

Hagerstown Community College Children’s Learning Center

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Hagerstown Community College Children’s Learning Center

Mission:

The Children's Learning Center is dedicated to serving the needs of young children by providing a high quality early childhood program within a safe, nurturing environment. The program supports the child care needs of HCC students, faculty and staff and provides a learning laboratory for college students interested in working with young children.

Objectives:

To provide a caring, safe, happy, relaxed and respectful environment that enhances the individuality of each child and family.

To provide a developmentally appropriate program that gives attention to the physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth and development of each child.

To provide a language-rich environment with opportunities for conversation, vocabulary and concept development. To expose children to reading and writing through labeling, dictating stories and children's literature.

To help children develop trusting relationships and learn appropriate social behavior by observing, modeling and interacting with others.

To help children experience success and have a positive attitude towards life.

To help children become independent, self-confident and inquisitive learners through the exploration of their own ideas and responses to the world.

To create a partnership with children and their families and encourage parents to be the best advocates for their children.

To promote teamwork and cooperation among all staff members for the common goal - the child.

To serve as a model program and provide practical and enhanced opportunities for HCC students, parents and staff to increase their understanding of child development and strengthen their skills in working with young children.

Philosophy:

The Children's Learning Center program is designed to enhance the development of young children in a warm and nurturing environment. Our philosophy is based on the belief that each child is unique. Experiences are provided to enrich and promote each child's physical, social, emotional, creative, cognitive and language development. Because we understand that children are naturally curious, we know they learn best when allowed to explore and work together with adults and peers. Classroom activities reflect these needs and provide opportunities for children to create, explore and learn problem solving and personal interaction skills. Within the daily schedule children have opportunities to play alone, interact with a few friends and with the whole group. Our curriculum and teaching methods reflect the knowledge that young children learn through active manipulation of the environment and concrete experiences that contribute to concept development. Children develop a positive self-concept through a balance of self-directed and teacher-directed activities.

We believe children need knowledgeable, nurturing, consistent teacher/caregivers who understand the stages of child development, respect family needs and promote cultural diversity. Our staff is dedicated to building strong partnerships with families to enrich children's experiences.

Center Information and Organization

Hagerstown Community College opened its own child care facility, the Children's Learning Center, in August 1998. The Center is licensed for 62 children, 2 years of age through pre-kindergarten. A program for school-age children is offered during the summer.

Hagerstown Community College does not discriminate against any individual for reasons of race, sex, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, or sexual orientation, HCC subscribes to full access to all college facilities as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and as amended. Children with special needs will be offered enrollment based on determination that individually assessed needs can be met and reasonable accommodations can be made. We request a copy of the child's IEP, ISFP or other individualized care plans to assist us in understanding the child's medical or developmental needs.

The Children's Learning Center (CLC) is licensed by the Office of Child Care, a division of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Our program is proud to have earned NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Accreditation – the mark of quality for early learning programs. We are rated as a level 5, the highest possible rating, in the Maryland EXCELS program, the State's quality rating and improvement system. For more information on regulations and standards, visit www.marylandexcels.org, <http://families.naeyc.org/> and <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families>

Center Staff

All of our lead teachers have college degrees and all staff have taken college courses in early childhood education. Our teachers and assistants exceed State licensing requirements for education and experience for child care staff. Most regular staff have been employed at the CLC for ten years or longer. Our teaching staff complete at least 12 hours

of professional development annually and are continually enhancing the classroom environment and activities.

The CLC employs HCC students majoring in early childhood education as child care aides, to assist our staff in the classroom and provide coverage for lunch breaks and in the late afternoon.

The Center is organized into the following age groups:

Tiny Tots (2's) - Guppies

Serves children ages 2-3 years. Children need not be toilet trained. Maximum class size 12 children with 2 teachers.

Preschool (3's) – Busy Bees

Serves children ages 3-4 years. Children should be toilet trained. Class size 16 children with 2 teachers.

Pre-Kindergarten – Monkeys and Owls

Serves children ages 4 – 5 years (not in kindergarten). Maximum class size 20 children with 2 teachers.

Summer Camp – Mini CFK

In addition to the full year child care program, a summer camp is offered for children ages 5 through 8 years.

Transition planning

Transitions (moving one group of children to the next age group) generally occur at the beginning of the fall semester and children usually remain with one teaching team for the year. Children in the Tiny Tot room may be moved to the preschool room at another time of the year, if the child is three years old, toilet trained, the teacher and parents agree the child is ready to move and the child has been in the Tiny Tot class for at least 9 months. Children visit the new classroom for a period of one or two weeks before the final transition is made. In August, children who will be moving to the next class spend one or more mornings visiting the new room and getting acquainted with their new teachers.

During parent/teacher conferences in the spring, teachers discuss transitions for the upcoming school year. If the child will be moving to another classroom in our Center, the teacher shares information about that class and the program. If the child will be leaving the Center to attend kindergarten or another preschool program, the teacher discusses registration procedures for public school and shares information about school readiness. Your child's PreK Progress Report and transition form may be sent to Washington County Public Schools (or other schools) to assist with kindergarten placement, if we have your permission to share this information.

