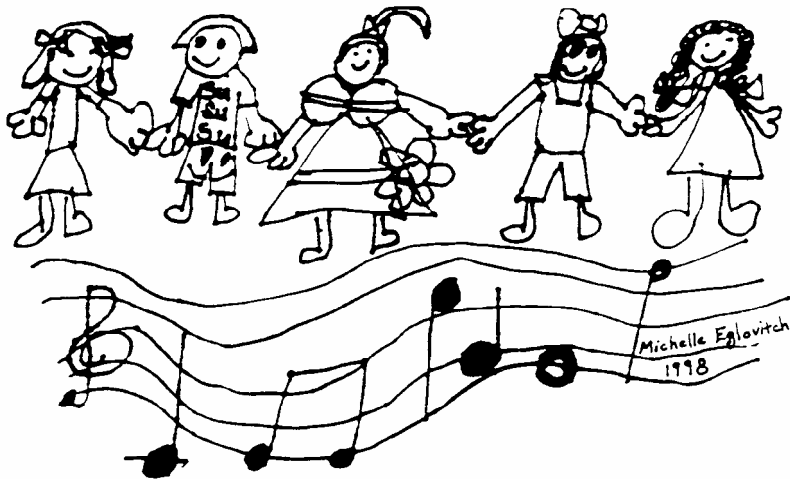




**Montgomery
Child Care
Association**

FAMILY HANDBOOK



February 2009



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Montgomery Child Care Association

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MISSION STATEMENT

Montgomery Child Care Association strives to provide the highest quality child care and play-based education for children in Montgomery County; professional training for child care providers; and advocacy for affordable quality child care for families of all income levels, and better training, pay and benefits for child care professionals.

Quality, affordability and compensation are the enduring “trilemma” of child care, and drive all our work. Improving program quality requires, in large part, improving staff quality. Improving staff quality requires increasing staff compensation. Increasing staff compensation impacts affordability for parents in a system funded almost entirely by parent fees. Every goal and objective addresses an aspect of the child care trilemma.

Primary Strategies:

- Provide high quality, responsive program management and administrative services to its associated child care centers.
- Work for the expansion of financial and other community support to ensure affordable child care for all segments of the community, regardless of ability to pay.
- Expand service delivery where a need is identified within the community, when feasible and prudent.
- Improve the quality of child care in MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION centers and in the community through training.
- Monitor standards for child care and work to improve those standards where appropriate.

Values and Traditions:

- Shared leadership/consensus building
- Service to all families regardless of income, wherever and whenever feasible
- Provision of culturally competent and relevant child care services
- Maintenance of the highest standards in child care according to Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), National AfterSchool Association (NAA), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or similar accreditation criteria
- Family involvement
- Staff training and support

Approved by the Board of Directors October 2005

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YOUR CENTER AND MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the Montgomery Child Care Association family. We are pleased to have you join us!

Your center is one of 9 centers that make up Montgomery Child Care Association, Inc., a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to provide high quality child care. There are a total of 15 Montgomery Child Care programs (some centers have multiple sites) throughout Montgomery County. For more information about locations please visit our website at www.mccaedu.org. Each of our programs leases their space. Some lease from Montgomery County (see Appendix I for more details) space, others from local churches and/or private property. Each of our locations has grown from a need for quality child care in the community. Montgomery Child Care Association provides early childhood education that is professionally directed and responsive to the needs of each child.

Association Centers are open to all without regard to race, color or creed, national origin or disability. We comply with all conditions under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

In order to serve low and moderate income working parents, all of the Montgomery Child Care Centers accept families receiving child care subsidies from the Montgomery County Department of Social Services and the Working Parents Assistance Program. Both programs base the fees on a sliding scale, according to income and size of family.

Montgomery Child Care Association sets the overall policies for all of its affiliated centers. You have the opportunity, through your center, to help determine those policies. Each center must have representation on the Executive Committee, Finance Committee and Personnel Committee. Because we feel it is important for you to have a voice in programs affecting your child, we encourage you to participate in other activities and committees of the Association. Center membership in the Association brings the benefit of shared experiences as well as the services of the Executive Director and Education Director.

REGULATIONS

Children in all Montgomery Child Care Association centers are protected by regulations published by the Office of Child Care which is a division of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). They cover such things as physical space, food requirements, size of the group of children, and training of staff. A copy of the regulations is available for you to see at the center or online at: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/licensing_branch/regulat.

CENTER PARENT COUNCILS

Each Montgomery Child Care Association Center has a Parent Council. The center's Parent Council is a collaborative partnership between Montgomery Child Care Association, the Center Director and staff and the parents. Every parent with a child enrolled in our Center is automatically a member of our Parent Council. We believe it is important for you to have a voice in decisions affecting your child and we encourage you to attend meetings. Each Council holds meetings to share ideas, determine specific policies and to plan center or association-wide events. Meetings will be announced at your center and are scheduled at a time convenient for working families. Please ask your Center Director or Assistant Director for more information.

The mission of Parent Councils for Montgomery Child Care Association is to support the successful provision of high quality child care programs. Parent Council members and the Center Director and Center Staff form a partnership to address center issues, ideas and concerns. Additionally, the mission of parent council is to encourage parent involvement in our centers as well as to support and speak on behalf of center

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children and families at the Center and Association levels. Our experience shows us that a center with an active, involved parent group is always the “healthiest” in terms of program and parent satisfaction. **Please get involved!**

ANNUAL FAMILY SURVEY

Another way to be involved and to have a say is through our Family Surveys. These surveys are conducted on a regular basis. As part of this process you, the parent, will receive a questionnaire asking for your comments and feelings about your center, your feedback are very important to us. We urge you to complete these forms and return them to us. These reviews help us to maintain quality programs and contribute to identifying annual center goals.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The Montgomery Child Care Association approach to programming is child centered and based on the individual interests and needs of each child. We implement the creative curriculum in our classrooms as well the Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit. We look at the needs of the whole child’s development in the following four areas:

- Social/Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive

We put play at the heart of our curriculum, encouraging active participation in the learning process. By creating partnerships with families, center staff and the community, we build and enhance each child’s positive sense of self. This team approach supports the child as the learner by providing opportunities for exploration of the environment, social interactions and problem solving.

Through Montgomery Child Care Association’s Training Institute, our staff is continually updated in current development and curriculum practices to provide the highest quality programs.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. To encourage each child’s positive sense of self through developmentally appropriate practices.
2. To develop each child’s ability to make choices and decisions through the principles of active learning.
3. To create an environment for children that encourages a collaborative relationship with families.
4. To provide an environment that promotes optimal physical development in a safe and healthy setting.
5. To develop each child’s ability to recognize, understand and express thoughts, ideas and feelings in developmentally appropriate ways.
6. To foster development of interpersonal skills so that each child has opportunities to build positive relationships with others.
7. To support each child’s creativity, initiative, spirit of inquiry and passion for learning.
8. To foster an appreciation and respect for the diversity of individuals, families and community through an anti-bias approach.

