

Creative Learning Center, LLC

Parent Policy Handbook



Please read and print this packet for easy reference at home later.

Rebecca Mancuso - Director
Barbara Halpern - Administrative Director
Creative Learning Center, LLC
17930 Bowie Mill Rd.
Derwood, MD 20855
301-987-5454
Info@clcpreschool.net
Updated 8/23/24

Philosophy:

Our mission is to continually strive to meet the needs of each child and family. Specifically, we strive to:

- Create a safe, nurturing learning environment which encourages social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth of each child.
- Accept, celebrate, and support each child's unique personality, culture, learning style, developmental rate and are welcoming of children of all abilities.
- Work together with parents to achieve the best for each child and encourage parents to become partners in their child's development by participating in the classroom and by increasing their knowledge and awareness of child development through reading, observation and sharing ideas to meet parenting challenges.
- Provide a stimulating play environment, using developmentally appropriate practice and an emergent curriculum with a focus on verbal/cognitive development to teach children to think independently and creatively.
- Create a supportive emotional climate to help children develop a positive self-image, to learn and practice conflict resolution techniques, to respect themselves and others and to behave in a socially acceptable manner.
- Act continually as an advocate for each child in the program and for children in general; and provide a program which embodies the highest industry standards through careful use of resources, by recruiting, developing, and retaining high quality teachers and by encouraging open communication and a free exchange of ideas.

Accomplishing Our Mission:

CLC's program is designed to provide for the total growth of a child in an environment in which children are encouraged to explore, pretend, create, express feelings and thoughts, develop life skills and experience joy. As we bridge the gap between home and school, we guide children toward a positive self-image while helping them to develop their skills. Our teachers strive to provide experiences that are relevant to each child's age and their emotional, social, and intellectual needs. Children are provided with activities and learning tasks that support the learning process by "hands-on" experiences. Ongoing brain research validates our belief that learning by doing results in short-term and long-term benefits. Thought comes from action, not from words. Our teachers provide necessary guidance, assistance, and materials to promote opportunities for each child to learn through meaningful exploration, active involvement, and reinforcement through repetition. Children learn best from concrete experience, from "doing", rather than from "hearing about". Play (learning) is planned which emphasizes the process more than the product, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride in children.

Teachers listen to what children are saying and respond appropriately. We emphasize a verbal-cognitive approach to learning, in which teachers' model and support constant language interaction between adult and child and between child and child. Experience and research confirm that the use of language is instrumental in children's development of critical thinking (how to think) and problem-solving skills. Language use must be practiced many times for a

child to become skillful. CLC's learning setting provides ongoing opportunities for your child to practice, practice, practice. We repeat their thoughts, correcting the grammar and adding vocabulary. We ask questions to encourage the child to express his/her thoughts. We give your child time to answer. We encourage and guide children in resolving conflicts and in thinking through a problem and offering solutions. Problem-solving involves the development of concentration, systematic trial-and-error, planning a sequence of events toward a solution and noticing, evaluating, and correcting errors in the plan. This is challenging work for your child! We do all this to develop each child's ability to learn how to think through a problem. Not only is this a critical life skill for social purposes, but it is also a necessary skill for math work in later school years. With our world's growing reliance on technology, the ability to develop creative solutions is becoming even more valuable. Problem-solving builds self-esteem and self-confidence in children as they realize they can figure out a problem independently. Also, it helps children control their emotions, as we validate their ideas and needs in arriving at a solution. We believe children have the right to experience trust, without which learning is difficult. Children have the right to experience being in control, to have friends, to feel safe and secure, to be able to change things, to feel welcomed and loved and to have fun. Recognizing that children grow in predictable stages but that each child's rate differs slightly, we treat each child as an individual, working from the level that child has attained and challenging them to move forward one step at a time.

Copyright© 2014, Creative Learning Center. All rights reserved.

Tuition:

Tuition is due the first week of each month. You may mail tuition to CLC, or you can drop it off in the mailbox or drop box outside the office door. Please make checks payable to Creative Learning Center, LLC. Thank you for being prompt with your payment to avoid a \$25 late fee. Please note that tuition is always due, even in the event of a long absence such as vacation, illness or COVID-19 closure.

Enrollment:

A complete **application**, an **application fee** and **one month's deposit** are needed to enroll your child. The application fee is nonrefundable. The deposit will be used as a credit toward June's tuition. The deposit is not refundable if you choose to withdraw before June.

