Frederick Community College

The Carl & Norma Miller

Children's Center

…Nurturing a Love of Learning since 1994

Parent Handbook

Frederick Community College
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Parent Handbook

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Welcome

The staff of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center at Frederick Community College would like to extend a warm welcome to your family. We are pleased that you have chosen our program for your child. We are committed to providing a loving, safe, nurturing, relaxed, and developmentally appropriate environment for your child. We look forward to working with you in the care and education of your child. This parent handbook will provide you with an understanding of the philosophy, policies, and procedures of our program. Please read the handbook carefully and then complete, sign, and return the parent highlight form in your enrollment packet. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Director or the appropriate classroom teacher at your convenience. Thank you for choosing our Center. We appreciate the privilege of sharing this time with your child.

About Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center

Vision

The vision of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center is to be a model facility that promotes best practices in the field of early childhood education by providing a nurturing, child-centered learning program that fosters children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth, and development.

Mission

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center mission is to provide a childcare and early education program based on best practices for the College's diverse population of students, staff and faculty, and surrounding community members. We allow parents to engage in study or work knowing their child is receiving quality early learning experiences to prepare them for success in school, thus contributing to college, career, and life readiness.

Goals

- Provide children with a caring, safe, nurturing, relaxed, and developmentally appropriate environment
- Accept and appreciate the differences of each child and his/her family
- Provide an atmosphere for physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth by encouraging children to be curious, ask questions, and discover their own ideas and responses to their world
- Broaden the world and opportunities of the children through the introduction and manipulation of new ideas and materials
- Provide daily role models for the children through the selection and continual training of dedicated teachers and staff
- Create a partnership with the children and their families and encourage parents to be advocates for their children by participating in the program and freely communicating with the teachers
- Create a positive and respectful environment that enhances the individuality of each child and contributes to feelings of greater self-worth (self-esteem). All children will have many opportunities for success throughout each day.
- Provide a well-rounded daily schedule which includes:

  - child-directed free play – indoors and outdoors;
  - organized activities such as songs, stories, and games;
  - many opportunities to explore, create, and be successful;
  - time to practice self-help skills;
  - a relaxed and respectful social atmosphere; and
  - rest and relaxation
- Maintain a professional early childhood teaching staff
- Work cooperatively with the Early Childhood Development and Education programs and enrich the experience of students enrolled in College courses
- Be a model early childhood program for our community

National Accreditation

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood programs through the *National Association for the Education of Young Children* (NAEYC). Our program voluntarily undergoes a comprehensive process of internal self-study and invites an external professional review to verify compliance with the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs. A copy of the Criteria can be obtained from the Center or from NAEYC (naeyc.org). Our program has a commitment to high quality, early childhood education that provides a safe and nurturing environment, while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. We continue to renew our accreditation yearly.

Child Care License

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center is licensed annually by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care (OCC). Our License Number is 10-44818. The OCC Regional Office in Frederick may be reached at 301-696-9766. We are committed to meeting and/or exceeding all licensing laws. A copy of the current license is displayed in the entryway. Child Care regulations are available on the MSDE website:
http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/12/subtitle_16_centers_comar_online.pdf

Ages Served

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center serves the following ages of children:

- Infants/Toddlers (approximately 6 weeks to 2 years)
- Young Preschool (2 – 3 years)
- Preschool/Pre-K (4- 5 years)
- Summer Camp (ages 5-11)

The ages given are approximate guidelines as children will move from one classroom to another based on individual and developmental needs rather than by chronological age alone.

Hours of Operation/Scheduled Closures

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center operates a daytime and evening program. The daytime program is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, January through

December, with the exception of the below listed scheduled closings (as well as any others that may be announced by the college)

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- FCC Spring Break (see FCC academic calendar for dates)
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July (If holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday, the College will observe the holiday on Friday or Monday. See FCC academic calendar for dates.)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & Friday after Thanksgiving
- FCC Winter Break (see FCC academic calendar for dates)

An annual calendar is available from the front office, which includes all holidays and scheduled closures. The Carl and Norma Miller follows the FCC calendar, which may or may not coincide with Frederick County Public School closures.

Children with Special Needs

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center accepts children with special needs. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we try to accommodate as much as possible those children who can be served in a group setting. There are some children with special needs that require more one-on-one care than we are able to provide in our group setting. In this situation, the Center may not be the best educational setting to provide for the needs of the individual child. When a child with ***identified*** special needs is enrolled, an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) is required. These documents provide the staff with specific skills and areas of development that are a focus for the child and or family. If the child receives special services from a therapist, the Center staff will make arrangements to accommodate the therapists. The Teacher and Director will meet with families on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Center can continue to meet the changing needs of the child. The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will request written consent from parents to work with outside agencies.

Free Access · Non-Discrimination

Frederick Community College prohibits discrimination against any person on the basis of age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, creed, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, genetic information, marital status, mental or physical disability, national origin, race, religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status in its activities, admissions, educational programs, and employment Frederick Community College subscribes to full access to all College facilities as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and as amended. Children with special needs will be offered enrollment in the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center when space is available, individually assessed needs can be met, and accommodations can be made.

Expulsion Policy

At the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center, our goal is to promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health and to appropriately address and bring resources to challenging behavior. However, as young children learn to develop social emotional skills, they may respond to situations with externalized behaviors (e.g., defiance, noncompliance and aggression). We attempt to create a developmentally appropriate program that meets the needs of each child and

precludes the need for children to respond with externalized behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment. Some of the methods that we use in our program are:

- Consideration of the individual needs of each child. This approach helps us to adapt and respond to individual variation.
- Utilization of Positive Guidance Techniques: Children's desired behavior will be reinforced, and consequences for challenging behavior will be developmentally appropriate and consistent.
- Use of Formal and Informal Screenings and Observations: Early identification through formal and informal screenings and observations helps programs match children with the services that benefit children and their families.
- Maintaining appropriate group sizes: Compliance with recommended and required teacher/child ratios and group sizes improves child outcomes, helps to reduce behavior problems and improves the early childhood experience.
- Using constructive approaches to redirection: Strategies such as class meetings and conflict mediation help to restore balance to the learning environment when young children struggle in large group settings.
- Engaging families: Children benefit when families and early childhood programs work together in partnership. Early childhood educators should engage families to better understand the origin of the behaviors and how parents have addressed the behaviors in the home setting. This information is used as part of the decision-making process to support the child
- Demonstrating Cultural Responsiveness: Intentionally teaching social skills, raising expectations of all children, and recognizing children's positive behaviors in the context of their own culture.
- Accessing Developmental, Mental Health, and other supports for children and families: There are resources in the state of Maryland that can provide supports to the child, family, and program. We work with families to suggest and facilitate the use of a variety of options.
- Balanced Scheduling: Because children benefit from play, our classroom schedules allow children to spend a substantial portion of the day in play (both indoor and outdoor).

Because of the long-term benefits of participation in high-quality early childhood programs, our goal is to ensure that all of our youngest learners have the tools and experience they need to thrive. When there are concerns, we attempt to collaborate with parents to bring the needed resources and strategies to a situation. Our hope is that these efforts will not result in suspensions and expulsions. The Center would only implement suspensions or expulsions when there are extraordinary circumstances or a determination of a serious safety threats or concerns. While we will make efforts to reduce or eliminate such concerns and/or threats using the steps outlined above, we reserve the right to suspend or expel in any situation where the Director deems it to be necessary and to be in the best interest of the Children's Center.

Federal Identification Number

The Frederick Community College Federal Identification Number is **52-0743590**. This is the number needed for tax reporting purposes or to claim reimbursement for dependent care flexible spending accounts.

Our Staff

Early Childhood Professionals

Understanding and guiding children's lives is a challenging task. Helping children develop into fully functioning, healthy individuals is a very time-consuming, energy expending commitment. As early childhood professionals, we greatly appreciate your support and assistance in making the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center a wonderful place for children and families to grow together.

As set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the "Code of Ethical Conduct," we commit ourselves to:

- appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle;
- basing our work with children on knowledge of child development;
- appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and family;
- recognizing that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society;
- respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague); and
- helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard**.**

The Staff – An Overview

All childcare providers in the State of Maryland are required to have a recent medical exam (including a TB test), complete a personnel information form listing all education and experience related to working with young children, and have state/federal fingerprint/criminal background checks.

- The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center requires staff qualifications that exceed the Office of Child Care requirements for all positions. The majority of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff have education and experience beyond the listed qualifications. Teachers are required to take basic first aid training and Pediatric Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) within their first year of employment and maintain certification in both. Teachers are also required to take a Medication Administration course, Basic Health and Safety and COVID-19 training. The following are minimum position requirements.

Child Care Aide - Child Care Aides must be a minimum of 18 years old, have a high school diploma and preferably meet the Office of Child Care Child Care Teacher or School Age Teacher qualifications (or be willing to work toward Child Care Teacher or School Age Teacher qualifications within the first year of employment). Additional education or experience is preferred. Child Care Aides must complete a minimum of six clock hours of continued training annually and are required to become part of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Child Care Assistant - Child Care Assistants are required to have a High School Diploma and training in Americans with Disabilities Compliance, Basic Health and Safety and COVID-19 training, and one-year experience working in a structured early childhood education program. An Associate's Degree in Early Childhood is preferred. Child Care Assistants must complete a

minimum of six clock hours of continued training annually and are required to become part of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Child Care Teacher - Child Care Teachers are required to have a High School Diploma, 3 semester hours of Child Development, 3 semester hours of Activities for Preschool Children, 9 clock hours of training in communicating with staff, parents and the public, training in Developmental Screening, Americans with Disabilities Compliance, Basic Health and Safety and COVID-19 training and at least 1 year of experience working with young children in a structured setting. An Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education is preferred. Child Care Teachers are required to become part of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Child Care Teacher (Infant and Toddler) - Child Care Teachers working with Infants and Toddlers are required to have a High School Diploma, 3 semester hours of Child Development, 3 semester hours of Activities for Preschool Children, 3 semester hours of Infant and Toddler Development, 9 clock hours of training in communicating with staff, parents and the public, training in Developmental Screening, Americans with Disabilities Compliance, Basic Health and Safety and COVID -19 training and at least 1 year of experience working with young children in a structured setting. An Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education is preferred. Infant and Toddler Child Care Teachers are required to become part of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Assistant Director - the Assistant Director is required to have a minimum Associate of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Education (or closely related field), training in Developmental Screening, Americans with Disabilities Compliance, Basic Health and Safety and COVID-19 training. A Bachelor's degree preferred. In addition, a minimum of two years' experience working with young children as a lead teacher in a structured early childhood education program is required. Additionally, FCC requires professional development/continuing education on an annual basis. The Assistant Director is required to become part of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Director - The Director is required to have a minimum of a Bachelor Arts/Science degree in Early Childhood Education (or closely related field), training in Developmental Screening, Americans with Disabilities Compliance, Basic Health and Safety and COVID-19 training, and a minimum of three years progressively responsible experience working with young children in a structured early childhood education program is required. In addition, administrative experience is helpful. The Director position requires full compliance with Office of Child Care Director qualifications. Additionally, FCC requires professional development and/or continuing education on an annual basis. The Director is required to become part of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Training

Children's Center employees are required to have more training than mandated by Office of Child Care. The state licensing requirements are 6 hours per year for Aides and Assistants and 12 hours of training for Teachers.

The Children's Center employees are required to participate in the **Maryland Child Care Credential Program.** This program recognizes childcare providers who go beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations. There are six credential levels, each one recognizing a childcare provider's achievement of a specified number of training hours, years of experience and professional activities that lead to quality childcare. Participating providers

complete training in topic areas to develop the knowledge and skills they need to provide the highest quality care for the children and families we serve. The goals of the program are:

- a well-qualified workforce;
- improved status and increased compensation for child care providers;
- recognition of for-credit and non-credit career preparation; and
- to provide a structure for professional growth through professional competencies.

Babysitting

The teachers at the Children's Center are professionals or are training to become professionals. As such, we expect all teachers at our Center to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These principles state, "We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children". We ask for your cooperation and support by refraining from asking any of our teaching staff who may be working in the Center to provide care for your children at any time other than when they are in the Center. We understand the level of comfort that you feel with the teaching staff and how hard it is sometimes to find ethical quality after hours' care; but we also know that you expect excellence and high quality from each of us and we expect the same of ourselves. Your support helps us achieve these goals.

