

A CHILD'S PLACE

Preschool, Prekindergarten, Early Kindergarten, and Kindergarten

Early Childhood Education Lab School

PARENT HANDBOOK



NOTRE DAME
OF MARYLAND
UNIVERSITY

4701 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

achildsplace@ndm.edu

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Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Telephone: 410-532-5399

Cell: 410-236-0748, after 4:00 p.m.

A Child's Place

Policies Acknowledgement

Child's Name: _____

Please initial that you have read and understand the policies concerning the following:

- _____ Admission policies; age eligibility
- _____ Release of Information Waiver (as needed)
- _____ Nap time for all students (bedding, nap toys, etc.)
- _____ Toilet training policy (All children must be toilet-trained at an independent level.)
- _____ Required enrollment forms, including Health Inventory & Immunization Certificate
- _____ Hours of operation; parking; late pick-up penalties and fees
- _____ Holidays and other celebrations
- _____ Tuition payment and late payment fees; tuition receipts
- _____ Late pick up penalties and fees
- _____ Snow and emergency closings
- _____ Behavior, discipline, and bullying policies; withdrawal and termination
- _____ Health and safety policies; up-to-date notification of school RE: chronic health conditions, allergies, asthma, etc.; illness
- _____ Sign-in and sign-out books; required emergency form; individuals to pick up child; changes in custody
- _____ Terms of care, i.e., clothing, snacks, lunch
- _____ Parent conferences and visitations; progress reports
- _____ Suspected child abuse or neglect procedures
- _____ Changes to ACP policy and procedures

Your signature below signifies that you have read the parent handbook and that you understand the policies and procedures adopted by *A Child's Place* as indicated in the Parent Handbook and agree to comply with them. *A Child's Place* reserves the right to make updates and revisions, as necessary.

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF THE SCHOOL

A Child's Place provides a diverse and comprehensive program to fulfill the needs of young children in the community. The holistic curriculum provides each child with opportunities to experience, explore, and learn about the world around him/her. Each child is a unique person with an individual timetable for growth and development. This growth and development includes physical, cognitive, and social-emotional, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. ACP strives to teach the whole child. Both the curriculum and the staff's interaction should be responsive to the children's individual differences. The children are encouraged to accept one another and are led by example to respect different cultures and customs. Through teacher demonstration of compassion and caring, the children learn to be supportive of individuality.

Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. These experiences should match the child's abilities, interests, and understanding. This can best be accomplished through a holistic approach in a noncompetitive atmosphere built on a foundation of trust and support between teacher and child and among the children.

Following developmentally appropriate practices and using an interdisciplinary approach, learning is driven by exploration and guided by the integration of instruction following the Maryland Early Learning Standards in language and literacy, math, science, social studies, health, physical education, fine arts, and social foundations. Teachers use their knowledge of child development to design an appropriate learning environment for their students.

Play is important as an organizing framework for children to investigate and build knowledge. Opportunities for indoor and outdoor play are made available daily. There is a growing body of evidence supporting the many connections between cognitive competence and high-quality pretend play.

MISSION STATEMENT

Notre Dame of Maryland University educates women as leaders to transform the world. Embracing the vision of the founders, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the University promotes the advancement of women and provides a liberal arts education in the Catholic tradition. Notre Dame challenges women and men to strive for intellectual and professional excellence, to build inclusive communities, to engage in service to others, and to promote social responsibility.

The mission of *A Child's Place* is to provide a safe and caring educational environment for the early learner, from age two through kindergarten, by creating opportunities for growth in the life of the complete child: intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual. The environment at ACP supports the child's individual and unique development and establishes patterns that build a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Our mission is to help each child to meet their full potential so that they leave *A Child's Place* ready to learn and to meet with success in the next phase of their education.

At *A Child's Place*, our young students learn how important it is to care about and take care of each other as well as our world and all the creatures in it.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Notre Dame of Maryland University (“University” or “NDMU”) values safety, cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility, lifelong learning, equity, and civic engagement. Consistent with these principles, the University does not discriminate in offering equal access to its educational programs and activities or with respect to employment terms and conditions on the basis of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, gender, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran’s status in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations including but not limited to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as amended (Title IX), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended (Title VI), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended (Title VII), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended (ADA), and Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 as amended.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

Margaret McManus organized *A Child’s Place* in 1985. Mrs. McManus was a graduate of Notre Dame, and we are indebted to her for her generosity and dedication. In January 1994, *A Child’s Place* became a department within the College of Notre Dame, under the Office of Student Development. In the winter of 2017, *A Child’s Place* was identified as a Lab School associated with the School of Education in the Division of Academic Affairs.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of Child Care licenses *A Child’s Place*. The staff consists of a director, an assistant director, three to four lead teachers, and up to four instructional assistants. Every adult working in *A Child’s Place* must adhere to the COMAR regulations for fingerprinting and background checks necessary to work with children.

Each classroom has a lead teacher with an assistant teacher available based on enrollment.

Licensing details for teacher to child ratios are:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Room One: 3 & 4-year-olds | 1:10 (maximum 2:12) |
| Room Two: 2 & 3-year-olds | 1:6 (maximum 2:12) |
| Room Three: 3 & 4-year-olds | 1:10 (maximum 2:16) |
| Room Four: 5 & 6-year-olds | 1:10 (maximum 2:16) |

The preschool instructional day runs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Before and after care is provided at no extra cost to families from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

TEACHER CREDENTIALS

Teachers are employed by Notre Dame of Maryland University and must meet the standards set forth by the University’s Department of Human Resources and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE.) MSDE requires all lead teachers of an accredited program to have a Bachelor’s degree or an Associate’s degree with a minimum number of credits in early childcare or approved training in early care and education. The teaching staff at ACP meets or exceeds MSDE requirements. In addition, ACP staff continues to participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential Program which recognizes early care and education personnel who go beyond requirements of State licensing and registration regulations.

