

Parent Handbook

WELCOME TO
THE OWL'S NEST CHILD CARE



***"Tell me and I forget. Teach me
and I remember. Involve me and
I learn."***

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**Administrator
Level One**

Changes in the fees, procedures, and policies stated in this handbook are subject to be changed at the discretion of the Director.



Mission

Our mission is to be a child-focused early learning center that helps children to develop socially, physically, emotionally, and cognitively under the care and guidance of highly trained professionals and within a child-friendly environment. The child centered approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centered approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

Philosophy

It is our philosophy that children are encouraged to learn and grow by providing a foundation of developmentally appropriate experiences. This foundation enables all children to succeed in a safe and fostering environment.

We believe children learn best through meaningful play with both teacher and child directed activities. Our child centered program reflects the combination of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-help and artistic areas for the total development of each child. Meaningful play encourages curiosity, discovery and problem solving which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image. Teacher directed activities allows the teacher to bring new ideas, concepts, and learning material for the child to explore and further their learning and experiences.

We believe that each child is a unique individual and all children can and want to learn. Our program provides inclusive settings for children with varied abilities, interests, needs, and learning styles.

We recognize that parents are the child's first teachers. Children learn best when parents are involved in their educational program. The primary bridge between home and school is the involvement of family and community.

The statement and beliefs in this philosophy mirror the position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Enrollment and Tuition

Children between the ages 6 weeks and twelve years are eligible for enrollment at The Owl's Nest Child Care. Children may attend the center for a 9-hour block between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. *Overtime fees will apply for additional hours needed

Documents to be completed and returned before enrollment are:

- Contract for Care
- Health Inventory
- Blood Lead Testing
- Immunization Record
- Discipline Policy
- Emergency Contact Form
- Pet Policy
- Deposit for Care/Holding Fee Form
- All About Me Form
- Medication Administration (if applicable)
- Screen Time Policy
- Property Easement

A registration fee of \$150 is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a one-time, nonrefundable charge. If a child is withdrawn then re-enrolls at a later date, a second enrollment fee will be required.

A deposit of \$300 is required for each child except infants whose deposit is \$350, not including school-age children enrolled in the before and after care program. A deposit is held and applied to the final payment due before a child exits care except those exiting care between June 1st and August 31st. See section "Withdrawal and Dismissals and page 6 "Holidays and Closures."

Annual Supply Fee of \$100 will be billed and due on July 1st of every year, regardless of any termination notice or date.

Tuition is due weekly, every Thursday by 1 p.m. Payments made after 1 p.m. will incur an initial late fee of \$25 the day of and \$10/day every additional day thereafter. Payments not received by Monday morning will result in discontinued care until all fees are paid and up to date. If an on-time electronic payment fails days later due to account processing, late fees will be charged from the date the payment was due. Returned payments from checking accounts will require the parent pay in cash before a child is accepted into care. Late fees will accrue until full payment is received.

Tuition is based on 52 weeks, except for our before and after care program. Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week including a holiday. After extensive research, we have found our policy to be consistent with other schools and child day care centers. Because our costs remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week in order to maintain our quality of care.

Before and After Care Program Fees

Before and after care fees are monthly starting in August with the final payment being in May. The registration/start-up fee of \$125 is applied to each child enrolling. Once enrolled, you have committed to the 9-month program and agree to the 9 monthly payments. The program is billed monthly and not prorated if starting late in the school year. An early exit fee will apply for leaving the program early. This fee is \$500 or the balance left at the time of departure, whichever is less. This program does not cover days school is closed. You may request availability for a full day when school is closed, however it is not guaranteed. An additional per day fee of \$40 will apply for school-age care on school closure days.

Birthday Celebrations

Parents are welcome to send in a treat to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Some classrooms have strict allergy guidelines. Inform your child's teacher in advance about what kind of treat you plan on bringing.

Withdrawal and Dismissal

The first TEN DAYS of enrollment in The Owls Nest is considered a "trial period." Child care may be terminated by either the Center or the Parent(s) during this trial period without advance notice. After the trial period has passed, child care may be terminated (*with limitations below) by the Center or the Parent(s) only by providing the other party with FOUR WEEKS advance written notice per child. If the Parent(s) fails to provide the advance written notice, the Parent(s) agrees to pay the regular scheduled fees for the FOUR WEEKS (per child), during which the Center had no notice of such termination. All tuition received in advance is you, the payee, acknowledging and accepting care for the term the advance payment applies. If for any reason you choose to terminate care after this payment NO REFUNDS will be given as future materials, supplies and expenses have been paid for that child(ren).

