

Melwood Child Development Center

School-Age Program
Parent's Policy
Handbook

"Making a Difference"

January 2017

Melwood Child Development Center

6906 Woodyard Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
(301) 599-6704

Director: Rev. Janet Johnson

Table of Contents

Mission and Philosophy	2
About Our Church	3
Staff	5
Hours & Holidays	5
Inclement Weather Closures	6
Arrival & Departure Procedures	6
Entrance to Center	7
Center Programs	9
Field Trips	9
Age of Child	11
Enrollment Process	11
Group Placement	12
Health & Medication	13
Clothing	15
Toys	15
Screen Time	16
Rest Time	17
Food & Beverages	17
Discipline Issues	20
Fees	23
Parent Involvement	27
Parent/Teacher Communication	28
Other Enrollment Requirements	28
Guidelines for Parents	28
Vacation	29
Withdrawal Procedure	29
Sample Parent/Center Agreement	30

Mission and Philosophy

The mission of Melwood Child Development Center is to provide our community with quality child care in a safe and loving, Christian Environment where children can develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, mentally and physically.

Giving children a place to grow and develop is the mission of Melwood Child Development Center. Through exposure to God's Word, beginning academics, and a variety of physical activities the children encounter the influences that mold them into well-rounded individuals.

Educational Philosophy

Children need opportunities for growth in many areas. They develop best through participation in activities that stimulate physical, cognitive, and social skills. Our day begins with Bible and prayer time and continues with a schedule of structured and unstructured activities, such as music, playtime, arts, crafts, story time, learning centers, and games. The teacher who develops these activities provides loving care and guidance through each experience, recognizing that each child develops at his or her own pace.

Statement of Inclusion

We strive to provide an inclusive environment for all children, regardless of special needs and abilities. We actively seek ways to meet the specific needs of each child, including developmental delays, food allergy, chronic health conditions, etc., to the best of our abilities and with the guidance and support of families and specialists.

We work with other professionals in community to help identify and meet the special needs of children in our program. We provide service for children in our community who attend one of the local TAG, Magnet, or Special Education schools, if that school will transport children to and from our center. If children are eligible to receive on-site visits from special educators, tutors, or therapists, we encourage such opportunities.

Even with all we do to be inclusive of all children, we may not be the right program for all children. Therefore, during the enrollment process, to assist everyone in making the best decision for each child, we require parents to meet with the Director or Assistant Director and the classroom teachers, to discuss their child's developmental needs and the parent's educational goals for their child. See page 12-13 for more information on this process.

MELWOOD CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Melwood Child Development Center is a ministry of Melwood Church of the Nazarene. The desire of the church is not to insist on the doctrine of the Nazarene church but to have the opportunity to serve your family with an active sincere expression of God's love.

If the church can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to call the pastor. We believe that you will find Melwood Church of the Nazarene to be a loving, caring, community of people who want to make a difference for Jesus Christ. We seek to Love God, Love People, and Serve the World, in Jesus' name.

We want to be a church that actively worships the Lord, equips the body for ministry, and reaches out to our community. We seek to minister to the whole family and have a well-rounded schedule of activities and services. We believe you will truly find at Melwood, a *place to belong*.

Schedule of Services

Discipleship Groups (for all ages)	9:30 AM
Sunday Worship Celebration	10:45 AM
Wednesday Activities (for all ages)	7:00 PM

We Believe

1. In one God, the Creator of all things,
who reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. In Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man at the same time,
who became like us to bring about our salvation.
3. In the Holy Spirit, who is active in the world, bringing us to salvation.
4. That the Bible is the Word of God, giving us all we need
to know about how to be saved.
5. That we are all sinners by both nature and act and need God's
forgiveness and cleansing.
6. That Jesus Christ died on the Cross, was raised from the dead, and that,
by trusting in His death, we can be restored to a right relationship with God.
7. That when we turn from sin and trust in Christ, the old record of sin is wiped
clean, and we are born anew, thus becoming part of the family of God.
8. That after being born anew, we need the fullness of God's Spirit in our hearts. When we
make a complete commitment to Him, He cleanses our spirit, fills us with His perfect
love, and gives us the power to live our lives victoriously.
9. That Jesus Christ is coming again.

Center Policies and Procedures

Hours

The center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 6:30 am - 6:00 pm.

Holidays

The Center is closed on:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Election Days
- Veterans' Day or an alternate day that week
- Thanksgiving Day & Friday
- Christmas Eve or the day after Christmas
- Christmas Day

Additional Days the Center may close:

Occasionally the center may also be closed for an additional day around Christmas or New Year's Day, and for teacher's professional days near the beginning and end of summer. Such dates will be announced well in advance.

Inclement Weather Closures

The Center will follow Prince George's County School's Inclement Weather decisions. If they are closed, we are closed. If they open late, we will late. If they close early, we will close early.

Other Emergency Closures

If we have any other emergency closing needs, due to a power outage or other situation that is unique to our location, we will notify you through schoolsout.com (<http://www.schoolsout.com>.) ***This is a free subscription, but you must sign up and confirm your subscription before it takes effect. If you do not, you will not receive notices.*** Once you subscribe, you will automatically receive emails for any emergency closings or delays we may have. While not required, you may also choose to receive a text message directly from schoolsout.com. They will provide that service for a small annual fee paid directly to them. At times, we will also send our own individual emails or make phone calls as an additional mode of communication.

In case of a Center closing, whether for holidays, weather, or other emergencies, weekly tuition remains the same.

Health and Safety

Licensing and Regulations

Our responsibility to the safety of all children in care is the guiding force for daily events in this program. Adult supervision and safety proofing go hand-in-hand to ensure, to the best of our ability, that children can participate in daily activities safely. As a licensed center, we are regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education, through the Office of Child Care. They regularly inspect our center to ensure that we are adhering to all child care regulations, a majority of which center around the health and safety of young children. A copy of those regulations can be found on the wall outside of the Director's office. Feel free to peruse them while you are in the center, but please leave them here for other parents to view as well. You can download your own copy at:

http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/12/subtitle_16_centers_comar_online.pdf

Staff and Volunteers

The beginning of all safety starts with ensuring that all staff members complete background checks to ensure they are eligible to work with children. They must also pass a pre-employment medical exam, proving that they are healthy enough to work with children. If they do not pass both the background and medical checks, they cannot work in our center.

