



Parent Handbook

Visions and Dreams
2200 Old Washington Road Waldorf, MD 20601
240-448-3830
Email us: vision.dreamslc@gmail.com
<http://www.visionsanddreamslc.com>

Dear Families,

Welcome to Vision and Dreams. On behalf of the staff, I would like to welcome you and your child to our center.

We are an outreach center, seeking to develop and build each child's self-esteem, and to promote learning in an environment of love, acceptance, discovery and exploration.

Our staff works to develop a curriculum that will enable each child to develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually into a unique child.

The curriculum from which we draw our activities is, Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood.

We look forward to working with you and your child here at Vision and Dreams. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have, at any time.

Sincerely,

Willa Johnson
Director



EDUCATION AND CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHIES

OUR EDUCATION MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

Vision and Dreams is to provide affordable quality educational childcare and services to the surrounding community. We incorporate developmentally appropriate activities for cultivating school readiness, social and emotional interaction and growth for children. Our trained and qualified teachers support interests as a motivation for learning. Our teachers foster a love of curiosity, learning, and self-direction while nurturing and developing the whole child. We carefully selected the “Creative Curriculum” which allows our teachers to expand the learning experience by incorporating the children’s unique needs and interests.

Vision and Dreams is set up to promote your child’s success and provide you with a peace of mind that your child is receiving quality education and care. Vision and Dreams is designed to be a place where your children can learn through play. When properly supervised and directed, it will assist children in learning how to cooperate, care for others and develop their own creative potential. Children are naturally curious and motivated to learn. Your child is given many opportunities to experiment with different methods or ways including water, sand, paint, clay, and play dough. Through play the child will make her own discoveries about the nature of what is real and what is not. Imaginative or pretend play is encouraged within the child. Pretending is viewed as a way of developing a system of symbols to stand for real events and as a way of learning to take a different point of view.

Our teachers and staff believe in establishing partnerships with their parents to maintain open-lines of communication to ensure the best needs are being met for their child.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national or origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited based will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We act in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act and other applicable federal, state, or local laws pertaining to the provision of services to children with disabilities. Our goal is to meet the individual needs of the child within the structure of our program, while maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all the children and staff. We will make reasonable accommodations to afford children with disabilities full and equal enjoyment of our programs and services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. We will make no assumptions concerning any individual’s abilities or disabilities and will make an individual assessment to determine if we can meet each child’s need in our group child care setting.

The Classroom Environment

Our school environment is clean, safe, and well planned. The programs at Vision and Dreams include the infant class through the school aged class. We make a concerted effort to place all children in appropriate classrooms and provide activities and learning experiences specially designed for each child's needs and abilities. All instructors meet or exceed state requirements for staff qualifications.

Infant Room

The Infant room at Vision and Dreams has been arranged so that the individual schedules of the children may be accommodated. Each infant has an individual crib and also the opportunity to interact with the world around them. The staff members initiate "baby games" and "baby songs" with the children. Hours of operation for the infant program are 5:45a.m. until 7:00 p.m. We are unable to "hold spaces" without a fee during summer months or at other times due to our limited enrollment and program costs.

Preschool

The Preschool program hours are 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with before and after care available from 5:45 to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. The Preschool program follows a developmentally appropriate philosophy. Curriculum is drawn from "Creative Curriculum" which is kept on file in the director's office and may be examined by request. Physical, social, emotional and academic aspects of child development will be woven throughout the activities of the day. Arts and crafts activities are developed to support themes & units as well as encourage self-expression and creative effort. Daily periods of supervised free-play and outside play are scheduled that allow the child to master a variety of skills. All children must be potty trained to enter the preschool classes.

School-Age Full Day

On days when public schools are closed for in-service days, conferences and holidays, which are not observed by Vision and Dreams, school aged children may attend for the entire day. Exceptions to this would be snow or emergency closings and the holiday schedule herein described. Sign-up sheets will be provided for those days.