*Termination dates between June 1st and August 31st will incur an additional charge equal to the deposit. Between June 1st and August 31st, staff are paid for vacation time for 1 week. During this time, those who leave the program before the approved/contracted time off they agreed to, will be charged for their final week of care, thus forfeiting their deposit.

The Owls Nest retains the right to terminate this Contract without notice for the following reasons:

- The child(ren)'s behavior is destructive, uncontrollable, violent, or threatening to the other children, families or staff at the care facility. This determination is made in the sole discretion of the Director.
- A Parent's behavior is threatening or abusive to the other children or providers at the care facility.
- Child care fees are 3 DAYS or more delinquent.
- The child(ren) is absent for 3 DAYS or more without reasonable explanation or payment from the Parent(s).
- Administration of fever reducing medication before care without informing the staff at the time of arrival.
- Continued actions against our facility's policies.
- Expired medical forms or immunizations schedules that go against state regulations or center policies.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is our complete child care operating platform in which we track your child's day, incident reports, notes, photos, updates, announcements, and invoicing. Brightwheel is the parent's responsibility to monitor for all communication and payments. At the time of enrollment, you will receive a link to sign up and connect to your child's account.

Communication

Proper communication between our parents and the teachers/staff is extremely important. Teachers will be updating information on a regular basis through Brightwheel. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher-even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the center director. Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. We must be informed, in writing, regarding any changes in the person picking up your child. You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick-up your child on the Emergency Form. A staff member must be informed of any of the following changes:

- address and/or phone numbers, or e-mail address •
- parent/guardian employment
- health/immunization up-dates or other pertinent information related to your child

In addition, if you are a family that uses English as a second language, we will make an effort to communicate to you in your chosen language if requested.

Confidentiality

Each family has the right to confidentiality. The Owl's Nest keeps certain information on file regarding children and families that may be considered personal in nature. We maintain this information in confidence and do not discuss or release it to persons outside of staff members, unless written permission has been obtained from the parent(s).

Drop-off and Pick-up Policies

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the center. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for the teacher to keep a watchful eye on all the children in his or her care. You are welcome to stay for a short while and assist your child through this transition. Simply notify the classroom teacher when you are ready to leave and the teacher will assist.

Only the individuals listed on the Emergency Form, or a Brightwheel request from the parent, will be allowed to leave with a child. The staff is expected to request a picture I.D. from any unfamiliar person (including grandparents).

If there is any concern of safety, health or wellbeing, all staff reserves the right to deny a person's request to pick-up a child.

Your child's classroom teacher may be available at pick-up time for short questions. For longer discussions or concerns please schedule an appointment.

Parents are expected to assume full responsibility of their child once they enter the classroom.

Children are expected to be picked-up at the agreed upon daily time. The parent or guardian of a child not picked-up until after the agreed time, or past closing, will be charged \$25 then \$1 per minute thereafter.

Families who pick up late more than 3x, in a one-year period, will pay \$5 per minute after closing. All late fees are to be paid the following day before a child is admitted into care. This fee applies per family. Excessive abuse of late pickup times can result in disenrollment.

Vehicles are not to be left running during drop off and pick up times. In cases of extreme cold or heat please make your transitions brief so the vehicle is not left unattended for a long period of time.

NEVER leave a child in an idling vehicle unattended.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Teachers are trained on what to watch for and how to properly report it. If you have a concern of abuse or neglect please speak to the first available staff member.

Holidays and Closures

Parent conferences are twice a year in February and August. Conference days will be closed to students and time blocks will be sent out for parents to choose a time to communicate with the teacher.

The Owl's Nest provides a calendar for the year with all scheduled breaks and holidays for parents. Parents are to monitor the Brightwheel calendar and refer to the calendar provided for the year. Updates happen during the year as well, when a previously scheduled closure is changed, all parents will be notified of the change, and all calendars will be updated for future reference.

