



# Druid Hills Child Development Center

2018-2019 Parent Handbook



*Serving the midtown Atlanta community since 1969*



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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## THE DRUID HILLS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Druid Hills Child Development Center is to develop children socially, emotionally and cognitively, to encourage their curiosity, and to help them realize their full potential. We define quality as an environment that inspires children's natural curiosity and believe children learn best through doing. We partner with families to support them in their role as their child's first and most important teachers and believe that through this partnership we create a foundation for a child's future success.

### OUR HISTORY

Druid Hills Child Development Center is a nonprofit agency with a long-standing history of providing exceptional early care and education since 1969. What started as a mission of the church has evolved into relationship based on rental of the facility, however our mission has not changed over the years. We work daily to meet the needs of young children and their families by providing high quality early care and education.

### Value Statements

- We value safe and healthy environments that foster creativity and curiosity and create a foundation for young children and their families for future educational and life success.
- We value the creation of a community for children with an emphasis on positive interactions that reflect our respect for children and their individual needs.
- We value the engagement of parents, children, educators, and community members to create our child driven community and to foster individuality for all.
- We value striving for quality improvements and the professional development of our educators as we support them in their quest as life- long learners.
- We value our role as trusted advisors and a provider of resources to our families and work hard to maintain that role every day.

We highly value the contributions that parents make to our organizational culture. We encourage parents to support our work and the children in the program in a variety of ways. We ask parents to embrace the following Community Agreements as a way to support the staff and children:

- Be Respectful
- Be Present
- Be Informed
- Be Accountable

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## OUR GOALS AND PURPOSE

### PRESERVING THE EXPERIENCE OF CHILDHOOD

Adult values, experience, and activities constantly press on the experience of childhood, pushing children into adult experiences before they are ready. The Center honors the experience of childhood, recognizing that children need the time to be children so that they can progress and grow into healthy adults.

### CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY

Modern life is challenging for most young families. The Center operates as a community of children, parents, staff, Board, and interested friends working interdependently in support of each other's healthy growth and development, and creating joyful experiences in a loving environment.

### QUALITY IN SERVICE

The Center strives to provide the highest quality service in all of its activities. The program follows standards that define quality in early childhood programs set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Georgia Quality Rated program.

### FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF EVERY CHILD AND FAMILY

The Center strives to make certain that the individual needs of each and every child is met and that their unique gifts and talents are developed. Similarly, parents and their families have individual needs. While the Center does not attempt to "be all things to all people", it does strive to meet the individual needs of families to the extent we are able. Teachers and members of the leadership team welcome the opportunity to discuss any needs your family may have at any time during the school year. Any information you share will be kept confidential.

### FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS

Druid Hills Child Development Center recognizes that all families are not structured similarly and that some families may live apart due to a variety of circumstances. Druid Hills Child Development Center teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs of children in these situations and will work to support the entire family. We are happy to provide duplicate information to accommodate both parents' need for information, upon request.

### PROVIDING A QUALITY WORK ENVIRONMENT

**The Center recognizes that the quality and well-being of the staff determines the quality of the program** and treats its staff with care and respect. We strive to retain a well-qualified teaching staff by providing competitive pay rates along with benefit packages such as health care and retirement programs. We also offer an excellent vacation package, paid training, and tuition reimbursement for employees seeking to improve their education and knowledge in the field of early care and education. Turnover in our field is high due to the difficulty of the job and the relatively low wages. We will do our best to prevent turnover however it will occur in the

program. Parents can assist us in keeping our best teachers by committing to the Community Agreements, maintaining appropriate communication with each other and the staff, and adhering to policy. When we experience staffing turnover we will notify parents in the classroom being impacted when their teacher is leaving and our plan to provide the remaining staff the support they need as we begin our recruitment process. If at any time you have questions related to staffing and our process for recruitment please contact the DHCDC Program Director

## **OUR CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

The Druid Hills Child Development Center promotes the optimum development of each child. We recognize that the child's entire experience with the Center is important and there is no defined separation between learning and caring, play and work. Our goals for each child are drawn from the child and her/his family, NAEYC, the Quality Rated program, and the Creative Curriculum educational approach, which include:

- Promoting all aspects of development including physical (gross and fine motor); social (awareness, respect, ability to share and cooperate); communication (verbal and non-verbal); self-esteem (self-awareness and positive self-image); and cognitive (comprehension, problem solving, and skill acquisition)
- Encouraging each child to develop his or her unique individual talents
- Developing a foundation that promotes individual success in the future
- Creating an "active learning" environment in which to develop

We want to empower each and every child to become confident, life-long learners and secure, caring people. The fundamental goal of the Center's programming is that children become enthusiastic learners from activities they plan and carry out themselves. We recognize children as little scientists and builders, acrobats and artisans, who need active experience with the world of people and things; who need opportunities to plan and set goals and take responsibility. Our teachers craft opportunities for children to experience their community, to learn in formal and informal ways, and provoke questions and help the child find new answers and challenges. Our teachers also help children achieve the confidence and self-discipline to develop increasingly more sophisticated skills and knowledge.

### **OUR CURRICULUM**

Druid Hills Child Development Center uses The Creative Curriculum and the Georgia Early Learning Development Standards ([GELDS](#)) for all age groups in the program. The Creative Curriculum educational approach has been successfully used with children of all abilities since the 1980's. The Creative Curriculum bases its educational approach on the idea that all children progress and learn through interactions with the social and physical environment. Based on this idea, our teachers are trained to observe children and to create weekly lessons that build off of their interest. **Due to the inclusive nature of The Druid Hills Child Development Center, great care is taken to ensure active and equal participation of all children.**

*The most important goal of this curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. The goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We're teaching them how to learn, not just in preschool and kindergarten, but all through their lives. Each child is allowed to learn at his/her own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We're giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their years.*

From The Creative Curriculum, Diane Trister Dodge and Joanna Phinney

The Creative Curriculum is implemented in a way that allows for modifications and adaptations to ensure success for all children enrolled. It is implemented in a way that is responsive to family home values, beliefs, and experiences.

If you would like more information on The Creative Curriculum, you can visit their website at [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com).

### **ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS**

An important feature of the curriculum is the assessment process for each child's development and progress while they are enrolled in the program. Teachers have received formal training on how to assess child progress and receive ongoing training regarding how to use information obtained through the assessment process to appropriately modify the curriculum to meet each child's needs. Assessments are composed of developmental checklists, anecdotal notes, screenings, and work samples. We collectively refer to these documents as the "Portfolio". Assessments occur ongoing throughout the year; however, they are most intensely administered near parent-teacher conference times each November and March.

Our teachers are trained to administer the [Ages and Stages](#) screening questionnaire to track development and identify opportunities for intervention if needed. The initial Ages and Stages screening will be completed for all newly enrolling children after the first 60 days and no later than the first 90 days of attendance. All assessments are kept confidential and outside sources must provide written consent to gain access. A written, summarized report, referred to as the Family Conference Form (for infants and toddlers) and/or the Child Progress and Planning Report, is provided to parents during conferences. If you need this information provided to you in a language other than English, or a method other than written, please let the Lead Teacher or a member of administration know so that we can meet your needs. If additional support services are needed to ensure your child is developing on course we are happy to host therapist here at DHCDC. We must meet prior to therapy beginning and must have a signed Memorandum of Understanding to ensure both the organization providing the services and DHCDC are on the same page regarding the treatment being provided. Therapists are not allowed to interact with other children in the space and are required to adhere to our health and safety policies as well as our approach to discipline.

