

CHILDSPACE DAY CARE CENTER
7500 Germantown Avenue
Smith Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19119

WELCOME TO CHILDSPACE

We are happy to have you here. For those of you who are just starting out, as well as for you who have been with us for a while, we hope that this handbook will answer some questions that you have or might have in the future.

Enclosed are the following materials:

- Childspace History and Goals
- Policies and Procedures
- Class Introductions

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Childspace opened its initial center in the Mt. Airy Presbyterian Church in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia in September 1988, serving 20 children aged three months through two years, with an After school program for 40 children in grade K-6th.

In September 1992, Childspace opened a new center, “Childspace Too” at 5517 Greene Street in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Another expansion came about in September 1999 when Childspace partnered with HELP Philadelphia and PHMC to open its third center, “Childspace West” located at 4910 Wyalusing Ave in West Philadelphia.

In order to accommodate additional children, in August 2011 The Mt. Airy Center relocated to the New Covenant Campus 7500 Germantown Ave. The new site is a large 4 story building, Smith Hall. The center has expanded its capacity serving, Infants ages 4 months through 12 months, Young Toddlers ages 12 months through 2 years, Toddlers ages 2 through 3, Preschool ages 3 up to kindergarten as well as a Summer Camp and After School Programs serving ages Kindergarten through 5th grade.

The Childspace Centers were organized to provide high quality day care spaces for a diverse mix of children. An organizational structure was designed which would (hopefully) motivate talented day care workers to join and to remain in the field of early childhood education. The Childspace Model involves two organizations: Childspace Day Care Center, a non-profit organization which has a board made up of parents, child development specialists, community supporters and center staff, and Childspace Management Group, Inc., a worker cooperative whose member/owners are the Childspace staff. This model was designed to recognize the important roles that both parents and day care staff play while creating more opportunities and incentives for the day care staff to be committed and invested in the quality of the day care program. This model also reflects a desire to create better quality jobs in day care because we feel (and studies substantiate) better quality jobs are directly related to higher quality care for children.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Admission to Childspace shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin or sex. Childspace values diversity and we will do our best to provide appropriate services to children with special needs. The Director will be informed by parent of any special needs a child might have at the time of enrollment. In an effort to provide quality service the family is asked to share any IFSP's or IEP's with the director so an appropriate plan for the child can be made. The IFSP or IEP will only be shared with staff who are directly involved in planning for that child.

OUR FACILITY

Childspace is located at 7500 Germantown Ave in the Smith Hall Building on the beautiful New Covenant Campus. Facilities include small classrooms, an outside play area, indoor gross motor rooms, and access to the grounds of the New Covenant Campus. Septa Bus Route #23 runs one block away from the center and the Septa Chestnut Hill West train station is nearby.

LICENSING

The State of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare licenses Childspace. The center adheres to all the licensing regulations, and a copy of our Certificate of compliance is posted on the Parent Bulletin Board, and outside the Director's Office. Licensing regulations require that we report all suspected cases of child abuse to child line. Further no weapons, firearms or ammunition are prohibited in a child day care center.

ACCREDITATION

We are proud of the fact that we are a NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Accredited Program. As an accredited program we have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited outside professional review to verify compliance with the Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs and have been found to be substantial compliance with the criteria. We are one of approximately 30 accredited centers in Philadelphia.

OUR STAFF

Childspace employs staff only after careful screening and background checks. Our head teachers are required to have degrees in Child Development, Education or a related field. We do make an exception and will promote an assistant teacher to a head teach position if the assistant teacher has extensive experience and is presently completing his/her degree. We encourage all staff to further their studies in related areas.

