

# PARENT HANDBOOK 2015-2016



## FALLS CHURCH-McLEAN CHILDREN'S CENTER

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Welcome to the Center Family Community**

The Board of Directors and the Staff of the Falls Church-McLean Children's Center welcome you and your family to our Center. We want to let you know that our Center is different. We are not a typical daycare center, or preschool, we focus on, and emphasis quality early childhood education. We recognize that high quality early childhood education begins with quality family community.

We celebrate family diversity. Celebrating family diversity we encourage families to share in our programs the unique aspect of their family. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, religion, socio-economic status, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation.

We look forward to working with you to provide a high quality early learning environment that will prepare your child for the next steps of their life, from Kindergarten to employment.

### **The History of the Falls Church-McLean Children's Center**

In 1967, several community members in the Falls Church and McLean area noticed there were several unsupervised children in many neighborhoods. These concerned citizens started a community campaign to make sure that all children have access to safe and secure child care. Gathering together representatives from twenty churches and synagogues in the Falls Church and McLean area, these community members held an official meeting on May 17, 1967. This gathering was successful and resulted in one of the first integrated child care centers in the Northern Virginia/ Washington D.C. area.

On October 16, 1968, The Falls Church-McLean Children's Center, opened its doors with an enrollment of fifteen children. This non-profit corporation opened with the focus of recognizing the importance of developing an equal platform for school success for all children.

Using the platform as a beginning, in 1987, the Successful Start Program was implemented with the purpose of outlining specific life challenges that can hinder their school achievement. 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, behavior specialists, and a Child Find special education teacher; 2) the maintenance of an exceptionally well-qualified, bilingual 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 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.

## **PURPOSE**

Falls Church McLean Children's Center has been organized to operate child care services on a non-profit basis with emphasis on families of limited financial resources. All funds received shall be expended for the cost of operation of the center, and no business shall be conducted for a profit.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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

## **PHILOSOPHY**

We believe 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 the staff.

## **GOALS and POLICIES**

Providing high quality programming begins with having strategic goals and objectives and then implementing policies and procedures to ensure that the goals are accomplished. The Board of Directors and Staff of Falls Church-McLean Children's Center work diligently to ensure that the Center continues to meet the needs of the community it serves. The following are the strategic goals of the center.

### **Goal #1. Families with limited financial resources will have access to the high quality programming offered at the Center.**

**Policy:** Children will be admitted to the center with no less than 60% of the children enrolled who meet the financial guidelines set forth by the Child Care Assistance Program in Fairfax County or the State of Virginia.

### **Goal #2 To meet the social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs of each child through a comprehensive concrete, play-oriented environment.**

**Policy:** Staff will facilitate each child's individual development through a variety of developmentally appropriate activities based on the *Creative curriculum framework*. This curriculum utilizes the child's interests and needs through appropriate activities that encourage each child to learn at his/her own pace. Activities used include exploration, manipulation, and interactions; encourages each child to make independent choices, develop problem solving skills, and express individual creativity.

### **Goal #3 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.**

**Policy:** Each child in the center will receive annual vision, hearing, speech and language, and dental screenings. Therapy and treatment will be arranged for children who are requiring additional supports. Inclusive classroom practices will ensure that all children understand, recognize, and appreciate the individual worth of each child.

**Goals #4 To promote strong families to support children as they grow and develop.**

**Policy:** Through continuous communication, staff will have a better understanding of each families values, practices, and needs and parents will gain a better understanding of child development, and developmentally appropriate practices.

**Goal #5 To provide staff with the support and training necessary to work with children and families with diverse backgrounds and abilities.**

**Policy:** Staff will be provided opportunities for professional workshops, conferences and other training exceeding the mandated training hours required.

**Goal #6 To maintain a quality early childhood program with a stable high quality environment.**

**Policy:** The center will continually seek partnerships and certification programs to ensure the quality of early learning experiences are maintained.