If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) we would like to include those documents in your child's portfolio. Parents, teachers, and any other professional involved in your child's life should work together to decide how best to incorporate the goals identified within those documents. We are also interested in what you observe at home. At any time, please feel free to share observations from home with your Lead Teacher. If you would like to know more about any part of our curriculum, including the assessment process and tools used, please feel free to contact your Lead Teacher or the Program Coordinator. You can also visit the Creative Curriculum website at [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com) for further information.

During the parent teacher conference parents have an opportunity to set goals with the teacher and to address any successes or challenges. We also provide copies of the ASQ screening tools for parents to complete upon request and if the tool recommends monitoring or referral.

### **THE NATURE, PURPOSE, AND VALUE OF PLAY**

As early educators we make the statement that play is children's "work." Play is the activity by which children learn and develop. An excessive focus on product and achievement-oriented activities (devaluing the value of "play") undermines that which establishes the foundation for a productive and satisfying life as an adult. At the Center, a primary requirement of our teachers is to have a comprehensive understanding of play and its relationship to learning; a **primary goal** of our program is to sustain and enhance the play activity of our children.

### **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Our physical environment has been thoughtfully organized to serve the developmental needs of children. Our indoor and outdoor spaces are both created to address the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development of the children in our care.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor physical activity is critical for healthy development as well as plays and important part in preventing the spread of infectious illness. When weather cooperates, we will spend time outdoors. According to licensing regulations, young children are to spend a minimum of an hour and a half outdoors each day (except for times when there is active precipitation or extremely inclement weather including smog alert days). Staff will be notified if the temperature is below 32 degrees (including wind chill) which will limit outdoor play. Outdoor will be excluded when it is raining or below 20 degrees with wind chill. Infants are to spend an hour outdoors each day. Please dress your child appropriately for the current weather (excluding scarves) and in play clothes with shoes that adequately protect the feet and are not slick-soled (tennis shoes are a good choice). Labeling clothing items brought to school is strongly suggested.

During times when outdoor play is not admissible, we will spend time indoors doing active play. **A doctor's note is required in order to keep a child (including infants) inside during their scheduled outside play time and will be approved on a case by case basis.**

## **APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE**

It is vital to the well-being and successful development of young children that they have clear, consistent, and appropriate limits on behavior. Because of our commitment to developing a positive sense of self-esteem, and independent, responsible, and caring behavior, we approach "setting limits" (discipline) in a predictable, clear, and sensitive manner. The limits we set arise from two areas of importance: not hurting oneself or others and respecting everything in the physical environment. We also design the environment to minimize the necessity of limits, and share control with children in the decision-making process. In "disciplining" a child, our primary goal is to support the child in developing awareness in these two areas and then establishing effective "inner discipline" or self-control. This reduces their dependence on adult-imposed control. Since developing "inner discipline" is our primary objective, setting limits is treated as a learning process. We believe that social and emotional skills must be taught and it is not our job to create a punitive environment for children learning the necessary skills. We implement the Pyramid Approach (Appendix, 1.0) which builds on an effective work force, strong schedules and routines, individualized supports, and when necessary a plan that involves additional support (see supporting Social and Emotional development, pg. 6)

If a child's behavior is inappropriate or unsafe, an educative consequence appropriate to the behavior, age and individual child is applied. Our first course of action is positive redirection (for instance a child may simply be directed to another activity) and facilitation of peer to peer problem solving.

To enforce the boundaries and rules at the DHCDC, the adults use the following techniques with the children:

- Clear statement of the limit. ("You may not throw the blocks.")
- Stating expectation positively. ("The blocks are for building.")
- Redirection. ("Let's go see what Eric is cooking in the kitchen.")
- Supporting problem-solving and negotiation between the children. ("How could you use your words to tell John that you would like to have a turn with that truck?")
- Logical consequences or choices. ("You are having difficulty playing with the blocks without throwing: I need you to choose another place to play.")
- Modeling effective ways to express feelings and emotions. ("I do not like it when you grab the book from my hands. Please tell me that you would like to see it.")

At times some children will exhibit physically challenging behavior while in group care. These behaviors (ex: biting, hitting, kicking, spitting, throwing objects) can be in response to frustration or lack of language and it can happen more often in group care than at home. We look at these behaviors as a typical behavior and will deal with this behavior in the same way we deal with all typical behavior that needs to be redirected. Although we know these behaviors are often typical it can be very difficult in a classroom setting and we will use redirection and shadowing as techniques to assist children to move forward with new ways of expressing their emotions.

It is very important for parents to understand that the staff at DHCDC are trained to manage challenging behaviors and we will communicate to parents any concerns via phone call, email or



a scheduled conference. We do not think it is good for parents or children to discuss their behavior at pick up or drop off. When we meet with parents we are looking to inform and partner with families to assist children in successfully moving forward with their development. We will also work in partnership with parent to identify if your child needs additional supports

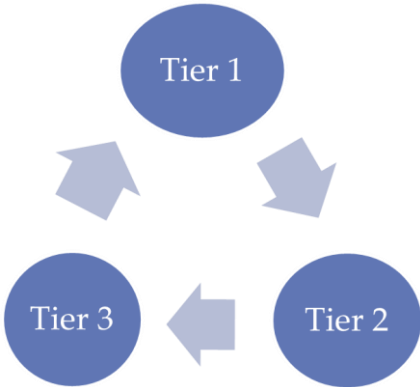
AT NO TIME WILL A CHILD BE STRUCK, ROUGHLY HANDLED, VERBALLY ABUSED, OR DEMEANED AS A DISCIPLINARY MEASURE. To be clear no child will experience physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and we will not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Additionally, parents of children enrolled in the program are expected to adhere to these discipline policies while at the Center whether engaging their own children or the children of others. We are happy to discuss our philosophy of developing internal discipline with you individually as it pertains to your child at a time when our staff can be out of the classroom and can provide you with our full attention. We strongly encourage parents to engage teachers at pick up to gather more information about how your child experienced their day however we do not find it is the best time to discuss any behavior or developmental issues. It is critical that children feel safe and that they do not see our teachers discussing their behavior in a critical way in front of them or other children and parents. Please feel free to request a parent conference if you have any concerns about your child’s social and emotional development and we will also reach out to parents and request a time to discuss any concerns we may have about your child’s development or behavior.

**Supporting Social and Emotional Development**

Druid Hills Child Development Center strives to provide the support and education children need daily in partnership with parents. To ensure children are receiving the necessary supports we require your participation in our process as well as your support in acquiring additional interventions as needed. We have a three tiered system in place to support children and their parents as we assess their ability to be successful in our group setting.

**Tier 1-** We expect 90% of our children to be served through Tier 1-where we use behavior strategies that are effective for most developmentally appropriate behaviors.

**Tier 2-** If, through our data collection, we have significant evidence that a child needs additional supports, we will work with the child’s family and teachers to create a Tier 2 behavior plan with a specific set of interventions (such as incentive plans for children, transition supports etc...) We would expect 10% of our enrolled children in Tier 2 during a school year.



**Tier 3-** If, through our data collection, we have significant evidence that a child needs additional supports, we will work with the child’s family and teachers to create a Tier 3 behavior plan with a specific set of interventions that includes assessment provided by outside professionals. We would expect 5 % of our enrolled children in Tier 2 to progress into Tier 3 during a school year.

**If parents are unwilling to partner with us and/or provide the additional assessments that may be necessary to continue providing care the Druid Hills Child Development Center will require parents to pay additional tuition at the cost \$40.00 per day to provide for additional staffing in their child’s classroom. If that support is not deemed enough to provide for a positive environment we will terminate care as a last resort.**

**CONTINUITY OF CARE MODEL**

In an effort to ease transitions within the program, we follow a continuity of care model for the infant and toddler programs. This means that children stay with at least part (if not all) of their peer group when they move into new classrooms each year in August. We will also assess the needs and skills of our teachers and work to identify an assistant teacher that might travel with infants and toddlers as they progress, however we do not guarantee that teachers will always move with children as they transition. We work very hard to create a transition plan that involves new teachers joining current classrooms to meet the children and visits that gradually extend in length to ease the process for both children and parents.

