

FAMILY HANDBOOK



MAIN LOCATION

1526 North Fremont Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21217

Located On The Campus of St. Peter
Claver Church

Phone: (410) 728-2222

www.littleflowersecdc.org

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A Message From Our Director



Welcome to Little Flowers Early Childhood and Development Center, Inc. (Little Flowers). Our goal is to support you and your child, and to provide you with the best quality service. We want you to know that you have chosen a safe, loving, and exciting place for your child to grow and learn while you are away. We thank you for entrusting your most precious gift in our hands and look forward to working with you.

Respectfully,

Crystal Hardy-Flowers, MSW, LGSW
Founder/Director

ABOUT OUR CENTER

Little Flowers offers three comprehensive academic programs: infants, toddlers, and preschool. We also offer a before school nutrition program, after school learning and enrichment program, and a weekend recreation and child care program.

The infants – preschool program is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Human Resources, Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation, to serve children between the ages of six weeks – five years of age, on a full-time basis. Little Flowers is staffed by a Director, Teachers, and Aides all of whom have the education and experience to offer your child a program filled with fun and learning.

The infants – preschool program operates on school days from 6:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

In order to meet the needs of families with different schedules we offer a before school nutrition program, after school learning and enrichment program, and weekend recreation and child care program, which is also licensed by the Maryland State Department of Human Resources, Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation, and are staffed by a Director, Teachers, and Aides, who are trained to provide elementary and middle school children with a stimulating and safe before, after school and weekend experience.

The before school program operates on school days between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

The after-school program operates on school days between the hours of 2:25 p.m. and 12 midnight.

The weekend program operates on Saturdays and Sundays between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 12 midnight.

In addition, we provide safe and reliable transportation services. Our driver, as with our educational staff, is held to the same strict standards of the Maryland State Department of Human Resources, Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation, and Little Flowers.

Transportation services are available Monday through Friday, and operate from 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Our main office is located at 1526 North Fremont Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 21217. You can reach the Center by phone at (410) 728-2222. Our second location (for 2-year-olds only) is located at 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 21217. You can reach the center by phone at (410) 728-0222.

If no one is available, please leave a message and the Director will return your call that same day. For urgent calls, dial (443) 831-2835, which is the cell phone number of Ms. Crystal Hardy-Flowers, the Founder/Director. Our fax number is (410)728-2228. Our email address is littleflowers3117@yahoo.com and our website is www.littleflowersecdc.org

OUR STAFF

Children thrive when surrounded by teachers who are deeply interested in and committed to them. Our teachers enjoy working with children and parents to create a warm and stable environment. All of our teachers are qualified early childhood professionals who meet strictly enforced State standards. They have been selected not only because of their knowledge and experience in the field of early childhood education, but also because their personal educational philosophy and teaching style are compatible with the Center's approach. Each staff member must also pass a thorough check of personal references, a comprehensive health examination and mandatory State screening.

MISSION STATEMENT

Little Flowers Early Childhood and Development Center, Inc. recognizes that children are our future. Therefore, it is our mission to improve the lives of children by employing a holistic approach to education. In doing so, we are committed to promoting growth in our children through quality education and early intervention, enrichment, parent involvement and collaborations. In addition, we see the importance of positioning children where they can be successful by providing them with a safe, nurturing and clean learning environment.

Our curriculum is designed to foster the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of the children we serve. We believe that children need to be actively involved in learning through play, with opportunities to explore, experience and succeed.

Staff development is a central focus of Little Flowers' program, enabling teachers and assistants to provide comprehensive services for children and families. On-going evaluation and performance improvement of staff are key elements of staff development, which is vital to the success of our program.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

- ◇ **We believe** that children are our most valuable investment.
- ◇ **We believe** that children should be loved, nurtured and safe.
- ◇ **We believe** that a child's environment should promote growth and excellence, and encourage acceptance amongst each other regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or disability.
- ◇ **We believe** that no child should be left behind and that every child should have an equal opportunity to learn and grow.
- ◇ **We believe** that a child's emotional and social health is essential to overall development.
- ◇ **We believe** that the family is an intrinsic component to a child's growth and development and that by educating and supporting the family, we are instilling positive behavior that will

improve future familial relationships.

- ◇ **We believe** that education should be fun, creative and innovative and that every child should be encouraged to explore and demonstrate his/her talents.
- ◇ **We believe** in building communities through development, collaborations and support.

OUR CORE VALUES

- ◇ Education & Enrichment
- ◇ Professional & Program Development
- ◇ Parent & Community Involvement
- ◇ Diversity & Inclusion

OUR PROGRAM

Curriculum and Assessment

Little Flowers provides educational opportunities for children to help them develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We help children develop skills and abilities that are appropriate for their age, reflect their interests, support children of all abilities, and will help them get along with others.

At Little Flowers, our curriculum and assessments are aligned with common core and promote school readiness. Our center always uses best practices in early education. We use research-based, State-recommended curriculums for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children (3, 4, and 5 years-old), follow the Maryland State Standards and the seven learning domains:

- ◇ Social and Personal Development
- ◇ Language and Literacy
- ◇ Mathematical Thinking
- ◇ Scientific Thinking
- ◇ Social Studies
- ◇ The Arts
- ◇ Physical Development and Health

Other Resources:

We use Healthy Beginnings, a resource aligned with the Maryland's Early Learning Standards for the care of children from infancy to three years old. Healthy Beginnings gives knowledge and support about child care and child development, and a frame of reference so that teachers can plan for children's learning.

Infants and toddlers (6 weeks to 2 years old) use the OUNCE Scale, which is an assessment tool that enables caregivers and families to monitor their child's development. We also use the Teaching Strategies curriculum, which is a comprehensive curriculum, with a clear organizational structure and a particular focus on routines and experiences.

Preschool-age children (3, 4, and 5 years old) use the Core Knowledge and Teaching Strategies Curriculums, both Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved and designed to develop skills and knowledge in the seven domains of learning.

In addition, our Center uses the Pinnacle curriculum, which supplements our state approved curriculum. The Pinnacle Curriculum is centered on monthly themes, as well as unit themes. Each month of curriculum provides five full weeks of activities, in a daily format. Moreover, it offers activities that are age appropriate as well as provide teachers with an abundance of ideas to enrich learning centers in their classroom. The activities meet learning objectives that help children move toward their potentials, as they explore the materials and activities in the classroom.

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

To help prepare for school readiness, we use Maryland Learning Outcomes to focus on specific domains of development and to implement concepts through intentional teaching.

Children learn to get along co-operative with others, follow directions, wash their hands, brush their teeth, put on their coats, serve themselves at meal times, and clean up after themselves. These activities are part of the daily schedule. In addition to language, literacy and math skills are addressed.

Children develop skills that will help them become competent readers and writers when they enter school. They will have books read to them every day, look at storybooks, make predictions, and answer open-ended questions to further their understanding. Children will paint, draw, write, cut with scissors, assemble puzzles, sort, string beads, sing, dance, learn nursery rhymes, play with sand and water, and tell stories. Three and four-year-olds will learn to recognize their names in print. Children will build



with blocks, have classroom responsibilities, such as, setting the table, teacher's helper, line leader, etc. Children will measure liquids and match objects that are alike.

Four-year-olds transitioning to school will learn to name ten or more letters of the alphabet and begin to understand letter-sound connections which can be combined to make words. Some four-year-olds may be able to write some recognizable letters; as well as their names before they transition to school.

Four-year-olds transitioning to school will also prepare throughout the year with classroom activities and real life experiences, such as visiting the new school, classroom and teacher.

Whole Language Approach:

- ◇ A philosophy of teaching literacy that includes the use of trade books, with the concurrent instruction in reading, writing, oral language, and focuses on meaningful, functional, and cooperative learning.
- ◇ Includes experiences and activities focusing on listening, comprehension, letter recognition, reading and communication.
- ◇ Demonstrates communication skills through dictations and show and tell experiences.
- ◇ Strengthens communication skills and increases vocabulary through play, stories and teacher modeling.

