

The Imagination Station



11 Taylor Avenue
Pearisburg, Virginia 24134

(540) 921-4191

<http://www.gototheimaginationstation.com>

Parent Handbook

"Where imagination takes place."

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Welcome to The Imagination Station!

Dear Parents,

The staff would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family. We are pleased that you have chosen our Center to be a part of your child's early development. As we become a part of your family, it is our desire to help you feel comfortable and secure while your child is in our care.

We have an open-door policy and welcome a visit at any time. After you spend some time here, you will understand the value we place on early education.

We eagerly look forward to serving you. If there is anything that we can do to assist in a happy transition for you and your child, please let us know!

This handbook will give you vital information about our program and policies. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask any questions you have.

The staff looks forward to a positive and successful relationship.

Sincerely yours,

Sheila

Sheila Morrison
Director/Owner

The Imagination Station Philosophy

Our goal is for your child to have wonderful memories of his/her preschool years. In order to make this possible we will do the following:

- 1) Fill their lives with loving, understanding adults who will nurture and enable them to fulfill their greatest potential!
- 2) Help them develop friendships that will continue through their school-age years and beyond!
- 3) Help them gain the knowledge necessary to make them successful when they step into the world of public school.
- 4) Enable parents to be a part of the experience, and "bridge the gap between home and school."

It is our mission to accept and love every child in our care. The Imagination Station does not discriminate based on a child's race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, sex or sexual orientation.

Admission Policy

Parents must tour our facility and complete a parent packet. You must have the following completed and turned in before your child can start care:

- 1) Application
- 2) Physical and Immunization Records
- 3) Copy of his/her birth certificate
- 4) Registration fee of \$50 and Annual Supply fee of \$50

While your child is enrolled at The Imagination Station, it is your responsibility to update information such as addresses, phone numbers, change of employment and immunizations.

Center Operating Hours

6:15 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

We realize that you may encounter difficult situations from time to time. If you feel that you are not going to be able to pick up your children on time, you need to contact the Center to make us aware of the situation. You must also contact someone else to pick up your child in a timely manner. There will be a \$2.00 charge for each minute after 6:00 you are late per child. If we have not heard from you, and are unable to contact anyone to pick up the child by 6:30 p.m., we will notify the proper authorities. If you are continually late, you will need to find alternative care that can accommodate your work hours.

Holiday Closings

The Center will be closed on the following days. Please realize that these are paid holidays for our staff, therefore, your weekly fees are not reduced for the closing.

New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
Easter/Good Friday
Memorial Day
July 4th/Independence Day

Labor Day
Thanksgiving & Black Friday
Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
Possible Staff Training Day(s)

If the holiday(s) fall on a weekend, we will inform you well in advance as to which day(s) we will be closed.

Payment Policy

For your convenience, we accept the following methods of payment for your child care fees: Cash, Check, Debit/Credit Card, Aid for Dependent Children (ADC), Fee Supplemental System Money, and Certified Checks. Rates are enclosed in your parent packet.

Here are answers to some commonly asked questions about how our budget works:

1) **Do I pay when my child misses a day?**

Yes, in order for our budget to run consistently, parents are required to pay a set rate. Our budget is based on a particular number of spaces and our Center's expenses are fixed, even when a child is absent.

2) **When are my childcare fees due?**

Payments are due on Tuesday of each week unless you have made arrangements to pay bi-weekly or ahead for the entire month. (There is a reduced rate if you pay by the month.)

3) **When are my childcare fees reduced?**

After you have been enrolled in The Imagination Station for a one consecutive year you are entitled to one free week per year. Your child cannot be in attendance during that week. A form must be completed two weeks in advance to be approved.

First Day Checklist

In your parent packet we enclosed a "First Day Checklist" to help you make a happy transition! Please review this form and allow your child to assist you in this process. Talk to your child about what will happen when they get to the center, when you will say goodbye, and when you will return. This will help make the transition smooth.