### **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. In 2014, the Center was reaccredited by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC). For more information about accreditation, please visit <https://www.naeyc.org/accreditation> .

The program is also a part of the Virginia Star Quality Rating System and currently maintains a star rating of 4 stars. For more information about the Virginia Quality Rating System please visit [http://www.smartbeginnings.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/VSQI\\_Parents.pdf](http://www.smartbeginnings.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/VSQI_Parents.pdf)

The program is licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services, 801 E. Main Street, Richmond VA 23219-2901. For more information about the Virginia State Licensing Standards, please visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/>

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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

### **GROUPING OF CHILDREN**

Our program has one 2-3 year old classroom, two 3-4 year old classrooms, and two 4-5 year old classrooms and one school age classroom for children who are 5-12 years old. These 6 classrooms have teachers who have been primarily assigned to working with this group. Your child will remain in the classroom for a minimum of 9 months before moving to another group. This allows your child to develop a strong relationship with their caregiver.

Our staff/child ratios are as follows:

**2 year old classroom :** Discovery Room: 1 staff to 3 children in a group no more than 12 children.

**3 year old classrooms:**

Explorers Room: 1 staff to 4 children in a group no more than 12

Adventurers Room: 1 staff to 4 children in a group no more than 16

**4 year old classrooms:**

Rainbow Room: 1 staff to 5 children in a group no more than 17

Young Creators Room: 1 staff to 5 children in a group no more than 17

**School Age Classroom:**

1 staff for 10 children in a group of no more than 10.

The program also utilizes various specialists, however these specialist will not be included in the ratio.

**Curriculum**

Our program uses *The Teaching Strategies, LLC. The Creative Curriculum*. This curriculum utilizes the latest research and best practices in Early Childhood Education to create a high-quality learning environment that enables every child to become a creative, confident thinker. Using the Bilingual curriculum, all of our children establish a strong foundation in both the Spanish and English language. The Creative Curriculum focuses on 38 objectives for development and learning in Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, The Arts and English Language Acquisition. Using these domains of learning children work towards achieving the 38 objectives. The objectives of The Creative Curriculum co-inside with the center's philosophy of Early Childhood Education and mission.

**The Creative Curriculum Objectives for Development and Learning**

**Social-Emotional**

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships.
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations.

**Physical**

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination

**Language**

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language.
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs.
10. uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills.

**Cognitive**

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
12. Remembers and connects experiences
13. Uses classification skills

14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present.

### **Literacy**

- 15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
- 16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
- 17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses.
- 18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
- 19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills.

### **Mathematics**

- 20. Uses number concepts and operations
- 21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
- 22. Compares and measures.
- 23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns.

### **Science and Technology**

- 24. Uses Scientific inquiry skills
- 25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
- 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials.
- 27. Demonstrates knowledge of the Earth's environment.
- 28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks.

### **Social Studies**

- 29. Demonstrates knowledge about self.
- 30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live.
- 31. Explores change related to familiar people or places.
- 32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge.

### **The Arts**

- 33. Explores the visual arts.
- 34. Explores musical concepts and expression.
- 35. Explores dance and movement concepts
- 36. Explores drama through actions and language.

### **English Language Acquisition**

- 37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- 38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

### **Assessment Process and Plan for children**

Assessing children's development is essential in ensuring that children receive the supports necessary in their development. With this in mind, the following assessment tools are used at the Center.

1. All children are assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD® Assessment program. This exciting interactive reporting feature uses data visualizations gauge child outcome information.

Being able to look at how the child grows over time, this assessment allows teachers in the classroom to gauge children's progress using family involvement to ensure that the child's interest and needs, the family culture and language as taken into consideration throughout the assessment process. Teaching Strategies GOLD assesses a child's social/emotional development, cognitive skills, language acquisition, physical

development, and literacy and math skills. Included in the assessment is the child's self-help skills.