PROGRAM POLICIES

CURRICULUM

Montgomery Child Care Association centers utilize the Creative Curriculum® (for more information visit www.teachingstrategies.com) in the classrooms. Classroom environments are designed to meet the developmental needs of each age group we serve. Materials are available for both self selection and during planned activities. Teaching teams plan based on their observations of the individual children in their group. This process is called an Emergent Curriculum where ideas emerge from the children’s interests, developmental stages and changes in the environment. Planned activities include a wide range of curriculum areas (Math, Literacy, Science etc…) which provide children with a solid foundation and support for their academic success in the primary grades and beyond. On the following pages you will see some examples of how children of all ages are learning through play in their program.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN*

When Children Do This:	They Are Learning To:
Put blocks in trucks and dump them out	Understand size, weight and number concepts (math, science)
Argue about where to place the next big block	Express ideas and cooperate with others (language, social skills)
Balance one large block on top of another	Control and coordinate muscles (Physical Coordination)
Put on dress-up clothes	Use their small muscle skills (self-help, writing)
Pretend to be grown-ups	Understand the roles of people in society (life skills)
Separate cups and plates at clean-up time	Group objects in categories (math)
Put pegs in a pegboard	Coordinate the actions of their eyes and hands (reading and writing readiness)
Finish a puzzle	Complete a task (study habits, self-esteem)
Sort pictures that are the same	Match and classify (math)
Make playdough	Recognize how materials change (science)
Gather papers, scissors, and glue for a project	Plan and carry out a task (study habits, independence)
Draw a picture of a person	Use symbols (reading and writing readiness)
Make boats sink	Recognize cause and effect (science, logical thinking)
Play beside other children	Get along with others (social skills)
Pour without spilling	Use their small muscle skills (physical coordination)

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When Children Do This:	They Are Learning To:
Turn pages of a book from beginning to end	Read a book from left to right (reading and writing readiness)
Listen to a story	Love books and develop a desire to read (reading readiness)
Talk about what happened in a story	Remember details and express ideas (language development)
Catch and throw balls	Coordinate eye and hand movements (physical development, reading and writing readiness)
Talk about changes in plants, people, and things outside as seasons change	Sharpen observation skills (science)
Climb on outdoor equipment	Use their bodies in challenging tasks(self-esteem)

*This table is reprinted with permission from Diane Trister Dodge and Joanna Phinney, *A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Education*, copyright Teaching Strategies, Inc., Washington, DC, 1990, pp. 8-9. For more information, please contact Teaching Strategies, Inc., PO Box 42243, Washington, DC 20015 or call 800-637-3642.

ACCREDITATION

While accreditation is a voluntary process, our board made a commitment to achieving quality and mandated that all of our centers achieve accreditation. Each of our programs takes great pride in attaining and maintaining accreditation. There are several accrediting agencies available to our programs including Maryland State Department of Education Accreditation Project (MSDE), National After school Association (NAA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Parent and staff are actively involved in the accreditation process through planning, implementing improvements and giving valuable ongoing input. This voluntary process of internal self-study, and invited professional review helps to meet and exceed the high quality standards set by our field.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR CHILD WEAR?

Since your child will be painting and playing on the floor, we suggest that children wear washable clothes. All clothing should be marked with your child's name (a magic marker works well). Mark all boots, coat, hat, sweater, and mittens. This helps the staff keep track of each child's clothing. Children should wear comfortable clothes that are appropriate for active play. This allows children to have more freedom, develop physical skills, and reduces the possibility of injury.

State Board of Education Licensing Regulations require daily "---periods of outside play." Please be sure that your child has adequate clothing (example: warm jacket, mittens and hat in the winter) for outdoor play in every season. Each child should have an emergency change of clothing at the center, marked with his/her name. Each child should have a change of:

- Shirt
- Pants
- Underwear
- Socks

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It is important to wash and return these emergency clothes promptly when they are sent home. While centers often have some extra clothes children prefer to have their own clothes to put on if needed.

BRINGING AND LEAVING YOUR CHILD

Your child must be escorted into the center and be presented to a staff member before you leave. As required by State Board of Education Licensing Regulations, you must sign your child in and out of the center.

At the end of the day, let a staff member know you are taking your child out of the center. If you want your child released to someone other than those listed on your child's emergency card, we must have the request in writing. If you are having someone else pick up your child at the center please tell your child's teacher, leave a note or call the center. In an unexpected emergency you can call the center and give the staff permission to release the child to a different adult. Children must be picked up by closing time at the center. Most centers charge a late fee if a child is picked up after the regular closing time.

Please notify center staff if your child will be absent from the child care center.

CHILD GUIDANCE

Our staff are trained to use a positive approach to guidance in the classroom. Providing children of all ages with guidance is an important part of our curriculum and a great opportunity for children to learn appropriate behavior skills. See Appendix II for more details about our *Guidance Policy*.

Teaching staff work with center directors to develop individualized plans for each child. These plans recognize each child's unique stages of development. Activities are correspondingly planned to support children's growing edges. These same individualized plans may identify strategies for guiding behavior in a consistent manner. When needed *Comprehensive Plans* are developed with families to address more challenging behavior issues, this type of united approach supports children to be their most successful.

Montgomery Child Care Association staff cooperate with MCPS and Private Schools regarding breaches of school policy. Consequently, children suspended from school will also be suspended from our programs. Using MCPS as model, we have developed procedures for supporting children who may display suicidal behaviors and have a policy in place concerning Dangerous Items that are brought to the center; see Appendix IV for more details.

ILLNESS

Great care is taken to make sure our centers are a safe and healthy environment for all the children and the staff. When you bring your child to the center, your child should be well enough to participate fully in all the activities of the center. **Our centers are not equipped or licensed to care for sick children.** If your child becomes ill during the day, we will make the child as comfortable as possible and using all the phone numbers provided to us, we will notify you to pick up your child. It is very important that families make arrangements to pick their child up as soon as possible to limit the spread of the illness.

In order to notify you, we need your current work phone number, cell phone numbers along with at least one alternate contact person if we are unable to reach you in an emergency. **It is extremely important that you notify the center if any of these numbers change and that you update your child's emergency card.** We have policies in place concerning information such as when children will need to be excluded from care due to illness, when children can return to care, and very specific policies concerning giving children medications (prescription or over-the-counter) while at the center that is detailed in Appendix VII.

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NO NIT LICE POLICY

If a child has head lice, the parent will be called to pick up him/her within the hour. Head lice is very contagious and requires immediate treatment with appropriate medication (e.g. Rid or Nix). Nits (lice eggs) must be removed from the hair shaft with a fine toothed comb or by using one's fingernails to pull the nits out of the hair. **Children cannot return to the Center until they are free of live lice and nits.** When a child returns to the Center, the Director, Assistant Director or designated staff person, with the parent and Center staff, will check his/her head to confirm the child is free of live lice and nits before the child is allowed to return to the program.

INJURY

Some bumps and bruises are a part of childhood, but as with illness, we take great care to keep our centers safe. **All of our staff are 1st aid and child CPR trained.** If your child sustains an injury at the center the staff will calm the child, perform the necessary 1st aid procedures, notify the family and fill out the necessary accident report. The staff will ask you to read and sign the accident report when you pick up your child. **Please inform the center if you seek medical attention for your child after an injury so we can inform our licensing agency.**

If the injury is more serious and requires immediate medical attention staff will call an ambulance and the child will be accompanied to the hospital by a staff member who will stay with the child until a family member can arrive. **It is extremely important that we have current phone numbers to reach you in cases of illness, injury or other emergencies, so please inform the center whenever your phone numbers or the phone numbers of others that are listed on the child's emergency card change.**

If medical treatment is required, from an injury sustained at the center, your family health insurance policy is primary. However, if you do not have health insurance or if it is not adequate, your child is covered by the Montgomery Child Care Association accident insurance policy. Ask staff for the claim forms.

LESSON PLANS/DAILY ROUTINE

Each classroom has a daily routine that is followed. The daily routine includes a balance of indoor and outdoor; quiet and active; small and large groups while striving for a minimum of transitions. You can find it posted with the weekly lesson plans on a classroom bulletin board and/or Family Information Board. Lesson Plans provide specific information about planned activities for both inside the classroom and for outside times. Planned activities are thoughtfully developed keeping in mind the individual needs of each child in the group. While activities may attract multiple children teachers take care to individualize support to ensure the activities provide the right amount of challenge for each child to grow and learn.

FOOD

Montgomery Child Care Association centers participate in the MSDE Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which is similar to the School Lunch Program. Meals are served without discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin or disability. Menus are posted in the center so that you can be aware of what your child is served. Your child will receive nutritious snacks and, in the morning and afternoon according to the classrooms schedule. Children need to be present during scheduled meal times in order to take advantage of the meal. Parents are responsible for notifying centers of any foods to avoid for their children and provide alternative foods if necessary.

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REST TIME

Rest time is a part of each daily routine for all children that have been in our programs for more than four hours, including school age children on ½ days, “no school” days and during Summer Adventures. In fact, this time is required by Maryland State Licensing which states that child care centers need to provide “the opportunity to rest”. This is **not a time that children must sleep**, but this opportunity often meets the needs of young children who do benefit from a nap. Individual cots are available for younger children to sleep on and families provide sheets, blankets and/or pillows. For school age children and children who are not in need of sleep at this time, guidelines are followed to ensure that appropriate quiet choices are available.