**RATIOS OF ADULTS TO CHILDREN**

Our experience has confirmed that group size and the number of paid, trained professional teachers available with whom the children can interact and relate are significant factors in providing a quality environment for children in a group setting. If your child bonds well to at least one adult in his/her room, the likelihood is that he/she will be happy at school. We strive to maintain the following ratios and group sizes based on NAEYC recommendations as well as consistent staffing:

AGE GROUP	CENTER GROUP SIZE & RATIOS		STATE REQUIREMENTS	
Birth to 12 Months	8	1:4	12	1:6
1 to 1 ½	12	1:4	16	1:8
1 ½ to 2 ½	14	1:6	20	1:10
2 ½ to Three Years	16/18	1:10	20	1:10
4-5 year olds	20	1:10	22	1:11
GA’s Prek	22	1:11	22	1:11

As a part of our staffing plan our ratio will change as the children age throughout the school year however the group sizes will not go above the groups sizes listed above.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Research shows that parent involvement in children's learning positively impacts student achievement levels. We believe that your participation at the Druid Hills Child Development Center will make a difference and will positively impact your child's progress and development. We encourage all parents, legal guardians and adult family members to become actively involved at Druid Hills Child Development Center by serving as a parent volunteer. Your time, talent and enthusiasm are an integral part of the day-to-day functioning of the center and the overall academic development of your child.

We highly value the contributions that parents make to our organizational culture. We encourage parents to support our work and the children in the program in a variety of ways. We ask parents to embrace the following **Community Agreements** as a way to support the staff and children:

- Be Respectful
- Be Present
- Be Informed
- Be Accountable

There are a number of ways you can volunteer and demonstrate your commitment at Druid Hills Child Development Center. Parent volunteer service hours can be offered by directly supporting the Center and by supporting your child academically.

Possible volunteer activities to support the Center include:

- Fundraising activities
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Parent Council Volunteer
- Field trip assistance and supervision
- Special events assistance

Leadership activities such as serving as the parent representative for your child's class, volunteering for the Book Fair, Fall Festival, Spaghetti Dinner, or participating in other Center committees

Possible volunteer activities to support your child academically include:

- Monthly parent workshop participation
- Classroom support
- Serving as a parent mentor/buddy to new families

If you would like to volunteer for specific jobs, please contact the Center to be placed on the parent volunteer schedule. We truly appreciate your participation as a parent volunteer and we will make every attempt to match your interests and skills with projects or tasks that you are comfortable with.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

The program includes ten classrooms for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and GA's Prek. New classroom groupings are formed each August as our prek children move on to kindergarten. Children are placed in groups based on the following considerations: chronological age, peer relations, and available space.

The daily schedule provides both for activities specifically geared to the similar developmental level of children in each classroom, as well as opportunities for children of different ages and developmental levels to interact and learn from one another. Children generally remain with the same peer group or part of the same peer group throughout their time in the program. Children may also remain with some of the same caregivers, allowing us to provide continuity of care from the infant through the toddler classrooms. The following is a brief description of the educational focus of the program:

### OUR PROGRAM FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG TODDLERS:

For infants and toddlers the program focuses on four areas: **self-esteem and personal awareness; communication skills; social skills; and physical development.** Self-awareness and positive self-concept are fostered by the teachers through close personal contact, communication with positive reinforcement, independence in choosing activities, granting of responsibility, and respect for the child as an individual. Communication skills are fostered through thoughtful speaking with the children during routine tasks such as diaper changing, in stories, music, and through enumeration of objects and the description of activities occurring in their presence. Social development is largely a function of the babies' interaction with adults. However, because the children are grouped together, their development is enhanced through physical contact, interaction in play, and structured group activities.

Physical development is the foundation upon which cognitive development is based. Adequate support of the sensory motor stage of development is of the utmost importance. Responsive adults provide the most significant experience, but the environment and physical activities are structured to maximize development. Infants are supported and encouraged in their natural pursuit of independent physical activity. Our infant program is setup to meet the individual needs of infants by feeding and allowing for sleep on demand and based on their own internal schedules.

While the developmental issues for infants and toddlers are similar, certain differences are addressed in the toddler program. Toddlers are more mobile, more independent, and are becoming more verbal. Their program features a more challenging classroom environment, with climbing structures as well as opportunities to take walks around the school. Group activities feature singing, playing musical instruments, playing movement games, and hearing stories. Because toddlers' attention spans are short and rapidly shifting, the program is highly flexible and individualized. Another shift as children grow into the toddler program is the shift

toward group eating and sleeping. The children will begin to eat together for breakfast, lunch, and snack and will nap as a group together in the classroom.

### **OUR PROGRAM FOR OLDER TODDLERS:**

Two years of age is the period which encompasses an exciting developmental stage and includes an increasing thrust toward independence and limit-testing. The proper balance of freedom of activity, decision making and adherence to appropriate limits set by parents and teachers is critical to successful development of self-esteem and self-control. Social development is fostered through small group interactions. Relationships between children that are assisted by teachers provide the greatest opportunity for development.

During later toddlerhood, communication skills are emphasized as children focus on language development. Stories and songs take on a greater significance but are not as important as dialogue that takes place between children and teachers. This is also a time period when children, in striving toward greater independence, develop more refined self-help skills in the areas of dressing, eating, problem solving and toileting. For many children the process of toilet training begins and is often completed during this year. We take a relaxed and child centered approach to supporting children in achieving toilet training and find that interest in participating with peers combined with positive, loving reinforcement by teachers is a sufficient motivator for most children.

Physical development is highlighted by the reinforcement of coordinated movements and expansion into more complex gross and fine motor activities, all of which are promoted by the creation of an appropriate and stimulating environment, filled with equipment and activities that are of interest to the children and allow for age appropriate challenges.

The outdoor play space for children is equipped with balls, sand and water play supplies, swings, tricycles, riding toys, and wagons. Classroom activities are also rotated outside providing children with a variety of opportunities including: selecting building toys such as Duplos or blocks; artistic experiences involving play dough, watercolors and glue; literacy experiences such as reading books; practicing eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills by coloring, writing, cutting, stringing beads, and working puzzles. Cognitive development is supported by interactions and investigation within a stimulating environment, rich in opportunities for developing language, problem solving skills, identification and classification, counting and number concepts, and emerging interest in literacy.

### **Preschool (3-5 Years old)**

Three-, four-, and five-year-old children are dynamic and on the move - ready and interested to learn more about their world and how they as individuals fit into it. Therefore, curriculum for these children is exciting, challenging, and supportive of each child's unique learning style.

The curriculum for each of these groups is designed to meet the interests and developmental needs of the children. Children are participants in the learning process and are encouraged to share their interests and ideas. Teachers are able to adapt the curriculum in order to take into

account the children's expanding knowledge, interests and abilities. Through observation and interaction, teachers introduce new concepts and initiate or extend activities in order to ensure that each child progresses in key developmental areas. Open shelving in the rooms allows for easy access to toys, materials and books, enabling children to initiate and expand activities. Defined areas for blocks, manipulative and building toys, artistic expression, dramatic play, reading and quiet play are found in each room, in addition to larger spaces for group activities and the expansion of various types of play. Opportunities exist for children to be involved in large or small group activities or to play alone in a cozy place. The spacious outdoor environment for these children includes climbing structures and swings. Additionally, children and teachers also utilize the outdoor environment for artistic expression, gardening, reading and storytelling, small group games, and as a place to develop a growing appreciation of nature in the form of bugs, plants, water, dirt, clouds, temperature, shadows, and much more.