Assessing children within the program is essential to identifying children who need additional support to meet performance goals in order to meet our program goals, and mission.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessments are conducted in the classroom, while children are involved in their day to day activities. Teacher's collect anecdotal data through observation, child and parent interviews, and enrollment forms. Assessments are conducted in the fall with the start of the Center's "school year" as well as in the spring to evaluate progress.

2. All children are assessed in the Ages & Stages Assessment. This assessment is completed by a collaborative effort of parents and teachers.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3™) allows parents and teachers to accurately screen children for developmental delays between one month and 5½ years. ASQ-3 is recommended by top organizations such as the American Academy of Neurology, First Signs, and The Child Neurology Society\*, ASQ-3 is highly valid and reliable.

In addition to these two assessments, children enrolled in the 4 year old program will receive assessment using the P.A.L.S. Pre-K Assessment.

P.A.L.S. Pre-K Assessment is a scientifically-based phonological awareness and literacy screening that measures preschoolers' developing knowledge of important literacy fundamentals and offers guidance to teachers for tailoring instruction to children's specific needs. The assessment reflects skills that are predictive of future reading success and measures name writing ability, upper-case and lower-case alphabet recognition, letter sound and beginning sound production, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness and nursery rhyme awareness. The assessment scores indicate children's strengths and those areas that may require more direct attention. The assessment is designed to be administered to four-year-olds in the fall of PreK in order to guide instruction during the year. A second administration in the spring of PreK serves to evaluate progress.

**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. Included in this program are Early Childhood Special Educators, a Licensed Professional Counselor, Child Find Early Childhood Specialist, Licensed Pediatric Occupational Therapist, and a Speech and Language Pathologist from the Speech and Language Center of Northern Virginia.

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.

### **TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:00 AM	Center Opens
7:00 - 9:00 AM	Breakfast (Optional) Self-Selected Individual and Small Group Learning Activities
9:00 - 9:45 AM	Clean Up - Group Time - Planning Time Snack Time
9:45 – 11:00 AM	Self-Selected Individual and Special Small Group Learning Activities which include art activities, fine motor activities, block and pretend play and manipulative. There are many opportunities for the children to learn social and language skills, practice gross motor and fine motor skills and learn the academics needed to succeed in school.
10:45 - 11:15 AM	Group/Story Time - Review of Morning Activities
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 12 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 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 per child** is required. We will also **need to see a birth certificate for your child, up to date immunization records, 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. This 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 regulations for the safety and well-being of all the children

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Your family records are considered confidential at our Center. We will keep your child's file and all of the contents locked and secure with only access granted to the administration, teachers, or inspectors to ensure they care complete and thorough. Prior to discussing any of your child's information with another specialist or agency, we will require written permission from you, the parent.

### 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. All food must meet USDA standards to be served within the program. No hot dogs, grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, raw carrots, or spoonful of peanut butter will be served to the children at any time. All food will be cut into smaller pieces to ensure easy consumption.

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 8:00 a.m. every morning. Therefore, if your child is going to be absent or late, please call the Center by 8:00 a.m.**

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are a big part of our Center. Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the successful implementation of the goals and objectives of the Center.

Ways to get involved include but are not limited to:

- Volunteer in the classroom
- Volunteer to assist with field trips
- Annual Fundraiser Volunteers
- Center Committees
- Board of Directors

Please see the office if you would like to get involved in the Center.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Communication is a great way that parents and Center staff and teachers remain consistent in meeting the objectives for the children. We use various ways of communicating with our families. Communication methods include hard copy daily notes, telephone calls, face-to-face conferences and meetings, workshops, family events, emails, text messages, and social media. 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.***

### **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**

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY**

Precautions are taken regularly to ensure that communal play does not spread infectious disease. Daily health observations are done on every child cut down on obvious spread of illness and disease.

**OPEN CUTS:** All open cuts must be covered while at the center. This includes scrapes and sores. Any child with scrapes, cuts, or sores will be not be permitted to participate in communal water play or swimming activities, even if they are covered.