Curriculum

The Children's Learning Center follows *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 5th Edition*, by Teaching Strategies. This curriculum model uses the preschool classroom, organized in "interest areas" or "learning centers", as the basis for learning skills and concepts. Children learn through exploration and "hands-on" experiences in the classroom. The teachers help

children learn by providing appropriate materials and activities. The Creative Curriculum and NAEYC accreditation standards provide guidance on “how” to teach young children.

The CLC uses other materials developed or used by The Maryland State Department of Education and the Office of Child Care. The Maryland Early Learning Standards Birth – 8 Years provides content standards for Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health, Physical Education, Fine Arts and Social Foundations. This document incorporates the Healthy Beginnings standards for birth to age three and the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for PreK to Grade 2.

These documents provide guidance on “what” to teach the children. Concepts and skills are introduced through monthly Units of Study with weekly lesson plans, adapted to meet the needs of individual learners (i.e. individual and small group practice of skills or review of concepts). Weekly lesson plans are posted in each classroom and teachers share monthly calendars, email updates and Facebook posts. Sign up to access our family and friends Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hccchildrenscenter>.

Assessment

Teachers observe children as they interact with other children and materials in the classroom and take notes and photographs to document their observations. The Creative Curriculum GOLD developmental continuum and objectives, is used for ongoing assessment of all age groups. Teachers use this tool, which describes age-appropriate behaviors and skills, to determine each child’s strengths and needs, and to develop learning goals.

Teachers will conduct developmental screenings with new children within the first two months of enrollment, using a standardized developmental assessment: Brigance Early Childhood Screens III (2 year olds), the Denver Articulation Screening Tool (all children) and the Early Screening Inventory - Revised (3 to 5 year olds). The results of these screenings are shared with the parent and used to determine if a referral should be made for further evaluation. If a child is experiencing a delay in speech and language or another area of development, it is important to get early intervention services to help the child be more successful when he/she enters school.

If your child is receiving therapy or special education services from Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) Birth to 5 Program, please provide a copy of your child’s IE/IFSP.

Daily Schedule

A daily schedule is posted in each of the classrooms. The “core” of the preschool day is between 9:00 and 12:30. Classes begin between 9:00 and 9:30 with “circle time”. This is a time when many concepts, songs, stories and themes are introduced. PreK children need to be here by 9:00 for circle time. The children spend most of the morning in “learning centers”, where they can build, explore, do art and cooking activities and much more. We **recommend all children arrive by 9:00** so they can participate in the learning activities of the morning. All children benefit from a regular routine. Coming to school at the same time each day can help your child adjust more quickly to the preschool experience.

When you arrive at the center, please take your child to the bathroom first, to use the toilet, if needed, and to wash hands. All children must wash hands upon arrival to the center. Then, take your child to the classroom and make sure a teacher sees that the child has arrived, before you leave.

Tiny Tots arriving before 8:30 will go to the Tiny Tot room; all other children go to the PreK (Monkey) room. At 8:30 all children will be in their own classrooms with their own teachers for breakfast. Breakfast is served between 8:30 and 9:00. Lunch is served between 11:30 and 12:30; see your child's class schedule for exact time. Children enrolled in the afternoon block are not served lunch. Snack is served at 3:00.

All classes are required to have a rest time. See your child's class schedule for times. Most children sleep during this time or lay quietly on their cots.

Children enrolled in the afternoon block should arrive at 12:30 but not before. Please do not bring children between 1:00 and 3:00 as this is during nap time. Arriving during nap is difficult for your child and is also disruptive to the children who are trying to fall asleep. You may bring your child after 3:00 if you have a late afternoon class.

Behavior Management and Discipline

The Children's Learning Center has adopted materials and strategies developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). The CSEFEL model identifies key social emotional skills that children need as they enter school. These skills are developed using classroom routines and planned experiences such as feeling charts, problem-solving cards and the "turtle technique". Child care staff use the following behavior management and disciplinary procedures when working with children. These procedures reflect a philosophy of providing a supportive and healthy emotional climate. Our goal is to help children develop positive self-esteem, social skills and internal behavior controls that enable them to comfortably engage in all types of activities in the early childhood classroom setting. Age appropriate expectations, careful planning and the availability of a rich variety of appropriate play materials and activities help to create an environment where behavior problems may be prevented.

When disruptive behaviors do occur, positive guidance techniques are used.

- Children are told what they can do instead of what they can't.
- A few simple rules are clearly defined and followed by children and staff.
- Language is used as a teaching tool and instructions are given in **positive terms**.
- Children are given **opportunities to choose** activities and behaviors within established limits.
- **Appropriate behaviors are noticed and positively reinforced.**
- Children are encouraged and assisted to "**use words**" to talk out their frustrations or solve conflicts with each other.
- **Redirection** is used to correct aggressive or inappropriate behaviors.
- As a last resort, a child may be temporarily removed from an activity (time-out) **for behaviors that endanger the child, other people or property**; the child may return to the group or activity when calm and ready to follow the rules. Children may also choose themselves to go to a quiet place in the classroom when they feel the need to calm-down.
- Physical restraint will only be used if necessary to protect the child or other children from harm.