Social Media

As Early Childhood Educators working in a nationally accredited program our teachers use the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct to inform their decision making. The Code offers guidelines for responsible behavior and provides a common basis for resolving ethical dilemmas encountered in our profession. The Code consists of ideals and principles that guide conduct and assist in resolving ethical issues. One principle (P-2.11) states, "We shall not engage in or support exploitation of families. We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain, or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness working with their children." For this reason, we ask that you avoid friending on Facebook or following on Instagram or other social media, any of the teachers at the Center. It is important for teachers to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries between their personal and professional lives and to avoid activities that might impair their impartiality when working with groups of children.

Enrollment Procedures

The enrollment process begins with an application. Applications are available on-line at http://www.frederick.edu/student-resources/childrens-center.aspx, or by mail. You can also email us at childrenscenter@frederick.edu. We require one application per child. Applications are prioritized by the date in which they are received. It is very important that applications are complete. Applications without pertinent information such as telephone number and enrollment needs will not be considered. Special consideration will be given for students that are waiting to meet with advisors before they know their child care needs. Once an application is received, the Center will follow up with all applicants to confirm space availability. At this time, if families have not had the opportunity to visit the Center, they are encouraged to set up a time and date for a tour with the Assistant Director or Director. Tours are given by appointment only. When space is not available, families may choose to remain on the waiting list but must notify the Center to

request this. While on our waiting list, if enrollment needs or contact information changes, please notify the Center. Once accepted, families will receive a confirmation letter and enrollment package. All paperwork must be completed in its entirety and returned to the Center by the date indicated on the confirmation letter.

Required Forms

Parents are required to complete and return the following forms in the enrollment packet **BEFORE** a child may attend the Center:

- ❑ Registration Form (All About Me)
- ❑ Service Agreement
- ❑ On-Campus Field Trip Authorization
- ❑ Emergency Card
- ❑ Immunization Certificate (must be signed by health care professional)
- ❑ Health Inventory (must be signed by health care professional)
- ❑ Sunscreen Authorization
- ❑ Consent and Release (Photograph, Videotape, or Audiotape)
- ❑ Emergency Health Care Plan (if applicable)
- ❑ Ages and Stages Developmental Screening
- ❑ Parent Handbook Highlights (initials and signature required)

Parents of Infants and Toddlers will also need (as appropriate to age of child):

- ❑ Individualized Infant/Toddler Schedule
- ❑ Food Waiver (Infants/Toddlers)
- ❑ Diaper Ointment Authorization (if applicable)
- ❑ Teething Gel (if applicable)
- ❑ Crib Waiver (if applicable)

Parents are responsible for keeping the Center informed at all times of any change in primary address, phone number, work schedules, authorized release persons, emergency contacts, and any other pertinent information. Updates are done on an annual basis by the Front Office.

Children's enrollment files are kept in the Director's office in a locked file cabinet. Each classroom has a copy of the following forms: Emergency Card, All About Me, Sunscreen, Field Trip, and Emergency Health Care Plan (if applicable). The Emergency Cards are kept in a binder in a cabinet that is inaccessible to the public.

Once enrolled, a family has priority and will not be bumped to accommodate a higher priority status application.

As spaces become available:

- Applications will be evaluated by priority group.
- Enrollment will be offered to the family with the highest priority status that has applied for the space that is available. If there are two or more applications from the same priority group, enrollment will be offered to the applicant with the earliest date of application within that priority group.

A child may be enrolled either full-time or part-time, depending upon the times care is needed.

Full-time: Full-time enrollment allows a child to attend during all hours of operation, five days per week.

Part-time: Part-time enrollment may be purchased either by the full day or by a morning block of time. **A minimum of two equivalent time periods is required.** Part time schedule options include a Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule or Tuesday and Thursday. Morning blocks of time are not available in the infant/toddler program.

Once enrolled, the days or blocks of time purchased are the times your child may attend each week. If, at any time, your schedule changes and you wish to change the days or times your child attends, we will gladly consider such change **if space permits.** Please make these arrangements as far in advance as possible by contacting the Front Office.

Student families will have the opportunity to request a change of enrollment prior to the beginning of each semester. Please provide a copy of your class schedule each semester when requesting enrollment changes. We will accommodate requests for changes in enrollment to the best of our ability and as space permits.

If, on occasion, parents need a child to attend for a day or block of time in addition to the times contracted, prior arrangement must be made with the Front Office. The Center can never exceed licensing capacities at any time and will only make such arrangements for additional days if space permits. Parents will be charged for the extra day or block of time in addition to the regularly scheduled time.

Enrollment Service Agreement

Upon enrollment families will receive an Enrollment Service Agreement. This agreement must be signed by both parents/guardians. The agreement includes acknowledgement that families have read and agree to abide by and follow policies and procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition Rates

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center has various rates for childcare services that are determined by parent/guardian status (student, staff/faculty, community) and child age and attendance schedule. In some cases, the child's age will determine the tuition rate, not the classroom. Tuition rates will be assessed annually, or as deemed necessary by the college. Rates may be changed with the review and approval of the Frederick Community College Board of Trustees. Parents will be notified in advance of such changes.

Student Rates

- A student is defined as "an individual who is registered at the College, either full or part-time, in a credit or non-credit course or courses, who has either paid or made arrangement for payment of tuition and/or fees.
- Students must be enrolled in six academic credits or equivalent non-credit program (75 hours) each semester to receive the student tuition rate. Students must provide proof of registration each semester before the student rate will apply.
- Student status will be verified shortly after the semester begins and again after the drop date for each semester. Families claiming student status but not meeting the six credits per semester requirement or dropping below six credits during the semester will be immediately billed the community tuition rate.

- Students may continue to receive student status during the summer months if the parents were eligible for the student rate in the spring semester and provide proof of enrollment in at least 6 academic credits or equivalent non-credit program in the fall semester.
- Students may continue to receive student status during the J-term if the parents were eligible for the student rate in the fall semester and provide proof of enrollment in at least 6 academic credits or equivalent non-credit program (75 hours) in the spring semester

Faculty/Staff Rates

- Families that are employed or on payroll at the time of application/enrollment or contracted for the upcoming semester will be eligible for the Faculty/Staff tuition rate.

Community Rates

- Families that are members of the community and are not students, faculty, or staff will be eligible for the Community tuition rate.

Tuition will not be reduced or waived for partial attendance due to illness, family vacation, or other reasons, except under extenuating circumstances and with prior arrangement from the Director. (See page 13 for more information about vacation credit).

If the college is closed due to a health emergency
Frederick Community College reserves the right to close the Children's Center due to health reasons. Decisions will be based on CDC guidelines, local government, and licensing department recommendations. We reserve the right to close for reasons beyond our control. If we are closed for 3 or more days due to health reasons or those beyond our control, tuition will be charged at half rate to continue enrollment.

If the College is closed due to holiday, inclement weather, or other conditions childcare tuition is charged according to the scheduled enrollment rate. Tuition is waived when the Center is closed the last week of December during the FCC Winter Break.

Security Deposit

A non-refundable deposit may be required in classrooms with wait lists to hold a space before enrolling. The amount of the deposit will depend on the length of time space is to be held. A deposit will not exceed one (1) month's tuition. Deposits will also be required for student families that remove their child from care during summer months or J-term. The deposit will not exceed one (1) month's tuition, is also non-refundable but will be applied to the first weeks' tuition.

Registration Fee

A registration fee of $30 per child or $50 per family will be charged at the beginning of the fall semester (September), the beginning of the Spring Semester (early February) and the beginning of the summer semesters (June). This fee will be due the week it is billed and is non-refundable. The fee will be prorated if families enroll in the middle of a semester.

Late Pick Up Policy and Fees

To comply with our Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Childcare license, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center closes at 6:00 p.m. We understand that unforeseen emergencies may occasionally prevent you from picking up your child on time. However, your

child anticipates your arrival and can become worried and anxious if his/her classmates have all been picked up and his/her own parent has not yet arrived. In addition, teachers are scheduled to leave at 6:00 p.m. so that they may attend to their families and carry out their personal plans for the evening. For the well-being of your child and our staff, we appreciate your cooperation in picking up your child in a timely manner. Regardless of the circumstances, each time you pick up a child after 6:00 p.m., your child's account will be charged a Late Pick-up Fee. $5.00 will be charged for the first 5 minutes and $1.50 for every minute thereafter for each child. This time will be recorded using the clock in the child's classroom. When late pick up occurs you will be asked to sign a Late Pick-Up Form to verify the time and date of pick up. One copy will be given to you and one copy will be kept on file at the Center. Parents who are late picking up their child **three or more times in a one-month period** will jeopardize their child's enrollment in the center.

In cases of emergency when a parent will be late in picking up a child, please make every effort to notify the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center and arrange for another authorized person to pick up your child. Staff members will not be allowed to transport children to parents unless written permission has been given by the parent. The police department will be notified if a child is not picked up within one hour of closing time unless the Center has been informed of an unusual circumstance delaying a parent or an authorized emergency person. Every attempt will be made by the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff to contact an authorized person to pick up your child prior to calling the police department. No child will ever be left unsupervised at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center.

Photo Identification Cards

In conjunction with the FCC Security Department located in the Student Center, parents/guardians may obtain Photo Identification Cards which will allow access during operating hours. A link to the Photo ID Registration Form will be emailed to you upon enrollment. Forms are completed electronically. Two days after submitting the form, you will be able to get your ID Card at the Campus Security Office in Gambrill Hall (first floor). A Security Officer will ask you for a photo identification and verify that you have been approved to receive an ID and then take your photo.

Photo ID cards are specific to an individual and are not to be shared. Any regularly authorized drop-off/pick-up person will need to have his/her own card.

You will need your card to enter the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center building. Please place it in a **secure** location and i**f your card is lost or stolen,** please report that information to the Director **immediately** so access to the building can remain secure. To obtain a new card, A Photo ID Registration Form will need to be submitted to the Director of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center.

Vacation Credit

Families of children that are enrolled for the full year (with no break in enrollment) may request one (1) week vacation credit per family (Monday-Friday) for each year of enrollment. Children must be enrolled in the program for six (6) months to be eligible for vacation credit. Vacation credit will not be granted for partial weeks. Vacation credit must be requested in advance by completing the Change of Schedule Form. Vacation credit will only be granted if arrangements are approved prior to the vacation absence. Once the Director verifies eligibility, parents will receive the signed vacation request.

Payment Procedures

- **Billing**: Tuition and one-time charges will be posted to your brightwheel account each Monday. Payment is due in full on the following Friday.

- **Payment Methods**: At the time of enrollment, parents will be invited to create their brightwheel account and set up their preferred method of payment. The Children's Center cannot accept cash or checks. Cash or check payments can only be accepted at the Cashier's office in Jefferson Hall.

- **Past Due Accounts**: Failure to make full payment each week will result in the following action:

    - If payment is not received by Thursday, a reminder notice will be sent through the brightwheel app.
    - If payment is not received by midnight each Friday for the week's tuition, a late fee of **$25** will be accessed to the account each week the payment is late.
    - Proof of payment may be required to attend the Center the following week.
    - Childcare services may be discontinued if an account is more than two (2) weeks delinquent.
    - FCC students who are delinquent in payment will be placed on the obligation list. This will result in all grades and transcripts being held by FCC and the student will not be able to register for classes until the balance has been paid in full or a payment plan is in place.
    - Please note that $25 will be charged to your account if your check is returned.

Questions: All questions regarding your account (tuition, fees and payments) should be directed to the Student Finance/Cashier's Office (301) 624-2810 or the Children's Center Director (301) 846-2612.

Financial Assistance

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center accepts several forms of financial assistance for Children's Center services. The forms of assistance currently accepted are listed below. Families/students receiving *any financial assistance* are responsible for payment of the full weekly tuition until appropriate documentation is approved by the Children's Center Director and an "Estimated Tuition Worksheet" estimating a new weekly payment schedule, has been prepared and signed by both the family/student and the Director. Once signed, the family is expected to pay the new weekly amount by Friday of each week.

Please note, the "Estimated Tuition Worksheets" are provided as a courtesy to the family. Balances are only estimates. If payments are not made on time, families will be charged a late fee and may be asked to pay the full amount for weekly tuition until the account is current. Families are responsible for checking invoices weekly and keeping the account up to date and making tuition payment adjustments as necessary. Families/students are responsible for the balance of the account at the end of each semester or when services are no longer provided

Childcare Grant
FCC students, enrolled in 6 or more credit hours, may apply for the Childcare Grant through the Foundation Office. Applications can be found at:
http://apps.frederick.edu/foundation/wheretogive/fccfoundationscholarships.aspx.