Beginning Phonics:

- ◇ The use of phonics, the relationship between letters and sounds in written words or an instructional method that teaches children these connections.

Hands-On Math/Science:

- ◇ Learning of numbers and numerical value.
- ◇ Encourage the discovery of nature and the world around us, to think, question and reason.

Appreciation of Art/Music:

- ◇ Promote the understanding of culture and community.
- ◇ Encourage creative expression and appreciation of the arts.

Creative Expression:

- ◇ Develop individuality and self-esteem.

Physical Exercise:

- ◇ Develop fine and gross motor skills.

School-age children (5 through 12 years old) engage in structured enrichment activities to promote interest in the arts, health, and community development. School-age children also follow a research-based S.T.E.A.M curriculum, which is a hands-on science, technology, engineering and math curriculum designed to increase children's interest in math and science, and help children stay competitive.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

We know that children also learn through play; because of this, we do not underestimate its importance on a growing child's mind, body and spirit. Therefore, children receive lots of both free-play and structured-play times throughout each day.

Teachers will choose materials based on the children's interest. Interest is determined by the child's age, development, ethnicity and culture. Materials are rotated at least once per month to maintain their interest. We try not to use materials based on commercial products to spark our children interests. Instead, we find related material to provide them with the opportunity to explore and use their own creativity and imagination to associate and problem solve. Materials are culturally sensitive and reflect non-stereotypical images of by disability, gender, family structure, etc.

Classrooms:

Classrooms are divided into centers (dramatic play/housekeeping, block area, library, science and social studies, art, music and movement, computers and writing). During structured learning activities, children are allowed "choice time," where they choose the center in which they want to play, which encourages them to problem solve, make choices, and explore.



Materials in the centers are strategically placed to enhance the lesson and continue to promote the learning experience. Materials in each center are age and developmentally appropriate, accessible to all children, reflect the children's interests and support children of all abilities.

Materials:

All furniture, storage and displays are labeled with both words and pictures, in English and Spanish. All learning materials on the walls are eye level to the children for them to easily see, touch and learn from. Shelving and materials on shelves are, low and accessible to all children.

Classrooms are stocked with books, Legos, manipulatives, music instruments, CD's, computers, dress-up clothes, play food, interactive stuffed animals, cars/trucks/planes, arts and crafts, puzzles, flash cards, animals/dinosaurs, trains, balls, dolls, blocks, beads and string, song games, play dough, coloring, sing along story books, painting, sand and water tables, sensory bottles, board

games, puppets, and much more.

Infant and Toddler Materials:

Materials in the infant and toddler rooms are soft, large and can be easily manipulated by their tiny hands. Materials allow children the opportunities to grasp, reach, pull, push, stack and/or release objects, and develop fine motor skills.

Library materials are either vinyl, cloth, touchy-feely and reflect pictures of people of various races, ages and abilities. Books also show pictures of animals, familiar objects and routines, as well as words, numbers and nursery rhymes. Furniture is soft and cozy. Blocks and manipulatives are soft (plastic, foam or cardboard), large and come in various colors and shapes. Puzzles come with few pieces and have large knobs, so as to be easily manipulated.

Preschool (3-5 years old) Materials:

As the children grow and develop, the material changes to reflect their growing abilities and curiosities. Materials are placed to encourage open-ended thinking and active participation.

Library materials are mixed with hard and soft back covers, and expository and narrative based for those emerging readers. Writing materials such as chalkboards, pencils, chalk, envelopes and postage stamps, and paper are available. Children have access to calendars, calculators, pegs and pegboards, math puzzles, connecting cubes, and geometric shapes of various sizes. Blocks and manipulatives are smaller and may be plastic or wooden. Puzzles come with more pieces and have large knobs so as to be easily manipulated.



LESSON PLANNING STATEMENT

Lesson plans are completed weekly, to correspond with the weekly theme and monthly unit. Lesson plans show teacher creativity and assist the teacher with on-going assessments and observations. Teachers use lesson plans to structure the daily lesson and address children's individual needs. Activities in lesson plans are age-appropriate, diverse and reflect the children's interests and skills. Children with special needs are identified in the lesson plan through flexible groupings and differentiated instruction. We incorporate information into the lesson plan from the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP), when provided, along with information from parents from on-going discussions and conferences. We also include activities in our lessons plans that are culturally competent, and especially reflective of the children and families in our community. At Little Flowers, we incorporate Spanish as a second language to help expose our children to other cultures and languages.

Little Flowers provides educational opportunities for children to help them develop socially, emo-

tionally, physically and intellectually. We help children develop skills and abilities which are appropriate for their age, reflect their interests, supportive of children of all abilities, and will help them get along with others.

Lesson plans reflect the following seven learning domains:

- ◇ Social and Personal Development
- ◇ Language and Literacy
- ◇ Mathematical Thinking
- ◇ Scientific Thinking
- ◇ Social Studies
- ◇ The Arts
- ◇ Physical Development and Health..

To help prepare for school readiness, we will use and monitor our progress from our MMSR scores to focus on specific domains of development and implement these concepts through intentional teaching.

Children learn to get along cooperatively with others, follow directions, wash their hands, brush their teeth, put on their coats, serve themselves at meal times, and clean up after themselves. These activities are part of the daily schedule, in addition to language, literacy and math skills are addressed.

Children develop skills that will help them become competent readers and writers when they enter school. They will have books read to them every day, look at storybooks, make predictions, and answer open-ended questions to further their understanding. Children will paint, draw, write, cut with scissors, assemble puzzles, sort, string beads, sing, and dance, learn nursery rhymes, play with sand and water, and tell stories. Three and four-year-olds will learn to recognize their names in print. Children will build with blocks, have classroom responsibilities, such as, setting the table, teacher's helper, line leader, etc. Children will measure liquids, and match objects that are alike.

Four-year-olds transitioning to school will learn to name ten or more letters of the alphabet and begin to understand letter-sound connections which can be combined to make words. Some four-year-olds may be able to write some recognizable letters; as well as their names before they transition to school.

Four-year-olds transitioning to school will also prepare throughout the year with classroom activities and through real life experiences, such as visiting the new school,

OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENTS

Observations and assessments are on-going at Little Flowers. Children are observed through-out the day and within the different domains. Observations are preserved on developmental checklists,

and/or anecdotal notes, which are stored in the individual child's portfolio, along with the child's work samples. Teachers use observations and assessments to meet the child's developmental needs and lesson plan. Little Flowers uses research-based assessments that are aligned with the curriculum. Assessments are discussed with parents three times per year during "Parent Conferencing."

COMPUTER/TECHNOLOGY

Technology such as, television, computers and tablets, are made available to all children ages 2 and up. Depending on the activity, children are not allowed any more than two hours of screen time per week. On special occasions, such as movie days, children are allowed to bring a G-rated children movie. Children are closely supervised while using technology. Any misuse of technology will result in a behavior action. Technology is not used in lieu of teaching; rather, it is used to facilitate the daily lesson and make the learning experience fun and exciting. We do not offer screen time for children under 2 years old.

SPECIAL NEEDS/INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION

We are dedicated to providing quality, early childhood education to children in our care. We strive to provide an individualized learning environment for each child. We do this through the use of our registration form, and an individualized education report. This report is required from any child who is diagnosed with special needs. You will be required to inform our staff about your child's special needs through private consultation, meetings, and written detailed instructions. We will work together to provide an environment that is positive for all children in our care.



DISCIPLINARY POLICY

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children to make positive choices.
2. DO reason with, redirect, and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.

4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children and use reflection and problem-solving to help them make better choices.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
10. DO explain things to children on their level.
11. DO use short supervised periods of "time-out".
12. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
13. DO have clear rules and expectations posted in the classrooms.
14. DO discuss rules throughout the year with our children and allow them to help make or change the rules to fit their needs.

