

2017-2018 PARENT HANDBOOK

9/1/2017

NASA Goddard Child
Development Center



NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC)
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Welcome

The Goddard Child Development Center, Inc., (GCDC) opened its doors in June of 1973, committed to the purpose of combining quality childcare with excellence in early childhood education. We are an educational program for children ages 2 to 5 years of age. Located in Building 90 on the Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) campus, GCDC can support 127 children.

For more than forty years, GCDC has been guided by the founding principle that high quality childcare services should be affordable to all parents. GCDC is committed to satisfying the diverse needs of families within the community with the highest standard of child-inspired, professionally nurtured care and opportunities for learning.

Code of Conduct

GCDC is committed to facilitating healthy behaviors through appropriate child supervision and strong parental engagement. We recognize the importance of families in our program and strive to maintain an environment that is safe and respectful for all its members. GCDC staff adheres to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct. Expectations are that the staff will model appropriate behavior and facilitate appropriate children's behavior. All children, administrators, staff, and family members will speak to and interact with each other in a respectful, appropriate and acceptable manner. Physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated.

Nondiscrimination Policy

GCDC is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, according equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or associational preference. People with disabilities are accorded equal treatment and access to services as long as the program can meet the needs of the child and the parent or family.

Open Door Policy

Enrolled families are welcome to visit GCDC at any time. If your child has trouble with parent visits during the school day, we will suggest ways to make these transitions easier. If you desire to meet with your child's teacher or an administrator, an appointment is requested. You may call or email the teacher or administrator to set up a time that will work for both of you.

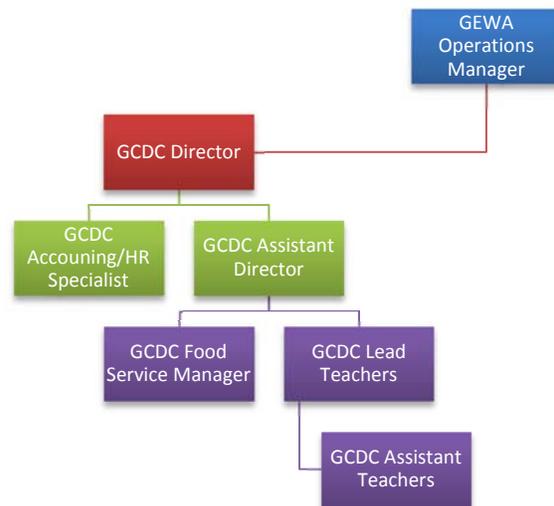
Program Philosophy

GCDC's philosophy is to meet each child's developmental and individual needs by creating a stimulating environment in which they learn, explore and discover. Acting as facilitators in children's learning, GCDC teachers provide support, encouragement, and individual attention to promote each child's strengths and development.

At GCDC, we believe that children learn to be independent and confident learners when their social-emotional needs are met; therefore, we strive to create an environment where children feel safe, loved and have a sense of belonging. We support children's social-emotional development through positive interactions with their classmates and teachers.

GCDC Structure

GCDC is a part of the Goddard Employees Welfare Association (GEWA) Exchange. As such, the GCDC Director reports directly to the GEWA Operations Manager



NASA GCDC Association

The general purpose of the NASA GCDC Association is to support the GCDC in all of its endeavors. The purpose of the Association is to:

- Promote and enhance the education of GCDC students;
- Promote open communication and cooperation between GCDC administration, GCDC parents, and the NASA GSFC Goddard Employees Welfare Association (GEWA);
- Provide volunteer assistance to teachers and other staff members; and
- Raise funds in support of the goals of the Association.

Furthermore, the purpose of the Association Board of Directors is to provide support and advice to the GEWA Operations Manager in overseeing the GCDC. Parent Association meetings are held monthly. All parents are invited to attend. Information about these meetings will be posted at GCDC, listed in the school newsletter and include in the weekly updates.

GCDC Association Board of Directors

The business and affairs of the NASA GCDC Association shall be managed under the direction of the Board of Directors. The GCDC Board of Directors shall be responsible, among other duties, for the following:

1. Monitoring the proper running of GCDC on a monthly basis;
2. Ensure the proper administration of all GCDC policies
3. Preparing and recommending the proposed annual GCDC operating budget to the GEWA Operations Manager.
4. Reviewing the equipment needs of GCDC and recommending the purchase of new equipment within approved budgetary guidelines.
5. Supporting the GEWA Operations Manager when hiring a new Director is required.
6. Evaluating the performance of the GCDC Director and making a recommendation of the performance to the GEWA Operations Manager.

Chapter 2: Program Quality

Research tells us that children who attend high quality childcare programs are more socially and emotionally adjusted than children who do not. Quality programs meet established standards, are regularly evaluated and seek continuous improvement. There are well-defined systems in place for measuring Early Care and Education (ECE) program quality.

Licensing

GCDC is [licensed](#) by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Our licensing number is 32975.

Nonpublic School Certification

GCDC is certified as a [nonpublic school](#). Our certification number is 09-16-7877. The standards for a non-public school are more stringent than the licensing requirements for a daycare center.

Accreditation

Program accreditation is a process by which ECE programs can significantly improve the quality of the services they provide. In this process, a program voluntarily pursues self-study, program improvement, and external program review in order to achieve and publicly confirm that it meets national or state quality standards. **GCDC is accredited by both the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).**

Asthma Friendly Designation

An asthma-friendly school supports the health and academic success of students through maximizing asthma management, reducing environmental asthma triggers in the school environment, and building asthma education and awareness programs for students and staff. **GCDC was designated as an Asthma-Friendly school in 2014.**

Green School

The Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) has certified NASA Goddard Child Development Center (GCDC) as Green School. The Maryland Green Schools program is a nationally recognized program that encourages PreK-12 schools to increase awareness and understanding of environmental interrelationships that impact public health and our society, and that promote responsible environmental stewardship practices. Among other goals, Green Schools seek to conserve energy and natural resources, improve environmental literacy in students, encourage recycling and promote habitat protection.

Maryland Excels

EXCELS is a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that awards ratings to child care programs that meet increasingly higher standards of quality in key areas. Similar to a rating system for restaurants (e.g. a five star restaurant is far better than a one star restaurant), EXCELS is a rating system for childcare. In Maryland, participating programs are rated on a scale of one check mark to five check marks with five check marks

being the highest level awarded. A five check mark program is considered one of Maryland's highest quality child care programs. **GCDC is a leader in the field and has been awarded the highest mark of quality, five check marks.**

Chapter 3: Attendance

Students who attend school regularly learn more and are more successful than students who do not. Parents who make regular school attendance a priority help their children learn to accept responsibility. Attendance patterns are formed early in life. Children who develop good attendance habits in the early years are more likely to continue them throughout their school career. This is important because students who are absent from school miss carefully planned sequences of instruction. They forego active learning experiences, classroom participation and the opportunity to ask questions. They are more likely to fall behind and eventually drop out of school.

Hours of Operation

GCDC hours of operation are 7:15 a.m. to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

GCDC is closed on all Federal holidays and all other times that GSFC is closed. Parents should refer to the school calendar for other GCDC closing dates, such as staff development days. School calendars are distributed to parents each school year. They may also be downloaded from the GCDC website and viewed on the GCDC Facebook page.

Early Dismissal

If GSFC closes early for any reasons, GCDC will close 30 minutes after the closing time announced by GSFC leadership. For example, if GSFC closes at 3:00 p.m., children must be picked up no later than 3:30 p.m. When early closures are anticipated, it is the parents' responsibility to monitor GSFC closure announcements. Parents must always keep all contact information current so that this information is available in the event of any emergency or early closure. Families can update emergency contact information via our website at any time.

