PARENT HANDBOOK
Welcome to the Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center

Child’s Name: __________________________________________________________

Teachers: ____________________________ ____________________________
                                                      ____________________________
                                                      ____________________________

Room: __________________________________________________________

Please remember to bring on your child’s first day:

1. Weekly Fee of ________________

2. Complete change of clothes marked with your child’s name.

____________________________________________________________________

Verification Form

______ I have received the Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center
     Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and standards.

______ I would like to be called to clarify my understanding of
____________________________________________________________________

Date  Print Child’s Name  Parent Signature

Revised November 2012
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INTRODUCTION

The Board of Directors and the Staff of the Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center welcome you and your family to our Center. We look forward to working with you to provide a secure and stimulating environment for your child. This parent manual has been prepared to orient you to our Center and to serve as a reference regarding our policies.

The Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national and/or ethnic origin, political beliefs, sexual orientation, age, or sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital status or disability, in the employment of staff, in the administration of policies, or in the admission of students. The Center does not promote religious activities or distribute materials of a religious nature. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of this information should contact USDA’s Target Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964. The Children’s Center and USDA are equal opportunity employers.

The Center is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center provides a comprehensive, high-quality early childhood program designed to give all young children, regardless of their family economic resources, a strong foundation on which to build the rest of their lives.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe all children have the right to participate in a quality early childhood program with developmentally appropriate activities in the least restrictive environment and with
the necessary support for the individual child, parents and staff.

HISTORY

Representatives of twenty churches and synagogues in the Falls Church-McLean area held their first meeting on May 17, 1967 to discuss the possibility of organizing a child care center in the area. These energetic people had first become aware of the need for child care facilities when news articles concerning the plight of working mothers caught their eyes. The Center was organized for the express purpose of providing quality care for all children, regardless of their family's economic resources.

On October 16, 1968, the Falls Church-McLean Day Care Center, Inc., a non-profit corporation now known as the Falls Church-McLean Children's Center, opened its doors with an enrollment of fifteen children. Recognizing that the majority of our children come to us at risk for low school achievement, often with limited or no English skills, in 1987 we implemented our Successful Start Program. This program is critical to our ability to promote the social and emotional development of our children and includes: 1) a team of on-site specialists, including a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, English and Spanish-speaking counselors, and a Child Find special education teacher; 2) the maintenance of an exceptionally well-qualified, stable staff of classroom teachers who are trained to work with at-risk children; 3) low student teacher ratios; and 4) frequent field trips into the community.

The Center has been recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Fairfax County Public Schools for outstanding service, support and advocacy for quality early childhood programs for children and families. Temple Rodef Shalom presented the Center with its 2000 award for Social Justice in recognition of its service to all children in the community. In 2004 and again in 2008 the Catalogue for Philanthropy named us “one of the finest small charities Greater Washington has to offer!” The Northern Virginia Chapter of The National Association for the Education for Young Children recognized the Children’s Center in 2008 for “Outstanding Service to Young Children,” the first time a program has ever been honored. That same year Executive Director Elizabeth Page was presented with the prestigious Fairfax Futures School Readiness Educator Award.

The Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center relocated to a new, permanent home at Lemon Road Elementary School on 7230 Idylwood Road, Falls Church on August 26, 2003. The Center continues its status as a private, non-profit early childhood center.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012

The Center is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of representatives of supporting organizations, parents and interested citizens. The Board of Directors sets all Center policies and hires the Executive Director who implements these policies and oversees the daily operation of the Center. Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:30 at the Center. Visitors are welcome.

Tim Shean
Certified Financial Planner
Potomac Financial Private Client Group

President
Chair, Executive Committee
Finance Committee
Sonya Powell  
Attorney, Shoun Bach  

Jose Penado  
Manager, Embassy Suites  

Molly Gravholt  

Susan Poretz  
Early Childhood Consultant  

Michele Hoffman  
Director, MorganFranklin  

Nadine Cipriano  
Director, Morgan Franklin  

Tena Nauheim  
Real Estate Agent  
Long and Foster  

Cindy Oh  
Attorney  

Katherine K. Banks, M.Ed.  
Executive Director  

Vice-President  
Development Committee  

Secretary  
Development Committee  

Treasurer  
Chair, Finance Committee  

Member-at-Large  
Human Resources  
Development Committee 

Past-President  
Development Committee  


STAFF

The Falls Church-McLean Children's Center is fortunate to have a staff of dedicated professionals. All members of the staff are members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and maintain current certification in First Aid and CPR. All staff complete a minimum of thirty-six hours of professional training each year.

Administrative Staff

Executive Director: The Board of Directors hires the Executive Director to administer of the Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center in a manner that contributes to the positive growth, development, and safety of young children. The Director also works with staff, parents and specialists to identify children who need special services, coordinates services of consultants and community specialists and mentors teachers in the classroom.

Kathy Banks  
Staff Member – November, 2012  
M.Ed. Teaching and Learning Child Development- Liberty University.  
B.S.. Psychology and Business, Liberty University  
24 years of relevant experience
Assistant Director: The Assistant Director is responsible for assisting the Executive Director with the administration of the Center.

