



# **2023-2024**

## **Family Handbook**

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Hyattsville, MD 20782  
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[www.heritagecarelearning.org](http://www.heritagecarelearning.org)

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**Learning Center Hours:**  
**Monday - Friday**  
**7:00 am to 6:00 pm**

## **MISSION STATEMENT & PHILOSOPHY of HLC**

The mission of Heritage Learning Center (HLC) is to provide high quality care and education to children in a safe, fun, healthy and nurturing bilingual environment. We believe all children deserve quality care and learning instruction in order to blossom into well-rounded individuals. HLC is an inclusive center that encourages children and families to bring their culture and traditions into the center every day. We do so by incorporating multiculturalism into our program's curriculum with projects and activities that highlight different cultures, nationalities, and languages monthly.

During a child's time at HLC, families can expect their child to experience cognitive development, social-emotional development, fine and gross motor skill development and communication skill development in both English and Spanish. Our program is designed to be inclusive of all children ages 6 weeks through 5 years, including those children with language barriers, identified disabilities, special learning and developmental needs. In our program, it is important to individualize instruction for each and every child. To support each child in learning, our program utilizes both teacher- led and child- led activities. In addition, we employ the state-approved Frog Street curriculum that includes instruction for verbal and non-verbal children, as well as ESL learners.

In addition to our regular center program, our center may be able to offer your child the following services if required: physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. Heritage Learning Center does not discriminate based on sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, family dynamic, or disabilities. If our center is unable to accommodate a specific disability, we will make every reasonable adjustment necessary as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Program Objectives of Heritage Learning Center is to:**

- Assist children in learning in a comfortable and social environment
- Promote appreciation for cultural diversity
- Encourage students to communicate in both English and Spanish (see Bilingual Program Outcomes below)
- Provide opportunities for learning in order to advance multicultural education
- Facilitate acquisition of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of various cultures
- Develop a respect for individual and cultural differences through discussion, literature, and role modeling.
- Provide opportunities for the children to interact, guided by models of socially acceptable behavior.
- Enhance the child's self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-confidence by offering many opportunities for a child to succeed, express ideas, and understand his/her emotions and to attain skills to control them.

- Provide opportunities for math, science, reading, memory skills, language development, and social science.
- Increase attention span and follow simple directions.
- Foster creativity and self-expression through art, music, and dramatic play.
- Develop small muscles by using scissors, glue, clay, blocks, puzzles, beads, pegs, etc.
- Develop large muscles through outdoor activities such as climbing, riding a tricycle, running, jumping etc.
- Stimulate and encourage curiosity and provide opportunities for problem solving.
- Encourage children to take care of their own needs with support from the adults in their environment.
- Give opportunities to participate and explore their individual skills in various center specials; Music and movement, art, soccer, yoga, motor and science and Spanish.

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## I. HLC HEALTH & SAFETY

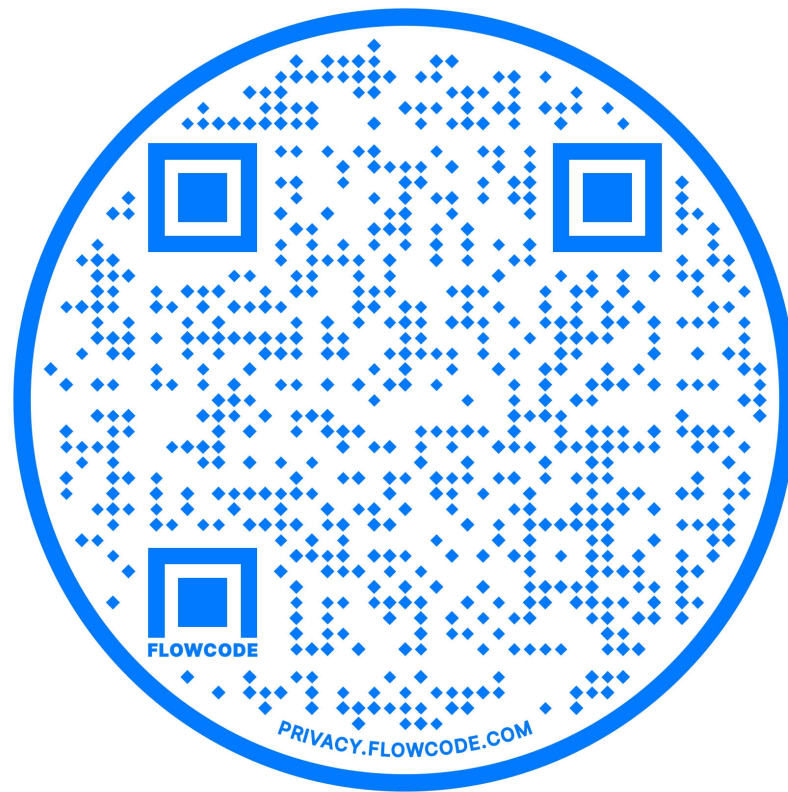
a. **COVID-19 Protocol** - This section serves to address the COVID-19 pandemic and outline the plan of action HLC is taking to deal with it. Please be aware that all families must sign a COVID-19 waiver before enrollment/registration.

b. **HLC Safety and Prevention Protocol- ONLY DURING HIGH COVID-19 Hospital Visits in PG** (this policy is not currently in effect but will be applied as needed based on local COVID-19 cases)

- HLC staff **MUST** be fully vaccinated within 40 days of full CDC vaccine approval
- Potential HLC staff must be vaccinated
- All adults in the center must wear a mask at all times regardless of vaccination status
- All Pre-K students will have a mask and be required to wear it, especially during time inside (aside from lunch/snack time and gym time). If a child does not have a mask, one will be provided.
- Compartmentalize the center to limit potential spread. Teachers will not move between rooms to cover unless there is an emergency
- Contactless temperature checks for everyone
- Hand washing during the 5 scheduled times and additionally as needed
- Isolation area for any child that has a temperature or displays symptoms
- Families will be required to have masks for pick ups
- Families will be limited to the drop-off and pick-up zone in the entrance of the center. We will only allow one family into this area at a time. If more than one family is present, we ask that you wait your turn for drop off/pick up outside the door until the first family exits the center.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, and other methods.
- All seating and bedding will be placed 6 feet apart
- Any teacher with a fever of 100.4 or if he/she has 2 or more symptoms associated with COVID-19 will be tested with a rapid test kit. HLC has a supply of tests.
- Sanitization of thermometer and limiting the exchanges of pens at sign in/out
- Ensure safe and correct application of CDC approved disinfectants and keep products away from children
- Maintain adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol and tissues
- Materials will not be shared between children or groups unless thoroughly disinfected first
- Disinfecting door knobs, bathroom fixtures, and handles three times per day
- Disinfecting toys, books, and classroom materials 2 times per day or as needed
- No shoes for students and staff in the infant and one-year-old classrooms

