



PARENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

Daycare • Before & After School • Summer Camp • Drop-In Care

“More Than Childcare, It’s Love.”

36 W. Maple Avenue, Merchantville, NJ 08109

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Effective August 2026

Please keep this handbook for future reference.

WELCOME. Welcome to the Gotta Love Me Family

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for choosing Gotta Love Me Childcare (GLMC). We understand that selecting care for your child is an important decision. Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, structured, and joyful environment where children are known, supported, and encouraged to grow.

This handbook explains our programs, daily procedures, tuition expectations, health and safety practices, communication methods, and behavior guidelines. Please read it carefully and contact the Director whenever you need clarification.

Our Promise to Families

We will partner with families, communicate respectfully, protect each child's well-being, and create meaningful opportunities for learning, creativity, friendship, and confidence.

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Policy updates may be issued during the year. Written notices and signed program agreements become part of this handbook and should be kept with your copy.

1. About Gotta Love Me Childcare

Who we are, what we believe, and what families can expect

Who We Are

Gotta Love Me Childcare is owned and operated by Brenda G. Jones. GLMC provides daycare, school-age before and after care, summer camp, and limited drop-in care. Our programs are designed to help children grow academically, socially, and emotionally in a safe and caring environment.

Mission

Our mission is to nurture young minds with compassion and creativity while providing dependable care that supports each child's unique needs. We foster independence, confidence, positive relationships, academic growth, and social-emotional development.

Philosophy

We believe every child is a unique individual. Children thrive when they feel safe, respected, included, and loved. We partner with parents, schools, and the community to create experiences that encourage curiosity, responsibility, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

Program Goals

- Provide quality care for families before school, after school, during the day, and during summer sessions.
- Create a safe place where children feel welcomed, valued, and supported by qualified adults.
- Offer developmentally appropriate activities that support physical, emotional, cognitive, creative, and social growth.
- Encourage self-worth, independence, new skills, responsible decision-making, and positive peer relationships.
- Provide responsive customer service and clear enrollment, communication, and payment procedures.
- Complement the child's home and school experiences without attempting to replace either one.

Our Tagline

"More Than Childcare, It's Love." This statement reflects our commitment to care for the whole child and to treat each family with dignity and respect.

2. Programs, Ages, Locations & Hours

Program hours are firm unless a written schedule change is issued

Program	Ages	Hours	Location / Notes
Daycare / Preschool	Ages 2½–5	6:45 AM–5:30 PM	36 W. Maple Ave., Merchantville
Forest Hill Before Care	School-age	7:00 AM–8:50 AM	Forest Hill Family School
Forest Hill After Care	School-age	2:45 PM–5:30 PM	Forest Hill Family School
Summer Camp	Ages 4–13	7:30 AM–3:30 PM	Site announced for each session
Drop-In Care	Eligible ages by program	Confirmed in writing	Space and staffing permitting

Forest Hill before and after care follows the Forest Hill Family School calendar. The school-age program does not operate when the school is closed, unless GLMC provides written notice of a separate service option. Half-day, holiday, and special-event schedules will be announced in advance whenever possible.

Daycare / Preschool

Our Merchantville daycare serves children ages 2½ through 5. The program provides a structured daily routine with learning centers, circle time, literacy, math and science experiences, art, music, movement, social-emotional learning, outdoor or active play, meals, rest time, and supervised choice activities.

Before and After School Care

GLMC provides school-age care before and after the school day. Before care offers a calm start to the morning. After care may include a meal or snack, homework support, social-emotional learning, arts and crafts, group games, physical activity, enrichment, and age-appropriate independent time.

Summer Camp

Summer camp offers themed weeks, projects, games, enrichment, indoor and outdoor activities, and scheduled trips or special events. Families receive a separate camp calendar, trip information, supply list, and permission forms.