We employ part-time as well as full-time workers and we also have very dedicated volunteers. We do not count volunteers as staff when determining staff ratios.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF OUR PROGRAM

The Childspace philosophy is that children learn by experience. We believe that children must first feel emotionally and physically secure to be able to explore and learn from their environment. We are concerned with all aspects of children's growth: social, emotional, cognitive and physical. We plan our program at each development level to provide opportunities for children to try new things both individually and in groups, make new friends and have fun. Activities are provided in the classrooms, outdoors, in the gym and on trips. Our toys are kept on open shelves for easy accessibility to children. In group activities, we recognize that each child is an individual and we encourage children to express themselves according to their own personalities through art, music, circle time, body movement, games, imaginary play, block play, book time and cooking. We set limitations primarily with regard to the safety of all children. We try to teach children to respect each other's person as well as their feelings and introduce children to the diversity found in society. We attempt to structure the classroom and activities in a way, which allows choice and flexibility within the security of a consistent schedule and pattern of expectations. We encourage parents to get involved in our program, make suggestions and ask questions.

CURRICULUM

The Creative Curriculum is used as our curriculum framework to provide children with opportunities to grow and develop in the following areas: social, emotional, cognitive, physical and language. Rooms are arranged in interest areas, and materials are provided in these areas to allow children to explore their environment, and to enhance their learning. A daily schedule and daily routine provides the basic structure for each day. Classroom themes are incorporated into the curriculum to provide the children with opportunities to learn about the world in which they live. Classroom themes are selected and based on what the teachers know about the community, and the children's interest. Examples of themes that are used or have been used include: New Beginnings (Learning about our classroom, ourselves, and the other children in the classroom); The 4 seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer); Our Five senses; Our Families; the Human body; Transportation; Animals; Insects; and Community Helpers. Recognizing that parents are the most important people in the child's world, our curriculum encourages parent involvement in a number of ways. "Pizza nights" are held where parents and children come together to learn about what is happening in the classroom, parents are invited to share their interests and talents with the children, and they are asked for their suggestions and ideas.

ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the center's assessment's procedures is to document what the children do, and how they do it. Assessments make it possible to learn about each child and the context of his or her learning. This information is used to make educational plans, and curriculum plans which will further each child's growth and development.

Assessments are done both through formal and informal means. Our formal assessment tool is based on the goals and objectives of the Creative Curriculum which is used as our curriculum framework. This tool is a check list, which documents the child's strengths, and what areas need to be worked on. By working with the assessment tool, the teachers can amend and individualize curriculum to meet individual needs. Formal conferences are held twice a year, and parents/guardians are given this assessment tool at the time of the conference. Informal assessment tools include anecdotal observations, portfolios, and behavior logs. Informal assessments are carried out on a continuous basis. Children's assessment records are confidential, and kept in the business office. Staff who directly work with the children and the administrative staff have access to the files.

Although formal conferences are held twice a year, parents/guardians may request a conference any time. Parents/guardians are given ideas and suggestions for helping their children at home and during conferences are asked for their suggestions and ideas. When assessments indicate that a child may be having difficulty in one or more areas of development, teaching staff meet with the parents/guardians, discuss concerns, and refer the parents to ChildLink, the agency which does formal developmental assessments to ascertain what additional help the child might need.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Children's records are located in the administrative office. Records are held in a locked and secured file cabinet. Administrative staffs, classroom teaching staff, regulatory and quality assurance agencies have access to the records. Parents must provide the required consent release document, before a child's information can be shared either verbally or written with any outside agency.

CHILD GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

We encourage children to learn to resolve conflicts creatively and peacefully and to display respect and compassion in their interactions with others. Staff members model appropriate ways of resolving conflict, and problem-solving skills. We use positive reinforcement and redirection in providing guidance to the children. Appropriate limits for children in our care are set. These limits are established to protect the children from themselves and each other. Staff is responsibilities for making sure that the children understand the limits, the reason for them, and the consequences that occur for violating a limit.

WHEN YOUR CHILD STARTS

Before your child begins a regular schedule, we ask families to plan a few introductory/play visits. The minimum requirement is for you and your child to spend 1 hour in the room. This enables parents and children to explore the classroom. Please check your child's "cubby" daily for important information that we may need to send home.