We:

1. DO NOT spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish the children.
2. DO NOT make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
3. DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
4. DO NOT deny food or rest as punishment.
5. DO NOT relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
6. DO NOT leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
7. DO NOT place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
8. DO NOT allow discipline of children by children.
9. DO NOT criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

About "Time-Out"

"Time-Out" is the removal of a child for a short period of time (based on the child's behavior and no longer than 3 to 5 minutes) from a situation in which the child is misbehaving and has not responded to other discipline techniques.

The "Time-Out" space, usually a chair, is located away from classroom activity but within the teacher's sight. During "Time-Out," the child has a chance to think about the misbehavior which led to his/ her removal from the group. After a brief interval of no more than 5 minutes, the teacher discusses the incident and appropriate behavior with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over, and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown to the other children.

MANAGING BEHAVIOR

As teachers and educators of young children, it is all staff members' responsibility to understand the developmental capabilities of each child and to relate it to their age group. Being knowledgeable

in this area will assist staff members in managing and directing children's energies. The Center has an obligation and commitment to providing an environment with positive approaches to behavior modifications, thus encouraging your child's success. (Resource: Developmentally Appropriate Practices, NAEYC).

Classroom rules and expectations are posted in each classroom, and reviewed with the children daily for routine. To varying degrees, however, young children will require assistance from their teachers in controlling their own behavior. It is critical that we remember that it is the teachers' responsibility to provide children with the appropriate words and actions to assist them in regaining control. Whenever possible, children should be encouraged to resolve conflicts independently. We praise positive behaviors and never feed into negative attention-seeking behaviors. We encourage children to make positive choices, and at times limit their choices, which helps with decision making, self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

When children act out by destroying property, refusing to follow directions, hitting, pushing, biting, yelling or using profanity, the Center staff will take the following steps:

- ◇ Review classroom rules and expectations.
- ◇ Document the behavior on the child's communication log.
- ◇ Discuss the behavior, stating a more appropriate form of expression. Depending on the age of the child, open-ended questions may be appropriate to encourage the child to think about his or her actions.
- ◇ Assessment of the classroom environment. Are there areas that promote certain behaviors? Are there enough play spaces and equipment choices? Are there spaces where it is okay to express anger? Are there areas where children can be alone or play quietly with a friend?
- ◇ Show appropriate ways of seeking attention. Biting and hitting often indicate a need to communicate. Demonstrate appropriate ways to communicate and get attention, like a gentle tap on the arm.
- ◇ Offer alternatives to undesirable behaviors. Model appropriate behaviors such as negotiating for a toy instead of grabbing it. Reward children for achieving. When a young child has several triumphs at changing a behavior, take a moment to tell the child that you noticed the change. When a young child makes an effort to do the right thing, recognize the effort

with a kind word, a hug, or a sticker.

- ◇ Redirection – A positive discipline technique where the adult changes the child's direction or focus from a negative behavior/experience to a positive one.
- ◇ Providing young children opportunities to use their voices, make decisions and better choices, develop ownership, and solve problems.
- ◇ Offer limited choices. Offering a few choices is a good way to teach decision-making, while allowing children input into their day.

When a particular child continues to express him or herself in a hurtful or inappropriate manner, it may be time to institute a behavior management program.

For the toddler, redirection is often the best approach, with the provision of positive language to encourage more positive behavior. (Resource: Toddler Time with Margie Carter, Redleaf Press).

For the school-aged child, staff should ask many open-minded questions and involve the child in the invention of the behavior plan.

- ◇ The child may be removed from the group and either kept company until he or she has regained control or allowed quiet time to regroup.
- ◇ Children with disciplinary problems may also be suspended from the Center and/or barred from outside activities.
- ◇ Children suspended from the Center will not be allowed back without a parent conference. When a child is barred from an outside activity, the child's parent/guardian may be responsible for childcare during that time.
- ◇ When a child endangers his or her own safety or that of a classmate, a teacher or other staff member, a behavior management program will be implemented. If the behavior management program is not effective, it will be time to investigate outside resources to assist the child, teacher and parent. If we are unable to successfully modify the undesirable behavior, an alternate day care provider may be necessary.
- ◇ The Director should be involved in all actions and decisions at this stage. There will be rare occasions when a Director will need to terminate the enrollment of a child, due to severe or harmful behavior. The Director, in conjunction with the founder, will make final decisions concerning all terminations.
- ◇ Spanking, shaking, hitting, pushing, pinching, pulling, and all other forms of corporal punishment (punishment to the body) are not permitted. Use of corporal punishment is illegal and

grounds for immediate dismissal.

- ◇ No child is subjected to severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- ◇ Food is not denied as a form of punishment or behavior control, nor should food be forced.
- ◇ Children are not punished for not using a toilet, for toileting accidents, or for wetting or soiling clothing.

Failure to comply with any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for all employees violating this policy.

PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATION

You are the most important person in your child's life and the one who knows your child best. When we work together, we will be giving your child the best experience. Many of us are parents too, and we know how difficult it is to combine work and/or school with parenting a child. The goal of parent-teacher communication is to support you in your job as a parent and help us in our job of caring for your child. We welcome your questions and suggestions and hope you will share yourself and your talents with us.



PARENT MEETINGS

Meetings for all parents are held monthly from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. A light meal is usually served and child care is provided. Parent meetings are set up so that parents can learn more about the child's experiences at Little Flowers, get to know each other, and talk about topics of interest.

Please let us know which subjects and/or speakers you would find interesting.

The meetings usually begin with a general session for all parents, where we discuss issues of general concern to the Center. Each meeting also includes an opportunity for parents to divide into smaller groups that address issues of specific interest to the Child Care Center.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held four times per year, at the time of progress reports. Parents are informed of these conferences through yearly calendar, newsletters, emails, texts, flyer (letter), and posted on the parent board in the classroom.

A conference sign-up sheet is made available in the child's classroom a week prior to the conference. At the time of the conference, parents and teachers come together to discuss the child's

progress and plan for the child's future academic growth.

BULLETIN BOARDS

The bulletin board located in the lobby and in the child's classroom has notices especially for you. Please check it frequently and feel free to share any items that might interest fellow parents.

PARENT PARTICIPATION IN OUR PROGRAM

We believe that the best way for parents to keep abreast of what is happening at the Center is by becoming involved as a volunteer. Both programs welcome parent participation. If you are interested in volunteering, please select your interest on the volunteer task sheet and return to the Program's Director.

ADDITIONAL METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- ◇ The Center issues a monthly newsletter
- ◇ The Center issues letters throughout the year as events or issues arise.
- ◇ Parent's Satisfaction Surveys are conducted. The results of the survey provide guidance on how we can improve our programs.
- ◇ There is a Suggestion Box in the lobby. Parents are encouraged to share their ideas for improving the Center by using the suggestion box.
- ◇ The Center also uses email, text and on-site parent boards

GETTING STARTED

We invite parents/guardians of enrolled children to drop into our Center at any time. We want you to look into our busy, noisy, creative, happy, classrooms and see your child at work and play. Join us for lunch or simply to observe.

The first scheduled visit to the Center will provide you with an opportunity to gather information about the Center's program and staff. We will explain the Center's curriculum and philosophy while you observe the Center first-hand. You will receive an enrollment application, tuition schedule, health form, and any other appropriate enrollment materials. We encourage you to bring your child to your initial visit so that he/she may join in the program activities. Children with no prior exposure to structured early learning may be required to complete a two-hour observation period before starting a full day.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are allowed to visit their children in our facilities any time they wish. We do ask parents who plan to visit their children frequently to follow the classroom routine, to avoid disturbing classroom schedules and activities. When permissible, parents are also allowed to view their child in his/her classroom via circuit TV.