A Child’s Place staff members are trained in CPR, AED, and Basic First Aid, as well as Medication Administration, Basic Health and Safety Training, Emergency Preparedness., and Active Shooter Training for Child Care Providers.

Current Staff:

- **Carnesha Banks – Director**

I am a native Marylander and I have lived all over the state. I grew up on the Eastern Shore, where I first found my interest in preschool education. I was an toddler teacher for a small child care center while attending Chesapeake college and obtained my associates degree in Early Childhood Development. Then I moved to College Park to attend University of Maryland where I worked as an infant teacher; while obtaining my bachelors in Psychology. Then moved to Howard County while attending Champlain College and Masters in Early Childhood Education. During that time I was an education coordinator, assistant director, preschool teacher for Head Start and later a preschool director. Now I am here at Notre Dame. I am married with one daughter. I currently live in Carroll County.

- **Arele Gibson-Lead Teacher,**

I am from Baltimore, MD. I am a graduate of Notre Dame of Maryland University, and I joined A Child's Place team in 2022. My certifications include the 45 hours for infants and toddlers. I have my CPR/ First Aid / AED, Medication Administration, ADA, 99 hours for preschool teaching certification, and SIDS certification. My dream is to become a maternal fetal medicine OB/GYN surgeon. I would love to live in Hawaii or New York City in the future. I am creative, focused, very determined, and have a lot of perseverance.

- **Robin Lopez- Lead Teacher**

I graduated from Towson University with a degree in education and the Institute of Children's Literature with a focus in Special Education. I also earned a Music Education degree from Essex Community College. I have been teaching for over 30 years. I am also a graduate from the Ringling Brothers College. I am passionate about sharing with others. I use my skills in drama, music, and sign language when working with young children. I believe "teamwork makes the dreamwork" and "keep reaching for the stars, for only as high can I reach will I grow!"

- **Cecelia Crowell – Lead Teacher**

I was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. I have an Associate Degree in Business. I worked for the Baltimore County Public Schools for twelve years as an Instructional Assistant. Six of those years were spent working in special education programs. For the last fifteen years, I have worked in the three-year-old preschool program at A Child's Place. I am a member of the Maryland State Department of Education Credentialing Program, and I hold a Level 4 Certificate. I believe that all of the useful knowledge that I have gained has come from the children that I have had the pleasure of working with and learning from. As a teacher, I find working with three-year-olds to be rewarding, challenging, inspirational, and educational on a daily basis.

- **Anita Ford – Assistant Director and Lead Teacher**

I am a native of Baltimore City. I graduated from the University of Virginia at Wise with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. August 2021 marks my 20th year of

teaching at A Child’s Place. During that time, I have served as a prekindergarten and kindergarten teacher as well as Assistant Director. My philosophy is that young children learn best through play. Therefore, that is how I have always planned and implemented my lessons based on early learning standards.

- **Donna Howard – Preschool Assistant Teacher**

I have been employed at A Child’s Place in the capacity of Senior Staff since 1997. My work with children dates back to 1986 when I worked in the Baltimore County Public Schools. I was also a Family Provider of childcare in my home. I currently participate in the MSDE Credentialing Program where I have a Level 4 certification.

CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

As the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines it, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (DAP) is a framework of principles and guidelines for best practice in the care and education of young children, birth through age 8. It is grounded both in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about education effectiveness. The principles and guidelines outline practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development.

At *A Child’s Place*, the curriculum for young children is planned to be developmentally appropriate for the 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, prekindergarteners, and kindergarteners who are enrolled. It is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of those individual children. Realistic program goals are based on regular assessment of individual needs, strengths, and interests. The hands-on process of interacting with materials and people results in learning. Learning activities and materials are real, concrete, and relevant to the lives of the children. However, the normal developmental age range of the children may vary as much as two years. The complexity of the materials reflects the age span of the total group. As children work with materials and engage in activities, teachers listen, observe, and interpret children's behavior. Teachers can then facilitate the children's involvement by making suggestions, asking questions, or adding more complex materials to a situation. Activities and environments will change in arrangement and inventory during the course of the year.

The Maryland State Department of Education Early Childhood Curriculum Project provides guidance to early childhood programs on curricular resources. The State-recommended resources for three, four, and five-year old children are aligned with Maryland’s College and Career Ready Standards and the Maryland Early Learning Standards. *A Child’s Place* has adopted the following programs for use in our instructional programs:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Preschool – 2-year-olds | <i>The Investigator Club:Tots</i> |
| Preschool - 3-year-olds | <i>The Investigator Club: Just for Threes Learning System</i> |
| Prekindergarten - 4-year-olds | <i>The Investigators Club: Prekindergarten</i> |
| Kindergarten – 5-year-olds | <i>Teaching Strategies: Creative Curriculum for Kindergarten</i> |

Instruction is differentiated to address the individual strengths and needs of each child. The child, not the teacher, defines instruction. Both formal and informal assessment strategies to

guide instruction for young children are utilized. *A Child's Place* provides a progress report for children at each age level. The teacher observes the child at work and play, and his/her mastery of skills is observed and recorded by the teacher. Parent conferences are regularly scheduled to communicate the child's progress.