Outdoor Playground

An outdoor playground is provided for enrichment activities, fitness using large motor skills and for the enjoyment of the children. Outdoor equipment will provide opportunities for pulling, lifting, constructing, bouncing, rocking, running, jumping and digging. When the weather permits, the children play outdoors in the morning and afternoon each day. Daily schedules are specific to each classroom. Classroom schedules remain flexible enough to allow for spontaneous interests in the innovation of the group, but provide a structure for the day's activities. Children will need appropriate outer wear as outdoor activities are scheduled year round. Children who are unable to participate in outdoor activities should not plan to attend school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

This center provides day-to-day responsibilities to all of our staff to ensure that the health and safety of our children and staff are in compliance with the Maryland state rules and regulations governing child care centers by providing the following:

- Adequate control of health and safety risks arising from work and play activities by daily checking the classrooms and playgrounds before use.
- Provide staff with a day-to-day advice and supervision on occupational health such as, use of equipment, stools, or hanging objects.
- Provide adequate training to ensure staffs are competent to do their work.
- To implement emergency procedures-fire drills and emergency evacuation plans.
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions.
- Health and safety Posters are displayed throughout the building to include hand washing procedures, running in the building, flu sneezing charts, diapering procedure, toileting, and other posters and charts as needed.
- Emergency procedures and charts to follow in case of evacuation and fire drill plans posted in each room and at the doors.
- First aid medical boxes are in every room and in the kitchen. An emergency packet is located in the office.
- Maintaining a clean environment with well-lit classrooms and hallways.
- All staff must have CPR/First Aid certificates and they must be current.
- Most of our staff personnel hold medication certification.
- Food handling and feeding policy is part of our Health and Safety Plan, no one with a known infectious virus will be required to come to work until a doctor permission slip is given.
- Safe and clean water fountains are accessible to children and will be offered to children who are over 2 years of age after each meal.
- Bedding and cots are cleaned daily and parents are responsible for taking home the sheets and other covers.
- Training is required of all new staff and volunteers, who must go through an orientation phase of the goals and philosophy of our center, including regulatory requirements.
- A written performance evaluation is required annually.



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Our goal is to collaborate with you to ensure your child has the best experience possible, so we encourage you to visit any time and join us in our activities. Families are the most significant people in each child's life. Because you know your child better than anyone, we depend on you to help us learn about your child, starting with your initial visit when we gather information from you. We seek your active involvement and input in the school's programs, particularly in ensuring your child's progress, and also to assist us in determining program goals and improvements.

Special opportunities will be offered throughout the year for parents to participate in holiday preparations, field trips, fund raising projects and other special events. We plan to schedule a clean-up day in the fall and in the spring and will ask for volunteers to help with playground cleanup, small repairs, etc. Food and fun will be provided.

SCHOOL VISITORS

Families are invited to observe or visit classes at any time. All visitors will need to stop by the office first. Visits are limited to 20 minutes. Children not enrolled in our program may not visit classrooms.

FAMILY-TEACHER CONFERENCES

We offer family-teacher conferences twice a year the Late-Fall and Mid-Spring. At our family-teacher conferences, we share with you your child's interests, progress and any other questions you may have regarding our programs. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to visit with the teacher to discuss your child's interests and progress. When we have a parent teacher conference, our families are informed by several ways: Our Monthly Newsletter, on the parent message board, in the teacher's classroom, on the Procure software system and also on our website. Sign up sheets will be posted on the parent board inside each classroom. Parents may select a time that is best for them. If none of the times work for you our teachers will accommodate your schedule. If at any time you or your child's teacher would like to schedule an additional conference with your child's teacher, please ask.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

If you are interested in family education opportunities specific to the needs of your child, we will be happy to share information with you regarding what community services are available in your area.

NEWSLETTERS

In effort to keep you informed of what we are doing at the school, we publish and distribute monthly newsletters with important information about child development issues, home activities, and information about the curriculum. We also announce upcoming activities and events, as well as introduce new teachers. Newsletters are placed in each child's cubby/mailbox. Parents should check their child's cubby each day at pick-up time so that he/she will be apprised of current events. In addition, you will notice a variety of flyers in the school with information on

special events, programs, and reminders. Newsletters are made available to all parents of enrolled children.

ENROLLMENT AND TUITION GUIDLINES

ENROLLING YOUR CHILD

When enrolling your child with us, you are required to complete the ALL required forms. These forms give us vital information about your child so we can provide the best possible care. It is imperative for your child's health and safety that all forms are accurately completed and submitted to management for review *before your child's first day*. There will be other state-specific forms that must be completed as well.

Within your enrollment forms, you will be asked for telephone numbers where you can be *immediately* reached. Please notify us as soon as any of these numbers change. For your child's health and safety, we must be able to quickly reach you while your child is in our care. You will also be required to provide us with the names and telephone numbers of at least three other persons that you authorize to pick up your child from school.