The expansion of social and emotional growth is rapid during this time in a child's life. Children are in the process of discovering and exploring who they are as an individual, a member of a family, and a peer within a social group. The program's philosophy strongly emphasizes multi-faceted support of each child's own unique developmental process in the realms of social and emotional growth. This support includes respect for individual needs, facilitation of individual and group problem solving, identification of emotions (*"I can see that you are feeling sad right now."*), and gentle, nurturing care which conveys to each child that he/she is special and deeply loved.

Additionally, during these years children are developing increasingly complex thought, problem solving and investigatory abilities. Our curriculum is designed to insure that ample opportunities are available for children to explore problem solving in the context of everyday events, such as circle time, social play, experimentation with toys and equipment, and outdoor play. The role of the teacher is to be readily available to assist children in their exploration by posing questions, which encourage expanded thinking and assist them in extending their play and learning activities. Through active exploration, play, and continuous building of social relationships, children develop a positive and healthy self-concept, which supports future learning and relationships. It is our belief that when children are supported in realizing their ability to be successful in the world, they will be more fully prepared to make positive contributions to our society.

Typically, during the latter half of the three-year-old year and progressing steadily during the four and five-year-old years, children become increasingly interested in literacy activities. We view literacy activities to be any activity or process where a child is exploring and developing skills, which will eventually support them in becoming good readers and writers. In its simplest form, this means developing capacities ranging from eye/hand and fine muscle coordination necessary for the mechanics of writing to the more complex cognitive processes of comprehending that letters are symbols that can be decoded and combined to create written language. Teachers support these emerging processes by providing an environment that is rich in spoken and written language and that allows children to experience, view, copy, practice, and conceptualize both written and oral language. Due to the individual nature of each child's learning process, teachers exercise great care in order to evaluate when children are ready for increased challenge in the area of developing literacy abilities. We utilize the Get Ready to

Read! pre-literacy screening tool for older three-year olds and four-year olds to guide literacy activities within the classroom. The results of your child's screening will be shared with parents at parent-teacher conference time.

### **GA's Prek Program @ DHCDC**

Georgia's Pre-K Program is a lottery funded educational program for Georgia's four year olds to prepare children for Kindergarten. Children four years of age on September 1 of the current school year who are Georgia residents are eligible to attend Georgia's Pre-K Program during this school year. Georgia's Pre-K Program is voluntary for families and for providers. The funds are awarded to programs and Druid Hills Child Development Center is required to apply all policies and procedures relate to the program. The program provides educational services daily from 8:00AM-2:30PM. Parents are only responsible for the required Meal Fee monthly. Families who need care before or after the prek day can participate in our Extended Care program (see below). For further details see GA's Prek Program Family Handbook (Appendix 2.0) for all of the program policies and requirements.

### **SUPPORT PROGRAMS:**

#### **Drop In Care**

We offer drop in care for children up to age 8 in our School Age Camp programs only and charge a daily fee for this service. We ask for a 24 hour notice to ensure we have adequate coverage to provide care and require a 24 hour cancellation notice if you have registered for care and have a change of need. If we do not receive the 24 hour notice your account will be billed for the full drop in rate.

#### **Extended Care**

We offer Extended Care to families participating in GA's Prek that extends the care to the full operating hours of our center. Parents pay a monthly fee for this service. If you are family who is not participating in Extended Care and you drop off prior to 7:45 AM or pick up after 2:45PM your child will be enrolled into Extended Care for the month and the monthly fee will be applied to your account.

#### **Summer Camp**

Summer Camp provides care for children 5-8 years of age during the months of June, July, and August. Children who are rising kindergarteners eligible to attend and it is open to the community. Summer Camp runs for a total of 9 weeks and consists of week-long sessions based on various themes of summer. Outdoor games, field trips, creative arts and music are central components of the curriculum, which is designed to be relaxing and educational. We structure our school calendar around the **Atlanta Public School** calendar each year.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

Experiencing the world and using the surrounding community to build on learning is an important part of learning for children 4-5 years of age. We will take field trips throughout the

year that reflect the children's interest and build on their skill sets. Teachers will set goals and have a plan for each trip to ensure learning is taking place as well as fun!

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Program staff and administration at Druid Hills Child Development Center understand the importance of confidentiality regarding your family's information. Unless authorized to do so, personal information including address, phone number(s), and email addresses will not be released. Information related to your child will not be discussed with anyone without your consent other than Druid Hills Child Development Center staff members, unless required by law. Children's files are located in an office. When unattended, these offices are locked to ensure confidentiality. Assessment information and records are kept in locked cabinets. WE ask that parents assist us in maintaining confidentiality by scheduling time to discuss your child's development or your concerns outside of drop off and pick up times. We also ask that parents not discuss other people's children, staff, or each other. Gossiping about children, their families, and our staff erode the DHCDC community and the morale of teachers and parents. Please see our Grievance Process on pg. 24 for the steps to addressing and solving any concerns you may have related to your child's care here DHCDC.

## **ENROLLMENT & TUITION INFORMATION**

### **TUITION**

Tuition is paid on a weekly basis. Tuition is charged for all weekdays each month, including holidays, whether or not your child is in attendance. It may be helpful to think of tuition as you might pay rent for an apartment. It holds a place for your child in the Center. Just as a landlord is unable to fill your apartment for a few weeks while you go on a vacation, we are unable to fill your child's space for a brief vacation period while our operating expenses remain constant. You will receive a weekly invoice via email. Please carefully review statements and be in touch if you identify any errors. If you need receipts for tax purposes or flexible spending accounts, please make a formal request to our Business Manager, Dawn Character: [dcharacter@dhcdc.com](mailto:dcharacter@dhcdc.com)

Additional details regarding tuition:

- We encourage our parents to take advantage of our lowest cost and most convenient method of payment which is **automatic bank draft**. Forms for setting up the draft are available at the front desk or upon request.
- Checks should be made payable to Druid Hills Child Development Center and mailed or placed in the drop box located in the front lobby. As a convenience credit and debit cards are accepted. Please note there is a convenience charge for this service.
- Tuition is due weekly on Tuesday by 12:00 pm. If a Tuesday falls on a day the center is closed tuition is due on the first day prior that the center is open. A late fee of \$25 a day fee is assessed if tuition is not received.



- Payments not received by the close of business on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the week may result in termination of your child(ren)'s enrollment.
- Any late pick-up charges incurred will be billed the following business day and are payable with your next weekly tuition payment.
- A \$35 service fee is charged for any check or decline draft returned due to insufficient funds or for any other reason.
- Tuition rates are increased as needed at the beginning of each school year (August) to cover the costs of increased expenses. Administration will make every effort to inform you of increases in a reasonable amount of time before they go into effect, typically with re-enrollment each spring. A minimum of a 30 day notice will be provided to parents prior to any tuition increase.
- A refundable two week deposit is due at the time of enrollment in order to hold your child's space. The two week deposit will be applied to your last two weeks of care. If there is a difference owed to the center it is responsibility of the parent to make up the difference.
- ***Tuition will not be prorated. A two week notice is required.***

## **ANNUAL FEES**

### **Activity Fee**

A \$100.00 annual activity fee is added to your initial billing and is assessed each year in September as an annual fee to cover partial costs of art materials and community activities that are brought to the Center for the children to enjoy.

### **Extended Care and After Care Deposits**

A one month deposit is required for both the Extended Care Program and the After School Program. Deposits are only returned in the form of a credit once notice is provided (one month notice is required)

### **TAX INFORMATION**

Each week, you will automatically receive an invoice. If you need receipts, please submit a request in writing to Dawn Character; [dcharacter@dhcdc.com](mailto:dcharacter@dhcdc.com). Please retain your weekly invoices and receipts. We will also send you an annual statement by the end of January each year to assist you with the process of filing your taxes.