BECOMING A PART OF THE “CENTER” FAMILY

Once the decision to enroll in the Center has been made, you will meet with the Director to review specific policies and procedures and to submit all pertinent forms and fees. Our staff is experienced in helping you and your child to make a smooth transition from home or another day care provider. We want to ensure that both you and your child are comfortable with the Center and that your child enjoys the Center experience. All enrollment forms, tuition deposits and first week's tuition are due before your child's first day in the program. Our staff will keep you informed of your child's successful transition into our program or any adjustment difficulties as they may occur.



YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY

Each child is unique and will react differently as they transition into our program. We want this to be a positive experience, therefore, we ask that parents present the first day as an exciting adventure, thus offering positive reinforcement on a day when your child may be apprehensive. Be prepared for a little resistance from your child and perhaps some tears, but be assured that our staff will comfort them when you leave. Relax and leave the Center with a reassuring smile. Have confidence that you have made an informed decision about childcare and trust our staff to take care of your child. We understand that you are concerned about your child's adjustment; however, lingering in the Center and extended goodbyes only make it more difficult for your child to adjust. If you would like to know your child's progress during the day, please contact the Center but, do not return until the end of the scheduled day. Your child will begin to learn the routine and will adjust more quickly and smoothly. If your child's teacher believes that he/she needs more time to adjust to the new environment, they will notify you and together, we can develop an alternate approach to transition your child into the Center program.

OUR DAILY ROUTINE

Our daily routine is designed to teach children while giving them a sense of security. In early education, structure is used to establish a pattern that children can follow and thus relate to a learning or behavioral process. When children know what to expect each day, they become more comfortable with their surroundings. We begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance and the school song. This is a way to teach children a sense of patriotism, while offering an activity to help the children to set-



tle down and prepare for the daily learning program. We ask that parents adhere to the following policies in order to establish a consistent routine that will promote cohesion between the Center staff and parents. Children need to see that we work with our parents to provide the best possible environment for them to grow and thrive.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents must accompany children directly into the Center and make certain that the child has been properly received by a teacher. Maintaining accurate daily attendance records, including specific drop-off and pick-up times is imperative. We must insist on conscientious parental compliance with this requirement. Under no circumstances may a parent leave a child at the center: (1) prior to opening, (2) prior to the child's scheduled arrival time, without the Center approval, or (3) without making certain that the child has been properly received by a teacher.

When picking your child up from the Center, please come early enough to allow sufficient time for visiting before the Center's closing time or before your child's scheduled departure. Remember that teachers also have families, personal lives, and scheduled appointments. Please keep in mind that your child's teacher must continue to monitor the remainder of the class when you arrive and will not be able to have an in-depth discussion at that time. For extended discussions, an appointment with your child's teacher or Director at a mutually convenient time must be requested. If you are going to be late and cannot make proper arrangements with the Center for a late pick-up, it is your responsibility to contact your emergency pick-up person to make arrangements for timely pick-up for your child.

Other than parents, only persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to pick up a child from the Center. Anyone who is unfamiliar to staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present identification before a child is released to them. Children are allowed to leave the facility only when accompanied by an authorized adult. Such authorization must be renewed at least every 12 months with the Center and must be submitted in writing.

To ensure the security of the children, the Center staff will adhere to the following procedures:

- ◇ Check pick-up authorization form in child's file. A child may be released to a person who is not on the authorized list only if the parent has provided a verifiably, dated and signed note, authorizing a specified person to pick-up the child at a specified time. The note must include the driver's license number of the authorized person or another verifiable means of identification.
- ◇ Before releasing a child to someone other than a parent, staff will check the driver's license or other identification to make sure it matches the authorization form or special authorizing

note.

- ◇ Parents may not give oral authorization for pick of children via the telephone or fax.
- ◇ Under no circumstances will a child be released to a person who is not on the list or for whom the parent has not written an authorization note, even if the child and a staff member are familiar with the person. This includes parents of other children enrolled in the Center.
- ◇ On duty staff members may not take a child home. All other rules for pick-up and drop-off of children apply to staff members who are specifically authorized to pick-up or drop-off a child enrolled in the Center
- ◇ No Center employee will force a child to leave the Center with someone unfamiliar to the child.
- ◇ Occasionally, childcare centers are put in a difficult position by parents who are involved in a custody dispute. In the absence of a court order, a childcare center cannot deny a parent access to his or her child. Even with a court order, our ability to deny access is limited to prompt notification of the custodial parent and the proper police authority, should unsanc-



tioned contact be attempted or occur at the Center. Difficulties of this nature must be dis-

- ◇ cussed with the Director so that we may clarify our procedures and limitations. Staff members will be instructed not to place themselves in jeopardy to mediate a family dispute or to attempt to enforce a court order.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

We provide a variety of age-appropriate fun activities for indoor play. Toys may be rotated or placed temporarily out of use so that the children do not become bored. Younger children have less-developed organizational skills and can get easily frustrated or upset when there are too many toys to choose from. It is also more difficult for them to help with clean up when there are toys everywhere, because it is so overwhelming to them. For this reason, during free play times, each child may select one or two things at a time to play with. They will be shown how to put those things away before selecting something else.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Children enjoy outdoor activities every day, weather-permitting. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed (see Clothing/Attire section) for outdoor play at all times. Our activities will include walks, playground, water play (sprinkler in summer), and others. We do not go outside when the temperature is below 20 degrees (including wind chill), or above 90 degrees (including heat index). We are mandated by State law to take the children outside. Parents who feel that their child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities must keep them out of daycare until they are able to participate in all activities.



NUTRITION POLICY

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner And Snacks

The Center receives funding from the Maryland Department of Education. There are guidelines that must be followed. You will receive a package that includes information that you should know upon enrollment of your child. If you have any questions, please contact the Front Office.

Little Flowers values the importance of healthy eating. We believe that good nutrition, along with regular exercise, reduces childhood obesity and major health risks. In addition, it promotes positive growth and development in our children.

Little Flowers provides Breakfast, Lunch, Snack and Dinner and evening snack for extended hours children. All parents are required to complete a Meal Benefit form to determine eligibility for free, reduced or paid meals. Little Flowers, however, serves all children regardless of eligibility. If your child requires a special diet, please notify your child's teacher or Director at intake. Little Flowers posts a log in the kitchen and in the child's classroom with all children's special dietary concerns.

Our menus are posted in the kitchen and on the parent information board. Recipes are available upon request. Menus will reflect cultural and ethnic preferences of the children in the community. We review our menus to ensure we are doing everything possible to promote good health and nutrition in them. We serve and encourage the children to drink water at any time during the day. Although we provide meals on site, you are welcome to supply your child's food. However, children are not allowed to share food, and/or bring in sodas, candy or foods with high sugar counts.



MEAL TIMES		
Breakfast		
School - Age	7:00am-7:30am	
Day Program	8:00am-8:45am	*Including Pre-K
Lunch		
6 weeks to 2	11:30am-12:00pm	*Infants eat on demand
3 and 4 y/o	12:00pm-12:30pm	
Afternoon Snack	3:15pm	
Dinner	6:30-7:30pm	
Evening Snack	8:00pm	

****Appropriate beverages are included. A menu is available for your review.***

If your child has food allergies or is on a special diet, arrangements for meals served can be made with the Director. However, we must have a doctor's written explanation in your child's file.

We are happy to make arrangements for nursing mothers to visit their infants any time of the day.

REST PERIOD

A rest period is required for all children participating in a full day of care. This generally occurs during the first part of the afternoon, following lunch. Rest period will be adjusted to the individual needs of the child. No child will be forced to sleep or be expected to rest for inappropriate amount of time. After a reasonable amount of time, alternative quiet activities will be available for children who have finished resting.