The center does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- ⊗ Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or any other means of physical discipline or enforcement of acts which result in physical pain.

- ⊗ Neglect or failure to attend to a child's physical needs. Food is not used as a punishment or a reward.
- ⊗ Subjecting a child to verbal abuse intended to cause mental distress, such as shouting, cursing, shaming, or ridiculing.
- ⊗ Methods which create undue discomfort, such as washing a child's mouth with soap, requiring a child to stand on one foot as punishment, or tying a child to a cot or other equipment.

Any staff person violating this discipline policy will be subject to personnel actions, which may include suspension or dismissal. Any parent or other adult exhibiting any of the above behaviors while in the Center may be asked to leave the premises.

Teachers will document incidents of recurring disruptive, violent or other unacceptable behaviors and will attempt to change such behaviors using positive guidance techniques. If the behavior continues or is extremely dangerous or disruptive, the lead teacher will discuss the situation with the parents and a behavior plan and timeline will be established. The staff will continue to monitor and record the behavior for the established time period and will communicate progress with parents. The child may be referred to outside consultants or the local school system for evaluation. All attempts will be made to work with the child and family to help the child learn social skills and promote successful inclusion in the classroom. If the child's behavior is consistently disruptive in such a manner that is harmful to the well-being of the child, other children, the staff, or the facility, despite these efforts at remediation, the Children's Learning Center reserves the right to give the parent notice of termination of services for the child.

Operating Procedures

Getting started

Each family will be required to complete enrollment forms, including health information, emergency information, permission form, meal benefit form, enrollment schedule and service agreement. All families must provide proof of required immunizations, results of a blood test for lead (Maryland residents) and a medical examination for each of their enrolled children dated within the year and signed by their child's pediatrician. **NO CHILD IS ALLOWED TO BEGIN or REMAIN IN THE CENTER WITHOUT CURRENT MEDICAL INFORMATION ON FILE.** Be sure to update your child's medical records during the year by providing documentation of subsequent immunizations and tests.

If any of the following information should change at any time, please notify us so we can update your records:

1. Phone numbers where you can be reached during the day, including work and cell phone numbers.
2. Home and work addresses.
3. Names and phone numbers of persons to be contacted in case of illness or injury.
4. Names of persons authorized to pick up your child in the event you are detained.
5. Any change in your child's schedule. (Please note: We may not be able to accommodate requests for changes if your child's class is fully enrolled).

We must be able to reach you or another person on your emergency card in case of illness or an emergency.

The centers operating hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please pick up your child before closing time. A late pick-up fee is charged after 6:00. The late pick up fee is as follows:

6:00 – 6:15 PM	\$10.00
6:16 – 6:30	15.00
6:31 – 6:45	20.00
6:46 – 7:00	25.00; \$5 added for each 15 minute period

If a child has not been picked up before 7:00 p.m. and there has been no contact from the parent and no one on the emergency contact form can be reached, our staff will contact Child Protective Services to take custody of the child.

For children who are enrolled for the morning block, a full day charge will be incurred if children are not picked up by 1:00 p.m. Late fees will be added to the parents' account and are due with the following week's payment.

Payment Schedule and Policies

There is a \$20.00 non-refundable application fee. A non-refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition may be charged to hold a child's slot once the child has been selected for enrollment. This deposit will be credited towards the first month of care. A materials fee of \$50 per year will be charged to all enrolled children, due by Aug. 31 of the current year or at the time of enrollment.

For children who do not have continuous enrollment, a re-enrollment fee of \$50 will be charged to hold the child's spot when there is a break in enrollment (between fall and spring semesters or during the summer).

Weekly tuition is determined according to the days and times a child is enrolled. If extra days or hours are needed and available, an additional fee is charged for attendance. Parents will sign a contract agreeing to tuition rates and policies.

All parents will be charged the community rate unless proof of HCC employee or student status is provided for each semester. To qualify for student rates the parent must be registered or enrolled for a minimum of 6 credits (fall and spring semesters) or 3 credits (summer session). Registration in continuing education courses does not count towards student status.

Tuition Payment Policy:

Child care fees will be charged weekly, monthly or by the semester, depending on how your service agreement is written. You may make payments weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. **If you are paying monthly, the full payment for the month is due by the 15th of each month.** Monthly tuition is calculated by taking each family's weekly rate times 50 weeks (this will take into account a free week during winter break and 1 week of family vacation), so the amount billed will be the same each month; tuition will only be prorated if a child begins or ends enrollment within the month. **Tuition will not be reduced or waived for partial attendance** and days cannot be switched or "made-up" due to illness, family vacation, or other reasons. **Tuition is charged for all days when the College or the Center is closed for scheduled holidays, professional development, weather**

conditions or other emergencies. Additional fees may be charged for field trips or other special activities. Parents will receive advance notice of such activities.