Absences

Parents are asked to call GCDC before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence to notify the teacher that their child will not be attending.

Arrivals and Departures

Children thrive in a well-ordered and predictable environment where daily routines, such as arrivals and departures, mealtimes, nap times, and toileting are implemented consistently. Policies in this handbook help to preserve your child's daily routine.

Arrival Procedures

All parents must enter the building by scanning their GSFC badge over the badge reader outside the main entrance. If both parents are dropping off, both parents must scan their badge. This is a GSFC requirement and is used to monitor access to our secure facility. Parents with temporary badges should ring the doorbell and sign into the GCDC visitor's log until their permanent badge is issued. Please note, the door is very sensitive. Pulling or touching the door prior to being told that the lock has been released will cause an alarm to sound. The doorbell can only be heard in

the office. If the administrators are located in another part of the building, there may be a delay in our response to open the door.

Children who can walk independently should be encouraged to walk on their own so that they are in the habit of doing so each day. Children who are carried daily often have difficulty during emergency evacuation procedures. For everyone's safety, please encourage children to walk in and out of the building daily.

Once inside the building, parents should take each child to their assigned classroom and put away all of their child's personal belongings. Parents should not allow children to run through the building during this time. Children may not be left attended.

After putting away all personal items, parents should then take their child to the area where children are being supervised by GCDC personnel. This may be another classroom or the playground. If the drop-off point is in a classroom, parents should assist their child with hand washing and applying sunscreen. If parents are visiting the classroom beyond just dropping off, parents must wash their hands as well. Parents must be certain that a GCDC staff member sees and acknowledges the child before the parent leaves. Parents may not leave their children in classrooms with other parents. They must be left in the custody and care of a GCDC staff member.

Parents are required to log their child into the GCDC attendance system every day using the computer in the atrium. If children are being dropped off by an emergency contact, parents should notify the office beforehand. GCDC prohibits sharing attendance system access codes with anyone.

Arrival By 9:30 a.m.

Each class at GCDC begins its day with a morning meeting or circle time. This is one of the few times that teachers engage in large-group, teacher-directed instruction. During this central time of the day, teachers build schema for the rest of the day by introducing concepts, telling children their goals for each center during play, and reviewing basic concepts such as letters, numbers, letter sounds, vocabulary, weather, calendar and much more. A lot happens in this short period of time! Teachers then build upon this introductory lesson throughout the day.

We have found that children who are regularly present for morning meeting or circle time have a much better day and learn more throughout the school year than children who do not. When children routinely arrive later in the day, they often miss important concepts. While our teachers work with the students to help them catch up, it's simply not the same as participating in a dynamic morning meeting or circle time with their peers.

It's important to also remember that when children's sleep and morning schedules are disrupted and they arrive to school late, they are often more irritable throughout the day because it's difficult for them to get back on schedule with the rest of the class. This, again, negatively impacts their readiness to learn. For this

reason, we ask that parents not drop their children off between the hours of noon and 3:00 p.m.

We encourage parents to help their children get the most out of the school year by having them here by 9:30 a.m. each day. This ensures a less disruptive day for our teachers, better learning opportunities for your child and better preparation for a traditional school day.

Departure

Children must remain in the classroom until parents come to the classroom to pick up their child. A distinct “turning over of responsibility” is necessary. Parents should ensure that a staff member sees and acknowledges them before leaving with their child. We ask that parents not allow children to leave the classroom ahead of them. Unsupervised children in the hallways or atrium can lead to accidents, injury or running out the frequently opening doors. These rules are in place to help keep children safe and help to ensure supervision requirements are maintained.

Because of the rubberized surfacing used on GCDC playgrounds, parents should not walk on playground surfacing while wearing high heels. Doing so punctures the surface. Parents wearing high heels should ask a GCDC member to help secure their child from the playground.

When entering or leaving the building many children like to play on the stepping pods in the front garden. Children must be monitored at all times in this area; children should not play in the cross walk or parking lot.

Communicating with Teachers during Arrival and Departure

Transition times are important time for everyone. Parents often want to share information with staff or learn about their child’s day during this time. We value the importance of communication between parents and staff; however, staff may not be available for long conversations due to their classroom responsibilities. If you need more than a few minutes to talk to your child’s teacher, please call us or email the administrative staff. If the administrative staff can assist you, please stop by the front office.

Custody Agreements

Families must inform GCDC of any custody agreements involving children enrolled at GCDC. A copy of the agreement must be provided at the time of enrollment and with any subsequent change to the agreement. Without a custody agreement on file, GCDC cannot prevent a parent (custodial or noncustodial) from picking up a child.

Denial of Care

GCDC reserves the right to deny care at any time for any reason.

Government Shutdown

In the event of a government shutdown due to furloughs or funding issues, GCDC will send out an e-mail that provides specific instructions regarding whether GCDC can remain open for GCDC parents who work in critical positions.

GCDC parents remain responsible for any tuition due during a government shutdown since we are a non-appropriated fund activity. Our program is fully funded by parent tuition, and the GCDC requires payments from its patrons to operate, maintain staffing, and pay any debts owed.

In the event the GCDC is not able to use government-funded communication (e.g. e-mail, listservs, phones), GCDC patrons and employees can find current information via the GCDC Facebook page.

Parking

Parents must park legally during pick up and drop off either in the spaces in front of the building or in one of the neighboring parking lots. The parking spaces in front of GCDC have a thirty-minute limit to ensure enough space is available for all parents. When parking at GCDC, please be courteous and do not pull your car up so far that it covers the sidewalk. All engines must be turned off, and no children may be left in a vehicle unattended. As a reminder, the speed limit in front of our school is 15 miles per hour. Parents must adhere to the posted speed limit signs at all times.

Release of Children

If someone other than a parent (or person designated on the emergency card) will be picking up a child, GCDC must be notified in writing. Phone calls are acceptable only in emergency situations. GCDC prohibits sharing attendance system access codes with anyone. Emergency contacts must sign the Visitor's Log Book located in the atrium and proceed to the office. GCDC administrators will check the person's identification and compare it to the emergency contacts listed in the child's file.

Children will not be released to anyone under the age of sixteen. We will not release children to parents if we suspect they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Unscheduled Closures

In the event of inclement weather, disaster, evacuations or special events, GCDC follows the GSFC leave policy as indicated in the box below. To determine GSFC's status, call 301-286-NEWS or (301) 286-6397. GCDC's hours correspond to GSFC's operation status codes as follows:

GSFC CODE GREEN or BLUE—GCDC will open as usual
GSFC CODE YELLOW—GCDC opens 15 minutes after GSFC's announced opening of GSFC
GSFC CODE RED—GCDC will be closed

Chapter 4: Curriculum and Assessment

Children begin learning the moment they are born. This is why access to high-quality early childhood programs is so important. For young children, everyt

ing is a learning experience. Exposing your child to a wide variety of positive experiences leads to lifelong learning. At GCDC, we use age-appropriate activities, such as reading books; playing games; listening to music; dancing; and visiting museums, parks, and playgrounds as the foundation of our teaching.

Twos, Preschool and Pre-K Curricula

The most important goals of our preschool curriculum are for children to get along well with others and become enthusiastic learners. We want children to become independent, self-confident, curious, life-long learners who can work well with others. We achieve these goals by creating purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all areas.