Sandra Blanco  Staff Member – 5/2000
  AA degrees in Early Childhood Education and General Studies, NOVA
  CDA (Child Development Associate) Certification in Preschool Education
  Fluent in Spanish
  11 years relevant experience

Development Director: This person is primarily responsible for production of donor communications, gift processing, donor acknowledgements, and grant proposals.

Renee Boyle  Staff member-9/2010

Office Manager: The Office Manager is responsible for providing the necessary clerical support for the efficient operation of the Center.

Luisa Fuentelzas  Staff Member – 8/2005
  6 years relevant experience
  Completed six month Office Assistant Training Course
  Fluent in Spanish

Bus Driver: The bus driver is here several mornings a week to take classrooms on field trips to places like the area museums, parks, gardens, the Zoo and libraries.

Hector Cabrera  Staff Member – 4/11
  CDL License
  12 years relevant experience

Teaching Staff

Each member of the teaching staff shares responsibility for providing a warm, nurturing and safe environment, planning daily learning activities and maintaining regular communication and involvement with parents. The teaching staff observe children; document behavior, refer children identified to our specialists; reinforce the intervention techniques recommended by the specialists; attend specialized training; provide opportunities for parental involvement; and evaluate the children’s progress.

Young Creators Teachers, ages 3 – 5

Velma Williams - Teacher
  Staff Member – 10/85
  15 credits, UVA, NOVA and G W University
  CDA Certification in Preschool Education
  30 years of relevant experience.

Debbie Lamar – Part-time Teacher
  Staff Member - 8/2006
  AA in Early Childhood Education, Northern Virginia Community College
  22 years relevant experience

Ivania Ramos – Assistant Teacher
Daniela Ramirez – Assistant Teacher
Staff Member - 9/09
Pursuing CDA
2 years relevant experience
Fluent in Spanish

Rainbow Room Teachers, ages 3 – 5

Jennifer Wallace – Part-time Teacher
Staff member – 4/2002
BA in Early Childhood Education, University of South Carolina
18 years of relevant experience.

Maya Good – Teacher
Staff Member – 2/07
BA in Education, Smith College
4 years relevant experience

Matt Nieves - Teacher
Staff member -1/10
AA degree in General Studies, Northern Virginia Community College
2 years relevant experience

Adventure Room Teachers, ages 3 – 5

Ryan Walsh – Teacher
Staff Member – 7/07
BA in Education, Franciscan University
6 years relevant experience

Cary O’Bryan – Teacher
Staff Member – 10/04
B.A., Lima Peru; Completing AA degree in ECE, NOVA
7 Years relevant experience
Fluent in Spanish

Lucy Allca – Teacher
Staff member –
AA degree in Early Childhood Education, NOVA

Young Explorers Classroom. Older 2’s and young 3’s

Gloria Turner – Teacher
Staff Member – 8/1972
54 credits, UVA, GW University, NOVA and Marymount University
CDA Certification in Preschool Education
40 years of relevant experience.
Bernarda Rodriguez - Teacher
Staff Member – 8/1999
46 credits, Northern Virginia Community College toward AA degree in ECE
CDA Certification in Preschool Education
11 years relevant experience
Fluent in Spanish

Susana Coro – Assistant Teacher
Staff Member – 9/09
13 years of relevant experience
Fluent in Spanish

Discovery Room

Mary Jackson – Part-Time Teacher
Staff member – 4/1974
CDA in Preschool Education
6 credits from University of Virginia and Marymount University
37 years of relevant experience

Julie Smith – Teacher
Staff Member – 10/2003
15 ECE/CD units
7 Years Relevant experience

Vanessa Villatoro – Teacher
Staff Member - 1/10
AA degree in Early Childhood Education, NOVA
Fluent in Spanish
5 years of relevant experience

Teresa Terrones – Assistant Teacher
Staff Member – 6/07
15 years relevant experience
Fluent in Spanish
In the absence of the Director, the Assistance Director or a designated teacher is in charge.

**PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The program was among the first early childhood programs in the nation to achieve accreditation in July 1987 by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. To be accredited, the Center had to undergo a comprehensive self-study, be validated by a trained early childhood specialist, and be reviewed by a national commission to certify that the Center met high standards for staff qualifications, health and safety, a developmentally appropriate curriculum, staff-child ratios, and other criteria for a high quality program. The accreditation process was repeated in 1990, 1993, 1997, 2000 and 2003 to maintain current accreditation.

Two-Year-Old Program:

The children are divided into two classrooms, the youngest group in the Discovery Room and the older two year olds and younger three year olds in the Young Explorers Room. These children have their own playground area. The children will move to the preschool classrooms when the teachers, parents and Director agree that they are ready and there is an opening in one of the classrooms.

