

Melwood Child Development Center

Preschool

Parent's Policy

Handbook

**"Making a Difference"**

**January 2017**

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**Melwood Child Development Center**

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Director: Rev. Janet Johnson



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## 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. If children are eligible to receive on-site visits from special educators or therapists, we encourage such opportunities. If children are eligible to go off-site to a special educational program for a part of their day, and their assigned school can transport the child to and from our center, we gladly work with such scheduling to ensure their needs are being met.

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 pages 17 & 18 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](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. 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.***

### **Daily Routine**

Consistency is important to the young child. In the best interest of your child, establish a regular pattern of when and how you drop off and pick your child up. It is important for children to have a routine and know what to expect. This makes morning and afternoon transition easier for you, your child, and the rest of the class.

**Arrival Time-** While you may bring your child any time between 6:30 and 6:00 daily, **we strongly urge that they are here regularly between 9:00 and 4:30.** The core of their educational program will take place during the hours of 9 and 11:30 in the morning, and then again from 3:00-4:30. The care they receive before 9 and after 4:30 will be much more play-based, social time.

**Two and Three year olds- 2 and 3 year old children should not be at the center for more than 9 1/2 hours per day.** The value of being in a center environment declines when they are here too long each day. They still need much more time in the nurturing care of their parent/s.

Each class follows its own schedule, which is posted. A lesson plan will also be posted and/or sent home weekly. We highly recommend that you read these so that you can discuss the day's events with your child and be prepared for any special events that come up during the week.

### **Helpful Hints for the First Few Days**

Say goodbye when you leave your child at the Center. Do not try to sneak away in an effort to keep your child from crying. This is important for the child's development of trust. Remind your child that you will return. Give us a specific time, if possible. A young child in a new setting often fears that parents won't return. In time, the child grows to understand that you do come back and then they relax and the morning separations become easier.

Talk about leaving in positive, reassuring terms. Establish a consistent drop-off and pick-up time. Let your child see you chatting with teachers in a relaxed, friendly way. Be patient with your child's greeting and goodbye rituals. Research shows that it can take 6-8 weeks for a child to adjust to a new setting. Children often develop elaborate rituals to help themselves make the transition between home and school.

### *Academic and Developmental Goals*

We are not a school. We are a child development center. It is our goal to help prepare all children to succeed in school. Therefore we provide a structured program that includes a variety of developmentally appropriate activities through which children can learn. Students will have free choice times during which they can explore and play but there will also be times of structured, teacher led group learning.

The work children do while in our program will not always look like "school work". Early childhood education addresses all aspects of the child's development (Emotional, Social, Physical, Mental and Spiritual), across many different domains of learning. Therefore, their work is supposed to look different than what they will receive when they begin elementary school. **Pushing academics too hard, and too soon, will only hinder their long-term educational and emotional well-being.** For these reasons we have carefully chosen curricular tools that help them develop appropriate to their age.

Our program strives to meet the individual needs of all children, as much as we are able, within the context of the larger classes. This means that we will assess children's development regularly, using both formal and informal tools and strategies, and will use the information gained from those assessments to help develop teaching strategies to help each child grow in the areas of their needs.

***We will also work together with parents and outside professionals to meet special needs that may be identified.*** If an enrolling student has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place, we will request copies of those documents to ensure we are working together with you towards reaching the child's learning goals. We use their stated goals to help customize their activities when planning lessons. If a child is eligible to receive on-site visits from special educators or therapists we encourage them to do so. Also, if a child is eligible to go off-site to a special educational

program for a part of their day, and their assigned school can transport the child to and from our center, we gladly work with such scheduling. We may also ask for permission to confer with the specialists who are already part of their learning process to give us assistance. We strongly believe that we can only service children well if we are partnering with parents and other professionals to reach the same developmental and learning goals.

