

Montgomery Child Care Association, Inc.

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**Montgomery  
CHILD CARE  
ASSOCIATION**



*Providing high quality care and play-based education since 1968*

# **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**August 2016**



## MISSION STATEMENT

Montgomery Child Care Association, Inc. (MCCA) strives to provide the highest quality child care and play-based education for children in Montgomery County; professional training for child care providers; and advocacy for affordable quality child care for families of all income levels; and better training, pay and benefits for child care professionals.

## ABOUT MCCA

MCCA provides daily child care and early education to nearly 1,000 infant through school aged children at its centers located throughout Montgomery County, Maryland. MCCA is the oldest non-profit child care provider in Montgomery County and started its work in 1966 as a Community Action Project of the War on Poverty. Recognizing the need for child care in their neighborhoods, a group of local activists formed an association to establish day care centers in Montgomery County that would serve a diverse population and establish high standards for child care.

Today, MCCA programs continue to honor the organization's mission by providing developmentally appropriate, play-based child care for Montgomery County's culturally and economically diverse communities. MCCA helps low-income families access high quality child care by welcoming those families that use government child care subsidies. Family Emergency Scholarships provide temporary tuition assistance to enrolled families experiencing crisis and a Summer Scholarship program helps make summer care affordable for school aged children.

MCCA uses the Creative Curriculum®, a research-validated curriculum that is aligned with its play-based philosophy and approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in its preschool programs. Our classroom activities provide active, hands-on play and learning experiences in language and literacy, math, science, social studies, art, music and dramatic play. In addition, MCCA programs offer opportunities for children to develop their large-motor skills through vigorous indoor and outdoor play.

All MCCA child care programs strive to exceed Maryland State child care licensing requirements and achieve accreditation by MSDE or other nationally recognized rating agencies. MCCA also is enrolled in MSDE's quality rating system known as Maryland EXCELS. All MCCA programs provide daily snacks and follow high nutritional standards to promote healthy eating habits and combat childhood obesity.

MCCA child care teachers and aides are encouraged to seek professional development beyond state minimum licensing requirements and participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential, a MSDE career ladder that encourages higher levels of education. Staff have access to professional development funds to pursue college courses in child care and receive regular training and skills development as part of MCCA's ongoing commitment to providing quality care.

All Montgomery Child Care Association, Inc. centers are open to all without regard to race, color or creed, national origin or disability.

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### MCCA PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

MCCA's approach to programming is child centric and focused on the individual interests and needs of each child. MCCA implements the Creative Curriculum® in its birth through preschool classrooms. Providing high quality, play-based child care is the foundation of the organization's mission. In providing this care, MCCA employs a comprehensive approach that assesses the developmental needs of the whole child in the following four areas:

- Social/Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive

MCCA's committed staff of early care and education professionals strive to create a learning environment that fosters a sense of community and encourages exploration of the environment, social interactions and problem solving. Specifically, in its daily work with children of all ages MCCA seeks:

- To encourage each child's positive sense of self through developmentally appropriate practices.
- To develop each child's ability to make choices and decisions through the principles of active learning.
- To provide an environment that promotes optimal physical development in a safe and healthy setting.
- To develop each child's ability to recognize, understand and express thoughts, ideas and feelings in developmentally appropriate ways.
- To foster development of interpersonal skills so that each child has opportunities to build positive relationships with others.
- To support each child's creativity, initiative, spirit of inquiry and passion for learning.
- To foster an appreciation and respect for the diversity of individuals, families and community through an unbiased approach.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

MCCA admits children of any race, color, national and ethnic origin and affords all children the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to children in MCCA programs. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid or any other MCCA sponsored program.

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

### HOURS OF OPERATION

MCCA programs are open for child care services Monday through Friday throughout the year except as noted in our MCCA Opening and Closing Schedule, included as Appendix I. Daily hours of operation vary. Please check with your Center or Program Director for operating hours at your location.