During the first few weeks of school, observation and assessment take place to determine the instructional objectives for the children in the program. Focusing instruction on the beginning developmental level of each child, prerequisite skills are taught and reinforced one step at a time as the teacher moves the child toward the ultimate goal of developmentally appropriate goals and objectives. Progressing step by step, with one skill built upon prerequisite skills ensures success for the child as a foundation for learning is established.

COLLEGE AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

The years from birth to age five are the most crucial period of learning in a child's life. This is the "window" in which a child's greatest brain development takes place. In fact, nearly 90% of a child's brain development — in response to the stimulation the child receives — happens by age five. Early experiences lay the groundwork for a child's lifelong learning and behavior.

Using the comprehensive resource from MSDE, *Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland's Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy, Birth to Age 8, A Child's Place* staff studies best practices and early learning experiences informed by research. Children and their families as well as the early childhood staff benefit from the clear communication about what children need to learn and be able to do to be successful in school. Aligning instruction at ACP with MSDE standards is important because it provides a common goal and language of how parents and teachers can support young children's learning.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Content included in daily instruction includes:

Language and Literacy

Math

Science

Social Studies

Health

Physical Education

Fine Arts

Social Foundations

SCREEN TIME POLICY

The use of classroom computers and videos/DVDs is limited as we believe that children learn best by active involvement and hands-on experiences with learning materials. "Screen time" is kept to a minimum. A Child's Place adheres to rules and regulations as set forth in Maryland Code Regulations 13A.16.09.01. A child in attendance who is 2 years old or older may not be permitted to view more than 30 minutes of age-appropriate, educational passive technology per week.

No child may be permitted to view any passive or interactive technology during a meal or a snack.

Limited use of appropriate interactive technology may support, but may not replace, creative play, physical activity, hands-on exploration, outdoor experiences, social interactions, and other developmentally appropriate learning activities for children 2 years old or older.

An occasional exception to the weekly passive technology viewing limit may be made for a special event or project, including a holiday or birthday celebration, or for educational content that is related to the child care center's curriculum. If an exception to the weekly passive technology viewing limit is made, a written record of the exception shall be made and retained on file that documents the nature and duration of the programming viewed and reason for the exception.

No child may be permitted to view any media with brand placement or advertising for unhealthy or sugary food or beverages.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Children are enrolled at *A Child's Place* on a first-come-first-serve basis. Our only criterion for entrance into the program is age eligibility. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, gender, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran's status.

Applications are available anytime throughout the year. Tours are provided by appointment only, and families must call ahead to schedule. (410-532-5399).

Registration for the next school year begins in the fall, and families with an application on file will be notified. *A non-refundable \$100 registration fee is required to be officially registered for the program.*

Every parent must complete and sign the *Enrollment Agreement* prior to the beginning of the school year. The *Enrollment Agreement* sets forth the parents' obligation to adhere to school policies and State regulations. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in the dismissal of your child from the program.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Children must be two years old and potty trained to enter our two-year old program; three years old by September 1st to enter our three-year-old program; four years old by September 1st to enter our prekindergarten program; and five years old by September 1st to enroll in our kindergarten program.

EARLY ENTRANCE INTO KINDERGARTEN

Children who turn five after September 1st and no later than October 15th may be eligible for early admission to kindergarten if the following criteria are met:

1. Parents must make a formal request in writing prior to the beginning of the school year.
2. The child will be tested by the kindergarten teacher, and if, in their opinion, the child demonstrates the ability to fully participate in the kindergarten program, both academically and socially, the child will be enrolled as a kindergarten student for a 4-6 week period of probation.

3. After that time, a final determination will be made by the teacher, administration, and parents.

(See complete policy in *A Child's Place Policy for Early Admission to Kindergarten*).

RELEASE OF INFORMATION WAIVER

If your child has an IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) or an IEP (Individualized Education Program), please sign a "Release of Information Waiver" so that A Child's Place may receive a copy to best meet your child's needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A Child's Place does have an active Facebook and Instagram account. Most of the posts on these websites are for marketing purposes. We also share fun activities that happen throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to follow the accounts. Student photos are featured on the website. A Photo Permission/Model Release is required during enrollment. If a family does not want their child features in our marketing material, please note this on the release form.

NAP TIME

All preschool students are required to rest daily from 1:00-3:00 p.m. The school day is very active and challenging, and by mid-day most children are physically and mentally tired. Our day is more varied than a typical day at home, and children who normally may not require a rest period will usually welcome it at school. All schools providing a full-day early childhood program are required by Maryland State Code to provide a two-hour rest period during the school day.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

During early childhood, children learn one self-care skill that gives them more independence than any other skill they will learn during this phase of life -- toilet training. It is expected that the child who is toilet-trained will demonstrate independence in all aspects of using the bathroom.

All children must be toilet-trained. Pull-ups are not permitted. ACP is not equipped with either the facilities or the staff to be able to address potty-training here in preschool.

Children who are coming to preschool for the first time may experience a few accidents during the first couple of weeks of adjustment. If your child is not 100% toilet trained, you will be required to withdraw your child from the program until he/she is independent in his/her toileting and ready for preschool. Your child's space may then be given to the next child on the waiting list, or you may choose to continue your tuition payments to hold your child's space until he/she returns to school.

