



# The Parent Handbook



Early Childhood Education Program



# Welcome

The Garden of Children (the center) has offered child day care to the Newport News area since 1974. Our dedicated staff is certified, insured, warm and caring. We believe that the "pre" school experience prepares children academically, emotionally, and socially for elementary school. Additionally, we believe play is a vital element in a child's learning experience. It is a medium for self-expression and an excellent time to develop their individual thinking processes. We participate with the Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5), formerly "Smart Beginnings Virginia Star Quality Initiative" and are actively working towards the highest level rating. Children in high quality childcare settings are more successful in school and life, so choosing a preschool or childcare program, is one of the most important decisions parents and families make. We excel in the care of toddlers and preschoolers and will take care of your little ones!

## **Our Commitment**

- To acknowledge and support our families as a child's first and most important teacher.
- To provide our children with the highest quality of care.
- To provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for our children.
- To focus on the interest of the individual child.
- To setting the standard of excellence in early childhood care and education.
- To listen and respond to our families concerns or questions.
- And to be committed to you and your child in all of their developmental needs.

## **Our Mission**

The Garden of Children's mission is to partner with Virginia families in providing excellence in quality childcare and education. We maximize the positive aspects of all children through creating an environment where differences are recognized, understood, appreciated and where all children learn, grow and play every day so that they are given the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

## **Our Philosophy**

To a working parent or guardian, a childcare facility is more than just a babysitter. It is a part of the input to the child's personality development, early education, and social interactions that can shape his/her future. A child takes in more information between the ages of one to six than they do the remainder of his/her life. We know these formative years are critical to the development of each child's creative talent, positive self-esteem, and enthusiasm for learning. The Garden of Children provides a safe nurturing environment for your child to grow and develop character using the basic ingredient of the home – love. We believe that the giving and receiving of love must be a basic function in our center.

## Our Staff

Our Staff either holds a degree in early Childhood Education or have ECE college credits or ECE community base training in addition to qualified teaching experience in a certified child/preschool setting. All our staff is enrolled in central background registry as require for certified childcare center, hold currents First Aid/CPR certifications, and participate in monthly trainings to enhance the education and care of your children.

We offer low ratios: 1 to 10 students in Preschool

1 to 8 Toddler

1 to 5 Pre-toddler

1 to 4 Infant

# Attendance

## Ages Served

The Garden of Children enrolls children from the age of four weeks up through the age of twelve.

## Operating Hours

We are open Monday through Friday, **5AM to 6PM**.

## Arrivals & Departures

Although we recommend that each child is checked in in time for their first lesson (8:30am), **the latest you may bring your child is 10AM**. This allows us to properly staff, cook and plan for the rest of the day. When you bring your child to school, you also certify that to the best of your knowledge, your child is in good health and can participate fully in all activities. It is important that children are aware that their parents are leaving. While this acknowledgement may result in an occasional emotional upset, parents should take comfort in knowing that such separation anxiety usually ends by the time the parent is out of the front door. Parents are required to list the name, address, and phone numbers of each person other than the parent who is authorized to care for their child in an emergency. Parents or any other person designated to pick up a child must be prepared to show picture identification to the staff. Children are not released to any other person than named on the registration form unless we have prior written request from the parent. Children are not released to anyone younger than eighteen years old unless specified in a letter that is signed by the parent.

## Signing In and Signing Out

It is important that we have an accurate record of your child's attendance. Upon arrival each morning, a team member will sign in your child. A team member will also sign your child out at the end of the day when he/she is picked up.

### **Absences, Appointments & Early Pick-Ups**

We do not require that you call if your child is going to be absent, however we do require you call if you have a scheduled appointment, meeting, etc., in which you may need to bring your child after 10AM – this will allow us to still include your child in the count when staffing, cooking and planning for the day. If you pick your child up early for an appointment, you may not bring your child back if after 10AM unless previously approved. Regular rates still apply for partial and absent days.