The Center does not remit bills unless payments are delinquent. Payment is to be made to Hagerstown Community College. Payment in the form of check or money order may be made at the center. **Please include your student ID number or account # on your check.** Cash and credit card payments must be made at the finance office; Payments can be made on-line through Web Advisor; you may also make credit card payments over the telephone by calling 240-500-2550. A \$35.00 returned check fee is charged if a check is returned for insufficient funds. The College may refuse to accept personal checks if a check has been returned due to insufficient funds.

HCC students may transfer financial aid funds to their child care account at the beginning of each semester. See the director for an authorization form. We accept State child care subsidy/vouchers from MD and PA. Parents are responsible for any assigned co-payments or differences between voucher payment and tuition rates.

Two weeks written notice is required for withdrawal from child care. The parent is responsible for payment of these two weeks.

Failure to pay fees may result in dismissal. If a family has an outstanding balance a warning will be given that the balance must be paid within 2 weeks or the child will be suspended from attending until the balance is paid. The child may be put on a waiting list to return to the center if the class is full when the balance is paid.

Outstanding balances at the end of a semester will prevent a student from receiving grades or registering for future classes. Students receiving financial aid are required to fulfill the total child care tuition obligation for each semester prior to any refund being given to the student. Open balances at the end of the child's enrollment will be considered delinquent and will be forwarded to a collection agency. A collection fee will be added to all debts referred to collections.

Holidays and college closings

The CLC follows HCC's schedule of holidays and closings due to weather or any other situation when the college closes. The holidays are:

- Labor Day, September 3, 2018
- Wednesday before Thanksgiving - College closes at 12 noon; CLC closed all day for professional development, Nov. 21, 2018
- Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving, Nov. 22 and 23, 2018
- Winter Break – Friday, December 21, 2018 – January 1, 2018 (reopen Jan. 2)
- Martin Luther King Holiday, Jan. 21, 2019
- Spring break for staff – Mar. 8, 2019
- Memorial Day, May 27, 2019
- Independence Day, July 4, 2019

The center is also closed 3 days in August before the fall semester for staff development and cleaning.

In the event of **inclement weather**, HCC closings and delays will be posted on the HCC website www.hagerstowncc.edu. **For notification of delays and closings, parents can**

sign up for Emergency Alerts, which will send a text message to your cell phone and/or an e-mail to your designated email address. To register for Emergency Alerts go to www.hagerstowncc.edu/emergency. You can also call 240-500-2322 for a recorded message about the status of CLC operations. **If the college is closed the center is closed.** If the College has a delayed opening, the CLC will open 30 minutes prior to the HCC opening to allow students and faculty time to get to their classes. The center will follow the college's policy for early closing due to weather or other emergencies.

Parking

In an effort to ensure the safety of parents and children while arriving and departing the Children's Learning Center, the HCC Security Officer has approved the following parking procedure:

The designated **child care parking spots for pick up and drop-off are located in the parking lot G at the side of the ATC building, which is the building directly behind our Center.** Refer to the campus map at the end of this document for directions. The designated child care spaces are at the end of the lot, closest to our building. If you plan to remain at the center with your child longer than 10 minutes, please park in a regular parking space in this lot. **Never leave a young child (under 8 years of age) in a vehicle alone** (this is in violation of Maryland law). Except in extreme weather, do not leave a vehicle idling in the parking lot.

Please note that vehicles may be ticketed if parked in the staff or visitor parking spaces or along the curb in Lot B, the lot in front of the Children's Learning Center. This parking lot is for staff and visitors for administration and student affairs only.

Child Safety and Security

The inside door at the front entrance and other doors to the Children's Learning Center are kept locked. Parents and authorized persons listed on each child's emergency form will select a 4 digit number (ID code) to enter into the keypad in the vestibule, to enter the inside door. If someone does not have a code, a doorbell will alert one of the staff that there is a visitor at the door. Please do not share your code or hold the door open for visitors, as this defeats the purpose of having a security system. We reserve the right to prohibit access to parents or other adults who have displayed behavior that poses a threat to the children and staff. In this case, this person's ID code will be removed.

Upon arrival, parents/guardians must use the computer at the front desk to electronically **sign-in and accompany the child to his/her classroom.** Parents and authorized persons will be registered on the check-in computer, using that person's fingerprint and the parent will **check their child in and out each time the child comes to the Center.** If you have not yet been registered on the check-in computer or the computer is not working, you must use the paper sign-in sheet located next to the computer at the front desk. Please see a staff member if you are having difficulty with the computer.

In cases of emergency when a parent will be late in picking up a child (traffic accident, weather conditions or other emergency), parents should notify the Center and arrange for

another person to pick up the child. Staff members are not permitted to transport children to parents under any circumstances. If no one is here to pick up a child by closing time, a staff member will try to contact the parents and other contacts listed on the emergency form. If no one can be reached, the police department and/or Child Protective Services will be contacted if a child is not picked up within one hour of closing time unless the Center has been notified of an unusual circumstance delaying a parent and assurance that someone is on their way to get the child.