Grant applications are due prior to the beginning of each semester (fall, spring, summer) as indicated on the application form. Children must be enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center prior to receiving a grant award. The Grant application will need to be signed by the Director or Assistant Director of the Children's Center. Parents are responsible for payment of tuition that is not covered by the grant. Any unused portion of a childcare grant is returned to the college. For further information, please call the Foundation Office, 301-624-2851.

Project Forward Step

Project Forward Step is a counseling, information, and referral program designed to meet the needs of returning adult students, with special services for single parents (including single women who are pregnant) and displaced homemakers and is available through Adult Services. These special services include career counseling and academic advising, transition support, workshops, and College and community services referrals. For more information call the Adult Services Office, 301-846-2483.

Childcare Access Means Parents In School Program (CCAMPIS)

The Childcare Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program supports eligible FCC students by providing increased access to affordable on-campus childcare services at the Children's Center. Student-parents who are accepted into the program will receive a voucher to help cover the cost of childcare services provided by the Children's Center. The CCAMPIS program is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For more information about the grant visit our webpage at: https://www.frederick.edu/student-resources/childrens-center/ccampis.aspx

Student Aid

Students receiving financial aid for college tuition can use surplus funds to pay for childcare tuition.

- Families/Students must bring Student Accounts Statement to the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center Director.
- Families/Students will be required to sign an Assignment of Funds Agreement allowing surplus funds to be transferred to the Childcare account.
- Children Center Director will verify amount with Student Accounts.

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center also accepts outside assistance sponsored by the federal, state, and local government.

Childcare Subsidy Program

Through the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Childcare, families can apply for the **Childcare Subsidy (CCS) Program**. The purpose of the CCS Program is to provide financial assistance with childcare costs to eligible working families. General information about the program can be found on the following website:

http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-subsidy-program

The CCS Program issues vouchers to eligible families in need of help with the cost of childcare. To receive this assistance, families must meet certain requirements. Eligibility for the subsidy is based on income level and family size.

Eligible families receive a voucher from the Childcare Subsidy Central office to bring to the Children's Center. The voucher will need to be completed and signed by the family and Children's Center Director and then submitted to the Childcare Subsidy Central Office.

The voucher indicates the subsidy rate and the parental assigned copayment. The family must pay the copayment directly to the Children's Center. A Student Account Associate will provide the family with a worksheet that includes the weekly tuition rate based on the subsidy rate and time period of the voucher.

Vouchers are for a set period of time. Families/students are responsible for applying to renew vouchers. If a voucher expires, families are responsible for the full Children's Center tuition rate until a new voucher is obtained.

Military Childcare Assistance Program (CCAoA)
This program serves members of the Armed Forces, Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, National Park Service and US Customs and Border Protection. Each program is unique and the guidelines for administration are set forth by the Agency offering the Fee Assistance/Childcare Benefit. Parents can get more information on the GSA website at:

http://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/

Your Child's First Day

Parents and children are encouraged to visit the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center prior to the first day of enrollment. Parents can show the child what room or areas the child will be using and get to know the teachers. Please feel free to arrange to spend some time at the Center with your child prior to your child's first day of care. Talk to your child about what to expect at the Center.

On the first day, please bring the appropriate forms (if not already submitted), clothing items, lunch, special blanket or soft toy (if needed), and other personal belongings needed for the day, and two boxes of tissues. Please label all personal articles (except tissue boxes).

Plan to spend a little time with your child if your schedule allows. Your child will use you as a base to explore the new environment. When you are ready to leave**, please say good-bye to your child and tell your child you will be returning later in the day**. Sneaking out may cause your child great trauma and will reduce your child's sense of trust. Parents always need to say good-bye. Leaving without saying good-bye is not a practice accepted by the Center.

The teachers will be prepared to help your child through the transition and are very willing to deal with tears during this time. Many children cry upon separation and then proceed to have a great day. In the event that your child has extreme separation issues, the teachers will honestly share this information with you and work with you to help you and your child.

Please make every effort to be prompt in picking up your child. It is very unsettling for new children to be one of the last to go home. They fear their parents have forgotten them or don't remember where to pick them up. If at all possible it is helpful for parents to leave their child for a shorter time on the first day or two. A shorter day helps a child gradually become used to a full day at the Center. An adjustment period is normal and usually temporary. Please be in daily contact with your child's teacher so that everyone may work through the adjustment process successfully. Remember, the separation is often more traumatic for the parent than it is for the child and an update of how your child is doing is just a phone call away!

What to Bring for Your Child?

Please put your child's name on all items brought to the Center.

Equipment/Materials: We will provide all equipment and materials for your child at the Center.

Sheets/Blankets: Sheets and blankets are provided and laundered at the Center for cots and cribs. Your child may wish to bring a special blanket or a soft, cuddly stuffed animal to use during rest time. Please do not bring adult sized pillows or blankets for your child as we do not have the space to properly store them.

Dress Appropriately: Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for a play environment. Children will be painting and involved in other "hands-on" activities throughout the day at the Center. We will encourage children to participate in all activities – their play will not be limited for fear of getting clothing dirty. Children feel very sad if a parent has threatened them to keep their clothes clean. We will use washable markers and paint and provide aprons/smocks – all of which help – but, will not prevent the inevitable touch of paint, stroke of the pen, or splash of water. If you need to go somewhere in nice clothes after leaving the Center, please bring the nice clothes with you and change your child's clothing when you pick him/her up at the end of the day. Also, please make sure your child has clothing (and outer garments) appropriate to the weather conditions.

Shoes: Please make sure your child has shoes that will allow for free movement indoors and outdoors. The Center strongly recommends a pair of sturdy tennis shoes (sneakers) for each child. Please discourage children from wearing loose sandals/flip flops, crocs and jellies as these do not protect children's feet. During the winter months, please send a pair of indoor shoes for your child if your child wears boots to the Center. Remaining in warm boots is very uncomfortable for children as their feet sweat when indoors. Staff will help children change into their boots when they are ready to go outdoors.

Extra Clothing: Please provide at least one change of clothing – appropriate for the weather conditions – for your child. Please include underclothing (underwear, undershirts) and socks. Parents of children in the toilet learning process should bring at least three changes of clothing each day. Please place your child's clothing in a small, compact bag with your child's name on the bag. You can leave the clothing in your child's cubby. When clothing is soiled, please take it home and bring a clean set the following day.

Toys and Valuables: Children are required to leave toys and valuables at home. Except for soft, cuddly stuffed animals needed for security or nap times, all toys must stay home. Toys can be disruptive, foster jealousy, and cause tears when broken by classmates. Unfortunately, we cannot assume responsibility for toys or valuables brought to the Center. Remember – a soft, cuddly nap-time stuffed animal is okay! Occasionally teachers may request children bring in an item that is associated with the letter of the week or theme of the week. When this occurs teachers will let parents know via newsletter or note posted on the parent information board in the classroom.

Tissues: Please bring two (2) boxes of tissues to the Center on your child's first day and at the beginning of each subsequent semester of enrollment. Many tissues are used on a daily basis as the children are encouraged to use tissues as needed and then wash their hands. Tissue boxes will be used by all children in the classroom throughout the year. Teachers may

occasionally request additional boxes of tissues during the year if needed. We greatly appreciate your help as we go through many, many boxes of tissues each year!

Sign In & Sign Out Requirements

All parents must sign in children upon arrival using the brightwheel app and sign them out when removing the children from the Center using the brightwheel app. Children will be released only to adults authorized on the emergency card unless the Center is given advance written permission, by the parent who enrolled the child, to release the child to another adult. Staff members will ask for verification of identity (usually a driver's license) if the person authorized to pick up the child is unknown to the staff member (even if the person is a parent or someone else known to the child).

Parent Involvement and Communication

Ways Parents Can Be Involved

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center strongly encourages parents to become involved in the Center. You can do this in many ways by:

- serving on the Parent Advisory Board;
- volunteering on field trips;
- participating in family nights, back to school nights, and winter celebration;
- showing interest in your child's activities;
- reading newsletters (classroom and center);
- sharing hobbies, skills, and careers with the children;
- attending parent and teacher conferences; and
- attending special events such as grandparents breakfast, mother's day breakfast, and father's day breakfast.

Communication between Parents and Staff

We value clear, honest, and open communication with parents. Please feel free to discuss your child's progress or any concern you may have with your child's teachers or the administrators of the Center. It is helpful to the teachers if parents inform them about special things a child's family is doing or about events that may have happened at home that may influence a child's behavior at the Center. Families often have to deal with difficult situations that may affect a child. Please share information with the teachers if you know that your child may be affected by something outside of school (e.g. lack of sleep, illness of parent/relative, death of someone close to the family – including a pet, parental tensions, parental separation or divorce, family move, etc.). The teachers want to be sensitive to each child's needs and it will make a tremendous difference in how well that can be done if a teacher is aware of something that is traumatic or of concern to a child. All information shared by parents will be held in professional confidence.

We will keep parents informed about special or unusual experiences a child has at school. We want parents and children to be satisfied with their experiences at the Center. If a parent has a concern or complaint, the parent should first discuss it with the child's teacher. If further discussion is needed, please bring the concern to the Director or Assistant Director of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center. All efforts to arrive at a mutually agreed upon solution will be made. In the event that a solution cannot be agreed upon, parents may request a meeting with the Director of Auxiliary Services.

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center asks that parents communicate with teachers while the teachers are at the Center. Please refrain from calling staff at home to discuss issues related to the Center. If there is an emergency situation, please call the Director or Assistant Director of the Center before calling any other staff member. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in respecting the personal and family time of the Center's employees.

In addition to verbal daily communications, email, and phone conversations, the Center uses the Tadpoles communication system. The Tadpoles program allows our teachers to capture special moments, take photos, and videos of the children in action as well as send classroom information. Daily reports and notes can also be sent to your email. Each classroom is equipped with an iPad mini which is specifically used for the Tadpoles program. We consider all information captured using Tadpoles to be a private communication between our center and our families. No personal information is shared with any external parties and as a parent you will only receive information specifically about your child. We will be using the email address we have on file to communicate via the Tadpoles program. Please let us know if that should be updated.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents/guardians of children in our preschool classrooms, have the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher during a scheduled conference each October and April. During this time teachers and parents have an opportunity to work together to discuss the best way to meet their child's needs while in the classroom, the child's development and progress and to know more about the child and the family. Teachers will discuss with parents the assessment tools that are used and how the results are implemented in the classroom. Conferences include a written report from the teacher on the status of your child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. If at any time you would like to arrange a conference with a teacher, please feel free to do so. We try to avoid talking to parents about sensitive topics in front of the children. Please be sure to ask if the teachers can step out of the classroom for a moment if you need to discuss something about your child's behavior or emotions. Parents of children enrolled in the infant and toddler classroom will have scheduled conferences that correspond with the child's age and developmental milestones.

General Parent Information Bulletin Board

There is a bulletin board in the hallway outside of the Assistant Director's Office that contains general information for parents. An additional bulletin board is located just past the infant and toddler classroom and it contains specific articles concerning child development, health, behavior, nutrition, etc.

Classroom Parent Information Bulletin Board

There is a bulletin board located in each classroom that contains both general and specific information for parents. Please make a point to check the information on the board each day.

Newsletters

The Center and individual classrooms publish a monthly newsletter as a way to maintain communication with parents. The newsletters are distributed in your child's mailbox and via tadpoles.

Advisory Committee

At the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center Advisory Committee was formed in the spring of 2003 and is comprised of parents, FCC Staff/Faculty, Early Childhood Educators, & Human Service Professionals.

The purpose of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center Advisory Committee includes the following:

- Advise in the development/revision of policies/procedures as needed;
- Advise in periodic revision of Parent Handbook and Teacher Guide;
- Provide insight into local childcare needs as related to the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center mission and program priorities;
- Advise in development of budgetary priorities;
- Provide insight into collaboration efforts with community agencies and resources; and
- Promote the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center mission throughout the Frederick community.

Elections are held each April and the members serve a one-year term, beginning September 1.

Questions, Concerns, and Issues

If you have a question or concern about your child and his or her daily life at the Center (including developmental and social issues), please contact your child's teacher/caregivers first, as they are your primary source of information. If your question is about Center policies, such as enrollment, staffing, or the calendar, please go directly to the Director or Assistant Director. If the parent and teacher are unable to resolve an issue to the satisfaction of both parties, a meeting should be scheduled with the Director. Any issues that cannot be resolved between parents, teachers, and the Director will be taken to the Vice President for Finance for resolution.