## **Curriculum Statement**

We have two classes for young **2's and 3's**. The teachers in these classrooms utilize the ***Healthy Beginnings Developmental Goals and Objectives*** as a guideline for creating developmentally appropriate lessons for young children. To assist them in reaching those goals, they have been using of the *Active Learning Series Curriculum*, and *The Year Round Activities Series*, along with teacher created materials. This spring they have begun switching to ***The Creative Curriculum***, which is one of the curricula recommended by Maryland State Department of Education for use in child care centers, preschools, and Head Start programs. By September 2016 *The Creative Curriculum* will be the primary curriculum used in these classrooms. Information on *Healthy Beginnings, Maryland's Early Learning Standards*, and *The Creative Curriculum*, see

<http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/sites/3910/files/HealthyBeginnings2015.pdf>

[http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/4/msde-pedagogy-report-appendix\\_2016.pdf](http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/4/msde-pedagogy-report-appendix_2016.pdf)

<http://teachingstrategies.com/curriculum/>

**The K3/4 class**, is for students who will be 3 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current "school year." The teachers in this classroom use ***The InvestiGators Club curriculum***, by Robert Leslie Publishing and portions of the *Abeka* phonics and literacy program to create lessons plans that meet or exceed the ***Maryland Early Learning Standards***. *The Investigators Club* is one of the curricula recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education for use in child care centers, preschools, and Head Start programs..

**Our PreK class** is for 4 and 5 year old children who will be starting kindergarten the following school-year. To enroll in this class children should be 4 year old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. The teachers in this classroom strive to help students in this classroom meet or exceed the ***Maryland Early Learning Standards***. To accomplish this goal, they currently utilize some *High Reach Learning* curriculum, and the *Abeka* phonics and math program. By September 2016 this class will be using ***The InvestiGators Club PreK*** curriculum as their foundational tool for creating developmentally appropriate lessons. They will continue to use portions of the *Abeka* phonics and math program as a complement to *The Investigators Club*. Together with the skilled teachers who use them, these curricular tools offer all children an excellent, foundational learning experience, which will ensure they are ready for Kindergarten when they transition to school.

Follow the links on the next page for information about Maryland Early Learning Standards, The Investigators Club curriculum, and the Abeka phonics and math program.

[http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/A7EA6261-E4F6-430C-9615-87A712323BC7/25354/StateRecommendedComprehensiveMatrix\\_r082510.pdf](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/A7EA6261-E4F6-430C-9615-87A712323BC7/25354/StateRecommendedComprehensiveMatrix_r082510.pdf)

([http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/4/msde-pedagogy-report-appendix\\_2016.pdf](http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/4/msde-pedagogy-report-appendix_2016.pdf))

<http://www.investigatorclub.com/>

<http://www.abeka.com/ABekaOnline/BookDescription.aspx?sbn=138525>

## **Lesson Plans**

Teacher lesson plans are reviewed by the Center Director. They are then posted on the parent board in each class for parents to review. These lesson plan sheets are a good **communication tool** for you and your child. So many events happen in the day of a young child, your inquiries can sharpen the child's memory skills. If you have any questions concerning the lesson plans, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher. Summer Activity Plans replace the lesson plans during the summer program.

The lesson activities include story time, art, music, dramatic play, social skills, intellectual activities, and large and small muscle development. Intellectual Activities include activities in Language Arts and Literacy (Reading), Scientific Thinking, Mathematical Thinking, Social Studies and the Arts.

Because children learn best through play, exploration and discovery, and manipulation of items in their world, lesson plans will be filled with such opportunities. This means much learning is active, as children interact with the materials in the classroom. As children interact with the teachers, other students, the lessons and classroom materials, the teachers discover the specific likes, dislikes, interests and abilities of the children. Teachers may then decide to adjust, adapt, or extend lessons to respond to student interest and any unique needs they observe. They also adapt the lessons to meet the specific goals that children with special needs may have in their I.E.P. or I.F.S.P. So while lesson plans go home, and teachers strive to stay on course with the big picture of meeting developmentally appropriate learning goals and objectives, there may be times when the teachers do not accomplish everything they had planned. The curriculum is a teacher's tool, not their master. The same is true of their lesson plans. They use the children's responses to their plans to adjust the daily activities and future lesson plans.

