



PARENT HANDBOOK

February 2025

Please read this handbook in its entirety. Sign acknowledging receipt and return the signed page with your enrollment packet. Keep the handbook for your reference.

GAP reserves the right to make changes to this handbook. Any modification will be communicated by written notice. Any changes supersede information in previous handbooks.

CONTACT INFORMATION

GAP Community Child Development Center

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Main number: 202-426-3636

President & CEO, thardmon@gapccc.com

Lead Teacher, Jfoster@gapccc.com

If you need to speak with your child's teacher, the best times to call is between 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Welcome to the GAP Family

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to the GAP Community Child Development Center (GAP). We are confident that your child will have a nurturing and stimulating child development experience with us.

GAP is economically and ethnically diverse. Our children come to us from all over the DC Metropolitan area and from a wide range of economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. We also actively seek a diverse group of teachers and staff. Together, we provide an atmosphere in which all individuals are valued and respected. Nurturing and strengthening a sense of self-respect and respect for others is fundamental to our philosophy of education. To support our policy of economic integration of families, we hold a Level 2 status as GAP is part of the DC Child Care Subsidy Program.

We are accredited by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). GAP's curriculum is based on NAEYC standards – the highest in early childhood education and the DC Common Core. GAP also has the High-Quality Designation in DC's Capital Quality Rating System. Our educational program includes creative expression, languages, reading readiness, math, science, music, outdoor play, and emotional development. During indoor and outdoor play, with carefully selected materials, children establish important foundations for conceptual learning. Children become increasingly independent as they learn to dress themselves, set tables for lunch, serve their own food and drinks, and clean up after themselves. They learn about their environment through neighborhood exploration and about the city by taking field trips. Each teaching team designs its own curriculum and schedule with guidance from the education coach.

We know you have choices, and are elated that you have selected GAP to meet your child care and development needs.

Again, welcome! If you have any questions, please contact me at thardmon@gapccc.com or 202-426-3636.

Sincerely,



Travis H. Hardmon
President and CEO

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I. HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

GAP formerly stood for Monica **Guyot**, Aisha **Abubakar**, and Juna **Puentes**. These visionaries founded the organization as a child development center to provide a multi-cultural educational and developmental program for children ages six (6) weeks through five (5) years. Today, GAP stands for **G**rowing **A**dvancing **P**reparing (GAP).

GAP was established in 1982 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Washington, DC to provide high quality early education services. Over the past 40 years, GAP has provided services to over 25,000 children and their families.

GAP has been operating in its current location for the past 15 years and purchased the building in 2022. The outdoor play area was renovated in 2023 and located adjacent to the entrance of GAP's building. The proximity of the outdoor play area to the building provides a safe and secure area for children and teaching staff.

Funding for the Center comes from tuition, grants, gifts, and contracts with the D.C. Office of the State of Education (OSSE) and the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

II. STAFF

Our staff is highly qualified to serve your children. Teachers have degrees in early childhood, child development, and/or education. Assistant teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). Several of GAP's teachers have worked for GAP for over 10 years. GAP also has teachers who were once children enrolled in our early childhood program. All staff members have CPR and First Aid certifications and receive on-going training. GAP staff also have experience and training working with children with special needs and children with dietary restrictions. A number of our staff have certificates in Safe Food Handling Practices. Staff training is ongoing and all staff receive a minimum of 40 hours of training per year. Before being hired, all staff must submit an incident free criminal background clearance, three positive references, and a health report ensuring they are free from any communicable diseases and evidence of COVID-19 vaccination. Staff submit updated clearances annually.

Current GAP teaching staffing are not authorized to provide child care services to current GAP families at any location outside of the Center at any time.

III. MISSION, CORE VALUES, AND PHILOSOPHY

A. Mission

Our mission is to provide high quality early care and education services to children six weeks to 5 years of age families and the community. Our mission is achieved by:

- Maintaining families and staff that reflect the diversity of the greater Washington Metropolitan area.
- Maintaining and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity for the children we serve and the staff.
- Providing spaces for children from families in need.
- Providing a high quality, developmentally appropriate, early childhood program.
- Providing a curriculum that is appropriate for young children and is consistent with the way young children learn.

- Providing a clean, safe, stimulating, and secure environment that allows and encourages children's individuality and creativity.
- Setting up a learning environment that fosters growth and competence in all developmental areas.
- Promoting cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity.
- Teaching children about different cultures within the different areas of the curriculum.
- Maintaining ethnic and culturally diverse environments at the center.
- Establishing open and beneficial relationships between parents and staff.
- Communicating with parents about overall program as well as their child's progress and accomplishments.
- Encouraging parents to actively participate in activities within the program.
- Providing support and learning opportunities regarding parenting issues.

B. Core Values

- **Equity:** GAP ensures that every child has access to the necessary resources and opportunities to succeed, tailored to meet their unique needs and overcome any barriers. The goal is to provide support that addresses individual differences, creating an inclusive environment where all children can reach their full potential.
- **Diversity:** GAP celebrates and honors the wide range of cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds of its children, families, and staff. This diversity enriches the community with varied perspectives and experiences. Culturally responsive teaching practices and materials are integrated into the curriculum, reflecting the diverse identities of the students and fostering a sense of belonging and respect for all.
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion is at the heart of GAP's approach, creating a welcoming atmosphere where every child and family feels valued and respected. GAP engages with families through culturally relevant events, provides ongoing staff training on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), and ensures its policies and practices promote equity and inclusion. The inclusive culture supports every child's development and learning, ensuring fairness and respect in all aspects of operations.

C. Philosophy

GAP believes:

- It is our obligation to ensure the health and safety of all children, families, and staff.
- Every child should have access to a high-quality education.
- In diversity, and that all children should be in learning environments that foster their growth and development that is grounded in experiential learning and best practices.
- In strong partnerships with parents who are a child's primary nurturer, teacher, and advocate.

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires observing and experimenting to find out how things work and why they work the way they do. Children expand their imaginations creatively through use of various mediums. Through use of real materials, children begin to take their explorations from a concrete level to an abstract level of thinking. Children explore the world around them by using all their senses: touching, tasting, smelling, looking and listening. Our educational curriculum is based upon child-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities. Teachers plan and supervise activities that enhance children's self-esteem, encourage problem solving, and facilitate language development.