The Owl's Nest's facility will be closed for ONE week, in which the facility and staff will use as vacation time, appointments, professional development, or any purpose of their choosing. Tuition is due during the closure, as this time off has been calculated into the total yearly tuition amount. Ample time will be given to make arrangements for care and alternate care recommendations can be provided if requested. Between June 1st and August 31st, staff are paid for vacation time for 1 week. During this time, those who leave the program before the approved/contracted time off they agreed to, will be charged for their final week of care, thus forfeiting their deposit.

In-service Days

It is important for the staff to have time to prepare lessons, gather information from a guest speaker, or attend a conference. To accomplish this, we include four in-service days per year. Dates will be confirmed with ample advanced notice when conferences and locations are announced from local and national agencies. The center will be closed to children.

Unexpected Closings

The Owl's Nest will be open on public school "snow days" unless notified otherwise on Brightwheel. In the event our center is forced to close due to a situation beyond our control (e.g., snow, ice storm, electrical outage, no water service). Every attempt will be made to inform parents of an emergency closing. In cases where we must close temporarily, and it is beyond our control, tuition is still due. We will make every effort to pro-rate, discount, or credit accounts as necessary based on the nature of the event and duration of closure.

Treasures and Possessions

Sometimes children need to bring special toys or newfound treasures to bridge home and school together. On these occasions we will work with you and your child to make it a positive sharing experience. Past experience has shown that often toys from home create problems at school. We encourage you to keep personal belongings and toys at home unless the teacher has scheduled a "show-n'- tell" day. Staff will not be responsible for any lost, damaged, or broken items.

Items not allowed: toy guns, gum, money, candy, beaded jewelry, small hair clips/clamps that pose a choking risk.

Hygiene and Clothing

The Owl's Nest expects all children to be clean and in clean clothing that is in good condition. Clothing from the previous day of care or pajamas will not be acceptable. Clothing must be appropriate for the weather and temperatures outside so that outdoor play is not harmful to their health. Shoes are required and if your child does not have shoes they will not be accepted into care.

Creative or outdoor play, and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that 2 extra sets of clothing always kept at the center. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name and placed in a labeled plastic bag. Clothing should include underwear, socks, pants, and shirt. If soiled clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set of clothes the next morning.

Licensing requires that children be taken outdoors each day. Children should be dressed accordingly: light jacket, cap, rain boots (for damp days) in fall and spring; heavy winter jacket, mittens, scarf, hat, and snow boots in winter. An extra sweater or sweatshirt at school is recommended for sudden changes in temperature. All clothing, including coats and boots, must be labeled clearly with your child's name.

Diapers & Toilet Training

Parents supply all diapers for their child(ren). We require all families with children in diapers to provide 3 packs of wipes (56 count or more) at the beginning of each month. Potty training begins at home. We will only assist in potty training once your child has been training at home for 3 or more days. Assistance will only continue if potty training is followed through at home. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful. We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage-- especially in a hurry! While toilet training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and/or outer clothing. Pull-ups are not acceptable for potty training in the center and are NOT recommended as diapers.

A potty-trained child is a child who is:

1. Able to tell the teacher they need to go BEFORE they go and not be asked to go.
2. Able to pull down clothing to go potty and get them back up with minimal assistance.
3. Able to wipe after urination, push down their penis to keep pee inside the toilet.
4. Able to get on and off the potty themselves.
5. Able to wash and dry hands.
6. Able to postpone going if the bathroom is in use or we are away from a bathroom (outside).
7. Able to wear underwear during nap. A child must be dry for ONE MONTH before a pull-up/diaper will not be required. If the child has more than 1 accident in a month during nap time, we will start the process over again.

Bodies and Boundaries

There is a natural curiosity among children with regards to their bodies. When situations arise where we have to speak to children about body parts, we use the anatomically correct terms. We also teach children that every person has boundaries and that our bodies are private and should be respected. Parents will be notified if situations occur in the classroom that directly affects their child(ren).

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, publicity materials, and/or educational trainings. Your permission for photographs of your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement. Your child's photo will also be displayed in their classroom's Brightwheel.

Meals, Snacks and Food Allergies

The Owl's Nest provides breakfast, AM snack, Lunch, and a PM snack. Our center participates in the CACFP program to ensure the meals and snacks provided are of high quality, healthy, well-rounded nutrition. A menu will be posted every week in the classroom. Food allergies may limit some of the items served, as we are a group setting, however we make alternative routes to ensure the proper nutrition of every meal is met.