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### CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE

It is essential that MCCA be notified of any changes in contact information including email, street address or telephone numbers. Immediate notification should be made to both the Center or Program Director and the MCCA billing office.

### HEALTH AND EMERGENCY FORMS

A complete enrollment packet, including health and emergency forms, must be received, reviewed and approved by MCCA before a child can begin in one of our programs. Registration forms are provided to families when they notify the Center or Program Director that they are interested in enrolling. Many registration forms can be completed by families but some forms require a physician's signature. State licensing regulations require parents/guardians to update forms at the beginning of every school year. Your child will not be permitted to attend MCCA programs without the required documents.

The required forms can be downloaded from MCCA's website at:

[http://www.mccaedu.org/family\\_resources\\_enrollment.html](http://www.mccaedu.org/family_resources_enrollment.html)

### CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Your child will be actively engaged in activities throughout the day including painting, playing on the floor and playing outdoors. Children should wear comfortable, washable clothes that are appropriate for active play. Open-toed shoes and flip flops are not appropriate daily footwear and may only be worn during designated water play periods. All clothing should be marked with your child's name.

Please be sure that your child has appropriate clothing (example: warm jacket, mittens and hat in the winter) for outdoor play in every season. Each child should have an emergency change of clothing at the center, marked with his/her name. Each child should have a change of:

- Shirt
- Pants
- Underwear
- Socks

It is important to wash and return these emergency clothes promptly when they are sent home.

### DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Your child must be escorted by a responsible adult into the program, be presented to a staff member upon arrival and signed into the program. At school age programs operating in Montgomery County Elementary Schools (MCPS), children may enter the program directly from their classrooms.

At the end of the day, you must let a staff member know you are taking your child out of the center and sign the program's sign-out log. If you want your child released to someone other than those listed on your child's emergency card, MCCA must have the request in writing or via email. In an unexpected emergency you can call your program and give your child's teacher or Center or Program Director permission to release the child to a different adult. Text messages will not be accepted. You may be

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asked to provide proof of identity related to this phone request and MCCA will require photo identification from the adult picking up before a child will be released to a different adult.

Children must be picked up by the established closing time at the center. A late fee of \$2.00 per minute will be assessed if a child is picked up after the program's established closing time. After the first 30 minutes, the late fee rate increases to \$5.00 per minute. The program clock will be the official time for calculating the late pick-up fee. You will be asked to sign a Late Pick-Up Fee Acknowledgment Form and the amount of the late fee will be added to your next billing cycle payment.

Selected MCCA programs may have a "late room" option that is billed at a separate rate as part of monthly tuition costs. An additional late pick-up fee will be assessed for any child that is picked up after the established late room closing time.

Families who are habitually late will be warned and may be subject to expulsion from their MCCA program. Unpaid late fee balances that are more than 30 days old may result in the immediate suspension of your child's attendance from a MCCA program.

Please call or email program staff if your child will be absent from the child care center. Text messages are not an acceptable form of notification.

**CHILD GUIDANCE**

MCCA staff is trained to use a positive approach to guidance in the classroom. Providing children of all ages with guidance is an important part of our curriculum and a great opportunity for children to learn appropriate behavior skills.

The goal of discipline in our programs is to teach children self-control. Our intent is to provide a secure, comfortable environment where children are guided by clear and consistent limits. An essential component of our approach involves teaching children appropriate expression of their feelings.

We do not use punishment in our centers. Corporal punishment, verbal abuse such as threats or sarcasm, requiring a child to be silent or still for long periods of time, isolation, causing a child any kind of physical discomfort, or using food as reward or punishment, are not condoned.

Teaching staff work with Center and Program Directors to develop individualized plans, as needed, to help guide classroom behavior. Conferences may be scheduled with families to address more challenging behaviors or other issues. If the child's behavior does not improve, MCCA may terminate the contract for care and suggest alternative care for your child.