The staff of A Child's Place is aware that any of our young children may have the occasional bathroom 'accident.' Teachers handle this situation with sensitivity and care. To help eliminate stress to your child, parents are asked to send in two changes of clothes to have on hand in case of such an emergency.

A child who is fully potty trained can do the following:

- 1) Be able to TELL the adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go. They must be able to say some form of the words “I have to go potty/I have to use the bathroom” BEFORE they have to go.
- 2) Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
- 3) Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
- 4) Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
- 5) Be able to wash and dry hands.
- 6) Be able to go directly back to the room without directions.
- 7) Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the classroom.

The first one is the number one key to successful training. Children who are potty trained have the ability to perceive the event that is going to happen before it happens. Because we cannot allow children to just go in and out of the room to freely use the potty they MUST learn they have to tell us so that we can accompany them into the room and supervise them. At home you can allow them free access to the bathroom if you choose but we are prohibited by our regulations to allow them to go unaccompanied. Because of this they need to learn that they must tell the adult they have to go BEFORE they have to go.

REQUIRED ENROLLMENT FORMS

Each child must have on file, prior to the first day, the following forms, completed and signed:

- Emergency Form
- Child Release Authorization and Custody Arrangements
- Consent and Contact Form
- Health Inventory
- DHMH Blood Test Certificate
- Immunization Certificate (continuing students must present updated information as additional immunizations are given)
- Medication Authorization Form (for sunscreen and as needed for specific health issues)
- All About Me (from MSDE)
- Special Programs Permission
- Permission for Participation and Observation
- Enrollment Agreement
- Photo Permission/Model Release Form
- School Roster Permission
- Policies Acknowledgement (indicating that you have read and understand the policies and procedures of ACP as noted in *A Child's Place Parent Handbook SY*)

RE-ENROLLMENT / REGISTRATION

In the fall, children currently enrolled at *A Child's Place* will be given priority to register for the following year. After current students and siblings register, enrollment will be opened to the public, beginning with families who have an application on file.

Children currently enrolled who apply for admittance into another school program relinquish their priority re-enrollment. *Spaces cannot be saved* until a decision has been made by the new school or by the parents. If your child is not accepted into the new program, you may reapply to *A Child's Place* where a space will be awarded as it becomes available.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The school is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Children may arrive no earlier than 7:30 a.m. and must be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. each day.

The academic year is a minimum of 170 days as set forth by MSDE. The school year operates from September through the beginning of June. (See *A Child's Place School Calendar*)

ACP Summer Camp begins in June and ends mid-August and consists of two-week themed sessions. ACP will close for two weeks between summer camp and the school year. This allows the staff prepare for the new session and deep clean and major repairs to the school.

HOLIDAYS

A Child's Place publishes a school calendar at the beginning of each school year. The school is closed four days throughout the school year to allow time for required professional development activities for ACP staff.

OTHER CELEBRATIONS

A Child's Place serves the greater surrounding community and, therefore, strives to maintain an atmosphere of acceptance of all people, creeds, nationalities, and religions. In so doing, it is our desire to participate in holidays and other celebrations that are important to the families enrolled. The classroom approach will be one of education rather than one of endorsement. If any family would like to assist us in this endeavor by sharing a holiday tradition or celebration, please contact the office and/or your child's teacher.

As Notre Dame of Maryland University is a Roman Catholic organization, major Christian holidays will be observed. *A Child's Place* has an annual Christmas program; the program focuses on the story of the Nativity. Daily prayer occurs in the form of saying Grace before each meal or snack. These are non-denominational and age appropriate.

TUITION AND FEES

Monthly tuition for school year 2023-2024 has been set at \$1780.00 for Room 2 program, and \$1645.00 for Rooms 1, 3, & 4.

Tuition is set by the university and may increase by 3%-5% annually.

- *The ACP registration fee each year is \$100.00 and is due at the time of registration; it is non-refundable, and it is **not** applied toward tuition.*
- *The balance of September's tuition is due on or before August 1st.*

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Tuition is due on the first of each month; payment must be done online through NDMU's Marketplace and received on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month. Payment may be made by electronic check or credit card. Parents may arrange for recurring payments online.

LATE PAYMENT

There will be a late fee of \$2.00 per day for any monthly tuition paid after the 10th of the month. If the school has not received your payment by the first week of the next month, your child's enrollment in the school may be terminated, and their space may be offered to another child. Full tuition is due regardless of your child's attendance. Tuition will not be prorated for illness or vacations.

TUITION RECEIPTS

An online receipt will be issued upon receiving your monthly payment. It is the only record of your tuition payments that you will receive. Please keep your receipts for your tax records. Our Tax I.D. # is 52-0591641. ACP is not equipped to prepare yearly statements. If a duplicate statement is requested, there will be a processing fee of \$10.00 for each month requested.

LATE PICK UP PENALTIES AND FEES

PICK-UP TIME OF BEFORE 5:30 P.M. IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.

If your child is picked up after 5:30 p.m., there is a fee of \$5.00 for the first 5-minute period, or portion thereof, and \$10.00 for each 5-minute period thereafter, or portion thereof. You will be advised at pick-up what the penalties are and will be given an invoice the following day which is due upon receipt.

If you are late more than one time in any week, your fee will double to \$10.00 for the first 5-minute period, or portion thereof; and \$20.00 for each 5-minute period thereafter, or portion thereof.

The official time will be based on the readout on the director or lead teacher's smart phone.

If you are consistently late, the preschool may withdraw your child from the program.

In case of an emergency, please notify us that you will be late, using the school **cell phone number (410-236-0748)**. When you are late, you cause the closing staff to be late picking up their children. Your lateness has a trickle-down effect that impacts others.