ALL REQUIRED FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED:

- Two-Part Health Form, Lead Addendum, up-to-date Immunization Record, Emergency card, OCC flyer, Behavior agreement, and signed
- Parent Handbook Agreement.
- A signed and dated enrollment agreement must be on file.
- Children must meet age requirements for each class. The cut-off day for 3's, and 4's students to enter in their age group, is September 1st. Infants must be at least 6 weeks of age. Children registering for the Two's class must be 24 months old at enrollment.
- We may reserve the option of recommending a child with a late birthday be placed in a class that might better meet his/her need

Order of Enrollment

All students are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis during open enrollment.

Acceptance of Enrollment

Acceptance of enrollment is dependent on completion of information received during interview with parent and child, and whether or not our center can accommodate the needs of the child

TUITION

While completing the enrollment registration forms, you will be asked to sign an Enrollment Agreement that explains the terms and conditions of enrollment and our fees. In addition to tuition, we require a non-refundable annual registration fee.

- *Tuition is due each Monday.*

- *A non-refundable activities fee is due for all children attending the Summer Program, before the first day of the summer program.*
- *A non-refundable activities fee is due for all children attending the Summer Program, before the first day of the fall program.*
- *Families wishing to re-enroll their child/children must be current with no outstanding balances.*

TUITION PAYMENTS

- **CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PREFERED**
- Payments are due in advance (Monday), of the week of care. Payments are credited to charges on your account; in the order charges are listed.
- A late fee is added to any account with a balance owing on Wednesday mornings.
- Statements will be given on Tuesday for any account with a balance due.
- If payments are not received by Friday of the week of care, **children may not be allowed to return to school until balance is paid in full.**

RETURNED CHECKS

Due to the excessive cost required to process returned checks we require the following fee schedule:

1 st returned check	\$35
2 nd returned check	\$50
3 rd returned check	\$50 and we will no longer accept personal checks. Payment will need to be made by money order or cashier's check.

LATE FEE POLICY

Visions and Dreams Learning Center closes at 7:00 P.M. At 7:01 P.M. \$2.50 per minute is due to any child being picked up after 7:00 p.m. The late fee increases after 15 minutes to \$3.50 a minute, per family.



WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD

If you decide to withdraw your child from our care, you're required to give us a *two-week* notice. If notification is not provided, you will still be responsible for all tuition and fees for the two weeks, whether or not your child is in attendance. After you have withdrawn your child, he or she will only be eligible for readmission based upon space availability and if all other enrollment criteria are met. If an outstanding balance existed when your child was withdrawn, you must bring your account current before we can consider you for re-enrollment. If your child is eligible to re-enroll, you must pay a non-refundable registration fee at the current rate.

DISENROLLMENT

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. This decision is based on the best interest of the child concerned, other children in the class, and the well-being of everyone at the school. Every effort will be made to correct a situation before a final decision is made (i.e. moving a child to another class, redirecting behaviors, providing choices, separating children who are not getting along, or other interventions).

Disenrollment may be in result of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff, or property by child or parent/guardian.
- Continue violation of policies by child or parent/guardian.
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by child or parent/guardian.
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by an individual identified as an authorized or emergency pick-up person.
- The school's inability to meet the child's need or the parent or guardian's expectations.
- Repeat late pick-ups.
- Non-payment of tuition.

This is a partial list and we reserve the right to end the enrollment of a child at any time for any reason deemed appropriate. Whenever possible, prior notification will be provided to the parent.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

DAYS OF OPERATION

Our school is open Monday through Friday, 5:45 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. all year long. We are closed in observance of these holidays each year:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

President's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

Children will need to be picked up so that your family can leave the center by 7:00 p.m. When picking up your child in the evening, please allow adequate time to gather all their belongings, etc.

SNOW DAYS AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event of an emergency early dismissal, we require parents to pick their child up by 4 P.M. or earlier if emergency condition deem necessary.

We also post our centers emergency information regarding early dismissals and closings to the weather Center on Channel 7. When unusual weather or emergencies occur, please check with the centers office for updated information.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Children must be signed in/out by the parent, on the Sign-In/Out sheet. The sign-in/out sheet is a required form by Child Care Administration and is a legal form. Do not allow children to sign in or out. Each day when you bring your child, sign the time that you arrived and initial on the Sign-In sheet.

Children may not sign themselves in or out, only adults are to sign in or out. If anyone other than the authorized person is to pick up your child, this must be communicated in writing to the staff. We cannot release your child to an unauthorized person. Always let the teacher know that you have your child and are exiting the building or leaving the playground.

CLASS SIZES

The following staff child ratio is maintained for each of these groups.