We respect children's developmental stages by tailoring activities and expectations to the age, interests and abilities of the individual child. The activities planned for the children, the way the environment is organized, the selection of toys and materials, their daily schedule, and the language staff use with the children are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and to give each child a successful start in school.

Above all else, we want children to enjoy their day, make friends, and benefit developmentally from their child care experience.

IV. CURRICULUM

A. The Goals

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic lifelong 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. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident inquisitive learners. We teach them how to learn, not just in school, but also throughout life. We allow them to learn at their own pace and in ways that are best for them. We try to teach them good habits and encourage positive attitudes - particularly a positive sense of self - which will make a difference throughout their lives. Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

- **Social:** to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are part of a group.
- **Emotional:** to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude towards life.
- **Cognitive:** to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success and by helping them acquire learning skills, such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings.
- **Physical:** to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

B. Educational Practices

Our educational curriculum, The Creative Curriculum, is based upon the understanding that preschoolers learn and develop best through carefully supervised play with age-appropriate educational materials. We also want children to enjoy their day, to make friends, and to benefit developmentally from their childcare experience.

Teachers plan and supervise activities which enhance children's self-esteem and minimize the experience of failure. We respect developmental stages of early childhood by tailoring activities and expectations to the age, interests, and ability of the individual child. We follow NAEYC standards.

Daily art activities are open-ended so that children may explore possibilities and experiment with materials without adult determined models.

Oral expression of thoughts and feelings is encouraged during structured group times and mealtimes, as well as during unstructured playtimes.

Classroom materials such as unit blocks, puzzles, Legos, and table games teach math and pre-writing skills, in addition to encouraging small motor dexterity and strength.

In the “creative play area” children have opportunities for imaginative play.

In the water and sand tables children have an opportunity to experience sensory motor play while exploring textures and temperature.

Children play outdoors twice a day in our shaded and fenced play yard. Outdoor equipment includes climbing structures, bikes, sandboxes, balls, and hoops.

C. Teaching Qualifications and Training Requirements

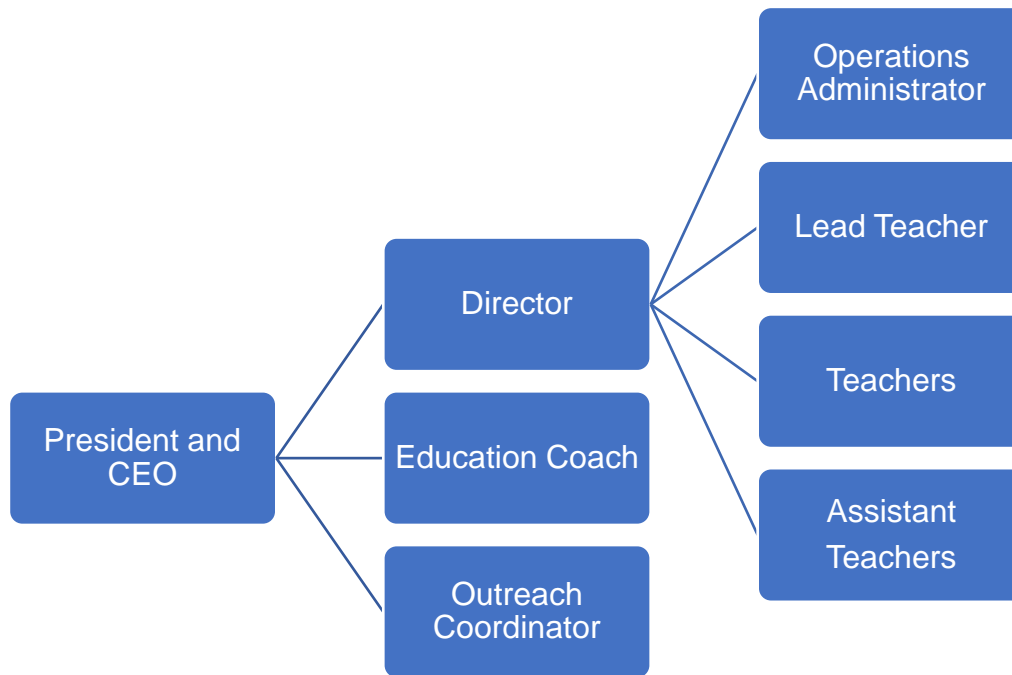
All of our teachers have practical experience in the field of early childhood education. Many of our teaching staff have been employed by GAP as teachers for several years. Teachers have degrees in early childhood education. Assistant teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA).

GAP works with community partners, such as D.C. Lead, to provide scholarships which result in low and no cost opportunities for teachers and assistant teachers to obtain degrees in early childhood education.

GAP management has long advocated that teacher employed at the Center should be fully trained in their chosen profession and should have the professional degrees and experience to reflect that commitment. GAP’s teachers are required to receive a minimum of 40 hours of training per year in relevant child development and related topics. The required training includes, but is not limited to:

- Effective supervision of children
- Effective communication with parents
- Food Safety
- CPR/First Aid
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Medication Administration and Information
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Curriculum Planning and Implementation
- Lesson Planning
- Classroom Observations
- Supporting and tracking children’s developmental progress
- Administering the ASQ
- D.C. Common Core Early Learning Standards
- ITERS-3(Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale)
- Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS)
- School Readiness

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE CENTER



VI. STARTING SCHOOL

A. Orientation

Before starting school, we conduct orientation meetings via Zoom to allow you to meet our team and get to know more about the Center. Orientation includes a *Teacher Meet and Greet* as well as an *Intake Meeting*. The meet and greet is your opportunity to touch base with your child's teacher to discuss things such as the classroom environment, routine, structure, etc. The intake meeting is with a member of the Admissions Team and covers general GAP matters such as travel and COVID policies, school-wide protocols, and other topics regarding the school at large.

For your child's first week, we encourage gradually working into a full day of attendance. For the first day, it may be best to pick up your child by lunch time which typically occurs at noon. This allows your child a few hours to get to know the classroom, teachers, and friends without being overwhelmed by being in a new environment for an entire day. Once your child seems comfortable with the new environment, they can progress to staying until after nap time (around 3:00 p.m.). Finally, once your child seems comfortable sleeping at school, they are encouraged to stay for a full day.