There are also weekly bulletins posted along the entranceway to the center around your child's classroom. We invite parents to talk with teachers regularly. The classes correspond with parents through notes in lunch boxes, cubbies, and message boards. In the infant/toddler room daily logs are kept to record your child's naps, diaper changes, and eating schedule. We will call you if there is something we feel you should know. Childspace understand and recognizes that families come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A Spanish interpreter is available

Monday through Friday from 7:30-3:30. In event that another language interpreter is required, Childspace will contact the Lingual Institute to provide this service.

It is important that we have on file your current mailing address and telephone number(s) as well as emergency phone numbers. Occasionally we might need to get in touch with you by phone or send correspondence in the mail.

You are welcome to call the center during the day to check on your child. The number to reach the center is (215) 248-3080. We do ask you to be sensitive to other parents who might need to get through and not spend too much time on the line. If you need to reach the Childspace Too Center, the main number is (215) 849-1660. If you have any questions regarding your tuition bill please call our bookkeeper at (215) 248-3080 ext. 4. She handles all billing information.

BRINGING TOYS FROM HOME

Children may bring toys as transitional objects from home. Please make sure that the toy or object is safe for your child and other children. Please print your child's name clearly on the object.

We try to redirect children engaged in violent play. While children may occasionally use their finger as a pretend gun, this type of play is greatly reduced if a toy weapon is not there to suggest it. More importantly, children will engage in other kinds of imaginary or exploring behavior that can lead to more positive interactions and learning.

DRESS

Please dress your child to play. We like to allow children to be involved in all kinds of activities. Sometimes this means clothes will get stained with paint, glue, food, or old fashioned mud. We do attempt to have children wear smocks, but there will still be occasions when accidents happen. If the clothes children are wearing are not special, it makes it easier to deal with those situations.

We will go out in most weather. Please dress your child in weather appropriate inner and outer clothes. The following excerpt was taken from *Promoting General Health of Children in Child Care*:

“In fresh, outdoor air, children do not have to re-breathe the germs of the group...Taking the group outdoors daily, even in winter, is a healthy part of the schedule. Daily outdoor play gives children an opportunity for a change of scene, for gross motor activity, and for fresh air. Even children who are sick but active should go outside provided the weather is not severe.”

When it is sunny, please make sure your child wear sun protective clothing; and/or you provide the center with either sun screen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. In order to apply the sun screen, remember to sign the medicine log in your child's room, since we need your written permission.

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents, please send in only repellents containing DEET. We can not apply insect repellent to children younger than two (2) months. We can not apply the repellent more than once a day. Again, we need your written permission on the medicine log to apply the repellent.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Childspace is not affiliated with any religious organization. We welcome children from any religious background. Our policy is to make sure all children feel included in all aspects of our program, and so teachers do not initiate or lead any religious celebrations. Rather we invite and encourage children to share how their family celebrates holidays.

HEALTH POLICIES

Childspace will call you in the event that your child becomes ill during the course of the day. Please do not send your child to Childspace if she or he is ill. Children cannot be accepted for care if they have fevers over 100.4 degrees, significant cold or flu, or suspected contagious conditions. Your child should be clear of any temperature for 24 hours before returning to Childspace unless the cause of the temperature has been determined and is not contagious (i.e. ear infections). Often a child will have a fever the day before they show signs of contagious disease. The fever will go away and then...the spots will appear. The 24 hour clear-of-fever rule is to protect your child and their classmate from unnecessary exposure to illness.

Children may come with colds but please make a judgment as to whether he/she is up to play. Our staff can give extra hugs and nap times to a child under the weather but we cannot give one-on-one care to a child who is very uncomfortable. You may be asked to submit a physician's note indicating that your child may return to the center when he/she has been out with any contagious condition.