This kind of responsive teaching and planning, and our purposefully active teaching and learning environment allows us to customize the curriculum to fit the children's needs, rather than expecting the children to keep up with lesson plans designed from a scripted curriculum. It also means that parents will not always see projects or paperwork produced from their child's learning time, especially in the younger groups. Instead, there may often be photographs, group projects, collections of natural items, free art expressions, games, and books of interest spread throughout the classroom as the only evidence that learning activities have taken place. For this same reason, there will rarely be homework. There is

plenty of time for that in elementary school. It also means that you will need to ask your child daily about the things they did and what they enjoyed most.

## **Activities and Materials**

Our daily program is structured but informal. The children's activities are scheduled for each day for consistency of routines; however, we remain flexible for any special events or interesting variations to that schedule to build on children's interests. Such variations may take the form of a nature walk around the grounds of the building, extended time in an activity they are enjoying, or the addition of new and interesting items to the learning and play centers based on their expressed interests.

Activities are balanced with both active and quiet periods, large and small groups learning experiences, and both teacher-directed and child-selected activities. Program content and materials reflect our philosophy of inclusion, offering cultural diversity and anti-bias attitudes, in ways that encourage independent choices and individual growth. This approach helps meet the developing needs, interests, and abilities of all children.

Since all children learn best when they are interested in, and have hands on experiences with, real world items, our teachers intentionally incorporate a variety of materials throughout the classroom, in multiple interest areas. The classroom environment is designed to facilitate movement, free choice exploration, curiosity and successful experiences by students of all learning styles and abilities.

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 and express a newly developing skill or concept that correlates with the lessons across the curriculum. 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."

(<http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare/news/2014/art-an-opportunity-to-develop-childrens-skills>). For this reason, we encourage a great deal of artistic expression in the classrooms, and supply children with a wide variety of materials to stimulate creativity.

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 later academic success;

Social Studies: Introducing community helpers, social skills, transportation, families, and customs around the world are all part of a developmentally appropriate social studies curriculum. Teachers will introduce these concepts thematically throughout the year using stories, discussions, and classroom visitors during large group time. To correlate with these lessons, each classroom

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

Language & Literacy development: To foster language and literacy development, we provide a print rich environment, regularly read stories to young children, and provide children with time for conversation in both small and large group settings. Teachers regularly provide developmentally appropriate writing and phonemic awareness lessons and activities. We 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 mathematical lessons during small group, teacher led activities, and through the students use of these materials during free choice learning centers and play times. 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, counting manipulatives, measuring tools, blocks, books, etc. Teachers also use daily routines and activities to engage children in mathematical thinking that applies to their lives.

Music: Teachers will utilize music as a means to help children learn and remember new concepts, such as reciting the alphabet, counting, and practice listening and speaking, and phonemic awareness. They will be exploring rhythm, tone, pitch, and patterns, among other things, through singing, dancing, and playing rhythm instruments. 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, riding equipment, parachute play, dance, aerobics, and running games are used for large muscle development. Fine muscle development is planned daily as well, using the art materials, both during teacher led activities and as a part of free choice activities. The classroom also offers puzzles, play dough, pegs & pegboards, construction toys, lacing cards, and other small manipulative toys and games to help children develop these skills.

Science and Nature: Beginning science concepts form with exposure to animals, insects, plants, planting gardens, playing with natural materials such as sand, water, or woodworking, estimating, comparing, hypothesizing, describing and recording, etc. Classrooms also offer children with a wide variety of books about the natural world, games and puzzles, pictures, magnets, play animals and insects, magnifying glasses, color wands, and natural materials like rocks, shells, wood chips, etc. Teachers will use some of this equipment during small group learning centers, and children also have the opportunity to explore and play with 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 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. As they play with the items in their world, they begin to make sense of the concepts the 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. These include block play, water & sand play, dramatic play, housekeeping, puzzles and manipulatives, music, books, art, writing, science, and math centers, etc.