**MSDE COVID-19 Policy Update***Updated August 5th, 2023*

Please scan the QR code for access to the most recent MSDE COVID-19 policy. Please note that these are the policies that MSDE strongly recommends. HLC adheres to these policies and practices “layered prevention strategies”. In some cases, HLC goes beyond what is recommended by MSDE. Please note the following change in policy for the 2023-2024 school year. There will no longer be classroom closures according to the latest MSDE policy. This policy is subject to change based on recommendations from the health department or MSDE.



[https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/covid\\_guidance\\_full\\_080420.pdf](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/covid_guidance_full_080420.pdf)

<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Pages/COVID-19/OPGD.aspx>

[https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps\\_new-admissions-rate-county](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps_new-admissions-rate-county)

**Illness** - Please keep your child at home if s/he has been ill during the night or has active symptoms such as:

- a. Fever (underarm temperature of 100.4 degree or above)
- b. Diarrhea
- c. Undiagnosed skin rash
- d. Persistent cough
- e. Vomiting
- f. Sore throat
- g. Red, inflamed watery eyes
- h. Any communicable illness
- i. Head Lice

A child who has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above, diarrhea (that occurs twice within a one hour time period or three times all day), or vomiting must be immediately sent home, and will not be admitted to the center until she/he is **SYMPTOM** or **FEVER FREE** for **24 hours** since the last symptom appeared (without the use of fever reducing medicine). **A child will not be admitted into the center until after the 24 hour free period.**

If a child becomes ill with a symptom listed above while at the center, the family will be notified immediately to take their child home (please pick your child within 2 hours of being notified). The child may not return to the center until **24 hours** after fever/symptoms are gone. If the child is mildly ill, the child will be monitored in an isolated area, usually the office but only if possible, until the family can come to pick up the child.

**If a child is sent home due to symptoms of pink eye, or any other communicable disease, a doctor's note is required for the child to return to the center. If the child does not have pink eye (or suspected disease) a doctor's note is required stating that the child is clear to attend the center.**

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, please let the center know so that other families may be made aware and take the necessary precautions for their children. Children will be required to wash their hands several times throughout the day for infection control and personal hygiene purposes.

**PLEASE NOTE: Heritage Learning Center's COVID-19 Policy (based on MSDE policy) takes precedence over any of the following policies listed in the "Illness" section. For example, any child with a fever of over 100.4 and one or more symptoms of COVID must adhere to the COVID-19 policy. This policy will remain in effect until further notice of COVID CDC cases.**

**HLC Isolation Policy-** Heritage Learning Center has used an Isolation Policy in which we are vigilant of the Covid rates in our community and use this information to maintain distance

between the classrooms in an effort to lessen the spread of any germs from staff or student contact. We are adapting the policy this year in order to have a more consistent method of determining Covid levels. We will use the CDC's Covid-19 Hospital Admission Levels (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>). When the hospital admission levels for our County are high or medium, then we will enter into Isolation mode where our teachers & students do not leave their classrooms and they do not mix in the restrooms or the communal area (playground/gym) with other classrooms. When in effect, we will implement the Isolation Policy daily from 8-5pm until the hospital admission levels lower from high (red) or medium (yellow) to low (green) levels. We will inform families when we are in and out of each hospital admission level.

**Immunizations** - Our center requires children in our program to have a physical examination signed by a physician, as well as a TB skin test within six months prior to enrollment. An up-to-date record of immunizations is also required. A medical form with all of the above information **MUST** be on file *before* a child will be allowed to attend the center. Their physical examination must be renewed **every year** and the immunizations must be kept current. Lead tests must be completed when your child is 12 months and then 24 months. Lead test documentation must be submitted to the office. All lead screenings must be administered not later than one week of their 12 month and 24 month birthday.

**Emergencies/ First Aid** - In accordance with the Maryland Department of Education, there are always at least two staff members that are both CPR and First Aide certified at all times. In case of an emergency, the Center will notify the family to come to the center immediately. The center must have a record of telephone numbers for each family member and another adult who would respond in case of an emergency, and for the family's pediatrician or other doctor. Any change in the emergency telephone number must be reported to the center immediately. It is imperative that up-to-date numbers be maintained, as emergency medical services cannot be offered to your child in the absence of consent from a family or legal guardian. Emergency forms must be updated yearly.

**Medication** - Families need to administer medicine to their children at home, whenever possible. If medicine must be administered at the center, the following policy applies. Medication which is to be given to a child by a director **MUST** be in the **original, labeled, and unopened Doctor's prescribed bottle**. Over-the-counter medication may only be administered if we receive a signed note from the physician with the following information: child's name, name of prescribed medication, explanation of condition requiring medication, date and dosage. Over the counter medication, must be unopened, brand new. Fever reducers, such as Tylenol, cannot be administered by our staff and should not be given to a child for that purpose just prior to attending the center. Cough drops may not be given at the center.



**Evacuations** - All staff and children practice monthly fire drills. Also, there are two emergency disaster evacuations practiced per year. The center practices two in house drills in the event we are unable to leave the building. If the center needs to be evacuated, all children and staff will walk to the local church located around the corner from the center, The Church of the Living God. Emergency lockdown procedures will be practiced throughout the year as well. Families will be notified when practice drills have taken place.

**Security** - The front and side doors to the center are kept locked at all times in order to limit access and to keep children from exiting ahead of staff/families. Families are to enter through the front door of the center through the main lobby. The front entrance door will be locked and families must use punch code. The front door is punch code accessible only. Each family member will receive the code in order to enter the learning center.