All staff members are required to be certified in First Aid and CPR. They must also take a class on emergency preparedness, and be familiar with our emergency plan. We have regular fire and emergency evacuation drills with the children to ensure that everyone knows how to exit the building safely. We also have shelter in place drills, taking the children to the basement of the building, which is where we would go if there were a tornado or other emergency need requiring us to shelter in place. (A copy of our emergency plan is posted outside the Director's office) .

Only those staff members who have taken a class in medication administration are permitted to give children medicine supplied by the parent. When medicines are administered, they use this form to record the time, date, and any side effects noted.

We will allow volunteers to work in the program, including family members and those affiliated with an early childhood education or child development program of a local high school, community or four year college or to complete community service required for high school graduation. Volunteers who have regular, ongoing interaction with children must also pass background checks and medical evaluations. Volunteers are never allowed to be alone with a child.

Illness and Accident Prevention

To minimize germ exposure, toys, cots, tables, chairs, and other equipment are washed and sanitized with bleach regularly. Bathrooms are also cleaned and sanitized regularly to ensure a clean environment for the children. Children are also taught how to wash their thoroughly, and are taught healthy practices for self care such as covering their cough, and using a tissue to clean their noses to minimize germs.

While we cannot avoid all accidents, we seek to make the Center environment as child safe as possible. We also intentionally teach the children about the safety rules in the center (such as not running inside, and putting toys away so they won't trip on them).

With all that we do to maintain a safe, healthy environment, children will still occasionally get hurt or become ill while in our care. Therefore, we adhere to procedures of parent notification and action, which includes written reports and/or calls to parents. One copy of the Illness or Incident Report is to be signed by the parent upon receipt to verify that they did receive notification of the incident.

Parents are an important part of helping us keep children healthy and safe. Please pay close attention to the sections of this handbook entitled "*Arrival and Departure Procedures*," and "Entrance to the Center." How you enter the facility is an important part of everyone's safety. Also pay close attention to our "*Health and Medication Policy*," which begins on pages 19-21. We follow that policy strictly to minimize exposure to illness and to ensure that medications are given appropriately when they are necessary.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Parking

Observe all posted signs when driving in and out of the parking lot.

The speed limit for the church and day care parking areas is 10 MPH.

Parking is only allowed in marked spaces. **Do not park directly in front of the gate or in front of a concrete sidewalk behind the building.** These are buffer zones for walking children and parents. Also, when using the upper lot during inclement weather, ***parking is not permitted directly in front of the building between 7:15-10:00 AM or 2:00-3:45 PM. This is a bus loading and unloading zone only during those times.***

Please yield to other traffic when coming in and out from the back parking lot. Remember to watch for traffic coming into and out of the upper parking area and yield to them.

The Center reserves the right to issue warnings if these policies are violated. Upon subsequent violations we may post a \$25.00 fine to your financial account.

Entrance to the Center

Please use the entrances into the Center that are in the back of the building. Do not use the front door of the church unless directed to do so. (There are times in the winter when the back parking lot is closed and you will be directed to use the front doors of the church.)

Access Keys

Parents or others authorized by you to sign-in/out your child on a regular basis may receive a key-card that would gain you access to the door of the center during our operational hours. Access Keys are the property of Melwood Child Development Center and in order to receive one, individuals must agree to abide by the following conditions.

1. There is a \$10.00 deposit required which will be refunded when the key is returned to Melwood Child Development Center. Should the key be lost or damaged the deposit will be lost and another \$10.00 will be required to receive a replacement key.
2. The key must remain in your possession and will not be loaned to any person other than family members who normally pick up your child.
3. Should you lose or misplace the key, you must IMMEDIATELY inform the center so that the key can be deactivated. If the key is then found, you can alert the center to have it re-activated.
4. At whatever point you take my child out of the program at Melwood Child Development Center, the key must be returned to the Day Care Office in working order. Failure to do so will result in a forfeit of the deposit.

Sign-In/Out

Child Care regulations require your child to be signed in and out of the center daily, **by a responsible adult over 18 years of age. Students may not sign themselves in or out.** Only persons authorized on the Enrollment Application or Emergency Information form, will be allowed to pick up your child. If it is necessary for anyone other than those listed on the emergency card to pick up your child, written permission by parent or legal guardian is required. **NO telephone authorization will be accepted.** Picture identification will be required of all persons picking up a child for the first time or any time requested by staff who are not familiar with the person.

Minor age siblings will not be permitted to drop off, pick up, or sign children in and out.

Upon arrival, your child must be delivered to the staff person in charge. MAKE SURE you walk into the class and greet the teacher before leaving at the beginning and end of the day. Please do not loiter in the halls or peer into other classrooms, as this tends to cause classroom disruptions. If you wish to observe or volunteer in your child's classroom, let us know and we can work with you to make arrangements for that. However, lingering and chatting with the teachers or students in the middle of their routine tends to be a disruption.

In keeping with our Health and Safety goals, please do not allow your child(ren) to run unattended through the hallways. They must remain with you or a teacher at all times.

Melwood Child Development Center reserves the right to deny the release of a child to anyone suspected of being "under the influence" of either drugs or alcohol and not in a condition to drive. It is the legal responsibility of the center to see that the child is safely supervised. Some options that might be taken: call a cab (parent will be responsible for cab payment), call another person authorized to pick up child, or call Social Services to have them pick up the child. If this situation happens repeatedly, the Center has the right to discontinue care of that child.

Late Pick-up

A late fee will be charged for children remaining at the center after 6:00 pm (see the section on fees for rate). **These fees must be paid TO THE TEACHER when you pick up your child.** If these fees are not paid at that time, they will be added to your child's tuition balance, and may then receive a late payment fee, in addition to the \$1 per minute fee already charged. **Therefore, it is best to be prepared with cash or your checkbook when you arrive. You may make the check payable to either the staff member on duty at the time, or to the center.**

If you are extremely late, and we cannot reach you or anyone on your list, we may have to call Social Services to pick up your children. To avoid this, provide a lengthy, thorough listing of all people authorized to pick up your children. Also, do everything in your power to let us know if you are running late and how you are making arrangements for your child to be picked up. ***We will terminate services for those families who are perpetually late picking up their children.***

Programs

Before and After School Care

A Daily schedule is posted in the classroom for your convenience. We encourage you to read it so you will be able to discuss the day with your child at home in the evening.

