

WESTGATE CHILD CENTER

*1609 Great Falls Street * McLean, VA 22101
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PARENT HANDBOOK

Message from the Director.

WELCOME TO WESTGATE CHILD CENTER

Westgate Child Care Center, was established in 1973, and has provided years of invaluable educational service to the community. The Center is a non-profit, pre-school and day care center for children, 2.5 years to 12 years of age. Licensed by Fairfax County and The Commonwealth of Virginia, the Center offers a “pre-school” curriculum of “learning through play”, as well as extended care for school age children.

The Center is committed to providing a high quality education through carefully planned play activities and thematic units of study using interesting materials. The program strives to nurture each child’s social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs in a stimulating yet warm and caring environment.

The Center maintains an excellent child – teacher ratio of 5:1 with teachers who are qualified, trained and professional. We are proud of our low child-teacher ratio, which enables our teachers to focus on the special needs and talents of each child.

Westgate Child Center does not discriminate on basis of race, creed, gender disability, or national / ethnic origin.

HOURS OF OPERATION:

The Center is open from 7:00AM until 6:30PM

ADMISSION & REGISTRATION:

Prior to your child's admission, a personal interview will be arranged, in order to exchange information and mutually determine if the program meets the needs of the child.

To enroll your child, the following items have to be completed and signed.

- 1. A pre-school application form, with a one time non-refundable \$50 application fee.*
- 2. A current physical form including immunization records*
- 3. A Medical Emergency Form.*
- 4. A copy of the 'Birth Certificate'.*
- 5. A signed parent/school agreement, along with a Bi-Monthly deposit (per family)*

TUITION:

Tuition payment is made on a monthly or a bi-monthly basis. Monthly tuition is due on the first of each month. For payments made more than ten calendar days late, a \$15.00 charge is added. Bi-Monthly tuition is due on the 1st and 15th of each month.

In addition, there is a \$25 charge for returned checks. Cash payment is not acceptable.

ACTIVITIES:

Classrooms have structured activity areas with a wide variety of activities, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. The children are introduced to alphabets, numbers, shapes, colors, vocabulary, etc. planned around themes in a way to develop their imagination, reasoning skills and confidence. Each child progresses at his/her own level and is never coerced to do work for which he/she is not ready. Children develop social skills, including practical life skills, cooperation, respect and interpersonal problem solving skills. Exposure to art, music, computers, craft, drama and imaginative expression are all important part of our pre-school program, as well as creative movement and small and large motor development. Extra curricular activities like 'soccer' and 'ballet' are available.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:

This program is designed to interest and challenge the school age children in a fun 'club - like' environment. The children arrive between 7.00 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. They are 'bused' to area school after breakfast. Upon their return from school, they have a snack and participate in the club activities and a homework group. The club activities center round arts, crafts, group sports, appropriate games and toys, in addition to field trips. Transportation to and from local elementary school (Kent Gardens Elem. School) is available.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS:

The Center program is available year round. Pre-School system of 'learning through play' is offered, from September to mid June. During summer, the center changes into a summer day camp. The children enjoy swimming, cookout, field trips and special program of enriching experience planned around various themes. In addition, Music, Computers, Ballet, Soccer and Gymnastics are also offered.

TEACHERS:

Center is staffed with mature, experienced and qualified teachers. They are actively involved with ongoing training and workshops and are sincerely committed to improving their skills in dealing with young children. We are proud of our low teacher turnover and child /teacher ratio. Our Staff are mandated reporters of any suspected child abuse per the code of Virginia.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

Parent involvement is encouraged and welcome.

Teachers prepare monthly lesson plans to keep parents informed of school activities, to provide insight into what occurs during your child's day at school. Parent meetings for discussing specific concerns are arranged as needed. Parents receive weekly report of their child's progress and newsletters are issued periodically where upcoming events, dates and classroom news are featured..

Parents can join their children on Field trips, share a hobby and participate on occasions like Halloween, Thanksgiving etc.