Preschoolers can bring child-sized blankets. Infants and toddlers may have a thin blanket, but may not have filled comforters or pillows.

Dress Code

Come prepared to play. Wearing the right kind of clothes can help your child enjoy his/her day. Comfortable shoes, shirts and pants are great. If you would like for your child to be changed at the end of the day, please make your child's teacher aware of this request (if you are going somewhere special, and have a certain outfit in mind, etc.). You may need to leave several sets of

clothes at the center for these times. If your child is potty-training, you will want to make sure he/she has several changes of clothes at all times. **Make sure all clothing items are labeled.**

All children in the pre-school area must have at least one change of clothes to keep in their cubbies at all times. Please check your child's cubby to make sure they have clothes for the appropriate season. We do not keep extra clothes at the center. If your child needs an extra outfit and he/she does not have one here, we will need to call you to bring him/her clothes.

Good Mornings & Goodbyes

As your child begins his/her transition to our center, there may be times of objection. This is heartbreaking to a parent. We assure you this is perfectly normal and may occur at different stages as they progress through our program. The staff will welcome each child warmly and encourage activities that may help ease the separation. Here are a few suggestions to prepare you for this separation:

- 1) On the way to the center, explain to your child the process you will go through when you arrive. Example: Mommy will give you a hug and kiss, and then will go to work. You will be staying with your class to play and learn with your friends.
- 2) After your hug and kiss, leave quickly and calmly. Your child needs to see that you are excited about him/her being in school. They will find assurance in the confidence they see in you. If your child is upset when you are leaving, you may want to linger in the hallway outside of your child's view to make sure he/she is okay before you need to leave.
- 3) If your child has an extremely hard time separating from you (for example, screaming and kicking, etc.) be assured our staff will comfort and love your child until he/she calms down. We are experts at distraction!
- 4) Feel free to call the center after you arrive at work so that you can make sure that the transition went well after your departure. We want your work day to be worry free. We have an open door policy—custodial parents are admitted to the center at any time during the day.

For your child's protection:

- 1) Parents are responsible for supervision of their child(ren) until they personally deliver their child to the staff. This includes school-aged children, please inform anyone who will be assisting in pickup or drop off of this center policy. Children are to be under parent supervision unless signed into center care through classroom forms.
- 2) Children will not be allowed to leave the center with anyone that is not listed on their application, unless a custodial guardian has notified the administration and staff. Anyone picking up your child will be required to have a picture I.D.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken daily by your child's teacher. We need for each parent to inform us by 9:00 a.m. if your child will not be in attendance for the day. If we have not heard from you or been previously made aware of your child being out, we will contact you by phone to ensure that the child is where they need to be. Please help us by letting us know when your child will be out or calling us by 9:00 a.m. if your child will be coming in later, so we can add them to our lunch count. If we do not hear from you we will contact you at home, cell or work to ensure their safety.

Toy Policy

It is distressing when a child loses a toy, or a favorite toy gets broken. The teachers have set aside certain days for "show and learn." We encourage children to bring something in that would enhance the theme we are studying for the week. We discourage toys that promote violence such as guns or knives.

Accident Policy

If your child is involved in a minor accident/injury requiring a Band-Aid or ice pack, our policy is to fill out an "accident report." The report will give information as to the circumstances around the accident. You will need to sign the accident form, and we will keep it on file. Copies can be given upon request. If your child has suffered a head injury, you will be notified by phone.

In the event of a serious injury, you will be contacted immediately so that you can advise how you would prefer your child be transported to the local hospital of your choice. In case of accidents at the center requiring medical attention, the center carries a supplemental insurance policy. This covers every child that is enrolled. Our policy covers only after the parent's insurance has been submitted. If the parent does not have any type of insurance, our policy will cover the entire amount.