**Entering and exiting out of the exterior classroom doors are prohibited.** In addition to the punch code access, each child will be given a pass code that will be kept in their classroom and file in the event the child is picked up from someone who is different from than the normal pick up routine. Families must notify the director or classroom teacher if the normal pick-up person will not be picking the child up. This person must also provide proper identification. Children will not be dismissed to anyone who does not follow these measures.

Cameras are placed in each classroom, gym area, playground, and lobby for observation purposes and security. Camera video will be saved in the office.

## II. ENROLLMENT

The Heritage Learning Center is open to all in need of child care from ages 6 weeks to five years old. If your child turns 5 years old after Prince George's County Public School registration deadline requirements, they are able to enroll. This would be child care age 5.

Families must enroll their child in the Director's office. Families will be required to complete all required paperwork given by the director including, but not limited to immunization records, emergency contact information, various center forms, and names / photo IDs of people authorized to pick up the child. Families will be responsible for a \$120.00 non refundable enrollment fee deposit. Enrollment fees and 2 weeks tuition is due prior to the child's first day of enrollment. Payment and service agreement is required prior to the first day of enrollment. If there is no available space, the child will be placed on the waiting list and the family will be notified once space becomes available. Wait list fee is \$70.00 and non refundable. **All waitlist PDF applications must be submitted via email and payment should be made via PayPal to asydor@heritagecare.org. The form is under the "enrollment" tab on the center's website.**

- a. **Heritage Learning Center Tuition Fees** - Families will be responsible for a \$120.00 non refundable enrollment deposit. Enrollment fee and 2 weeks tuition is due prior to the child's first day of enrollment along with the service agreement.
1. **Technology Fee** - Beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, Heritage Learning Center will be going paperless with the introduction of the **HiMama** online childcare platform. This system will aid in center and teacher communication with families by allowing families to monitor their child/children activities within the center in real time. As such, an annual fee of **\$80** will be charged upon registration.
  2. **Tuition Payment** - A tuition cycle is a two-week cycle, beginning on Monday of the first week and ends on Friday of the second week. Tuition is determined by classroom, not by age. Children are moved to the next classroom based on their birthdate and their level of development. Invoices are issued for a two week tuition cycle and must be paid in advance. The invoice will be sent via Quickbooks and will be due the Friday before the tuition cycle. If payment is not received, the child will run the risk of losing his/her spot at the center. Monthly charges are due the first of each month for the previous month. These charges include lunch, missed sign in/out, late pick-up fees, late tuition and monthly charges payments and unexcused absence. These are included in the invoice for monthly charges. Payments can be made by check or an ACH direct transfer through Quickbooks. There is a 1% fee for payments made by ACH transfer. We recommend creating a Quickbooks account and linking a bank account. In the event of an emergency, our PayPal account can accept credit card payments but a 3.5% charge will be applied on top of the tuition payment. Please send Paypal payments to "asydor@heritagecare.org" on the Paypal website. Any returned check will be an added \$35.00 fee. **If payment is not received by the due date, a \$5 late fee will be charged for every business day that payment is late. In addition to a late fee, the child will run the risk of losing his/her spot at our center.** Tuition prices are subject to change. Each child is responsible to complete a credit card form to keep in his/her file in the event you fail to pay tuition or monthly charge fees. In the event, tuition or monthly charges are not paid, HLC will automatically charge the credit card on file. Credit card payments must be paid through Paypal on the HLC website. There will be a 3.5% charge for all credit card payments. A declined credit card will be a fee of \$30 and charged to your child's account. After 3 unsuccessful attempts to charge the credit card on file, an open balance will be sent to a collection agency.

**Tuition Fees** - We offer competitive pricing options, including drop in, part time, full time, depending on families' needs. **Rates are subject to change throughout the year.** Families will be given a minimum of 90 days notice before a rate increase.

Classroom	Daily	PG County Family Bi-weekly	Out-of-County Family Bi-weekly
Singing Canaries	\$100.50	\$1,005.00	\$1,065.50
Busy Bees/Teddy Bears	\$94.50	\$945.00	\$1,010.00
Swimming Dolphins	\$81.00	\$810.00	\$860.00
Curious Kittens*	\$70.00	\$700.00	\$700.00
Dancing Ducks*	\$60.00	\$600.00	\$600.00

\*An additional \$60 of tuition will be charged bi-weekly for any child in Curious Kittens and Dancing Ducks that is not potty-trained. Potty-training status is determined by our staff and our criteria are listed below

- b. **Potty Training** - Upon enrollment or transition to the preschool room, all children of the age of 3 or older are expected to be potty trained. HLC reserves the right to charge families for children not fully potty trained. HLC defines a potty trained child as a child who can do the following:
- Be able to tell the teacher they have to go potty **before** they have to go. They must be able to say the words “I have to go potty” **before** they have to go.
  - Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
  - Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
  - Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
  - Be able to wash and dry hands.
  - Be able to go directly back to the room without directions.
- c. **Drop in Care** - Drop in care is available for families that only need occasional care for their child. All of the same paperwork is required for children that are considered drop in status. Drop in status does not guarantee your child will have a space in our center. Families must call/email the week before they would like to drop their child off in our center, and if the director knows a space will be open, only then will the child be allowed to stay the chosen day(s). Drop in service is depending on the age of the child and classroom they will be enrolling in that particular day. All rules and other fees apply to drop in status families. In the case of an emergency when calling/emailing the week before is not possible, families may call that morning to see if there is space for their child, but a space is not guaranteed.
- d. **Termination of Child care** - Heritage Care, Inc. reserves the right to discontinue child care in situations including but not limited to where families do not adhere to center policies or lack of tuition payment. In the event that a child comes to the center that is violent and/or

creates an unsafe environment for themselves/others, the center director and child's teachers will meet with the child's family to set up a plan to work with this child. If no effort is put in by the families, or there is no change in the child's behavior, it is the center's right to discontinue care to this child. As a family member, you also have the right to discontinue care at our center. **The center requires that you provide at least one month's notice (30 days) before departure from the center.** The notice must be in email/HiMama message and submitted to the center directors. In the case where a month's notice is not given, you may be charged for the full month, even after your child care has been terminated. Please be sure to pay all fees and to take home all of your child's belongings before their last day. **Unpaid balances will be sent to a collection agency.**

**-Discipline Policy** - It is our policy that we handle **ALL** discipline situations which may arise with the children enrolled in our program, according to our stated philosophy and individual needs of the child. Each family will be responsible to review and sign our discipline policy form.