### **Late Pick-Up Policy**

If you pick up your child after 6:00PM from the center, a late fee of \$25.00 will be charged plus \$5.00 for each minute after 6:00pm. The tuition covers a 10-hour day: after that, there is a late fee of \$25 plus \$5.00 for each minute beyond the 10-hour limit. **All late fees are per child and are due at the time your child is picked up or before they can return.**

### **Verification Policy**

The Garden of Children has a strict verification policy. Children will not, under any circumstances, be sent home with a person who is not listed in their enrollment packet. A parent may call or come into the center to add a person to the pick-up list, but any person(s) not on the pick-up list will be turned away, unless a parent/legal guardian is contacted. Any person who is not known/recognized as an approved pick-up will be asked to show picture identification. If you have picked up before but the front desk staff has not seen you or does not recognize you, you will be asked to show an identification. All identifications must be valid, and state issued.

### **Holidays & Vacations**

The Garden of Children understands that not all parents have all holidays off, however it is our duty to still ensure our staff have holiday time to spend with their families. We are closed for all major holidays – closings are posted months in advance, to allow families to make necessary arrangements.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the case of inclement weather, it is our priority to keep our families and staff safe. We try to remain open during inclement weather to care for those families who *must* go to work – but it is our recommendation to keep your child at home if you are able to do so. We want to keep your children safe and ask you to allow us the opportunity to keep our staff safe as well. We will not be fully staffed on such days. Once we reach our staffing ratio's capacity, we are unable to allow for more drop-offs. Inclement weather alerts will be sent out through the Brightwheel app and posted on our Facebook page.

## **Transportation Policy**

The Garden of Children includes transportation to and from our list of approved schools daily. If your child attends a school that is not on the list of approved schools, you must arrange for his/her transportation to and from school each day. We DO NOT transport children to and from the home. We do provide transportation for children center-wide, to and from all scheduled field trips. Parents must provide government approved child safety seat (i.e., car seat, booster seat, etc.). All seats will be labeled upon arrival. The center has the right to refuse transportation to any child due to misconduct or illness.

## **Termination**

The Garden of Children will only enroll the number of children to whom we can give adequate care. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from the center, you are required to give two weeks written notice to administration so that the vacancy can be filled. Regular rates still apply for those two weeks; however, your child is still welcome to attend during those two-weeks. Failure to give notice will result in a two-week charge. The Garden of Children has the right to terminate services due to excessive late payments, excessive late pick-ups, behavioral incidents and/or misconduct by the child or parent.

# **Nutrition**

## **Meals**

The Garden of Children participates in the USDA Program, meaning, we provide healthy, state approved meals – covering all nutrition groups and amounts. We have a full kitchen, and all meals are cooked fresh each day. Breakfast is served at 8:00AM each morning (7:00AM for those who go to school). If your child is not here in time for breakfast, please be sure your he/she is fed before drop-off. Children who attend school may bring a lunch box, however, they are not allowed to access those items while at the center. For all other children, outside food and drinks are not permitted into the center. Please consult with a management team member regarding what is allowed for in-class birthday celebrations.

## **Mealtimes**

Mealtimes are predetermined blocks of time specifically for enjoying meals in each classroom. Mealtimes are important in every age group, especially here at the center where all meals are served family style. It is important to us to take these extra steps because family style allows for fine motor skills practice, using tongs, measuring cups, milk pitchers and more! It also allows for each child to practice patience as they wait, kindness as they share, and communication as they socially interact with one another. It is important that each child learn the importance of sitting down for mealtimes each

day, eating properly at a table and being well-mannered. Mealtimes allow for learning from one another, listening to one another and bonding with each other.

### **USDA/Food Policy**

Since the Garden of Children participates in the USDA Program, we only serve the best to your child. USDA choice meals are healthy, fresh-cooked, complete meals including the proper servings of protein, fruit, vegetable, grain, and dairy. To best cater to all allergies and/or other health issues, the center does not allow ANY outside food or drinks.

### **Infant Feedings**

Infants are fed as needed. All bottles will be discarded after 1 hour (if not consumed by infant).