Sometimes new materials are introduced into learning and play centers in order to facilitate teacher directed lessons and activities. Other times teachers will place some of the students favorite materials across the classroom, in new areas, to stimulate curiosity and encourage new ways of using them. The goal is to ensure that there are as many stimulating learning opportunities as possible, which children of all abilities will feel successful in using.

Parents have an important role to play in this:

- Tell the teachers about things your child has done with you, places they have gone, and other activities they participate in, (dance, karate, soccer, etc.).
- Tell the teachers about those things your child seems to be struggling with. If necessary, make sure we have a copy of their most recent I.E.P. or I.F.S.P.
- Donate items to the classroom that will help us add to the variety of items into the learning and play centers. We sometimes send home a "wish list" of items for the Center. Those lists are often based upon things the children have expressed an interest in or a need for. When parents donate those items, the classrooms become better equipped to stimulate children's learning.

When parents and teachers work together in these ways, our Center becomes stronger and all the children in the center benefit.

## Field Trips

**Off-Site Trips** will be enhancing the learning process in our K3/4 and PreK classes. (Our younger 2's and 3's classes will *not* participate in these off-site trips). A signed permission slip must be submitted for each field trip. If you do not wish for your child to participate in one of these off-site field trips, you must indicate this on the permission slip form. In such cases, you will need to find alternate care for your child for the day of the trip.

***We 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.***

**On-Site Trips** will also 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, weekly Chapel, occasional special guest speakers, Trike-A-Thons, and Vacation Bible School. 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 on-site event, one blanket permission slip to cover all these On-Site 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 right program for your family.

## *Student Screening and Evaluations*

### Developmental Screening

Maryland State Department of Education has implemented a new State regulation for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. Beginning July 1, 2016, all children up to kindergarten entry attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs will need to have a developmental screening conducted. A child's development can be measured by how a child learns, speaks, moves, behaves and relates.

If the screening indicates that a referral to another agency for further evaluation is necessary, we will notify you to set up a conference and discuss the findings and recommendations. It is our desire to work with parents, and to partner with other educational and developmental specialists in the community to ensure that each child receives every opportunity to develop and succeed as they prepare for their further education.

- Children aged birth-36 months will be required to have two screenings per year.
- Children aged 37 months-kindergarten entry will be required to have one screening per year.

Parents should consider this process as part of required documentation in order for the child to attend our or any other licensed child care program in the State. The screening tool our program will use is called The Brigance Early Childhood Screen III. Our screening process will begin in September, 2016, after new students have enrolled for the new year.

### **Informal Assessments**

In addition to the developmental screening, children's developmental progress is assessed informally on a daily basis. Teacher's continually observe children during learning and play times. Keeping the developmental goals and objectives in mind, they seek to discover how well the children are processing new skills and concepts. As they observe the children in daily life, interact with them in group time, and listen to them during play time, teachers notate key observations concerning their progress. They also take pictures of the children in action, and keep samples of their work to observe how the children are progressing over time.

These informal assessments help teacher's now how best to adjust, adapt, or extend the lessons they have planned, to ensure maximum learning is taking place. They also use this information to help differentiate the lessons to meet the specific needs they see in individual students. This also helps them determine which activities and materials they will use to help students reach their developmental goals on a daily basis.

### **Comprehensive Evaluations**

Our teachers also perform formal mid-year and end-of-year evaluations of all students. These evaluations assess student progress across multiple domains of learning. Our 2 & 3 year old classes currently utilize the *Developmental Goals and Objectives from Healthy Beginnings*® as the tool for the evaluations. They will begin using the *Creative Curriculum* evaluation tools during the 2016-2017 school year. Our K3/4 class uses the evaluation tools provided with the *Investigators Club* curriculum. Our PreK teachers are currently using the Learning Goals and Objectives from *High Reach Learning*® as the evaluative tool. They will begin using the evaluations provided with the *Investigators Club* curriculum during the 2016-2017 school year. Because the evaluative tools correlate with the curriculum they use to create their lesson plans, the results of the evaluations inform the decisions they make for future lesson planning.