B. Separation Anxiety

Your little one may be calm at home, but once you are ready to drop him/her off at the Center, the hysterics may begin. What is a parent to do? Young children often experience separation anxiety when their parents leave them. Your child can learn to manage without you and that he/she can rely on other caretakers until you return.

Here are some things you can do to minimize the apprehension your child feels when you leave him/her each day:

1. Reassure him/her that the separation is only temporary and that you will return. Always tell him/her when you are going to leave and when you will return.
2. Don't leave without saying good-bye. Knowing that you could leave at any time could cause him/her to feel uneasy.
3. Don't linger. If he/she starts to cry when you say good-bye, you should still leave. Otherwise, he/she will soon learn to use his/her tears as a way to keep you around.
4. Return when you promise and remind him/her that you did.
5. Discuss the day with your child. Talk about what he/she did, as well as what you did while you were away.
6. Talk about all the good things you do at work or while you're away. Arrange to have him/her meet your co-workers and see where you go and what you do when you are gone all day.

C. Developing a Good Relationship with Us

Creating the best learning and growing experience for a child requires strong teamwork between educators and parents. Parents must actively participate in the education process to ensure the child development situation is a positive one. It is important to monitor your child's progress in the child development environment. GAP teaching staff provide a daily report at the time of pick-up. The report provides a recap of the day's activities including, but not limited to eating, bathroom breaks/changing, and your child's participation in classroom activities. Try to take a few minutes at the end of each day to review your child's daily report. Ask your child how things are going. If he/she can't yet speak make a mental note of his or her overall disposition and behavior when you drop off and pick up each day.

Teachers also communicate with parents via the school app – *Classdojo*. If you have questions, compliments or concerns, feel free to set up a conference with your child's teacher either in person or by phone. The best times to reach your child's teachers are during the class nap time, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. There are also three regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences throughout the year.

Please understand that we value a positive working relationship with our families. To this end, we will do whatever is possible to facilitate and ensure that the relationship is both cooperative and healthy. Under no circumstances will we permit parents to exhibit disrespectful, divisive, abusive, or aggressive behavior towards staff, a child, or another parent. If it is determined a parent's behavior is inappropriate, they will be asked to leave the program.

D. Parents Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are an integral part of GAP and we encourage their participation in every aspect of our program. Parents may be asked to serve as a resource for a particular class or for the Center, depending upon skills and interests. During the course of the school year, parents are always encouraged to share their knowledge about their favorite subject, craft, songs, books, culture, and their child's favorite recipe.

- All email addresses and telephone numbers /cell phone numbers must be working numbers. Notify GAP immediately if your telephone number or email address changes.

- Parents are also expected to share information about their child/children. If a teacher is to meet the child's needs, the teacher must know about any unusual event in a child's life. The only way for teachers to gain this information is directly from the parent.
- Parents are encouraged to actively participate in parent-teacher conferences to share and ask questions about their child's development and his/her readiness and ability to move forward to the next level.
- Parents must notify GAP of any accident involving their child that occurs in the home. (i.e. bruises, burns, bumps, rashes, etc.) If we know an accident occurred in your home, we can make sure that during the day your child is looked after in the areas where he or she was injured.

E. Parent Code of Conduct

- Inappropriate Language: GAP prohibits the use of inappropriate language by any person while inside or on the outside (playground) of the GAP facility.
- Threatening of Staff, Parent or Children: It is the policy of GAP to contact local law enforcement in the event a parent or other person threatens a staff member, parent or child. Any parent of an enrolled child who threatens another person may be asked to leave the facility permanently. This may cause his/her child to be dropped from the Center's enrollment.
- Smoking: GAP is a smoke free environment. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in the Center and on the Center's grounds, including the playground area.
- Use of physical or verbal punishment on its property regardless of the circumstances. This includes quarreling with other parents and staff.
- At no time is any adult to discipline or punish in any way any child other than his or her own child.
- If there is an issue to be discussed, the parent may set up a conference time with the teacher and lead teacher.
- All information about children enrolled in GAP is confidential. Releasing information about a child to any unauthorized personnel may result in a parent or teacher being asked to leave the facility and jeopardize their child's enrollment in the facility.

F. Enrollment

To ensure a smooth transition into GAP, parents are required to provide information and documents pertaining to the family and the child:

1. GAP Enrollment Application
2. GAP Enrollment Agreement
3. Child Care Subsidy Program Application and supporting documentation (if applicable)
4. Pre-K Program Application (if applicable)
5. Child's birth certificate
6. Health Certificate (cannot be more than one year old)
7. Registration Form
8. Emergency Contact/Consent Form
9. Medication Form
10. Permission to place child's picture on GAP's website and social media platforms
11. Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Forms
12. Proof of Residency

G. Personal Items for Your Child

Parents are responsible for bringing the required items for their child/children on a weekly basis to ensure they are comfortable:

Infants (6 weeks to 1 year)

- Change of Clothes – 2 sets (seasonally appropriate)
- Pampers – 1 Packet
- Wipes – 2 Packs
- Crib Sheets – 5
- Labeling – Everything must be labeled
- 2 Bibs (that can be wiped and disposed of daily)
- Bottles – 3
- Breast Milk – (Must be labeled with the date and time)
- Formula – 1 Container

It is against regulations to use pillows or blankets in the infant room. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is associated with these items. We will provide information for you on SIDS. You may also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/sudden-infant-death/sleep-safely/index.html>

Cases of SIDS are dramatically reduced for babies who sleep on their backs. As a result of the significant safety implications to the wellbeing of the infants that are under our care, it is the mandatory policy of GAP to place all infants on their backs to sleep, unless another position is ordered by a pediatric physician and expressed with an official written document. This written document shall be maintained in the child's record.

Note: No toys, pillows, quilts or soft items are allowed in the cribs.

Toddlers (1 year to 2.11 months)

- 5 Sheets
- 2 blankets
- 2 Complete changes of clothing
- Wipes – 1 set
- Labeling – Everything must be labeled
- Meals are provided by GAP

Pre-k (3 year to 5 years)

- Change of Clothes – 2
- Pull-ups– 1 Packet – (20 per week)
- Blanket – (1 per week)
- Sheets – (1 per week)
- Labeling – Everything must be labeled
- Meals are provided by GAP

H. Attendance

Any child who is absent from the Center for 20 service days (consecutively or non-consecutively) in any given month may be cause for termination. However, no adverse action will be taken if there is a medical justification for the child's absence and it is supported by a doctor's certification.