If you have a cafeteria plan and wish to be reimbursed during the year please see our Executive Director or Business Manager for a signature on any of your documents.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

Enrollment is open to any child, 6 weeks of age through 5 years, without discrimination based on sex, race, color, national/ethnic identity, ability, or creed, provided the child will benefit from the program offered and not pose a threat to the health and safety of other children enrolled or to the staff. **Enrollment priority is given to siblings of current children, and children of employees.**

***Admission is decided by the Leadership Team and children can be dis-enrolled based on our assessment of fit in the program with no notice.***

### **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The Center will enroll children with disabilities and consider many factors, included but may not be limited to, how well each child's individual needs will be met in the context of the program's philosophy, group size, teacher-child ratio, staff expertise, and the number of other children with specialized needs within any group.

### **INITIAL APPLICATION PROCESS**

Families interested in enrollment at the Center are asked to complete the following activities in the process of applying to the program:

- First, we ask that you visit our program during one of our tour days, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30-11:00. These dates and times are open times set aside for tours and do not require an appointment
- Second, return the completed application form accompanied by a non-refundable \$100.00 application fee per child. Applications can be obtained during your tour. *Parents with siblings already enrolled must follow the same procedure.*
- Parents will be contacted (only via email) when a spot becomes available and are required at that time to respond to email within 24 hours confirming interest and then must provide 2 week deposit by the provided deadline and begin paying tuition regardless of use.

Although the admission and the readmission process begin in March of each year, we do experience some vacancies during the year. We will contact families throughout the year as spaces become available; however, most of our enrollment vacancies occur in August of each year. We hold everyone's applications in our interest pool throughout the year in the event a vacancy appears. Each year in January we update the interest pool list by sending out a form to each family on the list and ask that it be completed and returned. Only those families who return the form are kept in the pool.

## **RE-ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

Enrollment and re-enrollment are extended at the discretion of the Board of Directors and Leadership Team. Each spring, currently enrolled families are given a re-enrollment packet to complete and return. The Executive Director of the Center along with the Program Coordinator will review all re-enrollment packets. If we do not receive your paperwork on the designated days, we will begin enrollment of new families on the waiting list.

## **ENROLLMENT FORMS**

In addition to the application for admission, a packet of enrollment forms must be completed and signed before the child enters the program. Upon confirmation of admission, the Program Coordinator schedules time with new parents to review all forms, requirements, and orientation processes.

## **TRANSITIONS**

Starting a new school can be a difficult experience for young children and their parents. We encourage parents and children to visit the Center prior to the actual start date following their acceptance into the program. One or more visits to the school during activity time, lunch, and nap, provide an opportunity for children to become comfortable with the new environment before setting off on their own.

Conversely, if your child is transitioning out of our program, either to go to Kindergarten or to another school, we want to help you with that transition. Information that we will gather over the course of your child's enrollment with us will be helpful for his/her new school teachers and caregivers. We will happily provide you with copies of any assessments, screenings, and portfolio information we have compiled on your child. Additionally, throughout the year and especially in the spring, we will distribute information on surrounding school's open-houses, "Kindergarten Round-Up" events, and registration information.

Transitions within the program are thoughtfully planned for as well. Each year in July and August, children spend time transitioning into their new class and becoming acquainted with their new teachers and peer group. Prior to beginning the school year parents are given information on class roster, teaching staff, and classrooms for the upcoming school year, in addition to specific information about the transition schedule and process.

## **WHAT TO BRING ON THE FIRST DAY**

On the first day of school, most children need to bring: (All items MUST be labeled)

- Diapers/pull-ups\*
- Change of clothes
- Outdoor protection (sunscreen, bug spray, coat, etc.)
- Diapering creams and ointments
- Water Bottle/Sippy cup
- Toothbrush and toothpaste (toddlers, preschool and pre-k only)

\*Some parents may opt to use cloth diapers as opposed to disposable diapers. Cloth diapers

must include an absorbent, inner lining that must be completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the inner and outer covering must be changed as a unit during each diaper change.

These are the most common items that are used daily in the classrooms. Please check with your child's teacher to see what additional items may be needed for a particular room or age group. Keep in mind that we often use paint, water, markers, glue, and/or other messy items daily. Please make sure your child wears "play clothing" to the Center. Parents usually bring items in a diaper bag or backpack and we ask that you not leave any items in the bag marked "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN" and that includes **any medications, plastic bags, creams, or items small enough to swallow**. Children love to explore. Please DO NOT bring toys, snacks, and candy unless teachers ask (show and tell, special parties, etc.) Your child may also be attached to an object (blanket, doll, other toy) that would provide comfort and reassurance on the first few days with us. Please feel free to bring it along (labeled, of course!)

Protective lotions such as sunscreen and bug repellent are accepted and encouraged, especially during the spring and summer months. Written permission is required in order to use these products on your child. Additionally, sunscreen or sun block must be a minimum of SPF 15 and include UVB and UVA protection. **Please do not provide aerosol sunscreen or bug spray as it can be a trigger for children with asthma or other breathing issues. Ointments only for sunscreen and spray (not aerosol) for bug spray please!**

#### **WITHDRAWAL**

It is important for your child to be given an opportunity to say good-bye and have a sense of closure when he or she leaves the program. Please let your child and the staff know in advance of your child's last day, so that the transition can be a positive experience for your child, his or her friends, and teachers.

***A 2 week written notification is required to withdraw your child from the program without penalty. Druid Hills Child Development Center does not prorate tuition for families leaving before the end of this period. This notice should be given to the Business Manager via email (dcharacter@dchdc.com) or hard copy. Once notice is received you will receive confirmation and a detailed explanation of how your deposit will be applied. Your initial deposit will be applied to your last two weeks of care. If there is difference in this amount parents are responsible for the difference or the Center will reimburse the parents.***

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Druid Hills Child Development Center is open year round, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Children need to arrive prior to scheduled meal times in order to be served.

## **MEAL TIMES**

- Breakfast: 8:30-9:00
- Lunch: 11:30-12:30 (depending on classroom schedules the start time for meals may vary)
- Afternoon Snack: 3:00-3:30
- The Infant Center schedules may vary slightly due to individual schedules. Parents of infants are responsible for bringing formula/breast milk and jar food. Center food is available upon parent/guardian request.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The Center observes 12 holidays throughout the year. This includes New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Families receive a calendar of closings with their re-enrollment packet annually.

## **STAFF IN-SERVICE**

In addition to holiday closures, the Center is closed to children for two days throughout the school year. These dates will generally be during March and October. The actual dates can be found on the Parent Calendar, distributed to all parents each year.

## **PARKING**

We have convenient parking at the Druid Hills Child Development Center however during peak times the parking lots can become congested. **Please remember there is absolutely no parking or loading from the sidewalk directly in front of the building.** The gates to black top area are open from 7:30-8:45 in the morning and 5:00-6:00 in the afternoon. Please do not park in those spaces in the morning if you plan to be in the building past 9:00 AM. We have one point of entry here at the Center and we ask that all parent access the building through the front door. The side door can be used to exit the facility. All building entry doors are locked at all times. Parents and staff use a standard access code for entry.