In the event that your child has not been picked up by 6:30 p.m., and you have not contacted the school as to your whereabouts, we will call each of the emergency telephone numbers that you provided on your child's emergency/contact forms. If we cannot contact anyone to pick up your child, we will call the Campus Public Safety Office and file a report; the Public Safety Office will contact the Baltimore City Police and the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services. Child Protective Services will come to the college and pick up your child. When you arrive on campus, go to the desk in the foyer of Gibbons Hall where you may contact Campus Security and make arrangements to pick up your child.

LATE ARRIVAL FOR THE DAY

Parents are asked to bring children **no later than 9:00 a.m.** so that your child may have time to transition comfortably each day from home to school and be prepared to participate fully in the program.

Preschool instruction begins at 9:00 a.m. When your child arrives after that time, several things occur:

1. Your child misses the all-important transition time between home and school.
2. Your child misses the peer interaction that takes place during play before 9:00 a.m.

3. By coming into the classroom after instruction begins, your child misses the continuity and content of the lesson and/or activity that has been planned and is in progress.
4. The group's focus is diverted to the late comer disrupting instruction and drawing attention to your child, creating an awkward situation for him/her.

If your child will be late, please notify the office as early as possible.

LEAVING SCHOOL FOR APPOINTMENTS AND RETURNING

If you remove a child for appointments, they may return only if it is before 12:30 pm. The students' lunch period is over at 12:30. If your child misses the lunch period at school, arrangements for lunch will be the responsibility of the parent.

INDIVIDUALS TO PICK UP CHILD

The school can release a child only to the parents or legal guardian of the child or the individuals authorized to pick up the child whom the parent/guardian has listed on the school's Child Release Authorized and Custody Information form. Consent and Contact from and/or Emergency Form provided by the state licensing agency. Please notify the teacher or the office by email about any changes to routine pick-up. Staff members of the school will require any unknown person who arrives to pick up a child show photo identification. All persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least eighteen (18) years old.

CHANGES IN CUSTODY

If there is any change in legal custody of the child while the child is enrolled in the school, the parent must immediately notify the school and must provide the School Director with a certified copy of the Court Order confirming the change in custody. If unauthorized person arrives at the school to pick up a child, the school staff will notify the parent immediately.

RELEASE OF CHILD TO INTOXICATED OR DRUGGED INDIVIDUAL

In order to protect the children from any potential danger that could arise because of an adult's condition, and to protect the school against potential claims, it is the policy of the school 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 teacher present at the school, a parent or authorized person who arrives to transport the child home from the school is in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will:

- a. Contact the NDMU Public Safety Office for support;
- b. Notify the other parent or guardian of the situation;
- c. Ask the person to leave his/her car at the school and take the child home using other means of transportation home; or
- d. Offer to call another relative, friend or taxi (at the parent's expense) to drive the person and child home.

If the person insists on driving the child home, the school's staff member will notify the NDMU Safety Office and the local police department. If officers agree that the parent or authorized person is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, that person may be charged with public drunkenness and/or driving while under the influence of alcohol.

If a parent/guardian or other authorized person frequently arrives in an intoxicated or drugged state, the school will not only notify the police department, but also will alert other appropriate governmental authorities involved with the care and treatment of children.

SNOW AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Announcements closings, late openings or early closings for *A Child's Place* will be announced via email. No announcement will be made if classes are being held as usual.

Whenever there is a late opening, *A Child's Place* will open at 10:00 a.m.

The ACP Director will use email to communicate with parents; therefore, it is imperative that ACP has current email addresses for parents at home and at work. Because of the number of students enrolled, it is not efficient for us to attempt to contact parents by phone when ACP closes. The director will send an email notification as soon as there is any information to report.

When extreme weather conditions exist, please be aware of the possibility of a change in schedule at ACP, listen to radio/television for announcements, **AND check your email often.** When in doubt, please contact the director at cbanks@ndm.edu. You may call the university's weather-line at 410-532-5151 or access the NDMU website at www.ndm.edu for information.

NDMU also offers a mass notification system that sends messages instantly and simultaneously to registered text-message-capable cell phones and email addresses. For more information, follow this link: <https://www.ndm.edu/public-safety/e2campus> It is strongly suggested that parents register for this automatic notification system.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Notre Dame of Maryland University has developed an emergency plan in the event of a crisis. In addition, *A Child's Place* has an "Emergency Preparedness Plan" which is continually updated and revised.

BEHAVIOR, DISCIPLINE, AND BULLYING POLICIES

At *A Child's Place* we strive for the ideal that the child commands his/her own self-discipline through self-control. Our rules and regulations are based on health and safety and those common courtesies useful in dealing with a group. In a stressful situation, redirection is used to help a child regain emotional control. They are reminded to use words to handle their problems, or they may be asked to take a short 'calming' period away from the situation until they are able to handle the situation in a more socially acceptable manner.

The purpose of discipline is to teach the child correct behaviors, not to punish misbehavior. Positive reinforcement and redirecting the child's behavior are two ways to discipline a child. Staff members also act as role models, demonstrating socially acceptable manners and courtesies. Discipline must always be accompanied by demonstrating the expected appropriate behaviors and by a verbal explanation/discussion of how to behave the next time a similar situation arises.

The teaching staff primarily uses natural and logical consequences to teach the children self-control.