VII. TERMS OF PAYMENT

A. Tuition Deposits

- A deposit equivalent to one month's tuition is required to hold the spot when your child is accepted into the program. The deposit is non-refundable.
- The deposit is applied as tuition to your child's last month in attendance.
- Parents are required to notify the President & CEO, Travis Hardmon, one month in advance if they are planning to withdraw their child from the Center. This notice **MUST BE IN WRITING**. Failure to notify Mr. Hardmon in advance of withdrawing will result in forfeiture of the deposit.
- Parents are liable for payment of the entire month's tuition following notice of withdrawal, regardless of child's attendance.
- Tuition is NOT prorated for your child's last month in attendance.

B. Tuition Payments and Co-Payments

- Tuition is payable on the day the child is scheduled for his/her half day visit and on the first day of each month, thereafter. Payments can be made on GAP's website. Click on Tuition and Payments > Pay Now
- Tuition payments that are reduced because of the change in a child's age will take effect the month following the month that the child age changes.
- Co-payments that are increased or reduced as a result of an OSSE Eligibility review will take effect the month following the month the review takes place.
- Tuition and co-payments will *not* be adjusted for:
 - Holidays
 - Staff Training
 - Closures due to inclement weather or facility maintenance issues
 - Families going on vacation or a child being absent from the Center for other reasons.

C. Partial Month Enrollment

Tuition for partial month enrollment is pro-rated at one month's tuition is divided by 20 days and multiplied by the number of days enrolled. Pro-rated tuition is applied to the initial month of enrollment **ONLY**.

D. Late Payment Fees

Tuition payment is due on the first day of the month. A \$25.00 late fee is assessed if payment is not received by the 5th of the month.

E. Returned Check Fees

Your account will be assessed a \$40.00 returned check fee if your check payment is returned by the bank for any reason. You are allowed only two (2) returned checks. Payments thereafter must be made in cash, money order, or cashier's check.

F. Tuition Payment of Non-Attended Days

Parents are responsible for payment of full tuition if the Center is closed for holidays, emergency situations, snow days or if the child is absent for any reason including, but not limited to illness, vacation, etc.

G. Late Pick-up Charges

- The Center closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick up is detrimental to both the child, who sees all of the other children leave, and to the teacher, who must stay with the child until the parent arrives.
- A late charge of \$20.00 for the first 15 minutes (6:01 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.), \$30-(6:16 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.), \$50-(6:31 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.), \$75 (6:46 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.) - payable at that time to the teacher.
- If a parent is late and does not contact the Center by 6:30 p.m., DC Child and Family Services (CFSA) will be contacted to pick-up child. We recommend that you set up an alternate pick-up plan for extenuating circumstances.
- All fines are doubled after the third late pick-up.
- Recurrent late pick-ups may prompt the child's termination from the program.

VIII. CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

A. What to Wear to School

The children play a lot at school. They play with sand and water, they paint, they cook, they run and climb -- and they get dirty. Please dress your child in clothing that is sturdy and washable. Long dresses and sandals are not appropriate; they are dangerous on the climbers and they restrict other types of play. Pre-k children are required to wear uniforms during the school year. The uniform consists of a light blue top and navy blue bottoms.

Please dress your child accordingly for the weather. The children play outside even in the cold weather, so please dress them warmly in winter. We recommend dressing them in layers as the temperature changes drastically from indoors to outdoors. If the ground is wet, snowy or icy, they will need boots. Hint: Mittens are warmer than gloves and much easier to put on. Please ensure that ALL your child's items (e.g., mittens, hats, boots, coats and sweaters, etc.) are labeled. Young children are often not able to keep up with all their belongings. If they are labeled, we will know who owns what and your child's things will usually find their way back to you!

Shoes. The preferred shoe throughout the entire year is a sneaker type. They provide the most protection for your child's feet as well as support for climbing, running and bike riding. Please make sure all shoes fit properly and either tie or Velcro securely to their feet. Flip-flops, sandals, jellies, clogs or non-secured footwear are not permitted. For the child's safety, we do not permit children to wear open toed shoes or unsecured shoes to ride bikes or play on the big climber. If these types of shoes are worn, play will be limited to sandbox and drawing with chalk.

Water Play shoes: Closed-in rubber bottom shoes are the best and our first choice for water play.

B. Toilet Training

Regardless of which stage of training your child is in, each class makes frequent stops to the bathroom and children are always invited to use the facilities. Children who are not yet trained sometimes start using the toilet because they have watched their friends take a turn.

Please provide an ample supply of underpants, pants/shorts, socks and shirts. During training and beyond, it is quite common for children to have accidents or to become so involved in play they forget to use the facilities. Children are never disciplined when this occurs. Toilet training must be a positive experience for all involved. If your child needs pull-ups, please bring an ample supply of both pull-ups and wipes at the beginning of each week.

When your child is transitioning from pull-ups to cloth underpants, please keep in mind that we prefer you to use the thick training underpants, not thin underpants. The teaching staff will give parents the soiled clothing at the time of pick-up in the event of a potty accident.

C. Toys From Home

We discourage toys (including electronics) from home in the classroom except for nap time companions. Sometimes, however, a child may need a favorite toy initially to help adjust to school. Toys that promote aggressive play such as GUNS, WAR TOYS, LIGHT SABERS, WEAPONS AND ACTION FIGURES ARE PROHIBITED FROM SCHOOL AT ALL TIMES! If a child needs to express feelings of aggression, we suggest pounding clay or play-dough or a punching a bag or active movements such as dance or running.

D. Meals and Snacks

The Center provides a breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack daily. The cost of these meals is included in tuition, except for infants. Parents must provide formula and other food items for infants. An outside catering company provides food for all meals including hot breakfast and lunches. The foods served do not have artificial color, flavoring or preservatives. To encourage healthy eating habits, and to help your child function best throughout the day, we include foods from at least two of the four major food groups when serving snacks and all four major food groups when serving lunch. We serve milk daily and with all meals.

Please do not send in any food items for snack or lunch for your child, as we encourage family style eating where all of the children have access to the same food items. (Please see Special Dietary Requirements below.) Menus are distributed at the beginning of each month.

Parents must provide food for their infants until they turn one. Infants are generally able to begin eating school food on or around their first birthday. To start this process, parents must send an email to GAP management that the child is ready for school food. Prior to this, any food brought in for under one-year olds must be tried at home first in order to avoid the risk of an unforeseen allergic reaction to new food.