For your child to begin attending school we will need the following:

- * **Paper Application** - completed and turned in with application fee and deposit
- * **Online registration** - completed
- * **Maryland State Health Forms** - completed and signed by a doctor
- * **Maryland State Immunization records** - completed and signed by a doctor
- * **Activity fee**

*** Supply fee**

*** A Go Kit** - for your child (see below)

*** Spare clothes** - for the classroom, in case of an accident or spill.

*** After Care Bedding** - (only if your child uses our After Care program) 1 piece roll up mat with attached pillow and blanket.

All the above are due in August before the school year begins. In the event you are enrolling your child after August 1st, all the above are due as soon as possible, so your child can start attending class.

What is a Go Kit?

A large Zip lock bag with your child's name on it, filled with the following items:

- An extra pair of clothes (seasonally appropriate)
- A small nonperishable snack – no nut products and processed in a nut free facility
- A small pack of travel tissues
- 3 band aids
- A few diapers and wipes (if your child is not fully potty trained)
- A book or small toy

We ask that each family prepare their child's "Go Kit" and bring it to school on or before the first day of school. Thank you!

Supply Fee:

We collect a supply fee once each school year. This fee covers all the fantastic supplies needed to keep a happy and interesting classroom.

Activity Fee:

We collect an activity fee once each school year. This fee covers all the fun extras we have planned for your children. We like to take field trips to the farm, have special puppet shows, visit a nature center, have animal guests and much more! The fee covers the cost for your child; however, there is an extra fee for the attending adults and siblings.

Drop Off /Pick Up and Absence:

Students will be checked in outside of their classroom door. Each student must complete a temperature check before entering their classroom. Students who exhibit illness will not be

allowed to enter the classroom. Please alert the office if your child is arriving late for class, picked up early, picked up late, or will not attend class. If your child is home sick, please contact the office and let us know promptly that morning.

Field Trips:

Field trips are a fun way to enrich our theme units. We need and truly appreciate parent participation. If you are unable to attend a trip with your child, you will need to make prior arrangements with another parent attending the field trip, to take your child. If you need assistance finding another parent for your child to ride with, please speak with a teacher at least a week before a trip. If you are unable to find a ride for your child, prior arrangements may be made to have your child stay at CLC during the field trip. Teachers are happy to help, but they cannot drive your children and are not responsible for your child while on the field trip. If a field trip is cancelled there will be a normal school day. If you are unsure of a cancellation, please check your email for a note or call the school office. Permission slips and associated fees for each field trip must be signed and returned before the date of the field trip, in order for your child to participate. The Activity Fee covers the cost for your child; however, there is an extra fee for the attending adults and siblings.

Emergency Plans:

In the event of a natural disaster or any other unforeseen emergency conditions, staff and children will evacuate to their assigned bathrooms. A sign will be posted on your child's classroom door indicating where they are in the building. Each teacher takes their classroom emergency bins with them. These bins will be filled with all materials necessary for an evacuation, based on state requirements.

The emergency bins contain:

- * "Go Kits" for each child.
- * All medication including Epi Pens
- * Emergency contact information for each child
- * First Aid Kit
- * Other various items, such as, flashlights, blankets, and water bottles



In the event we need to evacuate the school property, a note will be posted at the main entrance door and at each classroom door stating the address and directions to our location.

Emergency drills are conducted monthly. When the whistle is blown, the children practice going into the bathrooms quickly and orderly. There, we sing a song or read a book and return

to our classrooms. It is very simple and usually free of any anxious feelings. When practicing, we use terms like “We’re practicing hiding in our safe spot”.

Fire drills are also practiced monthly. This drill consists of pulling the fire alarm and quickly meeting outside at our designated area in front of the school. The fire alarm can be scary, as it is very loud. We always do our best to prepare the kids for the loud noise, remind them that it is just practice and keep a cheery disposition to help keep a calm, worry free environment.

Change of Information:

Please log into your child’s portal to make any changes regarding health information, medical changes, medications, address, phone, emergency contact, persons authorized to pick up your child or other important information. Please also inform the office of any changes.

Parent Participation and Communication:

Communication - At CLC we pride ourselves on positive communication with our families. Feel free to reach out to us at any time with concerns, questions, or conference requests. Our teachers are busy working in the classrooms during the day and therefore we appreciate families contacting us via email info@clcpreschool.net or school phone line 301-987-5454 to schedule phone or in person discussions about your child. We also ask you to email or call the school directly if you are running late or if your child is out sick. Our staff are not permitted to share their cell phone numbers or communicate by text with our families. We kindly ask you not to request their personal phone numbers. Please feel free to contact the office at any time for general questions.