WEATHER POLICY

Daily outdoor time is scheduled each morning and afternoon for 30-45 minutes. Times and duration of outdoor time are adjusted throughout the year to weather conditions. Please refer to the Wind Chill Chart and Air Quality/Heat Index Chart posted at your center. When the Wind Chill Factor falls below 15 degrees or when the Air Quality /Heat Index is Code Purple, outdoor time will be replaced with appropriate indoor active play activities. Children attending the program are expected to be able to participate fully in the center programming including being well enough to play outdoors, and having the appropriate clothing for the weather. For more information concerning Outdoor Time see Appendix VIII.

TOYS/MATERIALS FROM HOME

We recognize how important materials from home are for your child and how they can support successful transitions into classrooms. Guidelines for bringing in materials from home including comfort items, toys, electronic toys and cell phone are detailed in Appendix V. Please review and follow the corresponding guidelines. Centers are not responsible for lost or broken items.

DANGEROUS ITEMS POLICY

All efforts are made to make our Center a safe place. Families play a major role in this goal. In order to protect the children from any potential danger, we ask all families to monitor items your child brings to our program. Please see Appendix IV for more information.

HOMEWORK POLICY

We understand the need for school age children to get started on their homework after school. Creating an opportunity for children to decompress in the afternoon as well as complete school work is achievable, with a well planned routine. See Appendix IX for specific details about our homework policy.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are an important part of both the preschool and school age programs. At MCCA we see field trips not only as a fun exploration of the worlds around us, but as a way to further enhance the learning and life skill development of the child. Field trips are carefully and thoughtfully selected and planned with the idea of providing the child with new, meaningful and exciting experiences. See Appendix X for details about Field Trips and Transportation.

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PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage and welcome parent participation. Examples of participation include volunteering regularly or occasionally in your child's class; helping out with field trips or special events; or lending a hand with class or center projects. All of the centers have general parent meetings which you are urged to attend to discuss center issues, as well as social get-togethers, pot luck suppers, etc.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Center staff members are trained and experienced in early childhood education. They plan a daily program that will promote and stimulate the maximum growth and development of each child. In order to better understand each child, they need opportunities to talk with you about your child. The center will contact you to schedule a formal parent-teacher conference during the year. Please feel free to contact staff members to discuss our program, situations in the home, events, etc. which you feel the center should be aware of in order to support your child.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

All Montgomery Child Care Association centers are a reflection of their communities, and as Montgomery County is a diverse county, so too are our centers. As an Association we choose to honor and celebrate our diverse cultures. Teaching children acceptance and encouraging them to embrace each other's cultures in a positive manner is an important goal for each of our centers. Montgomery Child Care Association has a zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind, and encourages families and staff to share their cultural practices with the children as appropriate.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

CENTER VISITS

An initial visit to the center with your child is requested before your child begins our program. This is a good opportunity to ask questions and to make sure the program matches what you want for your child. Visiting the center also gives you and your child an opportunity to meet the staff and see the physical set up of the classrooms. Classroom placement within the center is determined by the Center Director and is contingent on space availability. In programs with multiple classrooms for the same age group parent preferences are taken into consideration, but not guaranteed, in making a classroom assignment. After your child is enrolled we encourage you to continue to make regular visits to the center. Come for lunch or stay for awhile in the morning or afternoon when you bring your child, or spend part of a day-off in the center. This will give you a chance to see how your child spends his/her time with the other children and with his/her teachers.

REGISTRATION

A complete enrollment packet must be received and reviewed by each center director before a child can start in the center. Registration forms are provided to families when they notify the director that they are interested in enrolling. All registration forms are also available at our website www.mccaedu.org. Many registration forms can be completed by families but some forms require your child's physician's signature.

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MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Every child must have a complete enrollment packet in order to begin attending our programs.

Included in this paperwork are the *Maryland Department of Health and Hygiene Immunization Certificate*, *Health Inventory* and *Health Inventory Addendum* which require a physician's signature. All immunizations must be kept current and center records must be updated. Parents are encouraged to take their child for annual checkups, and to bring their health records up to date at that time. **Please share all pertinent health and developmental information, particularly concerning allergies (*Emergency Health Plan* must be completed including a photo), with staff.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Montgomery Child Care Association is committed to facilitating teamwork through collaboration and cooperation among its centers and the community of families it serves. We recognize the importance of families in our programs and strive to maintain an environment that is safe and respectful for all of its members--families, children and staff alike. Expectations are that center staff, family members, and children will speak to and interact with each other in a respectful, appropriate, and acceptable manner. Physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated.

COMMUNICATION

Our Centers' goal is for open, constructive communication. As a parent, other parents or staff members may come to you with concerns. It is important to remember that concerns, suggestions and complaints are a healthy vehicle for improving our Centers.

Suggestions or complaints should be made to *someone who can do something about it*. We discourage gossip and other damaging comments. We protect each staff member's and family's confidentiality. We encourage the concerned individual to approach the Director or appropriate staff member personally. If a person is not willing to communicate, it is important to ask permission to bring the concerns to the Director's attention as soon as possible. If you need support to ensure effective communication or resolve concerns, request assistance from the Center Director or Assistant Director, or, when additional resources are needed, the Education or Executive Director. The Education and Executive Directors can be reached at the central office, (301) 984-7680. **Open and direct communication, delivered in an appropriate manner, will support the quality of our centers.**

CORRESPONDENCE THROUGH CENTER MAILBOXES

Group correspondence by a family through Center mailboxes must first be approved by the Center Director or Assistant Director. If you are planning a birthday celebration outside of the center and do not plan to invite the entire class, please mail the invitations directly to the invited child's home. If the entire class is invited, please feel free to use the children's mailboxes in the classroom after informing the Center Director.

Please note: Center Directories, bulletin boards and center facilities are not available for business solicitation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

FAMILIES: Montgomery Child Care Association respects a family's right to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral and developmental records and information concerning their child. These rights to privacy and confidentiality are protected by various federal and state statutes, local ordinances, accreditation standards, and regulatory rules. For example, if your child is involved in altercation or a biting incident with another child, Montgomery Child Care Association cannot reveal the biter's identity to you without prior written consent from the biter's parents, except as required by law.

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STAFF: Montgomery Child Care Association respects a staff member’s right to privacy by keeping all health, private and professional records and information confidential. If you have a question or concern about a staff member, we encourage you to speak directly to that person or to the Center Director as outlined under the COMMUNICATION section in the Montgomery Child Care Association *Personnel Policies* and Montgomery Child Care Association *Family Handbook*.

HOLIDAYS

The center is open Monday through Friday throughout the year, except for the following holidays:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| New Year’s Day | Columbus Day (Teacher In-Service Day) |
| Martin Luther King Jr. Day | Thanksgiving Day |
| Presidents’ Day (Teacher In-Service Day) | Friday after Thanksgiving |
| Memorial Day | Christmas Eve |
| Independence Day - July 4 | Christmas Day |
| Labor Day | First Working Day after Christmas Day |

Please note: MCCA will close at **3:00 p.m.** on New Year’s Eve. Each MCCA center closes additional days for environment renewal. Please check with your Center Director.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Montgomery Child Care Association is usually open even if Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are closed for inclement weather. ***Our programs close only if MCPS Administrative Offices or the Federal Government offices close.*** When school is closed for weather, we open a little later so staff may arrive safely before families do. Please call your child’s center before arriving at the program for specific opening and closing times. For recorded information regarding Montgomery County Public School closings, please call 301-279-3673.

If MCPS schools:	and MCPS Administrative Offices:	then MCCA Centers:
are closed	are open	open one hour later and close at their regularly scheduled time*
are delayed for 2 hours	are open	open one hour later and close at their regularly scheduled time
are delayed	are delayed	open at 9:00 AM and close at their regularly scheduled time
are closed	are delayed	open at 9:00 AM and close one hour earlier than their regularly scheduled time
are closed	are closed OR Federal Government is closed	are closed

*** MCCA may close the centers one hour earlier depending on road and weather conditions.**

In extreme circumstances, centers may close early due to inclement weather or an emergency, at the discretion of the MCCA Executive Director. If programs close early, each family will be contacted by the center through phone calls and emails.