The teachers will also use the results of both informal assessments and formal evaluations to help identify any area of development that continues to be difficult for a particular child. They will track student's progress in those areas, and if needed, they will recommend referring a student to other specialists in the community for further assessment and special educational or therapeutic services. (See page 16 for more information on community resources for referrals)

### ***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 12:30-2:30 daily to talk with the teacher.**

## Conferences

Teachers will contact parents directly, by phone or in person, to schedule conferences after Developmental Screenings when they think a child should be referred to for outside assessments and services. The value of the Developmental Assessment is that it can be used to help make such a determination early in the year. The earlier a child's needs are identified, the better, since early intervention is key to future success. When referrals are made, we will follow up with parents and seek to partner with specialists as needed, if services such as speech, language, physical, occupational, or behavioral therapies are needed.

After mid-year and end-of-year evaluations are completed, teachers will send home written notices and will post a note on the parent board, inviting parents to sign up for a parent teacher conference. There will be a sign-up sheet on the parent board with the available times indicated. **It is requested that parents make every effort to attend these conferences when they are made available. The success of your child depends on an informed partnership between parents and the center staff.**

## *Community Resources*

A free consultative service is available to families enrolled at MCDC through the Prince George's Child Resource Center's grant funded ***Project Win***. At the request of parent or staff (with parental permission), a Child Development Specialist will be available to observe your child in his/her natural play groups and activities at MCDC, to give assistance and guidance when a child is experiencing a problem or when staff or parent have concerns about the child's development or behavior. Additionally, parents may be able to access a family social worker for a free conferencing session to discuss child/family problems or concerns, or work on home behavior plans.

Parents may receive referrals to appropriate community resources such as **Infants & Toddlers (301) 265-8415** or **Child Find at (301) 925-6600**, both are free County services that can evaluate for speech and language delays, as well as other concerns and can provide free early intervention services such as Speech & Language Therapy, if needed.

Other current community resource information is located on the wall outside the Director's office.

All families are encouraged to have a library card for their child and to make visiting the local library a regular family activity. Information about the PG County Memorial Library System can be accessed at [www.pgcmls.info](http://www.pgcmls.info). The library system has many resources for families-check them out!

# Enrollment

## Age of Child

To be eligible for enrollment in our “Pre-school” department, your child must be no younger than two years old and typically should be no older than five years old. We can only accept some 5 year old, Kindergarten eligible children, under the following conditions:

- *If a child is already in the public school and has a documented special need with an IEP (Individual Education Plan) indicating their developmental needs would be best served in pre-school class. OR*
- *If a parent believes their Kindergarten eligible five year old is not ready for Kindergarten and has notified Prince George’s County School Board that they are holding their child back one more year before admitting them to Kindergarten.*

All other 5-year old students whose parents wish to enroll in our center may apply for placement in our “School-Age” Department: for Before and After School Care if their child will be attending Melwood Elementary, Rosaryville Elementary, Mattaponi TAG program, Arrowhead Elementary, or the Special Education Program at Marlton Elementary. These schools can transport students to and from our center.

## 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, the academic goals of the class, the assessment and evaluation process for all children. If their child has already been identified as having a particular special educational need and has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), or an Individual Education Plan (IEP), specifying the child’s specific needs and learning goals, we will

request copies of those documents. These documents will become part of that discussion, with the goal of discovering what accommodations we might need 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.

### **Classroom Placement**

Children will typically be enrolled in the classroom with their age mates, who will be ready to move to Kindergarten at the same time. MSDE Kindergarten entrance requirements state that children must be five years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they want to enroll in kindergarten. Because of this requirement we have four different pre-school classrooms to meet the age and development needs of all pre-school students prior to Kindergarten.

**Once children are placed, they will typically remain in that class until the Director begins moving children to their new classes *in the summer or fall of the new "school year"*.** Teachers adapt their curriculum to meet the growing needs of the children in their classroom throughout the year, assessing their development and adjusting lessons to meet all goals and objectives for each stage in the child's development. There will rarely be a time when children need to move to an older class before the next school year. If the director believes a move is needed, parents will be notified and a time will be set for the move.