## **ARRIVAL TIME AND PICK UP**

We are available to receive children at 7:30 a.m. Please do not access the building prior to our opening time. Our mission is to serve working families therefore we do not have required times for drop off. However, we do encourage parents to maintain their daily routine with their children to create a predictability that is comforting for young children. Children anxiously

anticipate the expected arrival of a parent, and we appreciate your promptness in picking your child (ren) up from the Center. Additionally, our staff frequently has meetings, classes, and families waiting for them immediately after operating hours. If you are going to be late, it is imperative that you call us to let us know. If there is no answer, please leave a message on the Executive Director's voice mail. Please note our late pick up fees are \$2.00 per minute and after the third late pick up they are increased to \$5.00 per minute. This charge goes to pay the overtime for the teacher who stays late. ***Calling the Center does not mean that the late pick up fee will be waived.*** Late pick up fees are applied to your account and are expected to be paid in full with your next tuition payment

- Parents picking up after 6:00 pm will incur a late fee based on the time they left the building not just the time of their clock out time in our Procure system. Our closing manager will record the time parent and child (ren) leaves our facility.
- The Center reserves the right to check a parent or authorized adult's identification prior to releasing a child(ren) into custody of an unfamiliar person.
- Fulton County Protective Services will be notified and requested to take custody of the child(ren) if a parent and the emergency contacts cannot be reached after 30 minutes has transpired.
- All children must be signed in and out in the front lobby by a parent each day using our Procure system.
- ***At all times, a parent must escort and supervise their child(ren) while in the building or on the grounds.***
- Parents with multiple children to pick up should pick up infants first. Older siblings can be disruptive to infant classrooms if they are not carefully supervised during pick up and drop off times.

## **RELEASING YOUR CHILD**

Normal procedure is to release a child to no one other than his or her parents or to another party the parent has designated. If someone other than a child's parents plan to pick a child up, please notify the teacher and the Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director as soon as possible. A verbal notice on the day of pick up is acceptable if the person is someone with written authorization with which to release the child. ***If the person is not on the list of designated parties, we must have written permission to release the child.*** Written authorization may be granted by emailing the Executive Director with the following information the authorized person's name, address, and phone number. Identification is required when someone other than the parent picks up a child as a measure of protection. Emergency contacts listed on file are always authorized to pick up children.

If information is needed by Druid Hills Child Development Center staff regarding custody please provide us with the formal paperwork. Unless we have the appropriate paperwork, we cannot keep a child's biological mother or father from picking up his or her child. When we have the appropriate paperwork and a parent tries to pick up the child in a manner that is inconsistent with the legal documents, we will call the other parent immediately and then the police. We will ask that the police mediate the situation and determine who is allowed to take the child home.

## **CUBBIES**

Each child has a cubby in the room in which their group is based. Their spare clothes should be kept there. Soiled clothes are returned there and the cubby should be checked daily.

## **VISITING**

The school encourages parents to visit during the day. This makes the child feel very special and facilitates communication between the Center and home. Parents are also warmly invited to join the monthly scheduled activities. We emphasize that, while notification of visits is helpful, parents are free to come and go from the Center at their own discretion.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are a time for each child to feel special. We recognize that families choose to celebrate birthdays in various ways. Some families enjoy bringing in treats for the class to share on the child's birthday. Keep in mind, that any food items brought to the class **must be store bought and cannot contain peanut products. At no time will the Center allow food prepared at home to be served to the group.**

We also realize that families may have a party elsewhere and wish to invite classmates. Unless you plan to invite the entire class to a birthday celebration or special event, you will need to send the invitations by mail. We regret that due to confidentiality restrictions, we are unable to release mailing addresses to parents in the program. **If you choose to make balloons part of your celebration, please do NOT bring latex balloons (Mylar is acceptable).**

## **CLASSROOM PARTIES**

There are several times over the course of the school year that parents may choose to gather and socialize in their child's classroom (i.e. graduations, end of the year parties, holiday parties). While we encourage parents to have a fun time getting to know one another, please be advised that alcohol use in the classrooms is strictly prohibited. We also ask that if bringing in food items that you limit the amount of sugar and provide a balance of healthy and items for the children to select from with the typical party fare. **Please note we do not serve nuts or home made products to children. All food provided for parties must have been prepared in a professional kitchen and purchased.**

## **SLEEPING & REST TIME ACCESSORIES**

State licensing regulations require each child under the age of one be placed on his/her back to sleep. Blankets, stuffed toys, pillows, and mobiles are prohibited. Children under the age of two cannot have a pillow at rest time. **Any child requiring equipment in the crib or alternate sleep positioning must have a written physician order with detailed instructions.** If you would like your young infant to be swaddled or to have their bed placed at an incline you must provide a written statement from your child's physician that include all three items below:

- Specific instructions on how to swaddle or incline the bed
- For how long can this practice continue
- Physician's Signature is required

It is our practice that as infants turn one-year of age, they will be transitioned to a sleeping cot. Teachers and parents will work together to make this transition as smooth as possible. Parents are asked to provide children sleeping on cots with a small blanket for rest time. Children sleeping on cots are also welcome to bring a stuffed, soft animal or doll, as well as transitional items such as "lovies" or pacifiers (we do not use pacifier fasteners due to the choking hazard they create) to which their child is attached and finds comfort using. We discourage toys being brought from home, as they may be lost or broken and can sometimes generate excessive conflict among the children. Additionally, it is the policy of the Center to give children who aren't sleeping a quiet activity after 30 minutes of rest. This may include a book, puzzle, or something brought from home. Please note: No toy guns or weapons of any kind are permitted at the Center.

## **PROCARE USAGE: CHECKING CHILDREN IN AND OUT EACH DAY**

*SIGNING YOUR CHILD IN AND OUT EACH DAY IS REQUIRED BY LAW. PARENTS MUST ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIGNING THE TIME THEIR CHILD IS IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL EACH DAY. IF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT WILL BE DOING THIS, THE SCHOOL MUST BE NOTIFIED IN WRITING OR BY PHONE. SIGNING IN IS OUR ONLY RECORD OF ATTENDANCE. YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO SOMEONE UNFAMILIAR TO US WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN NOTIFICATION AND A PHOTO ID.*

## **MESSAGES, NOTICES AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Please be sure to check your child's daily sheet and your email for important information messages. Parents will receive emails from the Center including weekly updates and monthly newsletters. These emails provide parents with the monthly calendar, community information,



and Parent Council announcements. Daily sheets and emails are our primary means of communication with families; PLEASE READ THEM CAREFULLY. Other notices will be distributed or posted as necessary. A parent board is outside of every classroom, in the lobby and by the back exit where you will find specific classroom information as well as information on center wide events and information of interest.

### **PORTFOLIOS, JOURNALS, AND PARENT CONFERENCES**

Portfolios and annual parent conferences are in place in an effort to maximize communication between parents and teachers in regards to each child's development.

Individualized portfolios contain developmental milestones, current goals, sample artwork and general facts about each child. During the conference, your teacher will discuss observations made by the staff including any accomplishments or concerns, upcoming activities and/or challenges that may be appropriate for the child. Formal parent conferences are held each April and November. However, parents are welcome to request a conference at any time.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS**

We encourage communication with your child's teachers. While we acknowledge that parents may at times develop a relationship with teachers outside of the Center we ask you to maintain professional boundaries and ask that parents not ask our staff to provide other services outside of their role as teacher (ex: **babysitting**, transporting your child, housesitting, pet sitting). Please note it is strictly forbidden for staff members to check a child out of our care and transport them from DHCDC. Please do not list our staff members as emergency pick up contacts for your family for this reason.

If you do for whatever reason make additional agreements with our staff outside of their role as teacher the Druid Hills Child Development Center is not liable for any situations arising through contact outside of the Center. **We also ask that you refrain from texting or calling teachers on their cell phones.** We have a no cell phone use policy at the Center while teachers are in the classroom to ensure your child's safety. If you need to contact your child's teacher or to check on your child please do so by contacting the center at 404-875-5019. We do our best to always answer the phone but if you are unable to reach us please leave a message in the Program Director's voice mail and your call will be returned or directed to correct staff person to follow up.