Food and Nutrition Policies

Lunches/Snacks

We will provide morning snack, 2% milk with lunch, and afternoon snack each day. If a child requires a special diet, the parent will need to bring food. If a child has a food allergy or restriction, the Center must be notified of such, in writing (by both parent and doctor), at the time of enrollment.
The children will need to bring a lunch in **a soft-sided, small lunch bag**. Hard lunch boxes do not fit well into our refrigerator and take up a lot of space. Lunches may be placed in the "lunch tote bin" in the classroom. Please send food that can be eaten at refrigerated/room temperatures (except for infants/toddlers) in a thermos. The teachers will not be able to warm food for lunch. Please send plastic containers or Ziploc® bags to hold food. We will be happy to help children open containers – however, in order to foster independence in preschool age (and older) children, please send food in containers that children can easily open. Be sure to label containers if you want them returned.

In an effort to promote good nutrition for growing bones, muscles, and brain tissue, our lunch policy is geared toward making sure children have healthy foods. Let's do all we can to make sure our children have nutritious lunches!

Foods encouraged for lunch: sandwiches, fresh or canned fruit, fresh or canned vegetables, yogurt, cheese, pasta, cold cuts, bread products (rolls, bagels, muffins, pancakes, banana bread, zucchini bread, pita bread, etc.), crackers, raisins, pretzels, cereal mix, rice cakes, salads. Cheese, meat, and crackers sent in zip lock bags are much more nutritious than lunchables® which contain enormous amounts of sodium as a preservative. If sending foods on which children often choke, please cut the food into pieces which are ¼" or less in diameter. This includes: carrot sticks, celery sticks, grapes, apples, and similar foods.

Foods that will not be put out for lunch – PLEASE KEEP THESE FOODS AT HOME: cookies, cakes, cupcakes, fruit roll-ups, fruit-by-the-foot, fruit gummy snacks, marshmallows, potato chips, Doritos®, cheese puffs, Cheetos®, corn chips, any other non-nutritious chips, candy, gum, or any similar type of food. **Please leave popcorn out of lunches for children under the age of five (5). Popcorn is a choking hazard and can result in airway restriction or blockage.**

Beverages: we are required to furnish milk with lunch. Please leave all juice at home unless your child has a verified allergy to milk (verification from a doctor is required). If your child has a milk allergy, please provide 100% fruit juice for lunch (not a juice drink). We are required to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Child and Adult Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which states that all beverages, other than milk, contains no added sweeteners or caffeine unless prescribed by a health care provider. If your child does not want milk for lunch but has no allergy, we will be happy to provide water.

Food Allergies

All food allergies must be noted on your child's Emergency Form. Parents will also need to have an Emergency Health Care Plan completed by the child's Health Care Provider. This plan must also be signed by the parent giving the Center permission to post the plan in all food preparation areas. The Emergency Health Care Plan will be posted in the kitchen and in the child's classroom. The Health Care Plan posted in the classroom will be stored inside a cabinet door and not visible for the public.

Nut Free Facility

We are a 100% nut free facility. This is to ensure the safety of children that are allergic to nuts and foods containing nuts. These conditions can result in airway restriction and will require immediate emergency medical care. Although the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center strives to be a nut free/allergy free environment, **we cannot guarantee our classrooms to be a food allergen free zone**. Due to the fact that parents provide lunches for their children on a daily basis, it would be extremely difficult to ensure that there are no nut products in every child's lunch. Instead we ask parents to exclude nuts and nut products from their child's lunch.

Health Policies

Practices Concerning a Sick Child

Children will inevitably be exposed to germs carrying disease and illness. The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center cannot prevent the spread of disease; however, measures will be taken to reduce the spread of disease whenever possible. This includes requesting that **children exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness stay at home**. When sick children come to the Center, they jeopardize the health of every other person in the building. Please make arrangements to have a back-up person available to care for your child on days when your child is sick. **We are**

not licensed to provide care for sick children. We all need to work together to protect the health of our children, our teachers, and our families.

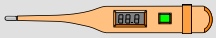
Please make sure your child is well enough to fully participate in the Center activities each day**. If your child is well enough to attend, your child is well enough to participate in all activities – including going outdoors.** We will not be able to honor requests to keep children indoors if the other children are going out to play. We cannot provide staff to stay indoors with your child when the other children are outdoors.

The Office of Childcare does not allow a child with a fever, communicable disease, or any other symptom of illness to participate in childcare (COMAR 13A.14.02.45).

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center teachers are responsible for assessing each child at arrival each day for signs and symptoms of illness. If a child is ill, the parent will be asked to take the child home. Please cooperate with staff when it is obvious that your child is ill and you are asked to take your child home.

The final decision to exclude a child from care is made by the Center administrators. This decision may be made in consultation with a medical professional if the situation warrants.

Please remember: a fever need not be present for a child to be ill.



Some of the signs and symptoms of illness, for which a child will be excluded from care, include, but are not limited to:

- **Fever** of 100 degrees or above
  -All children must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of Motrin or Tylenol before returning to the center.
- **Vomiting**-A child must be symptom free for a full 24 hours prior to returning to care.
- **Diarrhea** (2 or more within a 24-hour period) - A child will be excluded from care until diarrhea has stopped **and** the child has regular bowel movements **and** at least 24 hours has passed. Diarrhea in young children is often a sign of infection and can quickly cause dehydration which is very dangerous for children. If your child has an infection, they are infecting other children and teachers via bodily fluids such as saliva, mucus, etc. Also, if a child has Diarrhea and it is not contained in the diaper, it is a sanitary issue**.**
- **Abnormal behavior** such as unusual fatigue, refusal to eat and/or excessive irritability. A child who requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care may need to be excluded.
- **Conjunctivitis** (pink-eye) - A child will be excluded for 24 hours after antibacterial treatment is started. Viral conjunctivitis usually has clear, watery discharge and may not require medication or exclusion but **requires** diagnosis by a medical professional.
- Consistent complaints of **ear or stomach pain**.
- Excessive **greenish or yellow nasal discharge**, indicating possible infection.
- **Head Lice**, scabies, or other infections - Child will be excluded until 24 hours after treatment has started. In the case of Lice, child must be "nit-free" before returning to care.
- **Severe cough, wheezing**, difficult or rapid breathing-child will be excluded until medical evaluation allows the child to return to care.
- **Strep Throat** or other streptococcal infections – children will be excluded until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.

- **Rash**-unexplained or open sores and/or accompanied by fever or behavioral changes-a child will be excluded until a medical professional has determined that the condition is noninfectious.
- **Chicken Pox**-a child will be excluded until all sores have dried up and healed over.
- **Impetigo**-a child will be excluded until 24 hours after treatment.
- **Unspecified Respiratory Illness**- illness with cold symptoms, croup, ear infections, etc.- A child should be excluded until he/she feels well enough to participate fully, is fever free for 24 hours after prescription medication (if prescribed) has been administered.
- **Illness** resulting in a **greater need for care** than the childcare classroom staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children as determined by the childcare provider.

If runny nose and/or cough are due to allergies, this information must be documented on the health inventory and confirmed by a doctor.

If a child becomes ill during the day, the child will be isolated from other children; the parent will be notified, and asked to pick up the child immediately. **If the parent cannot be reached within 30 minutes, emergency contacts will be notified and asked to pick up the child.** Only a person to whom the Center has authorization to release the child will be allowed to pick-up the child. It is imperative that the Emergency Information phone numbers be kept up-to-date and accurate. Please inform the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center, in writing, of any information changes as soon as they occur.

The Center may not knowingly admit a child to care during the period of communicability of a communicable disease unless the child is undergoing treatment and the child's readmission is approved, in writing; by a licensed health practitioner (COMAR 13A.14.02.46). Parents are required by State Laws and our centers' policies to inform the center within 24 hours, exclusive of Holidays/weekends, if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease. All center parents will be notified of incidents of contagious diseases so they may take appropriate action to protect their children or watch for signs of the disease. The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center frequently communicates with Frederick County Health Department for medical advice and when necessary to report an outbreak of a communicable disease.

The Center may not readmit a child after an absence due to illness for three (3) days or more without first receiving a written statement from the parent or child's physician stating that the child may return to a regular schedule (COMAR 13A.14.02.45).

While the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will take as many health and sanitary precautions as possible, children are still susceptible to contracting diseases and becoming sick. Neither the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center nor the College will take responsibility for medical payments or treatments due to illness or any other condition.

Frequent hand washing is the single best way of preventing disease/illness. Please join us (if you are not already) in helping your child develop good hand washing habits. Please encourage your child to wash his/her hands upon arrival to the classroom each morning. Proper hand washing procedures are posted in each classroom.

Administration of Medicine

The Office of Childcare regulates the administration of medication at childcare centers (COMAR 13A.14.02.49). We may administer medication only if:

1. The parent's authorization form was signed by parent **and physician** before administering the medication. This authorization includes the child's name, parent's signature, physician's signature, date signed, identity of medication, dosage for child, dates on which the medication is to be administered, and time/conditions to administer the medication.

2. Medicine must be in the original container (including nebulizer medications) labeled by the pharmacy or physician with the child's name, expiration date, and dosage instructions. Medicine will be kept in a locked box at the Center.

3. At least one dose of a prescription medication must be given to the child at home in order for parents to monitor the child's reaction to the medication. Please do not come directly from the pharmacy to the Center with the medication and expect to be able to give your child a dose and leave your child in care – this is not allowed by law. You will be asked to take your child home until you have had time to observe any reaction to the initial dose of medication. Allergic reactions can occur even if your child has used that medication previously.

4. **Over the counter medications may not be administered unless parents provide written authorization from a health care provider**. Non-prescription medications must be in the original and labeled container. The container or written authorization must include
    a. child's name
    b. name of medication
    c. current date
    d. dosage
    e. how to administer
    f. time medication must be given
    g. medication start and end date
    h. reason for medication
    i. expiration date
    j. special instructions or storage information

5. The Center must have written parental authorization to administer sun screen lotion, diaper ointment, lip balm, or skin cream. Topical medications will only be used as a preventative. If skin is broken or irritated medication cannot be administered. A parent must provide written approval from a health care provider that indicates above noted information. **If these medications are needed for treatment, i.e. broken skin, eczema, burn, bleeding or severe diaper rash, a written order from a health care provider and written parental authorization is needed.**

6. The Center must document the administration of all medications (except sunscreen, diaper ointment, lip balm, or skin cream). Parents wishing to personally administer medication (during the time the child is in care) may do so – however, the parent must sign the appropriate form indicating the administration of the medication.

Teachers need to know if a child has taken medicine within the past twelve (12) hours before arrival at the Center – including over-the-counter (OTC) cold or pain medications (e.g. Tylenol, Motrin, cough syrup, allergy antihistamine, etc.). It is extremely important that a child not be given a fever reducer in the morning just to be able to come to the Center. A fever is one indicator that the body is fighting an illness and should be taken as a sign that a child is ill. Children who are given pain reliever in the morning (to reduce fever) generally feel ill and the fever returns during the day as soon as the medication wears off. This is not helpful to the child and usually requires

a call to parents in the middle of the day. Please be honest and forthright when treating your child for any illness as this helps us provide appropriate care.

Nebulizer Treatment Procedures

It is preferable for the parent to come into the Center for this process, but understandable that the parent cannot always do so. In order for the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center Director or Assistant Director to use the nebulizer, the following procedures must be followed:

1. An original letter of authorization from the child's pediatrician outlining the necessary information we normally require to administer medication (child's name, date, medication name, dosage to be given, time of day to be given, and any special instructions). Please note that this authorization is valid for one year and must be renewed annually. For children that receive this type of medication on a regular basis, the doctor's original letter of authorization will be kept in the child's file, and a copy will be kept in the classroom.
2. The parent signs the Medication Order Form to be attached to the doctor's authorization letter. This child's medical condition before and after medication is noted on the consent. Two staff members must sign and witness the appropriate use of the nebulizer.
3. The nebulizer must be kept out of reach of the children and stored in a classroom cabinet. It may not be kept in the child's cubby.