### **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 students. 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.**

## 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*

Our "uniform code" is *Dress for mess!* Children should wear comfortable, durable, and washable 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. We will not limit a child's activities due to the type of clothing he/she is wearing, except in the case of proper foot wear for 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. If they do not have safe foot gear for outdoor play, they may have to be limited to calmer outdoor activities, rather than climbing, running, or sprinkler play.

Please supply the Center with a complete change of clothing at all times (children 2 years of age should always have at least 3 extra sets). Remember to check your child's extra clothes regularly to make sure they are seasonally appropriate. All clothing needs to be marked with your child's name. A backpack is required to keep the extra clothes in the classroom cubby space assigned to your child.

We make every attempt to get the children outdoors every day except in inclement weather.\* *Please be sure your child has the proper outer clothing for the weather.* We suggest that you keep a set of 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

The center has adequate toys and equipment to satisfy your child during his/her stay. Please do not allow children to bring toys from home, except on designated "show and tell" days. Toys brought into the center for "show and tell" 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. **Melwood Child Development Center is not responsible for toys brought from home.**

## 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](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 require that we provide children with a minimum of 1 1/2 hours of rest each day while at the Center. Most children in our center will rest for 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Even if a child does not typically nap, they must be able to lie quietly on their cot, or attend to other quiet activities, so they still receive rest and are not disturbing the other children. While the rest time routine may take some getting used to for children to get used to, we expect that within two weeks of enrollment they will adjust to the new routine. ***Children who cannot remain quiet during rest time and continually disrupt the rest of the class, will be unable to remain in our program.***

Parents need to provide a small blanket, pillow, and a crib sized sheet to cover the cot during rest time. Your child may also bring a small stuffed animal or doll from home to sleep with if he/she wishes. Bedding will be sent home with each family every Friday to be laundered. Bedding must be returned the following Monday.

**If bedding is not brought in, we will loan you bedding from the center. However, a \$5 bedding fee (per occurrence) will be charged if this becomes a regular occurrence.**

*Please be sure all items brought into the center are clearly marked with your child's name. **TEACHERS WILL MARK ITEMS FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO.***

## Food & Beverages

### Breakfast

Parents who arrive with their pre-school child before 7:30 AM may bring their child's ready to serve breakfast with them. We will give him an opportunity to eat it before beginning activities in the classroom. If a child arrives after 7:30 he/she will be given an opportunity to eat his/her breakfast during morning snack time, which is typically around 9:00 AM. **We cannot heat food items.** Bring all breakfast items in clearly labeled containers so they can be returned that evening, or bring food in a totally disposable container.

### Snacks

Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks will be provided for your child. A snack menu will be posted for your convenience and information. 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. Substitutions will always be made for children with documented allergies.

## Lunch

Parents are required to provide a healthy, nutritious lunch for their child each day, which also 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](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Child_Meals.pdf))

A good lunch includes the following:

- \* Protein
- \* Starch
- \* Vegetables and/or Fruit
- Milk (which the Center provides)

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.

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

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

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.**

## Beverages

The Center is required to provide 1% milk with morning snack and with lunch. Office of Child Care regulations allow parents to furnish the Center with a different type of milk if the child's health care provider requires such a substitution, or if the parent prefers a different source of milk.

The Center will also provide 100% juice or additional milk with afternoon snacks. (As defined by the O.C.C. regulations, 100% juice means juice that contains no added sugars or caffeine). If parents do not want their child to consume the juice provided by the Center, the child will be offered milk or water instead. O.C.C. regulations require that all juice be provided by the Center. They do not allow for parents to make juice substitutions.

The Center will also provide water throughout the day, encouraging children to drink enough to stay well hydrated. We are required to ensure that all water served comes from one of three sources; a fountain, a freshly poured pitcher of water, or an original, unopened bottle as purchased from the store. If you wish to ensure that your child has extra water available at all times, you may supply single serve bottled water in the original sealed containers at the beginning of each day. If the seal on the bottle has been broken, or the child has already been drinking out of the bottle, we cannot serve them that container of water. Water cannot be placed in personal, reusable containers.