### **Food Allergies/Preferences**

The Garden of Children accommodates all food and milk allergies. Parent/guardian must bring documentation from child's physician regarding all allergies for the center to provide the alternative. Milk preferences can be accommodated; however, parent must provide the milk if it is not a documented allergy. Food preferences cannot be accommodated (i.e., veganism). All children's names with allergies and/or food preferences will be listed in each classroom at the center.

## **Programs and Curriculum**

### **Curriculum**

The Garden of Children is committed to quality in education. We strive to prepare each child to excel in school and thrive in the world. We currently teach all children the "Early Learning Matters" curriculum while incorporating the CDCs developmental milestones as well as the Virginia Foundation Blocks. Our curriculum is based on years of childhood and learning studies. It employs research-based developmentally appropriate practice, which, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) "provides children with opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills." It offers challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery and it takes place in the context of a community where children are safe and valued, where their physical needs are met, and where they feel psychologically secure. Each classroom is set up with centers that includes blocks, dramatic play, gross motor, fine motor, art, language, math, science, and geography. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and is included in the schedule. Self-selection of free play is a daily routine of the curriculum and each child can choose which center or activity he/she participates in.

## **Methods**

Our teachers and aides will have a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. From circle time to music and movement to the letter, number, shape, and color of the week, our activities are created to enhance each child's learning experience. Your child will learn, grow and play every day!

### **Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:**

**Social:** To help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are a part of the group.

**Emotional:** To help children experience pride and self- confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.

**Cognitive:** To help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings.

**Physical:** To help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of the curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

## **Classroom Supplies**

Each classroom provides the necessary supplies for day-to-day activities and curriculum. Parents will only be responsible for supplying their child's personal belongings as listed below. There will be occasions throughout the year when families will have the opportunity to donate supplies to their child classroom.

## **Personal Belongings**

It is difficult for young children to share toys and personal belongings with other children. Likewise, it is difficult for the staff to monitor all the many belongings children might bring from home. Therefore, unless specifically allowed for special days, please leave all toys, food, gum, pets, and money at home. These items are prohibited.



### "What to Bring" Checklist:

- ✓ Toiletries (diapers, wipes, change of clothes)
- ✓ Infant Needs (pacifiers, pre-made bottles, unopened container of formula)
- ✓ School-Age Needs (backpacks, homework supplies, pencils, paper, etc.)

The pre-made bottles must be labeled with your child's name, date, and amount. If your child does not have his/her needs, they cannot be dropped off. If you need to leave the center to get supplies, you must take your child with you.

### Items NOT Permitted:

- X Outside Snacks/Food
- X Outside Toys
- X Technologies (iPads, cellphones, Gameboys, etc.)
- X Sandals, Flip-Flops, Open-Toed Shoes
- X Weapons (firearms, knives, explosives, switchblades, brass knuckles, etc.)
- X Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol

### **Clothing**

Please be sure that your child's name is clearly marked so that we can minimize the loss of personal belongings. In the event of a missing item, please notify us promptly. Unclaimed items are donated to charity. Clothing should be comfortable, easy for the child to manage (buttons in front, elastic waist bands, etc.) and appropriate for "messy" activities, such as creative arts and outdoor recreation. Clothing that comes on and off easily, without adult help, gives your child added confidence and avoids toileting accidents. Therefore, overalls are **prohibited**. Closed-toe shoes, sneakers or other soft-sole shoes are required for the prevention of injuries. We ask that infants, pre-toddlers, and toddlers have two changes of clothing and a supply of disposable diapers and wipes. Preschoolers and kindergartners should have one change of clothing. A sweater or jacket should be brought to the center during the winter months.

### **Parent Involvement**

Ongoing research shows that parent involvement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parents' confidence in their children's education. Children with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior. We offer many opportunities throughout the year for parent involvement including holiday celebrations, recitals, and other community events. We do strongly recommend that all parents and guardians attend the parent/teacher conferences upon request, as well as parent appreciation nights.