Discipline policies will be in each child's file and families are expected to adhere to the policy. Heritage Learning Center promotes positive reinforcement for all children. Children who are having difficulty following directions will be redirected to another activity. Children will be redirected to a calm corner (to calm the senses) or a teacher to student discussion to help the children be able to be welcomed back to the activity. The child will be either redirected to another area of the classroom in view of the teachers in the classroom. In the event that a child's behavior is harmful to the child, others, property, or is extremely disruptive, the child will be taken to the director's office. Communication with the child will take place immediately to assist the child toward positive and appropriate behavior. Corporal or physical punishment is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Conscious Discipline<sup>®</sup> - is a whole program solution for social and emotional learning discipline and self regulation of children's behavior. This is embedded within the Frogstreet curriculum to ensure a center culture that will become a safe haven with cooperation, constructive problem solving and academic success for all children. (Extracted from Conscious Discipline Website). The center integrates daily strategies to reinforce positive behaviors and discipline. The first strategies are STAR (Smile; Take a Deep Breath and Relax). Each child is able to conduct this self relaxing strategy in the event they become upset or frustrated. Another component is a commitment box. Each child commits to a positive behaviors goal for the day. All acts of kindness are posted on our kindness/family tree. Children can visually see their acts of kindness towards their peers and within the center. This will help reinforce positive behavior.

### III. HLC DAILY OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

- a. **Arrival** - Heritage Learning Center opens at **7:00 am**. Arrival time is between 7:00 am and 9:00am depending on the child's check in time and classroom. Additionally, we are asking

families to specify their drop off and pick up times on the sign in form in order to stagger families' arrival time. This is to limit family traffic in the drop off and pick up area. Families remain in the designated drop off/pick up area at the entrance of the center.

1. All children must arrive by 9:00am in preschool and 9:30 in the infant and toddler classrooms. Children in preschool are encouraged to arrive at the center prior to 8:45am. The learning day begins at 8:45am. Morning meetings are an important time to set the tone for the day. All children will unite and commit to an educational learning experience. The morning schedule is designed to specifically aid in the transition from home to school. Therefore we ask that children arrive at the center within this time period. Families are asked to aid in the transition into the activity. If your child requires more time to become adjusted, please arrive earlier so that you can spend time with your child and then make it to your work areas on time. **Children are to be brought directly into the center and signed in by the family member dropping off** on the sign in sheet on a daily basis. Signing in consists of finding your child's name on the sign in sheet, writing the current time, and your signature. **Both time and signature are required** in order for a child to be signed in or out. Families must make **verbal contact** with the child's teacher/HLC staff upon arrival. Children's belongings must be placed in their assigned cubby areas. Children will be required to wash their hands before going into the classroom or playground and joining the other children.
2. Please note that breakfast is served from 7:00am-8:00am. If your child arrives after this time, please ensure they have eaten breakfast. Snack is offered beginning at 9:30 am depending on the child's classroom.
3. It is extremely important that families **sign in / out and make verbal contact** with the child's teacher upon arrival to pick up the child. **A \$5.00 fee will be charged each time a child is not signed in or out.** This is a concern because we need to be able to keep track of all of our children at all times.
4. Families of infants must remove shoes or cover shoes with booties prior to entering the infant room. This helps avoid tracking dirt onto the floor where the babies play. Families of infants must fill out the morning's pertinent information located on the sign-in sheet (last nap, last bottle/food, last diaper change) everyday to keep the teachers informed about your child's schedule for the day. Your child's teachers will continue the rest of the day based off of information provided on the sign-in sheet. You can access your child's information on the rest of the day on our HiMama application. The state of Maryland requires that we keep these forms on file for at least six weeks. You are free to request daily copies for yourself, or you may wait to pick them up after four weeks.

**b. Departure - Heritage Learning Center closes at 6:00pm.** Late fees will be applied to anyone exceeding scheduled hours. Anytime you arrive after 6:00pm to pick up your child, a **\$2.00 /minute** fee will be charged. If you arrive after 6:10pm, \$5.00/minute fee will be charged. Families must contact your child's teacher or director to notify them that you will be late for pick up. If a child is not picked up by 6:30pm and we are unable to contact the families or someone you designated as an emergency pick up person, we will contact the police and child protective services. A family that has communicated that they will pickup up their children late will be charged but the children will remain safe in the HLC office with the Center director and an extra staff member up until 6:30pm.

1. A child will be released only to those persons authorized in writing by the family. The center will refuse the release of a child to any person other than those on file. Staff will ask to see identification for any person they have not met before, even if their name is on file. Families must also notify the teachers in advance when an authorized person will be picking up their child. (A child calling a person "Grandma" is not adequate authorization or identification.) Other center security measures are in place and will be further discussed at the time of enrollment.
  
2. **Remember to sign your child out (just like signing them in) before you leave to avoid the \$5.00 charge.**

### c. Classroom Information

**HLC Classrooms-** Heritage Learning Center currently has 6 classrooms. The following are their names and their age groups. The teachers of each classroom can be found on our website under teacher directory located in the "Meet our Staff" tab.

Singing Canaries: Infants= 6 weeks to 1 year old	Ratio=3 students to 1 teacher Maximum of 6 infants in the class
Teddy Bears: 1 year old up to about 18 months old	Ratio=3 students to 1 teacher Maximum of 6 students in the class
Busy Bees: about 18 months - 2 years old	Ratio=3 students to 1 teacher Maximum of 6 students in the class
Swimming Dolphins: 2 year old - 3 year olds	Ratio=6 students to 1 teacher Maximum of 12 students in the class
Curious Kittens: 3 year old - 4 year old	Ratio=10 students to 1 teacher Maximum of 12 students in the class

Dancing Ducks: 4 year old - 5 year old	Ratio=10 students to 1 teacher Maximum of 12 students in the class
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**Pacifiers**- HLC permits the use of pacifiers for infants up to 6 months. This is because at this age the child is more adept at sign language, recognition of faces and independence. Additionally, the staff is more prepared to soothe the child than a pacifier. Lastly, we want to extend the relationship between the infant and the caregiver. The use of pacifiers past the age of 6 months according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians can be concerning for bacteria/viral production and possible dental issues.