Each parent is expected to provide a crib-sized or cot-sized blanket, labeled with your child's name, to be used for rest periods. These items are to be laundered at home weekly, or more often as needed. Parents or infants should bring a clean crib sheet each day. Mattresses and cots are cleaned daily or after each use.

CLOTHING AND DIAPERS

At least one change of clothes, including underwear and socks, should be kept at the Center at all times. (Infants and Toddlers may need two complete sets). All clothes sent or worn to the Center must be labeled with the child's full name. Each child will have a specially designated space to hold personal belongings. The children are expected to wear shoes at all times. When a child wears foul-weather boots to school in place of shoes, other shoes or hard-soled slippers must be sent for use indoors.

Parents are responsible for providing diapers, diaper wipes, and bibs for their children. Please check with the infant/toddler staff regularly about your child's supplies. Parents who provide cloth diapers are responsible for cloth diaper clean up and laundering at home. The center will bag soiled diapers for daily removal. Parents must provide a tightly covered container for storage of soiled cloth diapers. This container must be removed from the center daily and be emptied and sanitized at home before returning it to the Center.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is done in accordance with the requests of the child's parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. Toilet training will never be coerced. All children will be allowed to use the bathroom when needed. Children will be supervised during toileting, but allowed as much privacy as is appropriate. No child will be punished for soiling or wetting clothing. Children who are learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves. Parents of children who are toilet training will receive communication daily regarding their child's toileting progress.

TOYS

Although a small "snuggly" for naptime is welcome, we ask that children not bring other toys from home. Please keep in mind that children's personal storage space is limited. Teachers may help children to be careful with their belongings, but they cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items.

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS

Holiday themes will emphasize multi-cultural traditions. The children in our care represent many different religious and ethnic groups. The folklore and practices of each are an important part of our collective culture and are presented as such. The spirit of joy and happiness is the theme common to all.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Little Flowers will not be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry, cellular phones, electronic games, etc. Children are not allowed to bring such items to the Center. Little Flowers is also not responsible for replacing children's clothes, which includes gloves, hats and scarves, or shoes. All clothing should be properly labeled, and children should avoid wearing expensive clothes and shoes to the Center.

SPECIAL TIMES

Field Trips

We plan field trips in order to provide a variety of new experiences for the children and to give them an opportunity to see for themselves some of the things they are learning about in the classroom. Field trips also give the children the opportunity to acquire or reinforce concepts or to correct misconceptions they may have.



We will let you know in advance about our field trips. You will need to sign a permission form for each field trip. The form you receive will tell you where we are going, the mode of transportation, the cost, what time your child needs to be at the Center, what time we plan to be back at the Center and any additional information that needs to be communicated to you.

Strollers and walkers are not allowed in many of the public entertainment areas.

Therefore, adults must accompany children under the age of two (2) on all field trips.

Birthdays

Birthdays are the child's unique celebration of self. If you would like to celebrate at the Center, you are encouraged to bring in (STORE BROUGHT ONLY) simple treats and to bring in sufficient amounts to feed all the children in your child's program. Please see the Director to make arrangements before the special day.

Celebrations

Holiday times offer children opportunities to share our joy through celebrating with creative experiences that are appropriate to their age and developmental level. Celebrations in the Center are multicultural and planned to provide experiences within the children's level of understanding. Parents are welcome to contribute to celebrations by bringing special items from home and/or participating in group activities, such as cooking, singing, etc. Please talk over your special holiday idea with the Director.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Required Forms

The Child Care Licensing regulations of the State of Maryland require that before your child can start the Center must have a completed Emergency Card, a copy of your child's immunization card, a Health Inventory and Health Inventory Addendum signed by your child's health care practitioner. The required forms are part of the registration package.

Good Health

Only children who are in good health may be brought to the Center. When a child develops signs of illness during the day, parents will be called and will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. In the meantime, the child will be made comfortable in a quiet, supervised location away from other children.

Children in all programs will play outdoors daily, weather-permitting. Parents are responsible for sending children adequate clothing and footwear to maintain good health during outdoor play in all suitable weather conditions, including normal winter temperatures. Please do not ask us to keep a child inside because of a cold or other illness, except for recuperation from bronchitis or pneumonia, as ordered by a physician. A child who is too sick to go outside is usually too sick to be in a social situation with other children.

EMERGENCY CARDS

The Emergency Card is one of our most important tools. It must have the most up-to-date information on how we can reach you. We keep this card on file so that we can contact you in case of an emergency. It is your responsibility to inform the Center of any changes in phone numbers, addresses, persons authorized to pick up your child, or other pertinent information.

The State of Maryland requires that you examine your card, date it, and initial it once a year.

The Center will not be responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false, incorrect, or out-of-date information on your child's Emergency Card.

ILLNESS

Parents must understand that any new social setting offers exposure to illnesses and germs. Although teachers take precautions to prevent the spread of illness, children entering a new child care setting may be more susceptible to illness while their immune systems adjust to the new environment. Please be prepared to stay home with your child or make arrangements for someone who can if they are ill.

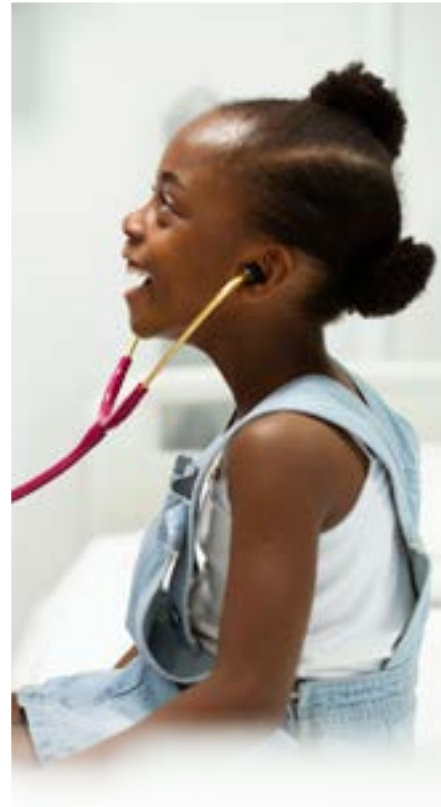
In general, children are lethargic and unable to participate actively in the full, regular program will not be allowed to remain in the Center. Whenever your child has experienced any of the following symptoms within the previous 24-hour period, you will be expected to make other child care arrangements for the comfort of your child and the health of the other families who use the Center:

- ◇ Fever of 101° - Children sent home with a fever in the middle of the day may not return to the center until they have been fever-free for a full 24-hour period.
- ◇ Diarrhea – 2 or more instances close together may be assumed to be contagious unless determined by a doctor not to be so.
- ◇ Vomiting
- ◇ Pronounced or persistent coughing
- ◇ A contagious condition of any kind, including but not limited to strep, flu, respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, infectious rash, hepatitis, chicken pox, measles, mumps, scabies, lice, etc., unless accompanied by a physician's note indicating that the child is able to return to a group setting.

When sick children are kept at home all of the children and their families benefit from better health. Please remember that all symptoms must have disappeared at least 24 hours before returning to the Center. In some instances, a physician's certificate of good health may be required before a child will be allowed to return.

MEDICATION POLICY

The Center encourages parents and physicians to schedule the dispensing of medication outside of the school hours whenever possible. But to meet the needs of our families for those circumstances in which it is necessary to administer medication during school hours, the Center strictly adheres to the following Medication Policy. Medication will be stored, handled and administered only according to this policy. The necessary authorization form for handling medications at the



Center is available from the Director.

- ◇ Prescription medications will only be administered when delivered to the Director in the current prescription container, labeled by the pharmacist with the child's name, physician's name, name of the medication and dosage instructions.
- ◇ The Center must also receive a Medication Permission form with specific instructions for administration, including length of course, any allergies and possible side effects. The physician's name and telephone number must be provided.
- ◇ Parents should always request prescription medication that is BID (twice/day) to preclude distribution at the Center whenever possible. Some TID (thrice/day) medication can also be scheduled completely outside of the school day.