Wellness Policy

An educational program is a shared program in which more than 1 child or 1 family attend. Due to the rate of infection spreading between children, this program, like most, will not accept a child who is sick. If the child(ren) exhibits any of the symptoms listed below, the child(ren) shall not attend the child care facility for a minimum of 24 hours but 48 hours for vomiting and diarrhea, until the symptoms are no longer exhibited or unless the Parent(s) has obtained a statement from the child's doctor stating that the child is not contagious. Siblings in care should be excluded at the same time. If one child is ill, both will be sent home and expected to exclude from care. The final decision as to whether a child will be admitted to the child care facility will be made in the sole discretion of the Director/Staff.

- Fever of 100.0 degrees F
- Diarrhea/vomiting- 48hr exclusion (loose, runny, or bloody stools- the exclusion is for symptom no matter the reasoning)
- Irregular breathing
- Rashes
- Yellowish color to the eyes or skin
- Swallowing difficulty
- Discharge from eyes or ears
- Excessive drowsiness
- Lice
- Diaper rash in which the provider feels needs medical attention or treatment
- Persistent and/or excessive crying- Crying and irritability for a long time, or not eating or drinking normally. Anytime a child is not themselves, cannot be soothed by a teacher, requires one-on-one care, complaining about discomfort, or not interacting with the class is reason to take a Wellness Day and spend time in the comfort of their own parent(s) arms.

If your child is too ill to play outside with his or her class, or participate in regular classroom activities, then your child is too ill to attend the center.

Outbreak Procedures:

In the event more than half of the class has contracted an illness, we are required to notify the Health Department for notification and guidance. During that time the center will close until we receive instructions on how to proceed. Parents will be notified in Brightwheel as soon as the notification/determination has been made.

Immunizations are a requirement to be enrolled, regardless of reasoning. Parents are allowed a religious exemption per state regulations but it is up to each private institutions as to whether they will accept a child without immunizations. We at The Owl's Nest will discuss the exemption from certain immunizations or altered schedule and whether it will have a negative impact for the students enrolled.

Scholarship and Financial Aid:

Scholarships from Maryland are accepted and Military financial aid. The financial aid is an assistance to tuition and will be applied as such. If any aid is not paid for a holiday, closure, vacation, or for reasons out of our control, the billing on your child's account continues and is the parent's responsibility to ensure the account is up to date. All fees and procedures for late payments or failure to pay will apply. Parents are responsible for late pick up fees and extended care fees outside of regular tuition.

Legal Action for Fees Unpaid:

In the event any fees or tuition payments are not received per the contract we will make attempts to collect all fees via Brightwheel. After 7 days a formal letter will be sent for intent to collect the debt. We will offer a payment plan to those attempting to pay the debt. At such time a payment plan has been requested, we will assess a \$50 starting fee and will apply a 10% fee of the balance every month until the amount is paid in full. Once the collection period has passed and no attempt to pay has been made, The Owl's Nest Child Care will proceed with a claim with St. Mary's County Small Claims Court. All court fees will be requested to be paid by the parent in court on top of the amount due.

Medicine

Non-prescriptive medication (Tylenol, nose/ear drops, etc.) as well as prescription medication will only be administered after a parent signs, and dates a form entitled, Medication Administration Authorization Form.

- The parent must provide all medications.
- Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name.
- A parent or guardian must administer the first dosage under their supervision; never the center staff.

We will not administer cold medications to any child.

Staff cannot administer medication (prescription or over the counter) without the proper dosage for that child listed on the container. If the container reads, "Consult/see Doctor" then a note from the doctor with the child's weight, and the dosage recommended, must be provided.

Medication will be stored per the manufacturer's recommendations. We have locked cupboards, and containers for the refrigerator, for the storage of medication.

Injuries and Accidents

Every consideration will be taken to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. Should an injury occur, an Incident Report would be completed by the closest adult and notified by the Center Director, Assistant Director or appropriate person. A copy of this report will be on Brightwheel. A parent or guardian will be notified regarding any injury that occurs while your child is in our care. In the event of a major medical emergency or accident, the center teacher or director will call 911 first. The child will be transported to the hospital noted on the Emergency Form (or the closest hospital). The parent/guardian will be called immediately. The Parent(s) agrees to pay all costs and expenses incurred in connection with any medical care provided to the child(ren), including the cost of transportation.