If your child eats a snack prior to drop-off at the Center, we ask that all food items and drinks be left in the car. We do not want food on the playground, as crumbs and leftover food invite rodents.

GAP follows and participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which focuses on nutritious meals and snacks. Please do NOT bring or allow your child to bring fast food (e.g., McDonalds) into the Center.

Infants need the required components for meal service.

- Breakfast - 3 – components - (bread/fruit/milk)
- Snack – 2 components – (Fruit/milk or a bread/milk or vegetable/milk) Water is always encouraged.
- Lunch – 5 components – Meat item, bread item, vegetable, fruit and milk.

IMPORTANT: It is important that parents ensure their infant has sufficient liquids and food for their daily meals.

- Bottles and Sippy cups must be labeled.
- Children ages 2-5 / Breakfast is served between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
- Lunch is served 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Afternoon snack is served at 3:00 p.m. after naptime.
- Menus are provided for each family and posted in the foyer.
- Menus are also posted in the classrooms for teachers and children to talk about. Some children will ask, “What’s for lunch today?”
- The same nutritional standards regarding healthy foods, fruits, whole grains and lean meats continue to be the fundamental ingredients of the meals GAP serve.
- Children ages 2 and above are required to participate in the Center’s breakfast, lunch and snack food program, unless there is a medical condition, religious reason, or cultural meals which exclude participation. If your child is allergic to a food item, please provide a doctor’s note.

E. Special Dietary Requirements: Food Allergies & Vegetarians

It is GAP’s policy to provide an alternative snack for children who have food allergies. In addition, we provide alternative meals for vegetarians. A written note must be provided from a physician if your child has any food allergies or dietary requirements with specific substitutions.

Please provide a written statement if your child has specific dietary requirements for religious or spiritual reasons. This statement will be placed in your child’s file. The Center will provide a vegetarian substitution for all beef and chicken meals. Please let us know if your child eats fish or eggs. Chips, cookies, candy or other similar foods are not part of our lunch or snack menus nor are they allowed at the Center.

The parent of a child who has food allergies is responsible for alerting GAP management of a child’s allergy and any associated foods you see on the menu.

GAP management must be notified immediately upon registration if a child has special dietary needs due to allergies. Although we do not serve nuts or peanut butter of any kind, GAP is not be responsible for screening foods for potential allergens.

Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (I.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets, etc.)

F. Meals

Pre-Toddlers/Toddlers/Pre-School: Meals are provided to these classrooms and the menu is posted in the foyer where you sign in. Parents also receive their own individual menu to take home. Again, we follow the Child Care Food Program requirements.

Prohibited ITEMS – Please do NOT bring or allow your child to bring the following items to the Center. If brought, these items will be taken and placed in the child's cubby to be returned to the parent at the end of the day.

- Electronic Devices, Gum, Chips, McDonalds/Fast Food, Cookies, Candy, Sodas, Sugary Drinks, Doughnuts, Doritos, Cheetos, and Sugary Cereal.

G. Parties

- We celebrate birthdays during the afternoon snack time (3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.) Please make arrangements with your child's teachers at least a week in advance. Snacks will not be held later than 4:00 p.m.
- The Center's snack prepared for the children will be served prior to any special treat brought in. Any special treats must be purchased from a store and be sealed. Food made at a parent's home is not permitted.
- We do not allow party favors, goody bags, or piñatas. Instead, please feel free to make a donation to your child's class in the form of a book or toy in honor of your child's birthday.
- We have a no candy or balloon policy. Any candy or balloons sent in will be sent home to the parent with a reminder that these items are not allowed at the Center.
- When planning a party at home, please only distribute invitations at school if every child in their class receives one.
- Please note that candy, gum and soda are not allowed at school at any time, including birthday parties or special school events and programs at which food is served.

H. Peanut Policy

Due to an increasing number of life-threatening allergies to peanuts, GAP is a peanut-free school. This means that peanuts, peanut butter, foods cooked in peanut oil, or any processed foods that contain even a trace amount of peanut product must not be brought into the school. Peanuts do not have to be ingested to cause a reaction. Swift and severe anaphylactic shock can occur if a child with a peanut allergy touches another child's fingers or a table with traces of peanut oil.

I. Field Trips

Various age-appropriate field trips are scheduled throughout the year to enrich and augment the program. Examples from recent years include: Cox Farm, The Capital Children's Museum, National Gallery of Art, Duke Ellington School of Dance Spring Recital, Air and Space Museum, National Zoo, Museum of African Art, Museum of Natural History, and Glen Echo Park.

At the beginning of the year, a general permission slip is signed which includes all walking field trips around the community. A separate permission slip must be signed for trips where children will ride on a school bus, metro bus or driven by another parent.

GAP provides each child a school t-shirt which they are required to wear on all field trips. Children without a signed permission slip may not participate in the class trip. Due to staff/child ratios, parents will have to find alternative care for their child during field trips if their child will not be participating.

J. Enrichment Programs

Throughout the year, the Center includes various enrichment programs to supplement the program. These programs usually include music, creative movement, Spanish lessons, yoga, and soccer.

K. Discipline

Discipline is the art and science of teaching and guiding children to learn to control their own behaviors. It is never punitive. The structure we use on a daily basis, such as the daily classroom schedule, setting age and development appropriate limits, and being consistent, helps to minimize inappropriate behaviors.

When inappropriate behavior presents itself, the guidance techniques are handled on a case-by-case basis using a variety of methods, including redirection, loss of privileges, and behavior modification. In cases of more severe disciplinary problems, parents will be notified and solutions will include the teachers, parents, children. Recommendations may involve outside resources (counseling or specialists). We believe that physical punishment, sarcasm or belittling is not a part of good discipline and, therefore, is never used at GAP. Tattle-telling and using other children against a difficult child is destructive and is not permitted at our Center.

L. Aggressive Behavior Policy

Although age-appropriate and often hard to avoid, hitting, pushing, teasing, biting, rough-and-tumble play and other aggressive behaviors are not acceptable at the Center. Whenever these behaviors are exhibited, the aggressive child as well as the other child (ren) involved is spoken to by a teacher. It is explained that these behaviors are not okay and children are told to use their words.