Behavior Management

Our staff remains alert to the total situation in the classroom at all times. We use a proactive approach and encourage the children to make good choices and use their words to manage conflict. We do our best to redirect negative behavior. All discipline will be fair and consistent. We will consider the child's age and level of understanding before deciding on a disciplinary action. If the child needs to be disciplined, the child is removed from the group or activity for a set amount of time. (Approximately 1 minute per each year of the child's age.) This is called "time-out." We explain to the child why he/she is sitting in "time-out."

If a child requires assistance beyond time-out, we will temporarily remove him/her from the classroom. If the behavior continues to be disruptive, we will call a parent conference, and will work with you to determine a plan for improvement.

If every attempt fails and the child is causing detrimental harm to the children, and/or staff in the classroom, we reserve the right to take steps towards dismissing the child. First, the child will

be put on a two week probation period. We will notify the parent(s) of this probationary period in writing. If the behavior continues during those two weeks, it will call for immediate dismissal and the parent must come pick up the child immediately. (Behaviors that could result in dismissal include, but are not limited to: Biting, temper tantrums, hitting and/or kicking other children or teachers, etc.)

We **do not discipline** in the following ways: physical punishment, withholding food or water, taking away nap time or outside time. We never punish for potty accidents. We never restrain a child or force a child to assume an uncomfortable position. We never isolate a child in a confined space.

Health and Medication

Please do not store medication in diaper bags or other belongings that other children could possibly have access to during the day. This could result in medication being ingested by another child, spilled, or lost. Please keep all medications at home.

As a policy we do not administer medication except for EpiPens for children with severe allergic reactions. If your child/children require the potential use of an EpiPen, please let our Director know so we can get more information about their allergy/allergies and we can set up an allergy plan along with the necessary medication consent forms.

Diaper Cream/Sunscreen

We require diaper cream and sunscreen to be labeled with the child's name and we must have an authorization form filled out before we can apply it to the child. Each diaper cream authorization is valid for 10 days. If your child still requires the cream after that period of time, you will need to fill out a new form. Please fill out forms completely...the staff are not allowed to fill in the information for you.

Lice

In group care, there is a possibility of a case of lice from time to time, due to the large number of children that share the same space day after day. If we send your child home due to lice, you will need to treat your child immediately and bring the top of the treatment box back to school the next day. We have a no nit policy, which means that your child must be nit free before they can return to care. *A staff member will need to check your child's hair before you may leave them.* We understand that this can be very upsetting to the child, as well as the parent. We will do everything we can to make this process as smooth as possible. If you require further information about lice or how to get rid of it, please stop by the office and we can give you some tips and suggestions that can help the process seem less scary.

Infection Control

The Imagination Station makes it a priority to strive daily for a healthy environment. Our staff is trained to assess children when they seem under the weather, and take proper precautions to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Unfortunately, we may have to send your child home because of an illness.

The following symptoms are adequate causes to send your child home:

- 1) A fever higher than 100.4 degrees
- 2) Vomiting
- 3) Diarrhea (2 or more loose BM's in 30 minutes)
- 4) Other Contagious illnesses (unexplained rash, drainage from the eyes, etc.)

You will receive an illness report when you pick your child up that will indicate the symptoms we observed, and when your child can return to care. Your child must be fever free for at least 24 hours (without the help of fever reducers) before he/she can return to care. Even as careful as we are to assess your child's well-being, you may choose to take him/her to a physician. We will accept a physician's recommendation for your child's return to care. Please ask for a written recommendation that we can keep on file. We appreciate your assistance in helping us prevent the spread of illnesses and communicable disease.

We ask that you inform the center within 24 hours or the next business day if *anyone* in your household develops symptoms of a communicable disease.

Meals

There are three meals provided during the day: Breakfast (8:30 a.m.), Lunch (11:00 a.m.) and Afternoon snack (3:00 p.m.). Menus are dated and posted in each classroom. We strive to provide a quality, balanced menu that follows USDA standards.