All persons picking up children must use the computer at the front desk to sign-out before leaving the building with the child. Children will be released only to an authorized person (age 14 or older) who is listed on the child's Emergency Information Form. Parents must notify the center if someone not listed on the emergency form will be picking up the child. Staff members may ask for verification of identity if the person picking up the child is unknown to them. **If the adult picking up the child has not been registered on the check-in computer, this person must sign the paper "sign-out" form on the front desk.** Children will not be released without an adult escort from the premises. Please make sure a staff member sees the child leave the Center with the adult. All children must leave through the front entrance; children may not be taken directly from the playground.

Any time an unauthorized person (not on child's emergency form) attempts to pick up a child, the parent is called before the child is released. If this person acts suspiciously or is hostile, campus police will be called. In the case of separated or divorced parents, the law stipulates we cannot determine which parent may pick up the child. We must release children to either parent, regardless of which parent has enrolled the child, unless the custodial, enrolling parent has a court order detailing physical custody and visitation limitations. In that case, we must retain a copy of the court order in our files. Parents should inform the center if there are any problems with custody of the child.

Campus police will also be contacted if the parent or authorized person picking up the child parent appears impaired and unable to drive safely. If it is determined that the person is under the influence, another person on the child's emergency contact list will be called.

Parents must keep the child's emergency information record up-to-date and let the office know if daytime phone numbers have changed. It is imperative that we are able to reach a parent or other emergency contact if a child is sick or injured

Meals

We provide breakfast, lunch and snack, using menus that include nutritious foods in accordance with the U.S Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. All meals are served "family style" to promote a relaxing and social environment and to teach children self-help skills. Menus are posted in each classroom. CACFP guidelines require us to serve all children the same food. Please do not send food from home.

Special diets: We will make every effort to meet nutritional requirements of children with special diets or food restrictions. **If a child has dietary restrictions for medical reasons such as food allergies, we must have written notification from the child's doctor stating the nature of the medical condition, what foods the child may not have and allowed substitutions.** For further information or to discuss food restrictions for religious or other reasons, please see the director.

Health and Safety Policies

Illness and Exclusion

Parents/guardians please be alert, as we will be, for signs of illness such as elevated temperature, skin rashes, inflamed/ reddened eyes, flushed, pale or sweaty appearances. If a child shows these or other signs of illness, pain or physical distress he/she should not attend preschool and should be evaluated by a health care provider. As licensed child care providers we have a responsibility, to the best of our capability, to protect from illness all those entrusted to our care.

The CLC reserves the right to decline admittance to a child or to send a child home if he/she is not well enough to participate in activities. The classroom teachers will make this decision with guidance from the director.

If a child exhibits any of the symptoms of acute illness while in the Center, the parent will be notified and asked to pick up the child immediately. If the parent is not available, emergency contacts will be notified. If a child appears to be developing symptoms, the parent will be called to mutually decide the best course of action.

Symptoms of acute illness include:

- Fever – Oral temperature 101 or greater or auxiliary temperature 100 or greater.
- Unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs.
- Diarrhea (2 or more watery stools) in the past 24 hours or diarrhea that cannot be contained in child's diaper or toilet-child will be excluded until diarrhea is controlled or stopped, or a doctor has determined diarrhea is not contagious.
- Vomiting 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours- child will be excluded until vomiting has stopped and child is able to eat and drink normally.
- Rash with fever or behavior change.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge).
- Scabies, head lice, ringworm or other infestation, or active itching and scratching due to illness, allergy or unknown causes.
- Impetigo.
- Sore throat with swollen glands, blisters in throat and/or fever.
- Symptoms of other diseases not listed above that are listed in the exclusion guidelines for child care centers.

If a child has been sick, he/she should not return to the Center until 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, 24 hours after antibiotic treatment was begun, or until a doctor indicates that the child may return to normal activities.

The center's established policy for an ill child's return:

- Fever free for 24 hours without Tylenol or other fever-reducing medication (do not give child Tylenol before bringing them to school; if child has a fever, keep child at home)
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment and fever free
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

- Head lice: with proof of completion of 1st treatment and no evidence of live or active infestation; for repeated or on-going infestation a note from doctor will be required
- Other illnesses or conditions, as advised by Health Department guidelines

Please notify the staff by telephone or when the child returns, if the child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. **If your child has been absent from the center for 3 or more consecutive days due to illness he/she may not return without a note from the parent or doctor stating the nature of the illness and that he/she may return to a regular schedule.** The Center reserves the right to request either in writing or orally a statement certifying the fitness of a child to attend the Center by the child's Physician. Upon a clean bill of health the child may be admitted back into the Center.

When certain contagious diseases are identified among children who attend the center, a notice will be posted indicating the type of illness, symptoms to look for and the incubation period for the disease. Names of ill children are not made public.

While the Center takes as many health and sanitary precautions as possible, children who attend schools and child care centers are susceptible to contracting diseases. Please help us protect all of the children and staff by following these procedures for excluding sick children from care. Following our health policy allows your sick child to get the attention he/she needs when she/he is sick and may prevent other children from getting sick. . If you have any questions, please see the Director.