Drop-In Care

Drop-in care is available on a limited, space-available basis. It is intended for families who need care for specific dates or a short period. Approval depends on age-group space, staffing, completed records, and payment arrangements.

- Requested dates, the start date, and the final date of care must be confirmed in writing.
- A completed drop-in form, emergency contacts, authorized pickups, health information, and payment authorization are required before attendance.
- Drop-in care may be private pay or supported by an approved New Jersey child care voucher/CCAP agreement.
- Submitting a request does not guarantee a space. GLMC will confirm acceptance before the child attends.

3. Enrollment & Required Records

A child may attend only after required documents are complete and approved

Enrollment Requirements

- Completed enrollment or registration packet for the current program year.
- Current emergency contacts and authorized pickup information.
- Health records, immunization records, and any required universal health forms.
- Signed permission forms, emergency treatment authorization, and program agreements.
- Completed tuition and payment authorization documents.
- Physician-completed action plans for severe allergies, asthma, seizures, or other conditions that may require emergency care.
- Any custody order, restraining order, or court document that limits a person's access to the child.

Annual Renewal

A new enrollment packet is required for each school year or program year. Families must update GLMC immediately when contact, employment, medical, custody, schedule, or authorized-pickup information changes.

Toilet Training

Children enrolled in GLMC programs must be fully toilet trained before attendance. Children must be able to use the restroom and manage clothing and cleanup independently. Staff members do not provide toileting, wiping, or changing assistance. Families should send a labeled change of clothing for unexpected accidents.

Confidentiality

Child and family records are maintained in a secure manner and are shared only with authorized staff, licensing or government representatives, health professionals, or others as required by law or written parental authorization.

Space and Placement

Enrollment and continued placement depend on available space, staffing, age-group capacity, the child's needs, the family's account status, and the family's ability to follow GLMC policies. A previous enrollment does not guarantee a future space after withdrawal or termination.

4. Tuition, Billing, Subsidy & Fees

Families are responsible for keeping their accounts current

Weekly Billing

- Weekly invoices are generally sent electronically through Square on Friday for the upcoming week.
- Payment is due by Monday at 10:00 AM unless the signed tuition agreement states otherwise.
- A \$30 late-payment fee may be assessed when payment is received after the deadline.
- An additional \$20 late fee may be assessed for each billing week that an overdue balance remains unpaid.
- Accounts may not remain more than one week behind. A child may not attend until the past-due balance is paid in full and the account returns to a zero balance.
- Registration fees are nonrefundable. Tuition, registration, trip, activity, late, and other program fees are separate unless stated otherwise in writing.

Important

Tuition reserves your child's space and is due according to the signed agreement, including weeks with absences. There are no refunds for absences, suspensions, emergency closings, missed trips, or services canceled after an applicable cutoff date.

New Jersey Child Care Voucher / CCAP

GLMC accepts approved New Jersey child care vouchers or subsidy agreements. Families receiving assistance remain responsible for all copayments, fees, and balances not covered by the agency.

- The parent or guardian must complete, renew, and maintain all required agency documents and attendance records.
- GLMC must receive an approved provider agreement before subsidy billing can begin. Until approval is received, the family is responsible for the private-pay rate.
- Families must notify GLMC and the appropriate agency of schedule, employment, household, address, or eligibility changes.
- Copayments and uncovered balances are due on the same schedule as private-pay tuition unless the signed agreement states otherwise.
- Failure to meet subsidy attendance, documentation, or payment requirements may result in suspension of care and may affect assistance eligibility.

Other Charges

Trip fees, special activity fees, extended-hours fees, replacement charges, and other approved program costs will be communicated in advance and may be invoiced separately. Payment deadlines are firm because GLMC must reserve transportation, admission, staffing, food, and materials.