Natural consequences are the result of going against the laws of nature, i.e., the child who refuses to eat lunch gets hungry. Natural consequences do not need any interference from adults, for example, when you do not wear gloves, your hands get cold.

Logical consequences are the result of going against the rules of social cooperation, e.g., if three-year-old Brad deliberately rides his tricycle into Kristen, Kristen may not want to play with him, or an adult may take away Brad's tricycle-riding privileges for awhile. Logical consequences meet the needs of a particular situation. They have the following qualities: 1) they express the rules of social living; 2) they are related to the misbehavior; 3) they separate the deed from the doer; 4) they are concerned with what will happen now; 5) they are given in a friendly and supportive manner; and 6) they permit choice.

What is bullying?

There is a difference between play, which builds imagination, develops coordination, and teaches children about rules and responsibility, and bullying, which is chronic, frequent behavior that has, at its core, the intention to harm and intimidate. The most obvious forms of bullying are repeated hitting, shoving, chasing, or threatening. Other forms include name-calling, teasing, telling lies, and excluding. Bullying also includes taking or destroying another child's belongings. Bullying is very different from occasional roughhousing or behavior problems under usual circumstances. It is repeated roughness or repeated planned victimization. The intention of bullying is to cause deliberate hurt, physical or emotional, or to gain more power or control. Bullying usually occurs consistently between the same children.

While people mistakenly believe that bullying begins later in elementary school, unfortunately, it may also occur as early as the preschool years. Emergent bullying behavior is sometimes overlooked by parents and caregivers and deemed normal social experimentation. However, when a child believes that conflict is best resolved using threats or force, when he/she deliberately and systematically finds ways to inflict injury or harm, physically or emotionally, to their victim, and maybe even laugh after doing so, adults must indeed be concerned. Minimizing the importance of the issue sends a message to a child that being inconsiderate of other people's feelings is acceptable. Victims of bullying become shy, isolated, and fearful. The bully learns a false sense of his/her own importance and power and sets himself/herself up for social failure.

At *A Child's Place*, the children's emotional and physical safety and well-being will always be the primary concern. *ACP* staff members are in a position to prevent conflict or take steps to reduce the likelihood of problems. While we want and encourage children to use their words to resolve their own conflicts, it is important to keep a reasonable standard of behavior in mind. Staff members demonstrate the behavior we want the children to imitate and emphasize that bullying is not acceptable. Staff members explain in simple language that bullying behaviors actually hurt others. It not only hurts the victim, but also the child doing the bullying – other children do not want to be friends with someone who bullies them.

Our goal at *A Child's Place* is to teach, not punish. Children who learn how to resolve conflicts, respect others, and handle frustration will refrain from bullying behavior.

SAFETY POLICIES

Emergencies: If a child is injured or becomes seriously ill while at the school, every effort will be made to contact the parent. It is critical for each parent to **complete the *Emergency Information Form* and update it as necessary** so that the school can contact the parent or other

authorized person in an emergency and have the child treated if necessary. The parent **must** notify the school if there is any change in the emergency information. (This also applies to the *Consent and Contact Form* and the *Child Release Authorization and Custody Arrangements Form*.)

HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICIES

Medical Examination: The State of Maryland requires the parent to provide the following information prior to a child attending a Maryland State Department of Education licensed, registered, or approved child care or nursery school:

- A **physical examination** by a physician or a certified nurse practitioner completed no more than twelve months prior to attending child care;
- evidence of immunizations,
- and evidence of blood-testing for children living in designated at risk areas for lead.

If you notice that your child is not acting like their usual self in the morning, and you suspect that they might be coming down with something, even if there is no fever, please err on the side of caution and keep your child at home to see what develops. If a child comes to school and gets sick here, you will be called to come to for your child immediately. Unfortunately, by then, other children and teachers will have been exposed to the illness.

Parents must notify the school immediately after their child or any member of their immediate family has developed a known or suspected communicable disease. This will enable the school to track illnesses and provide better care to children. Disease surveillance and reporting to local health authorities are crucial to preventing and controlling diseases in the school setting. *A Child's Place* (ACP) will notify parents immediately when a child in attendance has been diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Administration of Medication:

The school's personnel cannot administer any medication (including over-the-counter medicine such as aspirin, cough drops, decongestant, or other non-prescription drugs, as well as prescription medicine) to a child unless the school has a Medication Authorization Form signed by the parent and health care provider (as indicated on the form).

A Child's Place staff cannot administer any medication, prescribed or OTC unless the child has previously received at least one dose.

Illness Policies

- Allergies:

All allergies, whether medical, food, or insect, and the medical intervention necessary, must be detailed in a written report outlining the allergy and medical procedure to follow, i.e., *Asthma Action Plan*, *Allergy Action Plan*, etc. This form must be kept on file in the school office.

- Chicken Pox:

Generally, two days without fresh lesions and signs that other lesions have dried up are necessary before returning to school.

- Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye:

Must be treated by prescription medicine and diagnosed by a physician. Child must remain home for 24 hours after start of medication.

- Diarrhea and Vomiting:

Diarrhea and/or vomiting associated with illness will be cause for a child to be dismissed for the day. They may not return for at least 24 hours after symptoms have subsided.

- Fever:

A temperature of 100.4 degrees (axillary) is considered a fever. The child may not return to school until 24 hours after they have been free of a fever.

- Fifth Disease:

Contagious before pink cheeks appear. The child need not stay home unless other symptoms, such as fever, are also present. Parents will be notified if it is present in the school. Pregnant women need to contact their physician and follow his advice.