Newsletters - We distribute a monthly newsletter letting families know what great things are happening, and have happened, in each classroom that month. It includes a monthly calendar and important reminders and updates.

Parent Teacher Conferences - Conferences are normally held at the end of January; however, if you or your child’s teacher believe it is appropriate to have additional conferences, they may be scheduled at any time. A development report will be given before the conference with comments from your child’s teacher. Your child’s teacher will contact you to arrange a time for the conference.

Observations/Visits and Volunteers:

We encourage and welcome all parents to visit their child’s classroom anytime during the year. Please make prior arrangements with your child’s teacher and the office staff before coming to spend time in your child’s classroom. Parents must sign in, have their temperature taken,

before entering the classroom. If you plan on visiting your child during Enrichment Classes, we ask that you let us know and observe quietly in the background allowing for your child to fully participate in their activity. All parent visitors should remain with their child's class during their visits at CLC. We encourage you to visit your child's class during core hours (9:00 am-12:00 pm) or during Enrichment (1:00 pm-1:45 pm). We always enjoy extra hands if you would like to be a parent volunteer. All volunteers interacting with CLC students must complete and maintain a satisfactory criminal background check.

Parking:

We have two parent parking lots. We welcome families to use either of our parking lots when picking up/dropping off. Families who are picking up/dropping off children in the Eagle, Oriole and Hummingbird classes typically use the upper parking lot. The Robin and Bluebird classes typically use the lower parking lot with the stairs. During the winter months, when the weather becomes icy, the stairwell may be closed. In that case, please use the upper parking lots. New Hope Church will reopen the stairs in the spring, and parents may again use the lower parking and stairs.

Birthday Parties:



We love celebrating birthdays at CLC. Parents may come in and celebrate with the class after scheduling time with the teacher and alerting the office. Please ask the teacher about the number of treats to bring. **All birthday treats must be prepackaged from the grocery store (not from bakery display case), unopened, clearly labeled with ingredients listed, contain no nuts/peanuts, and be made in a nut/peanut free facility.** Goody bags, birthday napkins and plates are also permissible. Some good party treat suggestions are:

- Popsicles
- Ice-cream cups
- Prepackaged cookies
- "School Safe" mini cupcakes

* No candy, marshmallows, or popcorn please

* Please check all items for allergy information before sending to school (see above)

*Krispy Kreme and Dunkin Doughnuts are **not** permitted.

Snacks:

Families may provide their own healthy snacks, such as crackers, cheese, graham crackers, apples, pears, celery, and raisins. Students should pack a refillable water bottle. Morning snack is served during preschool hours and an afternoon snack is served during aftercare hours. We ask that you pack a healthy and **nut/peanut free** snack **and be made in a nut/peanut free facility.** Grapes and carrots and hotdogs brought from home should be cut up lengthwise. Candy, popcorn, and large marshmallows will not be served and will be returned home

unopened. For 2's (Hummingbirds) no gummies (candy or fruit snacks) and string cheese should be cut lengthwise or shredded. Students who do not bring a snack will be provided with a healthy nutritious snack and the choice of milk or water.

Lunch:

If your child stays for lunch, we ask that you pack a healthy and **nut/peanut free lunch with items made in a nut/peanut free facility**. Any food containing nut products will not be opened and will be returned home with a reminder note. Please remember that packing too many choices or very large portions for your preschooler will result in them not eating as much. A few small items and water/milk are perfect. All lunch boxes/bags must be labeled with your child's name. Grapes, carrots, and hotdogs brought from home should be cut up lengthwise. Candy, popcorn, and large marshmallows will not be served and will be returned home unopened. For 2's no gummies and string cheese should be cut or shredded. Students will be offered milk or water at lunch.

Special Events:

CLC provides a variety of special events throughout the school year. Families are often welcome to participate in these yearly events. This year we will have our annual Welcome Day, Pumpkin Patch Field Trip, Halloween Parade, Rainforest Puppet Show, Olney Helps Food Drive, Box Week, Community Helper Visits, Nature Center Field Trip, Fundraiser Restaurant Nights, Parent Appreciation Breakfast, Under the Sea -Live Ocean Life Experience, Water Day, and Spirit Week. In addition to these special events, we also have themed parties throughout the school year.

Lending Library:

We have a nice selection of children's books in the hallway by the front door, for you to check out with your child. You may check out 1-2 books at a time. Please return the books before you check out new ones. Books should be returned no later than one week after being checked out.

50 Book Challenge:

To encourage reading at home, we have created a 50 Book Challenge. Complete our 50 Book Challenge Form (located near the Lending Library) by listing the titles of the books read. Your child will submit this form to their teacher to receive their "Shining Star" on our Shining Stars Bulletin Board. Your child will also receive a small prize for their achievements.