5. Attendance, Arrival & Authorized Release

Daily sign-in and sign-out procedures protect every child

Arrival and Departure

- An adult must escort the child to and from the designated program area.
- The child must be signed in and out using GLMC's designated paper or electronic process.
- Children may be released only to a parent, guardian, or person listed as an authorized pickup.
- Authorized adults must be prepared to show a government-issued photo ID.
- An emergency contact is not automatically an authorized pickup. Families must list the person in both places when appropriate.
- Children will not be released based only on a child's statement, an unverified phone call, or a message from an unauthorized person.

Adding or Changing an Authorized Pickup

Permanent changes must be submitted in writing by the parent or legal guardian. A same-day emergency change may be accepted by email, text, telephone, or the approved communication platform only after GLMC verifies the request. Messages are monitored during program hours.

Attendance and Absence Notification

Parents must notify GLMC when a child will be absent, leave school early, attend an after-school activity, or not report to after care as scheduled. For Forest Hill after care, notify both the school and GLMC early enough for the child to be dismissed to the correct location.

If a school-age child participates in a club, sport, tutoring session, or other activity during GLMC hours, written permission and release instructions are required in advance. Once a child has entered GLMC care, the child will not be released to another activity unless an authorized adult or approved school representative signs the child out.

Schedule Changes

Requests to change a regular attendance schedule should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Approval depends on space, staffing, transportation, school procedures, and account status. Families remain responsible for tuition under the current schedule until the change is approved in writing.

6. Late Pickup, Closings & Emergencies

Please plan to arrive early enough to complete sign-out by closing time

Late Pickup

\$25 Late Pickup Fee

A \$25 late pickup fee is assessed beginning at 5:31 PM and is due at the time of pickup. The fee applies each time a child is picked up after the program's closing time.

Late pickup is recorded using the program's official time. Repeated lateness may require a parent conference and may result in suspension or termination of care. Families should maintain multiple reliable emergency contacts and arrange backup transportation.

Child Not Picked Up

Staff will continue to supervise the child and will attempt to contact the parent, guardian, and authorized emergency pickups. If the child remains at the program one hour or more after closing, all release arrangements have failed, and staff cannot continue care at the site, GLMC may contact the New Jersey Department of Children and Families State Central Registry at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) for assistance, consistent with licensing requirements.

School Closings and Delayed Openings

- Forest Hill before care does not operate when the school announces a delayed opening.
- Forest Hill before and after care does not operate when the school is closed, unless GLMC announces a separate service option in writing.
- If school closes early because of weather, power loss, water loss, or another emergency, families must follow school dismissal instructions and GLMC notices.
- Daycare and summer camp closing decisions are communicated through the approved parent communication channels. Families must arrange prompt pickup when an early closing is announced.
- No refund or credit is issued for emergency closures unless GLMC provides a different written policy for a specific event.

Emergency Procedures

GLMC maintains emergency plans for evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, medical emergencies, severe weather, and reunification. During an emergency, staff will supervise children, provide first aid within their training, contact emergency services when needed, and communicate with families as soon as it is safe to do so.

7. Family Communication & Participation

Strong communication helps us care for children well

How We Communicate

GLMC communicates through email, telephone, text messages, ClassDojo or another approved parent platform, printed notices, and the website. Families are responsible for reviewing messages and keeping contact information current.

Please Speak With Us When...

- Something at home may affect your child's feelings, behavior, sleep, appetite, or ability to participate.
- Your child has a new health concern, allergy, medication, diagnosis, support plan, or service provider.
- You or your child has a concern about the program, another child, a staff interaction, or a procedure.
- You need clarification about attendance, tuition, discipline, transportation, meals, trips, or any written notice.
- There has been a change in custody, address, telephone number, employment, school schedule, or authorized pickups.

Family Participation

Families may be invited to special events, celebrations, volunteer opportunities, community projects, and enrichment activities. Donations of clean, safe craft materials may be accepted with staff approval. To protect privacy and maintain supervision, adults should not remain in classrooms for extended periods or interact with other children during routine drop-off and pickup unless invited by GLMC.