Smoking

Hagerstown Community College (including the Children's Learning Center) has a Tobacco-Free policy effective Jan. 1, 2015. Smoking and the use of tobacco and e-cigarette products are not permitted on any HCC property, including parking lots, grounds and walkways. This policy applies to all persons on campus, including visitors. Children's health can be affected by second-hand smoke (people smoking around children) and by third-hand smoke (residues from smoking that clings to hair, clothing and other objects). Please make sure your child's blankets and clothing are free from smoke before coming into the Center. We reserve the right to remove a child's personal items (i.e. blanket, coat) from the classroom if the item smells of cigarette smoke.

Medication

According to licensing regulations we are not permitted to administer any type of medication without a Medication Administration Authorization Form signed by the physician and parent. The form must be signed by the doctor for both non-prescription (over-the-counter) and prescription medication. The Medication Administration Form is available on the child care page of the HCC website. In addition:

- Prescription medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, a date, directions and physician's name. The center will not administer medication after the expiration date.
- At least one dose of a prescription medication must be given to the child at home in order to monitor the child's reaction to the medication.
- The center must ensure that non-prescription medication is labeled with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the center. Non-prescription medication must be brought in the original container, and must be approved in writing by health personnel and the child's parent.

- The physician and parent must sign and date medication forms before any medication can be administered. The physician must specify date, time and amount to be administered.
- All medication is to be placed in the secured box or in the refrigerator in the kitchen. The lead teacher is responsible for making sure that the medications are correctly administered. Only staff who have completed the medication administration training may administer medication. Staff must document the administration of all medications on the child's medication form.

Please let your doctor know your child is in center-based child care. Often medication can be prescribed to be administered before the child is brought to the center and again in the evening, avoiding the need to administer medication at the center. If this is not possible, you may wish to ask your pharmacist to provide you with two bottles for the medication so one can be left at the center and the other at home. If the medication is not to stay at the center, it is the parent's responsibility to remember to take medications home with the child when the child is picked up.

Emergency Medical Care

Children's Learning Center staff are trained in First Aid and Pediatric CPR.

Staff members document all accidents/injuries and treatment(s) occurring at the center. Parents will be notified, in writing, of any accident/injury the same day it occurs. Under certain circumstances, staff may telephone a parent to report an injury rather than waiting until the child is picked up to give the report.

If the child needs emergency medical care, the Director/Acting Director will take appropriate steps to secure such care for the child. These steps include, but are not limited to:

- Attempt to contact a parent or guardian.
- Attempt to contact parent/guardian through emergency contacts listed on Emergency Form.
- Attempt to contact child's physician (in cases involving a chronic medical condition or transport of child to hospital).
- Contact of paramedics/ambulance. If a child must be transported to the hospital, this will be done by emergency vehicle only. A staff member, familiar to the child, will remain with the child at all times until a parent or emergency contact person takes custody of the child.

Expenses incurred from injury or from following the above emergency procedures will be the responsibility of the child's family.

Child abuse reporting requirements

No staff member, substitute, volunteer, or anyone connected with the Children's Learning Center may subject a child to child abuse, neglect, or injurious treatment. An operator or staff member who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected in the center or outside of the center shall report that belief directly to the protective services unit of the department of social services or to the local law enforcement agency. (COMAR 07.04.02.7)

We are required by law to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. A report may be made in any of the following situations:

- a staff member witnesses an abusive act (from any adult on a child)
- a child comes to the center with a bruise, burn or other mark on his/her body and the child reports that the injury was inflicted by an adult and was not accidental

- a child reports sexual contact with an adult or displays behavior or knowledge that is sexual in nature and beyond the natural, age-appropriate understanding of a preschool child
- If a child appears to be neglected (for example, child is chronically ill with no evidence that child is being treated by a doctor; suspicion that child is not adequately fed or properly supervised at home)
- any other situation that may indicate physical, sexual or mental abuse or neglect

Prevention of abuse

While no policies can prevent abuse from occurring, the risk of abuse can be minimized. CLC policies reduce the risk of child abuse and accusations by not allowing staff to be alone in the building with children. Bathroom doors are always open and classrooms have windows so staff and children can be observed from outside the room. Security cameras are in each classroom and in the front reception area. Prior to employment, staff give permission to the licensing agency to check child protective services records for reported child abuse or neglect and state and FBI criminal background checks are conducted.

If a staff member is accused of mistreatment of a child, an investigation will be done within 24 hours by the director, the Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of Human Resources to determine the facts of the incident and to determine disciplinary action, if warranted. Depending on the severity of the accusation, the staff member may be suspended or terminated. If the action of the staff member is found to meet the definition of abuse or neglect, the director will report the findings to Child Protective Services (CPS) and the Office of Child Care (OCC). If the alleged abuse is reported directly to CPS, CPS and the OCC will conduct an investigation and report on the findings. The employee will be suspended, pending results of the investigation. If the abuse is substantiated, the employee will be dismissed.