### **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.

### **Challenging Behavior Referrals**

Should a child display unusually disruptive or challenging behavior or show signs that our program is not beneficial to him, the **Center reserves the right to require parental**

**consent** and sharing of information with an appropriate community partner to request an Early Intervention specialist from Project WIN or other Community Resource to support the child, arrange for any support services needed to help teachers to develop an early intervention plan in order to retain the child in the program. Conferences may be held to evaluate the plan.

### **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.



## **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](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

FEES are cumulative for each week that there is 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.

## Field Trip/Activity Fees

Throughout the year the center seeks to provide extended learning opportunities for children, by way of both special on-site activities and off-site field trips. Most of these special opportunities will incur an additional fee ranging between \$15 and \$25 each. Fees will be due two weeks prior to each event in order for your child to participate.

## Misc Fees

- **Curriculum Fee:** A \$30 curriculum fee is due at the beginning of each school year. This will be billed to the financial account by the end of August.
- **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.
- **Bedding & Laundry Fee of \$5 per day:** This may be charged any time we must supply and launder bedding for a child who has none to use during rest time.
- **Cap & Gown Fee of \$15:** This is required for all PreK and K5 graduates
- **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 program by volunteering in their school/child development center. As students see their parent connecting with the program and working together with other parents and teachers, they become more secure in their school 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 ask 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

Guest Story Reader

Career Day Guest Speaker

Decorate Bulletin Boards

Prepare materials for teachers

Donate materials for teachers

Make copies for teachers

Library runner for teachers

Greeter during Christmas and Spring Programs

Help Set up Sanctuary for Christmas and Spring Programs

Help Set up fellowship areas for Christmas and Spring Programs

Supply Snacks for Christmas and Spring Programs

Guest Story Reader

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, maintenance. etc.)

Financial Donation for Classroom Supplies (\$50)

## Vacation

A 50% tuition discount is offered for up to two weeks of vacation per calendar year if you wish to retain enrollment. A week is considered Monday through Friday. A two-week advance **written notice is required** to receive the discount. Vacation Request Forms can be obtained outside the Director's Office. Parents may also email the Director with their request. Vacation tuition is still due in advance. It must be paid before leaving town. 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.

If a parent desires to have their child out of the center for longer than two weeks, they must either pay full tuition for those additional weeks, or withdraw their child.

## Withdrawal

We require **two weeks advance written notice** if your child is being withdrawn from the Center. Withdrawal Forms can be obtained outside the Director's Office. Parents may also email the Director with their request. Your security deposit may be used towards 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.**

## Program Transfer

We want to see children succeed. We work hard to address the individual needs of each child. However, there are times when it becomes obvious to parents and/or teachers that our program is not the right fit for their child. If this occurs, the parent, the teacher, or the Director can schedule a conference to discuss plans for withdrawing the child when a more suitable environment can be located. If this becomes necessary, and it appears that the withdrawal should be immediate rather than with the typical two week notice, the parents will not lose their security deposit. It will be immediately applied to their account.

When a child "graduates" in June from the PreK Program, **we still have lessons planned for them throughout the summer.** We encourage you keep them enrolled and learning some of the important transitional lessons we plan for them during those weeks before Kindergarten. Remember also that **we have a before and After Care Program for students who attend the local Elementary schools!** Please consider us when you are making your before & after Care plans.

If your plans include moving to another school let the Director know early in the spring when the re-enrollment forms are distributed. Also, be sure to submit a withdrawal form. There will also be a form sent to inquire as to your interest in applying in our before and After School Program. For information about these programs, please request information from the Director. The Center gives special consideration to our current families; however entering this program is not automatic. While enrollment fees are waived, there is still an enrollment process for this program. An enrollment form will be given to you or can be requested.

# 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.*

## PARENT / CENTER AGREEMENT

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.

Signed *Janet M Johnson*  
Center Director

**A copy of this Parent/Center Agreement will be provided to  
you upon enrollment.**  
**Keep this copy for your records**