Concerns and Problem Solving

Please begin by speaking respectfully with the Site Manager or Director. GLMC will review the concern, gather relevant information, and communicate next steps. Abusive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or disruptive conduct toward children, families, staff, school personnel, or visitors is not permitted.

Communication Standard

Families and staff are expected to communicate calmly, privately, and respectfully. Concerns should not be discussed in front of children or posted publicly before GLMC has an opportunity to respond.

8. Your Child's Program Experience

Learning, relationships, routines, and supervised fun

A Balanced Day

Children experience a balance of child-initiated and staff-guided activities. Programs may include:

- Circle time, sharing, read-alouds, and literacy activities.
- Math, science, STEM, discovery, and problem-solving experiences.
- Arts and crafts, music, movement, dramatic play, and creative expression.
- Indoor and outdoor physical activity, group games, and supervised free play.
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), friendship skills, conflict resolution, and emotional check-ins.
- Homework support and quiet study time for school-age children. Staff encourage completion but do not guarantee that homework is checked or finished.
- Young Entrepreneur Academy (YEA) or other enrichment opportunities when offered.
- Theme days, community guests, field trips, celebrations, and special projects.

Meals and Snacks

GLMC provides meals and snacks according to the program schedule and posted menu. The Merchantville daycare generally provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. School-age and camp meal service varies by schedule and will be announced to families.

Food Allergies and Special Diets

Families must disclose all food allergies and dietary restrictions in writing. A physician's plan may be required for severe allergies. GLMC will make reasonable efforts to follow approved plans; however, families may be asked to provide clearly labeled substitute food when the posted menu cannot safely meet the child's needs.

Personal Belongings

Items should be labeled with the child's name. GLMC is not responsible for lost, damaged, traded, or stolen personal property. Electronics, cell phones, money, toys, and other items should remain at home unless requested for a specific activity. Program-specific clothing and supply requirements will be communicated in writing.

9. Health, Illness & Medication

The health and safety of children and staff are our first priority

When a Child Should Stay Home

A child should not attend when illness prevents comfortable participation, requires more care than staff can safely provide, or may expose others. A child may be excluded for the following symptoms or conditions:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher, especially when accompanied by behavior change or other symptoms.
- Repeated vomiting or acute diarrhea.
- Severe pain, unusual lethargy, difficulty breathing, rapid breathing, or severe coughing.
- Red eyes with discharge; yellow eyes or jaundiced skin.
- Untreated or draining skin lesions, unexplained rash with fever, or suspected contagious infection.
- Mouth sores with uncontrolled drooling, stiff neck, or other symptoms requiring medical evaluation.
- A communicable disease for which exclusion is recommended by a health care provider, local health department, school nurse, or current public-health guidance.

If symptoms begin during care, the child will be separated from the group within staff supervision, made comfortable, and released promptly to a parent or authorized pickup. GLMC may require written medical clearance before the child returns.

Communicable Disease

Families must notify GLMC when a child is diagnosed with or exposed to a communicable disease. When required, GLMC will notify potentially exposed families without identifying the affected child. Examples include chickenpox, measles, mumps, meningitis, pertussis, strep throat, influenza, COVID-19, impetigo, lice, scabies, ringworm, hepatitis A, salmonella, shigella, and other reportable or excludable illnesses.

Medication

Medication may be accepted only after required authorizations, health care provider instructions, original packaging, and staff review are complete. GLMC generally administers emergency or medically necessary medication, such as inhalers or epinephrine auto-injectors, when failure to provide the medication would jeopardize the child's health or prevent attendance. Two epinephrine auto-injectors must be provided when supplied as a two-device pack.

- Medication must be unexpired, labeled for the child, and stored according to written instructions.
- Parents are responsible for replacing medication after use or before expiration.
- Medication must be collected at the end of the program year or when care ends. Unclaimed medication may be discarded according to policy.
- Children may not carry or self-administer medication unless a written plan specifically authorizes it and GLMC approves the arrangement.