Preschool Program:

The children are divided into three multi-age groups that are balanced in regard to age
and sex. Each group is with its three teachers in three classrooms: The Adventurers Room, The Young Creators Room, and the Rainbow Room. These children will stay with that teaching team until they leave for kindergarten, providing a consistent group of caregivers. In addition to having a large selection of developmentally appropriate activities that are always available to the children, the teachers also plan special daily activities for the children and individualized activities for special children. The program is supplemented by several field trips a month.

Outdoor Learning Center:

During the year, the Center children are taken outside to take advantage of our playground and to give children opportunities to enjoy experiences in the fresh air. Art, music, books, puzzles and other small muscle activities are all done outside. Science activities that increase the children's awareness and appreciation of nature are provided, as well as plenty of opportunities for experiences with sand, digging and water play. During July and August the preschoolers swim at Chesterbrook Swim Club. This private swim club has generously allowed us the use of their facilities for many years.

Field Trips:

GOALS

The Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center has established the following goals:

1. To meet the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of each child through a concrete, play oriented program. To meet this goal, the staff facilitate each child’s development by planning a variety of developmentally appropriate activities based on children's interests and needs; provide the materials and environment to help each child to learn at her own rate; and encourage children to make independent choices, problem solve and express creativity.

2. To identify children with special needs that may affect their development and learning, to provide the needed early intervention services, and to integrate the children into the regular classroom. To meet this goal, the Center provides visual, hearing, speech, language, developmental and dental screenings. Therapy and treatment are arranged for those children who may benefit from this service. Nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks are provided during the day.

3. To promote strong families to support children as they grow and develop. To meet this goal, the Center is sensitive to the individual needs, values and practices of each family; encourages regular staff-parent communication; provides opportunities and invites parents to be involved in our program; and offers parent education and family support services.

4. To provide staff with the support and training necessary to work with children and families with diverse backgrounds and abilities. To meet this goal, the Center provides funds and professional leave for staff to attend workshops, university classes and conferences to further their education; and provides opportunities for weekly consultations with psychologists, speech-language and occupational therapists who are working with children in the program.
5. To maintain a quality early childhood program with a stable, professionally trained staff. To meet this goal, the Center continuously strives to improve staff salaries and benefits to reflect their experience and education. The Human Resources’ Committee of the Board of Directors interviews each teacher every year, responding to individual queries, comments and suggestions made by members of the staff. The Director maintains an open door policy for the staff.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum for our program is rooted in a broad-based educational philosophy, practical experience with children, and an understanding of children’s interests. Erikson’s stages of socio-emotional development, Piaget’s theories of how children think and learn, Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theories, and principles of physical development have had an influence on our curriculum and interaction with the children.

Principles, activities and materials have been adapted from the High/Scope, the Reggio Emilia programs, the Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood, and the Montessori approach. Children learn through discovery, active learning, and the interaction with peers and adults. There is a daily balance between active and quiet activities, between indoor and outdoor activities, and between large group/small group and individually selected activities. Learning centers have been created to help the children develop skills in the following areas: art, music, language-communication, science, math, dramatic play, reading readiness, and small and large muscle development.

The children choose their own activities and then work individually or in small groups. Children are encouraged to make independent choices, to problem solve and to express creativity. The teachers set the stage and facilitate each child’s individual development by providing the materials, preparing the environment and by planning developmentally appropriate activities.

DAILY SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM</td>
<td>Center Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 - 9:00 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast (Optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Selected Individual and Small Group Learning Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:45 AM</td>
<td>Clean Up - Group Time - Planning Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snack Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 – 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Self-Selected Individual and Special Small Group Learning Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities which include art activities, fine motor activities, block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and pretend play and manipulative. There are many opportunities for the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>children to learn social and language skills, practice gross motor and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fine motor skills and learn the academics needed to succeed in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 - 11:15 AM</td>
<td>Group/Story Time - Review of Morning Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11:15 - 12:00 AM  Outdoors
12:00 AM - 1:00 PM  Toileting - Hand washing - Lunch
1:00 - 3:00 PM  Quiet Time (Naps, Listening to Records and Story Tapes)
3:00 - 3:30 PM  Wake-Up - Bathroom - Hand washing - Snack Time
Group Time (Stories, Music, Conversation)
Review and Planning for Afternoon Activities
3:30 – 6:00 PM  Outdoors/Indoor activities
6:00 PM  Center Closes

ADMISSION POLICIES

Children ages 2 to 6 years are eligible to attend the Center. Parents are encouraged to tour the Center with their child before making a decision to enroll or place their child on our waiting list. The visit is a good opportunity for the parent to ask any questions and to assess the appropriateness of the Center for their child.

WAITING LIST

If enrollment at the Center is full, children are placed on a waiting list in numerical order from the time the application is made. In keeping with the mission of the Center, the Center commits approximately 60% of its enrollment to children eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program. A completed application must be on file with a $100 application fee before a child is placed on the waiting list. When a space becomes available in the Center, the parent has 1 week to decide whether or not to enroll the child in the Center. If the parent does not enroll the child, the child's name will be removed from the waiting list if the parent is no longer interested, or left at the top of the waiting list if the parent prefers a later date.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Prior to attendance at the Center, a completed enrollment packet and a $100 registration fee is required. We will also need to see a birth certificate for your child, social security numbers for the child and parents, a physical done within the last year and a TB test. Before the first day of school, we will arrange a time with you for a parent and the child to come for a visit, about one hour. The makes the first day of school go more smoothly.