Book Donations:

CLC is always looking for great preschool books for use in your child's classroom and our Lending Library. If you would like to make a Book Donation in honor of your child, we will adhere a special book plate with your child's name to the inside cover of each book you donate. Birthdays and Mystery Reader visits are a great time to donate new or gently used books to your child's classroom. Please let your child's teacher know that you want to make a book donation, and we will provide the book plate for your donated book.

Toy Donations:

If you would like to make a toy donation, please email the office a picture of your toy(s) so we can determine if we can utilize it here at CLC.

Medication:

Any medication, including Epi Pens, must be brought to school prior to the first day your child attends, along with all the proper forms filled out and signed by a doctor. Children cannot attend school without proper medication (non expired) and proper paperwork. If your child requires medication administered at school, later in the school year, we will need the Medication Administration Authorization Form filled out by your child's doctor prior to medication being administered. Prescription medication must be in a container labeled by the pharmacist or the prescriber. Nonprescription medicine must be in the original container with the label intact. Please inform the office if any medication needs to be administered. Please also update your child's portal with medication information.

Toilet Training:

Creative Learning Center does not require students to be toilet trained. Staff will work with families to help determine the best time to start toilet training. We do this in partnership with our families to make this a successful experience.

Enrichment Classes and Music:

Creative Learning Center offers several after school enrichment classes throughout the school year for an additional fee. Classes may include soccer, basketball, art, cooking, yoga, and dance. These programs are offered to our Bluebird, Robin, Oriole, and Eagle students. Enrichment is

typically held from 1:00 pm-1:45 pm. Registration forms are sent home throughout the school year.

Music classes are held weekly at CLC with Mrs. Haas. There is no additional charge for Music, the cost is included in your child's tuition. We alternate Music classes weekly on Tuesdays or Wednesdays so that all our students have an opportunity to participate.

Clothes:

Dress your child in comfortable play clothes and shoes. We believe kids should have the opportunity to learn through exploration and sometimes that means getting dirty! We can't promise we'll send your child home stain free. Please dress your children in proper play shoes for climbing and running (no Crocs please). Clothes must be labeled, such as hats, mittens, jackets, and sweatshirts.



Weather Closing Policy:

If Montgomery County is closed due to inclement weather, CLC is also closed.

If Montgomery County calls for a one- or two-hour delay, there will be no Before Care and Preschool classes (normally 9:00 am-12:00 pm) will begin at 10:00 am and end at 1:00 pm. All children should bring a packed lunch on those days. After Care will begin at 1:00 pm and remain open if Montgomery County remains open.

If Montgomery County Schools close early, please pick up your children as soon as possible. We will do our best to notify you.

If Montgomery County cancels after school activities, After Care will close at 3:30 pm.

Please visit: montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/sources.aspx sign up to receive email or text notifications.

*CLC reserves the right to cancel classes or delay/close early as weather permits.

Weather restrictions:

32 degrees to 27 degrees - maximum 15 minutes outside/playground time









26 degrees to 23 degrees - maximum 10 minutes outside/playground time

under 22 degrees - stay inside

88 degrees to 90 degrees - maximum 30 minutes outside, with water breaks
91 degrees to 95 degrees - maximum 15 minutes outside, with water breaks
over 96 degrees - stay inside

We follow state air quality restrictions. We do not go outside when the air quality index is listed at Code Orange, Red, or Purple.

Illness:

-  Please report all illnesses!
-  Please keep your child home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms: fever over 100.4-degrees Fahrenheit (when off fever reducing medication), rash, cough, sore throat, diarrhea, thick drainage from the nose, red, pink, or crusted eyes, lethargy, earache, vomiting or any infectious disease. The administration may ask for a home COVID -19 Test or a PCR result.
-  If a child should develop symptoms of illness while in class, the school will notify parents immediately. If we are unable to reach our parents, we will try your emergency contacts. Please pick up your child as soon as possible.
-  If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease (such as COVID-19, Chicken Pox, Hand, Foot, and Mouth, or Strep), please notify the director immediately. A COVID-19 test is required if a student or staff member is exposed or has COVID-19 symptoms.
-  Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours (off any symptom related medication) before returning to school.
-  We are asking families to call or email when their child is out of school, to let us know the reason for the absence. If it is illness related, please state the symptoms. Office staff should be notified on the morning of their absence or before (email: info@clcpreschool.net, Phone: 301-987-5454). During the school day our teaching staff are busy caring for your children, we kindly ask you to contact the office staff rather than your child's teacher during school hours. Staff are not permitted to be on the phone during school hours or share their cell phone numbers with our families.
-  If your child misses more than three school days due to illness, Maryland State Law requires us to have a form signed by a physician stating that your child is in good health and able to return to school.
-  Creative Learning Center follows all Health Department guidelines and guidelines from the Office of Childcare regarding COVID-19 quarantine guidance and closures.