Infant/Toddlers	1:3	Two Year Olds	1:6
Three/Four Year Olds	1:10	Kindergarten & B/A	1:15

SUMMER PROGRAM

The child care program operates 12 months of the year. However, during the summer months, a more camp-like atmosphere and program will be instituted. The day will be less structured, more informal and allow for more outdoor activities. Participation in movies, picnic, field trips and other special events may be included in the summer schedule of events. Fees may be passed on to the parents to cover the expenses of some of these special activities.

FIELD TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Children are expected to participate in all scheduled events unless parents have made other arrangements with the office or the child will not be attending that day. On days that field trips are scheduled, children are expected to attend the field trip.

TOYS

Generally, we ask that children do not bring toys from home. No guns or other toy weapons are ever allowed. Books, records and objects of nature are always good choices for sharing with the class. Please place "Show and Tell" items in a labeled bag.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday in class, give the teacher advance notice so that she can allow for extra time in the schedule. Please do not bring gifts to unwrap as this is an activity better suited for home parties. **Due to safety concerns children may not be given balloons.**

Invitations for off-site parties MUST go through your child's teacher. We do not allow children to hand out invitations; this stops the teasing and the hurt feeling of the other children who may not have been invited

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Parents signing up as helpers for class celebrations will be asked to help provide treats, help with set-up, and clean-up. Requests for reimbursements on items purchased for school activities **must** be turned in within 2 weeks of the purchase date, and must be approved through the office in advance of the purchase.

FAMILY VACATIONS

After families have attended our program for a full year, we offer the opportunity for full-time year round students to receive a 1-week vacation- time off with no fee charged. Days must be taken consecutively. This opportunity is available once each 12 months.

Vacation credits will not be given on accounts with past due balances.

DISCIPLINE, BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Children are expected to comply with the school rules. The staff has the responsibility to set up the environment to encourage cooperation and sharing, growing and learning. We ask that you discuss with the Director any special needs, behavioral problems, or concerns you have about your child. There are times when children may actually endanger themselves or others by their actions. Due to these actions, specific behavior guidance steps have been set up.

Logical consequences are established for the problematic behavior. A child who throws or damages a toy, for example, may be asked not to use that toy for the play period in question.

The teacher will use a brief statement of the problem behavior, the fact that it is unacceptable, and offer an acceptable alternative.

At times a child may require time to himself to calm down and redirect his thinking. When *relax time* is given, the child remains within sight of the staff. In preschool and the younger classes, we go by the accepted rule for “relax time” of no longer than the age of the child in minutes (i.e. for a 4-year-old, 4 minutes). Children in 1st through 5th grades may be asked to spend more time to work out a solution to problems that come up repeatedly.

Vision and Dreams complies with all federal, state and other relevant laws which prohibit corporal or abusive punishment in a child care setting. Additionally, staff is expressly prohibited from using unproductive, shaming methods of punishment.

Vision and Dreams believes that parents and staff must work together to address persistent behavioral issues such as biting, unusual or dangerous aggression or other issues. Parents will be contacted for a conference when a child appears to be unusually stressed, anxious or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors.

Children who cannot adjust to the group environment, benefit from the program offered, or endanger the safety or the wellbeing of others may be dismissed from the center. Children who are physically aggressive toward staff may face immediate dismissal. The dismissal process will be reviewed by the School Board.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

State law requires that the child care workers report suspected child abuse directly to Child Protective Services.

In keeping with state law this report remains confidential. Once a report has been made, the entire matter is out of the hands of the school and any further questions should be referred to Child Protective Services. If your child has sustained multiple bruises or injuries that might cause suspicion of abusive conditions, it is advisable to provide written explanation of these injuries to the staff when you bring the child to school.

MEDICATION, ILLNESS AND EMERGENCIES

Several of our teachers and administrators have received medication administration certification by MSDE/OCC Nurse Instructor. Prescription and over the counter medication can only be administered to a child when a "Medication Order Form" has been filled out and filed with the center. It must include dates on which the medication is to be administered, times of administration, and be signed by the parent and the doctor. Medication must be administered according to the licensed health practitioner's written instructions on the label of the medication. All medications must have the child's name on it.

