

Vision

Every child is valued and reaches their full potential.

Mission

Provide nurturing, play-based early learning to support each child in realizing their potential while giving families peace of mind.

Purpose

Following are the agreed upon Board Norms that support the RisingOaks Early Learning board of directors to self-govern. A healthy board is not necessarily conflict-free. However, a healthy board does have a shared understanding of (a) board members' shared responsibility in self-governing and (b) what the group's operating norms are.

Preparation Norms

We promise to	We promise not to	If we see a problem, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honour commitments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> being responsive to communication and requests follow up on assigned tasks and deadlines be prepared, attend meetings complete your board term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require last minute actions without sufficient notice. Disconnect without identifying extenuating circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify scheduling/commitment issues as soon as possible after identification Board chair to follow up after missed meetings – see Appendix A.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the board meeting package and post any questions by midnight the night before a meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delay the board meeting package without prior to communication and agreement. Be unprepared for important discussion. Request last minute agenda items without consent of the board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify timing issues with the CEO and work towards a solution. Identify any specific concerns and highlight to the board and CEO to attain additional information or discuss alternate timing for the discussion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever possible, post clarifying questions and comments, especially on Consent Agenda Items, or to highlight information gaps PRIOR to the board meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise or request operational details at the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage triad discussion and follow up with CEO ahead of the meeting for clarification.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to the board meeting or affected decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay silent if we think we MAY have a conflict of interest, intentionally not disclose conflicts of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any real or perceived conflict of interest during discussions, regardless of timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Come prepared to all board meetings; having read the full board package and be prepared for discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be unprepared for important discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such issues will be identified on the bi-annual director performance check-in and/or individually with the director as needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid using AI to summarize board meeting materials during review (e.g., don't upload the board meeting package to AI and asking for a summary). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not use AI to summarize board meeting materials during review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chair will address the director privately if a concern comes forward.

In-Meeting Norms | Applies to Everyone (in person and virtual participants)

We promise to	We promise not to	If we see a problem, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be present and engaged at board and committee meetings Minimize distractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-task during the meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair to speak to director privately to provide feedback when appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise hand to speak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak over top of each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting chair will keep a speaker list if multiple people want a turn. If appropriate, chair can follow up with a director to provide feedback after meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present thoughts in an inclusive manner that supports, promotes and protects a leadership culture that celebrates the value of diversity in perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate, participate in, or tacitly accept by not challenging conversation focused on the qualities, lifestyle, or interests of any individual Pass judgement on differing view points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors will identify any concern to the Chair during the meeting or through the meeting evaluation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat Board members, staff and invited guests as equal partners in discussions, while recognizing the Board's ultimate authority to determine policy and strategic direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disregard or discourage board members, staff, or invited guests from contributing their perspective on agenda items. Neglect our responsibility to ensure fulsome discussion that contributes to making board related decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors will identify any concern to the Chair during the meeting or through the meeting evaluation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute information, solutions and ideas in some way (triad discussion, comments/chat, raise hand) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withhold our perspective, whether it is favour or against, on the item being discussed. Come to meetings ill prepared, which may be an impediment to thoughtful, reasoned participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors will express concerns and offer feedback for improvements to discussion format through the meeting evaluation, or once the meeting is over, to the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Nominating Committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signify whether a statement is fact or opinion by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using "We know" when stating a fact and include the evidence Using "I think" or "I believe" when stating an opinion Using "I feel" to indicate personal discomfort, satisfaction or pride in how the discussion is proceeding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make opinion-rich, information-poor decisions. Make personal attacks on another member Dismiss relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every director shares responsibility to call "Point of Order" or ask the Chair to "pause" discussion to reflect on process if the discussion is in appropriate, heated or going in circles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay focused on setting strategy, and our responsibilities under direct and protect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get involved in the operations or how we will achieve our objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag it using our governance monitor cards; identify on our board meeting evaluation and discuss as a group as needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make decisions by consensus after considering various options. Briefing Note that clearly defines options in advance along with risks and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay silent if we cannot support a decision Judge decisions or options based solely on opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you disagree, at least register unease and request time to reflect and assess other facts. The Chair may use a 5-point consensus scale to assist in confirming support, as needed,

In-Meeting Norms | Applies to Everyone (in person and virtual participants)

We promise to	We promise not to	If we see a problem, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate options in a fact-based manner Test for consensus, giving everyone a voice 		with the final decision confirmed by motion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once a decision is made, the board speaks with one voice in support of the decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express dissent and/or breach confidentiality regarding a board decision when speaking to members, parents and staff. Rubber stamp decisions without considering all perspectives; not to pass judgement on differing view points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors will notify the chair of any concerns. Chair will speak directly to the director to provide feedback and discuss next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only revisit decisions if NEW information is discovered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request discussion on items that have already been passed by the board unless new information has been presented Withhold perspective the first time the item is discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that any request to revisit a decision is accompanied by an updated Briefing Note with new information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid the use AI to record a transcript of the meeting unless it is part of a subscribed RisingOaks' plan. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chair or CEO will remove any AI bots for the purpose of meeting notes/transcripts.

