

ST. MATTHEWS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

"A fun place to learn"

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PARENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME TO ST. MATTHEWS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

At St. Matthews Child Development Center (SMCDC), we understand choosing a preschool is an important and exciting decision for parents. We are honored that you have chosen SMCDC to continue your child's educational development and happiness. We have put together this parent handbook as a source of information, reassurance and guidance as a convenience for you, the parent. We want to make sure that you feel completely confident you have made the right choice for you and your children. Please read and refer to this booklet whenever you have a question, or feel free to contact us at SmcdcDirector@gmail.com or (502) 896-2798.

WE BELIEVE . . .

In our parents.

SMCDC is committed to serving as the parents' partner in providing high quality child care and child development programs. We believe we can best meet the needs of our parents by providing consistent and caring professional services for the children entrusted to us. We believe parents need to feel constantly assured of the security and well-being of their children. We believe in providing that assurance.

In our children.

We believe that we can best meet the needs of our children by fostering an environment that recognizes each child's individuality, fully appreciating the importance of planning, and taking every opportunity to nurture development. We believe children need a constant sense of safety and security while away from parents. We believe in providing that safety and security.

In our Director and Staff.

We believe that the satisfaction of our Director and Staff is critical. We believe in encouraging innovation, fairness, and teamwork. We believe our Director and Staff should not serve "customers," but serve children and their families. We do.

In our work.

We believe in respecting the dignity of every Child, Parent, Director and Teacher. We believe we can play an active part in making our world a better place by being totally dedicated to excellence in our important work.

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST DAY

TAKING A TOUR

Before enrolling your child, we recommend that your child come with you for a visit. She/He can see the fun things we do, meet his/her teacher and some of his/her classmates. This will help spark your child's enthusiasm for SMCDC and give your child a chance to see her new surroundings with you there for support and encouragement.

ENROLLMENT

Before your child's first day, please fill out the enrollment application, parent agreement, medical forms, notarized custody declaration (when applicable) and other forms required by licensing. We realize this paperwork may take a little time, but it is important for the safety of your child and is a requirement of state and local licensing agencies. As an equal opportunity provider, applications for enrollment are considered without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability or any other basis prohibited by law.

AUTHORIZED PERSONS

To ensure your child's safety, we keep a file of names, addresses and phone numbers of the people authorized to pick up your child and those to contact in case of an emergency. This file is based on the information you provided on your enrollment forms. It is important that you notify the Director in writing of any changes to this information immediately. Anyone picking up your child must show proper identification, such as a driver's license, before your child will be released. In the case of divorce or separation, it is important that you indicate on your enrollment form who is the custodial parent and who may pick up your child. The custodial parent is required to provide SMCDC with a copy of the divorce decree, which will be kept confidentially in your child's file.

DRESS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

To make the most of their day, children must be dressed appropriately. Please dress your child in loose, comfortable and easily washable play clothes that are appropriate for the weather. Shoes should be close-toed and sturdy enough for outdoor play. Children should have a coat appropriate for the weather, as they are encouraged to play outdoors every day the weather permits.

All children need to keep at least one change of clothing at the center in case of accidents. To avoid loss or confusion, all clothing and belongings should be clearly marked with the child's name. Please remember to mark coats also. If SMCDC clothing is loaned, please be sure to launder and return it that week. We accept donations of clothing; especially underwear, socks, and pants.

Children can bring a special blanket from home for nap time. Except for scheduled "show & tell" events, we ask that toys and personal items stay at home. Each teacher may set rules regarding personal toys in their respective classrooms. We do not allow toy guns or any type of weapon in the center at any time. Please do not send anything that is not replaceable, as accidents do happen and SMCDC will not be responsible for lost or broken toys.

YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY!

WHAT TO DO AND WHAT TO EXPECT

CHECKING IN & OUT

Children must be accompanied by a parent or authorized escort upon entering and leaving the center. When you arrive and leave SMCDC each day, you must sign your child in and out on the clipboards using your initials. Clipboards will be in the front lobby or with your child's teacher depending on the time of day. Once you have checked your child in, make sure you take him/her back to his/her respective classroom.

TRANSITION

When the big day arrives, you can help your child with the transition in several ways. On your way to SMCDC, remind your child about the fun things she/he will be doing, the friends she/he will be making and the nice teacher she/he met when she visited. We suggest you arrive a little early so the morning doesn't feel rushed.

If you arrive in the early morning, as many parents do, you'll most likely notice a higher level of traffic and excitement as parents, children and teachers are getting ready for the day. Don't feel concerned if the staff members you met on the tour are not in the classroom when you drop off your child. The Primary teacher for her/his classroom may not be in yet due to the operating hours SMCDC is open.

Give your child a warm good-bye kiss, a positive smile and a few reassuring words about when you'll be back. Stay as long as necessary to help your child feel comfortable, but from our experience, you can feel confident she/he will settle down shortly after you leave. If it would help to ease your mind, please feel free to call the Director throughout the day to see how your child is doing.

DROP OFF TIMES

SMCDC is open from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.; we ask that your child be dropped off by 10:00 a.m. This enables your child to be a part of all of the fun and learning activities that are helpful in your child's educational development. When a child arrives after 10:00 a.m., it is often disruptive to certain activities and schedules within classrooms and we'd like our schedules to run smoothly. If you need to drop your child off after 10:00 a.m., **please** make arrangements with the teacher or director.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

SMCDC maintains an open door policy for all parents. You are always welcome at the center. Informal conversations during drop-off and pick-up times help keep the communication between the parent and teacher open. However, please remember that the teacher has the responsibility for a classroom of children and this must be the teacher's first priority. You may schedule a conference to discuss your child at a time that is convenient for all parties. The effectiveness of any center depends a great deal upon the enthusiasm, participation, and concerns of parents. We are always open to suggestion or concerns you may have. Parents are encouraged to participate in the center's activities as much as possible.