Any time parents requiring "sunscreen ointment" and/or "insect repellent" applied on their child, must submit written authorization, as per the policy.

CENTER POLICIES:

ARRIVAL /DISMISSAL

Keeping the safety of children in mind, parents are required to:

- 1. Park their car in the parking lot and walk their child into the building.*
- 2. Sign in/sign out child upon arrival and departure.*
- 4. Children not allowed running out of the building or into the parking lot alone.*

LATE PICK-UP:

The Center closes promptly at 6.30 p.m. A late fee is applicable for children picked up after closing time. If both parents and the emergency contacts are unavailable for more than one hour after closing, the local police will be contacted. If late pick-ups are habitual, the child's enrollment could be terminated.

AUTHORIZATION FOR PICK UP:

Children can be picked up only by parents or by a designated person.

Proper authorization in writing is required for the child to be released from the Center.

The staff reserves the right to check identification if necessary.

ACCIDENTS

The Center will contact parents in case of an accident. Children will receive first aid' immediately at school. All of our teachers are trained in First Aid & CPR. Parents are required to sign an accident report

FOOD

The Center serves a nutritional, balanced and tasty breakfast, lunch and snack,

Food from home is permissible, only under special circumstances like on field trips or birthdays

DISCIPLINE:

The safety of children is a foremost concern, as well as, teaching acceptable behavior and proper manners. The staff will establish and enforce guidelines. They will then work with the children's capability to respond to oral requests and discipline by the teacher. Disciplinary methods are restricted to mainly redirection and short time-outs, applied consistently and fairly. Expected behavior is set at the child's level. If there is a difficulty in adjusting to the guidelines, the parent will meet with the staff to discuss the situation and resolve the problem together. Physical punishment, verbal abuse or belittling remarks are strictly prohibited.

SICKNESS POLICY:

It is the Center's belief that families have the right to a safe and healthy Child Care.

To provide optimum care and to control the spread of contagious illness, children are required to stay at home if they show symptom of –

** Fever of 100 degree or more, which may also be accompanied by sore throat, persistent coughing, nasal discharge, unusual rash or extreme fussiness*

** Diarrhea * Vomiting * Redness of the eye with crusty discharge*

In the interest of full recuperation and safety, we recommend that children not return to the Center until they are free of active symptoms for 24 hours.

Parent/Guardian must inform the Center within 24 hours or next business day if a child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable diseases. Teachers trained in 'Health Screening' will perform a quick health assessment of each child upon arrival every day.

MEDICATION:

Only prescribed medication with proper authorization from parents will be administered.

In the case of an 'over the counter' medicine (such as cough medicine etc.) the parent must ask the doctor or nurse for a written note authorizing the staff to administer the medicine, indicating the medication dosage, times to be given etc. Our staff have received training in proper administration of medication to children, as well as training in CPR and First-Aid. Written parent authorization is required, before staff can apply 'sunscreen' and / or insect repellent on children.

HOLIDAYS / CLOSINGS

The Center will follow the standard policy of remaining open for business or closing, in line with the U.S. Federal Government. The Center will observe all Federal holidays and closings, [Substituting Veterans Day for the day after Thanksgiving] plus two staff workdays.

EMERGENCY AND SNOW / INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:

** The Center has in place an "Emergency Response Plan" in the case of any type of emergency that may occur during school hours.*

** Westgate Child Center will follow the Federal Government's lead in matters of opening and closing due to inclement weather. Parents are encouraged to listen to the local radio and television to determine the Federal Government status on days when adverse conditions may affect the normal working day. In addition, the messages on Westgate's phone system will be*

updated as necessary, to ensure accurate information on the Center's operational status for the day.

WITHDRAWALS:

Four (4) weeks notice is required, prior to the child's last day. Parents must notify the Director in writing, if they intend to withdraw a child from the Center. Families not able to follow the statements of the "Enrollment Agreement," will be provided with a two-week notice of termination. The Center reserves the right at any time to terminate the enrollment of a child, if in the Center's opinion it is in the best interest of the child or other children in the Center.
