

**CHILDSPACE WEST DAY CARE CENTER**  
**4910 Wyalusing Avenue**  
**Philadelphia, PA 19131**  
**215-473-7914**

[www.childspacedaycarecenters.org](http://www.childspacedaycarecenters.org)

## **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 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-6. 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." The Childspace Centers were organized to provide high quality care for a diverse mix of children. An organizational structure was designed to 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 with a board consisting 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 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 childcare because we feel (and studies substantiate) 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 should 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 West is housed on the ground floor of Help Philadelphia. Our classrooms are as follows:

<b>Infant</b>	Lead teacher; Assistant teacher	1:4 staff/child
<b>Young Toddler</b>	Lead teacher; Assistant teacher	1:5 staff/child
<b>Older Toddler</b>	Lead teacher; Assistant teacher	1:6 staff/child
<b>Pre-School</b>	Lead teacher; Assistant teacher	1:10 staff/child
<b>Afterschool</b>	Lead teacher	1: 12 staff/child

## **LICENSING**

The State of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare licenses Childspace West. The center adheres to all the licensing regulations. 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 weapons, firearms or ammunition are prohibited.

## **KEYSTONE STAR FOUR FACILITY**

Keystone STARS helps us improve the care and education we provide to your child. For childcare programs, Keystone STARS builds on the health and safety requirements regulated by the Department of Public Welfare. As childcare programs increase their quality and meet higher STAR levels, they receive supports so that they can continue to move up the quality ladder. Childspace West has been participating in Keystone STARS since 2007.

## **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 developmental 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 community room 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 for 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.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OR RECORDS**

Children's records are located in the administrative office. Records are held in a locked and secured file cabinet. Administrative staff, classroom teaching staff, regulatory and quality assurance agencies has 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. If children exhibit serious, challenging behavior which interferes with their ability to learn is harmful t the child, or other children or adults, or puts a child at high risk for later social problems, families will meet with staff to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

### **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. Events are held where parents and children come together to the classroom to learn about what is happening in the room, parents are invited to share their interests and talents with the children, and they are asked for their suggestions and ideas.

### **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS & ASSESSMENTS**

Ages and Stages is used as a developmental screening for all children in our program. This screening instrument meets professional standards for standardization, reliability, and validity. The tool is administered within 45 days of the child's admission into the program and is completed by both the teacher and the guardian. The screening tool covers the following areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and social/emotional development. Results are discussed with families, and if it is felt that a child would benefit from a more in depth screening, families are referred to Child Link or Elwyn for further evaluation.

The purpose of the center's assessment's procedures is to document what 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.

Our two primary assessment tools are the Ounce Scale for infants to age three (3) and Work Sampling for our preschool class. Both tools are based on observations of the children and correspond to the goals and objectives of the Creative Curriculum, which is used as our curriculum framework. This tool is a checklist that documents the child's strengths and what areas need

improvement. 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 work directly 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. During conferences they 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, which does formal developmental assessments to ascertain what additional help the child might need.

Any parent/guardian who has questions or concerns about the assessment methods are free to speak to the teacher. The staff and the director will work with families to clarify any concerns and make sure families are comfortable with the assessment process.

### **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 in the entryway to the center and the classroom's parent board. We invite parents to talk with teachers regularly. The classes correspond with parents through notes in cubbies and the parent 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 if needed. 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 may need to get in touch with you by phone or send correspondence in the mail. You are welcome to call the center any time during the day to check on your child. The number to reach the center is (215) 473-7914. 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 have any questions regarding your tuition bill please call our bookkeeper at (215) 248-3080 ext. 4.

### **BRINGING TOYS FROM HOME**

Children may bring toys from home to help them transition from home to school. 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 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 exploratory 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 sunscreen, 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 cannot apply insect repellent to children younger than two (2) months. We cannot 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 therefore 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 classmates 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 that 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:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Afternoon snack
- Crib or sleeping mat
- Toys
- Books
- Art equipment
- Music equipment
- Transportation to and from scheduled field trips

## **FOOD**

Childspace West provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack through an agreement with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. There is no cost to parents. However, families are required to complete a food program form in

order to participate. Parents may bring healthy meals for their children if they so choose.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

We schedule parent meetings and parent/teacher conferences throughout the year. 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**

The classroom staff plans field trips. 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 a licensed bus company. Safety restraints are used in accordance with the manufactures instructions. In order to insure the children's safety, a staff member will always have a cell phone, and a first aid kit is 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 or the trip will be rescheduled.

### **FEES**

Childspace West accepts private pay and CCIS families.

Co-pays are due on Monday. We must report non-payment of co-pays to CCIS if not paid by Friday. Payment can be made to the administrative assistant or the director.

Additional fees will be assessed for 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. Your child's teacher will notify you when an activity fee is necessary. Payments can be made in the Childspace office.

### **WITHDRAWALS (non-CCIS)**

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. If you receive CCIS subsidy, you are required to be current on your co-pays before you can transfer your child to another center.