Safety Policies

Emergency Medical Care

Staff members will document all accidents or injuries occurring at the Center. Parents will be notified of such. If the staff believe that a child needs emergency medical care beyond basic first aid (or needs a medical evaluation), the appropriate steps will be taken to secure such care for the child. These steps include, but are not limited to:

- attempt to contact a parent or guardian;
- attempt to contact parent/guardian through emergency contacts;
- contact of appropriate FCC Security services;
- attempt to contact child's physician (in cases involving a chronic medical condition or transport to hospital); and
- contact emergency medical services through 911. If child must be transported, child will be taken by emergency vehicle to Frederick Memorial Hospital or the appropriate medical facility as deemed necessary by 911 emergency medical technicians. A staff member, familiar to the child, will remain with the child until a parent or authorized person takes custody of the child at the medical facility.

Expenses incurred from accident, injury, or following emergency procedures are the full responsibility of the child's family. FCC assumes no responsibility for such expenses.

Child Custody

From time to time, there are families enrolled at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center who are involved in child custody disputes. This type of conflict can cause tremendous stress for both

children and parents. When this occurs the staff at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center recognizes that we are in a unique position. We must offer support and understanding to parents, security and consistency to children, while at the same time remaining strictly neutral on all issues regarding the custody dispute. Because this line we walk is often quite fine, we have developed the following list of expectations for Center staff and for parents:

If you are involved in a child custody dispute, you can expect the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff to:

1. Focus on the needs of the child(ren) enrolled at the center. It is especially important that the child have a place that is safe, consistent and impartial.
2. Remain strictly neutral in all matters regarding custody dispute. We will insist that parents resolve the conflict independent of the Center and staff.
3. Strictly follow the custody arrangements as they are written in the court documents. If there are no court documents regarding custody or restraint of access to a child, we cannot, according to the law, restrict the access to either properly identified parent.
4. Regularly communicate with both parents, any problems regarding the effects of the custody dispute on the child(ren), or problems or concerns with the custody arrangements as they affect the center. When parents are unable to resolve matters and their disputes become disruptive to the center, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center reserves the right to dis-enroll the family from the center at the discretion of the Center Director.
5. Offer assistance to both parents in finding outside resources that might be helpful to them or their children.

Inclement Weather Practices

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center follows the College for all weather related closings. The College will provide inclement weather announcements concerning cancellations, closings, and delays by 5:30 am. In the event of changing weather patterns and conditions, the college may re-evaluate a decision. When in doubt, please call the 301-846-2400 or check the FCC website for the most current updates before you drive to the campus.

For instant alerts sent to your cell phone or email account parents can register for **e2Campus** to get the latest information on weather related closures or campus emergencies. Go to https://www.frederick.edu/current-students/fccalert.aspx to create an account and sign up.

Other sources include:
Radio stations (note: radio and television stations may not use the exact words the college gives them – call the college switchboard to be sure)

WFMD (AM 930)	WARX (FM 106.9)	WTOP (FM 103.3)
WAFY (FM 103.1)	WFRE (FM 99.9)	

OTHER:

- FCC Switchboard: **301.846.2400**
- FCC Web Site: www.frederick.edu
- Local television stations may also carry inclement weather announcements
- FCC Alert text message (register at www.frederick.edu/fccalert)
- Comcast Cable – FCC TV Chanel 23

If the College is open, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will follow the normal schedule.

If the College is delayed, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will open 15 minutes prior to the opening time.

If the College is open but classes are delayed, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will follow the normal schedule.

If the College is open but day classes are cancelled, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will follow the normal schedule.
If FCC is closed, the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center is closed.

Please remember: *Because of changing weather patterns and conditions, the college often re-evaluates decisions. For example, the message might say, "FCC will open at eleven, but we'll re-evaluate our decision at 9 o'clock." When in doubt, please check for the most current updates before you head to campus.*

Fire, Natural Disaster, Emergency Procedures

1. In the event of a fire or other structural threat/disaster, the children/staff will be evacuated according to the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center evacuation plan. The children will be relocated to a safe place on campus at the direction of FCC officials. The first choice of location will be the Cougar Grille, located in the Student Center. The second choice of location will be the Gymnasium located in the Athletics Center. Other locations could be assigned as appropriate and will be determined based upon safety and health issues. Drills are conducted on a monthly basis to practice evacuation procedures.

2. In the event of a natural disaster or threat of disaster (e.g. tornado, hurricane, thunderstorm, etc.), the children and staff will be moved to the central corridor outside of classroom C unless advised by FCC officials to move to a different location. Choice of alternate locations will be the same as above.

3. In the event of the ***threat*** of a biological, nuclear, or other terrorist act, the following guidelines will be followed:
   - Families will be asked to enhance supplies for their children including, but not limited to, extra diapers, extra formula, extra baby food, extra clothing and shoes, extra food if a child is on a restricted diet.
   - The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will maintain an extra supply of bottled water and food sufficient for a minimum of 24-48 hours.
   - The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center will have alternate lighting available in the form of flashlights.
   - A portable communication device will be in place at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center to provide communication via radio, short wave, and television band (battery operated).
   - If instructed to evacuate the building and there is adequate time for parents to pick up children, parents will be notified to the best of the college's ability. If parents are not able to pick up children prior to other emergency instructions, the children will remain in the care of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff.

4. In the event of the ***occurrence*** of a biological, nuclear, or other terrorist act, the following guidelines will be followed:
   - Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff will follow emergency directions as announced by FCC officials.
   - If instructed to evacuate the building and there is adequate time for parents to pick up children, parents will be notified to the best of the College's ability. If parents are not able to pick up children prior to other emergency instructions, the children will remain in the care of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff.
   - If instructed to remain in the building, the children and staff will "Shelter in Place" until instructed to do otherwise. At that point, the building will be secured. In the event of biological or nuclear attacks, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building in order to reduce the chance of contamination. Air handling systems will be shut off immediately. Doors may be taped to reduce the chance of air infiltration. Parents will be contacted (if communication is possible) but will not be allowed to enter the building until the threat of contamination is lifted and emergency officials deem it safe for the building to be opened.
   - If instructed to evacuate the building, the children and staff will move to the designated location. FCC officials, in conjunction with emergency management agencies, will determine the location. The first choice of location will be the Cougar Grille, located in the Student Center. The second choice of location will be the Gymnasium located in the Athletics Center. Other locations may be designated as deemed appropriate by college officials.

5. In the event of any emergency requiring evacuation of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center building, parent/emergency contact information for each child will be in the possession of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff members. Every possible attempt will be made to contact parents to inform them of the location of their child(ren).

Lost or Missing Children

The Center maintains a low staff to child ratio. Our teachers are trained to supervise and manage groups of children on and off campus. Continuous head counts maintain attention on every child's location and activities. Staff members also count the number of children they have anytime they leave and return to the classroom. If a child is missing the following steps will be taken:

- Call 911 immediately; provide the following information:
  - child's name and age;
  - address;
  - physical and clothing description of the child, including any distinguishing marks such as visible scars or birthmarks;
  - medical status, if appropriate;
  - time and location child was last seen; and
  - person with whom the child was last seen.

- Notify Director immediately and search the facility again.
- Have child's information including picture, if possible, available for the police upon their arrival.
- Director will notify parents of missing child and attempt confirmation that child is with family; if not - inform parents of situation and steps taken.
- Director will report incident to licensor and Child Protective Services.

- Director will complete a written incident report at the earliest opportunity; incident reports are stored.

Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

No staff member, substitute, volunteer, or anyone connected with the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center may subject a child to child abuse, neglect, or injurious treatment. An operator or staff member who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected in the Center or outside of the Center shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the Department of Social Services or to the local law enforcement agency (COMAR 13A.14.02.70).

Frederick Community College is not responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false, incorrect, or incomplete information provided by a parent or guardian on the Emergency Form or any other documentation given to the Children's Center.

Center Policies and Procedures

Parking

Please park in the circular driveway when dropping off children, picking up children, or coming to visit. Parking spaces in the lot adjacent to the Children's Center are generally needed for teachers. When you park at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center, ***please be sure to turn off the ignition of your vehicle*** (regardless of the weather) and remove your keys from the car. It would be traumatic if someone came and drove off with your car when you were inside the Center. It would also be devastating if a child got into an unattended car with the motor running and engaged the car into motion. Also, it is imperative that young children remain under the supervision of an adult at all times. Never leave a young child unattended in your vehicle. Thanks for your help in protecting our children (and your vehicle).

Cell Phones

Please complete cell phone calls prior to entering the building. Thank you for giving your child your attention when sharing his or her world of school.

No Smoking

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center enforces a strict "NO SMOKING POLICY." Please refrain from smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes, or any other substance in the Center, on the property of the Center, or within view of the children. This includes any area adjacent to the building, parking lot, or playground. (COMAR 13A.14.02.50).

Open Door Policy

Parents of enrolled children are welcome to visit the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center at any time of the day. We invite you to come whenever you can. We would like you to be a part of your child's world at the Center as much as possible so that you can know "first hand" what we do each day.

We encourage parents to be sensitive to their children's issues related to separation from the parents. If a child has a hard time separating, it is better for the parent to look through the windows and stay out of sight of the child rather than disrupting the child and creating a situation where the child will have to deal with separation again. Also, if visiting during nap time, please look through the window rather than enter the classroom so as not to disturb the sleeping children unless you are picking up your child to leave the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center.

Inclusion in Observations, Photos, Marketing Publications

Children at the Center may be included in observations, evaluations, campus video productions, campus photo sessions, marketing materials, publications, or website photos in conjunction with the College for educational or non-commercial uses only.

FCC Employees You May See at the Center

In addition to the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff, there may be participation and visitation by various College personnel or students. These may include the FCC President, FCC Vice Presidents, esteemed guests of the college, faculty members, security officers, custodians, and maintenance support.

College students and faculty in Early Childhood Development and/or Education programs may be conducting observations, interviews, student teaching, or other such related activities. We welcome their involvement in our programs!

Visitors

Any visitor to the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center must first report to the Director, Assistant Director, or Teacher acting in charge of the Center prior to being allowed access to the Center. All visitors will be treated as strangers to the children.

Gifts to Staff

Center staff may accept small items such as pictures of a child or family, baked goods, candles, candy, flowers, inexpensive craft items, gift certificates, etc. Please refrain from giving teachers larger or more expensive gifts as they will have to decline or return such a gift.

Transitions to Kindergarten

The preparation for the transition to Kindergarten begins when children enter our preschool program. Teachers and parents work together to recognize a child's strengths and early signs of difficulties with learning, responding with appropriate activities and learning experiences and passing that information on to the child's parents and future teachers using Frederick County

Public Schools Transitional and Planning Form for Kindergarten. The Center will share information with outside agencies only with parental permission.

Withdrawing a Child

In order to best utilize the services of the Center and offer enrollment to families in need of care, the Director of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center must know when parents are planning to withdraw a child from care. Therefore, parents are required to notify the Center, in writing, at least two (2) weeks prior to withdrawing a child in order to terminate enrollment. If notification is not given in writing, at least two weeks in advance, parents will be responsible for the tuition accumulated during the two weeks (or any portion thereof) of absence.

- Families enrolled in the automatic payment plan must contact the Director or Financial Assistant to discontinue automatic payments.
- Accounts must be paid in full by the Monday of your child's final week of attendance at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center.

Any outstanding balances greater than 90 days will be subject to a collections agency. The collections agency will require full payment in addition to a 17% collection fee (% subject to change).

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has been shown to be the best form of infant nutrition, providing a multitude of health benefits to both infant and mother and for this reason the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center subscribes to the following policy:

1. Breastfeeding mothers will be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk.

   Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a private and sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area will have an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.

2. A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk.

   Breastfeeding mothers may store their expressed breast milk in the center or classroom refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milks (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding whenever possible and bottles will not be propped.

3. Safe handling and storage of human milk.

   Children's center staff will adhere to the following guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control:

a. Frozen breast milk will be transferred to the refrigerator for thawing or by swirling in a bowl of warm water. Microwaves will not be used to thaw milk. Breast milk will not be refrozen after it has been thawed.
b. Breast milk should not be left at room temperature for more than 6 hours.
c. Breast milk should not be left in the refrigerator or served after 48 hours if fresh or 24 hours if frozen.
d. Breast milk should not be kept frozen for more than 3 months.
e. Breast milk should be kept in a freezer at 0°F or below.

4. Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed.

   The center will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should a question or problem arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the center.

5. Parents and care givers will make a plan that will include the following information:

   a. how breast milk will be stored,
   b. if mother will attend the center to breastfeed and at what times,
   c. what to do when milk is gone and baby is hungry,
   d. the preferred temperature of the milk, and
   e. the approximate dates that the plan will be reviewed (every 3 months) or.