All-day closings will be announced on WTOP radio and posted on its website (www.wtop.com) as well as WJLA-TV ABC 7 and News Channel 8; NEWS 4; FOX 5.

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STATE OF EMERGENCY CENTER CLOSINGS

On the rare occasion that Montgomery County Public Schools choose to not open due to unsafe circumstances such as security threats, bombings or possible attacks, Montgomery Child Care Association centers will not open. Families should watch local news and listen to local radio stations for information regarding Montgomery County Public School being closed. Parents can also call the child care center before leaving and the message will be changed if an emergency closing is in effect.

If Montgomery County Public Schools close early, parents will be called and advised of the state of emergency and will be requested to pick up their child as soon as possible.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

The center is required by law to report evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Persons found guilty of failure to report suspected abuse are subject to a fine. "Abuse" means the physical injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare insignificantly harmed or at risk of being significantly harmed. See Appendix XI for detailed information about *Types of Child Abuse*.

CENTER SECURITY

Maintaining security in each of our programs is an ongoing interest for both our families and Montgomery Child Care Association staff. Montgomery Child Care Association staff follow procedures for releasing children at the end of the day, including identified approved adults (identified on emergency cards) and sign in/out sheets, as well as maintaining the highest supervision procedures at all times.

Criminal Background checks are required for Montgomery Child Care Association employees and procedures for managing other adults in our programs are in place.

COMMUNICATION WITH DUAL CUSTODY FAMILIES

Montgomery Child Care Association's goal is to support the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children whose families have a shared custody agreement.

Centers must remain a neutral, safe haven for each child in our program. Montgomery Child Care Association will in no way be forced in the middle of disagreements or to choose sides between disagreeing parents. Parents are expected to support their child's well-being by abiding by any set agreements or schedules. Disagreements and complaints should be resolved through effective communication between the parents or through appropriate legal channels. For more information please refer to Appendix XII.

RELEASE OF CHILD TO INTOXICATED OR DRUGGED INDIVIDUAL

Occasionally, a parent or other authorized person arrives at the Center intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. In order to protect the children from any potential danger that could arise because of a parent's condition, and to protect the Center from potential claims, it is the policy of the Center to take all reasonable steps to avoid releasing a child to a person in a drugged or intoxicated state. For more information please refer to Appendix XIII.

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DISMISSAL POLICY

The goal of our centers is to provide a quality early childhood program. The Center will make every effort to serve all children, and will work with parents to meet the individual needs of each child. However, families may be asked to withdraw from the Center for any of the following reasons:

1. A parent falls one month behind in payments.
2. Inability of the child or parent to adjust to the Center's program.
3. Any child who may endanger the safety or the physical or mental health of others. These behaviors include but are not limited to unprovoked physical violence, persistent bullying, verbal harassment of peers or staff, and unauthorized departure from the grounds of the program.
4. Inappropriate or unacceptable behavior toward center staff or other enrolled children or families.

Continual attempts will be made to work cooperatively with the parents and community resources to find a solution and/or resolve the problem. If the problem or situation is unresolved according to the Director, in consultation with the Education or Executive Director, the family will be given two weeks' notice. The monthly fee will be refunded on a prorated basis along with any previously paid unused deposit.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

Each parent signs a financial agreement at the time of enrollment of the child and any time the program or fee changes. This agreement states in part:

1. Parents shall initially pay **1 month in advance** and shall make regular payments thereafter. Parents will be billed monthly, by the middle of the month, for care provided the following month.
2. Parents shall pay their monthly fee regardless of the absence of the child, such as for vacations and illness. Every attempt will be made to open centers regardless of the weather.

Parents must keep current with payments, or it may be necessary to suspend the child.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Parents may be eligible for the State Purchase of Care (POC) or the county Working Parents Assistance program (WPA). Call the Montgomery County Childcare subsidy office at 240-777-1155 for more information.

FAMILY EMERGENCY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Montgomery Child Care Association has a limited emergency scholarship fund. Families experiencing a sudden emergency (such as death, illness or loss of job) may apply for the temporary financial support. Submit a letter to your center Director with a recent pay stub, tax return, and listing of the month's expenses. Applications are reviewed for potential approval by the Montgomery Child Care Association Scholarship Committee.

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WITHDRAWAL

Parents must give the center one month's notice in writing when a child is withdrawn. If one month's notice is not given, parents will be responsible for payment for this time period.

BILLING

Billing is done by the Association Office, which handles accounting for all the centers. Bills are mailed by the middle of the month and are due by the first of the next month. If payment is not received by the tenth of the month, a \$15.00 late fee will be charged. A fee will be charged to families for a check returned to Montgomery Child Care Association by the bank. If a second check is returned to Montgomery Child Care Association, the parent will be required to pay all future bills by money order, bank check or cash directly to the central office. If a family goes into collections they will not be permitted to enroll in any Montgomery Child Care Association Center.

LATE FEE POLICY

Each center has a set opening and closing time that needs to be respected for a variety of reasons. Consequently, families need to ensure that children are dropped off and picked up within center hours. While we understand that there can be circumstances that delay families in picking up their children, it is imperative that you make arrangements for someone to pick up your child if you think you are going to be late. It is always a good idea to get to know families that may live near you, as they are a great resource in these situations. Please remember to inform the center of any arrangements you have made.

Late fees are charged for families who arrive after programs end. Late fee amounts have been determined in an effort to **deter** late arrivals. Fees will begin to be assessed one minute after your child's program ends, ask your director for more details. The center office clock will be the official time. Families who are habitually late will be given a warning after which point further lateness will result in possible expulsion from the center.

ADDITIONAL FEES

In addition to monthly tuition charges, each center may set additional fees, such as registration, activity or late pick up fees. Please check with your Center Director.

VACATIONS/LEAVE OF ABSENCE/HOLIDAYS

As much as we would like to, our budget does not permit us to promise to hold spaces for children who leave the program for the summer, extended vacations, maternity leave of parents, etc., unless the regular fees are paid during the absence. We will, however, do our best to honor these requests. There are no refunds made for inclement weather days, for Center Holidays or for Center work or training days.

REFERRAL TUITION DISCOUNT POLICY

A family is awarded a \$50.00 discount towards one month's tuition if they refer an eligible candidate for a center's staff position (job opening) and that candidate is hired by the center. This discount is given after the candidate works for the center for three months. Additionally, families are awarded a \$50.00 towards one month' tuition if they refer a family to the center that enrolls. This discount is given after the child/children have been enrolled, in good standing, for three months.

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PARENT COLLECTIONS FOR CENTER STAFF

Parent solicitation, collection and distribution of money from parents to center staff is optional. Staff gifts are certainly appreciated by staff, but they are not expected or required. When a parent or group of parents initiates organizing a gift giving campaign they are asked to follow the guidelines below.

Equity issues have occurred in the past and have caused staff morale issues. Montgomery Child Care Association asks that you would keep that in mind and follow our guideline to disperse funds equally among all staff. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Letters or requests to families should be distributed generally and not target a particular family or address the status of their participation. Letters or requests to families should be reviewed by the Center Director before being distributed.
2. Letters or requests to families should avoid asking for a specific amount to prevent a family feeling pressured to give. A family can give whatever is comfortable and within their budget or decide not to give at all.
3. Collection of money should be a simple procedure. Announce a deadline and collect funds until deadline. To avoid possible conflicts or financial debts, do not offer or collect pledges or promises for contributions.

4. There are two options for disbursement of funds to staff.

- **Montgomery Child Care Association distribution:** Contributions can be organized by center families and collected by the center director. Checks or money orders should be payable to MCCA. Funds are brought to the administrative office to be deposited and distributed to staff through Montgomery Child Care Association payroll (taxed) or gifts/gift cards (not taxed). Funds collected are dispersed in an equal dollar amount to each center staff member. Parent Council officers should not volunteer to collect funds.