The morning schedule will include an opportunity to eat breakfast brought from home if children are able to complete their breakfast by 7:00 AM. By 7:10-7:15 the school bus will arrive to take the children to school.

The afternoon schedule will include a snack, an activity, homework, Bible lessons, and free play time. Afternoon activities could include science experiments, arts and crafts, cooking, etc.

Summer Enrichment

The activities during Summer Enrichment are based on thematic explorations and include Bible lessons, weekly field trips, swimming, arts and crafts, service projects, music, reading, character development, and recreation.

The daily schedule, as well as the summer activity schedule, is provided on a calendar in the summer enrollment packet each year.

Lesson Plans

The lesson plans and activities include reading, research, art, music, dramatic play, social skills, intellectual activities, and large and small muscle development. Intellectual Activities include, Scientific Thinking, Mathematical Thinking, Social Studies and the Arts.

Activities and Materials

Children will participate in a wide variety of activities, using a variety of materials and equipment as an integral part of the lesson plans, and during learning center and free choice play times. As teachers develop their lesson plans, they choose specific materials and equipment for the classroom to help implement the learning goals and objectives in the curriculum. Children experience a wide variety of activities chosen specifically to help them reach these developmental goals; during both teacher directed learning times and child led activities.

Arts and crafts: Each classroom has a variety of art materials such as paper, paint, colors, markers, glue, scissors, and collage materials. Teachers plan art or craft activities to help children creatively explore concepts and ideas that tie into lessons. Children are also offered the opportunity to choose the art center during free play/choice time. “Research shows that art activities develop brain capacity in early childhood. Art engages children’s senses in open-ended play and supports the development of cognitive, social-emotional and multisensory skills.”

Dramatic play: Through play and as a part of group learning times, children can role play, act out stories and poems, and pretend. Each classroom has a variety of dramatic play equipment, including puppets, dolls, stuffed animals, costumes, dress-up clothes, housekeeping equipment, and career related props. Recent research indicates dramatic play correlates highly with academic success;

Social Studies: Social intelligence is important to children. Not only do they need to learn about the diverse people in their world, but they need to learn how to interact with the people they encounter. Therefore, they will be given opportunities to learn about families and customs around the world, people of influence both now and in the past, and they will be given opportunities to engage in their world socially. To correlate with these lessons, each classroom

has a variety of props for dramatic play areas, books on the topics being explored, and maps.

Language & Literacy development: To foster language and literacy development, we provide a print rich environment, with a large selection of books for children to read. Teachers regularly provide developmentally appropriate writing activities, and give children guidance with their homework. We also provide puzzles, games, paper, pencils, stencils, flannel boards, puppets, books, and dramatic play props etc., to give children the ability to develop good listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills.

Mathematical Thinking: Children will be exposed to a wide variety of activities that stimulate mathematical thinking. Activities may include collections of things, matching and comparisons of attributes, patterns, counting, one to one correspondence, measuring, recognizing numerals, shapes, and spatial relationships. The classrooms all offer a wide variety of puzzles, games, math manipulatives, measuring tools, blocks, books, etc. Teachers give guidance to children during their math homework time, encouraging them to think and problem solve using materials on hand.

Music. Each class has a variety of musical instruments, as well as songs on CD's and DVD's which they integrate into the day for support of other lessons and for fun.

Physical activities: Climbing, swinging, tunnels, parachute play, dance, aerobics, and running games are used for large muscle development Outside time is scheduled daily.

Science and Nature: Classrooms offer children with a wide variety of books about the natural world, games and puzzles, natural materials like rocks, shells, wood chips, etc. Teachers will use some of this equipment during learning centers, and children also have the opportunity to explore these scientific materials during free choice and play times.

Cooking/Food Experiences: Teachers will use cooking and food experiences as part of lessons throughout the year. Through these experiences, children learn about nutrition and healthy eating. Teachers also use food experiences as a part of science, social studies, math and language learning experiences.

Bible.- Teachers make use of stories, books, songs, puppets, flannel boards, games, and craft activities to engage children in Bible stories and the truths of God's Word. Children have access to many of these materials during free choice activities. A Biblical world view is woven throughout the day, in all lessons. The goal is to help children understand that God created this world and the people in it, and that He created it for us to learn about, enjoy, and care for.

Free play: Student led free play is one of the best ways for children to learn and relax from the stresses of the school day. As they play with the items in their world, they begin to make use of and begin to better understand the daily importance of concepts teachers have introduced. Each teacher intentionally plans time within each day for children to play freely in the wide variety of play and learning centers in the classroom.

Field Trips

On-Site Trips will enhance the program for all students. Because we are a church ministry, we have access to other parts of the church building and grounds, which we can use for extended learning opportunities. Such events include, but are not limited to occasional special guest speakers, Vacation Bible School, and for k-5 students, Weekly Chapel. Since some of these spaces in our facility are not part of the licensed child care space, we must treat these events as field trips. This means we must obtain written permission for your child to attend.

Rather than sending home a permission slip for every event, one blanket permission slip to cover all these events will be included in your enrollment packet. All children must have one on file and it must be updated annually. Because we believe so strongly in offering these extended learning opportunities as an integral part of our program, all children must attend. If you are not comfortable with your child attending these on-site field trips, we are not the program for your family.

Off-Site Trips --Summer Enrichment Only

During our summer program we go on various field trips, which could include museums, parks, and recreational activities. A separate handbook, which outlines the specifics of each summer and the policies and procedures specific to this program, will be sent home with summer enrollment packets. A calendar of events will be provided at the **mandatory** Parent Orientation Night in early June. **We reserve the right to deny enrollment if parents do not attend this meeting.**

We also reserve the right to require a parent chaperone on field trips, or deny field trip privileges if we believe a particular child might need the additional supervision to be safe in a public setting.