**Center Screen Time** - Preschool (2yrs-5yrs) media is used during center time and no more than 30 minutes per week. We offer educational media ie: listening center and center computers. HLC adheres to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendation in establishing screen free zones in our infant and toddler program. We understand that a child's brain develops rapidly during these first years that young children learn best interacting with people/objects not screens (AAP American Academy of Pediatrics).

**Absences** – If your child is going to be absent, please notify the center prior to 10:00am. Please call the child’s classroom or director’s office and leave a message on their voice mail (phone number and classroom extensions are below). Absent children can impact staffing, so it is very important that we know what children will not be attending and WHY. A **\$10.00** fee will be charged for failure to notify the center of an absence. The days that you commit too, either part time or full time, you must pay regardless of excused/unexcused absences. You reserved that particular space for your child, no matter their attendance.

**Clothing** – On the first day of child care, all children are required to have two complete changes of clothing, including underwear, and socks to be kept in their cubby at all times. Small children often do not recognize their own clothing and items. In order to eliminate confusion, all items to include, but not limited to clothes, bibs, sheets, sunscreen, and ointments must be clearly **LABELED** with your child’s name. Update these items as your child’s needs change, either the size they wear, or as the weather changes. As it starts to get colder, be sure your child has a hat, mittens/gloves and a warm coat. Children without these items will not be allowed to play outside. Scarves and other winter items are a good idea, but not required. An extra sweater or sweatshirt is also a good idea. **Please be sure your child has at least one spare outfit at all times! After every bathroom accident, please check with your’s child teacher to ensure they receive the extra change of clothes.** All children are required to wear toe-covering hard bottom footwear **at all times** except those children in the Infant Room.

**Items Needed** - Children that need diapers or pull ups, along with wipes and ointment must be provided by families. Families must sign the topical ointment form in order to ensure that unlabeled ointments get applied to the correct child. **Cloth diapers are not permitted at the center.** Teachers will notify families when supplies run low, but it is up to the families to keep their child's supplies fully stocked. If there are not adequate diapers/pull ups or wipes for the day, your child will not be permitted to stay. Families are asked to provide a sheet to cover their child's cot/crib and small blanket for naptime – these items will be sent home each Friday to be washed and returned to the center on Monday.

**Nap/Rest period** – All children over the age of one are required to rest between 1:00pm – 3:00pm. The younger classes may adjust this time to accommodate the children's needs. Infants take multiple naps throughout the day as needed for each child. Teachers will assist children in resting by turning off lights, providing soothing music and rubbing backs. Children are not required to sleep, but are expected to rest quietly on their cots for at least one hour of that time. Families may provide a small stuffed animal or special toy from home to help their child rest. Please refrain from sending toys that will make the child stay active during rest time. Clean cot sheets should be provided weekly. Cots sheets will be sent home at the end of each week to be cleaned and should be returned the following week. If you need to pick up your child early, please make sure you notify the teacher ahead of time so that they can make sure every effort is taken not to disturb the other children who are resting.

**Meals** - Breakfast consists of a cold cereal. Children will be given breakfast between 7:00am-8:00am. If your child arrives after 8:00am, please make sure they have eaten beforehand. There will be a morning snack at 9:30/10:00am and afternoon snack at 3:00pm, after nap. Morning and Afternoon snacks consist of fruit and crackers. All snacks are served with juice or water.

Lunch time is 12:00pm-1:00pm. Families may decide if they would like to purchase lunch from the center for \$4.25 a day or they may provide lunch for their child. Please place a check on the sign-in sheet if your child needs lunch for the day. If a family chooses to provide a lunch, they must satisfy all necessary state meal requirements. Please take a look at the Maryland State Meal requirements (pdf form on our website) that will assist in meeting the requirements of your' child's meals. Lunch is available daily to purchase & the total sum of lunches will be invoiced in the first billing cycle of the following month.

HLC encourages families to promote good eating habits by sending in nutritious items for lunch. Please refrain from packing candy and no more than one small desert. Children who do not bring a healthy lunch, have a small amount of food and/or whose lunch does not meet state meal regulations, HLC will provide lunch for them, inform the families of this event, and charge



families for this lunch. Children must have 2-3 choices for lunch. Children are not allowed to bring in snack items for lunch. HLC lunch is served with a main portion and vegetables. Lunches are served with milk.

Lunch boxes must be **CLEARLY LABELED** and put in the assigned area each morning. The preschool room has a specific shelf in the main kitchen refrigerator. The infant, one year and two year old rooms have refrigerators in their rooms. Every refrigerator is emptied and cleaned every night, so any food left will be thrown away, and the empty unwashed containers will be placed in the child's cubby.

The center has a microwave to warm lunches, however due to the amount of lunches that need to be served; teachers do not have time to make or prepare each child's lunch. Be sure to send something that is ready to eat, or just needs to be quickly warmed. Using a thermos is our recommendation as warmed or cold food stays ready to eat without any heating or cooling necessary. This encourages our older students to practice independence and kindergarten readiness for the next transition as Kindergarten Schools do not warm children's lunches. The center will provide a backup lunch if families forget lunches at home, or if the lunch they brought does not meet the state's meal requirements. Families will be charged accordingly. Families are not required to provide eating utensils. However, **bottles/sippy cups must be brought from home**. The center will provide utensils, cups, plates, or bowls as needed for meals. Any utensils, containers, bottles, and cups from home must be labeled, and taken home each night to be washed.