**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.

**RUNNY NOSE:** If your child has a runny nose that includes yellow or green mucus, this is a sign of an infection. If your child has a consistent runny nose with this mucus, please keep them from school until the mucus is cleared up. White mucus and clear mucus is not infection.

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 can not 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.

The Center works with the Virginia Health Department to ensure that health safety is taken in all aspects. Health inspectors consult the Center on communicable diseases, playground safety, medication administration, and nutrition. These experts make recommendations to the Center on ways to improve the overall well-being of the children, staff and families of the Center.

## **DIAPERING PROCEDURES**

The Center accepts children who are still in diapers. Children may not use cloth diapers, only the use of commercial diapers can be brought to the Center. Parents bring their child's diapers as well as two changes of clothing to be kept at the Center.

Staff will follow these procedures while children are at the Center.

1. Children entering the Center will be changed immediately.
2. Children will be changed every two hours whether the diaper is wet or not.
  - a. Children will be changed when the staff recognize the diaper is wet or soiled in between scheduled changings.
3. Children are changed in a changing area designated specifically for diapering. This area is located in three feet from a sink, and is only used for the group of children in the classroom.
4. Staff maintain one hand on the child while the child is elevated.
5. All children being diapered will have a form of documentation of each changing, and a copy is given to the parent at the end of each day.
6. Changing areas will be cleaned and disinfected after each changing according to Virginia State Licensing Standards.

## **POTTY TRAINING PROCEDURES**

The Center works with children who are in the process of potty training. Please remember that the overall goal of the Center is to maintain the safety and health of all of the children in the program. With this in mind, the following procedures are Center policy during this developmental time.

1. A potty training commitment form will be signed by parents indicating that they are working with the child at home as well as at school. This form will indicate the specific information regarding the child's toileting habits.
2. Underwear and Plastic Pants cannot be used during potty training. Children must wear pull-ups during the process.
  - a. GRADUATION- when the child is able to complete the following steps during the potty training process, they will have a POTTY GRADUATION ceremony.
    - i. He/She must be able to communicate either through sign language, speaking or by pointing to the bathroom that they need to go to the bathroom.
    - ii. He/She must be able to maneuver their pants without assistance (pull pants up and down without teacher's help).
    - iii. He/She has been accident free for five days. This include both wetting and bowl movement.
    - iv. He/She must be able to wipe themselves with only verbal assistance. (The teachers are not able to assist them in wiping).
    - v. Upon completion of these requirements and graduation, the child will be able to wear underwear.

## **HANDWASHING PROCEDURES**

All children and staff are required to wash their hands several times throughout the day. The following procedures must be followed by children, staff and parents.

1. All staff, children, and parents are required to wash their hands upon each entrance into the classroom (includes coming in from outdoor play).
2. All staff, children, and parents are required to wash their hands after diapering or use of the bathroom.
3. All staff, children, and volunteers are required to wash their hands before meals and snacks, before and after preparation of food and any cooking activity.
4. All staff, children, and volunteers are required to wash their hands after sand/water play in the classroom, handling of pets, other dirt, and/or play dough.
5. All staff, children and volunteers are required to wash their hands after using a tissue to wipe bodily fluids.
6. All staff are required to wash their hands after giving medication, providing first aid to children, handling garbage, or applying sunscreen or lotion.
7. While washing their hands, all staff/children will sing the ABC song to ensure proper disinfection.
8. After washing their hands, staff/children/parents will use a paper towel, and dispose of the paper towel in the garbage.
9. Staff and/or parents will assist children in washing their hands each time they wash their hands.

## **ORAL HYGENINE**

Children enrolled at the Center will have the opportunity each day to brush their teeth with their own tooth brush. This brush is provided by the Center. No toothpaste will be used during this practice.

## **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 Epi pen 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 Benadryl, 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 sunscreen 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 are required to fill out a 10 day permission slip form. Give your child's teacher the 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. The permission slip form must be only good for 10 days. If the ointment is required for longer than 10 days, a new form needs to be filled out.