Parent/Teacher Communication

We encourage parent/teacher communication. The classroom teachers post lesson plans, flyers, newsletters, and other notices on the bulletin boards throughout the Center and in the classrooms. They will also place copies of these and other forms of communication in your child's cubby pocket. As needed, they may also make phone calls and send emails to parents to communicate important information. **If you ever need to have an in depth conversation with the teacher, please call between 12:30-2:00 daily to schedule a time to meet.**

Enrollment

Before & After Care

To be eligible for enrollment in our Before & After Care program, your child must be at least five years old and must be enrolled in elementary school, attending any grade from kindergarten through 5th grade. They must attend one of the boundary schools that will transport students to and from our center. Currently we can receive students from Melwood and Rosaryville Elementary schools regular programs, and from Longfield's and Mattoconi's TAG programs.

Our program is planned to meet the needs of students each week of the school year from the first day of school to the last day, based on the P.G. County School Calendar as printed at the beginning of the school year. However, If they extend the school year due to inclement weather, there is the possibility that **we may be unable to offer before and after care for all of their extended days**. We will notify parents of our last day for before and after care as soon as possible if we are unable to offer care through all of those extended days.

When Prince George's County Schools are closed for teacher conferences or other professional days, we offer full day care for the students at no additional cost. There will be fun activities and homework time planned for these days. We also offer full day programming for students during Christmas and Easter Breaks. **These are considered part of the before and after school year and regular tuition is due for these weeks whether students attend or not.**

To take a one week vacation during **ONE** of those breaks, you must submit a written vacation request at least two full weeks in advance. When that vacation request is approved, a 50% discount is given for that one week. If your child does not attend tuition is still due on time as if they were attending. Before and After is a school year commitment.

Summer Enrichment

This program is for children who **will be** attending 1st-6th grade **in the fall** of the upcoming school year. Children in this program must be able to participate fully, without one-on-one assistance, in activities and field trips.

To enroll a child in our summer enrichment program, a complete application packet for that program must be completed. Current Before and After students desiring to attend this program must also complete the summer enrollment packets. These may be obtained from the Director or from the teachers in the school age program. Packets are generally available by the end of April each year and must be submitted with the required Enrollment Fee and Activity Fee to ensure a spot in the program. Students may enroll in the entire summer, or they may be enrolled in only a few weeks of the summer. However, weekly students must indicate the specific weeks they desire when they submit their enrollment application. A parent orientation will be held in late May or early June. This is a required meeting for parents.

Drop-in care and after school care for ESY students is not available for the summer program.

How to Enroll

We give preference to full time students. We only accept part time students if there are no full timers waiting to enroll. Parents of part time students must understand that their continued enrollment is not guaranteed to continue through-out the school year. If a new full time student submits an application, part time students will be notified that they must either change their own child to full time status to maintain their child's enrollment, or remove their child to make space for full time students.

It is our desire that students who enroll in our program are given every possible opportunity to succeed. Therefore, the Director will meet one-on-one with each family, and review each child's individual needs as part of the enrollment process. Additionally, since we know that we might not be the right fit for all children, parents are required to participate in a Family Interview process.

During the Family Interview, the parent(s) and child have the opportunity to spend time in the classroom(s) being considered for their child. The child will be able integrate into the classroom activities during that time, and parents observe and see how the classroom functions. The parents will receive a copy of the classroom schedule and current lesson plans during the Family Interview.

After the Family Interview, the parent(s) and director will meet again to go over the child's needs in light of what was observed by parents and teachers in the classroom. They will discuss the program goals, and the spiritual and academic goals of the class. If their child has been identified as having a particular special educational need and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), specifying the child's specific needs and learning goals, we will request copies of that document. This document will become part of that discussion, with the goal of discovering what accommodations we might be able to make to help meet that child's unique needs. We have found that this process allows parents a good opportunity to determine if Melwood Child Development Center is the right place for their child. There are times when after these meetings, the family and/or our staff members will determine that we are not the best fit for a particular child for any number of reasons. It is best to know this before enrolling.

Group Placement

In both Before & After Care and Summer Enrichment programs, children will be placed in groups of similar aged children. While the break-down is typically K- 2nd & 3rd- 6th, the director may choose to make adjustments to this grouping based on factors such as a child's maturity, special needs, personalities, or the number of enrolled students in each grade. Whenever possible we will try to separate siblings to allow for individual growth to take place. Exceptions to our grouping decisions are very rare and are made at the discretion of the Director.

Health and Medication

The State of Maryland mandates that we only accept well children. It is your responsibility to help us conform to this requirement. If **any** of the following symptoms of illness are apparent when your child arrives at Day Care, **you will be asked to take your child home. If your child exhibits any of these symptoms after being dropped off at the center, we will call and ask you to pick your child up within 2 hours.**

A. Symptoms of illness

1. Diarrhea
2. Severe cough
3. Yellow or green mucus from nose
4. Yellowish skin or eyes
5. Difficult or rapid breathing
6. Pinkeye
7. Unusually dark or tea colored urine
8. Grey or white stool
9. Headache or stiff neck
10. Untreated, infected skin patches
11. Fever of 100 degrees with any other symptoms of illness, or 101 degrees without other symptoms
12. Vomiting

B. What the Center will do

1. Remove the child from the main group.
2. Take temperature.
3. Document time symptoms appeared.
4. Contact parent to pick up the child.
5. If the child is not picked up within 1 hour, the individuals on the child's emergency card will be called to pick up the child.

C. Child may return to the Center, if they show no other signs of illness, AND,

1. Child has been fever-free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours.
2. Child has been diarrhea-free for 24 hours.
3. Child has not vomited for 24 hours.

During flu season, we may request that your child stay out at least 48 hours to help prevent the spread of seasonal illnesses.

In the event your child is absent from the Center for three (3) or more days due to illness, a doctor's certificate is required for re-admittance to the Center.

Ringworm - If we see something we suspect might be ringworm, we will ask you to take your child to a doctor before bringing them back to the center. You will need a doctor's note stating that they have been seen, and, if ringworm is confirmed, that it is being medicated. If ringworm is confirmed, your child may return after they have been on medication for 48 hours.