## Daily Activity Schedule

Each classroom has its' own daily activity schedule posted. These schedules are subject to change at to the Director's discretion (e.g., weather conditions, special guest, etc.). There are a few daily routines that are center-wide:

**Arrival** - 5:00AM to 10:00AM

**Breakfast** - 8:00AM

**Outdoor Play** - 30 Minutes AM & 30 Minutes PM

**Lunch** – 11:00AM

**Quiet/Nap Time** – 12:00PM to 2:00PM\*

**Snack Time** – 2:00PM

\*After lunch, restroom use, and hand washing, the children will take a nap or rest quietly on their nap cots. After thirty minutes of resting quietly, those children who are not asleep may read a book for the duration of the rest time.

## Health and Well-being

### Infection Control Policy

It is inevitable that children will get sick, no matter where they are. As children begin to have contact with the world outside that of their own families, they are exposed to viruses and bacteria that are foreign to their bodies. This is the way they build immunities. We cannot, nor would we want to, shield a child completely from the outside world. If we did, the natural immunities a child gains through contact with others would not develop and a simple cold could become a serious illness. However, we do want to protect a child from an unusually high exposure to germs.

In a childcare setting, children come into contact with groups of other children outside their families. It is in this situation that the illness of one child can spread rapidly through the group to other children and staff members if stringent measures to prevent this spread are not taken.

For this reason, the staff at the center will take precautions to prevent the spread of disease. Many common childhood diseases are contagious. They are caused by germs which may be spread in several ways. Intestinal tract infections are spread through stools. Respiratory tract infections are spread through coughs, sneezes, and runny noses. Other diseases are spread through direct contact. Careful hand washing by staff and children can eliminate approximately 75 percent of the risk of spreading these illnesses. We also separate sick children from those who are well, take extra care when diapering

or toilet training children, and work hard to maintain sanitary conditions throughout the center.

Parents can help us in our effort to keep your child healthy. We ask your cooperation in the following ways:

1. If your child has been exposed to any communicable disease, we ask that you notify us immediately of the exposure.
2. If your child shows any of the following symptoms and you are called, you must come within 1 hour. Please help us protect the other children by responding promptly. If your child has any of the following symptoms at home, we ask that you keep him/her out of the center until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours.

The symptoms include:

- ♥ fever greater than 101°F
- ♥ severe coughing
- ♥ high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing
- ♥ difficult or rapid breathing - especially in infants
- ♥ yellowish skin or eyes
- ♥ tears, redness of eyelid lining, followed by swelling and discharge of pus
- ♥ unusual spots or rashes
- ♥ sore throat or trouble swallowing
- ♥ infected skin patches
- ♥ crusty, bright yellow, dry, or gummy areas of skin
- ♥ unusually dark, tea colored urine especially with a fever
- ♥ grey or white stool
- ♥ headache and stiff neck
- ♥ vomiting and/or diarrhea
- ♥ severe itching of body or scalp or scratching of scalp
- ♥ non-clear nasal drainage

If a child appears cranky or less active than usual, cries more than usual, or just seems generally unwell at home, please inform the child's teacher so that the child can be watched carefully for the development of symptoms. If you are contacted to pick up your child, you must do so within one hour. If you do not pick up your child within one hour, you will be charged \$25 plus \$5.00 per minute.

It is imperative that we all work together to keep all of the children who attend the center as healthy and happy as possible. We thank you for your cooperation.

### **Medication Administration Policy**

The Garden of Children has a strict medication administration policy. If your child needs medicine while under our care, the parent **MUST FULLY** complete and submit the proper Medication Authorization form. This form includes the type of medicine, the dosage, how often it is given, etc. All

medication must be brought in its original packaging. The center will not transport medication to and from each school; that will remain the parents' responsibility. If your child is withdrawn from our center or discontinues treatment, all medication will be returned. Please do not send any medications in your child's bookbag. Only our MAT Certified employees can administer daily medications.