MEDICATION

We will administer Tylenol or non-prescription medicine if you have signed the medication form. The medication must be brought in its original container. If your child requires a prescription medication it must also be brought in its original container with the pharmacist's instructions. Make sure your child's name is clearly marked on the bottle, and log in directions for dosage and time in the medicine log book located in your child's room. You must log in each day that your child requires medicine and sign your name to the log. We will only give your child medicine if it is logged on the medicine log sheet.

HEALTH APPRAISALS

All children are required by state law to have current health appraisal form (which includes current immunizations) on file. Children from four (4) months to two (2) years are required to have updated health appraisal every six (6) months. Children from 2-5 are required to have a health appraisal once a year. Children who do not have current Health Appraisals on file may be dismissed from the center until a current one is obtained. We provide a Child Health Appraisal Form, which you and your doctor fill out and submit, to us.

SUPPLIES

Please see related classroom information sheet for the detailed materials that your child needs on hand. Childspace will supply the following:

- Morning and afternoon snack
- Crib or sleeping mat
- Toys
- Books
- Art equipment
- Music equipment
- Transportation to and from scheduled field trips

FOOD

We try to provide snacks that contain no animal fat and are low in sugar and salt. If your child has special dietary needs, such as no dairy or sugar, let us know. We will offer a substitute as snack time. If you have more restrictive needs, please supply your child's snack.

When packing your child's food, please make sure all foods and beverages are labeled with his/her name, and the date that the food has been brought in. At Childspace we are very concerned with choking hazards. Whole hot dogs, or hot dogs sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn; raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole are all choking hazards, and are not to be sent with children younger than four years of age.

If you send fruit that your child likes peeled or cut up (except for bananas), please do this prior to packing lunch.

Please do not send candy and/or sweets with your child's lunch. Often when a dessert is included the child is so focused on getting to eat the dessert s/he rushes through the nutritious part of her or his lunch. Snacks and sugary foods fill a child's frequently small appetite with "empty" calories. The following are a few health foods that are good lunch box items:

Yogurt (avoid custard and kid's style)
Whole grain breads, breadsticks, crackers
Rice cakes
Lean meats
Fresh fruits
Fresh Vegetables

MyPyramid.gov is an excellent website which provides information about USDA's food guidelines. Please check it out.

PARENTS PARTICIPATION

We schedule parent meetings and parent/teacher conferences throughout the year. The center also has a Parent Advisory Committee, which is composed of at least one parent representative from each classroom. Please note, however, that membership is not limited to one representative for each classroom and we encourage all interested parents to participate. The Parent Advisory committee plans special events, fund-raisers, and works as a liaison between parents, the director, and the non-profit board.

Parents also serve on the non-profit Board of Directors.

Parents are also invited to accompany us on field trips and should always feel free to observe or interact with your child. Please let us know if you have a special interest or talent that you would like to share with the children and staff.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned by the classroom staff, and families will always be notified in advance as to when a field trip will take place. Families are invited to join their children on a class trip. Transportation is provided by our Childspace Bus, and safety restraint devices in accordance with the manufactures instructions are used. In order to insure the children's safety, a staff member will always have a cell phone, and a first aid kit will be taken on all trips. Families will be notified if there is a problem with the transportation vehicle and alternate transportation arrangements need to be made.

FEES

The fees are per the current fees schedule which you should receive on your initial visit and which will be revised each year. Payment is due once a month (on the first) or twice a month (on the first and fifteenth). **Fees will be charged for the agreed number of days on the current agreement form, regardless of days your child may have missed due to illness, vacation, or other absence.** Additional fees will be billed for extra days and late pick-ups according to the terms in the Enrollment Agreement. Activity fees will be charged for special activities such as trips, programs, or special lunches. You will be notified by your child's teacher when an activity fee is necessary.

There is a locked Fee Box on each floor for dropping off payments, or they can be dropped off directly in the Childspace office.

WITHDRAWALS

You are asked to give the center at least four weeks notice prior to withdrawing from the program. Failure to give four weeks notice will result in forfeiture of the deposit that you paid at registration. Notice should be given in writing. If all bills are current when the notice is received, the registration deposit will be returned or applied toward your last payment.