Screen Time

It is the policy of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center that technology owned by the Center such as, TV/video, computers, tablets, electronic games and hand held devices may be used on occasion to enhance the curriculum.

For children ages 3-36 months the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center has a "No Screen Time" policy. For children three years and older, screen time shall be limited to no more than thirty minutes once a week* and will be only for educational, instructional or physical activity use. Screen time is defined as the time spent viewing TV/video, computer, electronic games, hand-held devices or other visual devices.
Screen time is not permitted during meal or snack time.

Videos must be intentionally linked to the instructional goals. The teachers will carefully review, select and screen titles that are appropriate and topic related. Approval from the Director or Assistant Director is required. Parents/Guardians will be informed of the title and duration before viewing whenever possible. Videos must be free of advertising and brand placement. Children will be provided with an opportunity to discuss the material with their teachers.
*Once or twice during the school-age summer camp program (June-August) children may view a G or PG-rated movie with parent permission.

Safe Sleep

In order to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) the Children's Center adheres to the following Safe Sleep Policy. While in care at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center:

- Infants (0-12 months) will be placed in cribs on their backs however if they turn over during sleep they will be allowed to adopt whatever sleep position they prefer.
- A physician's note for non-back sleepers will be required if parents do not want their infant put to sleep on their backs. The note must explain why the infant should not use a back-sleeping position, how the infant should be placed to sleep, and a time frame that the instructions are to be followed.
- Staff will use safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses
- Staff will not permit Infants to wear a bib while sleeping
- Staff will only allow infants to sleep in cribs not on the floor mats, bouncy seats, etc.
- Staff will monitor sleeping infants every 5 minutes and record and document such
- Cribs will be free of toys, stuffed animals, and extra bedding
- Blankets will not be used in cribs. Sleep clothing, such as sleepers, and sleep sacks, are good alternatives to blankets
- Staff will not permit the use of wedges or infant positioners, since there's no evidence that they reduce the risk of SIDS
- Administrators will inform all staff working with infants about the Safe Sleep Policy and will review these practices often

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Our Programs

Infants and Toddlers

The infant and toddler program focuses on meeting the developmental and individual needs of each child in the most respectful and appropriate ways possible. Basic skills are introduced and enhanced as each child expresses interest and curiosity. "Learning" is never forced upon a child. Learning opportunities are incorporated into the daily routine in a fun and playful way. The program includes free play, singing, storytelling, book reading, self-help skill development, manipulative play, creative activities, outdoor play, and other appropriate learning opportunities.

The work of infants is developing **BASIC TRUST**.

Infants:

- Are new to the world and are completely dependent on adults to care for them.
- Have physical and emotional needs intertwined.
- Are born with unique personalities and innate characteristics.
- Display individual temperaments (active, cuddly, distant, curious, shy, quiet, easily stimulated, and independent).
- Develop attachments to parents and caregivers.
- Like to watch other children.
- Use all five senses to learn about their world: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling.
- Are fascinated with their most interesting playmate: a caring adult.
- Communicate with their bodies, actions, and sounds.
- Explore first their bodies and then their world as they begin to stretch, sit up, crawl, and walk.
- Love the traditional games of babyhood which promote coordination and development of attention (Patty Cake, This Little Piggy, and Peek-a-Boo).
- Practice new physical skills: grasping, reaching, picking up, and pushing.
- Begin to practice separation as they crawl away.

The work of toddlers and young preschoolers is developing **AUTONOMY**.
Toddlers:

- Are "into everything."
- Get easily excited and are very active.
- Discover two-legged locomotion.
- Are giddy with their new movement and the independence it brings.
- Play not just to see how things feel, but to figure out what can be done with play objects.
- Work at becoming independent as they are learning to do things for themselves.
- Determined about "ME, MINE, AND MY".
- Are in love with the word "NO" (because that is the way they practice making decisions all by themselves).
- Become easily frustrated as they have a short attention span.
- Love to build up, knock down, put in, and take out.
- Begin to pretend play - imitate what they see and hear.
- Are learning to use language to express feelings and ideas.
- Ask "WHAT?" (Pointing to an object) many times per day.

Our typical infant/toddler daily schedule - all times are approximate

7:00 a.m.	Free Play, Reading Books
9:00 a.m.	Snack
9:45 a.m.	Activity Time, Stroller Rides, Outdoor Play
11:15 a.m.	Lunch
12:00 p.m.	Rest Time
3:00 p.m.	Snack
3:15 p.m.	Free Play, Outdoor Play, Stroller Rides

Children are diapered on an as-needed basis throughout the day.

Parents will be asked to provide information that addresses the child's normal pattern of activities, sleeping, and eating. This information is updated every two months for all infants and toddlers. On a daily basis, one staff member will have primary responsibility for each infant and toddler in care. This staff member will be responsible for monitoring the child's schedule and recording the events of the child's day for the parents.

All infants and toddlers will be diapered as needed. The children will be checked on a regular basis (every two hours) to make sure each child is clean and comfortable. Parents provide all disposable diapers, baby wipes, diaper cream, and any other related item. For sanitary purposes, the Center requires the use of disposable diapers. Parents will need to bring an adequate supply of diapers and wipes for use throughout each week. Disposable diapers will be discarded at the time of each diaper change.

Except in inclement weather, infants and toddlers will be taken outdoors (either walking or in strollers) on a daily basis and will be given outdoor play opportunities in the toddler play area of the playground as appropriate to the age and abilities of the child.

Parents will need to provide pre-bottled formula, bottled breast milk (if not visiting to feed the baby), cereal, and other infant foods and beverages. All baby bottles must be secured with a lid (please label the lid as well as the bottle). Parents wishing to breastfeed are welcome at any time. Breast milk will be stored in the refrigerator for 24 hours if previously frozen or 48 hours if

recently expressed. Parents may also request breast milk kept in the freezer but not longer than 3 months. Baby food jars must be new and unopened when brought to the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center. Please label and date all jars of baby food. Unused portions of food and bottles will be returned to parents daily.

The Center will provide snacks and beverages as the child is ready and with written parental consent. The Center provides 2% milk for children 12 months and older. If you would like for your child to have whole milk, it must be provided. Infant and toddler food waivers will be provided for parental consideration and signature.

In terms of personal hygiene, please make sure that your child's fingernails are kept well-trimmed. As young children do a lot of exploring with their hands, sharp fingernails can scratch the child, the other children, and teachers. We also appreciate it when children are clean – a daily bath goes a long way toward eliminating the dirt and other substances young children get on themselves throughout the day – and, they smell great after a bath. Please begin helping your toddler brush his/her teeth every day – this is an important oral hygiene practice to begin early with your child and will promote healthy habits.

Before children learn to walk they spend most of their time on the floor. In order to keep children as healthy as possible while in our care we request that parent's remove their shoes or wear shoe covers when entering the Infant and Toddler classroom.

Young Preschoolers (2 to 3 years)
Much of a young preschooler's day will be devoted to developing social skills, particularly those of cooperative play and problem solving. Children will be encouraged to become a part of the larger group. In addition to the development of social skills and the enhancement of basic skills, they will be encouraged to develop listening skills, learn how to follow simple directions, and practice self-help skills.

Various concepts and ideas will be introduced to encourage the development of new skills, including expanding vocabulary and curiosity. The children will be invited to experiment with manipulatives, gross motor play, singing, storytelling, book reading, self-help skill development, games, water play, creative play, and many other fun opportunities.

Approximate Daily Schedule: 2-3 year olds

(Diaper changes as needed)

7:00 a.m.	Arrival time, free play
9:00 a.m.	Snack
9:30 a.m.	Group Time/Activities
11:00 a.m.	Indoor/Outdoor Free Play
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m.	Rest time
3:00 p.m.	Snack
3:30 p.m.	Indoor/Outdoor Free Play

Reading, singing, dancing, and creative expression are incorporated into our daily activities!

Older Preschoolers/Pre-K (4 to 5 years)
Older preschoolers are much more independent and require less assistance during structured portions of the day. Social and problem solving skills, including bargaining and compromising, become more advanced as they work more cooperatively with one another and are introduced to

more complex ideas and social interactions. Continual practice and refinement of social skills is a critical component in the development of positive self-esteem and self-confidence.

Much of a preschool/Pre-K child's time is spent in developing friendships. Time is given for children to work on social skills (imagination, planning, creating, problem solving, being courteous, and cooperation). Teachers will model appropriate social behavior and will address concerns as needed (either individually or in a group). Teasing and making fun of other children will not be tolerated regardless of the situation. Alternate ways of positive interactions will be explored in these situations.

Preschoolers will have large blocks of time throughout the day to work on social skills and social interactions as well as to develop creative thinking processes. Creativity in the classroom will be encouraged through the use of themes designed to develop curiosity about learning. New concepts and opportunities allow them to experience a variety of ways to learn new things and to use their continually expanding base of knowledge. They will be encouraged to use songs, storytelling, literature, language, games, blocks, manipulatives, and other creative materials in more sophisticated ways and will be given time specifically devoted to developing their own unique themes of play. Teachers encourage cooperation and teamwork to help develop a spirit of respect and caring.

The work of preschoolers is developing **INITIATIVE**.
Preschoolers:

- Integrate all the growth of earlier years.
- Initiate a lot by talking, creating, exploring.
- Ask 'WHY" a lot!
- Are aware of a wide range of feelings and ways to express feelings.
- Enjoy dramatic and make-believe play…achieve the height of imaginative, fantasy play.
- Love to play with words and language "A cactus is like a fork with thorns on it."
- Are curious and inventive.
- Repeat new skills until they are mastered.
- Learn through ACTIVE play…masters of running, jumping, climbing
- Develop increasing control over small and large motor skills.
- Are focused on the process of play and creating…not the product.
- Can be bossy and critical
- Love to read, play, sing, dance, explore. We are a curious bunch!

A typical day for Older Preschool / Pre-K

(*All times are approximate)*

7:00 a.m.	Arrival time, free play
9:15 a.m.	Snack
9:30 a.m.	Group time / activities
11:30 a.m.	Outdoor / free play
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m.	Music, time to read/rest
1:30 p.m.	Afternoon group time/activities
3:15 p.m.	Snack
3:45 p.m.	Afternoon activities / Outdoor Play

Children are admitted to the Three-year-old preschool program if they are three by September 1st. Children are admitted to the Pre-K program if they are four by September 1st. Children that are four after September 1st are admitted into our Four-year-old preschool program.

Early Entrance

Early entrance into our Three and Four-year-old preschool programs is available. In order to be considered for early entrance to the Three-year-old preschool program the child must be at least two and a half and demonstrate social and academic readiness. In order to be considered for early entrance to the Four-year-old preschool program the child must be at least three and half and demonstrate age appropriate social and academic readiness. Since our Pre-K program is an approved MSDE educational program we follow Frederick County age requirement guidelines and we do not permit early entrance into our Pre-K program. Children in our Pre-K program must be four by September 1st.

Curriculum Goals

The most important goal of a curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. A good curriculum gives children good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives. A curriculum should be designed to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. Using a good curriculum, teachers can teach children *how* to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. A good curriculum allows children to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center chooses to implement the Creative Curriculum that identifies goals in all areas of development:

- *Social*: To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.
- *Emotional*: To help children experience pride and self- confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- *Cognitive*: To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.
- *Physical*: To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

The activities that are planned for children, the organization of the environment, the selection of toys and materials, planning the daily schedule, and talking with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of the Creative Curriculum and give your child a successful start in school. (Adapted from Teaching Strategies, Inc.)

Curriculum

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center chooses to implement the Creative Curriculum developed by Diane Trister Dodge. The philosophy behind the curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in.

In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors and they notice relationships between things. In time, they learn to use one object to stand for another. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. For example, they might pretend a stick is an airplane or a block is a hamburger. These early symbols - the stick and the block - are similar in shape to the objects they represent. Gradually children become more and more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. They learn to "read" pictures which are symbols of real people, places and things. This exciting development in symbolic thinking takes place during the pre-school years as children play.

- Play provides the foundation for academic or "school" learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols such as letters (which are symbols for sounds) and numbers (which are symbols for number concepts). Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children.