When children are having difficulty playing appropriately together, they are given a variety of choices for acceptable play or words. If a child becomes excessively aggressive, the teachers and the President & CEO will work closely with the child's parents to try to modify the child's unacceptable behaviors. In instances where a child is bitten, the parents of both the child that bit and the child that was bitten are contacted by the teacher that day. Biting is treated very seriously and the children are taught that biting is never acceptable. They are told, instead, to use their words, walk away or get a teacher to help them use their words.

Consequences for aggressive behavior vary with each situation and are handled at the discretion of the classroom teachers and the President & CEO. When children are unable to alter their unsafe behavior through methods devised by the staff in conjunction with the parents, the President & CEO will seek assistance of a specialist affiliated with CORE (Community Outreach Education Specialists). In extreme circumstances, it may be appropriate for the child to not return to the program.

IX. HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD

A. Illness Policy

Your child's health is of utmost importance to us. By the first day of school, we must have in our files a standard immunization, oral examination (for children 3 years and older), and the health inventory form signed by your child's physician. This form is renewed annually.

The receiving teacher conducts an informal health check when your child is dropped to note any health concerns. We follow a strict handwashing and sanitization routine to minimize the spread of germs.

To have your child and classmates stay healthy, children displaying any of the following symptoms are required to stay home. Furthermore, if a child develops any of the following symptoms during Center hours, a parent is contacted and must arrange for the child to be picked-up within a reasonable amount of time.

- Fever. A fever is defined as an oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher or an auxiliary (under arm) temperature of 99 degrees. Children **MUST** be fever free for a full 24 hours - without the aid of medication before returning to school).
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps (Children **MUST** be symptom free for a full 24 hours - without the aid of medication before returning to school).
- Heavy, thick yellow/green nasal drainage or discharge (indicates an infection).
- Crust on the eyes, pink eyes or mucus discharge from the eyes.
- An undiagnosed rash.

If your child displays any of the following symptoms, we suggest you keep him/her home. They will not be themselves, possibly requiring one-on-one attention, which unfortunately we are unable to provide.

- Fussiness, crankiness or is just not acting himself/herself.
- Excessive fatigue - rest at this time may prevent illness.
- Excessive sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headaches, or earache.

YOUR CHILD MUST BE SYMPTOM AND FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CENTER. IT IS THE SAME IF YOUR CHILD IS ON MEDICATION FOR A CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS.

Parents must notify us immediately if you discover that your child has contracted a contagious disease so that we can inform other parents to watch for similar symptoms. Sample list of communicable diseases:

- Chicken Pox
- Fifth Disease
- Impetigo
- Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis
- Scarlet Fever
- Strep Throat

B. Guidelines for Health / Exclusion from the Center

GAP reserves the right not to admit or retain a child who has one of the following symptoms or combination of symptoms:

1. When the child has developed a contagious disease [signs of COVID, ringworm, croup, lice or Coxsackievirus (i.e., hand/foot mouth disease.)]
2. A fever over 100 degrees F. Temperature taken under the arm.
3. Diarrhea (2 times) abnormally loose, runny, watery and/or bloody stool.
4. Vomiting.
5. Difficult breathing or abnormal wheezing. GAP management will administer asthma medication with written authorization and direction from the doctor regarding times of administration and dosage/units. However, if the medication does not relieve discernible stress and related breathing problems, parents and appropriate medical services will be contacted and the child transported to the hospital, if needed. A member of the GAP's management team will go along with the child in case of an emergency to the hospital.
6. Complaints of severe pain.
7. Skin or eye lesions or rashes that is severe, weeping or pus filled.

A child who shows signs of illness, as defined above, will be isolated and the parents(s) notified and asked to remove the child from the Center as soon as possible.

GAP reserves the right not to readmit a child, with any of the above symptoms, until the symptoms have subsided and a doctor's note is submitted. A medical form must be completed by a doctor or authorized medical professional verifying that the illness has resolved and the child is no longer contagious.

All children attending GAP are expected to participate in all daily activities, which include outdoor play. We ask that you bring your child only if he/she is well enough to fully participate in the daily activities. If you do not want your child to play outside, then he/she must stay home. We do not have enough staff to supervise a sick child indoors while other children are outside.

C. Medication

We can only give medication to your child under the following conditions:

- Over-the-counter (OTC) ointments (i.e., sunscreen, Vaseline, diaper rash cream, etc.) – a written authorization from the parent is required for us to administer the ointments.
- Prescription medications or OTC's (i.e., Benadryl, Tylenol, etc.) - we can only give these with a doctor's note on a medical order form (we can provide the for if necessary). The prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, name of the medication, the required dosage, directions for administering, date(s) for administration and physician's name.
- EPI-PENS & ASTHMA INHALERS AND OTHER DEVICES: The doctor's instructions on use MUST be kept on file at all times and renewed annually.

All medication must be in the original container. The bottle must be labeled with the child's name, date, amount of dosage, and frequency of dose(s). If prescribed, the bottle must have the name, address and number of the pharmacy and physician. All medicine must be placed in a resealable plastic bag and given to a teacher. **Please do not leave medicine in your child's backpack or tote.**

D. Health Certificates and Shot Records

- The Health Certificate must be updated every year. If your child's Health Certificate has expired, he/she will not be allowed to attend the Center until the Health Certificate is brought up to date.
- The Health Certificate must be signed by medical doctor (M.D.) or a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP). NOTHING ELSE IS ACCEPTABLE.
- Shot records must be kept up to date as needed.
- Food Allergies & Dietary Requirements must be in writing.

E. Emergencies

Children engaging in active play will sometimes hurt themselves or others. Most accidents are minor and can be treated at school. All head injuries, even minor ones, are reported immediately to the parents.

If a child is injured or becomes seriously ill while at the Center:

- 911 Emergency will be called to have your child transported to a hospital emergency room to be treated.
- The parent will be contacted and asked to meet the child and Center's staff person at the designated hospital emergency room.
- If a minor injury occurs, a note will be sent home explaining the injury and the steps the staff took with your child.

It is critical that each parent (or guardian) completes the AUTHORIZATION FOR CHILD'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT and the EMERGENCY CARD so that the Center can contact the parent or authorized person in an emergency. The parent must notify the Center if there is any change in the information on the form (such as telephone number, employer, etc.).