In-Meeting Norms | Applies if Joining Virtually

We promise to	We promise not to	If we see a problem, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make best efforts to join from a private space to protect confidentiality, and ensure a professional and quiet environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join from a public space without headphones or ear buds or where people can see the screen share, especially if In Camera or in a Closed-Door session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert the chair or CEO to technical difficulties or the need to go off-camera Any member of the board can alert that chair that they have concerns regarding confidentiality related to virtual attendance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use headphones or ear buds when joining from a non-private space (e.g., coffee shop, car or with family nearby) and confidentiality cannot be ensured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in In Camera/Closed-Door meetings in a public place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it's an In Camera or Closed-Door meeting, directors will be reminded to move to a private space, step back from discussion (e.g., by listening only, contributing in chat or sending regrets if that is not possible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply professional effort to mute or remove Smart Home Devices (e.g., Google Home, Amazon Echo) or move to a room without Smart Home Devices when in an In Camera or Closed-Door Meeting. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair can remind participants to mute such devices at the onset of an In Camera or Closed Door Session.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make best efforts to have camera on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-task while in meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert the chair or CEO to technical difficulties or the need to go off-camera

Board Norms: for better board meetings

In-Meeting Norms | Applies if Joining Virtually

We promise to	We promise not to	If we see a problem, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be mindful of confidentiality if others are nearby Use a blurred/virtual background if needed Ensure your screen is not visible to those around you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join from a public place where your screen (and therefore meeting materials) are visible to others nearby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If others are present nearby and conversation needs more confidentiality, the chair or another director may recommend the board move In Camera – requiring private space or “listen only” mode with input via chat only. If needed, chair can ask privately for a director or committee member to move to a more private space where others cannot see their screen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep microphone muted when not speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave microphone unmuted, especially when there are distractions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair or meeting host can mute participants if needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use chat or zoom icons to notify the group that you have to step away, include the time that you leave, and comment again when you get back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave the meeting without notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair will follow up with director with a reminder after the meeting if needed.

Post-Meeting Norms

We promise to	We promise not to	If we see a problem, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and post minutes within 2 weeks of meeting date. Minutes will include high-level overview of considerations, motions and any abstentions or opposed votes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include director names and verbatim comments in the minutes (to minimize legal liability) Delay review of the posted board minutes and identification of any errors or omissions beyond one week of receipt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors will identify any concerns to the Secretary, cc to the Chair and CEO.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise any concerns (e.g., somewhat agree or disagree from meeting evaluation) by sharing examples (during or after the meeting) so the board can discuss and improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't let issues fester or assume you're the only one feeling that way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are somewhat agree or disagree responses and no discussion, the Chair commits to following up to seek further understanding where possible.

Appendix A:

Follow up due to missed meetings:

1 st missed meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you did not send regrets, someone will contact you to check in and find out why you missed the meeting. • If you sent regrets, but not comments, you will receive an email reminding you that comments are welcome in the future and to provide an update on the meeting. .
2 nd missed meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the reason for missing a 2nd meeting was not identified and/or is not considered to be extenuating circumstances, you will be contacted to discuss your commitment to the Board/committee(s) and work-life balance. • If you had extenuating circumstances, you will receive the minutes of the meeting and a suggestion to follow up with your mentoring partner.
3 rd missed meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a director misses 3 board meetings, they will be contacted and reminded about the By-law 7.05 Discretionary Termination that indicates that if a director misses 3 meetings in a rolling 12-month period, they may be deemed to have resigned. • Whether a director or committee member, a discussion will take place about work-life balance and whether you can commit going forward.
4 th missed meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing a 4th meeting in a 12-month period without extenuating circumstances approved by the Board or Committee Chair, will result in deemed resignation from the Board or committee. The Chair and/or Secretary will confirm this deemed resignation in writing with you.

Acknowledgement of Commitment by Directors/Committee Members

I will do my best to perform up to these expectations during my term(s) as Director and/or committee member.

Signature of Director

Date