Conflict Resolution

If an issue should arise between a family and a staff member, or between two families, we encourage the concerned party speak directly to the staff member, or family, prior to coming to the directors. If the problem remains unresolved, or the parent wants to make sure the administration is aware, our door is always open. Administration will act as a moderator in situations that require more attention or are reoccurring. We will make every effort to remain fair, with our main priority being the safety and quality of care, of the children at The Owl's Nest.

Family Gatherings

The Owl's Nest families have a chance to meet with other families and the teachers several times a year. These gatherings are meant to provide a sense of community and to celebrate the families here at The Owl's Nest. Dates and times will be posted.

Inclusion

We create an environment where all children and families feel welcomed and included by welcoming all families and children. Children with disabilities are included in our day just as those without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made when needed. Special child care needs will be assessed and a plan formulated to make sure the child is taken care of and included in the program with children on the same age.

To meet the needs of individual children, and to make sure all children are able to participate in each activity, we use specific strategies, methods, or materials used in our program will help to meet the individual needs of each child and ensure full participation in all activities.

- Examples include: Adjusting the daily schedule, adapting activities or materials based on the skills and abilities of each child (i.e., chunky crayons, pencil grips, adapted cups or utensils, or other specialized equipment), and communicating openly with families to understand needs of the child.

Some children in our program receive support from outside agencies. We collaborate with other agencies that specialize with the care and development of children with disabilities. We will collaborate with these agencies to ensure we are taking all possible avenues to effectively care for the child. These agencies will work with our program and parents, if they choose, to ensure the development and progress of the child is continuing.

Some children in our program have IFSPs or IEPs that have been shared with us. We use these documents to ensure our environment is inclusive.

IFSPs or IEPs are reviewed individually with the Director and parent as needed.

We have received the following specialized training to support children with special health care needs or disabilities:

- American with Disabilities Act
- Children with Disabilities
- Developmental Screening
- Growth and Development for Early Childhood Education.
- Caring for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Inclusive Early Childhood Programs
- Family Diversity

Positive Behavioral Practices

We take many steps to build positive relationships with the children and families in our program. For example:

We use a variety of strategies to encourage children's positive behaviors and help them avoid negative behavior such as modeling positive words and actions, encouraging children to communicate about their feelings, recognize positive behavior and acknowledgment of positive behavior. We intervene in situations where negative behavior may occur.

Providing Choices

The children have multiple opportunities to make choices on their own throughout the day. For example, during our day children are given many opportunities of choices. From choosing their colored cup for meals, choices in materials used for crafts, independent time to explore/play/manipulate items of their choosing. Everything we do offers some sort of choice for every child.

We offer children choices as a way to encourage positive behaviors such as providing choices that allows children to have control about their self and day. Choices are a great way to positively guide children in the correct/better direction and evaluate the situation. If a child is displaying negative behavior at drop off, we will ask the child if they would like to be a helper for breakfast or line leader for outdoor play. This gives the child insight in the day that will calm them AND provides a choice for them to decide.

Redirection

We use verbal redirection to distract children from certain situations which may cause negative reactions/behaviors. When children are playing freely, we may see frustration building over a toy/object. We will intervene and verbally guide the frustrated child to another area of interest for them.

We use physical redirection as a gentle touch to guide children to a correct path away from possible negative behaviors. If a sibling is hurt by another child, we may guide with our hands the other sibling away from who hurt them. This will be used with verbal redirection as well. Guiding children to the appropriate station or back in doors when we are transitioning is also another way; we use physical guidance.

We use redirection with visual cues to further explain where we are going. These cues are great for those who are not auditory learners and need a visual to stay on topic and focus.

We use redirection with attention on many occasions and usually to point out good behavior. If children are banging on a table waiting for lunch, we may point out how "Johnny" is being so nice and patient waiting for his food. "Good job Johnny for making a great choice." This gathers the child's attention to the positive behavior without bringing attention to the negative.

Rules and Expectations

Rules help children and adults recognize and meet the expectations of our setting. We state rules and expectations in clear positive terms, so children can aim for the behaviors that help to follow rules and expectations of our classroom. Rules and expectations apply for the adults who serve as representations for the children as well. We constantly emphasize the rules so children can expect appropriate outcomes for their behavior.