If a child with special needs like severe allergies or developmental delays, it is important that the Center staff and the child’s parents work together. When your child is enrolled the Director needs to be made aware in advance of any child’s special needs. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan, the Director needs a copy of it for our files.

The Center must follow regulations of the Fairfax County Health Department, the State Department of Social Services, The State Department of Health and Human Services, the Fire Department, the National Association for the Education of Young Children and Virginia’s Quality Rating and Improvement System. Please help us in following those
Your Child's First Day

On the child's first day, please bring a complete change of clothes to leave at the Center. (Please remember to replace it seasonally or when it has been used by the child.) Names must be on all articles of clothing, including jackets, hats, mittens and boots. Children who feel more comfortable having something to sleep with at nap time may bring a small stuffed toy or blanket that will fit into their "cubbies." **No toys, bottles, cups or food from home are permitted.**

FEES

Fees are evaluated each year. Parents will be notified at least 30 days in advance of any increase in fees. All fees are due in advance on Monday morning of each week.

Application Fee: There is a nonrefundable $100.00 application fee to have a child on the waiting list.

Enrollment Fee: $100.00 to be paid at the time of enrollment or to confirm enrollment at a later date. This fee is non-refundable.

Tuition: $310.00 a week for the preschool age children and $340.00 a week for the two year old children. Full weekly fees are payable for weeks that may include holidays or snow days. There are no fees for snacks, lunch or field trips.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS

**Successful Start Program:** The early childhood specialists are employed on a contract basis to assist the Center to identify and evaluate children with special needs; to provide needed early intervention services; and to provide support, consultation and education for parents and staff.

**Shannon Barrows, M.S. Early Childhood Special Education**
Child Find specialist from Fairfax County Public Schools. She works on-site with children with identified special needs from Fairfax County.

**David A. Beigel, L.P.C. – Psychologist**
Provides consultation, support and training for parents and staff.
Private practice in child, adolescent and family psychotherapy

**Ann Gordon, M. Ed. – Early Childhood Specialist**
Child Find Coordinator for Falls Church City Public School. She works on-site with children with identified special needs from Falls Church City.

**Elizabeth Lopez-Lingeman, L.P.C. – Psychologist**
A bilingual therapist specializing in cross-cultural mental health services at community mental health center and in private practice.
Mary Craver, M.S., OTR/L - Pediatric Occupational Therapist
Screens, evaluates, provides therapy for children with developmental delays in sensory integration, attending and physical skills

Speech and Language Center of Northern Virginia
Has provided services for Center children for more than twenty years
Karen Evans, M.A., CCC-SLP- Speech/Language Pathologist
Evaluates and provides therapy for children with speech/language delays

The Center also arranges for hearing, vision, speech, language and developmental screenings, and dental examinations on a sliding scale fee. Speech therapy and language enrichment are provided as needed. Parental permission is secured prior to doing these screenings if permission hasn't been granted in the enrollment agreement.

**HOURS AND HOLIDAYS**

The Center operates from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. We close for Federal Holidays and occasional days throughout the year for training. We also close one week at the end of the summer to clean the building. Other school closings shall be made at the discretion of the Director. Parents are given a yearly calendar of closings.

**FOOD POLICIES**

The Falls Church-McLean Children's Center provides breakfast, regular morning and afternoon snacks and a mid-day lunch that are nutritious and that meet the requirements of the USDA Child Care Food Program. Children are not permitted to bring food to the Center except when the child is on special diets because of medical reasons. We must know how many lunches to order for children by 8:30 a.m. every morning. Therefore, if your child is going to be absent or late, please call the Center by 8:30 a.m.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Though all of our parents work long hours and have little free time, we would like to have you as involved at your child’s school as possible. Parents are invited to assist with field trips, to share their interests in the classroom, to serve on the Board of Directors, and to participate in parent work-days.

Parent-teacher communication is very important. Notes, telephone calls and conferences are used. Parents are invited to visit the program at any time. We require that parents attend conferences with their child’s schedule at least twice a year. This is a state licensing requirement and it is important for the teachers and parent s work as a team. You are your child’s first and most important teacher and we need your help.

**VISITORS**
The Center is always open to visitors. Parents and community people are most welcome. Come see for yourself how much fun we have and how much we learn! All visitors are asked to report first to the office, sign the visitors’ sheet and get a badge.

**DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

The goal of discipline is to help children to develop self-control and the necessary skills to assume responsibility for their own behavior. Children are taught to respect themselves and others. We do not use punishment or time-out, but instead focus on helping the children learn to share the attention of their friends and teachers, follow the classroom routine and become independent.

The following methods of discipline are **prohibited** on Center property or at Center sponsored events and apply to staff, parents and visitors.