GCDC uses The Creative Curriculum® in all classrooms except kindergarten (see the Kindergarten section of this handbook). This is a research-based curriculum that defines goals in the following areas of development: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Social Studies, and the Arts

We accomplish our goals through thoughtfully planned activities, carefully orchestrated classroom arrangements, age-appropriate selections of toys and materials, well-established routines, and engaging and meaningful interactions with teachers.

Assessment

Assessment is the planned and systematic process of observing, recording, and documenting what children do and how they do it. Teachers then analyze the information as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child, including determining the child's interests and needs. Informal assessments occur every day through observation and work sampling.

Formal assessments are completed monthly. The assessment spans across the four developmental domains: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. There is a strong teacher-parent partnership with observational recording. Results of assessments are formally shared with families monthly via a password secured website. Results are also shared during parent-teacher conferences. We encourage all families to check their child's assessment data so that opportunities to partner with the child's teacher in supporting individual needs are not missed. The results of assessments are used to adapt and improve the curriculum as well as to develop specific teaching approaches and practices and to refine instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of the children. The results are also used to provide the optimal learning environment and to inform and assess overall program development and improvement. Assessments may also be used to arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic evaluation for a child when indicated.

Each child has his or her own web-based portfolio that includes the results of formal and informal assessments, photos, work samples, and family partnership correspondence. Parents can access the secure site to see their child's portfolio at any time.

Assessment results are confidential. Information is shared only with those who have a right or a need to know (e.g., the child's parents, school administration, and the child's teachers). Assessment data will be shared with specialists only with the parents' written permission.

Once your account has been established, all technical questions such as password support should be directed to Teaching Strategies.

Developmental Delays

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires all families to complete a developmental screening annually. For children under the age of three, screenings must be completed twice each school year. Developmental screenings are completed by the parents. Parents that suspect developmental delays should contact the Prince George's County Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 3-years-old) at 301-265- 8415, or see the MSDE's resource webpage for the statewide program at <http://tinyurl.com/d53gosx>

The Director may, at any time, request that families seek professional support. This is to ensure that we have as much awareness as possible of all that may be needed to meet the needs of each child.

Kindergarten Curriculum and Assessment

For information about the GCDC Kindergarten curriculum, see the Kindergarten chapter of this handbook.

Recommendations

On occasion, parents may request letters of recommendations to support applications to other schools. These requests including addressed/stamped envelopes must be submitted to the office. Once the forms are completed by the Teacher, the forms are mailed directly to the requesting school. Neither the forms nor the copies are given directly to the parents. Please allow two weeks for this processed. We understand that families may have a number of perspective schools for their child; however, we can only support a maximum of four requests per child.

Chapter 5: Financial Matters

GCDC is a small institution that operates on a tight budget mainly derived from tuition payments. It is extremely challenging to operate the school in a fiscally responsible manner if tuition payments are not made promptly when due. Timely payment allows GCDC to offer high-quality services, materials and supplies, and a well-trained and educated staff.

Deposits

Parents are required to pay a deposit in the amount of two weeks tuition for each child being enrolled. Deposits are due at the time of enrollment. This deposit must be paid within two business days of accepting a space. GCDC will credit this deposit to the family's account when a two-week withdrawal notice is provided, as long as the family's account is in good standing.

It should be noted that because of rate increases between time of enrollment and time of withdrawal, the two week deposit may not fully cover the last two weeks of enrollment. Parents are responsible for any difference between the deposit amount paid at enrollment and that owed at the time of withdrawal.

Donations

GCDC relies on the generosity of parents, grandparents, and friends to support an array of needs at GCDC. Not all contributions need to be financial. Support can take many forms, from volunteering to donating goods and services. Some donations may be tax deductible. Please see the GCDC Business Manager for a receipt for financial and material donations.

Flexible-Spending Accounts

Some employers offer flexible-spending accounts as a benefit to its employees. These programs allow employees to contribute money from their salary before taxes are withheld, and those funds can then be used to reimburse the employee for out-of-pocket dependent care expenses. The GCDC Business Manager can support flexible-spending claims by providing tuition statements and signing required forms. Please email requests to the GCDC Business Manager.

Fundraising

As in most independent schools, tuition alone does not fully cover the cost of operating our school. GCDC has a variety of fundraising programs intended to bridge the gap between what tuition and fees cover and the funding necessary to fulfill the mission and vision of GCDC. Parent support of these fundraisers is critical in GCDC success.

Late Payments

Tuition is due by close of business each Wednesday. A \$20 late fee will be charged to all accounts that are not paid in full by Wednesday of each week. Families with balances that exceed their deposit, may be terminated from our program.

If you believe you have been given a late payment notice in error or are unable to make your payment in a timely manner, please contact the GCDC Business Manager to discuss the matter.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Families that pick up the children after GCDC's closing time will be charged a late fee. **We do not offer a grace period.** GCDC's regular closing time is 5:30 p.m., however it can be earlier such as during holiday periods or inclement weather. Each late pick-up is considered an event. For example, the first time a child is picked up after 5:30 p.m. will result in a late fee of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes after 5:30 p.m.; the second event will result in a \$15.00 charge for every 15 minutes after 5:30 p.m.

A family's late pick-up record is erased at the beginning of the school year.

Late fees are assessed on a membership basis, not on a per child basis. A member who is late picking up their children incurs one late pick-up event no matter how many children are being picked up. Parents are also required to sign the Late Pick-up Book. The GCDC Business Manager will bill accounts accordingly. Late fees will be deducted from the parents account with the next regular tuition cycle.

Monthly Statements

Monthly tuition statements will be emailed out to all families on the 1st of each month for the previous month's record.

Payments

GCDC uses **Tuition Express** for all tuition payments. This system is used to process automatic withdrawals from any checking account. Completed Tuition Express Forms should be submitted to the GCDC Business Manager

Scholarships

A limited number of need-based scholarships are available to qualified families. These scholarships are granted based upon salary guidelines and available funds and are funded by Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) donations. To learn more about scholarships and how to apply, please contact the GEWA Operations Manager.

Termination of Contract/Notice of Withdrawal

Parents who are withdrawing their child from GCDC must submit a withdrawal form two weeks prior to the child's last day at GCDC. Withdrawal dates must fall on a Friday. Withdrawal forms must be submitted via our program's website. Once received, the advance tuition deposit will be used to pay the child's final two weeks of enrollment at GCDC. Parents are responsible for any outstanding balances prior to their child's withdrawal. GCDC will seek the support of GSFC payroll processing to secure any funds due in the event families leave with a balance due. Other steps, as authorized by law, will be taken to secure money owed from families who are not GSFC Civil Servants (e.g. Contractors, employees from other agencies, etc.).

GCDC may terminate a child's enrollment by issuing a written notice to the parents if at any time GCDC deems a child's health or pattern of conduct adversely affects the children, staff or the efforts, efficiency, and mission of GCDC, or if the parents fail to meet their financial obligations to GCDC.

Chapter 6: Food and Nutrition

It is our goal to ensure each child's nutritional well-being. During the school year, GCDC provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack along with milk and juice to the children. Food is prepared, served, and stored at GCDC in accordance with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines, Maryland licensing, and NAEYC accreditation standards for food and nutrition.

Allergies

GCDC works with families and their child's physician to create an allergy action plan. This plan helps to ensure that everyone at GCDC knows about the child's allergies, typical reactions, and plans for responding in the event of an allergic reaction. It is the parents' responsibility to alert both GCDC administration and the child's teachers of any known allergies. In addition, allergies must be documented on the child's Emergency Form and Health Inventory.