- Head Lice:

Child must be treated for at least 24 hours.

- HIV or AIDS:

We can neither deny nor confirm the presence of anyone who is HIV positive or who has AIDS.

- Strep Throat:

Child must be on antibiotics for 24 hours.

We shall take every precaution to protect everyone from the spread of the disease by practicing the following hygiene precautions:

1. Wearing disposable gloves when blood or body fluids are present.
2. Washing hands frequently with soap and water and especially after contact with blood and body fluids.
3. Use of a mild bleach solution for cleaning.
4. Disposal of contaminated materials.

We shall not discriminate on the basis of health or social needs of children.

REPORTABLE DISEASES

Reportable diseases as defined by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (MDHMH) will be reported to MDHMH and then to the families enrolled at *A Child's Place* as directed by code. Non-reportable diseases will be reported to parents as they occur, i.e., chicken pox, strep throat, fifth disease, influenza. Normal colds and viruses will not be reported to parents unless there are a significant number of children absent due to the same illness. What is defined as a significant number will be determined by the staff and the director at the time the illness occurs. It is not unusual to experience up to four children absent in a single classroom during cold and flu season..

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The school is required by law to report evidence or suspicion of physical child abuse, neglect, or sexual child abuse. Persons found guilty of failure to report abuse are subject to criminal penalties. Parents, who suspect physical child abuse, neglect, or sexual child abuse at the school should call the Baltimore City Department of Social Services and make a report. The report will remain anonymous. (Refer to the *MSDE Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care*)

TERMS of CARE

Clothing: Two complete changes of clothing must be available. These will be kept in your child's cubby. Please replace the clothing as the seasons change. If your child uses one set of clothes, they should be replaced with a new outfit the next day.

Dress your child so that he/she can enjoy the outdoor activities, which are a part of the daily routine. Practical shoes and clothes for climbing and running and hats and mittens for cold weather are required. For your child's safety, no flip-flops, open-toed sandals, or Crocs are permitted. Children may not wear sunglasses.

Toileting: Children must be toilet trained before acceptance into the program. They must be able to demonstrate independence when going to the bathroom even though teachers are available to offer emergency assistance if needed. Diapers and disposable "pull-ups" are not permitted.

Bedding: Parents of preschool students are asked to provide a small, child-size indoor sleeping bag for nap time. Bedding for each child must be kept separate from others when not in use. Send your child's bedding to school labeled with your child's name. Parents are responsible to take the bedding home every Friday evening for laundering. Bedding must be brought back on Monday. While toys may NOT be used at nap time, a 'lovey', or stuffed animal that helps your child fall asleep is not only acceptable but also encouraged. For sanitary reasons, children may not use a pacifier while they are at school.

Toys: Other than 'loveys' for use during nap time, toys, stuffed animals, and games are not to be brought to the school without first consulting the child's teacher. The school does not accept responsibility for damaged or lost items. Some classrooms have scheduled "Show and Tell" days. Items will be kept in the child's cubby during the day.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Parents are required to provide a lunch daily; ACP will provide milk. Please keep in mind that ACP does not have facilities to heat food. Teachers will store children's lunches in a refrigerator until lunch time. We will not be able to heat or reheat individual lunches; please use a thermos for hot foods. If there is something in your child's lunch that is in a thermos, etc. to remain hot, please label the lunch bag so teachers do not put it in the refrigerator that day.

Lunch Bunch Option:

A Child's Place is offering a OPTIONAL bagged lunch program for your preschooler. SAGE Dining will prepare bagged lunches that will be dropped off directly to A Child's Place for your child at lunchtime. Each bagged lunch will include a variety of items to appeal to the appetite of a preschooler. Milk will be provided daily by A Child's Place.

You must register for the Lunch Bunch online. After you register, you will be notified about lunch options. Bagged lunches are \$6.50/day, and you must commit to one full month of lunches when you order. Lunch must be ordered one week ahead of time. Food allergies and dietary restrictions will be collected at the time of purchase.

AM and PM Snacks

The school provides the morning and afternoon snack as well as milk at both times. Children should eat breakfast before they come to school since the morning snack is scheduled at approximately 9:15 a.m. The afternoon snack is at 3:15 p.m. after nap time.

Food Allergies

NOTE: IT IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO ADVISE TEACHERS AND THE OFFICE OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES. A CHILD'S PLACE IS NOT A NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT!

If a student or students in our program have a nut allergy which is serious enough to call for ACP to enforce a 'nut-free environment' in a classroom or throughout the entire program, parents will be advised and offered suggestions for acceptable alternatives.

PARENT CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Parent conferences with teachers are scheduled twice during the school year – in November and April. Conferences can be held virtually, by phone or in person. In addition, teachers are available throughout the year for conferences with parents at any time that either party feels it is needed.

Assessments of each child will be made twice a year, and a *progress report* will be sent home – in January and April (November, January, and April for kindergarten). Parents and/or teachers may request an additional conference; is needed. These progress reports become part of your child's records.

Teachers of preschool students are available daily from 1:30–2:45 p.m. for telephone conferences. Arrangements can also be made to speak to the kindergarten teacher. You may call the office (410-532-5399) to schedule a time for the teacher to call you.