Input from Children

Children will have part in making the rules and expectations of the classroom. This allows children to be inclined to follow the rules and expectations and guide others into doing the same.

Reflection and Problem Solving

Learning to reflect rather than dwell on a problem is a helpful step in facing and resolving challenging situations. Consider this five-step approach to problem solving with children.¹

1. Identify the problem
2. Brainstorm three ways to handle it
3. Choose one way to try first and decide on a back-up plan
4. Try out the strategy
5. Evaluate how well the strategy works

Modeling, teaching, and helping children practice these steps all contribute to positive problem-solving skills. Supporting children to reflect and problem solve encourages them to believe in themselves as successful problem solvers and builds healthy social and emotional skills at an early age.

Time Out

We encourage children to empathize with one another's feelings and see the results of their actions. We discourage inappropriate behavior. We use a "Time Out" as our last resort. Any child that is put in time out is always supervised by a teacher and shall remain in time out only 1 minute per age of the child. When time out is over, it is explained to the child why time out occurred and what correct behavior is expected. No child is subjected to corporal punishment or physical discipline at any time. Discipline shall never be related to food, rest, or toileting.

¹ Pawlina, S. & Stanford, C. (2011). Preschoolers grow their brains: Shifting mindsets for greater resiliency and better problem solving. *Young Children*, 66, 5, 30-35.

Difficult Behavior

We will make every effort to work with the parent or guardian to ensure a cooperative approach for children having difficulties with behavior. We are here to serve and protect all of the children in care! A parent may be called at work or home at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the center's staff. We are qualified child care staff members and are not specialized in behavioral therapy, modification, or treatment for extreme or chronic disruptive behaviors.

The parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. The following steps may be taken regarding children who display chronic disruptive behavior, upsetting to the emotional or physical well-being of another child or an adult.

Initial Consultation:

The child will be sent home and the director will request that the parent or guardian meet for a conference. The problem/occurrences will be defined on paper. Intervention strategies will be discussed. The best solution toward solving the problem will be agreed upon by the center director, teacher, and parent or guardian.

Second Consultation:

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent will again be asked to meet with the director and teaching staff involved. The child will be sent home for 2 days. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem/occurrences, and establish a new, or revised approach for solving the problem. Parents may be asked to consult outside professionals, or bring in behavioral specialists to help identify the problems or provide new strategies. Our goal is to work as a team to better serve each child.

Disenrollment:

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, the child may be disenrolled from the center at the discretion of the center director. If the parents fail to follow the outlined intervention strategies, the center will terminate care.

NOTE: Corporal punishment will NOT be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.), exclusion from large motor or outdoor activities, or exclusion from any learning activity. In certain instances, a child may be physically restrained in order to keep the child, other children, or staff safe from harm. No unusual punishment will be allowed such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.

Selection of Learning Materials

Factors that influence the selection of learning materials in my/our program include developmental levels of the children, interest of the children, *background, experiences, cultures, and home languages* of the children, *accessibility* to all children, learning domains, differences in the way's children learn, and information from *IFSPs and IEPs* when provided by families.

The children's interests are reflected in the materials and equipment I/we use in my/our program. For example, our space is large for children to feel comfortable in and not overcrowded. Open areas for centers/bins, tables and floor coverings to make the area soft. We have a library for children to read and be read to, an art center for our art supplies and creativity, circle time board with calendar, days of the week, weather and journals. Our center materials are child friendly and appropriate for all ages and developmental stages. Outdoor we have playground equipment for all ages, gated in a safe area.

The learning materials and equipment are developmentally appropriate for the children in our program. For example, children are assessed on their developmental stage every day by observation. Materials are added to provide challenges for growth in each developmental stage. Children are provided with hands-on support for all activities and play by the provider.

We make sure all the children in our program are able to access the learning materials and equipment needed to participate in all activities. For example, all materials are catered to children. From the plates we eat on, cups we drink from to the scissors and tricycles we use. All furniture is child sized and easily accessible.

The materials and equipment we use supports children of all abilities to fully participate in every activity. For example, having materials for different stages in development from the infants, to the toddlers, to preschoolers then for school agers. These allow all children to engage. Modifications are given for different ages as well. A craft that includes cutting, painting and gluing will have all steps completed by a pre-k or school age child, but for the younger, modifications would include precut items, smaller sponges to paint with and assistance with gluing. All abilities are catered to with all activities. Modified instruments are given as well. Such as left-handed scissors or thick crayons.