- ◇ The initial dose of medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, must be given at home or by the doctor in order to evaluate effectiveness and observe possible side effects before any Center staff can administer medication.
- ◇ We recommend that children not return to the Center until they have completed two doses of the prescribed medication.
- ◇ Non-prescription medication must be unopened and in original package. If us-

age requires you to "consult physician" regarding dosage for a child your child's age, you must have a doctor's current authorization attached to this form. It must include child's name, dosage, time frame and name of medication.

- ◇ Over-the-counter medications (e.g. Tylenol, Dimetapp, etc.) will only be administered or stored by the Center with a written physician's order. This order, called a Medication Permission Form, must accompany each medication given. If an over-the-counter medication is ordered, we require specific instructions as to dosage, schedule and term. We cannot dispense over-the-counter medication on an "as needed" basis.
- ◇ Topical non-prescription medications may be administered to a child only with the written permission of a parent. Such permission shall be valid for no more than one year from the signature date. If the Center notices an adverse reaction to such a medication, the center reserves the right to require a physician's written order to continue use of the medication at the center.
- ◇ The center will not administer such medication contrary to the written directions on its original container unless directed to do so by a physician's order.
- ◇ Sunscreen – Parents who want their child to wear sunscreen are asked to apply the first application before coming in each day. Teachers will reapply sunscreen once before going out-

doors in the afternoon. Parents must supply their own bottle clearly marked with their child's name and instructions for application. Some states may require the written permission of a parent.

- ◇ Children with special needs or chronic conditions will be assessed individually in consultation with parent and physician. Such special needs would include, but not limited to, the use of inhalers, insulin, Phenobarbital or Dilantin.
- ◇ All medications must be handed to a teacher or Director. No medication will be accepted when left in a diaper bag, lunch box, cubby, etc. No medication should be mixed in a child's bottle or into other food, unless specified by the physician and labeled as the proper form of administration. In that case, the medication must be mixed at the Center. The Center is not responsible for replacement of spilled medication or for those left beyond the expiration date. Unused medication will be returned to the parent.
- ◇ All medication should be clearly labeled with the child's name and/or current prescription label. All prescription and non-prescription medication will be stored in a specific location in a locked box or cabinet. Refrigerated medication must be in a locked box in the refrigerator. Labeled topical medication may be stored in the classroom changing area in a locked cabinet or drawer that is inaccessible to children. Appropriate authorization forms must be stored with all medication and updated as medication administered.
- ◇ The person administering the medication must know the child.
- ◇ The individual administering the prescribed medication must always be precise when measuring or distributing each dose. If there is any doubt about the accuracy of the indicated dose, it is imperative to confirm dosages with the physician. The parent must supply any special device such as a dropper or a calibrated cup for the proper administration. Most pharmacists and physicians provide devices for giving medication to children. Tablets are not available in pediatric preparations may need to be crushed. This must be a specified requirement for measuring or administering the medication.
- ◇ The staff member who administers each medication will record each dosage administered on a medication form. The record will indicate the name of the child, medication name, dosage, time and the name of the person administered the medication.
- ◇ When administering medication, no attempt will be made to restrain a child or to use unusual force if the child is upset or uncooperative. A parent will be called immediately if such a problem occurs.

The Center recommends that parents keep several Medication Permission Forms at home to have handy for trips to the doctor. Additional forms are available from the Director, and they are suitable for use by the doctor as a physician's order to the center.

INTOXICATION POLICY

If a parent/guardian or emergency contact who appears to be intoxicated arrives at the center to pick up a child; the daycare staff will not release the child.

Daycare staff will:

- ◇ Offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the parent and child.
- ◇ Offer to call a cab.
- ◇ Inform the parent that if he/she chooses to drive with or without the child, the educator will inform the police immediately.
- ◇ Call Child Protective Services if they believe the child is in need of protection.

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

All staff receives first aid training, and designated staff members are trained in CPR for infants and children. All incidents and injuries will be reported to parents on an Incident/Accident Report Form, within 24 hours of any such occurrence. Minor accidents, such as cuts and scrapes, will be treated with soap and water; bruises and bumps are treated with ice.

In the case of a more serious accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach a parent or the designated emergency contact, we will call an ambulance and your child's physician. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital, in an ambulance, and remain with your child until you arrive. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any expenses incurred in the process.

BITING

Biting is an unfortunate but natural stage in the development of most young children. Although parents may not observe this behavior at home, most children who participate in a social environment may bite another child or be bitten by another child. While this is unpleasant for everyone involved, biting does not, under normal circumstances, represent a health threat.

The Center's policy on biting is to help children outgrow this undesirable behavior by learning more acceptable forms of social interaction. Our approach to managing biting is consistent with our policy for managing general behavior problems. We examine the environment and the activity schedule to see how they may be contributing to the behavior. We then make any adjustments that we feel may help the child modify their behavior. We also help parents to understand the behavior, so they can be prepared to respond in a constructive manner.

Unless biting by a child is unusually chronic and acute, the Center will not suggest that a child receive additional intervention outside of the Center or alternative childcare services. We may, on rare occasions, decide to assign children to different groups as a remedial strategy. Under no cir-

cumstances, outside of a court order, do we have the right to discuss one child's biting with another child's parents or to acknowledge the identity of a biter.

FIRE SAFETY

In accordance with State fire laws, we conduct a monthly fire drill, in which all children and staff participate. We are required to conduct these drills at different times of day, to include the use of signs to block exits. Once a year we have a drill during naptime.

Also in accordance with State fire laws, there are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in strategic locations throughout the building.

Emergency lights are connected to the building's wiring so that, in the event of an electrical outage, we will still be able to move about safely.

SECURITY CAMERAS

There are security cameras installed at the facility. Security cameras give parents confidence that their children will receive the best possible care. This also brings peace of mind to the Founder/Director and staff, since having the recorded video will help us refute any accusations that might be brought against us.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Even after the preceding referral procedure has been followed, there may be circumstances, which warrant termination of a child's enrollment at the Center. Although every effort will be made to avoid taking this step, the following situations may necessitate discontinued enrollment:

- ◇ Excessive biting.
- ◇ Parent's refusal to seek professional help for the child.
- ◇ Physical or emotional problems that require constant one-on-one attention.
- ◇ Severe behavioral problems, which cannot be controlled and may endanger the child or other children.
- ◇ Physical or emotional impairment, which the Center cannot reasonably accommodate.
- ◇ Failure to pay tuition for two consecutive weeks.
- ◇ Failure to provide health forms and other paperwork required for enrollment.
- ◇ Failure to cooperate with the Center's policies.
- ◇ Parent's disrespectful behavior toward other parents, children, teachers, or any Center employee.

- ◇ Discriminatory, humiliating, intimidating, or harassing behavior of any kind, which contributes to the creation of a hostile environment.
- ◇ Per the enrollment agreement, the Center reserves the right to deny, cancel service or suspend a child's enrollment at any time the Center, in its sole discretion, if it deems such action to be in the best interest of the child or the Center. In such an event, unused tuition will be refunded.

THE DECISION TO TERMINATE

Before a decision to terminate enrollment is made, the following steps will be taken:

- ◇ Documentation will be prepared by the Director to be shared with parents.
- ◇ If the child's behavior has not improved after the parents have sought outside help and the Center cannot provide an appropriate environment, the parents will be given a list of alternate centers or programs in the area. The parent will be allotted two weeks to find alternative care, whenever appropriate. The child will be told approximately one week before termination, in a manner consistent with his or her ability to understand. The child's separation from the center will be treated in the same manner as a child who is moving; i.e. a party, good-bye card, etc.
- ◇ Under no circumstances will the child's termination be treated any differently than a routine departure from the Center.
- ◇ If a child's departure from the Center must be sudden; and, the child and the Center are not given the opportunity to say good-bye, the teacher will write a simple note addressed to the child in an effort to give the child closure. Photos, drawings, and other mementos may be included.