MCCA reserves the right to immediately suspend or dismiss a child from its programs at any time and for any reason. MCCA cooperates with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and other educational institutions regarding breaches of school policy. Consequently, school aged children suspended from school will also be suspended from MCCA programs.

**CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

MCCA programs comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and make every reasonable accommodation to include all children in our programs and enable them to be safe and successful. Our

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staff works closely with families, specialists and agencies that are involved with the child with the goal of supporting each child's success in a group setting. Families are encouraged to share their child's Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Staff will monitor progress through ongoing observations, and schedule follow-up conferences with families and specialists as needed. MCCA's staff are knowledgeable about available county services, such as Child Find or Early Childhood Mental Health. These resources will be shared with families as needed.

MCCA programs also support children with medical special needs, including conditions such as asthma, allergies, diabetes or other conditions that require medication, or individualized support. The Center/Program Director will work with families to develop a written Emergency Health Plan. Designated MCCA staff receive training in First Aid, CPR and medication administration training. Additional training needed to support the implementation of Emergency Health Plans may be provided and may result in an additional charge to the family for the cost of the training.

### FOOD

MCCA follows the guidelines for the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the US Department of Agriculture. Meals and snacks are served without discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, disability, or any other protected status. Depending on program schedule and offerings at each location children may receive lunch and nutritious snacks in the morning and/or afternoon. On field trip days, a bag lunch from home may be required. At some programs, children may be required to bring a daily bag lunch from home and any perishable food in the lunch will be refrigerated. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying centers of any dietary restrictions or foods to avoid for their children and may need to provide alternative foods if necessary.

### OUTSIDE PLAY

Daily outdoor time is scheduled each morning and afternoon. Times and duration of outdoor time are adjusted throughout the year according to weather conditions. Please refer to the Summer and Winter Weather Guidelines posted at your program. When the Wind Chill Factor falls below 15 degrees or when the Air Quality /Heat Index is Code Purple, outdoor time will be replaced with appropriate indoor active play activities. Children attending the program are expected to be able to participate fully in the center programming including being well enough to play outdoors and having the appropriate clothing for the weather.

### REST TIME

Rest time is required by Maryland State Licensing Regulations and is a part of each daily routine for all children that have been in child care for more than four hours, including school aged children on ½ days, "no school" days and during Summer Adventures. This is not a time that children must sleep, but many young children do benefit from a nap. Individual cribs are used for infants and cots are available for younger children. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing sheets, blankets and/or pillows for your child's use during rest time. For school aged children and children who are not in need of sleep, guidelines are followed to ensure that appropriate quiet choices are available during rest time.

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### TOYS/MATERIALS FROM HOME

MCCA recognizes how important materials from home can support successful transitions into classrooms for some children. Guidelines for bringing in materials from home including comfort items, toys, electronic toys and cell phones are detailed in Appendix III. Information regarding MCCA's Media Policy is included as Appendix IV. Please review and follow the corresponding guidelines, including ensuring that no dangerous items are brought to the program. MCCA is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken items and each family assumes all risks of bringing items into the program.

### HOMEWORK POLICY

MCCA understands the need for school aged children to get started on their homework after school. MCCA schedules up to 45 minutes of homework time Monday through Thursday in its school age afterschool programs. It is up to each family to decide whether your child will do homework while in our child care programs. Each family will review a Homework Agreement with their child and sign a copy outlining responsibilities for homework completion.

### FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are an important part of both MCCA's preschool and school age programs. Field trips provide the opportunity for fun exploration of the world and enhance learning and life skills development. Field trips are carefully and thoughtfully selected and planned with the idea of providing children with new, meaningful experiences. A separate Field Trip Permission form must be signed by parents for each child before each trip. Parents are welcome to join scheduled field trips. There is no additional cost for children to attend field trips, however, parent volunteers may be asked to pay for their own entrance or other fees.

### ILLNESS

Great care is taken to make sure MCCA programs provide a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Each child should be well enough to participate fully in all of the daily activities of the program. Our programs are not equipped or licensed to care for sick children. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will make the child as comfortable as possible and notify you to immediately pick up your child.