## **CLASS INTRODUCTIONS**

### **DUCKLINGS (Infants)**

The Ducklings classroom is designed to be a comfortable space where infants can feel warm and secure and where they have room to explore and expand. Although we have a schedule listed below, the individual needs of the children supersede the formal schedule. We recognize that children will have different interests and emotional needs on a daily basis. Diapers are changed as needed. However, they are checked every 2 hours.

7:30-9:10	Arrival, Hand Washing, Breakfast, Diapering
9:10-9:40	Storybook Reading, Activities, Morning Nap
9:40-10:00	Diapering, Activities, Morning Nap
10:00-10:45	Outdoor Activities, Neighborhood Walk
10:45-11:00	Hand Washing, Diapering
11:00-11:30	Activities, Music
11:30-12:00	Hand Washing, Lunch
12:00-3:00	Diapering, Nap, Activities
3:00-3:30	Diapering, Snack

3:30-3:45

Outdoor Activities

3:45-6:00

Hand Washing, Diapering, Activities, Departure

## **CLASS PROCEDURES**

### **I. Supplies Check List**

\_\_\_\_ Complete 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, heavy blanket and lightweight blanket places inside an old pillowcase. The pillowcase should be **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name; (these must be taken home and laundered each week)

\_\_\_\_ Juice cup, bottles (no glass), **CLEARLY LABELED** with your child's name; (to be brought in and taken home daily). Ask the classroom teacher about our breast milk policy and procedure for proper handling.

\_\_\_\_ Diapers, disposable or cloth. Please note that if you use cloth diapers, for sanitary reason, we will not rinse them. We will place them in a plastic bag to be taken home. All diapers, disposable or cloth should be **CLEARLY LABELED**, with your child's name. For disposable diapers it is easier to leave a large bulk supply, and staff will let you know when you are running out.

### **I. Arrival**

The center opens at 7:30AM. When you come in the morning, please sign in and out on the classroom sign-in-sheets.



	Circle Time Stories, Table Activities Outside Play
11:45-12:00	Clean-up Diaper Check
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-2:30	Nap/Rest
2:30-3:00	Quiet Activities
3:00-4:00	Free Play Diaper Change Snack
4:00-5:00	Clean-up Outside Play
5:00-6:00	Diaper Changes Circle Time Stories, Table Activities Preparing for Departure

## **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
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least 1 full change of clothing including socks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Daily supply of diapers and/or pull-ups

### **II. Arrival**

Please remember to sign in and out on our room sign-in sheets. Wash your child's hands when entering the classroom.

### **III. Potty**

One year olds are not expected to be potty trained. The classroom is equipped with child size toilets. If a child expresses interest in sitting on one, the teacher will allow the child to sit. However there is no formal procedure that teachers follow regarding potty training. Children determine when they are "ready" to use the toilet. Teachers will follow the child's lead.

### **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.

## **BUMBLE BEES (Older Toddler)**

The Bumble Toddler classroom is a creative environment where children who have newly learned communication and coordination skills can express themselves at their own pace.

A typical day is:

7:30-9:00 Arrival/Breakfast and Free Play

9:00-10:00 Toileting/Free Play/Prep for Circle

10:00-10:15 Music and Movement

10:15-10:30 Circle Time

10:30-11:00 Small Group Activities

11:00-11:30 Outdoor/Gross Motor Play

11:30-11:45 Free Play/Prep for Lunch

11:45-12:30 Lunch/Clean-up

12:30-1:00 Toileting/Quiet Reading

1:00-3:00 Rest Time

3:00-3:15 Toileting/Prep for Snack

3:15-3:45 Snack/Clean-up

3:45-4:15 Outdoor/Gross Motor Play

4:15-5:15 Small Group Activities/Toileting

5:15-6:00 Free Play/Prep for Departure

## **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
- \_\_\_ At least 1 full change of clothing including socks
- \_\_\_ Daily supply of diapers and/or pull-ups

### **II. Potty**

Your two year old does not need to be potty trained to be in the Bumble Bee class. Each child has his/her own style of dealing with challenges and his/her own readiness clock. Learning to potty is one of those challenges. In a twos 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.

## **BUTTERFLIES (Head Start)**

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 day is:

7:00-9:00	Arrival, Breakfast, Floor & Table Activities, Writing, Toileting, Cozy Area Time, and Tooth brushing
9:10-9:30	Circle Time
9:30-11:15	Free Play (All Centers Open), Small Group Activities
11:15-11:30	Bathroom, Prepare for Outdoor Play
11:30-12:00	Outside Play
12:00-12:15	Hand washing and Prepare for Lunch
12:15-1:00	Lunch Time
1:00-3:00	Departure, Nap, Quiet Activities
3:00-3:15	Bathroom and Prepare for Snack
3:15-3:45	Snack Time, Quiet Reading

3:45-4:30	Free Play (All Areas Open), Small Group Activities
4:30-5:00	Outside Play
5:00-6:00	Departure, Music, and Dance, Table & Floor Activities

## **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).

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

### **Helpful Hints**

1. Mark all of your child's belongings, toys, clothing, underwear, 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.