### **Over-the-Counters, Ointments & Creams**

Should your child require any over the counter ointments and/or creams, you must provide the center with that item and it must be in the original packaging. You must also complete the form allowing us to apply that item. Please properly instruct our team on how much and how often you would like them to apply it. If a prescription was required to purchase it, *see "Medication Administration Policy"*.

### **In Case of Emergency Policy**

Emergencies come in many forms (medical, inclement weather, natural disaster, intruder, etc.). It is imperative that in the case of an emergency, you can be reached. The center **MUST ALWAYS** have all current contact information. If you are unable to be reached during an emergency, we will immediately call the alternate parent/guardian, and/or the emergency contacts listed. If we are unable to reach anybody at all, the child will remain with center personnel until a parent/guardian or the proper authorities can be contacted. If it is a medical emergency, the child will be transported to the emergency room, accompanied by our personnel, until a parent/guardian can be reached. We will continue to call all available numbers and send an alert through the Brightwheel app.

## **Tuition and Payment Policy**

### **Tuition**

All tuition is calculated on an annual basis and includes adjustments for all holidays and other closings. All payments are due in advance (tuition payment agreement completed during enrollment) or late fees will be added and must be paid before your child can return to the center. If an emergency arises that prevents you from paying your fees as agreed, you must contact administration as soon as possible. Repeated late payments can be cause for your child to be dropped from enrollment. All families are subject to annual tuition increases.

### **Registration**

An annual, non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is due upon application (then each January thereafter) and guarantees your child's spot in our program. This fee covers application charges, supplies, and insurance. This spot will only be held for a maximum of two weeks beyond the projected start date.

### **Discounts**

Active-duty military receives a 15% discount for each child.

### **Absences and Vacation Credits**

The Garden of Children bases its operating costs on annual enrollment projections. As a result, to assure the highest quality of staff personnel, equipment, and supplies on a continuous basis, we

cannot offer tuition reductions for absences due to illness, natural disasters, etc. We do offer families a vacation credit. After each 12 months of continuous enrollment, one week's tuition credit per child is awarded at the written request of the family (two weeks maximum). This credit only applies to tuition fees. If the tuition credit is not used in the calendar year, it will **not** carry forward to future years. This credit is non-transferable, and we require a two-week notification in writing.

### **Subsidy**

The Garden of Children accepts tuition through various federal and state agencies. If you are receiving tuition assistance from the Department of Social Services, you are required to swipe in and out, every day, for each child. If you fail to swipe in or out within the allotted 8-day period, you will be responsible for paying the daily rate (*\$90/day for children under 2, \$70/day for children over 2*) for each missed day.

### **Late Pick-Up Fees**

The tuition allows for a ten-hour day of care. After ten hours, a late fee of \$25 will be charged plus \$5.00 per minute. Also, the center closes at 6PM each day. If you pick up your child after 6:00PM, a late fee of \$25.00 will be charged plus \$5.00 per minute. All late fees are **per child** and are due at the time your child is picked up or before he/she may return.

### **Late Payment Fees**

Weekly payments made after Wednesday will result in a \$25 late fee. Monthly payments made after the 5<sup>th</sup> will result in a \$50 late fee. Monthly co-payments made after the 5<sup>th</sup> will result in a \$35 late fee.

### **Withdrawal/Program Changes**

The Garden of Children will only enroll the number of children to whom we can give adequate care. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from the center, you are required to give two weeks written notice to administration so that the vacancy can be filled. Failure to give notice will result in a two-week charge.

### **Methods of Payment**

The Garden of Children accepts debit/credit cards as well as cash (and CashApp), personal checks, cashier's checks and money orders.

### **Extra Charges**

Returned checks result in a \$50 minimum charge. Recurring returned checks result in cash-only terms. Additional charges may be assessed for field trips, shirts, extra-curricular activities, photography, etc. T-shirts are required for attending field trips.

### **Refunds**

All fees paid to the Garden of Children are non-refundable.

# Behavior and Conduct

## Misconduct

It is important to nurture a child's development through caring, patience and understanding. While caring for your child, we will always respond appropriately to his/her behavior. Hitting, kicking, spitting, foul language and other such behaviors, that may hurt another child, are strictly prohibited.