Please do not bring your child to the center with symptoms of illness. If your child is sent home from the center, s/he should remain at home and be symptom-free for at least 24 hours, or submit a written statement from the health care provider, approving the earlier return to the program. Children who have been ill for three or more days must have a note from a health care provider in order to return to child care. Please notify your Center or Program Director within 24 hours if your child has developed or been diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Please see Appendix II for additional information regarding general signs of illness and guidelines for Sickness and Medication Management.

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**LICE POLICY**

If a child has head lice with live bugs, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up him/her within the hour. Head lice are very contagious and require immediate treatment. Nits (lice eggs) must be removed from the hair shaft and children cannot return to the program until they are free of live lice as confirmed by program staff in their sole discretion through inspection.

**INJURY**

Some bumps and bruises are a part of childhood, but as with illness, MCCA takes great care to keep its programs safe. Designated staff are first aid and child CPR trained. If your child sustains an injury at the center the staff will calm the child, perform the necessary first aid procedures, notify you and fill out any required documentation, which may include an accident report. The staff will ask you to read and sign the accident report when you pick up your child. Please inform the center if you seek medical attention for your child after an injury as there is a reporting requirement to MSDE.

If the injury is more serious and requires immediate medical attention staff will call an ambulance and the child will be accompanied to the hospital by a staff member who will stay with the child until a family member can arrive. It is extremely important that MCCA has current phone numbers to reach you in cases of illness, injury or other emergencies. Please inform program management whenever your phone numbers or the phone numbers of others that are listed on your child's emergency card change.

**COMMUNICATION**

MCCA values open, respectful and constructive communication. You should contact staff members to discuss situations in the home, life events and other issues which you feel MCCA should be aware of in order to support your child. Suggestions or complaints should be made to the Center Director or Program Director at your location. MCCA discourages gossip and other damaging comments. We protect the confidentiality of each staff member, child and family to the extent possible. Suggestions and concerns may also be brought to the attention of the Executive Director by calling MCCA's main office at (301) 984-7680.

**CORRESPONDENCE THROUGH CENTER MAILBOXES**

All group correspondence by an individual, a family or group of families using MCCA mailboxes must first be approved by the Center or Program Director.

If you are planning a birthday celebration outside of MCCA operating hours and do not plan to invite the entire class, please mail the invitations directly to each invited child's home. If the entire class is invited, you may use MCCA mailboxes after obtaining approval from the Center or Program Director.

Please note: Family Directories and emails, bulletin boards and MCCA facilities are not available for business or charitable solicitations.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

**FAMILIES:** MCCA respects a family's right to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral and developmental records and information concerning their child to the extent possible. These rights



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to privacy and confidentiality are protected by various federal and state statutes, local ordinances, accreditation standards, and regulatory rules. For example, if your child is involved in an altercation or a biting incident with another child, MCCA cannot reveal the biter's identity to you without prior written consent from the biter's parents/guardians, except as required by law.

STAFF: MCCA respects a staff member's right to privacy by keeping all health, private and professional records and information confidential to the extent possible. If you have a question or concern about a staff member, we encourage you to speak directly to the Center or Program Director.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

MCCA is committed to facilitating teamwork through collaboration and cooperation among its centers and the community of families it serves. We recognize the importance of families in our programs and strive to maintain an environment that is safe and respectful for all of its members--families, children and staff alike. Expectations are that center staff, family members, and children will speak to and interact with each other in a respectful, appropriate, and acceptable manner. Physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated. MCCA reserves the right to suspend or terminate child care if MCCA reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent or guardian are inconsistent with a positive and constructive relationship or seriously interfere with MCCA's accomplishment of its mission.