Medical Emergency

Staff will provide first aid within the scope of their training, call 911 when appropriate, contact the parent or guardian, and complete required incident documentation. If necessary, a staff member may accompany the child to the emergency facility until an authorized adult arrives.

10. Positive Guidance & Discipline

Our goal is to teach safe, respectful, and responsible behavior

GLMC uses positive, developmentally appropriate guidance. Staff set clear expectations, model respectful communication, acknowledge positive choices, redirect behavior, teach problem-solving, and use logical consequences. Discipline is never humiliating, frightening, physically harmful, or related to food, sleep, toileting accidents, or a child's identity.

Positive Guidance Strategies

- Consistent, realistic limits and simple rules.
- A structured environment and schedule designed for the children's ages and needs.
- Praise, encouragement, choices, redirection, and calm coaching.
- Brief "think about it" time or a supervised change of activity when a child needs space to regain control.
- Private problem-solving conversations and opportunities to repair harm.
- Family conferences and written action plans when behavior is repeated, serious, or connected to a child's support needs.

Zero Tolerance

Physical aggression, threats, bullying, racism, discriminatory conduct, weapons, and behavior that places a child or another person at immediate risk are not permitted. Serious incidents may cause GLMC to skip steps in the usual progression.

Typical Behavior Response Progression

- 1 General Reminder**
Staff remind the group of the rule or expected behavior.
- 2 Direct Reminder**
Staff speak directly to the child and state the expected behavior.
- 3 Redirection or Private Conversation**
The child is guided to another activity or speaks privately with staff about what happened and what to do next.
- 4 Temporary Removal From an Activity**
The child participates in a supervised individual activity or brief think-about-it time before rejoining the group.
- 5 Parent Communication and Plan**
The parent is informed verbally or in writing, and a conference or behavior plan may be required.

The Director may move directly to a later step when the behavior is dangerous, severely disruptive, threatening, repeated, or otherwise requires immediate action.

11. Suspension, Expulsion & Termination

Decisions are made case by case with safety as the primary concern

When Written Documentation May Be Issued

- Repeated disrespect, defiance, disruption, inappropriate language, or failure to follow program rules after staff intervention.
- Running from the group or leaving an assigned area without permission.
- Hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, fighting, bullying, intimidation, threats, destruction of property, or self-injurious behavior.
- Possessing or using an item as a weapon.
- Behavior that significantly interferes with the safe operation of the program.

Suspension

Suspension must be approved by the Director and may be used after repeated serious behavior, an immediate safety concern, assaultive conduct, threats, weapons, or behavior that cannot be safely managed in the group. A parent may be required to pick up the child immediately. There is no tuition refund for days missed due to suspension. A return conference or written plan may be required.

Reasons Care May Be Terminated

- Ongoing or severe behavior that places the child, other children, staff, or the program at risk.
- A serious threat or act of violence by a child or adult.
- Failure to pay tuition, copayments, or required fees.
- Repeated late pickup or attendance violations.
- Failure to provide required records or maintain an approved subsidy agreement.
- Failure to follow handbook procedures, signed agreements, or health and safety requirements.
- Abusive, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or disruptive conduct by a parent, guardian, authorized pickup, or family representative.
- A program's inability to safely meet a child's needs after reasonable planning and communication.

Notice and Parent Conference

Whenever appropriate, GLMC will communicate concerns, hold a conference, and develop a plan before termination. Immediate termination may occur when a child or adult creates an urgent safety risk, makes a serious threat, commits an act of violence, or engages in conduct that prevents safe program operation. Notice may be verbal initially and followed in writing.

Family-Initiated Withdrawal

A completed withdrawal form and at least two weeks' written notice are required. The family remains responsible for tuition and balances during the notice period. Telling a staff member verbally does not replace the written form. When care restarts, a new registration fee may apply, and the former space is not guaranteed.