In response to misbehavior, staff WILL NOT USE:

- Threats or bribes
- Physical punishment (even if requested by the parent)
- Deprive your child of food or other basic needs
- Humiliation or isolation

In response to misbehavior, staff WILL:

- Respect your child
- Establish clear rules
- Be consistent in enforcing rules
- Use positive language to explain desired behavior
- Speak calmly while bending down to your child's eye level
- Give clear choices
- Redirect child to a new activity
- Offer the "Cozy Corner" where they can cool-down

If all attempts to correct misbehavior are exhausted, the center will notify the parent/guardian to pick their child up for the day and/or week. All behavior/conduct issues will be discussed with the parent/guardian in private. If we are unable to resolve recurring issues, the parent/guardian may be asked to make other childcare arrangements.

## Bite Policy

Biting is unfortunately not an unexpected behavior for pre-toddlers and toddlers. Some children communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both ideas in mind. As a childcare center, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of the setting. Our goal, however, is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be notified. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

## When Biting Does Occur:

Our staff strongly discourages biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn an alternate, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

### For the child that was bitten:

- 1) First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
- 2) Parent is notified.
- 3) The "Accident/Injury" report is filled out documenting the bite.

### For the child that bit:

- 1) The teacher will firmly tell the child "No, do not bite!"
- 2) The child is removed from the area that the bitten child is located.
- 3) The parent is notified.
- 4) The "Behavior Incident" report is filled out documenting the bite.

### When Biting Continues:

- 1) The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
- 2) The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.)
- 3) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
- 4) The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

### When biting becomes excessive:

- 1) If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parent to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
- 2) If the child, again, inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **one week**.  
If a child once again inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, **the parents will be asked to make other child care arrangements**.
- 3) If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

**If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from the center for the remainder of the day. This will not count towards the one-week suspension.**

### Parent/Guardian Conduct

We ask that parents and guardians do not use cell phones/make phone calls during drop-off or pick-up times. We ask that the focus be on the children, encouraging parents and guardians' participation

and involvement. Parents are required to use respectful, encouraging words – refraining from foul language, curse words and/or other negative phrases. Parents are asked to refrain from disciplining their children in the building (“spankings” are not permitted in our center). We ask that your attire be appropriate (no vulgar language or inappropriate pictures). These rules are in place to ensure safety and respect amongst parents, guardians, staff and children consistently, as not all parents/guardians follow the same behaviors.

### **Smoking Policy**

In an effort to keep all children safe and healthy, smoking is prohibited on our property. This includes the parking lot as well as fieldtrips.

### **Termination Policy**

The Garden of Children reserves the right to terminate services at any time. Grounds for termination include but are not limited to recurring bite incidents and/or excessive misbehaviors from the child, parent, or legal guardian.

## **Safety**

### **Licensing**

The Garden of Children is licensed by the State of Virginia and adheres to rigid enforcement of regulations that meet and exceed the minimum standards in childcare. These standards relate to our physical facility, staff, health and safety procedures, nutrition, and record keeping. The center undergoes regular health inspections by the city and state, and fire and licensing departments. We support high standards in childcare, as they are in the best interest of the children in our care. Please review a copy of the minimum standards and our most recent Licensing Inspection report by visiting the Virginia Department of Education website ([www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)) or calling the local licensing office (757.510.4026).

### **Field Trips**

For children three years and older, field trips will be planned periodically throughout the year. Information regarding the field trips will be posted in advance. In addition, a sign-up sheet will be posted during the week prior to the field trip. This sheet serves as a permission slip to allow your child to attend the field trip. This sheet will need to be signed and initialed for your child to attend the field trip. Each child must wear a Garden of Children t-shirt. During field trips, the teacher and the bus driver will have cell phones to call for help if necessary, first-aid kits to address any injuries, and are able to arrange alternate transportation arrangements if there is a problem with the bus during the trip.