OR

- **Family distribution:** Center families collect and distribute funds. Funds collected are dispersed in an equal dollar amount to each center staff member. Please obtain a complete staff list from your director. Once again, Parent Council officers should not volunteer to collect funds.

Please note: Montgomery Child Care Association staff receive other monetary bonuses and holiday gifts during the year weighted for years of service and positions held.

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APPENDIX I

COUNTY SPACE INFORMATION

Montgomery Child Care Association programs at Arcola, Brooke Grove, Garrett Park and Park Street are located in Montgomery County space. This space is licensed to us through a bidding process. We are tenants in these locations.

We also lease space from Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) for some of our school age programs. They are located in Montgomery County Public Schools:

- Beverly Farms Elementary School
- Garrett Park Elementary School
- Georgian Forest Elementary School
- Greenwood Elementary School
- Woodacres Elementary School

We have an annual lease at these locations with a re-bid process every five years.

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APPENDIX II

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

*Discipline is the slow, bit by bit, time-consuming task
of helping children see the sense in acting in a certain way.*

Dr. James Hymes

Montgomery Child Care Association believes that the goal of discipline in our programs is to teach children self-control. Our intention is to provide a secure, comfortable environment where children are guided by clear and consistent limits. An essential component of our approach involves teaching children appropriate expression of their feelings.

As in all aspects of our program, we approach child guidance from a child development perspective. Techniques such as distraction and redirection are used with the youngest children. As children progress, we add to these approaches more and more language as we label children's feelings and help them learn to express these feelings in words. Discussion and implementation of the logical consequences of inappropriate behavior are incorporated as children's cognitive abilities reach this level of understanding. Montgomery County Public Schools Conflict Resolution Systems such as "De-Bug" and "Star" are used to build each child's problem solving and communication skills.

In all cases, child guidance is handled on an individual basis. Group punishment is not used, and guidance techniques involve respect, trust, honesty and caring for others. Reinforcement of positive behavior and prevention of negative behavior is the basic approach in our programs.

Since our intent is to provide children with appropriate behavior models and alternatives to violence, we do not use punishment in our centers. Corporal punishment, verbal abuse such as threats or sarcasm, requiring a child to be silent or still for long periods of time (i.e. for more minutes than the child's age), isolation, causing a child any kind of physical discomfort, or using food as reward or punishment, are not practiced in our centers.

In conclusion, we feel that the child care center and the parent must work together as partners in helping children grow in self-esteem and self-control. Through informal daily conversation, regularly scheduled conferences, and periodic parent programs, we work with parents to promote the optimal development of appropriate behavior patterns in each child.

APPENDIX III

**MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION
Procedures for Handling Suicidal Behaviors**

The following behaviors can be risk factors of suicidal tendencies:

- | | |
|---|---|
| *Changes in social relationships | * Seems to fear a loss of self-control |
| *You have concerns about home supervision | * Has experienced a recent personal rejection |
| *Exhibits less interest in activities | * Child expresses concerns about sexual orientation |
| *Suicide of family member or friend | * Demonstrates sleep and/or appetite disturbances |
| *Talk of hating life | * Seems disconnected from outside activities |
| *Family health concerns | * Displays sense of having no one to confide in |
| *Ongoing family conflict | * History of scratching, cutting or marking of body |
| *Talk/write/draw about death at school | * Displays excessive pressures to succeed |
| *Recent academic failure | * Displays recent neglect of personal appearance |
| *Loss of school interest | * Displays boredom or a lack of concentration |
| *Increased risk-taking behavior | * Somatic problems or chronic medical condition |
| *Aware of media attention to suicide | * Victim of abuse or suspected abuse (sexual, physical, verbal) |
| *Lacks sense of belonging | * Expresses guilt, shame, or self-derogatory remark |
| *Seems lonely or disconnected | * Perceives actions of others as demeaning or threatening |

If a teacher has concerns about a child demonstrating suicidal tendencies they share their observations with the center director immediately and together follow the guidelines below.

If a child is a threat to himself or others...

(If you are uncertain if the child is a threat consult with your director immediately.)

- Call 911.
- Inform the family that they will need to bring back verification that the child has been seen by a professional and is safe to return to the program.
- Work with the family to implement recommendations made by the mental health professional that are feasible and appropriate for the center setting. Incorporate recommendations to the child's Comprehensive Individualized Plan.
- Notify the Montgomery Child Care Association office of your actions.

If a child states or suggests that they want to commit suicide but are not an immediate threat to himself or others...

- Inform the parent/guardian of your concerns and ask them to pick the child up.
- If the child has a therapist, recommend that the family make an "immediate contact" with the therapist. If the child does not have a therapist, provide the family with the phone of the **Crisis Center (240-777-4000)** for free emergency assessment.
- Inform the family that they will need to bring back verification that the child has been seen by a professional and is safe to return to the program.
- Work with the family to implement recommendations, made by the mental health professional, that are feasible and appropriate for the center setting. Incorporate recommendations to the child's Comprehensive Individualized Plan.
- If the parent or guardian is unavailable or uncooperative regarding emergency assessment, consider contacting the Mobile Crisis Team (240-777-4000) for consultation. Consider contacting Child Protective Services (240-777-4417).
- Notify the Montgomery Child Care Association office of your actions.

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If a child demonstrates several of the risk factors above or other behaviors that have you concerned...

- Inform the family of your observations and concerns immediately.
- Suggest if the child has a therapist suggest that that the family contacts the therapist. If the family does not have a therapist, offer the services of one the Montgomery Child Care Association Mental Health consultants. Contact the therapist to come to the center to meet with the family.
- Provide the family the telephone number of the **Crisis Center (240-777-4000)** for free emergency assessment.
- Develop a Comprehensive Individualized Plan that addresses specific strategies that the team will use to address behaviors of concern in the center.
- Share your Comprehensive Plan with the Education Director and/or School-Age Resource Coordinator.

****Adapted from the MCPS Suicide Risk Reporting Form

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APPENDIX IV

DANGEROUS ITEMS POLICY

All efforts are made to make our Center a safe place. Families play a major role in this goal. In order to protect the children from any potential danger, we ask all families to monitor items your child brings to our program.

If a dangerous item is found at the Center:

1. Teachers will remove the dangerous items from the child and report the incident to the Center Director.
2. The Center Director will notify the Center Council President(s) or other officer and the Montgomery Child Care Association Executive Director.
3. The parents of the involved child will be called and arrangements made for an immediate conference. The teachers, Director and parents will discuss the incident and the circumstances at length on the same day except under extenuating circumstances.
4. Parents in the affected classroom shall be notified about the incident involving a dangerous item and the actions being taken by the family, teachers and the Center Director to prevent such an incident from reoccurring. On this same day a letter written by the teachers and the Director will state to whom questions and concerns should be directed.
5. If concerns remain the Center Council and the Center Director may agree to call a meeting to provide a forum for concerned parents.
6. Should a similar incident occur within the same family, the Center Director, the Executive Director, the Parent Council Officers and the teachers shall meet to determine how to resolve the situation.

APPENDIX V

TOYS-FROM-HOME POLICIES

We recognize the important roles that toys from home can play in the lives of the children in our programs. Staff and families working in partnership can support the developmental growth of the children and provide a safe and enriching learning environment that includes these elements of home. The following policies as they pertain to toys brought from home will help us achieve our objective.

Comfort Toys

Infants, toddlers and preschool children often use specific toys from home as “comfort toys”. Comfort toys can help a child in their emotional development, by providing a support as they adjust to the separation from their families, and learn to cope with all the stress that being away from home for long hours can cause. “Comfort Toys” are often stuffed animals or dolls, but can also be items such as a blanket, a special hat or T-shirt, or even toys such as footballs, trucks, horses, dinosaurs, etc.

Family members should let staff know what their child’s “comfort toy” is. Comfort toys will not have to be shared and will be readily available to the child throughout the day. If a child chooses to share their toy, staff will discourage “selective sharing” and encourage the child to share it equally. If they do not want to share it equally it will be put in the child’s cubby or a “toys-from home” box.