12. Staff Qualifications & Supervision

Qualified adults support safe, consistent, and engaging programs

- Staff members meet the licensing or program requirements for their assigned positions.
- Required staff complete fingerprinting, criminal-history, and child-abuse-record background checks.
- Programs include staff trained in First Aid and CPR.
- Staff participate in orientation, professional development, and ongoing training.
- GLMC maintains staffing and supervision in accordance with applicable licensing requirements and strives for lower group ratios when possible.
- Children are supervised during arrival, departure, activities, meals, rest, outdoor play, transitions, trips, and emergency procedures.
- Volunteers and visitors are supervised and are not left alone with children unless all requirements for independent supervision have been met.

Parent Access and Licensing Information

Parents may ask the Director about program licensing, posted approvals, health and safety procedures, or how to review applicable New Jersey child care requirements. Family questions and concerns are welcomed and should be raised promptly so they can be addressed responsibly.

Shared Responsibility

Child safety is strongest when staff and families follow the same procedures every day: accurate records, timely communication, authorized release, current payments, health reporting, and respectful conduct.

13. Contact Information

Please save these details and keep your family contact information current

Merchantville Daycare / Office	Gotta Love Me Childcare 36 W. Maple Avenue Merchantville, NJ 08109
Forest Hill Program Site	Forest Hill Family School 1625 Wildwood Avenue Camden, NJ 08103
Telephone	856-444-0751 856-320-8890
Email	gottaloveme2024@outlook.com
Website	www.gottaloveme.com
Director / Owner	Brenda G. Jones
Regular Communication	Email, telephone, text, ClassDojo or another approved parent platform

Office Communication

Messages are reviewed during program and office hours. For urgent same-day attendance or pickup changes, call the program and use the approved parent communication method. Do not rely on email alone for an emergency.

Emergency Contacts

Call 911 for an immediate emergency. New Jersey Child Abuse/Neglect State Central Registry: 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873).

Thank You

We appreciate the trust you place in Gotta Love Me Childcare. We look forward to partnering with your family and helping your child learn, grow, and thrive.

APPENDIX A. Withdrawal / Termination of Care Form

*Submit this form to the Director at least two weeks before
the final date of care*

Program Site:

Today's Date:

Parent/Guardian:

Child/Children:

Final Date of Care:

Program(s) to End

- ☐ Daycare / Preschool
- ☐ Before School Care
- ☐ After School Care
- ☐ Summer Camp
- ☐ Drop-In Care

Reason for Withdrawal

Please Note

Two weeks' written notice is required. The account remains responsible for tuition and other balances during the notice period. Subsidy families must also follow their agency's termination or provider-change procedures. A future space is not guaranteed.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

GLMC Received By:

Effective Date:

- ☐ Please email me written confirmation when the withdrawal is processed.



APPENDIX B. Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

Return one signed copy to Gotta Love Me Childcare

I acknowledge that I received the Gotta Love Me Childcare Parent & Family Handbook, effective August 2026. I understand that the handbook explains important policies and procedures for daycare, before and after school care, summer camp, and drop-in care.

- ☐ I have read or will read the handbook and will ask the Director about anything I do not understand.
- ☐ I understand the program hours and the \$25 late pickup fee due at the time of pickup beginning at 5:31 PM.
- ☐ I understand the tuition, payment, subsidy, attendance, authorized-pickup, illness, behavior, and withdrawal requirements.
- ☐ I agree to keep my contact, health, custody, schedule, and authorized-pickup information current.
- ☐ I understand that GLMC may issue written policy updates and that those notices become part of the handbook.
- ☐ I understand that failure to follow handbook policies or signed agreements may result in fees, suspension, or termination of care.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Child/Children:

Program/Site:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

GLMC Representative:

Date Received:

WELCOME TO THE GOTTA LOVE ME FAMILY!

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