We use materials that represent children's *interests, culture, and home language* to communicate that their thoughts, ideas, and *cultural backgrounds* matter. We select materials based on children's interest and background that gives them a *sense of belonging* and adds a level of motivation for engaging in play and learning activities in the classroom and outdoors. Working with families to better understand their background and culture to select familiar materials is a way to invite children of all *backgrounds* in to care. These selections are used in many ways, like labeling items and centers in different languages, having dolls to look like the children in care, photos of varying families from different cultures, and incorporating games or songs that are familiar from their *culture/background*. How our selections are made are seen throughout the classroom to invite all children in and to feel welcome and comfortable.

We limit the choices that are available at any one time and rotate materials from time to time to add newness and spike curiosity that helps children stay engaged in exploration and learning. We have found that offering too many choices to young children at once can be overwhelming.

Electronic Check and Credit Card Payment Option

The Owl's Nest Child Care is pleased to provide you with a check or credit/debit card payment option for tuition payments. Every family will be required to have an automated bank or credit card on file through Brightwheel.

Here is what you need to know:

Check Option:

This is a FREE option. Check payments will be deposited the day we receive payment. No future dated checks will be accepted. If your check fails to clear, a \$36 fee will be billed and no future check payments will be allowed.

Credit/Debit Card and Bank Account Option:

This option has a processing charge.

Brightwheel is a secure, encrypted, site. The Owl's Nest Child Care does not have access to your bank information.

If you have any questions, please contact the Director-Morgan Zoblisein.

For questions, concerns or to file a complaint contact your Regional Office

Regional Offices	Phone
Anne Arundel	410-573-9522
Baltimore City	667-354-5178
Baltimore County	410-583-6200
Prince George's	301-333-6940
Montgomery	240-314-1400
Howard	410-750-8771
Western Maryland, Allegany, Garrett & Washington	301-791-4585
Upper Shore, Kent, Dorchester, Talbot, Queen Anne's & Caroline	410-819-5801
Lower Shore, Wicomico, Somerset & Worcester	410-713-3430
Southern Maryland, Calvert, Charles & St. Mary's	301-475-3770
Harford & Cecil	410-569-2879
Frederick	301-696-9766
Carroll	410-549-6489

The Regional Offices investigate complaints to determine if child care licensing regulations have been violated. All confirmed complaints against child care providers may be viewed at [Child Care Complaints](#).

For additional help, you may contact the Licensing Branch Chief at 410-767-0120.

Resources

Child Care Scholarship (CCS)- Assists eligible parents aid families with child care expenses
1-877-227-0125 [monev4childcare.com](#)

Maryland EXCELS -Maryland's Quality Rating System for child care programs
[marvlandexcels.org](#)

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council- Assistance with ADA issues
[md-council.org](#)

Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program- Early intervention services for young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families
[referral.mditp.org](#)

Maryland Family Network-Assists parents in locating child care
1-877-261-0060 [marvlandfamilynetwork.org](#)

Maryland Child - Information about child development, parenting, community resources, mental health, nutrition, literacy, and more.
[Marylandchild.org](#)

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood
200 West Baltimore Street
10th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201
[earlychildhood.marylandotbltcschoolsore](#)

Wes Moore, Governor

Mohammed Choudhury,
State Superintendent of Schools

OCC 1524 (updated June 2023)

Parent's Guide to Regulated/ Licensed Child Care



Information About Child Care Facilities



Who Regulates Child Care?

All child care in Maryland is regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care's (OCC), Licensing Branch.

The Licensing Branch's thirteen Regional Offices are responsible for all regulatory activities, including:

- Issuing child care licenses and registrations to child care facilities that meet state standards;
- Inspecting child care facilities annually;
- Providing technical assistance to child care providers;
- Investigating complaints against regulated child care facilities;
- Investigating reports of unlicensed (illegal) child care;
- Taking enforcement action when necessary; and
- Partnering with community organizations and consumers to keep all children in care safe and healthy.