### **Physical Facility**

To ensure the security of the children at the Garden of Children, administration is readily available at the front door to greet incoming guests. If administration does not recognize a guest, the guest will be asked to provide a photo identification card before he will be allowed to proceed through the building. All of our playgrounds and classrooms are enclosed by fences with safety latches. Each



classroom is designed with safety features, including two exits. We maintain high standards in health, hygiene, cleanliness, and comfort. To provide a nurturing environment, we are equipped with appropriately sized furnishings, playground equipment, and bathroom fixtures designed to help your child develop self-reliance skills.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In accordance with the Virginia State Law, the Garden of Children holds regularly scheduled fire, intruder, and tornado drills. It is crucial to the safety of the children that they learn proper emergency evacuation procedures. In our effort to simulate emergency conditions during fire drills, children are required to exit the building, dressed as they are, for a few minutes. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

Attached please find our "Emergency Preparedness Plan" which is also posted throughout the center.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

The Garden of Children has safeguards in place for situations that require a Shelter In Place, Off Site Evacuation, and/or lockdown of 4 Hoopes Road.

Each classroom has an emergency backpack containing each enrolled child's medical care authorization, parent/guardian contact information as well as the attendance sheet. The infant room backpack also contains formula, bottles, and diapering supplies for each infant.

The Center has two cell phones on the premises as well as several phones belonging to our staff. In case of emergency, these phones will be available for outgoing calls. To ensure prompt and effective communication, each teacher always has walkie talkies.

In an emergency, being able to appropriately respond is of the utmost importance. Therefore, all managers are MAT certified, all staff members are CPR and First Aid Certified, and the center (as well as each vehicle) is equipped with First Aid kits. Additionally, the infant room has 4 evacuation cribs.

The GOC has at least 3 ways to contact emergency personnel, family members and staff members: a landline phone, cell phones, walkie talkies, a computer app (Brightwheel) and various social media accounts.

We practice fire, tornado and intruder drills as required. During an actual event, staff will always remain with and care for the children. Attendance will be checked whenever children are moved. Staff will bring all necessary medications, supplies, and emergency records.

### **CONTINUITY OF CARE PLAN**

- Manager/lead teacher has been trained to take and maintain accurate attendance.
- Director and Managers will remain on site or at evacuation site until all children are safely reunited with family/designated emergency contact.
- Manager/lead teacher is responsible for maintaining the emergency backpack, attendance sheet and children's information. Periodic checks are completed by the director to ensure the backpack is complete and that children's information is correct and up to date.
- Director and Managers will account for all children and staff as they board/depart vehicles; and at the first available opportunity during shelter on site or lockdown.
- Managers/ lead teachers will bring any necessary medications/supplies and emergency records.
- First Aid kits are replenished on a regular basis.

### **CONTINGENCY PLANS**

**FIRE:** The alarm will be sounded, and children evacuated as per our drills conducted. Parents will be called and asked to pick their children up at 38 Hoopes Road, the Warwick Memorial United Methodist Church, our designated fire evacuation shelter. They will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian (or emergency contact) is notified of the situation and arrangements are made for either transporting home or care taking for the remainder of the day. The designated shelter is within walking distance.

**SEVERE WEATHER:** Tornado drills are conducted to shelter in place inside the building. The children will be taken to an area that has no windows until the danger has passed. Evaluation will be made at that time whether we can stay in the building or evacuate. Parents will be immediately contacted and advised of the

situation. All other severe weather conditions will be evaluated and addressed, and parents will be notified if necessary.

**AUTO ACCIDENT:** All center vehicles are equipped with all numbers to contact the parents, emergency personnel, potential shelters, and hospitals. All drivers have a cell phone available. Once necessary calls are made, children are medically cleared, they will be transported (in a replacement vehicle) back to the center.

**INTRUDER/ACTIVE SHOOTER/TERRORISM:** We have installed a security system that will allow us to contact the police immediately by pushing a silent alarm button. The building will go into lockdown as teachers will be alerted to the danger over the walkie talkies. The campus has a pre-determined code word for intruders. All children are kept in a designated area in their rooms until the danger has passed. The parents will be notified.