Food Policy

Children who are in the Toddler through Preschool rooms are not allowed to bring food or drink into the center. This causes much distress to other children, and we run the risk of a child with a food allergy consuming something that they may be allergic to. **School age children are allowed to pack lunch (not breakfast or snack) on days they are here instead of public school.**

We enjoy celebrations, whether they be birthdays or holidays. Please follow the guidelines outlined below for foods that you may bring in:

- 1) Food must be store in containers with lids or properly covered.
- 2) If food is perishable ask a teacher to place in the refrigerator upon arrival.
- 3) Consult the Lead Teacher about any classroom food allergies.

CACFP Approved Meals

The Imagination Station is approved by CACFP to provide CACFP approved meals for every child without regard to sex, race, ethnic and national origin, age, or sexual orientation. When your child begins daycare, you will be provided CACFP forms to fill out. If you have any questions, please come by the office.

Infant food and formula brought from home needs to be labeled. Baby food that has been opened must be sent home the same day it is used or discarded.

Emergency Management Plan

In the event of an emergency, the following procedures will be put into action:
Emergency management will be instructed through Giles County Emergency Service.

Public announcements will be made through WSLC Channel 10 News. Parents will be contacted by phone in the event of the Center closing or in the event of an evacuation procedure. In the event of an emergency, all center phone lines will be forwarded to Sheila Morrison's (Director) cell phone number to keep communication lines open.

The Imagination Station staff will take care of the essential documents and supplies needed for each age group.

We will make every effort to ensure the safety and protection of each child in our care under any emergency situation.

Transportation

The Imagination Station provides safe transportation to area schools for our before and after school program. Each child is required to follow the rules of wearing a seatbelt and sitting on their bottoms. Car seats will be provided by the center or the parent for children less than 8 years of age. Arms, legs, and hands are not to be outside the van at any time. We follow the rules of driving, as well as "Transportation of Children" laws.

- 1) Before moving, the doors are closed properly and seatbelts are checked.
- 2) There shall be at least one staff member present if there are any children in the van.
- 3) A list of names of children being transported on any given trip shall be kept in the van.
- 4) When entering/exiting the van, children must enter/exit from the curbside of the van or in a protected parking area or driveway.
- 5) When crossing the street, we will be sure that all children cross from corners, crosswalks or designated safe crossing points.
- 6) There shall be at least one staff member trained in first aid and procedures for vehicle breakdown present on any given field trip. They will contact the center immediately if there are any problems on the trip.
- 7) A complete first aid kit will be kept in the van at all times.

Field Trips:

At least 24-hours' notice will be given prior to a field trip. Parental permission must be secured before we can allow a child to leave the center. Parents are given the opportunity to withdraw their child from a field trip.

Before leaving for the field trip, a schedule of events and locations will be posted in the center. Should any field trip encompass lunch or snack time, the center will provide food and water. If perishable food is taken on the field trip, it will be stored in an insulated container with ice packs. A staff member will contact the center via cellular phone upon arrival and departure. A complete roll will be taken before departure from the center, upon arrival at the site, before departure from the site, and upon arrival at the center. In the event that a child is missing, the center will be contacted immediately, as well as the proper authorities.

Class Advancement

There are several factors we consider before advancing a child to the next class:

- 1) Age
- 2) Developmental Readiness
- 3) Potty training
- 4) Available space in the next classroom

Parents are given prior notice to the child's advancement. We begin the process with visiting the classroom, and progress to full days in the new classroom. Each child is different, and each has his/her own adjustment period. We will make sure we take all these factors into consideration when moving a child to another classroom.

Outdoor Policy

There will be time set aside each morning and afternoon for outside play. We feel this is very important to your child's healthy development. The only time we do not have outside play is in the case of inclement weather (rainy, too windy, air quality, or the temperature and/or wind chill is below 35 degrees.) Please make sure you send the appropriate clothing to suit the weather.