ATTENDANCE

Absence

When your child is going to be absent, please call the Center as early as possible. If your child has a contagious illness, please notify the Center immediately so that we can alert other parents to look for symptoms in their children.

Schedule Changes

All children must have a regular schedule on file with the Center. The Center requires two weeks' written notice in advance of a schedule change. Extra hours are usually available as, needed; but, must be approved by the Director. Schedule changes will not be accepted for legal holidays for which the Center is closed.



Vacation/Leave Of Absence Due To Illness

The Center does allow a vacation or a leave of absence from the Center, free of tuition obligation for one week. A week is considered Monday-Friday during the enrollment year September 1st through August 31st. However, a written notice is required, two weeks in advance, to obtain vacation week

credits. If the Center does not receive this written notice within the required timeframe, you are responsible for payment of weekly tuition to maintain your child's space in the Center, even when you choose not to use the Center for care. Tuition is not refundable or credited for days missed due to illness.

Note: One-week free tuition does not apply to any child receiving tuition assistance, sliding fees, discounts or behind with payment.

CENTER CALENDAR

Holidays and Scheduled Closings

The Center exists to support your family as you participate in work and/or training programs. We take very few holidays, and only two weeks vacation during the year. We encourage you to use these days as special, together-time for your family. If you cannot take these days off, be sure to make other arrangements well in advance:

- ◇ Labor Day
- ◇ Thanksgiving and the Day After Thanksgiving
- ◇ Winter Break (End of December)
- ◇ Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- ◇ Good Friday
- ◇ Memorial's Day
- ◇ Independence Day
- ◇ Summer Break (End of August)
- ◇ Presidential Election

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Center staff makes every effort to be here for you on the scheduled days. In case of severe weather that makes traveling dangerous or the streets impassable for our families and/or the staff, or in the event of a national emergency, please call the Center at (410) 728-2222 for a recorded announcement or watch your local news station for closings.

TUITION

Payment

Tuition payments are due according to the schedule specified in your payment contract. Tuition is always due by close of business on Friday. Tuition is paid one week in advance for childcare services. A cumulative service charge of \$5.00 per day will be added to the weekly tuition for all payments received after the scheduled due date for all outstanding balances. Refunds are not given for care, which has been scheduled, but is not utilized. A deposit of one week of tuition must accompany all enrollments. It will be applied to the last week of attendance, provided that a two-week written notice of withdrawal has been received. A non-refundable annual registration fee, specified on the Policy and Tuition sheet for the center, is required at registration and for each subsequent school year enrolled. Tuition may be paid in the form of check, money order or cash.



Children removed from the active roster for non-payment of tuition will lose a guaranteed space, and a new registration fee will be required to re-enroll, when space is available.

Late Pick-Up

The staff enjoys working with your child daily; however, they also appreciate being able to leave the Center at the end of their scheduled time. Therefore, it is important that children be picked up on time. We understand that emergencies may arise and in such a case, courtesy calls are required prior to the scheduled closing at the Center. Even in such instances, however, this does not eliminate the assessment of a late pick-up fee.

A fee will be charged for any child not picked up before the Center's regular closing time. This charge shall be \$1.00 per minute/child and an additional \$5.00 per child per 30-minute period thereafter. Fees for late pick up are payable immediately; if not paid, the child will not be readmitted to the program. Consistent lateness will be cause for the child's dismissal from the Center. Persons with vouchers must adhere to the time allotted on the voucher.

Protective services may be notified when children are left beyond 30 minutes and parents have not called.

Returned Checks

If a check is returned due to insufficient funds, the check must be replaced in addition to a penalty charge. A fee of \$35.00 will be charged for returned checks. Upon notification of a returned check, the parent will have 24 hours to replace the payment. If this amount is not paid within 24 hours, a cumulative late payment fee of \$5.00 per day will be added as stated in the payment section above. Two returned checks will be cause for accepting future payments by money order only.

Termination For Non-Payment

Non-payment or late payment of fees for two consecutive weeks can be sufficient cause for termination of service. If service is terminated by the Center for non-payment, the Center will pursue collection of the full amount due.

Withdrawal

A two-week written notice is required for withdrawal. Following such notification, tuition will be charged for two weeks or until the date specified, if beyond two weeks. Any deposits being retained by the Center will be applied to the final bill, according to your instructions, provided that proper notification has been submitted.

Tuition Assistance

Many families who are in training programs or are returning to work are eligible for child care vouchers through the Purchase Care Program of the Maryland State Department of Human Resources. Please talk with the Assistant Director who can give you information and help you apply for this program.

Unfortunately, the Department of Social Services (DSS) can take up to a few months before issuing a voucher. Parents awaiting vouchers but who do not have Letters of Guarantee, may have their child start the Child Care program by paying the tuition in full until their vouchers are approved. Parents will be issued a refund immediately once their vouchers are approved. If a voucher is not issued within expiration of the Letter of Guarantee, parents will be responsible to pay full tuition until the vouchers are received. Parents will be issued refunds for over-payments immediately once their vouchers are approved. Once a voucher is received, parents will be responsible for any balance not covered by the voucher.

Please see the following chart on the next pages for an explanation of fees.

TUITION FEES

Infant/ Toddler Program	Weekly Tuition	Program Hours	Program Days
Infants (6 weeks to 2 yrs.)	\$215.00	6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
Toddlers (2 to 3 yrs.)	\$151.00	6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
Preschool Program	Weekly Tuition	Program Hours	Program Days
Full Day (3-5 yrs.)	\$131.00	6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
Full Day (3-5 yrs.)	\$106.00	6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
School-age Program			
Before School (only)	\$45.00	6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Monday thru Friday
After School (only)	\$75.00	2:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
After School (package) (includes before care, half days an holidays)	\$106.00	2:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
School-age Summer Program			
Summer Camp (includes before and after camp)	\$125.00	6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
Summer Camp	\$90.00	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Monday thru Friday
Late Fees (per child)	Daily Fee		
	\$10.00	First 15 minutes	Monday thru Sunday
	\$1.00	Every minute thereafter	
Transportation	Daily Rate	Weekly Rate	Weekly Roundtrip Rate
With Enrollment (p/hh) Up to two children going to the same location, each Add'l child is half price.	\$11.00/\$17.00	\$45.00	\$75.00

W/O Enrollment (p/ch)	\$15.00/\$23.00	\$65.00	\$105.00
Weekend Services	Daily Weekend Tuition	Program Hours	Program Days
	\$60.00 (per/weekend day)	6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Saturday or Sunday
Evening Hours	Daily Fee	Weekly Fee	
Services after 6 p.m.	\$25.00 (per/day)	\$65.00	

- ◇ Full day rates apply to all infants and toddlers. A two-year old rate does not apply until the student is placed in a two-year classroom.
- ◇ Transportation, Weekend and Evening fees are in addition to fees for other services.
- ◇ Sibling discounts, sliding fees and tuition assistance available.

TRANSPORTATION

As a convenience for our parents, Little Flowers offers transportation services at a nominal fee. Vouchers are not an acceptable form of payment for transportation.

In order to provide our parents with optimal service and ensure your child's safety, the following transportation rules must be adhered to by you and your child(ren):

- ◇ Transportation hours: 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, and 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekends (hours and days are subject to change).
- ◇ Transportation services may not be available in inclement or hazardous weather (Parents will be notified at least 2 hours prior to any changes or immediately upon learning of weather concerns).
- ◇ Transportation services are for children ages 2 to 12; children under 2 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- ◇ Initial payment is due one week in advance, and weekly thereafter.
- ◇ Children must be ready at their designated pick-up times (the driver will only wait 2 minutes).
- ◇ The child's parent or guardian must be present at the time of drop off. The driver will only wait 2 minutes and then return the child(ren) to the Center. The parent or guardian will be

responsible for picking the child(ren) up from the Center and paying any late fees.