Parent Involvement

Open Door Policy

Parents/guardians of enrolled children are invited to visit the Center at any time. Parents or other adult family members may observe his/her child from another classroom (through the window of an adjoining room) or may observe or participate in a meal or other activity in the room. Teachers sometimes schedule parent helpers for special activities and field trips. Please discuss your participation with your child's teacher, to determine how to best meet everyone's needs.

We reserve the right to ask a parent to leave the center or prohibit a parent or other adult from entering the center if the adult displays inappropriate behavior such as yelling at a child or a staff member, using inappropriate language, or appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

We encourage parents to visit with their child on one or more occasions before your child is enrolled, to allow the child to meet the staff and get familiar with the environment. When the child is first enrolled, it is better for parents to observe from outside of the room or to call and check in with the teacher during naptime to see how the child is doing, rather than linger in the classroom with the child. It may take some time for a new child to adjust to new routines and separation from the parent. This is normal and the teachers do their best to help each child become comfortable in the classroom. Parents can help in this process by

reassuring the child that he or she will have a good day in school and the parent will return to pick them up after lunch or after nap time.

The Children's Learning Center welcomes parent/family involvement, volunteers and suggestions. Ways parents can participate include:

- ✓ being on the S.O.L.O. (Supporting Our Little Ones) parent/teacher/student Club to help plan fundraisers and activities
- ✓ attending family activities
- ✓ signing up for Martin's A+ School Rewards and designating the CLC to benefit
- ✓ checking with your child's classroom teacher about volunteering to be in class to help with projects, or to take materials home to cut out.
- ✓ reading with your child every day,
- ✓ "Take Home" bags – activities to do at home with your child

The S.O.L.O. Club meetings will be posted in the monthly newsletter and on the front door. All parents are welcome to attend or participate.

Parent/Staff Communication

The director and staff are available to discuss any questions or concerns parents may have about his/her child or the program. Brief conversations between parents and staff may take place at "pick-up" and "drop-off" times. Please be looking for newsletters and notes in your child's "parent pocket" or parent bulletin boards for important information. Since all staff members are not present during all of the hours of operation, parents may want to make an appointment to have time to discuss concerns. Teachers are available to return telephone calls to parents between the hours of 1:30 and 3:00 p.m. while the children are resting.

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. Teachers post available appointment times so parents can sign-up for a conference. Parents may request a written summary report or telephone conference if it is not convenient for them to come into the center for a meeting.

Referrals: If a teacher or parent has concerns about a child's development or behavior, our staff can refer you to the local public school system to have your child evaluated or to another appropriate resource in the community. Our program works with community agencies and can provide you with information about social services, health, education, mental health and other services. Please feel free to ask your child's teacher or the director if you have questions or need assistance in getting services for your family.

Confidentiality: Personal information about families is not shared with other families or those outside the school without permission from a family member or a court order. Children's health and school records may be sent, upon parent request or with "release of information" form signed by parent, when that child is transferring to a new school. We will not share sensitive information given to us by a parent unless there is a risk to a child (as in child abuse reporting). Information shared with staff is limited to what is needed by them to provide quality care for the children.

Visitors

Any visitor, other than a parent/guardian, must first report to the Director/Acting Director when entering the Center. Visitors may include HCC personnel or students. Occasionally, maintenance staff or computer repair personnel may be in the Center to investigate or

repair a problem. Whenever possible, maintenance and repairs are done after the Center's operating hours.

HCC students and faculty may use the Center to conduct observations or complete assignments, as required by their course of study. All students must sign-in at the front desk. Student workers or interns may be placed in the Center, after being interviewed by the Director and deemed appropriate to work with children. **Visitors and volunteers are supervised by staff and are not left alone with children.** Substitutes and support staff hired by the CLC work under the supervision of regular teaching staff. Therapists from WCPS may work with a child in the front office, with the director or other personnel present.

Grievance Procedure

Occasionally conflicts may arise between parents and teachers, or parents may have a question or concern about an incident that has occurred. We want to work with parents to resolve problems and work together to provide care for your child. Please address concerns in the following manner:

- Concerns about a staff member should first be brought to the attention of the person(s) involved. Please refrain from complaining about one staff person to another staff person or to other parents.
- If not comfortable addressing the staff member or if the problem is not resolved, the parent should speak to the Director, who will talk with all parties involved and may facilitate a meeting to discuss concerns.
- If the problem is still not satisfactorily resolved, the parent may take his/her concern to the Dean of Students, (240) 500-2301.
- Parents may contact the local Office of Child Care at (301) 791-4587 with questions or to register a complaint.

An annual Family Survey (anonymous) is conducted to solicit feedback about our program and comments are evaluated for program improvements. Parents may make suggestions at any time through the Director and/or the Children's Learning Center Advisory Committee.