1. An adult shall neither force nor withhold food from a child.

2. An adult shall neither force a child to nap nor withhold naps from a child.

3. A child shall not be punished or verbally berated for a toileting accident.

4. Verbal abuse of a child or the child’s family shall not be used. This includes belittling remarks.

5. Physical punishment or disciplinary action to the child’s body such as, but not limited to, the following actions:

   - Spanking
   - Shaking
   - Forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position
   - Keeping arms raised above or horizontal to the body
   - Enclosing in a confined space, box, or similar cubicle
   - Using exercise as punishment

**HEALTH POLICIES**

It is our hope that these rules will help provide your child with an environment where he or she can be well and happy. If we can cut down on the spread of illness in this way, your children will be healthier and you will lose less work in the long run. Hand washing is very effective in controlling and preventing the spread of diseases. They must be healthy enough to play outside and to eat the food served. Commonwealth of Virginia Child Care licensing regulations state that children are to be taken outside. Special exceptions require a statement from a physician.

**FEVER:** We will call parents to pick up their child if the child has a fever of 100 degrees or more. Your child should rest at home for at least 24 hours. Any child who has a fever at night or early morning must not be brought to the Center.

**CONJUNCTIVITIS/PINK EYE:** Should be seen by a doctor and treated for 24 hours before returning to school. Your child can return to school the same day of
treatment only if you have permission from the doctor stating that he or she does not have contagious conjunctivitis.

**THROAT CULTURE:** If your doctor does a throat culture on your child, he or she may not return to school until results of the culture are known. If your child has strep throat, please let us know so that we can notify the other families in your child's classroom. Your child can return to school after 24 hours on an antibiotic and when he/she is able to fully participate in our daily routine.

**DIARRHEA:** Diarrheal diseases spread very easily among young children. The child should be kept home until all symptoms disappear or you have a statement from the doctor that the diarrhea is not a communicable type.

**SEVERE COUGHING:** The child gets red or blue in the face or makes high pitched croupy sounds after he/she coughs. The child should stay home until the symptoms disappear or a physician decides that he/she can return to the Center without danger to him/herself or to the other children and staff.

**IMPETIGO:** Multiple skin lesions usually on exposed portions (elbows, legs, knees, also on face around the nose and mouth). Lesions are multiple, varying in size and shape and consists of blisters which rapidly turn into brown crusts on a reddened base. Caused by strep or staph germ. Exclude from school until physician advises return, usually 3-5 days.

**LICE:** Head lice are highly communicable and difficult to prevent, but if every parent takes the responsibility to CHECK their children regularly, these human parasites can be detected early. Head lice are the size of a sesame seed, usually brown and move quickly away from light. Nits are tiny, yellowish-white oval eggs firmly attached at an angle to the hair shaft. Infested children will be sent home and permitted to return as soon as he or she is free of lice and nits.

**RASHES:** If your child has a rash or develops one during the school day, you will need to have him/her checked by a doctor. Upon return to school, please bring a note from the doctor letting us know what the rash was and whether it was communicable.

If your child becomes sick while at school, we will notify you so you can pick up your child. Your child will be kept in the office to minimize exposure to other children and adults. Because office staff cannot properly supervise your sick child for long periods, please help us by coming to get your child as soon as possible. If we are not able to reach you in a timely way, we will call the people listed as emergency contacts in your child's.

**ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

The Center's personnel cannot administer any medication (including over-the-counter medicine such as aspirin, cough drops, decongestant or other non-prescription drugs, as well as prescription medicine) to a child unless the Center has a written prescription signed by a child's physician for each medication which states:

1. Name of the child
2. Name of the medication
3. The dosage
4. Time(s) it is to be given
5. Signature of the physician
6. Duration of the medication

A prescription medication container labeled with the above information is acceptable. In addition, the parent must provide a signed written consent for each medication to be given that states the duration of the authorization (may not exceed 10 work days*). Medication must be brought to and picked up in the office by an adult, or given to the bus driver. A child's parent or guardian may come to the Center at any time to give his/her child medication.

**LONG TERM PRESCRIPTION** drug use requires authorization and directions from a physician. If your child needs to store an epipen here or requires any other type of medication for more than 10 days, please get a form from the office. Have your doctor fill it out completely and sign it, then return it to the office. This includes medicines like Benydryl, cortisone creams and asthma medications.

**SUN SCREEN POLICY:** Parents are encouraged to protect their children from the sun’s harmful rays by (1) requiring them to wear wide-brimmed, sun-safe hats and long sleeved shirts with collars and long pants for outdoor activities and field trips; and, (2) applying sunscreen and lip balm an SPF of 15 or greater on all sun-exposed areas of the skin prior to bringing their child to the Center. If parents of children with very sensitive skin would like the staff to apply sun-screen on their child’s skin they should indicate that on a Parental Consent for Medication form with any known adverse reactions written on the form. Give your child’s teacher the sunscreen lotion in its original container and with your child’s name on it. It should be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15.