DISCIPLINE

The root of the word "discipline" is the word "disciple," which means "to teach." At St. Matthews Child Development Center, we believe that discipline is an important aspect of preparing children for their futures, and teaching self-discipline is important to the development of healthy children. We will implement the following discipline procedures to encourage this goal:

Children will be given simple rules for behavior which are appropriate for their particular age and developmental level. They will be expected to follow all rules. Overly aggressive behavior will not be tolerated, including hitting, biting, pushing, scratching, kicking and pinching. Foul language will also not be tolerated.

1. Staff will try to anticipate and avoid situations that may lead to inappropriate behavior.
2. Children will be redirected toward another activity in an effort to avoid unpleasant situations.
3. Children will be regularly reminded of the rules.
4. If necessary, the child will be removed from the general group for a short period of time, not to exceed one minute for each year of the child's age.

Children will not be subjected to harsh or physical discipline, loud, profane, threatening, frightening or abusive language, nor will discipline be associated with rest, toiletry or food.

Staff will document repetitive behavioral problems in an effort to recognize patterns and conduct effective conferences with parents. Every effort will be made to create a partnership with the children's families to benefit the children's behavioral development.

CHILD DISMISSAL

SMCDC reserves the right to dismiss any child if the child is unable to participate in group situations, is excessively disruptive, or consistently displays inappropriate behavior. The center also reserves the right to dismiss any family who interferes with the normal function of the center.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

IMMUNIZATION CERTIFICATE

All children are required to have a current immunization certificate on file at SMCDC within the first two weeks of enrollment. State law does not allow us to accept a shot record - it must be the state certificate form. Your physician or health department can provide you with this certificate. Certificate expiration can lead to dismissal.

NUTRITION - Feeding healthy minds and bodies.

A day of playing, learning, singing, reading and growing makes young children hungry, so we provide breakfast, a nutritious lunch and one healthy snack each day. The menu is planned to meet children's daily nutritional and licensing requirements, but also takes into account the kinds of food children love. We appreciate your cooperation in not letting your child bring food into the center. If your child has certain allergies, religious or special dietary needs that require attention, you will need to discuss this with the Director before your child's first day. All special treats for birthdays or holidays need to be pre-packaged and unopened (sorry, State Regulations prohibit homemade goodies).

ILLNESS - When you should keep your child at home.

Fevers, aches and pains are part of growing up, so our policies are preventative. To assure the health of the children at SMCDC, parents are to keep sick children at home. A few guidelines to help make the decision: a fever of 100.4° in the past 24 hours; a constant cough, wheezing, nasal discharge, sneezing, vomiting, rash or diarrhea; symptoms of or exposure to communicable diseases like measles or chicken pox.

In order to safeguard the health of all children in our care, the following policies will be enforced. Children with the following symptoms will not be admitted to the center. If the child develops any of these symptoms while under our care, the parent or an authorized escort must make arrangements to pick up the child from the center within an hour. The child must be free of symptoms, while unmedicated, for at least 24 hours before returning:

- 1 Fever of 100.4° or above
- 2 Vomiting or diarrhea
- 3 Sore throat
- 4 Persistent cough
- 5 Rash of unexplained origin
- 6 Eye or ear drainage

The Director may request a physician's statement before allowing a child to return to the center if there is a question about whether the child is still contagious. In addition to the symptoms listed above, the Director reserves the right to request a physician's statement for any questionable symptoms upon the return of your child.

In the event, that a communicable disease surfaces in the center, we will notify all parents by posting an announcement in the entryway. Children with symptoms of the disease will not be allowed to return until the contagious phase is over. The Director will provide information on the disease and its prevention. In all cases, we will follow health department recommendations.

EMERGENCIES - Preparing for the worst is best.

If a fire, severe weather, or other emergency occurs, it is crucial for children to react in a safe and orderly fashion. We prepare your child by having regular drills and practices, so he/she will know exactly what to do in the event of an emergency. If an emergency or evacuation of the center occurs, you will be notified.

Evacuation plans are located on the parent boards in your child's classroom.

MEDICATION - Our approach is safety first.

To assure safety and accuracy, a written authorization must be completed by you before any non-prescription, over the counter (OTC) medication or prescription medication is given to your child. Bring the medication and sign our "Permission to Administer Medication" slip. Prescription medication must be in the original, pharmacy labeled container with your child's name, type of medication, side effects, date, and amount and time of dosage. OTC medication needs to have the dosing cup or syringe that came with the medication. Please do not allow your child to bring medicine in their pocket and do not leave any medicine in a diaper bag. A medication form with the time and dose to be given must be completed for each week your child needs medication. PRN directions can not be accepted as dose and time. Please give a specific time and dose when your child needs OTC medications.

ALLERGIES - The only reactions we want are those of wonder.

The more we know about your child's special needs, the better care we can provide. At the time of enrollment, please inform us of any allergy problem(s) your child may have so we can take the right precautions.

INJURIES - Accidents sometimes happen.

While precautions are taken to help prevent accidents, childhood accidents are a normal part of growth and development as children begin testing their movements and limitations. As a partner in the care of your child, we will contact you via HiMama or phone, in the event that your child suffers an injury at SMCDC. For this reason, it is important that you keep your phone number(s) in our files updated. The Director or the child's teacher will also provide you with an Incident Report that explains what happened. We require that you sign the Incident Report for our records and we will provide you with a copy.