CLASS INTRODUCTIONS

INFANT & TODDLER

The infant and toddler room is designed to be a comfortable space where infants can feel warm and secure, and where toddlers can have room to explore and expand. The 1 staff to 3 children ration is adhered to between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM and a 1 to 4 ration is maintained at off-peak times from 7:30 AM to 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

The class day is flexibly structured as follows:

7:30 – 9:00	Drop Off, Diaper Changes, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, gross motor skills
9:15 – 10:00	Gym time/outdoor, Snack
10:15 – 11:00	Diaper Check, Circle time: stories, music/song, puppets or movement, Art Activities, Sensory Table, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, gross motor skills
11:00 – 11:15	Clean up, Gym/Outside
11:45 – 12:15	Diaper Check, Lunch
12:30 – 2:30	Nap/Rest time, Quiet Activities
2:30 – 3:00	Diaper Change, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, gross motor skills
3:00 – 4:15	Outdoor/Gym Time, Snacks
4:15 – 6:00	Diaper Change, Circle Time: stories, music/song, puppets or movement, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, and gross motor skills

Infants follow a schedule based on their individual needs.

The individual needs of children, however, supersede the formal schedule. We recognize that children will have different interests and emotional needs on a daily

basis. Diapers are of course, changed as needed (through we have special check times).

CLASS PROCEDURES

I. Supplies Check List

- _____ Completed seasonally-appropriate change of clothing, **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name.

- _____ Mittens and hats or hoods in cold weather, **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name.

- _____ Bedding: a heavy blanket and a lightweight blanket placed inside an old pillowcase. The pillowcase should be **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name; (these must be taken home and laundered each week)

- _____ Lunch, juice cup, bottles (no glass), and powdered formula or milk, **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name; (to be brought in and taken home daily). Childspace provides bottled water twice a day with snacks. If your child requires juice please pack it with the daily supplies.

- _____ Diapers, disposable, should be **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name. It is easier to leave a large bulk supply and staff will let you know when you are running out.

II. Drop Off

The center opens at 7:30AM. When you come in the morning, you will see two boxes on top of the cubbies. One is for bottles and one for refrigerator foods. Please note that our refrigerator space is limited, so please only put food (**CLEARLY LABELED**) that must be refrigerated in the refrigerator box.

Please remember to sign in and out on our room sign-in-sheets.

Your child should have his breakfast at home before coming to Childspace; however, in emergency situations if s/he must eat breakfast at Childspace, s/he must arrive before 8:45 AM. Please pack finger foods so that staff may have free hands to check in other arriving babies.

III. **Diaper Log**

All diaper changes are logged in on the diaper chart near the bathroom. This is a check for us to ensure that your child has been changed. Feel free to look and see how many changes, wet and bowel movement your child has had during the day.

IV. **Nap Log**

We long in the time your child goes down for a nap and the time s/he wakes up. Generally, we try to work with existing schedules for infants; and try to put toddlers down after lunch.

V. **Activity Notes**

We will write notes as often as time permits to let you know about your child's time with us. Sometime these will individual notes to parents and sometimes general classroom activity reports.

VI. **Accidents**

Though we are very cautious, occasionally children do fall, or injure themselves in other ways. We will tell you of any such occurrences and an incident report is always filled out at the time of injury. It is imperative that your child's consent form is checked and signed if you would like us to provide emergency medical care.

TWO'S ROOM

The two's class room is creative environment where children who have newly learned skills of communication and coordination can express themselves at their own pace in a more independent way.