Lice - If your child appears to have head lice, you will be called and will need to pick up your child from the center immediately. You will need to treat them with an over the counter lice shampoo. They may not return until the day after they have been treated with lice shampoo. All of their belongings will also be sent home to be thoroughly laundered.

We cannot honor requests that children be permitted to stay inside during outdoor playtime. If your child is not well enough to go outside then it is best that he/she remain at home.

If your child is injured during the day and requires emergency treatment, you will be notified and arrangements will be made to transport your child to the hospital, if necessary.

All children must have a medical exam and have a Health Inventory filled out by a physician before he/she can begin attending Melwood Child Development Center. The Health Inventory is included in the enrollment packet and is also available in the Director's office. We can only accept copies of this paperwork from your child's prior child care facility if the forms are less than 12 months old and show all immunizations are current. Otherwise we need new ones.

We **must** also have the doctor complete and sign the back of the child's Emergency Form, indicating whether or not the child has any medical concerns/conditions. This must also include what treatments the doctor has prescribed. This form must also be updated every February and August, as well as any time you know that your contact information has changed.

Both the Health Inventory and the back of the Emergency Form must be completed and signed by the physician for any health concerns noted on the Health Inventory. If a child has allergies or asthma, parents are also required to have the doctor complete an Allergy or Asthma Action Plan form. In such cases, the doctors must also complete a Medication Order Form.

If these forms indicate that the child has limitations which are extreme, we may not be capable of servicing your child. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide one-on-one care for children who might require such attention during even part of the day. If a child is unable to integrate fully into all activities, including regular rigorous outdoor play and field trips, we will not be able to accept them into our program.

Medication Administration

Written authorization is required for your child to receive medication, (prescription, or non-prescription), during Center hours. A Medication Administration form, provided by the Office of Child Care must be signed by the parent/guardian AND the child's physician in order for these medications to be administered. See the director to obtain the Medication Administration form.

Non-Medicated Topical Applications

If the parent wishes to provide **non-medicated topical items** such as lotion, chapstick, diaper cream, insect repellent, or sun-screen for their child, the parent must submit a Topical Applications Permission Form listing the items they will provide for their child. The form must be signed by the parent allowing the Center staff to administer these items, as needed, on an ongoing basis.

Clothing

A vital part of your child's day is the time he/she spends in free or creative play. This includes various arts, crafts, cooking, science experiments, and outdoor play. Washable play clothes are the most suitable for your child to wear. We will not limit your child's activities due to the type of clothing he/she is wearing, **unless they do not have proper foot gear for safe outdoor play**.

Tennis shoes should be worn on the playground and water shoes should be supplies for all water play. No flip-flops should ever be worn to day care. We ask that all Kindergarten students keep one extra set of clothing at the center at all times (pants, underpants, undershirt, and shirt). Place these in a tote bag or back that is clearly labeled with their name. Please make sure the clothing is appropriate for the season and is the correct size.

Although childcare regulations do not require school-age children in Before & After Care to go outside each day, we try to take the children outside as often as possible. Summer students will have more opportunities for outside play because they are here all day. We will not take children out in inclement weather*.

Please be sure your child has the proper outer clothing for the weather. We suggest that you keep a set of winter clothing accessories (hat, mittens, scarf, and boots) at the center. If this is not possible, please send them with your child daily during cold weather months.

****Inclement weather is: extreme hot or cold temperatures (typically above 90 or below 40), or snow, ice, rain, hail, or lightning.***

Toys and Electronic Equipment

The center has adequate toys and equipment to satisfy your child during his/her stay. Please do not allow children to bring toys or games from home. Children may bring toys from home only on designated theme days when teachers have sent home written notes permitting them. Items brought into the center must be labeled with your child's name.

Toys that promote aggressive behavior or toy weapons of any type are not allowed in the center.

Cell phones that are brought to the center after school must be kept in the child's backpack at all times. They may not be used by the child while they are in the center.

E-Readers, or tablets may only be brought to the center if they are part of the child's required homework or summer reading program.

Please be sure all items brought into the center are clearly marked with your child's name. Teachers will mark items for you if they are not clearly labeled.

Melwood Child Development Center is not responsible for toys, cell phones, or electronic devices brought from home or school.

Screen Time

Flat screen media/technology, (television, movies, computers, tablets, etc.) can be a great tool for education and developmentally appropriate entertainment. However, even a good thing can be over used and thus become a detriment to a child's overall development, rather than the asset. Therefore, we limit the use of such media/technology, and seek to ensure that they are used primarily as a tool to help children interact with each other, the teachers, and the learning objectives in the classroom.

Short movies that directly connect with a lesson (for Bible, science, health, math, literacy, or sign language), and encourage interactive engagement may be included in the learning activities of the day. Interactive exercise, dance, or sing-alongs for music and movement may also be utilized, as will computer or tablet programs or games that encourage interaction as they extend the lesson activities.

All such interactive technology use will be guided by teachers, and will be directly connected with, and integrated into, the lesson activities and group time conversations. Child Care Regulations state that even though these technologies have their use in the classroom, they "may not take the place of creative play, physical activity, hands-on exploration, outdoor experiences, social interactions, and other developmentally appropriate learning activities." (COMAR13A.16.09.01.c.(2)).

http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/12/subtitle_16_centers_comar_online.pdf

Passive flat screen media/technology, on the other hand, is defined as entertainment that does not involve interactive engagement with others and with the educational goals of the children. This form of technology is not used in our program.

Rest Time

Child Care Regulations state that each school-age child present in the center all day must have a minimum of ½ hour of quiet time to allow their bodies to rest. In our center, our students will lay their heads on their desk or lay on a carpeted area for 30-60 minutes each day. They may also be given books and/or other quiet activities to help them calm their bodies during this time of rest.

Food & Beverages

For children who are in the center all day, nutritious morning and afternoon snacks will be provided for your child. A menu will be posted for your convenience and information. These snacks are in accordance with the standards set by the Maryland State Health Department.

Child Care Regulations require that all children must be served 8 ounces of milk with all meals eaten at the center, and with at least one snack when children are in the center all day. Therefore, we will offer milk to every child, unless they are allergic to milk. If they are allergic to milk, we require a doctor's note stating that fact, along with a recommended substitute, which the parent must supply. Otherwise, if a child chooses to say "No thank you" to the milk offered, their only option will be water. However, if a child accepts the milk offered, we want them to drink it and will strongly urge them to do so before leaving the table. Please help us teach them not to be wasteful.