**DIAPER OINTMENT POLICY:** If parents would like the staff to apply diaper ointment on their child’s skin, they should indicate that form. Give your child’s teacher ointment in its original container and with your child’s name on it. The teacher will keep a record of its use and any reactions.

**INSECT REPELLENT:** This needs to be in the original container labeled with the child’s name and shall be inaccessible to children. Parent written authorization is needed.

**CELEBRATION OF HOLIDAYS AND BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are special occasions for children and their parents. At the Center the child’s class will prepare a simple cake; we are not permitted by the department of Agriculture to serve food that has been prepared elsewhere. If you would like, you may supply birthday napkins, but please do not bring in juice, gifts or favors, particularly candy. If you plan a party at home and are not planning to invite everyone in the class, please send the invitations through the mail to eliminate any hurt feelings. The office can give you list of addresses.
Our policy regarding the holidays is to keep holiday celebrations very low key and maintain our routines. At Halloween, costumes and candy are not allowed; many young children are afraid of people in costumes and don’t understand the difference between real and pretend. During the year we talk about holidays celebrated by many different cultures and religions.

**GRIEVANCE POLICIES**

The goal of the Falls Church-McLean Children's Center is to provide a quality early childhood program for each child. The Center will make every effort to serve all children and will work with parents to meet the individual needs of each child. Parents are provided with information about the philosophy of the program, the background of the staff and their child’s daily schedule at the time of their child’s enrollment.

If you have a question about the program and/or your child’s well-being, request a conference with their child’s teachers. If you still have concerns after talking to your child’s teachers, parents are encouraged to talk to the Director or Assistant Director. If you are still not satisfied that your concerns have been addressed adequately, you can approach the program’s Board of Directors.

**TERMINATION POLICIES**

The Center reserves the right to terminate, with two weeks notice, at the sole discretion of the Director:

1. Any child who may be a threat to their own safety, or to the safety, physical and mental health of others after efforts to reduce the risk are unsuccessful. If a child poses a significant threat, the child’s attendance may be immediately terminated
2. Any family who refuses to support and cooperate with staff in developing a plan to meet the needs of their child in a manner that is consistent with the goals and philosophy of our program.
3. Any family who is more than 13 days late in the payment of fees.

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM**

Prior to removing a child from the Center, parents need to give two weeks written notice to the Director or pay an additional two weeks in fees.

**THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Sliding scale fees at a rate determined by the Fairfax County Office for Children are based on income and number of dependents. The determined fee is payable in advance on the first school day of the week. Full weekly fees are payable for weeks that may include holidays, snow days or vacations. Registration and enrollment fees are waived. Regular attendance is required to maintain eligibility in the Child Care Assistance Program. A maximum of 2 absences per month is allowed. Written excuses need to be provided for all absences.
REFUNDS

No refunds are made for vacations, holidays, snow days or days that the Center has to close due to an emergency such as flood or other disaster. If a parent wants to take their child out of school for a vacation, payment is required for the period of the absence in order to hold the child’s spot in the program.

LATE PAYMENT & RETURNED CHECKS

We operate on a very tight budget in order to provide our parents with the lowest fees possible. Therefore, parents who are more than thirteen (13) days late in payment of fees risk the termination of the enrollment of their child.

Our policy on checks returned for insufficient funds is as follows: $25.00 service charge will be payable to the Children’s Center. No further checks will be accepted for your account. Cash or money order only will be accepted.

VACATIONS

If you plan a family vacation, please let the office and teachers know. It is expected that families pay tuition while on vacation. If you participate in the Child Care Assistance Program and would like to take an extended vacation, you must notify the Director and your case worker at Office for Children. If you want your child’s place to be held so it will be available upon his/her return, it is expected that families will pay the current State reimbursement rate. If payment is not made, the child will be put on the Center’s waiting list.

SNOW PROCEDURES

LISTEN TO THE RADIO to obtain information about school closings and/or call the Center to listen to the message on the answering machine.
- If Fairfax County Schools are closed, we are closed.
- If Fairfax County schools are open 2 hours late, we open at 8:30 am.

MID-DAY OR AFTERNOON SNOW: We ask parents to leave work earlier so that our staff may leave on time and so that both parents and staff may have a safe trip home. If Fairfax County Public Schools close early due to inclement weather the center will close at 3:00. The Director reserves the right to close in other situations if the weather causes particularly hazardous conditions. Please leave a telephone number and email address where you can be reached in case the weather worsens and we decide to close early.

ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICIES

Children adjust more easily to the child care program if they attend regularly and arrive by 9:00. Children who arrive after 9:00 a.m. miss out on planning the day’s activities with their classmates. Additionally, irregular attendance and late arrivals make it more difficult for children to develop friendships, an important part of their social development. Please drive very slowly in the parking lot. Turn off the motor of your car when you arrive at the Center to drop off or pick up your child; do not leave children unattended in your car. If there is no space in the front parking lot, there is a lot in the back of the
school. Do not park in the fire lane or block other cars.