**SURRY ALARM (bioterrorism, chemical disaster, toxic materials, or gases):** The children would be kept in their classrooms and all parents/guardians/emergency contacts would be notified immediately to pick them up. If any children need to be examined, they will be transported by our vans to Mary Immaculate Hospital where they will be examined by a health provider.

**EARLY CLOSURE:** If the center loses power, heat, or water parents will be notified to pick up their child and the building will close. In the unlikely event that the center is ever severely damaged or declared unsafe, the staff will evacuate all children to a designated emergency shelter and notify parents to pick up their child.

**OUTBREAK/EPIDEMIC (or other infectious disease):** In the event of a disease outbreak, we will contact the Virginia Health Department and proceed according to their instructions.

**REUNIFICATION:** In the case of an evacuation, all staff are required to remain in legal ratio with their children at all times. Once safely evacuated, children will be transported to one of the predetermined reunification sites. All parents will be contacted. Staff is required to remain with children until reunification occurs. Once parents arrive to reunify with their children, staff are required to thoroughly check parent/guardian's identity, ensuring proper departure procedures. The predetermined reunification sites are:

**1. Grissom Library**

*366 Deshazor Dr, Newport News, VA 23608  
(757) 369-3190*

**2. Denbigh High School**

*259 Denbigh Blvd, Newport News, VA 23608  
(757) 886-7700*

All children not claimed after exhausting every option, will be safely placed in a foster facility or with Child Protective Services. The Director, or management personnel, will call periodically to check on all unclaimed children, ensuring the best care is being given until parents/legal guardians are located.

**UNACCOMPANIED MINOR:** Upon discovery of an unaccompanied minor, the Garden of Children will begin to work through the following steps to support the child while he or she is separated from his or her parent or legal guardian and to reunite the child with his or her parent or legal guardian:

1. Identify minor and gather information.
2. Alert necessary agencies.

3. Secure sheltering.
4. Assess any legal requirements.
5. Implement tracking process (e.g., radio frequency identification [RFID] system, ID bracelet, etc.).
6. Coordinate with NCMEC Reunification System.
7. Local search.
8. Expanded search.
9. Verify parents' identity.
10. Provide interim housing.
11. Arrange transportation.
12. Secure care if parents are not located.

OTHER: In the event of a major environmental hazard that necessitates a larger area evacuation such as several neighborhoods, a city/town or geographical area, due to a large non-confined hazard, e.g., earthquake, hurricane, etc., children will be transported to a Red Cross designated mass shelter by Garden of Children vans where they will remain accompanied by caregiver(s) while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements are made for their pick up.

If the emergency is more widespread and encompasses a larger area such as a neighborhood or several homes due to a non-confined environmental threat, e.g. toxic fumes from a spill, floodwaters, brush fires, etc. and the children cannot remain in the area, the children will be brought to Denbigh High School, our designated shelter, by the center vans where they will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements for either transportation home or a continuation of care are made.

In the event of exposure to toxic materials or gases, and a physical examination is recommended, children will be transported by the center vans to Mary Immaculate Hospital where they will be examined by a health provider and family/guardian/emergency contacts will be notified.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Center's Emergency Officer is Deborah Glover, and back-up officers are Michelle Moore and Tiara Cosmo.

Deborah Glover's 24 hr. contact number: **757-817-7467** (cell)

Michelle Moore's 24 hr. contact number: **757-508-2030** (cell)

Tiara Cosmo's 24 hr. contact number: **757-660-8280** (cell)

Garden of Children

Phone: **757-877-7251** (landline)

E-mail: [office@thegardenofchildren.com](mailto:office@thegardenofchildren.com)

Fax: 757-874-5784

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children [NCMEC]

**1-800-THE-LOST or 1-800-843-5678**

Newport News Emergency Management

**757-269-2900**

Newport News Fire Department

**757-247-2500**

# Contact Us

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**Fax:** (757) 874-5784

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