### **PARENT CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN - CONFERENCES**

We care about your concerns for your children. We have found that when such concerns arise, a scheduled conference time works best for sharing between parent and teacher. If you desire a conference, please schedule one with your child's Lead Teacher. The teaching staff will communicate with the Leadership Team at the center and members of our team will attend as is

necessary or as requested by parents. We are here to meet your needs concerning you and your children. Please don't hesitate to make use of our services.

## **COMMUNICATING CONCERNS**

Open communication is the foundation of any long term relationship. Please make use of our willingness to listen by communicating your needs and concerns as they arise. The Lead Teacher should be your first point of contact with any issues regarding your child's care. If you are not able along with all members of Leadership Team (listed on the front page) are the people directly responsible for the operation of the Center and have the training and experience to answer your questions and solve any problems that may arise. Additionally, we distribute parent satisfaction surveys each year in March and also encourage parents leaving the program to complete exit interview surveys in order to collect constructive feedback regarding your experience with the program.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The faculty and staff at Druid Hills Child Development Center are committed to maintaining a safe and productive atmosphere for children to grow and learn. Communication is the key to resolving issues. Parents are encouraged to speak with classroom teachers regarding classroom concerns. In the event the parent(s) feels the issue is not being adequately addressed or has become a source of conflict, the following grievance procedure should be followed in order to achieve an appropriate solution.

*If your concerns are related to policy and practice at DHCDC please start with our Program Director and follow the steps below.*

1. Program Coordinator for your child's class
2. Program Director for the program can be contacted to escalate your concern and seek as solution
3. Executive Director for our program can be contacted if our Program Coordinator and Director were not able to resolve your concerns and/or implement a satisfactory solution

We do not have a punitive work environment and see parent concerns as an opportunity to address parent expectations and to improve our work. Please do not hesitate to share your needs or concerns. However please note that we can't implement solutions for classroom issues without notifying and empowering teachers be a part of addressing parent concerns. We will be transparent with teachers regarding parent concerns to ensure they understand our policies and family needs.

If a solution cannot be identified through the process above parents have the right to elevate their concerns to the center's Board of Executive Directors through the following process:

- Place all concerns in writing to [board@dhcdc.com](mailto:board@dhcdc.com)
- After review the Board Chair person and the Chair of the Admin and Policy Committee will review and follow up if needed for further information and assess if a meeting with the center leadership (see process below) is required.
- If needed a meeting with the leadership at the center, a non-parent board member, and the parent will be scheduled to review and address any concerns in person and work together to come to resolution.

### **Druid Hills Child Development Center Parent Council**

DHDCDC PC strives to be an inclusive organization that works to support the Druid Hills Child Development Center. DHDCDC PC focuses on raising money to support the program and teacher appreciation events. We want **100% participation** from the parents/teachers of the children at the Center. *Druid Hills Child Development Center experience is something to brag about – let’s keep it that way!*

#### **PC DHDCDC Sponsored Events:**

- Annual Fundraising Events occur to help raise money for specific projects each year such as technology updates and playground updates
- Staff Appreciation Week (May): The Parent Council coordinates gifts and activities for the teachers throughout this week to show appreciation for the hard work that happens all year long. In the past we have catered lunches, breakfasts, provided items for daily raffles, and arranged for mini-massages. With the Parent Council taking the lead on these activities, the teachers are pampered for the whole week!

#### **PARENT WORKSHOPS**

Quarterly workshops are held for all parents. They offer an opportunity to obtain information on a variety of topics as well as networking with other service providers. Past parent workshop topics have included positive discipline, sibling rivalry, biting, discipline and toilet training. If you have a suggestion on a useful topic or speaker, please contact the Executive Director.

#### **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

We are committed to providing your child healthy and varied nutrition filled food options daily. The Druid Hills Child Development Center:

- We follow the [USDA Food Guidelines](#) to include components of meals and serving sizes.

- **Strives to be nut free and will not serve nut products to the children in our care.** We cannot guarantee food products we do provide have not been made in facilities where nuts are present or that a substitution can always be provided for your child if nuts have to be excluded. **It is the responsibility of parents to notify us in writing if your child has any type of food allergy and have a physician statement completed with allergens and response if a child is exposed to the allergen (IE: Epi-Pens, Benadryl etc..).** Please see pg. 25 for details on required documentation for emergency administration of medicine in our program.
- Provides only turkey, chicken, fish, and beans as a source for protein and do not provide beef or pork
- All of our foods are prepared homemade and all vegetables and fruits are fresh or frozen and our seasonal
- We serve all meals for children beginning at one years old family style in the classroom
- Monthly menus are posted throughout the program as well as on our website: [www.dhcdc.com](http://www.dhcdc.com)

## **SAFETY**

We value safe and healthy environments that foster creativity and curiosity and create a foundation for young children and their families for future educational and life success. Safety is a primary focus at DHCDC and we provide safe environments by maintaining a clean and developmentally appropriate environment both inside and on our playground. We also provide a safe environment by ensuring that children are supervised at all times and engaged in our curriculum. Regardless of all we do to prevent injuries children in our care will experience injuries and the following steps will occur when a child is injured at DHCDC:

- First Aid (all of our staff receive First Aid and CPR training) will be implemented immediately and based on the injury:
  - Ice pack
  - Soap and Water to clean
  - Bandage as needed
- All injuries are reported to a member of the Leadership Team so that the injury can be assessed
- Parents are always called regardless of the severity of the injury
  - If the injury is serious parents will be asked to come and pick up or 911 will be called and parents will be called after
- An incident report is created and will be available for parents at the time of pick up
- Please note that DHCDC is not responsible for payment of medical bills incurred from injuries (see Enrollment Agreement)

We also provide ongoing safety by ensuring our facility is always locked and ask that parents partner with us by not allowing strangers into the building or sharing the access code with others.

## **IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH SCREENINGS**

For the protection of all children and families, children enrolled in the program must be current on all immunizations, according to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics for their age. We must receive copies of immunization records prior to start date. If your child is overdue for immunizations or required health screenings, they will not be allowed to return to school until the proper documentation is provided (or proof of a scheduled appointment). If you are abstaining from immunizations for religious reasons, please submit a notarized, written religious exemption letter.

## **ILLNESS**

The State of Georgia requires exclusion of any sick child from the program. Parents are asked to exercise good judgment and keep ill children at home and seek medical attention as appropriate. Children will not be allowed to attend the Center while suffering from the following illnesses:

1. Fever: Temperature of 101.5 degrees or greater. If a child comes to school and is known to have had a fever during the previous 24 hours, the staff will take the child's temperature to determine admission. Children will not be permitted to return to school until they have been free of fever for 24 hours without medication.
2. Behavior: If a child looks and acts differently: awake and crying, unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, irritable or restless.
3. Respiratory: Breathing difficulties, e.g., wheezing, cold with yellow/green nasal discharge and prolonged cough.
4. Vomiting: More than the usual infant "spitting up"; children will be sent home after 2 incidents of vomiting and may not return until they have been at least 24 hours without vomiting.
5. Diarrhea: Is characterized by frequent watery or green-colored bowel movements, which are not related to medications or food reactions. Children will be sent home after 2 incidents of diarrhea and may not return until they have been without for 24 hours.
6. Rash: Undiagnosed rash other than mild diaper or heat rash.
8. Eye Drainage: Mucus discharge from the eye that may need medical attention for possible infection.