Regulations governing the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) fall under COMAR Title 13A-Regulations that govern child care facilities and other information about the Office of Child Care may be found at:

[earlychildhood.marylandotbltcschoolsore](#)
[childcare.marylandotbltcschoolsore](#)

What are the types of Child Care Facilities?

Family Child Care - care in a provider's home for up to eight (8) children with no more than two under the age of two.

Large Family Child Care - care in a provider's home for 9-12 children.

Child Care Center - non-parental care in a group setting for part of a 24-hour day.

Center of Compliance (LOC) - care in a child care center operated by a religious organization for children who attend their school.

All facilities must meet the following requirements:

Must obtain the approval of OCC, fire department, and local agencies:

Must have qualified staff who have received criminal background checks, child abuse and neglect clearances, and are not on these offender registries:

Must maintain certification in First Aid and CPR; Must maintain approved staff and student ratio; Must provide ACTIVE supervision at all times when children are in care;

Must offer a daily program of indoor and outdoor activities; Must maintain a file with all required documentation for each enrolled child;

Must post approved evacuation plans, conduct fire drills, and emergency preparedness drills; and

Must report suspected abuse and neglect, and may not subject children to abuse, neglect, mental injury, or injurious treatment.

Did You Know?

- The provider's license or registration must be posted in a conspicuous place in the facility;
- A child care provider must enter into a written agreement with a parent, that specifies fees, disciplinary policy, presence of animals, the use of volunteers, and sleeping arrangements for overnight care; Parents/guardians may visit the facility without prior notification any time their children are present;
- Written permission from parents/guardians is required for children to participate in any and all off-site activities;
- All child care facilities must make reasonable accommodations for children with special needs;
- A qualified teacher must be assigned to each group of children in a child care center; Staff:child ratio must be maintained at all times in child care centers; Parents/guardian must be immediately notified if children are injured or have an accident, an care; Parents/guardians may review the public portion of a licensing file; and
- Check Child Care Maryland Check (MD Check) is a resource for parents and families to use to review child care provider's license status, verified complaints, compliance history, and inspection results.



Find the Right Early Childhood or School-Age Program for Your Child

Quality Matters Because Your Child Deserves the Best!

A Parent's Guide to Quality Care

What is Maryland EXCELS?

Maryland EXCELS is the state's quality rating and improvement system for child care and early education programs that meet nationally recognized quality standards.

Maryland EXCELS rates the quality of child care and early education programs on a scale of 1 to 5. Quality rated programs demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- Staffing and Professional Development Accreditation and Program Improvement
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Compliance with Child Care Licensing Regulations
- Administrative Policies and Practices

Programs with a quality rating of 5 meet the highest standards in Maryland EXCELS and are state or nationally accredited.

Why does quality matter?

You will consider cost, convenience and location of a program. But what about quality?

- Research shows that the first five years of a child's life build an important foundation for how children succeed in school and life.
- Your child deserves to be in an environment that engages with your family, is sensitive to your child's needs and promotes your child's love of learning.
- Choosing child care and early education for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make.

Where do you start?

Here are ways to find a high-quality program for your child in Maryland:

- Find Maryland EXCELS quality-rated programs with the help of the Find a Program tool on MarylandEXCELS.org.
- Visit MarylandFamilyNetwork.org/program-services/locate/ or call toll-free 877-261-0060.
- Once you find a quality program, contact the program and schedule a visit to determine if the program is right for you and your child.

Need help paying for child care? Visit Money4ChildCare.com



Find a Program to meet your unique needs

Do you or your child have specific needs or requirements? Maryland EXCELS recognizes programs that meet higher standards in the following areas:

Accreditation Program Allergy Cultural and Linguistic Competency Eco-friendly Program Family Engagement
Health and Wellness JUDY CENTER Military Families Quality Business Practices

For more information on how to choose a Quality program, visit marylandexcels.org/choosing-quality and select Tips for Finding Child Care from the navigation menu.

How can you spot high-quality care?

- ✓ Staff are responsive to the needs of each child and family
- ✓ Interactions are warm, positive and respectful
- ✓ Learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate
- ✓ Activities and materials reflect children's strengths, interests and cultures
- ✓ Families are encouraged to engage in all aspects of the program

The Maryland EXCELS quality rating badges recognize and celebrate the hard work providers have put into becoming a Maryland EXCELS participant.



Follow @MarylandEXCELS
www.marylandEXCELS.org