Assessments

Assessing young children (birth – 5 years) is often difficult. It is difficult because young children are very active and easily distracted, they have a short attention span and they perform inconsistently in unfamiliar settings. Other factors that make assessment difficult include cultural differences and language barriers. Assessment of young children requires sensitivity to the child's background and proper training of teachers. The Center uses assessments for three main reasons: to provide information to teachers and families that will improve the care and education of children, to identify children's interests and needs and to identify children at risk. The assessments are based on information from children's typical classroom performances. They focus on every day, naturally occurring practical behaviors and accomplishments.

For children birth to two years the Center uses the OUNCE Scale Assessment System. This interactive system incorporates teacher as well as parent observations and is a meaningful way to evaluate children's accomplishments, areas of difficulty and approaches to learning. The OUNCE Scale has three elements:

- the Observation Record which is used by the teacher to document everyday behaviors,
- the Family Album which is used for families to document everyday behaviors and share information about culture and language, and the
- Developmental Profile which is used to evaluate development and progress over time.

The OUNCE Scale is divided into six major areas of development:

- personal connections,
- feelings about self,
- relationships with others,
- understanding and communicating,
- exploration and problem solving, and
- movement and coordination.

At any time if teachers feel that there are developmental delays or other special needs the information is communicated immediately to families in a sensitive, supportive and confidential

manner with documentation and explanation for the concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment.

For children three to five years the Center uses the Early Learning Assessment System. It is designed to be used in the natural environment multiple times throughout the school year and to equip teachers with tools to track individual children's growth, individualize learning opportunities, plan for intervention, engage in real-time instructional planning, and ensure that all children are on the path for kindergarten readiness and beyond. The Early Learning Assessment follows a process to help teachers document, analyze, and make instruction decisions based on the information they collect.

The system focuses on seven domains of classroom learning:

- Social Foundations,
- Language and Literacy,
- Mathematics,
- Science,
- Social Studies,
- Fine Arts, and
- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Children are assessed on a daily basis. Teachers use anecdotal records and other informal notes to track and record children's progress. Teachers meet with parents to share information about children's progress at the end of each age level for OUNCE Scale and twice a year (October and May) for the Early Learning Assessment System. All assessors have been trained in the assessment procedures. All child records are kept confidential in a secure and non-public place.

Nap Time

A quiet rest time occurs daily from 12:30-3:00 p.m. in the toddler and preschool classrooms. While we cannot force the children to sleep we do provide a cot and a quiet atmosphere. After a 45-minute period any child that is awake may read or play quietly on his/her cot.
Sleep is a requirement for good health and for young children to get enough of it, some amount of daytime sleep is usually necessary. With physical and mental development at an all-time high in early childhood, naps provide the body with much-needed downtime for growth and rejuvenation. Naps also help keep children from becoming overtired, a state that not only takes a toll on their moods but may also make it harder for them to fall asleep at night. If a parent feels their child is sleeping too much at the Center we will help the child wake up gently only after 1 hour of sleep. If the child does not awaken with the first try, another gentle approach will be tried after 30 minutes of sleep. Teachers will not forcibly awaken a child. Children who are well rested will wake up on their own.

Birthday Celebrations

We look forward to celebrating birthdays with the children and their families. If a parent would like to bring a special treat for such an occasion, please make arrangements with the child's teacher in advance. We encourage food items such as fruit muffins, fruit/vegetable bread, granola bars, fresh fruit, frozen yogurt, Go-gurt (or other fun yogurts), and other nutritious foods. **We strongly discourage cupcakes, cake, and other sweet food that has little nutritional value for the children.** Due to licensing regulations, birthday treats **must** be **store bought.** Any food brought in for a birthday snack must arrive unopened, as it was packaged by the bakery

or store where it was purchased. You are welcome to join your child during this snack time. Please remember that, due to safety reasons, we cannot light birthday candles in the center. Please do not bring goody bags or any other party treats. In regards to invitations for children's private birthday parties - the teachers will be happy to distribute invitations **if every child** in the classroom is invited. If only a selected group of children will be invited from the classroom, the office can supply addresses for invitations to be mailed.

Holiday Celebrations

Our Center chooses not to celebrate the various holidays throughout the year for many reasons. Children receive a great deal of stimulation during these times, and our feeling is that we should maintain the consistency that children come to expect at the center. We will discuss holidays and sometimes read stories about them, based on children's interests, but we avoid parties and activities that are directly related to holiday themes (we will opt for seasonal activities instead). We feel it is up to each individual family to celebrate these special days in its own way. It is not our place to decide which holidays should be celebrated for the families in our Center. Our diverse population is something we value, but it would be inappropriate to celebrate one culture's holidays and ignore others'. It is relatively unlikely that we would celebrate everyone's holidays equally or accurately, nor would we want to spend that much time celebrating holidays. You are more than welcome (and encouraged), however, to share your family's culture and traditions with your child's classroom (given permission from the teacher) at any time during the year.

Young children often find holidays such as Halloween to be overwhelming and sometimes frightening, so we do not dress up for that occasion. We also do not exchange valentines or give out candy on Valentine's Day. Instead during this time of the year we focus on friendship and how to be a friend. It is also important to keep in mind that many of our families have to manage on very restricted budgets. We try hard not to impose any additional out-of-pocket expenses that would cause a hardship to families in our program. **Please do not ask us to put Valentine's, Halloween, Christmas or any holiday cards, treats, candy or gifts in children's cubbies on any of these holidays.** The office can supply addresses for cards to be mailed. Thank you for your cooperation.

Items Depicting Violent or Aggressive Behaviors

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center strives to provide an atmosphere of respect and cooperation by teaching children the value of caring for one another. In keeping with our philosophy, no item of a violent or aggressive nature will be allowed at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center. This includes, but is not limited to:

- weapons – including all types of toy guns (including water/squirt guns), knives, sling shots, swords, etc;
- aggressive, violent, or disrespectful character toys such as Power Rangers, Ninja Turtles, Batman, Pokéman, Sponge Bob, Spiderman, Superman, etc.

The following items will be ***strongly discouraged***:

- clothing depicting aggressive, violent, or disrespectful characters;
- clothing representative of war or war activities;
- lunch boxes, shoes, coats, sweatshirts, boots, hats, or other such items depicting an aggressive, violent or disrespectful character/act.

Children under the age of 5 have difficulty distinguishing between real life and fantasy and when they wear clothing depicting super heroes they tend to mimic the behaviors of these characters they have seen on TV or in movies. The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center respects the rights and desires of families in making these items or characters available to their children at home. However, we ask that parents respect our desire to provide an atmosphere free from the direct influence of such characters and behaviors.

Transitioning Children between Classrooms

Children are transitioned between classrooms in the Center to ensure that individual developmental needs are met and NOT strictly according to chronological age. The classroom placement of children is determined by the Director and classroom teachers, based on a number of factors, one of which is parent input regarding their child's needs. Conversations with parents take place prior to all transitions to discuss the child's readiness for transitioning and to familiarize the parents with day-to-day routines in the child's new group.

Field Trip Arrangements

Walking Field Trips: The on-campus field trip authorization form allows teachers to take the children walking or in strollers on the FCC campus. Examples of on-campus field trips may include visits to the gym, fine arts building, Cougar Grill, computer lab, soccer field, library, or any special event being held on campus. Teachers are required to take a cell phone, first aid kit, daily attendance sheet, and all emergency information for each child. Epi-pens and any other necessary medications are brought along, as well.

Off-Campus Field Trips: Any other field trip, requiring private or public transportation, will be announced prior to the trip. Parents will be required to sign an authorization form specifically for each field trip, along with the College Excursion Waiver form. For field trips requiring transportation, FCC public transportation will be used. Parents will be asked to supply car seats for their child as well as to properly install the car seat in the college vehicle. Teachers are required to take a cell phone, first aid kit, daily attendance sheet, and all emergency information for each child. Epi-pens and any other necessary medications are brought along, as well.
No one at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff will be allowed to transport a child at any time in his/her own or borrowed vehicle without advance written authorization from the parent. Notification must be given to the Director of the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center in any such instance.

Toilet Learning Practices

Toilet learning should be a positive experience for a child. If a child is ready, it generally only takes a short period of time. Toilet learning is as individual as learning to walk. The initiation of toilet learning should always be based on the child's developmental level rather than on the child's age. It is important for the child to begin toilet learning when he/she exhibits signs of interest and readiness. Toilet learning is a multi-stepped process and setbacks are common, should be anticipated and need not be seen as a failure, but rather as a temporary setback to a more comfortable place and another natural step toward progress. If a child has several accidents in one day teachers and parents may need to reassess the child's readiness for toilet learning. Parents need to believe the child will succeed and communicate that feeling to the child (with words, smiles, hugs, etc.). The use of bribes and threats is not encouraged. The best reward for a child is the feeling of success…there is no need for rewards such as stickers, prizes, candy, videos, etc. We will not support toilet learning that is associated with bribes or threats to the child.

How do I know my child is ready?
Does your child seem interested in the potty or in wearing underwear?
Can your child understand and follow basic directions?
Can your child ask simple questions?
Does your child stay dry for periods of two hours or longer during the day? Does he or she wake from naps dry?
Does your child have fairly predictable bowel movements?
Does your child tell you when he or she needs to use the potty?
Is your child uncomfortable in wet or dirty diapers?
Can your child pull down his or her pants and pull them up again?

If you answered mostly yes, your child may be ready for toilet learning. If you answered mostly no, you may want to wait awhile, especially if your child is about to face a major change, such as a move, a vacation, or the arrival of a new baby. It is very important that you discuss your child's readiness with his/her teachers so that everyone is working towards a successful toilet learning experience.

There are several websites and books available on toilet learning that can help parents get started. After the process of toilet learning has started at home (over a weekend) we will be happy to continue to support your child through this process. Following a successful weekend in dry underwear at home children should arrive to the Center in underwear. Parents should communicate to their child's teachers the routine established at home so that the teachers can continue the routine at the Center. A typical routine at the Center would include watching your child for signs of needing to use the toilet and taking your child to the toilet every two hours.

Please avoid using diaper-type training pants with your child such as Pull-ups®. Pull-ups® do not help children transition between diapers and using the toilet. All brands of pull ups are designed to contain wetness so that children don't wear wet clothes. As a result, children aren't able to feel when they are wet as easily as they would if they were wearing underwear. This can actually delay potty training.

Please bring flushable baby wipes and three pairs of clothing appropriate for the weather for your child. Please include an extra pair of shoes as well.
To help your child succeed, please make sure your child is dressed in loose fitting clothing that he/she can manage independently. An example of such clothing is a pair of elastic waist pants – easy to pull up and down. Please refrain from dressing your child in overalls, t-shirts with snaps between the legs (onesies), belts, tights, or dresses (young children often cannot see beyond the dress in time to pull down underwear and hems tend to end up in the potty). After several accidents in one day we may have to reassess your child's readiness.

Parent communication and support at home will be extremely important to minimize frustration and maximize success in helping your child achieve this milestone. We want this to be a positive experience for all!

Notification of Absences

We would greatly appreciate a phone call if your child will not be attending on a day that your child is scheduled to participate. Please call us and let us know…we worry when we don't hear from you.

Participation in Activities

The children will be allowed use of the equipment and encouraged to participate in all of the planned activities of the Center, including supervised water play (never exceeding twelve inches of water if on Center premises), as appropriate.

Car Seats

While we understand the reason parents may wish to leave car seats at the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center during the day, we do not have space to offer this service due to fire code laws. Please make other arrangements for the transfer of car seats. Many thanks!

Behavior Management and Discipline

NO child enrolled in the Center will be permitted to behave in a manner that may hurt him/herself, another person (child or adult), or damage property**.** Every effort will be made to monitor children's activities and behaviors at all times. However, disruptive behaviors can happen no matter how closely supervised the children are. Positive guidance techniques will be used to establish discipline and behavior management. These techniques include, but are not limited to: clarification of expectations, positive phrasing of instructions, giving realistic choices, praising for positive behaviors, ignoring non-violent or non-threatening behaviors whenever possible, helping children identify and talk about feelings, redirecting into an appropriate activity, and modeling appropriate behaviors.

We will endeavor to guide children in such a way as to help children develop self-control of their behaviors without damaging their self-esteem. This will include first discussing the problem with the child and giving reasons (age appropriate) why a certain behavior is not appropriate. At the same time, alternatives will be offered to help the child know what is expected instead of criticizing or shaming the child. The behavior will be labeled inappropriate instead of labeling the child. For example: "It is not okay to hit. Hitting hurts. Please use gentle touches." Instead of "You're a bad boy. Hitting isn't nice. Why would you want to hit your friend?" If necessary, a child may be temporarily removed from the other children or activities, but will always remain under the supervision of a staff member.