We work closely with the Health Department when staff or students report cases of COVID-19 exposure or infection. We are mandated to follow their guidance.

Student Interactions and Positive Behavioral Practices Policy:

Staff will always speak respectfully to children and maintain a warm disposition, even when being challenged. Yelling or using sarcasm, rough handling is NEVER acceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff will establish simple, clear, consistent rules, offer limited choices while allowing the child some control over their environment. Staff will reinforce positive behavior whenever possible to encourage children to behave appropriately. Staff will model appropriate behavior for children.

Developmental and Behavioral Concerns:

CLC strives to support students with developmental and behavioral concerns. We ask families to provide any information including IEP/IFSP reports, behavior or speech and language or other reports that would help us fully understand the concerns and help the student succeed at our school. We also ask our families to complete the "All About Me" form for their child. We work with families to develop plans to help their child succeed in the classroom. If needed, we seek help for our students from support services within Montgomery County. We invite families to have services completed during the school day if necessary. Please contact the office to schedule appropriate timing of services. After exhausting all reasonable resources, CLC may determine placement is no longer viable for a student. In this case, CLC will work with the family to find an appropriate placement.

There are free services available in Montgomery County (MC) for qualifying children:

- **Infants & Toddlers Program:** Family-oriented program that provides developmental screening and assistance to children between birth and 5 years old (services recommended to begin prior to 3 years old). Telephone: (240) 777-3997
- **Child Find:** Provides developmental screening and assistance for children (beginning at 3 years old), and for those families moving to MC whose preschool-aged child has been previously identified with a disability. Telephone: (301) 230-5966
- **Child Link:** Information and referral service for families with young children; also assists families in behavioral and mental health consultation in your child's school setting. Telephone: (240) 777-4769

Other resources:

- Montgomery County Public Library- Olney 3500 Olney Laytonsville Road Olney, MD 20832

- Talk & Learn –Speech, Language, and Learning Jennifer Sax 301-793-9953

Please contact the office for additional resources.

Dismissals/Withdraws:

We reserve the right to dismiss a child for any reason, including behavior problems (ex: biting, or other aggression) that result in a disruptive or unsafe environment for other children. A student may also be dismissed due to health problems that may result in an unsafe environment for that child or other students in our program. This would not be done until the parents and teachers have worked together to try to resolve any potential issues. CLC is always looking out for the health and safety of all our students, faculty, and families. For families who are withdrawing their child unexpectedly from CLC, we require one month's notice before your child leaves or the following month's tuition will be due.

Code of Conduct:

All individuals while on school property must behave in a civil manner. Verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated. Families and staff are expected to communicate professionally. This code of conduct is put in place for our students, staff, and community. Our goal is to have a nurturing environment for all our students, and a place where our staff and families feel safe. Any individual who violates our code of conduct may be asked to leave the premises. If necessary, authorities may be called to intervene in any altercation. Additionally, CLC may prohibit or set restrictions for individuals from visiting or entering the premises in the future.

Screen Time Policy:

Early childhood experts agree that it is important to monitor young children's exposure to screen time. We limit the use of "screen time" in the classroom. Developmentally Appropriate screen time is used only when directly related to teacher facilitated learning experiences that are educational in nature. We do not recommend screen time for children under the age of two.

Social Media:

Staff have been asked to refrain from friending CLC families on social media. We ask that you respect their privacy and our social media rules.

Babysitting:

While staff can recommend babysitters and or nannies, they are not able to care for your children outside of Creative Learning Center. Staff are also not permitted to babysit students who were previously enrolled at Creative Learning Center. We kindly ask parents not to approach staff for babysitting services outside of CLC.

Custody Issues:

Creative Learning Center is required to follow custody court orders. Parents must provide up-to-date custody orders for their child's file. Custody disagreements may not be addressed on school property. If there is a disagreement, Creative Learning Center staff will try and calm the parties involved before calling the proper authorities.

School Licensing Information:

Creative Learning Center is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Childcare as a Private Educational Institution.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the Parent Handbook. We are so excited to welcome your family to Creative Learning Center!

Rebecca Mancuso
Director/President
Info@clcpreschool.net
301-987-5454