**ALL Infants must be able and willing to take a bottle.** We do not discourage breastfeeding (we have a maternal breastfeeding area located in the Infant Room) but for a child's safety, he/she must be able to be fed in the event of an emergency. Formula must be made fresh daily. It must be sealed in an airtight container that is approved for liquid. Formula is not provided by the center. Breast milk may be brought in frozen if it is provided in approved breast milk freezer bags that are clearly labeled with the child's name, date, and contents of the bag. Frozen breast milk can stay at the center for up to six months. If frozen breast milk is not possible, fresh breast milk must be provided in air tight containers that are approved for liquids. Formula or breast milk may be stored in bottles, as long as the bottles contain nipple covers. Remember to label all of the parts of the bottles and containers with your child's name, and to take them home at the end of the day.

**Snack Calendar-** HLC provides morning and afternoon snack for every child ages 1 and up. These snacks are a fruit and a carbohydrate in alignment with State meal regulations. However, in order to provide a variety of multicultural snacks for all the children in the center, we would like each family to provide snack once or twice a month depending on their child's classroom schedule. Each family will bring in a snack such as cracker and/or nutrigrain box for each child in that classroom. This will assist in each child receiving not only the appropriate nutrient during

snack time but also a different variety from our families' multicultural backgrounds. Each classroom will send home a Calendar and a letter describing to parents what snacks they would like the family to bring in on their designated day to the Center. The snack would be for every child in that classroom.

- c. Transitions** - All classroom transitions will receive our transition packet. Transition packets will help with the transition process and allow children to know what will be expected in the new classroom and allow families tips to help ease anxiety/stress during this time to help prepare the children for transitioning. Every family meets with the new/old teachers of the classroom in order to formulate a plan for the child' transition & to discuss expectations for the transition and new class.

**-Home to HLC** - HLC will arrange a date for the new enrollment/child to come and visit his/her classroom for "Welcome Week." This will allow the child and family to meet his/her new teachers, friends and walk through the center prior to beginning the first day. New Enrollments will follow the transition welcome week.

Day 1- Family and child attend the center for 1 hour together

Day 2- Family and child attend for 2 hours

Day 3- Child will attend for half a day (9:30-1pm) with/without their family

Day 4- Child will attend for a half day (9:30-3pm) without their family

Day 5- Child will attend a full day at the learning center without their families.

The following week the child will be enrolled in their normal attendance.

**-Classroom to Classroom** - The center has the right to transition a child based upon their age, developmental readiness, and at the discretion of the center staff. The director will meet with teachers to discuss the developmental readiness of the child. The director and teacher will meet with families to discuss the transition process. Families will be given the transition schedule. Children will transition according to their age, developmental readiness, and availability in the classrooms. Children will usually be given a week during the transitional time to the next classroom. The transitioning child(ren) is still considered part of their old classroom until the transition is complete. Thusly, the tuition rate for the current classroom will still apply. The new classroom rate will take effect after the transition is complete. All classrooms will follow the same transition schedule. Children do not have to be toilet trained to transition to other classrooms. Transitions may be edited depending on availability of space in the next classroom.

**-HLC to School/Out of HLC** - Those children who will be transitioning from the center to school or another center will follow the school transition process. All children that are transitioning to Kindergarten will be able to attend “On the Way to Kindergarten, Family Night” This process consists of various lessons and activities about the child’s new school. Children will discuss pictures and read stories to allow the child to become comfortable and familiar in the new school. “On the Way to Kindergarten, Family Night” will be an evening of information provided to families and children on what to expect entering into Kindergarten. We will distribute learning tools, goals and social emotional ideas to help in a smooth transition. Families will have the opportunity to meet a teacher/representative from Prince George’s County Public Schools. When their time is complete, families will have an opportunity to celebrate with their kiddos their goodbye to HLC, fill out a survey to describe their experience and collect all the belongings/portfolio of their child. We use the family surveys in order to understand how to improve HLC.

**Field Trips-** HLC enjoys engaging children in field trips both in our school and outside. We have plenty of opportunities where families can interact in these field trips. For field trips within the school, they will mostly be held in our playground (weather permitting) or inside our gym (depending on health & safety parameters aka Covid Isolation Policy). For field trips outside of HLC, we ask families to come into our school to sign out their child, drive their child to the location of the field trip and then reunite with the staff. This way families are in charge of transporting their child to the field trip and enjoying their time together until they decide to leave. When we have an HLC form of transportation such as a school bus, we will inform all families.

- d. Conferences** - Conferences provide an opportunity for open lines of communication between home and school. Conferences can be initiated by the teacher or by the family. Regularly scheduled conferences will be twice a year, Fall and Spring. If you would like to schedule a conference/meeting with your child's teacher, outside of the scheduled times, please contact the teachers by sending in a note on HiMama, sending an email to the Director, or leaving them a message. Indicate the reason you are requesting a conference, as it will help the teacher to be better prepared to discuss the topic(s) at hand. It would also be helpful for you to indicate times and dates you are available. HLC will be closed for the center wide parent teacher conferences.
- e. Evaluation & Developmental Screenings-** Heritage Learning Center collaborates with the Infant and Toddlers Program of Prince George’s County Public Schools (also named: Child Resource Connect) and Judy Center. Ages and Stages Questionnaire tools will be completed by classroom teachers. All children enrolled in HLC will be screened twice a year using the

screening tool Ages and Stages Questionnaire. All screenings will be documented and reviewed here at Heritage Learning Center. Screenings will document all milestone categories. Families will be made aware of the results of the screening.

-This initial evaluation will allow our educators to document your child's progress both physically, emotionally and academically.

-Developmental screenings are scheduled for Fall, Spring and Summer.

If the results of the screening raise concern, the team including the center director, classroom teacher, and families will meet to discuss the results. If the results of the child's development is a case for concern then we can contact the Child Find organization (a nationally recognized organization dedicated to assisting families and schools by testing and connecting different therapists and specialists to assist in the improving the child's development)

If your child has a current IFSP/IEP, please submit this to the director. We will keep a copy in your child's file and in the child's classroom. We want to make sure we enforce modifications, interventions and strategies when needed. The child's teacher and director are eligible to attend meetings or conferences when needed for the IFSP/IEP meetings.