**HAND LOTION POLICY:** If parents would like the staff to apply hand lotion on their child's skin, they should indicate that form. Give your child's teacher the lotion in its original container and with your child's name on it. The teacher will keep a record of its use and any reactions. The permission slip form must be only good for 10 days. If the lotion is required for longer than 10 days, a new form needs to be filled out.

**INSECT REPELLANT:** 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.

### **TRANSITION FROM ONE CLASSROOM TO ANOTHER OR TO KINDERGARTEN**

In order to help families as their child continues to grow and develop, teachers and administration work to ensure the easiest of transition between classrooms, children will begin the transition with a visit schedule into the next classroom. This schedule will include an individualized plan that will allow for an easy transition. Teachers will work with parents to complete a transition form for each move

The Center participates in the Fairfax County School Readiness program for transitioning Kindergartners. Working with school administrators, community partners, and other educators, the Center encourage and support families in their transition to kindergarten.



In February, each year the Center uses the parent's home information to contact the child's elementary school so that the school will have the parent's information for Kindergarten registration.

The Administration office provides a list to your child's teacher, who will send out reminders about Kindergarten registration to the new school.

Our four year old classrooms also work with our neighbors, Lemon Road Elementary School to become acclimated to the new school.

### **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 8:00 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 contact the center in the morning if your child has a doctor's appointment, or another obligation and will not be able to arrive to school by 9:00 a.m.***

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 bus lane, 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.

### **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.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Our teachers use their knowledge of our community, and connect our learning in the classroom to the world around us. Using the opportunity to go on a variety of field trips, teachers connect the curriculum with outside experiences that families can then use to continue expanding learning.

Examples of field trips are: Lower Basin to see the Cherry Blossoms when we are studying about trees; The Smithsonian Natural History Museum when we are studying about animals.

Your child's class will go on field trip twice a month. Teachers will inform parents in advance what trip they will be taking. We invite parents to join us on our exploration of the community and see all the great things it has to offer.

### **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 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 experienced bus driver has a CDL license to drive a bus, has had a background check and has a clean driving record.

In accordance with Virginia Licensing Standard 22 VAC 40-185-580, we will ensure the following procedures are in place prior to the field trip.

All vehicles used by the center will meet the following requirements.

- 1) The vehicle is manufactured for the purpose of transporting people seated in an enclosed area.
- 2) The vehicle will be insured at the minimum limits established by the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- 3) The vehicle will be kept in satisfactory condition to assure the safety of children, to include regular maintenance and transportation checks by a licensed CDL driver.
- 4) NO personal vehicles will be used to transport children of the center.
- 5) While transporting children, safety belts and child restraints will be worn by all passengers as appropriate.
- 6) All passengers will remain seated while being transported with arms, legs, and head inside of the vehicle.
- 7) All doors will be closed and locked while the vehicle is in motion.
- 8) Emergency numbers as outlined in Virginia Licensing Standard 22VAC40-185-550 F and H will be listed within the vehicle.
- 9) The Vehicle will load and unload on a curb, and no child will ever cross a street upon exiting the vehicle.
- 10) Teachers will have a list of the children being transported, as well as all emergency information for each child.
- 11) Teachers will have an emergency kit on field trips that will include first aid, and bottled water.
- 12) Teachers will remain in the field trip ratio throughout the entire trip. For Falls Church-McLean Children's Center this ratio will be 1 teacher to 4 children.
- 13) Prior to the field trip, teachers will send permission slips home to parents that

indicate the date of the trip, the location of the trip and the emergency plan of the trip. This form will also be posted at the Center in a visible location.

- 14) Teachers are required to communicate with the office when they leave the center to go on the trip, when they arrive at their destination, and when they leave their destination.
- 15) If a parent chooses for their child not to participate in the field trip, that child can join a peer classroom during the time of the trip.



**HANDBOOK RECEIPT FOR PARENTS**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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**Verification Form**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received and read 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 June 2015