## **Our policies and procedures are as follows:**

1. If your child arrives at the Center with symptoms or possible illness or disease, you will be required to take your child home. If above symptoms manifest while your child is at school or if she/he has a significant accident, we will contact you immediately. Ill children are isolated and parents are requested to pick them up within ONE HOUR. If we are unable to contact you within ½ an hour or you cannot pick up your child, we will phone the person(s) you list as alternates for us to call in an emergency. An ill child must be picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized adult within one hour of being notified. If the child seems particularly sick or injured, we will attempt to call your child's doctor, or clinic for further instructions. In a genuine emergency, we will call the paramedics at 911 for assistance and, and simultaneously call you.
2. If your child contracts a contagious illness, please notify us so we can pass the information on to other parents along with health recommendations. Information provided to parents will include the type of contagious illness, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures for school and home.
3. In the event that a situation arises with a child that is beyond the capacity of the staff to properly care for and, at the same time ensure the smooth functioning of the program, parents will be asked to pick up the child as soon as possible.
4. Children who have had a contagious illness, have been hospitalized for illness or surgery, or have been out sick for 3 or more days MUST bring a doctor's note to return to school. Please remember this is important to ensure the health of ALL children and staff. If you do not bring a note, the teacher will refuse to accept your child into the classroom until a note is received.

## **MEDICINE**

**We do not administer prescription or non-prescription medicines. We will only administer prescription medicine if it is for sustaining life, such as breathing treatments, insulin, or emergency doses of Benadryl and Epi-Pens. These medications must come with the complete form signed by your child's physician and a parent.**

1. Make sure it is in the **original, child proof container** (inform the pharmacist before s/he fills the prescription). NO OTHERS WILL BE ACCEPTED
2. Fill out a Medication Authorization Form stating what the medicine is, when it is to be given, and how much. This authorization form is good for a two-week period. Forms can be obtained from your child's teacher or front desk.
3. Make sure that medicine is in its original container labeled with the child's first and last name. Give the medicine and Medication Authorization Form to your child's teacher. The teachers will let a member of the Leadership Team know that medication administration is

necessary for a child in their room and all medicine is then stored in a locked cabinet at the front office (excluding epi-pens and other emergency medicines which are stored away from children in the classroom) and administered by a member of the Leadership Team as prescribed by the physician.

4. Medications that are to be given for **longer than two weeks** will require a written doctor's order to continue giving. These orders will need to be updated periodically and new orders written. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the doctor's office for the updated orders. G-tube feedings and aerosol treatments will require a written physician order before being administered at school.

5. Medications that are to be given 3 or 4 times a day will be given at school as follows:

- 3x/day medications – first and last dose to be given at home, middle dose given at school between 12:00 and 3:00
- 4x/day medications – first and last dose to be given at home, second dose given at school at 11:00 and third dose given at school at 3:00

Medication may not be stored in cubbies, lunchboxes, or bags.

#### **FORMULA BOTTLES AND BREAST FEEDING**

All infants under 12 months old must have an up-to-date **feeding plan** on file including what type of food or milk is to be given, the time, and the amount. We accept formula or expressed breast milk for infants enrolled. All bottles, formula or breast milk, must be labeled with the infant's name and date. Formula must be mixed according to manufacturer's instructions and bottles cannot contain solid foods except with written instructions from a physician. Bottles will be heated only once in a crock pot (no microwaves will be used). Unfinished bottles will be stored in the refrigerator and may not be reheated. Cow's milk may not be served to infants less than 12 months.

Breast milk must be provided in ready-to-feed sanitary containers and cannot be stored in a refrigerator for more than 48 hours (24 hours if previously frozen). If you choose to actively breast feed your infant, please feel free to use the classroom or the designated space available on the lower level of our building or let a staff person know if you need any other accommodations. Please assist us by using our red rubber band system and placing the provided rubber band on each bottle of breast milk. This process allows for one more confirmation that the right child is getting the right bottle. All children who cannot hold their bottle will be held during feeding. We do not prop bottles.

The Health Department has advised that certain foods are not safe to eat if left un-refrigerated. For this reason, we make refrigerators available in room for perishable foods in all of our

classrooms. When placing food in the refrigerator, we ask that the food item/container is marked with your child's first and last name and date.

Food brought to school for special events must be store bought and in their factory sealed containers or whole fruits. At no time will the Center allow homemade foods to be served to the group.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**

The Center is well prepared for both individual and mass disaster emergencies. Several procedures have been established in order to provide for protection against and care in the event of an emergency.

### **SEVERE WEATHER, FIRE AND PHYSICAL PLANT PROBLEMS**

In case of fire, the Center staff will follow the evacuation procedures posted by the exits. Children will be taken to a safe 2<sup>nd</sup> Site location (Presbytery Office located at 1024 Ponce de Leon Avenue) and parents/guardians will be contacted for pick-up. The Center conducts fire drills monthly to practice these procedures.

In case of severe weather (tornado/storms) children and staff will be evacuated from rooms and into the central hallway as indicated by the exits. Parents/Guardians will be contacted as soon as possible, without compromising the safety of the children or the staff. The Center conducts tornado drills twice a year to practice these procedures.

Possible closings may occur in the event of severe weather or power outages. When making the decision to close, leadership must consider the ability for Center staff to report in, because in many cases, these individuals live farther away than our families. We will communicate with parents in the following three ways: General Email to all parents, postings on Facebook, and our Web Page.

\*Please remember, that if there is a problem as mentioned above, staff may not be able to answer the phones. Additionally, if there is a power outage, our phone system will not work. You will be contacted as soon as safely possible.

### **LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES**

In the event of an armed intruder or issues occurring outside of the facility that warrant a lockdown of our facility:

- Doors are locked and no access is available even with a door code
- Children are evacuated into closets and offices with locked doors
- 911 is called



- Notification to parents is provided if possible via email
- Children cannot be picked up during a lockdown procedure

We practice this process twice a year with children and twice a year without children to ensure our staff understand the process.

## **INDIVIDUAL EMERGENCIES**

All staff and teachers are trained in CPR/First Aid/AED Administration. We will not hesitate to acquire emergency medical care for your child if an injury occurs that is outside of basic first aid. If we feel your child needs emergency care we will conduct 911 first and then a parent.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **BOARD OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the welfare of the corporation as well as any and all activities of the organization; furthermore, it is responsible for ensuring that the philosophical integrity of the program remains intact. The Board does not concern itself with day-to-day design and management of the program except in its role of overseeing the Executive Director. It does concern itself with evaluating and approving the long-range development of services offered by the Center. As the legal body responsible for the Center, the Board carefully reviews the legal implications of all activities of the Center. The majority of the Board's time and energy is devoted to financial affairs.

The Board is made up of community volunteers including interested parties from the finance industry, the political arena, the fundraising and development community, as well as therapists, educators, pediatricians, and past and present parents. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Board, please contact the Executive Director.

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Currently the Leadership Team at the Center is comprised of an Executive Director, Program Director, Program Coordinator (2), and a Business Manager.

The **Executive Director** is responsible for implementing the vision and mission of the Center in collaboration with the Board of Executive Directors. The Executive Director is responsible for all pieces of the day to day management, developing policy that ensures quality and the health and safety of children, parents and staff.

The **Program Director** is responsible for the day to day management of the program to include scheduling, teacher assignments, enrollment, and health and safety oversight

The **Program Coordinators** are responsible for assigned classrooms and in that the teaching support and development of the curriculum.

The **Business Manager** is responsible for ensuring accurate collection of tuition, purchasing, and accounts payable for the Center.

Each member of the Leadership Team is capable of stepping into a classroom and you will see the Leadership Team working within the program daily. There will always be one member of the Leadership Team present during the opening hours at Druid Hills Child Development Center.

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Thank you for choosing Druid Hills Child Development Care  
for your child's early care and education needs.