- f. Weather Closures-** Heritage Learning Center follows Prince George's County Public Schools with all weather related school closures and delays. If Prince George's County Public Schools announces it is closed, HLC will also be closed. If they announce a delay (example, two hour delay) we will have a delay as well. If Prince George's County Public Schools close early, we will close. Prince George's County Public Schools will announce if it is closed on all local news stations, their website ([www.pgcps.org](http://www.pgcps.org)), or you can call them directly at (301) 952-6000. Also, you can sign up for text alerts through Prince George's County Public Schools. This accounts for weather related closings/delays only. This does not apply to holidays. **Weather related closures do not change tuition prices!**

- In the event that Prince George's County School system is already closed due to regular scheduled closings, we will then follow Montgomery County Public Schools. All families will be notified in advance if we are following Montgomery County Public School System with a letter sent through HiMama as an email.
- When Prince George's County Public Schools and Montgomery County Public Schools are closed for regular scheduled closings, we will follow the United States Federal Government.
- All Heritage Learning Center families will receive an email notifying them if the center will be closed due to the weather however; this is an extra component to the current policies. Notifications to families will be based on the Prince George's County Public School guidance for weather related closing and delays.

**Holiday Closures** - Heritage Learning Center is closed during the following holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Third Monday in January) - - unless otherwise noted
- Easter Monday (day after Easter)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)
- Juneteenth (third Friday in June)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- Eid al-Adha (open at 9am - - unless otherwise noted)

Signs will be posted before these holidays to remind families that the center will be closed. School calendars will be distributed to each family, each year.

**Center Closures-** Closures are additional to holiday closings. This will be included in our center calendars distributed yearly. Heritage Learning Center closes for parent teacher conferences and professional development for staff four times per year. This is scheduled yearly. Signs will be posted for reminders. Families will be notified in advance when the center is closed.

#### **IV. THE CURRICULUM/LEARNING ITEMS**

**a. Curriculum- Heritage Learning Center implements a Maryland State Department of Education approved curriculum, "Frog Street".**

The Frog Street curriculum is an inclusive education program focused on nurturing the minds of children from birth through age 5. It is designed to foster the academic, social, and emotional growth of children through purposeful lessons and materials that intentionally produce a positive outcome. It offers models for teacher instruction in the English and Spanish languages as well as American Sign language to promote an enriching cultural environment suited to each child's particular learning needs.

**-Frog Street Pre-K:**

Frog Street Pre-K is a high quality, researched based curriculum organized into ten skill domains that support integration of curriculum and builds connections between and among all disciplines. The curriculum integrates "Conscious Discipline" strategies to support social and emotional intelligence which in turns supports the cognitive performance of children. Frog Street Pre-K also includes

- Differentiated learning strategies and materials for a full range of learners include grouping strategies and scaffolding.
- Instruction in Frog Street Pre-K supports multicultural relevancy with materials and resources for languages other than English.
- Frog Street Pre-K features distinct home/school/community connections linked to thematic units in a scope and sequence fashion.
- Incorporated STEM, the content and skills of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

#### **-Frog Street Toddler:**

Frog Street Toddler includes 13 thematic activity guides that offer hundreds of domain-based activity choices that are intentional, integrated, and child centered.

**Language Development:** The toddlers in this classroom will be immersed in a language-rich environment essential for developing both receptive and expressive language skills. Frog Street Toddler includes high-interest books, stories, songs, poems, and chants that will amuse and delight toddlers. Vocabulary words are introduced in English and Spanish and reinforced weekly through activity integration, colorful photo cards, and sign language to support all learning modalities. Story Time includes modeled dialog in both languages for follow-up story discussions.

#### **-Frog Street Infant:**

Frog Street Infant is a comprehensive program that optimizes key windows of opportunity to build strong foundations for little ones ages 0-18 months. Based on the latest early brain development research, this program offers easy-to-use activities emphasizing all developmental domains (language, cognitive, physical, social and emotional, approaches toward learning) featuring Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline®.

#### **b. Bilingual Program Outcomes**

By the end of a child's time at HLC, he/she will be able to do the following in Spanish:

- Introduce him/herself
- Know the letters of the Spanish Language alphabet
- Count to at least 20
- Identify colors
- Know vocabulary related to family
- Know how to ask permission for basic needs (water, bathroom, and others)
- Know how to ask basic questions and respond to basic questions

**c. Special Activities Schedule** \* Each classroom has a special activities schedule.

- Spanish Class- All Classrooms will participate 30 minutes everyday
- Monday- Soccer – Busy Bees, Swimming Dolphins, Curious Kittens & Dancing Ducks have the opportunity to participate in Soccer Shots. Soccer teams are formed depending on each age group. Soccer is 30 minutes weekly.
- Tuesday-Sign Language Learning
- Wednesday- Yoga/Relaxation Activity- All Classrooms
- Thursday- Motor/Health Fitness- All Classrooms
- Friday- Art

*Note:* Some special activities will require additional fees. Some additional special activities are subject to change due to the ongoing enrichment programs offered in the center throughout the year.

- Each classroom has scheduled gym time. There are two scheduled gym times. Morning and Afternoon for a minimum of 30 minutes per each class. Children are expected to go outside when not in the gym twice each day, weather permitting.

**Physical Fitness/Motor-** All classrooms have a scheduled 30 minutes of gross motor in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. Children are able to have free time or structured game play during their individual classroom motor schedule. Weather permitting, gross motor will take place outside.

**V. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Heritage Learning Center has an open door policy where families are welcome to come and visit their child’s classroom, assist with center activities and administrative duties. Please note that we will continue drop-offs and pick-up where families wait in the lobby for their child(ren) in order to reduce germs within the Center. Heritage Learning Center has enjoyed the support of many families in a variety of volunteer roles. Family volunteers can serve in both instructional and non-instructional roles. All volunteers must wear a volunteer identification badge whenever you are working in the building during the school day. Volunteers must be fingerprinted to volunteer in the center. We encourage families to be involved with their child’s learning experiences.

There are different methods of center activities that we need volunteers and family support:

Fall Festival	Family Fun Day
Spring Fling	Center Fundraisers

Doughnuts with Grownups	Sweets and Treats Parties
Special Treats with Special Guests	Center/Classroom Surveys
Parent Night Out/Movie Night	Grandparent Day
Character Day Parade	Teacher Appreciation/Family Potluck
Turkey Gobble	Winter Pageant/Summer Graduation
Welcome Week/Welcome Night	Participating in our Accreditation and Program Improvement Plan.
Family Feedback Night	Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

All families are encouraged to view our family corner board which will provide a variety of information. The board includes a variety of parenting topics and activities offered in our community. The board also contains educational resources and information for early intervention services.