Fire Evacuation and Fire Drills: GAP's Fire Evacuation Plan has been approved by the DC Department of Fire and Emergency Management Services. Evacuation drills are practiced every month. Children are taken to the playground in front of the building. A record of our fire drills and evacuation plan is maintained in the office and on the Parent Information Board at the entrance of the Center in the foyer.

F. Information Updates

There is an information card file in the office which we use when we need to contact you during the day. Parents fill out this card when they receive their enrollment package. The card lists parents' home, work, and cell phone numbers, home addresses and the names and phone numbers of two other people whom we can call in case of an emergency. It is absolutely imperative that this information be kept up to date. Please let us know if there are any changes. We call your emergency contacts only if we are unable to reach either parent. Please be sure that the names we have on file are people who are willing and able to come to the Center, should the need arise.

X. SCHOOL POLICIES

A. Back to School

The school year begins with a Back-to-School orientation meeting for the parents within the first few weeks of school. At that time, parents have the opportunity to meet with the teachers and receive information concerning the early days of school as well as the rest of the year. This is a mandatory meeting for all parents and attendance counts as one of the two (2) workshop meeting requirements set-forth by the Center.

B. School Closings, Delays and Holidays

We follow the DC Public Schools schedule for school closings due to inclement weather. If the DC Public Schools is closed, so are we. However, in some cases, when safety is an issue, we may choose to close. In these instances, please call the Center at 202-462-3636 after 6:00 a.m. and listen to the recorded message or listen to WTOP 103.1 FM to see if the Center is closed or if we will have a delayed opening. The President & CEO will exercise his/her best judgment during inclement weather to safeguard the children and staff.

Should we need to close the school early for any reason, we will notify each parent and wait until the last child is picked up. If you have a problem with immediate pick-up, we will help you make alternate arrangements for care by another parent.

For scheduled closings for holidays and other events, please consult the Center's annual calendar. The Center is open weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. year-round, except for Federal holidays and staff training days. The Federal holidays are:

Closing	Day	Month
Labor Day	1st Monday	September
Columbus Day	2nd Monday	October
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday	November
Day after Thanksgiving	4th Friday	November
Week between Christmas Day and New Year's Day	25th*	December
New Year's Day	1st*	January
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	3rd Monday	January
Presidents' Day	3rd Monday	February
Memorial Day	4th Monday	May
Juneteenth	19	June
Independence Day	4th*	July

*If this day falls on a Saturday, the Center will close on the Friday before; if this day falls on a Sunday, the Center will close on the Monday after. For the winter recess, the Center will be closed on January 2 if the day falls on a Friday.

Staff Training Days: Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday prior to Labor Day Weekend

Two (2) additional Staff Training Days: To be announced (TBA)

C. Authorization for Pick-Up

For obvious reasons of safety and security, a child will not be released to anyone unless authorized by the child's parent. You must let us know in writing if your child will be picked up by someone other than the individuals listed on the Release Authorization and Custody Information form.

Alternate pick-up arrangements must be clearly given to the staff. We will not release your child to an unauthorized person. When someone different is coming, please inform your child so that he/she will know whom to expect. The person will need to present a government-issued photo identification before the child is released.

D. Arrival and Departure

Schedule and routine are your child's friend. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ON TIME FOR ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED.

Arrival

- The Center opens its doors at 7:00 a.m.
- All children are expected to be at the Center no later than 9:30 a.m. unless the teachers are advised otherwise (doctor's appointment, excess fatigue, scheduling conflict, etc.)
- It is very important that parents adhere to this time in order to ensure the safety of the child and the efficiency of the Center's operation.
- The program is affected and altered when children stagger in late. If your child arrives after 10:00 a.m. on a regular basis, GAP reserves the right to ask parents to return the next day.

- GAP has health and safety protocols in place. As such, all children are received at the entrance door. Parents are not allowed to enter the Center beyond the entry way. However, they must sign-in (and out) on the designated forms in the entry way.
- Parents are required to bring and pick-up their child directly from the Center. Staff are not allowed to either bring children into the Center or to take a child to meet a parent outside the Center.

Departure

- Similar to drop-off, GAP teaching staff will bring your child to the entrance door. Parents are not permitted to enter the Center beyond the entry way.
- When you come to pick up your child, please make sure you and your child say goodbye to the afternoon teacher. The goodbye is essential because it lets us know that your child is leaving our care and because it gives the child a sense of closure to the school day.
- Sometimes, at pick-up time, your child may want to show you a special achievement or a picture he/she has made. Don't miss the opportunity to build your child's self-esteem. These demonstrations also strengthen the connection between school and home, which in turn contributes to a general sense of well-being.
- To help you and your child depart in the evenings, we have a motto/policy. It is "When mommy/daddy says it is time to leave then it is time to leave." This is meant to assist you so that negotiations and bargaining do not continue for more time to stay. If you are having difficulty getting your child to leave the Center, please do not hesitate to ask a teacher for assistance.

E. Registration Form and Picking Up Children

A child will not be released to another adult unless the person's name is on the registration form or a separate written authorization, signed and dated by the primary parent, is on file. **Faxes, phone calls and emails providing the name of the person you wish to pick up your child or children are unacceptable.**

An individual will not be allowed to pick up the designated child/children if their name is not on the registration form and a photo identification is not on file, Parents shall ensure that the person picking up will be timely and aware they will be asked for an identification card.

No child may leave the Center with another child. A person must be at least eighteen (18) years of age in order to pick up a child enrolled in the Center. The 18-year-old must have a picture ID and be on the pick form.

F. Late Pick-up Policy and Charges

- The Center closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick up is detrimental to both the child, who sees all of the other children leave, and to the teacher, who must stay with the child until the parent arrives.
- A late charge of \$20.00 for the first 15 minutes (6:01 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.), \$30-(6:16 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.), \$50-(6:31 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.), \$75 (6:46 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.) - payable at that time to the teacher.
- If a parent is late and does not contact the Center by 6:30 p.m., DC Child and Family Services (CFSA) will be contacted to pick-up child. We recommend that you set up an alternate pick-up plan for extenuating circumstances.

- All fines are doubled after the third late pick-up.
- Recurrent late pick-ups may prompt the child's termination from the program.

G. Termination of Enrollment

Parents are asked to provide a written notice at least one month in advance of voluntarily withdrawing your child from the program. Parents are liable for payment of the entire month following notice of termination, regardless of child's attendance. The deposit will be applied to this final month in the program. The Center does not pro-rate tuition for your child's last month in attendance.