Email is another convenient way to stay in touch with the office or your child's teacher:

Ms. Carnesha, Director: cbanks@ndm.edu

Ms. Anita, Assistant Director/Teacher: aford@ndm.edu

Ms. Cecelia, Teacher: ccrowell@ndm.edu

Ms. Donna, Assistant Teacher: dhoward@ndm.edu

Ms. Arielle, Teacher: agibson@ndm.edu

Ms. Robin, Teacher: rrihalopez@ndu.edu

Office: achildsplace@ndm.edu

OUTSIDE CONSULTATIONS

With permission from and in collaboration with the parent, ACP staff will occasionally seek outside professional advice associated with instruction or the instructional environment as related to the growth and development of children enrolled at the school. One such resource that ACP often utilizes is the Early Intervention Project from the Family Tree. The results of such interviews, observations, or assessments will be shared with parents and remain confidential records of the school. Additional assessment or observation of any child will only be conducted with written permission from the parent after a conference with the teacher has been held.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations are fun for everyone. Please be sensitive to the feelings of all the children if you plan parties. Unless all the children in the class are invited to the party, please send invitations through e-mail and not via the children's cubbies.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Parents sign a permission form for participation in special programs upon admission to the school..

WITHDRAWAL BY A PARENT

You must give the school director at least two (2) weeks written notice before withdrawing your child from the program. Tuition refunds will not be made for withdrawals.

TERMINATION BY SCHOOL

a. Immediate. The school may terminate your child's enrollment in the school effective immediately, if any of the following conditions arise:

1. In the judgment of the school director and staff, the child's behavior threatens the physical or mental health of other children in the school, i.e., throwing objects, extreme temper tantrums, destroying school property, destroying personal property, fighting, hitting, biting.
2. Parent's behavior is inappropriate, i.e., verbally abusive to teachers or the director, refusal to adhere to school policies.
3. The child is brought to the school ill more than three (3) times within any 30-day period or the parent fails to promptly pick up a sick child more than three (3) times within any 30-day period;
4. Late evening pick up three (3) times in one month.
5. In the judgment of the school director and the staff, it is determined that the child is not toilet trained.

If enrollment is terminated, you will receive a portion of the monthly fee, pro-rated on a daily basis for the period remaining in the month.

b. Two-Weeks Notice. The school may terminate your child's enrollment upon two (2) weeks written notice to you if any of the following conditions arise:

1. Any of the conditions listed in (a) assuming that the school has not exercised its right to terminate immediately;
2. You fail to provide necessary items as described in the parent handbook.
3. You fail to abide by any other terms of the enrollment agreement and parent handbook.

If enrollment is terminated upon two (2) weeks written notice, you will receive a portion of the monthly fee, pro-rated on a daily basis for the period remaining in the month.

***A CHILD'S PLACE* PARENT ASSOCIATION (ACPPA)**

In 1994, working with parents, the director established *A Child's Place* Parent Association (ACPPA) to provide an avenue for parents to discuss issues concerning the education of their children and to support the school. All parents are encouraged to participate. Each year, the ACPPA will determine when and where it will meet based on the schedules and interest of the participating parents. In the spring, the ACPPA holds an annual fundraiser to raise funds to benefit the school. The ACPPA contacts parents early in the school year to request that each family contribute annual dues. All parents are welcome to join and participate on a regular or part-time schedule. In addition, various social outings are planned for families throughout the year.

FUNDRAISING

A Child's Place holds an annual fall fundraiser, e.g., KidStuff Coupon Books, Clare's Gourmet foods, etc. The proceeds from the fundraiser are used to purchase extra items not included in the annual operating budget.

The Parent Association holds a fundraiser in the spring with proceeds going toward special purchases of items not covered by the yearly operational budget, classroom materials from the teacher's wish list, and gifts for teachers as determined by the ACPPA parent leaders.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Irvin Simon Photographers take individual and class pictures every fall and spring. Picture packages may be obtained online from the company. ACP receives a commission for each student photo purchased.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB

The Scholastic Book Club is an excellent resource for children's books. A link to age-appropriate books is provided by Scholastic, and you may place your orders online. The children's books are value priced with incentives awarded to *A Child's Place* based on parent participation. Parents also win awards for their child's classroom.

(Ms. Cecelia, Room 1 teacher, manages the Scholastic Book Club for A Child's Place.)

POLICY CHANGES

A Child's Place and Notre Dame of Maryland University reserve the right to change any policy stated herein. Written notification of any change will be posted at least two weeks prior to the implementation of any change in policy.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS; RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS

If you have a question or a problem, start by communicating with your child's teachers. Day to day questions about your child's classroom activities can best be answered by the teachers.

If you need further assistance to resolve an issue, contact the school director or the assistant school director.

In addition, if you have a question about administrative procedures, you should contact the director, achildsplpace@ndm.edu or the director, Carnesha Banks (cbanks@ndm.edu)

PRIOR THE FIRST DAY CHECKLIST

- _____ Emergency Information form (note allergies)
- _____ Child Release Authorization and Custody Arrangements
- _____ Consent and Contact Form
- _____ Health Inventory (note allergies)
- _____ Immunization Certificate (must be updated for continuing ACP students)
- _____ DHMH Blood Lead Testing Certificate
- _____ Medication Authorization (as needed)
- _____ All About Me
- _____ Special Programs Permission
- _____ Permission for Participation and Observation
- _____ School Roster Permission
- _____ Photo Permission/Model Release
- _____ Enrollment Agreement
- _____ Policies Acknowledgement and Signature page

FIRST DAY CHECKLIST

- _____ Change of clothes (2), labeled w/ your child's name
- _____ Small sleeping bag for nap time (labeled w/your child's name)
- _____ Insulated water bottle labeled with your child's name
- _____ Lunch