When food allergies are known, parents submit a physician signed Food Allergy Action Plan; the original allergy plan goes to your child's teacher and a copy to the administration. A copy of the plan is posted in the child's classroom and the GCDC kitchen. Forms are available in the Administrative Office. Parents must also provide printed copies of our menu with foods that may not be served to the child marked out. GCDC may provide substitutions for any snacks that children cannot consume at GCDC due to an allergy. When this is not possible, we may ask families to provide a substitute that meets USDA/CACFP guidelines. .

Choking Hazards

GCDC staff may not offer children younger than four years of age the following foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Food served at GCDC must be cut into pieces no larger than 1/2-inch cubes for toddlers and 2-year-olds, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

Dietary Restrictions

GCDC will honor documented dietary restrictions. Parents are responsible for documenting the foods that your child cannot have on the monthly menu and providing an appropriate food substitute when restricted items are served. GCDC may provide substitutions for any snacks that children cannot consume at GCDC due to an allergy. When this is not possible, we may ask families to provide a substitute that meets USDA/CACFP guidelines.

Meal Patterns

All meals served at GCDC must comply with the USDA's CACFP guidelines and established meal patterns. This includes meals brought from home. A meal pattern is the set of food components, food items and minimum quantities required for a breakfast, supplement (snack), lunch or supper for a specific age group of children.

Meal patterns are designed to help adults plan well-balanced, nutritious meals and snacks for children. Meals and snacks planned with the CACFP meal pattern supply the kinds and amounts of foods that children require to help meet their nutrient and energy needs.

For information about meal patterns, visit www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Child_Meals.pdf

GCDC will offer lunch to all students. Our lunch is prepared by an approved caterer and meets required Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines (CACFP). Parents can view menus and corresponding allergy information on our website. Catered lunches may not be available on days when the Federal Government is closed because our caterer closes when the Federal Government closes. An example would be on days when the Federal Government is closed due to inclement weather, but GSFC and therefore GCDC, are open. On those days, parents will be required to bring lunch for their children.

The cost of lunch is included in each family's tuition. Tuition will not be adjusted if families opt not to participate in the school lunch program. Parents may only opt out of the lunch program when it is medically necessary to do so; however, when opting out, all meal provisioning, including breakfast and p.m. snack will be discontinued.

Modified Diets

If a child requires a modified diet for medical reasons, the reasons must be stated on the Emergency Form and Health Inventory. Any dietary changes that occur during the school year must be documented on the child's Emergency Form and brought to the teacher's attention as soon as possible. GCDC reserves the right to request that families provide all meals for their child if restrictions are cost prohibitive for our program. When this happens, there will be no reduction in tuition.

Peanut Free Zones

GCDC understands the seriousness of anaphylaxis that may result when children with peanut allergies come in contact with peanuts or peanut products. For that reason, GCDC has designated "peanut free zones" throughout the building. Each classroom has a designed Peanut/Tree Nut Free Zone table within the classroom. This table can be identified by the sign and the red chairs.

Special Occasions

Many parents wish to acknowledge and celebrate their child's birthday or other special occasions at GCDC. Typically, this is done after afternoon snack. Celebrations must be arranged with your child's teacher at least two weeks in advance. This notice is required; without proper notification, we cannot support parties. A cake, cupcakes, or ice cream is appropriate.

For the safety of all, all baked goods brought in to share with your child's classmates must be store bought. Any homemade items brought into GCDC will be sent home. Parents should also check with teachers to learn about any children in the classroom with allergies or special dietary needs. If food is provided it must be inclusive for all children, including

those with allergies. Excluding children because of allergies is not permissible in our school environment.

Birthday plates and napkins are fine; however, please do not bring party favors, balloons, or candy. Classroom celebrations are not a substitute for a home or family birthday party, but a time to recognize an each child's birthday within our program.

Specialty Milk

GCDC provides 2% milk for all students. We also provide milk alternatives from an MSDE/CACFP approved list. Alternatives are provided for children who have a medically documented need. GCDC cannot accommodate milk "preferences." This is true even if parents provide the milk alternative. For children with medically documented milk intolerances, we can only serve milk with enough nutritional substance to be approved by MSDE/CACFP. In general, rice and almond milks do not offer enough nutritional value to be served in place of milk. We may only serve 1% milk, 2% milk and CACFP approved soy milks.

Chapter 7: Health Policies

Our goal at GCDC is to maintain a healthy environment where children and staff can thrive. Together, as staff and families, it is our responsibility to ensure that we are protecting children's health and controlling the spread of infectious illness.

Child Abuse Reporting

Maryland law identifies educators as mandated reporters. See Md. Code Ann. [Family Law], § 5-704. Maryland law requires that educators who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect: (1) notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and (2) if acting as a staff member of a child care institution, immediately notify and give all information required by Maryland Law to the head of the institution or the designee of the head. See Md. Code Ann. [Family Law], §5-704

Accordingly, GCDC staff members who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, shall immediately: (1) notify the GSFC Chief of the Protective Services Division; and (2) notify and give all information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect to the GCDC Director.

Maryland Regulation 13A.16.07.02 explains that when an employee has reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected, the GCDC Director "may not require an employee to report through [the GCDC Director], rather than directly to the local department or a law enforcement agency." Thus, GCDC staff members are not required to receive the concurrence of the GCDC Director prior to notifying the GSFC Chief of the Protective Services Division.

Communicable Diseases

The Child Care Administration requires both staff and parents to inform GCDC if a child or staff member is infected with or had been exposed to a reportable communicable disease (e.g. conjunctivitis, chickenpox, hand-foot-and-mouth disease, strep throat, ring worm). GCDC cannot admit a child with a contagious disease during the period of communicability. Readmission to GCDC requires a written note by a licensed health practitioner, such as the child's pediatrician.

When a child or staff member is diagnosed as having a contagious illness, the child or staff member must be excluded from GCDC for the period of time defined by the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Individual information sheets are available that speak to care and exclusion requirements for specific illnesses. Other symptoms of illness that require exclusion from GCDC include a change in bowel habits (i.e. loose stool that occurs more than twice or with other symptoms), vomiting, undiagnosed rashes, and cold symptoms that do not subside. A doctor's note will be needed indicating that the period of contagion has passed if symptoms persist after a child was diagnosed with a communicable illness.

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness over the weekend or holiday break, parents should still notify the school so that proper parent notification can be processed.

Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization

Parents are required to submit a notarized Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization form upon enrollment.

Hand Washing

Unwashed hands are the primary carriers of bacteria and germs that cause illness. Children and staff are required to wash their hands upon arrival, after using the toilet, before eating, and when soiled. We ask that parents assist their child in hand washing every day upon entry to the classroom.

Health Inventory

Upon enrollment, parents are required to submit a Maryland State Department of Education Health Inventory form for each child enrolled. This form must be updated annually and as immunizations are administered. Failure to update medical forms within 30 days of expiration will result in termination from our program.

Immunizations

To enroll and participate in GCDC programs, all children must submit documentation of age-appropriate immunizations as defined by MSDE or provide supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs.

Medications

Code of Maryland Regulation 13A.16.11.04 requires persons who administer medications in public and nonpublic schools to be trained and certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing as Certified Nursing Assistant. GCDC has staff members trained to administer medications on an emergency basis only (inhaler or epi-pen). A completed Medication form is required for all emergency medications. Emergency medication stored at the GCDC must have the original prescription taped on the medication. Refrigerated medicines may be stored in our locked box in the refrigerator in the upper level.