Termination: The following include but are not limited to reasons children may be terminated from the program:

- Failure to meet Child Care Subsidy Program Eligibility requirements
- Late/non-payment of tuition or co-payments
- Behavior
- Excessive Absences

The deposit is non-refundable when a child is terminated from the program.

There may be times when our Center may not meet the needs of a particular child. When this occurs, the parents will be notified and given one (1) month notice to find other child care arrangements. However, if the child is posing a danger to his/herself or others, immediate dismissal may be necessary. If the President & CEO determines that we are not meeting a child's needs, the parents will not be responsible for any tuition after the child has left the program.

H. Notice of Tuition Increase

The monthly tuition rate is subject to change. Parents will be given written notice of such change at least one (1) month in advance.

I. Lost Articles

Please ensure all of your children's personal items are labeled and identified with their name.

- Example – Hats, Coates, sheets/blankets, bookbags, extra clothes, bags/boxes of diapers/pullups, wipes, etc.
- Infants- All baby food jars, bottles, formula, sheets/blankets, boxes of diapers, wipes, clothes, etc.

GAP is not responsible for unclaimed articles. Unclaimed items will be provided when a parent request an item.

If a parent accidentally takes an item or piece of clothing that belongs to another child, the item(s) should be cleaned and returned to the Center.

XI. DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE

At GAP, the purpose of discipline is to support the child to develop self-control and to become responsible for their own behavior. We do not use "time-out". We use non-punitive methods of discipline, which are directly related to the child's behavior and encourage the child's

participation. We ask the child to think about their behavior and to find more appropriate ways to remedy the situation.

Teachers work closely with parents to understand each child to determine which methods work best for their child. Teamwork with is very important. We are committed to helping children learn to express feelings appropriately, consider other children's feelings, and to negotiate their own conflicts.

GAP does not permit ANY FORM of corporal punishment or physical force. These discipline techniques are NOT permitted. A child is never to be deprived of food, water, a nap or rest, a comfort item from home, or their outside play time

XII. COMMUNICATION

A. Center Newsletters

GAP provides a quarterly newsletter to all parents. The newsletter includes, but is not limited to parenting tips, organizational and teacher accomplishments, classroom activities, parent and staff profiles, past and upcoming events and activities, and more.

B. Conferences

Three formal parent-teacher conferences are held each school year at the parent and teacher's mutual convenience to evaluate and assess your child's development and experiences. They are held usually in November, February, and May. Additional conferences may be arranged to address specific concerns.

C. Assessments

Assessments for speech, hearing, vision, and development may be completed by outside professionals in partnership with parents. Notices will always be given before a screening is done. You will be notified and referred for special needs services if a professional believes that your child requires further evaluation. GAP management is required to inform you, as the parents, if outside testing seems appropriate for your child.

XIII. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

A. Parents' Meetings and Workshops

- All meetings and workshops are open to all families.
- The meetings/workshops are generally held from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the Center. Childcare and a light meal are provided for the children. Light fare is provided for parents. Your participation and ideas are needed.
- Each family is required to attend two (2) Parent Training Workshops per school year. Topics are primarily geared toward helping parents better understand the needs of their preschool children.
- Presenters are your child's teachers, GAPS's management, and other content area specialists.
- There are approximately three (3) workshops offered throughout the school year so that all parents receive an ample opportunity to satisfy the mandatory training requirement.

B. Chaperones

While our field trips provide special adventures for the children, safety and proper supervision are of paramount importance. We ask that parents take turns chaperoning the children.

We will give a four (4) weeks' notice for trips so that parents can arrange their schedules. Unfortunately, we will have to cancel trips at the last minute if we do not have enough chaperones. When there are a limited number of spaces for parent chaperones, we will post a sign-up sheet. From this list we will ask parents who have not had a chance to chaperone a trip first.

When you chaperone field trips, you will assist the teachers by being responsible for other children beside your own. We rely on your additional eyes and ears during these times. Only parents (not babysitters or care givers) are allowed to chaperone or drive the children for field trips.

C. Visitors

We currently do not allow non-student/staff members in the building unless they are providing maintenance services or therapy and related services for children.

XIV. PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Should you have any questions or complaints about the care your child is receiving, please follow the procedures below:

1. Speak directly to the teacher.
2. If there is still a misunderstanding or complaint, speak to the lead teacher.
3. If the situation can't be resolved after speaking to the lead teacher, please contact the President & CEO at thardmon@gapccc.com.

XV. RELEASE OF CHILD TO INTOXICATED OR DRUGGED INDIVIDUAL

In order to protect the children from any potential danger that could arise because of a parent's or other authorized individual's condition, and to protect the Center against potential claims, it is the policy of the Center to take all reasonable steps to avoid releasing a child to a person in a drugged or intoxicated state. Accordingly, if, in the opinion of the senior staff member present at the Center, a parent or authorized person arrives in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will notify any other parent or guardian of the situation and, if necessary, offer to call another relative, friend or taxi (at the parent's expense) to drive the person and child home.

If the parent or guardian insists on driving the child home, the Center's staff member will notify the local police department. If police officers agree that the parent or authorized person is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, the parent or authorized person may be charged with public drunkenness and/or driving while under the influence of alcohol.

If a particular parent or guardian frequently arrives in an intoxicated or drugged state, the Center will notify the police department as well as DC Child and Family Services Agency.

XVI. PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE CASES

GAP employees are mandated reporters. By law, they are required to report evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to DC Child and Family Services Agency.

XVII. INDIVIDUALS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP CHILD; CHANGES IN CUSTODY

The Center can release a child only to the parents or legal guardian(s) of the child, or to individuals authorized to pick up the child whom the parent/guardian has listed on the Center's Release Authorization and Custody Information form. Staff may require any person who arrives to pick up a child to show identification.

All persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least eighteen (18) years old.

If only one parent has custody of the child and the other is not authorized to pick up the child, the parent must instruct the Center of this fact, and must provide the center's President & CEO with a certified copy of the Court Order confirming the change in custody. **This policy is essential in order to protect the Center against potential claims for releasing a child to an unauthorized person or for refusing to release a child to an authorized one.**

The Center staff will notify the parent immediately if an unauthorized person arrives at the Center to pick up a child.

~ End ~

NOTES

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