On days when children are in the center all day, we will also provide 100% juice for them to drink with their afternoon snack. We are required by state regulations to provide all juice, when juice is served. Parents may not provide a substitute juice. Students may opt to have milk or water instead if they do not want the juice we serve with that snack.

Before & After Care:

In the morning – children arriving before 6:50 AM may bring breakfast with them **if they can finish eating it before 7:00 AM**. The center will supply milk to go with their breakfast, but a snack will not be served in the morning since the children leave for school before 7:15 AM.

In the afternoon – All children will be provided with a nutritious snack and milk.

Summer Enrichment and Other "In-House" Days:

All students who are in our care for the full day will be served a snack in both the morning and afternoon. These snacks are developed in accordance with the standards set forth by the *Child and Adult Care Food Program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture*, which the Center is required to follow.

Parents are to supply a nutritious lunch, remembering that anything perishable should be removed from their lunch, labeled and refrigerated upon arrival at the center. Lunches should meet the standards set forth by the *Child and Adult Care Food Program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture*.

(http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Child_Meals.pdf)

We are unable to prepare microwave lunches. Please preheat and pack warm food items in a thermos.

Remember, a good lunch must include the following:

- * Protein
- * Starch
- * Vegetables
- * Fruit

Please do not send high sugar content or high salt content snack foods in the lunch (i.e. cakes, cookies, candy, or salty chips). Such items will be sent back home.

Be sure to label your child's lunch box, thermos, utensils, and any other containers used for meal purposes.

The Center is required to ensure that the foods and beverages consumed by children meet the healthy food standards as published by the *Child and Adult Care Food Program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture*. The Center is also required to supplement lunches that do not contain foods from all of the items listed above. Allergies will always be monitored when supplementing food.

Each time the Center must supplement a child's lunch to ensure he/she is offered adequate portions of food from the required food groups (as listed above*), the family will be charged a flat fee of \$2.00. This fee will be posted on the family's financial statement and must be paid with their next tuition payment.

Items that should be kept below 40° for food safety will be labeled and refrigerated daily. Inform a staff member upon arrival each day if your child's lunch contains such items.

No sodas or candy are permitted. We would also remind you to label your child's lunch box, thermos, utensils, and any other containers used for meal purpose. ***On field trip days, children are to bring a totally disposable, non-perishable lunch. (No lunch boxes, thermoses, fresh meats, eggs, mayonnaise or fresh milk products).***

Modified Diets:

Children with dietary restrictions requiring a modified diet for:

- (a) Medical Reasons – (including allergies) Parents must submit a current prescription and if needed, an Allergy Action Plan, completed by a licensed health practitioner. This must be updated annually or more often if needed to meet new needs.
- (b) Cultural or Religious Reasons - diet instructions, written and signed by the parent, must be in child's file.

Melwood CDC will make snack substitutions for children with the need for a modified diet unless parents send other options.

Discipline

We all live in a structured society. It is no different for children. From their earliest moments, children need and want structure and guidelines. Our philosophy is to help children understand that all of our actions result in consequences, both positive and negative. At Melwood Child Development Center, we set some basic safety rules and standards that allow for a safe, comfortable, and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Children also help to develop specific classroom rules that become an integral part of their learning experiences. Because the children are part of that process and the rules are discussed with them on a regular basis, they more readily respond to reminders in positive ways.

Discipline is a formative process, not just a corrective measure. It is our desire that the children learn from the discipline process. Therefore teachers will regularly have conversations with the children about the classroom rules and appropriate behaviors. Teachers will give children positive feedback when they see right choices being made. They will proactively work to ensure that the environment and the activities in the classroom are conducive to helping children make successful behavioral choices. Teachers will also discuss issues with them as they arise, guiding them to think of better behavioral choices they could make. Children will sometimes be redirected from a situation by being given other options of activities to choose from. These strategies help children learn problem solving skills and help them make good choices.

Moments of correction will always be handled with care, in ways that will help the child learn from the situation. Since children learn best when they see the connections in their world, teachers will guide children in discussions about the situations that occur, the choices that are made, and the natural consequences of those actions. Teachers will also help the children think of better options and choices that could be made in the future to be more successful.

Time Away

If a child continues to display an inappropriate behavior, he may be given a “Time Away” from the situation. This time is to allow a child to calm down and reflect on the situation with a teacher. Willful disobedience will always warrant a “Time Away” from the group activities in addition to conversations with teachers and/or the Director who can help the child reflect on the situation and learn better ways to respond. The goal will always be to help children manage themselves and learn to follow the rules of an ordered society successfully.

When “Time Away” is utilized, it will always be in a calm manner in their class, a different class, or the Director’s office, within sight or hearing of a staff member. The child will be spoken to quietly and respectfully about the situation and asked to sit separately from the activity for a short time and calm down. “Time Away” will be limited in duration. A timer will be set for one or two minutes for first offenses. A pre-school child will not be required to sit in “Time Away” for longer than five minutes (figured at a ratio of 1 minute for each year of their age). The teachers will always speak with the child at the end of the “Time Away” to

help them think of better choices they could make when problems arise in the future. They will then be encouraged to re-join the group activities.

As with adults, children often benefit from, and desire, additional time away from the setting which caused the difficulty before returning to a group activity. At the end of "Time Away," if the child seems reticent to return to the group, he will be given an opportunity to sit in the Cozy Corner with a book, or spend time with an independent activity of his choice until he indicates he wants to re-integrate into the classroom activities. This quiet time is not part of the "Time Away," but is a respectful consideration for the child who expresses the desire for time alone before going back into a group setting.

Loss of Privilege

A child may also lose a privilege if the teacher believes such loss of privilege would be a suitable natural consequence for a negative behavior. For example, if a child is throwing wooden blocks and he has not responded to reminders that this is dangerous and should not be done, he would lose the privilege of playing with the wooden blocks for a period of time. He would then be allowed to choose from other play or activity centers, and would be able to earn back the privilege he lost by showing that he could make better behavioral choices in the new setting. Such loss of privilege will always be directly connected to a child's choices, and the teacher will talk with him about why they lost the privilege and what they should do differently in the future. The goal is to help a child learn from their actions and make better choices in the future.