All children must be accompanied into the Center by an individual who is at least 16 years of age. Please let a teacher know when you drop off your child, help your child wash their hands and get settled. Be sure to sign in your child and always say good-bye to your child before leaving. Notify the Center if your child will not be returning to the Center after spending part of the day in another program.

At the end of the day, the child must be picked up inside or on the Center's grounds by an authorized person who is at least 16 years of age and who is listed on the Child Release Authorization form as described in this manual. We will not release a child to someone who is not on the pick-up list unless we have been notified by a parent that a new person is coming. We require ID from anyone picking up one the child who we do not recognize or who is not on the pick-up list. As a security measure, there is a class list and space for parents to record the arrival and departure time for their child outside each classroom. It is important that the adult dropping off and picking up the child is asked to sign the sheet.

**INDIVIDUALS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP CHILD**

The Center can release a child only to the parents or legal guardian(s) of the child, or the individuals authorized to pick up the child whom the parent/guardian has listed on the Center's Child Release Authorization and Custody Information form. Parents need to provide written authorization for individuals not on the Child Release Authorization Form.

Staff members of the Center may require any person who arrives to pick up a child to show identification. All persons authorized to pick up a child or to receive a child from the bus must be at least sixteen (16) years old.

If only one parent has custody of the child and the other is not authorized to pick up the child, the parent must provide the Center Director with an official copy of the Court Order confirming the physical custody of the child. If there is any change in the legal custody of the child while the child is enrolled in the Center, the parent must immediately notify the Center and must provide the Center Director with a certified copy of the Court Order confirming the change in custody. If an unauthorized person arrives at the Center to pick up a child, the Center staff will not release the child and will notify the parent immediately.

**LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

The Children's Center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Out of consideration for our staff who have already worked a full day and who also have family and personal responsibilities after 6:00 p.m., our late pick-up policy shall be as follows:

**Normal Weather Conditions:**

The charge shall be $2.00 for every minute that the parent is late. This fee must be paid to the office within one week of the incident.

Parents who are late on a regular basis (2 times or more in the same month) will be asked to discuss their problems with the Director. Many centers have a policy of terminating enrollment of children who are consistently picked up late. We do not want
to establish this policy.
It is important to notify the Center if you will be late. The Center will implement the following procedures if they have not been contacted by the parent. At 6:00 p.m., the Center will begin to try to contact child’s family and emergency contacts pick up the child. At 6:30 p.m., if the parents still have not contacted the Center and the Center is unable to reach an emergency contact for the child, the Center will notify the Fairfax County Police Department, McLean District, telephone number - (703) 556-7750.

**Bad Weather Conditions or Other Abnormal Conditions:**
In order that the staff of the Children's Center can leave work on schedule or hopefully earlier when there are poor road conditions:

All parents are urged to leave work early if bad weather is expected during the normal rush hour of 4-6 p.m. Parents who are not able to leave their jobs early should have back-up persons who can pick up their children early and care for them until the parents arrive. If Fairfax County closes early the center will close at 3:00 pm

Late fees for late arrivals during bad weather are determined on an individual basis at the discretion of the Director. Generally, the following policies will apply to parents who have never been late during normal weather.

**RELEASE OF CHILD TO INTOXICATED OR DRUGGED INDIVIDUAL**
In order to protect the children, it is the policy of the Center to take all reasonable steps to avoid release a child to a person in a drugged or intoxicated state. If the senior staff member present at the Center feels that a parent or authorized person who arrives to take a the child home is in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will notify any other parent or guardian of the situation and offer to call another relative, friend or taxi (at the parent's expense) to drive the person and child home.

If the parent or guardian insists on driving the child home, the Center's staff member will notify the police department. If police officers agree that the parent or authorized person is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, the parent or authorized person may be charged with public drunkenness and/or driving while under the influence of alcohol. If a particular parent or guardian frequently arrives in an intoxicated or drugged state, the Center will notify the police department and Child Protective Services.

**PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**
The Center is required by Virginia law (Section 63.1-248.3) to report evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Persons found guilty of failure to report suspected abuse are subject to a fine. Section 63.1-248.3 states that "... any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school, kindergarten or nursery school, any person providing full or part-time child care for pay on a regularly planned basis, ... and any person associated with or employed by any private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children who has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately, ... to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred ... Any person required to file a report ... who fails to do so within seventy-two hours of his first..."
suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall be fined . . .”
According to Virginia law, an abused or neglected child is any child under 18 years of age whose parents or any person responsible for his or her care* (such as a child care provider, foster parent, or anyone responsible for the welfare of a child receiving residential care at an institution):

1. Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
2. Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care; abandons the child
3. Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child’s age and level of development
4. Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

*NOTE: Virginia law requires that child care providers report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to child protective services regardless of the abuser/neglector’s relationship to the child.

**EMERGENCIES**

If a child is injured or becomes seriously ill while at the Center, the Center will call 911, then attempt contact the parent. If the child needs to be taken to the Hospital Emergency Room for treatment, a staff member will accompany the child, taking the Parental Consent for Medication form so that treatment can be started immediately.