Children will be taught to respect each others comfort toys. For example, phrases like “That’s Jamie’s special toy that helps him feel safe, just like your _____ helps you feel safe,” will help children understand why they may not be able to play with Jamie’s toy from home. Children will also be taught that if they do not need their comfort toy they should place it in their cubby, especially if they do not want anyone else to touch or play with it.

Toys Depicting Violence

The position statement by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** entitled “Media Violence in Children’s Lives” states “. . . there has been an increase in the amount and severity of violent acts observed by children through the media, including television, movies, computer games, and videotapes, and an increase in the manufacture and distribution of weapon-like toys and other products directly linked to violent programming.” They go on to say, “Children who repeatedly observe violent or aggressive problem solving behavior in the media tend to rehearse what they see in their play and imitate those behaviors in real-life encounters (Huesmann, 1986; Rule & Ferguson, 1986; Eron & Huesmann, 1987)”. In addition, **Montgomery County Public School Discipline** policy states “Students should not bring to school any object that looks like a weapon or could be used as a weapon, including toy guns or knives, water guns, etc.”

In light of all of this information, we have established the following policies:

1. Toys depicting violent themes, i.e. toy guns, knives or swords, action figures, etc. will not be permitted to be brought to the center from home.
2. If staff have knowledge that children have these types of toys in the center, the toy will be removed from the classroom, stored in the center’s office and a family member will be contacted.
3. Video games (for computers, game boys, etc.) brought to the program may not depict violent themes. If a child is found to be playing this type of game at the program they will be in violation

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of the Toys-From-Home Policies and the game/toy will be removed from the classroom, and all conditions as spelled out in the Electronic Toys section will be applied.

Game Boys, Laptop Computers, and Other Electronic Toys

We live in a high-tech world with high-tech, and often expensive, toys and equipment. TV's are everywhere – including our cars; computers are the norm and laptop versions make them portable; Sega, Nintendo, and the like are prevalent, and are also readily available in portable packages such as game boys. These activities have become extremely popular with some children (especially boys) and although these devices have made children very comfortable and competent with technology, we are finding that the “negatives” far outweigh the “positives.”

- One of the negative aspects is “screen time,” which refers to the time children spend sitting in front of a screen – television, computer, video games, etc. “Screen time” is being found to be a contributing factor to one of the most obese generations of children in our nation's history, since “screen time” activities often require very little physical activity, and are often accompanied by snacking on high calorie and high fat foods.
- Another negative aspect is the violence portrayed in many of the games played on these devices. Our programs do not wish to contribute to the further desensitization of children to the effects of violence, or promote violence or aggressive behavior as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts.
- Still another negative aspect is the cost of these items. Our programs cannot assume the cost of lost or stolen game boys, computers, etc., so families need to keep this in mind when deciding whether or not to send these items to the center with their child.

In setting policies for our programs in terms of these items and activities, we have weighed the limited positive benefits with the many negative aspects and have arrived at the following policies:

1. These items will only be permitted in the center on days when the child will be present for more than 6 hours (i.e. No School Days, Summer Adventures) or one time per week, whichever is less.
2. The center specifically, and MCCA as a whole, cannot be held accountable for lost, stolen, or broken items. The family must assume all risks of bringing the item to the center.
3. Families/children must decide whether they wish to share these items with other children when they are at the center and inform the staff member as to their wishes. As with comfort toys, children will be discouraged from “selective sharing” and will be expected to share it equally. If in violation of the terms of the guidelines, or if there is excessive conflict concerning the toy, it will be removed from the classroom, stored in a safe location and given to the family member at the end of the day. If this happens more than 3 times the child will not be allowed to bring a toy of this type to the program.
4. On days when these toys are permitted in the center, the children will have a 45 minute segment of time in the AM and a 45 minute segment of time in the PM to use the toys. At all other times during the day the toys must be in the child's cubby, backpack, or can be secured in the center office.
5. All electronic toys must also adhere to the policies set concerning toys depicting violence.

Cell Phones

Another part of our high tech society includes the use of cell phones. We are finding that more and more families are utilizing cell phones as a means of staying connected, and that more and more of the school age children in our programs have cell phones. While we appreciate the convenience that cell phones can

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provide to families in relaying information to their children about changes in schedules or who will be picking the child up from the program, it is essential that any information of this nature be communicated directly to the staff rather than through the child. In an effort to ensure that children are using their cell phones properly, are learning appropriate cell phone courtesy, are keeping the lines open for their families to stay connected, and that staff are kept directly in the information loop, we have the following policies regarding cell phones:

1. Cell phone use when the child is at the center is limited to incoming calls from their primary caregivers. Children will not be permitted to make any outgoing calls on their cell phones. Children will be permitted to make outgoing calls to their family members using the center phone as deemed necessary.
2. During the time children are at the center they will be encouraged to keep their cell phones on their person (on vibrate mode), in their cubbies or backpack, or they can be secured in the center office.
3. Family members must inform staff directly concerning any information such as changes in the child's schedule, changes in who will be picking up the child, etc. Family members should call the center phone to relay this information. If the family member calls the child's cell phone with this type of information they should ask to speak with the child's teacher or the director to share the information with them as well as with the child
4. The center or MCCA cannot be held accountable for lost, stolen, or broken cell phones. The family must assume all risks of the cell phone being at the center. Families need to keep this in mind when deciding whether or not to send a cell phone to the center with their child
5. As with any other personal item brought from home, if the rules and policies are not being adhered to, the cell phone will be confiscated by the staff and properly stored until it can be turned over to the family member at the end of the day.

General Toys

Any toys that do not fall into any of the above categories will be considered "general toys" and will follow these policies:

1. These items will only be permitted in the center on days when the child will be present for more than 6 hours (i.e. No School Days, Summer Adventures) or one time per week, whichever is less.
2. The center or MCCA cannot be held accountable for lost, stolen, or broken items. The family must assume all risks of bringing the item to the center.
3. Toys will not have to be shared with other children, however if a child chooses to share their toy staff will discourage "selective sharing" and encourage the child to share it equally. If they do not want to share it equally the child will be asked to put the toy in their cubby, backpack, or other appropriate location (such as the center's office).
4. If there is excessive conflict concerning a toy, it will be removed from the classroom, stored in a safe location and given to the family member at the end of the day. If this happens more than 3 times the child will not be allowed to bring a toy to the program.

If you have any questions regarding these policies please speak with your center director or call the MCCA main office at 301-984-7680 and speak with the Education Director, School Age Resource Coordinator or the Executive Director.

APPENDIX VI

EXCLUSION SYMPTOMS

If your child is sick, he/she will be miserable at our center. Your child will want you! Please do not bring your child to the center with symptoms of illness. If your child is sent home from the center, s/he should remain at home for at least 24 hours, or submit a written statement from the health care provider, approving the earlier return to the program. Notify the center office within 24 hours if your child has developed a known communicable disease.

GENERAL SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Temperature above 100 degrees - 101 auxiliary, infant more serious
- Unusual lethargy
- Uncontrolled coughing
- Irritability
- Persistent crying
- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Uncontrolled diarrhea
- Vomiting illness, two or more episodes of vomiting in previous 24 hours
- Gray or white stool or unusually colored urine
- Unusual spots or rash with fever or behavior change
- Thick nasal discharge, yellow or green, with other symptoms such as fatigue or fever
- Sudden onset of sneezing, running nose and eyes

DISEASES

- **Scabies, head lice**, or other infestation until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Tuberculosis**, until doctor states your child can attend school
- **Impetigo**, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Chicken pox**, until all sores have dried and crusted
- **Hepatitis A virus**, until one week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis has been administered to appropriate children and staff
- **Measles**, until 6 days after onset of rash
- **Shingles - return with doctor's note**
- **Herpetic gingivostomatitis - infected mouth ulcers - return with doctor's note**
- **"Pink eye,"** purulent conjunctivitis, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Strep throat** or other **streptococcal infection** until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.