Pediatric First Aid and CPR

All GCDC staff participates in annual training and hold certifications in pediatric first aid and CPR.

Pets

Other than fish, GCDC has a strict "no pets" policy. Furry or feathered pets are significant causes of allergic responses and can trigger severe asthma symptoms. Skin cells from pet dander can linger in rooms for significant periods of time; therefore, a strict no pet policy is enforced to assure the child care areas are free of pet dander.

Reduction of Indoor Asthma Triggers

Some of the most common indoor asthma triggers include environmental tobacco smoke (secondhand smoke), dust mites, mold, cockroaches and other pests, and household pets. GCDC works to reduce the presence of triggers in our program. Parents can learn more about reducing these triggers at home by visiting <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers.html>

Sick Children

State childcare administration licensing regulations do not permit children to be brought to GCDC when sick or remain at GCDC once it is discovered that they are ill. When parents are notified that their child is ill, they must pick up their child within one hour. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached in a timely manner, Administrative staff will make the decision whether or not to notify the emergency contact. Therefore, it is important that emergency forms are always up to date. Please stop by the office to change your child's form when needed. Our policies have been established for the health and safety of your child as well as the staff and the other children. Please do not ask staff to make exceptions.

If parents have shown negligence regarding the health of a child, the Director will have specific authority to determine whether the health of a child is suitable for attendance at GCDC. His or her opinion will take priority over that of a parent. If the Director deems a child too ill to be in attendance or that a child might infect other children, then the parent must promptly make other arrangements for the care of the child.

Smoke Free Facility

GCDC is a smoke free facility. Due to the acknowledged health threat to young children from exposure to tobacco smoke pollution, it is the policy of this facility to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and parents. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and applies to employees, parents, and visitors to the facility. There will be no smoking in any area of the childcare center at any time. This includes both indoor and outdoor areas. Field trips, walks, and all other off-site activities and functions will also be smoke-free.

Sunscreen

Parents are asked to apply their child's sunscreen before bringing them to school in the summer and spring. Sunscreen may be reapplied at GCDC by staff if the appropriate Medication Form for your child is on file. (Note: Most sunscreens need to be applied at least a half-hour in advance.)

Chapter 8: Kindergarten Policies

Kindergarten children enter school with varied experiences and expectations. Five-year-olds are discovering the world around them and are anxious to explore it. The development of a kindergartner's positive self-image as well as his and her good feelings about school is paramount. Our kindergarten environment nurtures the child and encourages exploration and learning.

Through a balance of play and academics, children develop the skills necessary to become constructive members of the school community. The primary function of the kindergarten program is to provide your child with a positive and successful learning experience in her or his first formal school year. A major goal of the kindergarten educator is to keep the child's needs as the central motivation for lessons.

The kindergarten curriculum provides the building blocks to help young children develop into lifelong learners. Your child's first year in school is a new experience for parent and child alike. Many things that a child will learn to do in kindergarten will become the cornerstone of his or her education.

Attendance Limits

Children who do not pass kindergarten may not attend GCDC's kindergarten program for a second year. However, with the Director's approval, students may attend kindergarten for non-credit one year and then for credit in the second year.

Attendance Policy for Kindergarten

COMAR 13A.08.01.01 and COMAR 13A.09.09.10B require that our school calendar provide at least 170 days of instruction each school year. We are further required to include additional school days in our school calendar for inclement weather days. Students must be present 94 percent of all scheduled school days in order to receive credit for successfully completing kindergarten. Therefore, children absent more than ten (10) days during the school year (no more than 5 days in a semester) will not pass or receive credit for kindergarten. In the state of Maryland, any Student who does not pass will be required to attend kindergarten again before being admitted to first grade.

Parents are asked to call GCDC before 9:00 a.m. the day of the absence to notify their child's teacher of the impending absence. Upon return to school, parents must report to the Administrative Office to obtain and complete an absence note prior to taking their child to class. This note documents the dates and reason for the absence. If a note is not submitted within two school days, the absence will become unexcused and makeup work cannot be submitted.

A student with an excused absence is permitted one day for each day of absence to make up her or his work. Families are responsible for requesting missed work from the teacher the day the child returns to school. Parents may request assignments for students absent from school for extended periods (3 days or more). To do so, parents should please contact the Lead Teacher for their child's class.

Eligibility for Kindergarten

Children must be five years of age by September 1st of the school year to enroll in and earn credit for kindergarten. GCDC may allow early admission to kindergarten for children whose birthday falls on or between September 2nd and October 15th. Parents seeking early admission for their child must complete the Early Admissions Screening Process.

Parents interested in early admission must contact their local public school and request a screening that meets the MSDE requirements for early admissions. GCDC requires an official letter from a school district that indicates the child passed the screening. Note: We cannot guarantee a space for credit without this documentation.

When space is available, parents may also enroll children who are not age-eligible in the GCDC Kindergarten program for non-credit. This will not meet the mandated attendance requirement to attend a public or nonpublic kindergarten program regularly during the school year before entering the first grade. In other words, your child would have to repeat kindergarten before enrolling in first grade.

Kindergarten Curriculum

The State Curriculum (SC) provides clear and detailed information about what Maryland students should know and be able to do at each grade level. All of Maryland's 24 local school systems have included the SC as part of their curriculum. This curriculum requirement applies specifically to our kindergarten program.

GCDC uses the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Treasures© curriculum for our kindergarten program, which is an MSDE recommended curriculum and meets all the requirements of the SC guidelines.

GCDC follows the Maryland Common Core Standards.

Make Up Work

Students are only allowed to complete make up work for excused absences. MSDE recognizes the following as lawful (excused) absences from school: Death in the immediate family, illness of the student, quarantine, court summons, Principal or Director-approved activity, mental or physical incapacity, violent storms, observance of a religious holiday, and state of emergency.

Absences are classified as excused or unexcused only for the purposes of the student's right to make up work after being absent. This classification does not impact the total number of days a student can miss as defined above. Students cannot miss more than 10 days in a school year (no more than 5 days in a semester) total, regardless if they are excused or unexcused.

Official School Days and Attendance

While our school is open on curriculum break days, curriculum break days do not count towards the 170 days of instruction offered during the school year. Curriculum break days are clearly identified on the GCDC calendar. GCDC will be open on curriculum break days; however, no new concepts will be introduced and no projects that would require your child's

presence will be started on these days. We highly suggest that families schedule trips or vacations during curriculum breaks.

Tardy Policy

The GCDC Kindergarten Tardy Policy has been developed to emphasize the importance of each student being in the classroom for the entire formal school day (9:30 – 3:30). Learning the responsibility of getting to class on time is an integral part of MSDE's standard of excellence and prepares students for success. In our school, instructional time is viewed as a precious resource. Consequently, we view chronic tardiness as a serious problem, particularly for the kindergarten class. Each time a student arrives after 9:30 a.m. or leaves before 3:30 p.m., their parent or guardian must come to the Administrative Office and complete a tardy/early departure pass before the child is brought to class or leaves for the day.

Three tardy/ early departure notices in a semester will result in your child being marked as having one unexcused absence and will not be allowed to make up any work missed. This will also be counted toward the total number of days (10 days per school year/5 days per semester) your child can miss each school year.

Truancy

COMAR 13A.08.01.04 states "A truant is a student as one who is absent without lawful cause from the attendance for a school day or portion of it." A student is considered habitually truant when (s)he is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days in excess of 20 percent of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year. In addition, noncredit students with excessive absences may be dismissed from the kindergarten program and enrolled in another class.