**a. Families We Serve** - Here at HLC, we especially take pride in providing care to essential personnel and their families. Essential personnel includes but is not limited to:

- Healthcare Workers
- First Responders
- Childcare Workers
- Military Families

If you are an essential personnel, please inquire about our essential personnel discount, available school year 2023-2024. It is up to the family to notify us about this discount.

**b. Communication-** In addition to conferences and assessments, HLC uses various ways to communicate and keep you updated on what is happening in your child's classroom. Heritage Learning Center will communicate to families/guardians in the following ways:

- ✓ Classroom Daily Report via the HiMama App
- ✓ Email
- ✓ Telephone Calls
- ✓ Journals
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Daily/Weekly Classroom Bulletins
- ✓ Family Corner Center Bulletins
- ✓ Center Website- <https://www.heritagecarelearning.org/>



To help us in our efforts for effective communication, all emails should be addressed to both Aaron Sydor ([asydor@heritagecare.org](mailto:asydor@heritagecare.org)) and Jenny Mena Zapata ([jmena@heritagecare.org](mailto:jmena@heritagecare.org)).

*Note: Please be sure to select "reply all" when responding to our emails.*

**Contact Information:**

**Heritage Learning Center**  
**4922C LaSalle Road**  
**Hyattsville, MD 20782**  
**(O) 301-864-2333 ext 3097**  
**© 240-721-0750**  
[www.heritagecarelearning.org/](http://www.heritagecarelearning.org/)

**Main Office - ext 3097**

- o Singing Canaries - ext 3092
- o Teddy Bears/Busy Bees - ext 3093
- o Swimming Dolphins - ext 3094
- o Dancing Ducks - ext 3095

- c. Family - Teacher Communication Protocol** - HLC would like to remind families that communication with the teaching staff must be conducted through the center and not via private phone, email or any other means of private communication. Appropriate communication through the center includes our center app (HiMama), the classroom phone, mail addressed to the teacher and sent to the center, and/or face to face communication. Please be aware that this rule will be taken very seriously and failure to comply will result in unenrollment from the center. This policy is important as it protects both important parties to HLC: families & staff. Our intention is to be able to assist both families & staff in communication of needs and relevant information.
- d. Staff - Family Relationship Policy** - Please note that it is forbidden for our staff to maintain relationships with families outside of our center while a child is currently enrolled in the center. This includes private communication and connection on social media. HLC will consider an exception to this policy if a family wishes to privately contract an HLC staff member for childcare. In this situation, both the staff member and the family must sign a waiver releasing HLC from all responsibility and liability during any private childcare arrangements between the staff and the family. This policy is one that our center takes seriously and any violation of this policy will result in a child's expulsion from the center and the staff member's immediate termination. This policy is in effect starting September 2023

in order to ensure that families & staff are able to maintain appropriate communication & relationships. The exemption waiver will be provided upon request.

**VI. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION & RESOURCES**

**Community Collaborations** - Heritage Learning Center collaborates and works with Judy Hoyer Early Learning Center and surrounding child care committees to reach out to community resources. Heritage supports community partnerships and offers families a variety of resources in the surrounding areas. Some of our programs and outreach research opportunities consist of the Infant and Toddlers Program (also known as Child Resource Connect), Prince George’s County Public Memorial Library, Prince George’s Public School system, University of Maryland and Georgetown University. We are affiliated with NAEYC and Maryland Child Care Association.

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES- Early Childhood Resources**

<p>Office of Child Care- Prince George’s County 807 Brightseat Road Landover, MD Main Office phone: (301) 333-6940</p>	<p>Hyattsville Branch Library 6530 Adelphi Rd, Hyattsville, MD 20782 (240) 455-5451</p>
<p>Prince George’s Child Resource Center (Child Resource Connect) Locate Child Care- MD 1001 Eastern Avenue 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Baltimore, MD 21202-4325 Tel: (410) 659- 7701 Fax: (410) 783-081</p>	<p>Child Find 2300 Belleview Avenue Cheverly, MD 20785 Phone: 301-925-1985 Fax: 301-925-1994 <a href="http://www.childresource.org">http://www.childresource.org</a></p>

Local Area Public Elementary Schools

Prince George’s County Public Schools 14201 School Lane Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 Phone: 301-952-6000	
Cool Springs Elementary 8910 Riggs Road Adelphi, MD 20783 Phone: (301) 431-6200	Adelphi Elementary 8820 Riggs Road Adelphi, MD 20783 Phone: (301) 431- 6250
Hyattsville Elementary 5311 43 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue Hyattsville, MD 20781 Phone: (301) 209-5800	Chillum Elementary 1420 Chillum Street Hyattsville, MD Phone: (301) 853-0825
Cesar Chavez Elementary 6609 Riggs Road Hyattsville, MD 20782 Phone: (301) 853-5694	Mt. Rainer Elementary 4011 32 <sup>nd</sup> Street Mt. Rainer, MD 20712 Phone: (301) 985-1810

**VII. HCI**

**Children with Disabilities/ Heritage Care Inc. Wellness** - Heritage Learning Center provides therapy programs that help children with a wide range of physical, neurological and other developmental disabilities to achieve their full potential in life. We have a qualified team of therapists, including physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists available to our center. Therapy services are billed through private insurance or through medicaid.

### Acknowledgement Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received a copy of Heritage Learning Center’s family handbook. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read and adhere to the rules listed in the operational plan/family handbook. If I do not follow the operational plan/family handbook, I understand that I will risk losing the benefit of sending my child to this center. I also understand that the center has the right to change the rules as they see fit. I acknowledge their right to do so, and once I am notified of the changes made, it is my responsibility to follow them.

I further acknowledge that I was informed about the “Termination of Child Care” clause on page twelve (12) of this handbook and agree to its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Family Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Family Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Director’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

In accordance with Maryland State licensing, this form will be kept in your child’s file. A copy can be made for you upon request.