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APPENDIX VII

SICK AND MEDICATION POLICY

State Department of Education Licensing Regulations do not permit sick children to be brought to the Centers, or to remain after it is discovered that they are ill. When parents are notified that their child is ill, they are expected to pick up their child within **one** hour. Emergency numbers need to be kept up to date, so please notify the Center of any changes.

Below are the guidelines that Montgomery Child Care Association uses to determine if a child is to be sent home and how we will support the child upon returning to the Center. Our goal is to establish a healthy environment for children and staff. These policies have been established for the health and safety of your child as well as the staff and other children in the Center. Additional information about *Exclusion Symptoms* is available in Appendix VI. These guidelines are enforced for everyone. Please do **not** ask staff to make exceptions.

1. **If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or greater, the parent will be called to pick up him/her.** The Centers will use an auxiliary temperature (under arm) that requires adding one degree to the reading. For example, if the auxiliary temperature reads 99 degrees, one degree is added to that number, and the resulting actual temperature is 100 degrees. (NOTE: Accommodations are made in certain situations such as teething and children with higher than usual normal body temperatures, when accompanied with a licensed health practitioner's note.)
2. **When a child is sent home with a fever of 100 degrees or greater, s/he may not return to the Center until 24 hours after the fever has broken without the use of medications.** For example: a child develops a fever on a Monday morning and is sent home; the parent gives the child medication (such as children's Tylenol) during the day on Monday; the child's fever breaks at 7:00 pm Monday night and the parent does not give the child anymore medication; if the fever does not return for 24 hours from 7:00 pm Monday night, the child can return to the Center the following Wednesday.
3. **Parents are encouraged to notify the Center if their child becomes acutely ill so that we can notify other families.** This will allow us to take steps to try to limit the risk of further infection. Some examples are strep throat, pink eye etc...
4. **Parents are required to inform the Center if their child is infected with or has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease** (for example, whooping cough (pertussis), rubella, hepatitis A, mumps, TB). The Center cannot admit a child who is infected with a communicable disease during the period of communicability as indicated by the Office of Child Care, our licensing agency. Re-admission to the Center requires a written note by a licensed health practitioner such as the child's pediatrician.
5. **When a child is diagnosed as having a contagious illness, such as strep throat, pink eye, etc., s/he is excluded from the Center for 24 hours after antibiotics have begun.**
6. **Other symptoms of illness which require exclusion from the Centers** include a change in bowel habits (i.e., loose, watery, stools that occur more than twice or with other symptoms), vomiting that occurs more than twice or with additional symptoms, undiagnosed rashes and cold symptoms that do not subside. When a child is sent home for any of these symptoms, **s/he may not return to the center for 24 hours,** or if returning to the program earlier, must submit a written

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statement from the health care provider approving the return. A doctor's note indicating that the child is not contagious will be needed if the symptoms persist.

7. **The Center staff are permitted to give medication (prescription and over-the-counter) only if parents have completed the Medication Order Form (DHR/CCA1216)** along with a separate written note from the doctor attached to this form. Any medication must be properly labeled and in its original container. *At least one dose of a prescription medicine is to be given to the child at home before the Center can dispense the medication.*

Medications include:

- prescription medications
- non-prescription medications (including Tylenol, cough drops, and cold medication)

NOTE: Lotion, sunscreen, lip balm, diaper ointment, diaper powder may only be administered with the Medication Order Form or the Montgomery Child Care Association Summer Safety Permission Form signed only by the child's parent or legal guardian (physician's signature *not* required).

The Medication Order Form (DHR/CCA1216) must contain:

- the child's name
- approval for Center to administer the medication
- the name of the medication to be administered
- the dosage amounts
- the times for medication to be administered
- possible side effects from the medication, if any, completed by the doctor
- the beginning and ending dates that the medication should be administered

This information can be faxed directly or hand delivered to the Center.

WE WILL NOT DISPENSE MEDICATION IF WE DO NOT HAVE THIS INFORMATION.

MEDICATIONS MAY NOT BE SENT TO THE CENTER IN A CHILD'S LUNCH OR BACK PACK. PLEASE HAND DELIVER ALL MEDICATIONS TO THE CHILD'S TEACHER.

Children CANNOT bring medication and take it themselves no matter what age they are.

8. **The Director, parents, and teaching team will develop a plan together when a field trip is scheduled** on a day when medication is required.

9. **Montgomery Child Care Association staff will administer treatments for conditions connected with a disability following appropriate training** in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

APPENDIX VIII

OUTDOOR TIME

Children thrive outdoors! They eat better, sleep better, play better, learn better, and stay healthier when they get regular outdoor time. **Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards** provides the following information about the importance of outdoor play:

- Outdoor Play is not only an opportunity for learning in a different environment; it also provides many health benefits.
- Generally, infectious disease organisms are less concentrated in outdoor air than indoor air.
- Light exposure of the skin to sunlight promotes the production of Vitamin D that growing children require.
- Open spaces encourage children to develop gross motor skills and fine motor skills that are difficult to duplicate indoors.
- Physical play opportunities support a healthy weight and lifestyle.

In light of all the positives of outdoor play, it is their recommendation that children should play outdoors **daily** when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. They further describe a significant health risk as being “**wind chill** at or below 15 degrees F. and a **heat index** at or above 90 degrees F. as identified by the National Weather Service.” Wind Chill Charts and Heat Index/Air Quality Charts are displayed at your center.

We as child care professionals take very clear precautions to protect children from adverse weather conditions all year round. Planning for weather safety is part of the daily routine. We plan our outdoor times carefully in the following ways:

- Go outdoors at the most advantages part of the day – in the summer, early in the morning or later in the day when it is cooler, and in the winter we try to be outside during the middle of the day when it is warmer.
- Utilize shade in the summer and search for sunny areas in the winter
- Adjust the length of time we are outdoors to match the weather conditions and the comfort level of the children
- Staff continuously check in with the children (at least every 15 minutes) to make sure they are comfortable
- Ensure that the children are properly dressed for the weather conditions. Light colored, light weight clothing in the summer and multiple layers in the winter, including hats, gloves and boots as needed
- All Staff are trained to recognize and treat the signs and symptoms of weather related issues
- Staff plan appropriate activities and provide additional equipment and materials to make best use of the weather and maintain the proper activity level for the temperature i.e. water play to stay cool in the summer, snow activities in the winter, etc.
- Safety is always a top priority in planning and presenting the activities outdoors. Specific policies concerning outdoor plan in general, and specific types of play such as water play, sledding, bicycling, to name a few, are maintained to ensure that children are able to explore, have fun, and remain safe!
- Written safety inspections of the playground equipment and grounds are performed weekly, and the outdoor area is surveyed daily.

APPENDIX IX

HOMEWORK POLICY

MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION understands that children need time to unwind and transition from the school environment to the child care setting when they first arrive at the Center. The children in our programs have been involved in school work throughout the day that includes a large amount of sitting and a limited amount of time for social interactions before they reach us. We understand that children need to balance out the limits of the school day with opportunities for physical, social and emotional activities. Our observations of children tell us they need to release pent-up energy and have opportunities to select their own activities when they arrive at our programs. To this end, our programs provide many choices of activities and projects to enhance the child's social, physical, and intellectual skills through our play based curriculum, and an opportunity to have snack when the children arrive at our centers.

MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION supports the Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) Homework Policy that states: The home can reinforce learning and broaden educational opportunities for the student through parental knowledge of the homework procedures. Making homework meaningful to the students requires cooperation and communication among teachers, students, and parents." Therefore, it will be the family's responsibility to ensure that all of the child's homework, even the homework completed at the center, is accurate and complete.

Even though MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION recognizes the MCPS policy that homework is a parental responsibility we also recognize the demands homework places on families. The dilemma of picking up children from our programs, getting home late, eating dinner, and trying to fit in homework can create a lot of stress for families.

In support of families, MONTGOMERY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION centers use the National Institute on Out-Of School Time's model where homework is a contracted activity. Children, families and the center enter into a contract which clarifies the expectations for center homework time. Due to the large number of children we can offer some homework assistance to the children, but cannot guarantee one-on-one assistance. At times homework assistance that includes tutoring, mentoring or an enrichment component may be offered based on the center's resources and financial status, but this is usually the exception rather than the rule.