Chapter 9: Parent Involvement

We firmly believe that families play an integral role in their child's learning and development. We value your participation in our program and rely on your shared input on the growth and development of your child as well as continuous communication and feedback with GCDC to ensure that your families' needs are being met.

GCDC provides many opportunities for parents to receive information about their child's progress, general activities and ways to become involved at GCDC.

Back-to-School Night

Good first impressions make a difference, and the first open house of the school year gives teachers a chance to gain parents' support. It also allows teachers an opportunity to create a personal connection with parents and establish ways for continued communication throughout the school year. Teachers provide an overview of the curriculum, classroom environment, daily schedule, goals and objectives, guidance and discipline, lunches, snacks, and naps. Parents provide valuable information about their individual child, and share information about their families, and bring photos of their families.

Communication

Good two-way communication between families and GCDC is necessary for student success. Not surprisingly, research shows that the more parents and teachers share relevant information with each other about a child, the better equipped both will be to help that child achieve in all areas of development.

Parents are given contact information for teachers and program administrators upon enrollment and throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers and program administrators at any time during business hours.

Daily Connect

This app is used in the Preschool 2 program. It is a means of communicating with families about their child's habits such as eating, sleeping, drinking, pottyng etc. You can also send brief messages to the Teachers through this app.

Email

GCDC recognizes that e-mail is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across our society. Staff members are provided with a GCDC e-mail account (firstinitiallastname@gcdc-nasa.org) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication with parents. As a policy, GCDC staff will not respond to emails outside of business hours. If your email is complex, we may request a meeting rather than address multiple issues via email.

Facebook

GCDC maintains a Facebook account. It can be accessed at www.facebook.com/NASA.GCDC. GCDC will not post photos of children without written permission from parents. Parents are encouraged to "like" our page as a way to receive regular communication about school events.

GCDC Electronic Mailing List

GCDC communicates with parents via an electronic mailing list. Parents will automatically be added to the Members list upon submission of a membership application. Upon enrollment you will automatically be added to the Enrolled list. Each classroom also has a mailing list for communication specific to their classroom. Parents are automatically added to the appropriate mailing list upon enrollment and at transitions. **Mailing lists may not be used for personal use such as mailing invitations to birthday parties.**

General Membership Meetings

Once a year, a general meeting of the membership convenes to review the past year's events and accomplishments and the strategic plan for the upcoming school year. Elections for new GCDC Association board members and the next year's Association budget are also voted upon by a quorum of the membership. Special general meetings may be called throughout the year if issues arise that must be addressed in a timely manner.

Information Sharing

Parents with children enrolled in the two-year-old classes will receive a daily report that shares information about their child's day.

Newsletters are distributed electronically on a monthly basis throughout the school year to all GCDC members.

The GCDC Parent Board, located in the atrium, contains information posted to comply with regulations or regarding the administration of the program. Notices for communicable illnesses are also posted for two weeks on this board and throughout GCDC.

Routine information is generally shared through weekly notes and bulletin boards inside and outside each classroom. In addition, there is a dry-erase board maintained in the atrium that provides important information on a daily basis or as needed.

Parents are responsible for reading bulletin boards, notices and newsletters, and taking appropriate action as necessary.

Library Books

GCDC maintains a small library. Families may checkout books from this library for a period of one week. The checkout process is managed by the Team Coordinators and must be completed before 5:15 p.m. Families are responsible for replacing any damaged books.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are one-on-one meetings that provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to engage in two-way communication about each child's developmental progress.

A formal continuum assessment is completed on each child twice per year for all enrolled children, once in the fall and again in the spring. For the kindergarten class, an additional progress report may be given in the winter. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled twice a year with parents to discuss their child's progress and development within the

classroom. The report will focus on the total development of the child, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Due to student-teacher ratio requirements, if parents will need more than three to five minutes to speak with a teacher during the day, we ask them schedule a time to meet away from the classroom. Parents are encouraged to discuss any matter they deem necessary with their child's teacher or the GCDC Director or Assistant Director.

Parent Areas

GCDC has a parent area located on the ramp connecting the two school wings. This area is a cozy place to read to a child who may be having a rough morning or transition issues. Parenting book topics range from caring for your newborn to choosing an appropriate school setting to raising a family on a budget are also available here. There is a sign-up sheet located on the shelf if you wish to borrow a book.

Parental Input

Parents should feel free to contact the GCDC Administrative staff, the GCDC Board of Directors, or the Director with questions or suggestions about the operation of GCDC. There is a family suggestion box located on the parent information table in the atrium. Parents are asked to complete surveys and questionnaires during each year and upon exit from GCDC. Parents wishing to express concerns may request a conference with a teacher or the Director. If concerns are not resolved, a meeting with the GEWA Operations Manager may be requested.

Phone Calls

Teachers may call parents to share information about their child's progress or other concerns. Parents are reminded that when teachers are in ratio, they cannot accept non-emergency phone calls. The best time to call your child's teacher is during naptime.

Volunteerism

All enrolled families are required to volunteer 10 hours per school year. Four hours must be completed between the first day of school and the last day of the first semester. Four additional hours must be completed between January 1st and the last day of school. Two hours are required during the summer months. Families will be charged \$25 for each unmet volunteer hour requirement at the end of each reporting period.

All volunteer hours must be approved in advance by a member of the GCDC staff and be documented by submitting a completed volunteer receipt to the GCDC Lead Team Coordinator at the completion of the volunteer activity. Families may check the status of their volunteer hours via GCDC's website.

Volunteer Opportunities

Families may learn about volunteer opportunities by visiting www.nasagcdc.com and clicking on the volunteer information page. Once there, click on the VolunteerSpot icon. This database includes a real time listing of all GCDC volunteer opportunities for the school year. It is updated each time new opportunities become known. Families may also initiate projects of interest by speaking with a member of the GCDC staff.

Accrual of Hours

In most cases, volunteer hours are calculated in real time. In other words, volunteers earn the number of hours or portion thereof worked. For example, a volunteer for a field trip will be awarded the number of hours required for the trip. Volunteer hours are earned in increments of 15 minutes.

Volunteer Awards

Although GCDC only requires ten volunteer hours per year, GCDC seeks to recognize those volunteers that go well above this requirement. GCDC is a [President's Volunteer Service Award](#) certifying organization. Volunteers that earn 100 or more hours at any time during their child's enrollment at GCDC will be awarded with this prestigious honor.

Therefore, it is critical that volunteers submit a volunteer service receipt for all volunteer acts performed at GCDC, even after completion of the -10 hour minimum requirement. For the purposes of the [President's Volunteer Service Award](#), hours do not reset each school year. Hours will continue to accrue and count toward this award for as long as the individual volunteers in support of NASA GCDC.

Chapter 10: General Policies

Our program emphasizes the positive aspects of your child's world while helping her or him learn to cope with negative aspects. We believe that a child wakes up each morning eager to learn and experience new people and new situations, and to be a confident individual, thriving in our complex world. Your child will learn to be self-reliant, observant and inquisitive.

At GCDC, we will help your child use all five senses in learning to discover their world. Each classroom has a variety of materials arranged throughout 12 learning centers (interest areas). The centers include but are not limited to dramatic play, blocks, language-literacy, library, listening station, science, math, sensory, art, technology and media, manipulatives, and music and movement.