Loss of Privilege will never be used in connection with food, drink, bathroom needs, or rest time.

When Time Away and Loss of Privilege Do Not Work

If a child is unwilling to cooperate with a "Time Away," or accept his loss of privilege and obey redirection to another activity, the parents of said child will be notified. Sometimes a child's conversation with his parent can help diffuse a situation, helping them to return to class and participate successfully. However, if this strategy does not work, the parent will be required to remove the child from the center for the remainder of that day.

Acts of physical aggression, destructiveness, running from a teacher, uncontrolled tantrums, or any other uncontrollable behavior will not be tolerated. These types of behavior will always result in a written Disciplinary Action Card (Step two below,) and the child will be removed from the Center for the rest of that day. If these types of behavior are repeated a second time, a conference with the parent will be required in addition to having the child removed for the day. If it happens a third time, a 3 day suspension will occur, and if it occurs a fourth time it will automatically result in termination of services. See the Disciplinary Action plan on the following page.

Disciplinary Action

- Step one: Internal discipline (i.e., time-out; loss of privileges.)
- Step two: Disciplinary Action Card sent home. Child sent home for the day.
- Step three: Second Disciplinary Action Card sent home to parent with a letter requesting a conference with the Director and classroom teacher.
Child sent home for the day.
- Step four: Third Disciplinary Action Card sent home - Three day suspension of services with full tuition maintained.
- Step five: Fourth Disciplinary Action Card sent home - Termination of services.

Disciplinary Action Cards

These cards will be used for serious offenses such as acts of aggressive behavior toward another child or a staff member, vulgar language, compulsive behavior (i.e., running away from staff, uncontrollable tantrums, or fits of rage, etc.).

Internal Discipline

The Director and staff are committed to disciplining each child fairly and lovingly. Our staff will use every resource available to them to address the specific need at step one of the Disciplinary Action Plan in order to prevent further action. However, as noted above, acts of physical aggression, destructiveness, running from a teacher, tantrums, or any other uncontrollable behavior is outside of our ability to handle. While we know children all have moments when they become upset, we must be able to keep a child safe. Therefore children must be able to respond to verbal correction in a developmentally appropriate, responsive manner, which does not prohibit the teacher(s) or Director from maintaining a safe environment conducive to learning.

Fees

Set Up & Enrollment Fees

- **Application fee:** A \$50 per application fee is required with each enrollment application. This fee will be refunded ONLY if it is determined, as a result of the Family Interview that Melwood Child Development Center is not the right fit for your child.
- **Security Deposit:** This is *equal to one week's tuition* for your age child. This deposit is required at least two weeks prior to the child's desired start date. Once your child has begun care, the security deposit is held on your account and will be credited towards what is owed for the last week of care, as long as a written, notice of withdrawal is given to the director at least two weeks in advance.

Both the Application Fee and the Security Deposit are non-refundable if you change your mind about enrollment after having attended an in-class Family Interview and submitting the fees.

- **Key deposit** --A \$10 deposit is required **for each key card** obtained by your family. We require that each family have at least 1 key, but they may not have more than 3 keys at any time. If a key is lost or broken, replacement keys will need to be obtained at an additional \$10 per key.
- **First Week's Tuition:** The first week's due on or before the child's first day of attendance.

Tuition and Summer fees

- **Before & After Care (K-5)** \$90 per week (subject to change)
Due EVERY week of the school year, including Christmas and Easter Breaks, UNLESS a vacation request for ONE of those weeks is submitted two weeks in advance.
- **Drop in Care when available** \$36 per day
- **Summer Enrichment** \$160.00 per week.(subject to change)
- **Summer Enrichment Activity Fee** Full summer Program \$200
Weekly Students \$25 per week

Part-Time and Drop-In care are only available if we are not fully enrolled. Summer students may enroll by the week if we are not fully enrolled.
Drop in days are only available during the school year, on select days when Prince George's County Schools are closed for in-service or other professional days, and during Christmas and Easter breaks on days we are open.

Making Payments

All tuition is due in advance of care. Forms of acceptable payment include check, money order, or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

- When paying by check or money order, payments must be received before close of business each Friday, (or on the last business day of the week), for the following week's care.
- To make payment by EFT, use the payment link on our website (www.melwoodnaz.com). All EFT payments must be posted to our account at least 4 business days in advance of care (Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays are not business days for banking purposes). It takes 4 full business days for funds to be transferred into our account and be available for our use.

Weekly Tuition:

- When paying by check or money order:
 - Weekly tuition must be paid each on Friday, the week prior to care.
 - If a holiday or other center closing falls on a Friday, tuition must be received on the last business day of that week to ensure payment has been received in advance of care.
 - Payments not received by close of business Friday (or the last business day of the week), are considered late and will receive a late payment fee.
- When paying by EFT, payments must be in our bank, available for use, by Monday the week care is to be given. This means you must post your payment four full business days in advance of care for the following week. Late payment fees will apply if funds are not available on time.

Monthly Tuition

- When paying by check or money order:
 - Those who choose to pay monthly must submit payment in advance of care for each month. In these situations, tuition is due no later than the close of business on the 1st business day of each month.
 - All payments not received by that deadline will incur a late payment.
- When paying by EFT, payments must be in our bank, available for use, by 1st day of the month for which care is to be given. This means you must post your payment four full business days in advance of care for the month. Late payment fees will apply if funds are not available on time.

Late Payment Fees

- **Late Payment:** A \$25.00 fee will be charged for **each payment** that is received after the due date deadline.
- **Outstanding Balance:** A \$5 charge will be added to your account every week that there is an outstanding amount due on your account.

In other words...FEES are cumulative for each week that there an outstanding balance of any amount on your account. This also means that if more than one week of tuition is past due, a fee of \$25 for the current late payment, **PLUS** a fee of \$5 for the PRIOR week's outstanding amount would be charged at the same time, and all outstanding balances will continue to accrue these fees until the balance is brought current.