Child Abuse

If you suspect abuse to your child, tell the Director immediately. We will file the proper papers and contact social services within 24 hours. As childcare providers, we are required to look for signs of abuse and report them. The children and their safety is our first priority.

Handling Parent Concerns and Policy Changes

We understand that each child is an individual and may go through many stages as they develop. We share your excitement as we master their milestones and your concern when they struggle to correct negative behavior. We strive to prevent, intervene or halt situations that could cause child harm. Should a behavioral issue arise, we have some set guidelines to help guide the issue to resolution:

- 1) The teacher will talk with the child and try to give positive choices to correct the behavior.
- 2) If the issue persists, we will ask for a parent conference to enlist your help in finding a solution. A plan of action will be set that each party agrees upon.

- 3) After a predetermined amount of time, if we cannot find resolution with the behavior issue we reserve the right to ask the family to choose alternative care that may better suit the needs of their child. We have to take into consideration the safety of each child enrolled in our facility. We realize children can express negative behavior from time to time. It is our combined responsibility to ensure that the best possible guidance is provided. We strive to boost positive self-esteem in all circumstances. Our desire is for you and your child to have a pleasurable experience with New Beginnings.

Social Media Interaction between The Imagination Station and Parents

We realize that problems or concerns arise and it would seem to be easier to message on Facebook however, we have learned that this may cause some miscommunication between the Center and parents. If you message any concerns on Facebook, they will not be responded to. Please call the Center to report any problems or concerns and we will be happy to help with this matter.

Termination of our Relationship

Our goal is to provide the best possible childcare available. We realize, however, that there may be times children will need to be withdrawn from our program. If at any time you find it necessary to terminate your relationship with us, for any reason, we require a two-week notice prior to withdrawal of your child. If you choose not to leave your child in our care during that time, you can pay the required two-week tuition upon your last day at the Center.

Payments are due by every Tuesday of the week. If you pay after Tuesday you could be subject to a 10% penalty. You can also pay monthly. If you pay by the 5th of every month, you can take 2% off your monthly tuition bill.

If you get behind on your weekly payments this could and will be reason for your child to be asked to not attend The Imagination Station. You will be given opportunity to pay what you owe but if you do not, The Imagination Station has the right to take this to court to obtain payment. You will be charged any court fees.

Important Policy Reminders

1. **Daily Attendance**

We require parents to call before 9:00 a.m. each day if your child will not be attending The Imagination Station. Please inform us the day before if your child will be out for the day. If we have not heard from you by 9:00 a.m., we will take measures to reach you at home, cell or work numbers to provide an extra safety measure and to ensure accurate daily attendance and meal count.

2. **Medication & Health**

At this time, we do not administer any medications.

Please notify center within 24 hours if anyone in your household develops a communicable disease.

3. Car Seats

Each child under the age of 8 years of age is required to arrive and depart in a car seat. If we see that a child is not placed in a car seat, we will request that you make arrangements to obtain a car seat for transportation of the child. We do have a few loaner car seats in case of an emergency that can be borrowed with our "Car Seat Loan Form" completed.

4. Hours of Operations:

Hours of operation: Monday-Friday; 6:15 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

We ask that you do not drop your child(ren) off before 6:15 a.m. In addition, children are expected to be picked up no later than 6:00 p.m. If you fail to pick your child up on time, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute per child for each minute that you are past 6:00 p.m. If you are past 6:30 p.m., we will contact the local authorities. If this becomes a continual issue, we will request that you find alternative care.

5. Photograph Release:

At times there may be photographs taken of the activities we have planned. The photographs may be used to promote the Center and/or to share with the community. By signing this form you give your consent to have your child's photo included.

Parent Agreement

We have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in The Imagination Station Parent Handbook. We agree to abide by these policies and procedures and give a two-week notice if we choose to end our relationship with The Imagination Station.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Director's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____