Language arts emphasizes sequential pre-reading tasks, phonics materials, such as word-picture cards, charts, and a variety of additional hands-on materials, which promote the understanding of print concepts. The language development approach emphasizes the understanding of written communication through hearing and discriminating the sound of language.

Mathematics, including counting, sorting, matching, discrimination of size and shape, addition and subtraction is taught using manipulative materials. Math concepts are connected to all aspects of the learning environment as well as the lesson-planned activities. Children are taught to use logical thinking and problem solving skills.

Our science and social studies lessons bring the real world to children. Your child's discoveries involving animal behavior, air, water, gardening, the community, and the world's people lend excitement and improved understanding of daily life.

Art, music, and movement education are integral parts of the center's curriculum and help to make a cultural contribution to well-rounded program.

Anti-Bully Policy

GCDC is committed to providing a safe and nurturing school environment that values diversity and commonality. GCDC is also committed to fostering a climate where individuals are valued and their safety and rights are protected. To that end, the GCDC prohibits acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation because they compromise the learning environment and well-being of students, staff, and community.

Challenging Behavior

When challenging behaviors occur, the GCDC staff will work with parents to identify age-appropriate solutions to the behavior. If children are sent to the office more than three times in a school year, the parent and teacher must develop a contract that identifies expectations and roles for both parties to help the child gain control of his or her behavior in the child care setting. It is important to note that GCDC must maintain childcare ratios at all times. If a child's behavior becomes so disruptive that it puts the other children at risk or takes the teacher out of ratio for extended periods of time, GCDC may request an

evaluation from a qualified professional. If parents do not comply with such a request, the child may be excluded from care.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all documents and information collected and maintained at GCDC for your child. GCDC will not disclose information concerning an individual child or the child's parents or guardians to a person other than the staff or government officials acting in the course of their duties, unless the parents or guardians grant written permission for the disclosure, except as required by law.

Conflict Resolution

Ongoing, two-way communication is the best method for preventing conflict, especially between parents and teachers. When members of the GCDC community disagree, each has a responsibility to consider respectfully the other's views, to act in the best interest of any children involved, and to assume that the other party is doing the same. Parents who have a conflict with any member of the GCDC community should first contact that person directly, respectfully, and expediently and try to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved or if it is not feasible to contact the person directly, you may contact the GCDC Director, who will work with both parties to resolve the problem.

GCDC follows all of the policies, guidance and regulations of the Goddard Space Flight Center Facility. Goddard does not tolerate any instance of harassment, intimidation, bias or unlawful discrimination and is committed to a violence-free workplace. GSFC is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace environment that encourages and empowers each individual to perform at his or her best. Parents should treat GCDC employees as GSFC colleagues and engage in collegial interactions at all times. GCDC employees have resources available to address conflicts just as civil servant and contractors do and may use any of the following to address conflicts.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), 301-286-0482

Ombudsman – 301-286-4467

Anti-Harassment Program, 301-286-6582

Equal Opportunity Programs Office, 301-286-0379

Dress

Play is the child's work. It is important that children come to school appropriately dressed for their work. This work involves painting, gluing, molding, building, climbing, running, and jumping; therefore, washable play clothes are most appropriate. Occasionally, clothing can become stained, as children need to feel free to explore and experiment. Children are required to wear well fitting, closed-toe shoes on the playground. Shoes that do not fit well may result in injury.

We suggest sending your child to GCDC in comfortable clothing that you don't mind if it gets an occasional stain or dirt from your child's exploration. During winter months, please remember that appropriate winter garb, such as boots, hats, gloves, and scarves, is

required to play in planned snow activities. Appropriate cold weather gear is required when the temperatures fall below sixty degrees.

Field Trip Policy

Field trips include walks around GSFC, as well as excursions away from GSFC. When classroom field trips are planned, GCDC is not open for care (for children in that class) during the hours of the event, e.g., bus departure from GCDC until bus return to GCDC. Each class will have 2 field trips away from GSFC each year. Individual classrooms may schedule additional field trips throughout the school year to supplement the program.

Please note: Parents of two-year-olds must chaperone their children on field trips and are not given volunteer credit time for attending. Parents of children in all other classrooms may only chaperone one field trip per school year. GCDC reserves the right to deny parent requests to chaperone.

Each child must have a signed permission slip in order to attend field trips. Parent chaperones are welcome to attend and will be presented with this opportunity. GCDC provides bus transportation to and from each field trip, but chaperone space may be limited. If you are chaperoning a field trip, you will need to meet with the teacher prior to the scheduled field trip to review the field trip guidelines, receive the itinerary and pick up the first-aid kit specifically developed for field trips.

Once on the field trip, parents often wish to venture out on their own. We request that you do not separate from the group until your teacher has released you. Our field trips serve as hands-on learning opportunities to expand the lessons taught in school.

A headcount will take place prior to departure, upon arrival at the location, before departing the location and upon return to GCDC. For everyone's safety, field trip participants may not use two modes of transportation (e.g. ride the bus to the trip but home with a parent in the car or vice versa). Participants must ride the same bus on the return trip as they did when going to the field trip site.

All GCDC students and teachers must wear their class colored t-shirts. See the T-shirts section in this chapter for more information.

When offsite trips are scheduled, parents must provide their own packed lunch. The lunch must be fully disposable not may not contact peanut products.

Guidance and Discipline

One of our teachers' main goals is to facilitate the children's development of responsibility and self-regulation. Teachers set clear, consistent, and fair limits for children's behavior and hold them accountable to standards of acceptable behavior. To the extent that children are able, teachers engage them in developing rules and procedures for behavior of class members. Teachers redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activity or use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed. Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations, respond with respect, and guide children to resolve conflicts and solve their own problems.

GCDC will not tolerate physical abuse, verbal abuse, withholding or the threat to withhold food.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are placed in a large bin by the sign-in/out table located in the entrance foyer. Please check the box periodically for any of your child's belongings, as well as when you are aware your child has lost a particular item. Quite often children will leave items in the receiving room when they arrive early or in the closing room at the end of the day. For any other personal items, such as ID badges, drivers licenses, and keycards that have been misplaced, please check with the Administrative Office.

Nap Policy

Naptime is from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for the two-year-old through pre-kindergarten classrooms and 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. for the kindergarten classroom. The environment is prepared for naptime by reducing the lights, closing window treatments, and playing soft music to help children relax. Children are allowed to rest on their cot with their blanket and a soft animal or doll. Please note the following:

- Neither pillows nor pillow pets are allowed.
- The children are not required to sleep;
- All children must remain on their cot during naptime; and
- If a child does not want to sleep, the child may be given a quiet activity to do on his or her cot during naptime.

Cot sheets and blankets are sent home every Friday, when soiled, or the last day of the week that your child is in attendance at GCDC. Please launder all items and bring them back to GCDC upon your return. Licensing Regulation—Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.16.09.04 requires that all children have an adequate supply of clean bedding. If you fail to return your child's cot sheet to GCDC, we will attempt to provide a sheet from our clean used sheets, however, if they are not available, parents will be charged a fee each time that a sheet is not provided or available for your child.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important and integral part of a high-quality early childhood education curriculum. We ask that parents assist us in ensuring that all children can go outside daily by providing appropriate weather gear for their children. GCDC will not allow children to go outside if they do not have appropriate attire for the weather. Children will go outside on most days, except in rain, extreme cold or when the air quality is in the unhealthy range. Children must have outer garments appropriate for all weather. Mittens or gloves are needed on cold weather days. Boots and snowsuits are needed on snowy days when we go outside and play. Please bring them on the first day of snow. Please send an extra pair of shoes to wear in the classroom. We try to keep the classroom floors clean and dry (wet floors are slippery and cause accidents). Sneakers or closed-toe shoes are required.

