due.