A Typical Two's Day:

7:30 – 10:00	Drop Off, Diaper Changes, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, Gross Motor Room/Outside, Snacks
10:00 – 11:45	Circle time: stories, music/song, puppets or movement, Art Activities, Table Activities, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, Gross Motor Room/Outside
11:45 –12:00	Diaper Check, Lunch
12:00 – 3:00	Nap/Rest Time, Soft Music, Quiet Activities
3:00 – 4:00	Diaper Change, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library, snack
4:15 – 5:00	Gross Motor Room/Outside
5:00 – 6:00	Diaper Change, Circle Time: stories, music/song, puppets or movement, Free Play: blocks, music, dramatic play, fine motor skills, library

CLASS PROCEDURES

I. Personal Items Each Child Must Have

- _____ One (1) crib sheet, lightweight blanket or sleeping bag
- _____ One (1) blanket
- _____ One (1) pillow case for storage
- _____ One (1) painting smock or old shirt
- _____ At least 1 full change of clothing including socks
- _____ Lunch, packed with spoon or fork if needed
- _____ Daily supply of diapers and/or training pants

II. Drop Off

A refrigerator box located on top of the cubbies is for items that must be refrigerated only. It is important that parent's read the monthly calendar to know when special items from home should be brought in. Please remember to sign in and out on our room sign-in sheets.

III. Potty

Your two year old does not need to be potty trained to be in the two's class. Each child has his/her own style of dealing with the challenges we present and his/her own readiness clock, potty learning being one of the many of those challenges. In a two's class survey conducted in November 1991, we found the following:

Twenty-five percent (25%) had no interest in using the potty; 40% had some interest (would sit on the potty – rarely or never put anything in it); 25% would use the potty some days and not at all on other day; 0% would go regularly with some “accidents;” 10% were fully trained (would ask to use the potty with occasional accident.)

We, as teachers, consistently discourage parents and ourselves from comparing children. We hope that this little survey will set you at ease concerning your child's potty progress.

IV. **Class Rules**

- We must be kind and gentle to our friends.
- We must clean up after ourselves and take good care of our toys and books.
- We must use quiet voices indoors, yelling is for outside.
- A teacher must be with us at all times.

PRESCHOOL ROOM

The preschool room is set up as an open classroom with activity centers which include; a block center, a dramatic play center, reading centers, a puzzle and manipulative center, an art center, a science center, and a listening and computer center. The center activities help the children use their imaginations, work on fine motor skills, learn to problem solve, and develop readiness skills in math and language. Circle time allows children to further develop their listening and verbal skills.

A Typical Preschool Day:

7:30 – 9:30	Free Play - Housekeeping, Blocks, Computer, Science, Dress up, Manipulative, Sand/Water Play, Quiet/Library, Art, Listening Center/Library
9:30 – 10:20	Clean up/Bathroom, Snack, Book Time
10:20 – 10:45	Circle Time
10:45 – 11:15	Teacher Directed Activities
11:15 – 11:50	Gross Motor Room/Outside
11:50 – 12:00	Bathroom/Hand Washing
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 2:30	Quiet Time/Nap Time
2:30 – 3:30	Free Play – Housekeeping, Blocks, Computer, Science, Dress Up, Manipulative, Sand/Water Play, Quiet/Library, Art, Listening Center/Library
3:30 – 4:00	Hand Washing, Snacks
4:00 – 4:15	Mini Circle
4:15 – 5:15	Gross Motor Room/Outside
5:15 – 6:00	Free Play – Housekeeping, Blocks, Computer, Science, Dress Up, Manipulative, Sand/Water Play,

CLASS PROCEDURES

I. **Supply Check List**

- _____ Sleeping bag or sheet and blanket with a pillowcase in which bedding can be stored.
- _____ At least one full change of clothing (socks, underwear, weather appropriate clothing).
- _____ Lunch
- _____ Painting smock or old shirt

Children may use the bathroom or be changed whenever needed; however, everyone is scheduled to use the potty or to be changed A.M., lunch time, and P.M.

Helpful Hints

1. Mark all your child's belongings, toys, clothing, underwear, lunches, etc
2. Let us know of planned absences or schedule changes. Please call if you will be late picking up your child, and let us know if you are keeping your child home on a day they are scheduled to be with us.
3. Please check the Parent Message Board, and your child's cubbies for special messages.