It is critical for each parent to complete the Medical Care and Emergency Contact Information Forms so that the Center can contact the parent or other authorized person in an emergency. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Center if there is any change in the information on the form (such as telephone number, employer, etc.). It is very important for us to have the correct information so that we can reach you.

In case of an emergency of any kind at the Children’s Center or Lemon Road Elementary School, the Principal at Lemon Road or Director of the Center will notify appropriate officials. Then an announcement will be made over the Public Address System by the Lemon Road Principal or Assistant Principal or the Director (or Director in Charge) of the Falls Church-McLean Children’s Center. If the emergency is building wide, the Lemon Road Principal will be in charge and Children’s Center staff will follow his/her orders. If phone systems are out or unavailable, the Center Director and the Principal will communicate by Walkie Talkie. If the emergency is contained within the wing of the Center, the Director will be the emergency officer and the Assistant Director will be the back-up officer. If one of these people out of the building the Office manager will be the back-up officer.

**FIRE:** Director or Lemon Road Principal will sound the fire alarm. Children and Teachers will leave the building, taking roll books and the Crisis Management Security Plan, through the rear exit of the Center and gather on the asphalt area of the fenced playground. If it is necessary to use the secondary route, children and teachers will go out the front of the school and gather on the grass at the south end of the parking lot. The Director (or Director in Charge), Assistant Director and Office Manager will go through the building and bathrooms to ensure that no one is left inside and close all fire doors. The Director will take a cell phone, Assistant Director will take the notebook with phone numbers for all families. The office manager will take the first aid kit in the field trip bag. When everyone is outside the Director will check with teachers to
make sure that all children are present.

TORNADO: An announcement will be made over the PA system by the Director or Principal of Lemon Road. All children and teachers will go through the inside doors into the elementary school and gather in the kindergarten/first grade hall, kneel and cover their heads with their arms, facing the wall until there is an all clear announcement. Teachers will take roll books, and Crisis Management Security Plan. Everyone will stay at least 10 feet away from any doors. The Director (or Director in Charge), Assistant Director and Office Manager will go through the building to ensure that no one is left in the Center's wing. The Director will take the Walkie-Talkies and a cell phone, Assistant Director will take the notebook with phone numbers for all families. The office manager will take the first aid kit in the field trip bag.

MISSING CHILD: Notify the Director. Director will call 911 and the parents of the missing child. Director will stay in the building to answer questions. Assistant Director and Office Manager and available teachers will look on the school property for the child.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY: One staff member stays with child (or adult) and administers first aid. One staff member stays with the other children in the classroom. Director is notified and calls 911. Staff member gets emergency forms, health file and insurance forms and calls parents. If necessary, one staff member goes to the child to the emergency room until a parent arrives.

SHELTER IN PLACE: If this is necessary, the State Police will be in charge of the building. Staff will do as they instruct. If it is necessary for everyone to gather in one room, all teachers and children will go to the multi-purpose room or, secondarily, the gym of Lemon Road E.S..

EVACUATION: If it becomes necessary to evacuate the school building and grounds, children and Teachers will leave the building, taking roll books, sign-in sheets and Crisis Management Security Plan. The Director (or Director in Charge), Assistant Director and Office Manager will go through the building and bathrooms to ensure that no one is left inside and close all fire doors. The Director will take the Walkie-Talkies and a cell phone, Assistant Director will take the notebook with phone numbers for all families. The office manager will take the first aid kit in the field trip bag. Everyone will go across Idylwood Road and gather at the bottom of the cul-de-sac on Yale Court. The FCMLCC bus will take children with their teachers to Temple Rodef Shalom or Longfellow Middle School.

SWIM POLICIES

Each summer, neighborhood swim clubs permit the Center to use their wading pools. Each class goes to the pool once a week. The following policies apply to those children who are toilet trained and able to participate in the program:

1. Each child participating in the swim program will need written permission from their parents. Children who do not have written permission to participate in the swim program will join the other children at the Center in appropriate activities.

2. Each child that participates will need a swim suit and towel to keep at the Center. Each item must be labeled clearly with the child's name.
3. The children will be using the shallow wading (kiddie) pool at each of the pools. It shall be assumed that children who are well enough to attend the Center can participate in swimming. In the event of unusually cool weather, an alternate activity will be planned for the children.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

Field Trips are an important part of our program. We are fortunate to have many museums, playgrounds, libraries and gardens in this area and because your children are with us all day, it is essential that they have opportunities to go out into the community. Each class goes on 2-3 field trips a month, weather permitting. A few days before a trip teachers will send home information. Parents are welcome to accompany their children on a trip but siblings are not permitted due to insurance constraints. If you do not want your child to go on a particular field trip please let us know or plan to keep your child at home.

As always, your children’s safety is our top priority. The bus is inspected and maintained in order to provide a safe experience for the children. Our bus driver has a CDL license to drive a bus, has had a background check and has a clean driving record. On field trips the teachers will take a first aid kit, the names and contact information and medical permission forms for each child, and the address of the closest fire station and hospital. The teachers will have a cell phone with them in case of an emergency.