Other Information

What to bring

All children should bring with them to school a change of clothes and if staying for rest time they may bring an appropriate nap toy and a pillow and blanket, or one-piece nap-sac (recommended). **NO backpacks** are allowed because the children share cubby spaces and there just isn't enough room. Parents must supply diapers or Pull-Ups and wipes, for children who are not yet toilet-trained. If your child has frequent toilet accidents, bring additional changes of clothing. Please check with your child's teacher to see the other supplies your child may need for school. **Please label everything with your child's name so it won't get lost.**

Toys from Home

Except for a stuffed animal or special object that is needed at naptime or to ease a child's transition when first coming to school, we ask that toys be left at home. It is very hard on your child when s/he brings a toy to school and then cannot find it at school's closing. Also the question of sharing a special toy can sometimes cause unhappiness, something we all would like to avoid. Your child's teacher will tell you if/when special things may be brought in

for “Show and Tell” or other sharing. **Toy guns, knives, or weapons of any kind are never allowed at school.**

Appropriate dress for children

Children are unique, messy little scientists that need to experience the world and in doing this they can get dirty. We do use washable paints, and smocks or shirts are provided, but there are times despite our best efforts spills and stains happen. Please dress your child in play clothing that is washable and durable so he/she can enjoy our activities without fear of ruining an outfit. Make sure clothing allows the child to easily use the toilet (i.e. no overalls or belts that are hard to open).

Shoes must be durable to protect your child from injury. Sneakers provide the best support for running and playing; a sturdy-soled shoe with a heel no higher than ½ inch is fine as well. **We do not allow flip flops or open-toed sandals.** In warmer months sandals that cover toes are allowed and for sprinkler days water shoes are allowed.

Outdoor play

We believe that in order for children to be healthy they need fresh air and exercise. Parents are advised to be aware of daily weather conditions **and to dress children appropriately for outdoor play.** Children will be taken outdoors in hot and cold weather and teachers will monitor the conditions and limit the time children are outside to assure children are neither too hot nor too cold. **Please remember to provide your child with protective clothing in cold months (hats, gloves or mittens, warm coat, boots).** Refer to the following chart for weather condition restrictions (temperatures include heat index or wind chill factor):

<u>Weather condition</u>	<u>Action required</u>
Temperature below 20 F	no outside activities
Temperature between 20 -50 F	45 minutes all children wearing outer garments
Temperature between 50-90 F	no restrictions. Apply sunscreen when appropriate, provide drinks of water
Temperature between 90-95 F	Limit outside to 30 minutes Sunscreen and water every 15 minutes.
Temperature above 95 F	no outside activities

It is our policy that if a child is too sick to go outdoors the child is too sick to be in the center. We cannot honor requests to keep a child inside while his/her class is outdoors.

Field Trips

Walking field trips: Our general permission form authorizes teacher to take the children walking on the HCC campus. Examples may be going on a nature walk, going to the library or any special event on campus.

Off campus field trips: Field trips requiring transportation will be announced in advance. Parents will be required to sign an authorization form specifically for each trip and pay any fee requested. Transportation will be provided by a CDL bus driver in the HCC motorcoach

(bus). For small groups of children (10 or less), minivans may be used. If transported in a minivan, parents must supply a car seat that is labeled with their child's name. By Maryland law, car seats are required for all children under the age of 8 years (exception – children who are 4 feet 9 inches tall or who weigh more than 65 pounds).

Birthdays and Holidays

Non-food “treats” and healthy alternatives may be offered for holidays and special events (i.e. coins in plastic eggs instead of candy, stickers, fruit salad). Food “treats” may be used for special occasions, such as holiday celebrations or birthdays with the following guidelines:

- **Food brought from home to be served to all of the children must be store-bought or made in commercial bakery and have a label with ingredients** (due to allergies; NAEYC criteria). Mini cupcakes or muffins are suggested instead of large cupcakes. Ice cream treats or whole fruits are also acceptable. We do want to celebrate your child's special day and you are welcome to join us. We ask that you do not send in “goodie bags” or balloons. Please discuss birthday plans with your child's teacher ahead of time.
- Teachers may give parents a list of treats to bring in for seasonal or holiday celebrations.

Screen Time Policy

Preschool and PreK classes may use appropriate interactive technology (i.e. age-appropriate and curriculum related computer games, books on CD, You Tube videos) to support, but not to replace, creative play, physical activity, hands-on exploration, outdoor experiences, social interactions, and other developmentally appropriate learning activities for children. Passive technology (i.e. watching movies, cartoons) is rarely used.

Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire or other structural threat/disaster, the children/staff will be evacuated according to the CLC evacuation plan. The children will be relocated to a safe place on campus at the direction of HCC officials. The first choice of location will be the ATC building, which is the building directly behind the Center. Other locations may be used based upon safety and health issues. Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis to practice evacuation procedures. In the event of a natural disaster (e.g. tornado, hurricane, thunderstorm, etc.) the children/staff will be moved to an interior room within the Center unless advised to move to a different building.

In the event of any emergency requiring evacuation or lockdown of the CLC building every attempt will be made to contact parents to inform them of the situation and of the location of their child. The staff will remain with the children until all have been released to parents or other authorized persons.

Parents can sign up for Emergency Alerts, which will send a text message to your cell phone in the event of an emergency closing of the HCC campus. E-mail messages will also be sent to your college or other designated e-mail account. To register for Emergency Alerts go to www.hagerstownc.edu/emergency.