- ◇ The pick-up and drop-off address must be the same as child's permanent address in the Center enrollment package.
- ◇ Parents must provide the Center with the child's correct address, an operable telephone number and emergency contact information.
- ◇ The driver will not handle any child other than in emergent situations.
- ◇ Parents must accompany their child to the vehicle and buckle his/her child into the seat.
- ◇ Parents must provide a booster and/or car seat if needed.
- ◇ No eating or drinking in the vehicle.
- ◇ Children must remain buckled in their seats throughout the ride.
- ◇ Children must be able to follow directions and instructions while in the vehicle.
- ◇ No fighting, profanity, or unruliness while in the vehicle.

Failure to comply with any of the aforementioned rules will result in termination from transportation services.

Transportation, Weekend and Evening fees are in addition to fees for other services.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Center believes in protecting the confidentiality of all families who choose to use our services. We will not discuss the affairs of one family with another family without prior mutual consent, nor will we release family information to parties outside the Center or to the general public without written consent. We will also ask for written consent when requesting outside records from other agencies or families. It is also against Center policy for staff members to discuss the affairs of families in casual conversation within the Center or in any inappropriate way at any time. We expect all families to follow the same principles of confidentiality with respect to all other families and staff members.



Photographs of children or samples of children's work will not be displayed outside the Center, nor will copies be used for promotional or training purposes without the prior approval of the parents.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The Center does not release the information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the child's program plan, without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian. The Center will notify a parent should his or her child's record be subpoenaed. Parents shall have access to their child's record at reasonable times with no delay of greater than two business days, following such a request. If the parents request a copy of any records, the Center will provide the requested copies at a fee no greater than the Center's cost of making or obtaining the copies. Occasionally, a duly authorized licenser will review children's files to substantiate proper record keeping by the Center. However, no material is removed, and confidentiality is always maintained.

A child's parents may add information to the child's record at any time. The parents may request to have information in the record deleted or amended. If the Director feels that the information needs to remain in the record, the Director will meet with the parents to discuss the issue. If, after the conference, the Director still chooses to deny the request, the Director will provide the parents with a written explanation for the denial and provide information on how to file an appeal with the child care licensing agency.

Upon written request of the parents and at the parent's expense, the Center will send a copy of the child's record to any other person or agency so designated.

REFERRAL PROCEDURE

The Director and teacher evaluate and monitor children's behavior and progress through weekly team meetings, evaluations, and progress reports. Records are confidential and access to them is limited. Parents have a right to review their child's file at any time.

If a behavioral incident occurs, or there is a reason to be concerned about a specific development issue, our procedures for observing, evaluating and referring the child or family to an appropriate agency or professional resources are as follows:

Teachers are responsible for recording information about a child's behavior and development in an accurate and factual manner, which states specific behaviors and the date, time and duration of all observations

- ◇ The Director will review and sign all documentation regarding such behaviors.
- ◇ The designated lead teacher, the Center's Director or the qualified Center professional may be asked to observe the child in the classroom for three half-hour periods, unless the situa-

tion required the Director to act immediately.

- ◇ Parents will be asked to review documentation and concerns about their child's behavior or development and sign a statement acknowledging the Center's concerns.
- ◇ The Director and parents then develop a plan to help identify both the child's needs and resources available to address those needs. This may include any State regulatory agency, the child's pediatrician, the Early Intervention team, or the local public school system, if the child is over three years of age.

CHILD PROTECTION MANDATE

In order to grow and learn, children's basic needs for proper nutrition, shelter, medical care, bathing, clean clothes, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love and a feeling of importance must be met. Children need a safe, nurturing environment that makes them feel secure and loved. Our commitment is to provide the best possible environment to support children's self-esteem and healthy development. To help our staff understand your child's needs, we ask that you keep us informed about our child's health, well-being, injuries or situations outside the Center, which may adversely affect your child. If, for any reason, you feel that our staff is not meeting your child's needs, we encourage you to speak with the Director.

BASIC NEEDS

Should you have any difficulty in providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, you are encouraged to ask for help. The Director can provide a referral to a community resource when you are experiencing a need for additional support.

If we recognize that your child's basic needs are being consistently neglected, the Director will inform you and will assist you in finding ways to meet those needs. If you are temporarily unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs as described above, our staff is mandated by State law to file a report with the regulatory State agency. It then becomes the responsibility of the agency to work with you and your family to resolve the issues.



SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

In all cases of suspected child abuse, the Center personnel are mandated reporters under State law. Our procedure is for staff to report their concerns to the Director, who will assess the facts, and assist the staff member in making a decision to file a report. A decision is also made about whether to notify the parents or guardian. In making this decision, risk to the children involved will be of the utmost concern.

The Center shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect. A copy of the Center's complete child abuse and neglect policy is available to parents upon request. These procedures include, but are not limited to, insuring that an allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member does not work directly with children until an investigation has been completed by the Center and the regulatory state agency.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Little Flowers utilizes resources in the community to help meet the individual and special needs of our children and families and program goals, as well as to incorporate services not provided by Little Flowers. All efforts are made to provide outside services on-site to help with continuity of care and to reduce stress to the child and family.

Prior to using any community program, we gather pertinent information about the program's mission, history, community involvement, and services. Information may come from websites, brochures, flyers, on-site visits and/or if available, client surveys.

To ensure the quality of our community partnerships, on-going assessments, site-visits and partner surveys are conducted in order to keep information accurate and current. To keep parents up-to-date with resources, Little Flowers maintains a community resource book (in English and Spanish) for parents. Resources are also posted on the Center's parent board, in weekly newsletters, and on the Center's social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, website).

COMMUNITY AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Center will not permit research, experimentation, or promotions using children without first obtaining written permission from the parents of the children involved. This includes photography, academic research, vision and hearing screening or any other activities, such as fund raising or publicity, which are unrelated to the direct care of the children.



RESOLVING CONFLICT

The Center hopes that all questions of care will be decided based on the best developmental interest of the children. Occasionally, conflict will arise between parents and care providers. While either side can terminate the relationship, progressive steps toward prompt resolution are often effective. The following steps are designed to help with the resolution of problems or disputes:

When a situation requires a conference or a written reply, we ask that you initiate your request with the Director, rather than through an individual teacher. The Director will respond as soon as possible and always within one week of receiving your request. You may certainly request or suggest that the teacher be present during the conference, and the Director may do the same.

The Center believes that the above procedures should be taken first, notwithstanding any recourse available under State licensing regulation or developed in association with a sponsoring employer. Upon request, the Director will provide parents with the details of any other resolution rights or procedures that may apply.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Center is firmly committed to the concepts and practices of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. We administer our programs for children and our employment practices without regard to race, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, marital status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, veteran status, national origin, disability, or any other characteristic protected by Federal, State, or local law.

Supporting equal opportunity goes beyond our obligation to the law. We work toward the cooperation of everyone to provide a constructive learning and working environment for all. Discrimination or harassment in any form is not tolerated. We are responsible for upholding this policy, which, simply states, that we treat one another with respect at all times.

Footnotes:

Despite our extended hours, State law limits an individual child's attendance in child care to no more than 14 hours per day.

"Tuition Installments" may not reflect price changes, please see Front Office staff for updated copy.

By signing this page, I acknowledge receipt of the parent handbook. I also agree to read the handbook and to review the Center's rules with my child. I further agree to comply with all policies and regulations.

Questions and/or concerns should be forwarded in writing to the Director within one-week upon receipt of the handbook.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name and Signature:

(Printed Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Witness Printed Name and Signature:

(Printed Name)

(Signature)

(Date)





www.littleflowersecdc.org