All School age children and their families complete a *Montgomery Child Care Association Homework Contract* at the beginning of each school year. This contract provides valuable information to help create an environment that is supportive and productive.

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APPENDIX X

FIELD TRIPS, COMMUNITY EXPLORATION AND TRANSPORTATION

MCCA Child Care Staff are encouraged to provide a wide variety of field trips to capture the interests of all the children:

- For physical activity: trips to parks or playgrounds, bowling, skating, swimming, gymnastics, yoga
- For science lovers: College Park Aviation Museum, Goddard Space and Flight Center, Locust Grove Nature Center, U of MD Observatory, Audubon Society, Doctor and Dentist offices, Fire Stations
- For animal lovers: Washington Animal Rescue League, Baltimore and National Zoos, PetSmart stores, Veterinarian offices
- For sports fans: Bowie Baysoxs, Frederick Keys, Washington Mystics, Baltimore Orioles
- For music and theater lovers: Strathmore Arts Center, Black Rock Center of the Arts, BAPA, Montgomery County Public Libraries
- Any many, many, more!

Transportation:

As with all activities in our programs, the safety of the children is a top priority. Children are transported by MCCA buses which meet National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Guidelines for the safe transportation of children in school buses. All our drivers are trained and all our drivers of full-size school buses hold CDL's (commercial driver licenses).

Safety and Supervision on Trips:

All trips are planned out well in advance and in detail to provide a safe and enjoyable learning opportunity. The children are properly supervised during all aspects of the trip. Families are informed of the trip through flyers, newsletters and with posters, and all families must sign written permission for their child to attend the trip. Staff/child ratios as set by the Office of Child Care are strictly maintained and are often supplemented on field trips by providing extra staff whenever possible (often the Center Director or Assistant Director accompany field trip groups). Family members are welcome to volunteer to accompany field trips – this can be a wonderful opportunity to “experience a day in the life of your child” in addition to providing additional support for the teaching staff.

APPENDIX XI

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

ABUSE

Physical Abuse

The intentional, non-accidental, physical injury to a child inflicted by a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the child's welfare. This includes, but is not limited to, burning, kicking, biting, punching or beating a child. Some indicators of physical abuse are consistent:

1. bruises in various stages of healing;
2. unexplained burns;
3. welts, cuts, abrasions, fractures, internal injuries;
4. behavior indicators such as behavioral extremes (very aggressive and very withdrawn), avoids physical contact, and fearful of parents.

Sexual Abuse

Using a child to meet an adult's sexual wants; any sexual activity between a child and adult is considered sexual abuse. This includes fondling a child's genital area or breasts, rape, intercourse, sodomy, exhibitionism and incest. It also includes using a child in pornographic pictures or films. Examples of physical indicators of sexual abuse are:

1. bruises, bleeding, pain, or itching of the genitals, anal or oral areas;
2. torn, stained or bloody underwear.
3. sleep disturbances;
4. sexually transmitted diseases diagnosed in young children;
5. excessive masturbation, especially when nervous or anxious;
6. behavior indicators such as persistent and inappropriate sexual behavior with peers, toys, or with themselves, overly aggressive or compliant behavior, and detailed and age inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior, especially by young children.

Emotional Abuse

Constantly belittling and ridiculing a child; telling them they can't do anything right; blaming them for family problems; making fun of them in front of others. A child who is emotionally abused will have several indicators of low self-esteem, for example:

1. afraid to take risks and to try new things
2. cries easily
3. is dependent on adults
4. clings to adults
5. is withdrawn
6. says "I can't" very often

NEGLECT

A condition that results when a child's basic needs of life are not met on a regular basis by a parent, caretaker, household or family member, Neglect can be physical and/or emotional.

Physical Neglect

Consistent failure to provide the basic needs of a child, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, attention to hygiene, education, protection and supervision are not provided. The child may be:

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1. **Consistently** dirty, hungry or inappropriately dressed
 2. **Consistently** hungry, malnourished
 3. **Continually** tired or listless
 4. Without adult supervision **for extended periods of time**
 5. In need of medical care
 6. Many uncared for cavities and dirty teeth
 7. Without shelter
 8. Living in an unsafe environment
 9. **Consistently** displaying certain behaviors that indicate neglect, such as:
 - a. Constant fatigue
 - b. Assumes adult responsibility
 - c. Inappropriate seeking of affection
- **Physical neglect can contribute to poor health and nutrition.** If neglect is extreme, it can cause non-organic “**failure to thrive**”; i.e. the infant or young child is not growing and developing as expected, but there is no organic (physical) explanation.
 - **However, certain medical conditions, including HIV infection, can lead to failure to thrive.** Children with HIV frequently have neurological and developmental complications. Developmental delays and failure to thrive can be early indicators of HIV.
 - **Children left in unsafe situations are at risk for injury;** e.g. a child left alone in a locked car while mom shops; an infant left in the care of a jealous 3 year old sibling who might hurt her; a child left in a kitchen with knives within reach.

Emotional Neglect

Being consistently unresponsive to child’s emotional need for love, approval and affection. A child who is emotionally neglected:

1. Feels insecure
2. Lacks self confidence
3. Cannot trust others or form attachments
4. Is constantly fearful and passive
5. Doesn’t receive a response to requests for help
6. Is not comforted when upset
7. Doesn’t receive attention, love and affection on a regular basis
8. Lacks encouragement and support.

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APPENDIX XII

COMMUNICATION WITH DUAL CUSTODY FAMILIES

Montgomery Child Care Association's goal is to support the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children whose families have a shared custody agreement.

Centers must remain a neutral, safe haven for each child in our program. Montgomery Child Care Association will in no way be forced in the middle of disagreements or to choose sides between disagreeing parents. Parents are expected to support their child's well-being by abiding by any set agreements or schedules. Disagreements and complaints should be resolved through effective communication between the parents or through appropriate legal channels. For more information please refer to Appendix XII.

The following practices will be applied:

1. The Center will accept the custody schedule regarding parental drop offs and pick ups as a way of informing and preparing the child regarding which parent will be arriving at the center for pick up on specific days.

Families with shared custody are responsible for discussing and resolving any changes to the schedule privately. Please share the changes with the child care center staff. Correct and clearly communicated information will eliminate confusion and allow your child to feel a sense of security and trust.

2. Child care center staff will release the child to either parent of a shared custody agreement at any time unless there is a specific court order to do otherwise.

Staff will refer to the custody schedule when a parent picks up or drop offs and if they notice a deviation they will call the non-appearing parent to inform them of the change. We cannot hold or restrain a child from a joint custody parent.

It is the responsibility of both parents to follow their agreements and to negotiate any changes to the schedule or custody agreement outside of the center for the well-being of their children.

4. In the event that parental rights are denied or restricted for either parent a copy of the court order is needed at the center. Only the specific pages referencing parental rights and the court authorization are needed. These documents will allow the center to follow through on all legal expectations. All other Montgomery Child Care Association policies apply regarding authorized pick-ups, code of conduct, etc. Please refer to the Montgomery Child Care Association Family Handbook.

APPENDIX XIII

RELEASE OF CHILD TO INTOXICATED OR DRUGGED INDIVIDUAL

Occasionally, a parent or other authorized person arrives at the Center intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. In order to protect the children from any potential danger that could arise because of a parent's condition, and to protect the Center from potential claims, it is the policy of the Center to take all reasonable steps to avoid releasing a child to a person in a drugged or intoxicated state.

Accordingly, if, in the opinion of the Child Care Teacher present at the Center, a parent or authorized person who arrives to transport the child home from the Center is in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will:

5. Ask the parent if they are OK and if they need assistance.
6. Tell the parent that they will arrange for assistance to help them get home safely. Then the staff person 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.
7. If the parent insists on driving the child home, the Center's staff member will notify the local police department. If the 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 under the influence of alcohol.
8. If a particular parent or guardian frequently arrives in an intoxicated or drugged state, the Center will not only notify the police department, but will also alert other appropriate governmental authorities involved with the care and treatment of children.