Conditions	Outdoor Play
Below 10 degrees F	Outdoor playtime will not be permitted. Alternative activities will be available.
Between 10-20 degrees F	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 10 to 15 minute increments. Children without proper attire will not be able to go outside.
Between 20-30 degrees F	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 20 to 30 minute increments. Children without proper attire will not be able to go outside.
30+ degrees F	Outdoor playtime will remain at the regular scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour. Children without proper attire will not be able to go outside.
Code Red	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 10 to 15 minute increments. On Mondays and Fridays, Sprinkle Time activities will be permitted at the regular scheduled time.
Code Orange	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 20 minute increments. On Mondays and Fridays, Sprinkle Time activities will be permitted at the regular scheduled time.
Code Yellow	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 30 minute increments. On Mondays and Fridays, Sprinkle Time activities will be permitted at the regular scheduled time.
Code Green	Outdoor playtime will remain at the regular scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
UV Index between 1 and 5*	Outdoor playtime will remain at the regular scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
UV Index between 6 and 7*	Outdoor playtime will be limited to before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. at regular scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
UV Index between 8+*	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 20 to 30 minute increments before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m.

Personal Items Needed for School

Everyday classroom items include:

- A complete set of extra clothing (appropriate for season) to be kept on hand during the year. Please note if your child has an accident and we do not have a change of clothes for your child, you will receive a telephone call to either bring a change of clothes or pick up your child. In the event that we have spare items available, we will use these items first.
- A small blanket for rest periods
- A small stuffed animal or soft doll for naptime, if desired.
- A bathing suit, towel, swim shoes, and a water bottle (summer only).

- A sweater or jacket for chilly days in the classroom. It is also good for outdoor periods in the spring and fall when children might not yet need coats in the morning or afternoon.
- Two-year-old room only: Items for diapering (disposable diapers, wipes, creams, etc.) The use of pull-up diapers is not permitted at GCDC. Bottles, pacifiers, and sippy cups are also not permitted in the center at any time. If you use these items for your child, you must leave them in your car. Parents must write the child's first and last name on belongings and clothing items with permanent markers so that they can be returned if misplaced. This is very important with articles of clothing, such as coats, sweaters, mittens, hats, boots, etc. Please check as the seasons change to be sure children have appropriate extra clothes for the season. Remember, children grow. If your child has not used the extra clothes for a while, she or he may have outgrown them.

Potty Training

Children enrolled in the two-year-old classrooms are not required to be potty trained, but will be assisted in potty training before they transition into the 3- to 4-year-old classroom. Pull-ups are not permitted at GCDC. With pull-ups the child does not feel the discomfort of wetness and the potty training process is slower. Once the decision has been made to start the potty training process, children are to arrive at school in underwear. Diapers or other forms of diapers should not return to school.

T-Shirts

Each GCDC class has an assigned t-shirt color. Students and teachers are required to wear their class colored t-shirt on field trip days. This is a safety precaution. It helps to ensure that teachers, parent chaperones and trip supervisors can quickly identify students within each group. Parents are given one t-shirt upon enrollment. With transitions, parents must purchase a t-shirt in their child's new class color. Children who are not wearing a class colored t-shirt on field trip days will be given a new one and the family's account will be billed for the new shirt.

Teacher to Child Ratios

GCDC ensures that sufficient staff with primary responsibility for children is available to provide frequent personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and to offer immediate care as needed. The ratio of staff to children varies depending on the age of the children, the type of program activity, the inclusion of children with special needs, the time of day, and other factors. It is GCDC policy for all children to be appropriately supervised by staff at all times. The following chart summarizes GCDC teacher and child ratios.

Classroom	Teacher: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Comets First Semester	1:6	12
Comets Second Semester	1:10	15
Little Discoveries	1:6	12
Milky Ways	1:10	17
Little Dippers	1:10	15
Satellites	1:10	20
Shooting Stars	1:10	17
Constellations	1:10	17
Rockets	1:15	17

Toys from Home

In order to support teachers in the classrooms, we ask that families not allow children to bring toys from home to school unless teachers have asked the children to bring something to share for share time or to support a learning activity or concept. This policy reduces the tears or conflicts over broken or lost items.

Transitions

Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with a new situation such as moving to a new classroom. Children's classroom transitioning is based upon a combination of their birth date and developmental maturity. To ensure an easier and a healthier transition for your child, GCDC has developed a transition model that will allow children to feel more comfortable and confident within their new environment.

To support the continuity of care and instruction, transitions are not permitted after October 31st. This eliminates disruptions to established classroom routines and procedures. Because tuition is based upon the level of care (e.g. student/teacher ratios), tuition rates remain constant for children enrolled in classrooms with a 1:6 ratio as long as they remain in that classroom. Tuition is not adjusted solely due to the age of the child. For transitions that may occur during the first two months of school, they will begin with the child visiting their new classroom and teacher for the period of two hours per day. Generally, this will

happen on a Monday and the total number of hours will increase as the week continues. Week long transitions are not mandatory, but recommended for children who need a transition period to ensure a less traumatic experience into a new environment. Each has individual needs, which may vary. Transition periods are based upon teacher's recommendations, the child's developmental needs and parents' input.

For transitions that occur at the end of the school year, placements for the new school year are decided based upon a number of factors. This includes but is not limited to the child's age, assessment data, gender (balancing boys/girls in like classrooms), learning styles, peer groups, etc. We do not place children in classroom solely to keep them with siblings or close friends. We want our students to develop broad experiences that come of interacting with a variety of children and Teachers.

Chapter 11: Safety and Security

Your child's safety and security are our number one priority. Health and safety policies provide specific guidelines to promote health and safety, and prevent the spread of contagious diseases in the child care setting. Policies include specific guidelines required by licensing or regulations, best practices, and information specific to GSFC.

Badges

GCDC can sponsor/request badges for parents who do not work at GSFC. We will only sponsor one badge per family (except when neither parent works for GSFC).

Emergency Evacuations

In the event of an extreme emergency, in which GCDC (Building 90) is to be evacuated, all building 90 occupants will exit the building and proceed across the street to the sidewalk furthest away from our building proceed to Building 18.

During a shelter in place exercise, parents should **not** leave their building to shelter in place with their child at GCDC. Due to limited space in building 90, we are unable to safely accommodate parents during these exercises.

GCDC participates in planned monthly fire drills and semi-annual shelter in place drills to ensure the children know the appropriate response to an emergency. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

Lockdown Procedures

In the event that the Goddard Security personnel institute a Center-wide lockdown, GCDC will also go on lockdown. GCDC Administrative staff will send an email to enrolled parents with further instructions. If the internet is down, we will contact parents via telephone where possible.

Secure Key Card Access

GCDC is secured by a key-card access system at all entrances. Upon enrollment, parents employed by GSFC will be given documentation to apply for key card access to GCDC. GCDC will submit this paperwork to GSFC Security. This process may take a few days. Parents who do not work for GSFC will not be issued a key card and must ring the doorbell for entry into GCDC. Parents are asked not to open the door for anyone if you are uncertain of his or her identity. Parents with access to our program are required to use their badge to access our building and should not rely on ringing the bell for access each day.

Video Monitoring

Our building is equipped with a state of the art security system that includes video monitoring. Cameras are located in the common areas (e.g. the atrium, near the front door and on the playgrounds). The videos are monitored by GSFC Security.