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center does not use or recommend the use of "time-out." Time out is a form of "punishment by loss" and does not teach the child appropriate behavior to replace the misbehavior. Removing a child from a situation to allow the child time to get back in control is an appropriate guidance technique – however, the child should be given every opportunity to try again with appropriate guidance for success. Children need to be given encouragement and respect rather than punishment and exclusion. Instead of just "managing" children's behavior, we strive to help children learn while providing opportunities to try again and succeed.

At no time will staff or parents be allowed to use any form of corporal punishment or engage in any form of injurious treatment to children in the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center or on the grounds of Frederick Community College (COMAR 07.04.02.70). This includes, but is not limited to: hitting, shaking, spanking, slapping, jerking, biting, pinching, pulling hair, kicking, or any other means of inflicting physical pain. These forms of punishment are child abuse and punishable by law.

At no time will a child be belittled, frightened, shamed, or threatened as a means of controlling behavior. Examples of such behavior include: "If you don't come now, I will leave you." "All the other children are being good, what's wrong with you." "Get over it, you shouldn't be angry." "If you're not good, you won't get to play outside." "If you don't share, I'll take your toys away." "Take a nap or you won't get any snack." We often hear parents using such tactics with their children and encourage all parents to explore different parenting techniques as these are emotionally devastating to children.

The use of physical restraint at the Center will be limited to what may be reasonable and necessary to:

1. Protect persons on premises from physical danger.
2. Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object.
3. Protect property from damage.
4. Remove a child who is engaging in behavior that hurts or threatens another person, hurts him/her, or is destroying property or objects belonging to another person.

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center staff is required to document evidence of recurring socially unacceptable, disruptive, threatening, and/or violent behaviors. The staff will, using acceptable methods of discipline, attempt to encourage a change of behavior.

Should such behavior continue on a regular basis or to an extreme, the teacher and Director will discuss this behavior with the parent(s). As part of the discussion, the parent will be asked to cooperate in the development of a program designed to extinguish such inappropriate behavior(s) within a reasonable period of time. Children benefit when families and programs work together in partnership. It is important for teachers to understand the origin of the behaviors and how parents have addressed the behaviors in the home setting. This information can be used as part of the decision-making process to support the child.

Discussion will include the use of developmental screening tools to assist with matching children and families with appropriate services, the use of strategies such as class meetings and conflict mediation, intentionally teaching social skills, raising expectations of all children and recognizing children's positive, assessing the classroom environment, by the Director or an outside agency, to ensure it is developmentally appropriate, that the teacher has reasonable expectations for the child, and that the environment supports the child in understanding the expectations and how to meet them and accessing mental health supports to help manage the challenging behaviors.

Once the program is developed, the teachers will provide daily information to parents concerning the child's progress (either written or verbally). If a child's behavior is consistently disruptive in such a manner that is harmful to the well-being of the child, other children, the staff, or the facility, despite efforts at remediation, the Center reserves the right to give the family notice of immediate termination of enrollment for the child.

The Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center also reserves the right to give notice of termination of services in the event of parental conduct of a harassing or threatening nature toward staff, parents, children, or FCC administration.

Guidelines for Discipline

The goal of discipline and guidance is to build self-discipline and self-control in children. We strive to help children understand that they are responsible for their own behavior and that their behavior

affects other people. We also help children realize that they are not responsible for the happiness of others – however, they do share the responsibility for creating a community of peace.

Setting Limits

To help prevent inappropriate behavior, adults need to set clear, simple limits. Good limits never degrade a child. They have real meaning and reasons behind them….and, are developmentally valid.

- Make directions clear, simple, and short. Give only one direction at a time.
- Use positive statements that tell the child "what to do" instead of "what not to do." Examples: "Please walk in the building," instead of "Don't run," "Roll the ball on the floor," instead of "Don't throw the ball." "Use talking words." instead of "Don't whine at me," "Lower your voice." instead of "Stop yelling."
- Use physical cues as well as verbal directions. Get down at a child's level and make direct eye contact, touch the child gently to get attention, point to objects or in a direction when appropriate.
- Give a reason "why" you have set a limit when appropriate. Examples: "It hurts Sam when you hit him." "The chair may slip and you could fall." "Everyone wants to use the bike. We will have to take turns."
- Model the behavior(s) you want to see in children. Show children how they can act in situations. Intentionally teach social skills, raise expectations of all children and recognize children's positive behaviors in the context of their own culture. Speak calmly and use self-control. Spanking children will not stop hitting – it just models that it is okay to hit if you are big and more powerful. Yelling at children to be quiet just models that it is okay to yell if you are big and more powerful.
- Respect the feelings of children. Use words to help children identify their feelings. Avoid evaluating feelings as "right" or "wrong." How children behave in response to their feelings is the issue not whether or not their feeling meets your approval. Example: "You seem angry. Use words to tell Susie what you want. It's hard to wait your turn but I can't let you hit Susie. I can help you use your words to tell her how you feel."
- Whenever possible, give children choices as you set limits or find new ways of phrasing repeated requests. "You need to wash your hands", could be changed to "Can you find the soap?" or "Can you wash your hands by yourself or do you need me to help you?"
- Give children opportunities to problem solve. Describe the situation and ask children to help find possible solutions. Example: "The sand is all over the floor. How could we clean it up?" "It's time to go outside but there are blocks on the floor. How can we get the room ready before we go out?"

Positive Phrasing of Directions

Phrasing a comment or direction in a positive manner is one way of providing clear communication for your child – and, will help your child be more successful. Telling a child what "not" to do can be very confusing – the child then has to "translate" your message ("okay, now what am I really supposed to do?"). Examples: If your child is running and needs to walk, give the direction in the positive "Please walk in the store." rather than "Stop running." If your child is hitting the cat, you can say "Use gentle touches with the cat – let me show you how" rather than "Stop hitting the cat." If your child is splashing the water out of the bathtub, you can say "Keep the water down low so it stays in the bathtub." rather than "Quit splashing."

Providing your child with clear messages can prevent misunderstandings and clarify your expectations of your child's behavior. When you provide clear, precise directions, you leave no room for misunderstandings – and, your child has a clear picture of what he/she is expected to do. What a powerful way to help children be successful!

Use of Encouragement

Encouragement is a form of influence that provides a way for adults to convey respect for a child. It allows a way of saying that you appreciate a child's efforts and that you value the child for what he/she can accomplish at his/her own level – not in comparison or competition with other children. Encouragement can bestow motivation, renew energy, increase feelings of positive self-esteem, provide courage to try or continue with a difficult task, and help children attempt new levels of achievement. The goal of encouragement is to promote our children's independence, self-confidence, and awareness of their own capabilities (not in comparison with other children's capabilities). With only a few encouraging words, adults can increase a child's sense of self-esteem, give a child's confidence a boost, and create the likelihood that a child will try even harder in the future.

Encouragement should be clearly differentiated from negative forms of manipulation (which should be avoided) such as:

- threatening a child (usually with a punishment);
- bribing a child (usually with a reward);
- the use of belittling comments (usually shaming and labeling); and
- the use of ultimatums (which lead to power struggles).

Giving Realistic Choices

Giving children choices helps them to develop independence and cooperation. It gives them an opportunity to be in control of a portion of their lives. We are all involved in continuous decision-making processes and need to model to children ways to make choices. We can do this by offering them realistic choices and accepting their decisions. We can give children choices that are simple – and respect both their desire for control and our need to keep order.

If you are not willing to accept the answer of "NO" to a question, then you need to rephrase the question – either into one with a realistic choice or into a simple statement. When there is no choice, you may need to tell the child why (e.g. "We can't go outside now. It's raining very hard."). Examples (when the child's answer of "no" would be unacceptable to adult):

- It's time to leave…. "Do you want to go now?" Rephrase into a simple statement: "We're leaving now." Rephrase into a realistic choice: "Can you walk by yourself or would you like to hold my hand?"
- It's cold outside…. "Do you want to put on your coat?" Rephrase into a simple statement: "Please put your coat on." Rephrase into a realistic choice: "Would you like to get your coat or do you want me to get it for you?"
- It's time to eat lunch… "Do you want to eat now?" Rephrase into a simple statement: "Time to eat. Come sit at the table, please." Rephrase into a realistic choice: "Do you want to sit in this chair or the one on the other side of the table?"
- It's time to get dressed… "Are you ready to get dressed?" Rephrase into a simple statement: "Put your clothes on, please." Rephrase into a realistic choice: "Would you like to put on your yellow dress or your green one?"

Maintaining Realistic Expectations

Children are not "little adults." They think differently. They have a different level of skill proficiency. They develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively at different rates.

We can help children become stronger and better able to succeed by understanding that there are many things they are not able to yet do. At the same time, we can encourage them to do the things that they can do…and we can show our appreciation for all that they can do, all that they are, are and all that they will become.

Valuing and loving children just as they are, is the greatest gift we can give to them.

What Children Can't Do Yet

- I can't share. Children use possession of objects as a device to understand autonomy. Just as babbling comes before talking, so owning comes before sharing. To share fully, a child must first fully possess.
- I can't say "I'm sorry" and mean it. Saying "I'm sorry" has little meaning to the young child. In order to say "I'm sorry" and understand what you are saying, you must also be able to understand how the other person feels. A young child can learn to empathize when involved in helping the hurt or injured child feel better. True empathy will then develop and in time, "I'm sorry" will be real. Otherwise, telling a young child to say, "I'm sorry" can teach your child to lie. It can also teach your child to think that saying "I'm sorry" is the only response needed when his/her behavior is unacceptable (thereby the child begins to think that he/she can do anything because saying "I'm sorry" will cover it).
- I can't remember what you told me. Most children remember only what is important to them. A child may not remember that you just told him/her to walk indoors. Adults often forget that children have trouble remembering.
- I can't focus on more than one task at a time. "Pick up your toys, put on your shoes, find your coat, and meet me at the door. We are getting ready to go out to play." This command has three more tasks than a young child is able to remember. Most young children will remember the last task or the task most important to them. With the above command, all the child may focus on is that he/she is going out to play and he/she may meet you at the door without any of the other task completed. Limit commands to one-step or two-step directions depending on the age of the child.
- I can't understand negative commands. If a child reaches to put his/her finger in an electrical wall outlet and you say "don't," the child may be easily confused because he/she does not know how to reverse the action (and doesn't know what he/she is supposed to do next). "Pull your hand back…that's dangerous." gives the child a positive action to take.
- I can't measure. When you want a young child to pour a glass of milk or juice and you hand him/her a full pitcher, expect the child to pour all the milk or juice into the glass – even if it spills all over the table or floor. Young children do not understand that all of the milk will not fit into the glass and they keep pouring until it's too late.
- I can't tell you the truth when you set me up. If you see a child do something inappropriate and you ask if she/he did it, the child will probably deny it. If you know what happened, avoid asking the child. That only sets up the child for failure (they feel pressure to deny their actions to avoid being in trouble).
- I can't sit still for very long. Young children are often told to sit still, while their bodies are telling them to move. When the large muscles in a preschooler's arms and legs are growing rapidly, they cry out for exercise. As a result, young children feel a need to move about frequently.
- I can't play with other children until I'm ready. Children go through different stages of social interaction. If allowed to grow at their own pace, they will begin to interact with other children when they are ready.
- I can't tell the difference between reality and fantasy. When a child has a bad dream, it is very real to him or her. Telling a child not to be a "baby" (because it's not real) does not help. Playing fantasy is very real for the child and very important for control and development.
- I can't express myself with words very well. Children resort to physical means of communication because they often don't have the verbal skills to express frustration and other feelings. You can help by giving the child words to use.

- I can't wait. Try not to put children in situations where they have to wait for long periods of time. Waiting often makes taking turns difficult.
- I don't fully understand right and wrong. Because young children don't understand cause and effect relationships, they can't fully understand right and wrong. A young child does not understand intentional versus unintentional actions and can only see issues from his or her own perspective.
- I can't be ready until I'm ready. Children all grow and develop at different rates. Avoid comparing children or force them to do things before they are ready.

Let Me Be A Child

So few the years
That I've been here…
Really just a weesome while
So – please,
Don't rush me into being
More than just a child.

Provide me space to run and climb
Freedom within limits sure
To reach with body and with mind
Independent – yet secure!

· June Rice

Frederick Community College reserves the right to make changes to this handbook and the services offered but will provide at least two (2) weeks' notice of any changes.