Misc Fees

- **Credit/Debit Card fees-** when using a credit card or debit card to pay tuition, you must include a 3% up charge for this service.
- **Echeck payment fees-** when paying online with an echeck, you must include a 1% up charge for this service.
- **NSF Fee:** A \$35.00 "Bank Fee" will be charged for any check returned to the Center unpaid by the bank. Money Orders will be required for repeated instances of returned checks.
- **Speeding or Parking Fines:** A \$25 fine will be incurred speeding and parking infractions on our property (refer to "Arrival and Departure" in this Handbook). Such fines will be posted to their account and will be subject to late payment fees if not paid when tuition is due.
- **Meal Supplementation:** A \$2.00 fee will be charged each time the Center must supplement a child's lunch. (See "Food & Beverages", pages 21-22)

Late Pick-up Fees

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for **each child** at the Center after closing at 6:00 PM. **These fees are due and payable by cash or check directly to the teachers who stayed late for you.** DO NOT include these payments with your tuition payments. If these charges are not paid the day they are incurred, they will be added to your financial account **and a late payment fee will also be applied.**

We reserve the right to terminate services with one week's notice, due to non-payment of any required fees.

Financial Supports For Families

Multiple Student Discount-

- A family with two or more children concurrently attending the Center (full time) will receive a **10% discount** off the total regular tuition fees.
- Part time or summer only students are not eligible for the multiple student discounts.

Assistance for paying child care for income eligible families:

- Child Care Subsidy with the Department of Social Services by calling 301-909-6200;
- Military families may contact NACCRRRA Child Care Aware to get information about military child care subsidy by calling 1-800-793-0324;
- Families that work for the federal government, inquire with your HR department or call FEEA at (303) 933-8413

Parent Involvement

Children benefit greatly when their parents are actively involved in their child's educational and after care programs. As students see their parent connecting with the program and working together with other parents and teachers, they become more secure in their school and after care setting. When they are secure, they learn better.

The children also gain an understanding of what it means to live and work in community when they see their parents actively involved in their school. Additionally, when parents volunteer their time, there is value added to the program, without the need to hire additional support staff. This can help the Center keep tuition more manageable for parents while still allowing the Center to provide high quality programming.

For these reasons, **we expect every family** to volunteer in at least 3 of the following ways each school year. A volunteer form will be included in with all enrollment packets and will be distributed in August of each year.

Fundraiser Participation (We ask every family to participate in at least 1 per year)

Fundraiser Coordinator

BoxTops4Education Coordinator

Special Event Coordinator (Class parties, etc)

Teacher Appreciation Event Team Member

Decorate Bulletin Boards

Prepare materials for teachers

Donate materials for teachers

Make copies for teachers

Library runner for teachers

Greeter during Christmas Programs

Help Set up Sanctuary for Christmas Programs

Help Set up fellowship areas for Christmas Programs

Supply Snacks for Christmas Programs

Career Day Coordinator

Career Day Guest Speaker

Fold and Distribute Newsletters

Field Trip Assistant

Supply Room Organizer

Lawn Care Rotation

Snow Shoveling Rotation

Work Day Assistance (cleaning, painting, maint. etc.)

Financial Donation for Classroom Supplies (\$50)

Guidelines for Parents

Child Abuse-

No one may subject a child to child abuse, neglect, or injurious treatment. Staff members are required to monitor children daily for signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect, and must by law, report suspicions to child protection agencies. Parents must refrain from all forms of physical punishment while on the grounds at the Center.

Questions and Concerns-

If you have a question or concern, whether about finances, policies and procedures, or if there is a problem with a staff member or another child, please adhere to the following guidelines.

- Any concern should be privately brought to the attention of the Center Director or the Lead Pastor of the church, who will initiate an appropriate plan of action.
- Such matters should not be discussed with the teachers or with other parents.
- Under no circumstances should a parent directly approach another child or their parents with concerns about the behavior of that child: Parents are not permitted to have direct contact with any child in the center who is not in their care. (The only exception relates to volunteering at the center under the direct supervision of a teacher or the director.)

Failure to follow these instructions is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Suspension/Termination of Services

Melwood Child Development Center reserves the right to suspend services with one week's notice, for failure to make payment of tuition, or for non-compliance in other policy areas as outlined in this handbook.

We also reserve the right to dismiss any child whose actions are disruptive to the operation of the Center. Refer to the Discipline Policy, the Rest Time Policy, and the Academic Goals section of this Handbook. If possible, we will try to give at least a one week's notice if we believe your child is not able to continue with us. However, there may be times when the behavior of a child is so disruptive that we cannot extend that much time, but must immediately have a child removed for both their own well being and the other's in the center.

Other Requirements

Before and After Re-Enrollment

Although we are a year round program, each spring we must begin to plan ahead for transitions, graduations, transfers to other schools, and new enrollees. Therefore, families who desire to keep their children enrolled for another year are required to complete a re-enrollment application each spring. If that form is not received by the assigned deadline each year, your child will be dropped from the fall enrollment list and spots will be given to those on our waiting list.

Vacation

Before and After Our students who are enrolled throughout the school year are eligible to receive a 50% tuition of for **ONE** week of vacation time away from the center during the school year.

Summer Enrichment Students- Students may opt to take **ONE** week of vacation at a 50% tuition discount. A week is considered Monday through Friday.

A two-week advance written notice is required to receive the vacation discount.

Unused vacation time cannot be carried over to the next year and cannot be used in lieu of regular payment for tuition when the child is in the center.

Withdrawal

We require two weeks advance **written** notice if your child is being withdrawn from the Center. Your security deposit may be used for the last week's tuition.

If no such written notice is given, you will be charged an extra week's tuition or the loss of your security deposit.

PARENT/CENTER AGREEMENT

SAMPLE

I have been given a copy of the Parent's Policy Handbook, have examined it thoroughly, and agree to abide by the policies written therein.

Signed _____
Parent or Guardian

In return, the Center agrees to provide a safe, caring, Christian atmosphere for your child and to abide by the policies written in the Parent's Policy Handbook.

A copy of this Parent/Center Agreement will be provided to you upon enrollment which must be signed and returned. Please keep this copy for your information