It is our intent that no sick child is allowed to attend the center. We cannot admit a child with a fever, contagious disease or infection, a severe cold or cough, diarrhea or other illness. If a child has had a fever during the last 24 hours, please do not send them to school. Parents will be contacted by a staff member if a child is ill. If a child is registering a temperature of 101 degrees, this is defined as a fever. Temperatures will be taken either oral, under the arm or with

a thermo-scan (in the ear). Parents are expected to respond in a timely fashion, by picking the child up within an hour or less. If unable to reach the parents, other emergency contact persons listed on the emergency card will be contacted. If the situation is deemed a medical emergency by the staff members on duty, a 911 call will be made to seek immediate medical attention for the child. To return to school, children must be fever free without the use of medication for 24 hours. Re-admission forms are required if your child has been under doctor's care or absent because of illness for three days or more.

Children sent home with any of the above symptoms may not return for 24 hours and until no longer contagious.

Notify the office if your child has any rash or unusual markings. Children may be sent home if we are unable to identify the rash or have concerns about contagious diseases. In that case, we will require a Doctor's note.

NAPPING

State regulations require a daily nap or rest time for the children. Each child is expected to rest quietly. Please prepare him/her for this by telling the child that he/she will rest at school. Upon enrollment, each child will need a small blanket and a fitted sheet for rest time. Children may not bring in pillows. A fitted sheet is required, if a child does not have a sheet, the office will provide him/her with a new sheet. Upon receiving the new sheet, the parent will be charged for the sheet with the tuition of that week. The blanket should be the size of a beach towel. Sleeping materials must be brought in on Mondays or the first day of the week the child attends, in a pillowcase. Each Friday they will be returned home in the same bag for laundering. State regulations require that staff check that bedding is clean and freshly laundered.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

The center participates in the Adult and Child Care Food Program. Nutritious meals and snacks are provided daily. Children are served breakfast, lunch and an evening snack. Menus are approved by the food program representatives and posted on the bulletin board for parents to review. The center provides Low fat (1%) or skim milk is required for children over age 2 and Whole milk for 2 years and younger at each meal. This Center provides Enfamil Formula for infants at no additional charge, and it is the option of the parent whether or not to use this formula based on the infant's needs. All formula must be iron-fortified as required by the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

FOOD ALLERGIES

If food allergies require your child to have a special diet, these foods should be sent in by the parent and labeled with child's name.

CLOTHING

Children 5 and under should have at least one complete change of clothing at the center at all times. All clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name. Clothing should be changed seasonally and as your child grows. When soiled clothing comes home and you see that the extra clothing has been used, you will need to send in a complete change of clothing on the next school day. Clothing should be suitable for the child's age and appropriate for the weather. Weather permitting; all children will go outdoors each day. Remember clothing such as hats, mittens, jackets and coats must also be labeled with your child's name. Jackets and

outerwear must have workable zippers or fasteners.

Think of your child's comfort. Provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fasteners, ones your child can easily manipulate in the bathroom. Most preschoolers cannot manage suspenders, overalls, belts and jumpsuits. Young children are generally eager to become independent and it is important that clothing does not hinder development of these self-care skills. All clothing should be washable. Our program includes teaching with hands-on activities that can get messy. Children may not wear open sandals or flip-flop type shoes for safety reasons. Tennis shoes are recommended. Only closed shoes that cover the foot and heel are accepted.

All children must have jackets or coats with working closures such as zippers, snaps or buttons. Coats that are damaged need to be replaced.

POTTY TRAINING

Children must be potty trained by 3 years old and before entering the 3's or 4's preschool program. Families will need to work with the teachers when beginning potty training in the toddler class and before putting children in pull-ups or underpants. Soiled clothing that is not disposable will be placed in a separate bag and parents will be informed so that they are aware of soiled clothing before leaving the center. Safe hygiene practices do not allow staff to rinse out underwear or clothing that has been soiled with bodily waste.

FIELD TRIPS

When field trips are planned, parents are encouraged to attend as chaperones. Transportation will be arranged by van or bus. Each family will be notified in advance of the field trip and asked to sign and return a permission slip for each trip. All Children must return a signed permission slip.

Students with discipline problems may not be allowed to attend field trips - No Refunds will be given.

INJURIES

If a child gets hurt while at Visions & Dreams Learning Center while playing in or outside the building and on site or off site, Visions & Dreams Learning Center is not held responsible for any insurance bills that may come along with any injuries. You will receive an incident report from the center that day of the incident.



Phone: (240) 448-3830

Caring for your precious children....

I (we) have read and understand the policies contained in the Parent Handbook and agree to comply with all of the policies and procedures as stated and contained therein. I (we) have also had the opportunity to ask for clarification on policies that were not clearly understood.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Center Representative

Date