### DISMISSAL POLICY

MCCA's goal is to provide a quality early childhood program for children and families in Montgomery County. MCCA will use its best efforts to serve the children in its care and work with parents/guardians to meet the individual needs of each child. Families may be asked to withdraw from an MCCA program at any time for any reason including, but not limited to:

- A parent/guardian fails to uphold the terms and conditions of MCCA's Enrollment and Financial agreement.
- Inability of the child or parent(s)/guardian(s) to adjust to MCCA's program and adhere to established policies and procedures.
- Inappropriate or unacceptable behavior toward MCCA staff, other enrolled children or families including any behavior that may endanger the safety or physical or mental health of others.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The safety of MCCA employees and the children and families we serve is our highest priority. Inclement weather and emergencies may periodically require changes to regularly scheduled operating hours. MCCA must also adhere to the terms of its leases and may be subject to operating restrictions as dictated by Montgomery County or Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

When MCPS is closed due to inclement weather, and MCCA is not restricted from opening, MCCA may open later than normal so that staff may arrive safely before families. Please call your child's center before arriving at the program to make sure enough staff has arrived to operate the program. If there is a delayed opening and weather conditions deteriorate, please call your program again for possible updates. For recorded information regarding Montgomery County Public School closings, please call 301-279-3673.

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<b>If MCPS Administrative Offices are:</b>	<b>and MCPS are:</b>	<b>then MCCA Centers and Administrative Office are:</b>
Open	Delayed	Open one hour later and close at their regularly scheduled time
Open	Closed	Open one hour later and close at their regularly scheduled time
Delayed	Delayed	Open at 10:30 AM and close at their regularly scheduled time
Delayed	Closed	Open at 10:30 AM and close at their regularly scheduled time
Closed	Closed	Closed

Changing weather and road conditions will be monitored throughout the day and MCCA reserves the right to change opening and closing times as necessary. If programs close early, families will be contacted by the Center or Program Director through phone calls or emails. The announcement will also be posted on MCCA’s website at [www.mccaedu.org](http://www.mccaedu.org) and on MCCA’s Facebook page.

**STATE OF EMERGENCY CENTER CLOSINGS**

On the rare occasion that Montgomery County Public Schools choose to not open due to unsafe circumstances such as security threats, bombings or possible attacks, MCCA will not open. Families should watch local news and listen to local radio stations for information regarding Montgomery County Public School being closed. Parents/guardians can also call the child care center where the message will be changed if an emergency closing is in effect.

If Montgomery County Public Schools close early, parents/guardians will be contacted by phone or email and advised of the state of emergency and will be requested to pick up their child as soon as possible.

**REPORTING ABUSE**

MCCA is required by law to report evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Police or the Department of Social Services.

**BABYSITTING FOR FAMILIES**

In an effort to maintain the professional status of program staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, MCCA discourages families from engaging its staff for babysitting duties. MCCA staff may only babysit for families outside of the program premises and on their personal time. This is a private arrangement between staff and families and MCCA is not responsible or liable for the actions of any staff member while they are performing personal babysitting or other duties. Staff are not permitted to take children out of the program, may not sign them out in order to babysit, and may not transport children for a family to or from the program.

**COMMUNICATION WITH DUAL CUSTODY FAMILIES**

MCCA must remain a neutral, safe haven for each child. MCCA will in no way be forced into the middle of disagreements or choose sides between disagreeing parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are expected to support their child’s well-being by abiding by any set agreements or schedules. If at any

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time a parent/guardian acts inappropriately, MCCA reserves the right to dismiss his or her child from the program.

### RELEASE OF CHILD TO INTOXICATED OR DRUGGED INDIVIDUAL

In order to protect a child from any potential danger that could arise because of a parent's/guardian's condition, MCCA will take all reasonable steps to avoid releasing a child to a person in a drugged or intoxicated state, to be determined at the sole discretion of MCCA.

### PARENT PARTICIPATION

MCCA welcomes family participation and values the meaningful contributions that families can provide to the Association. Parents are encouraged to help support creating community through family activities, staff appreciation events, education and training seminars. Parent meetings may be periodically scheduled by the Center or Program Director to share ideas, identify parent/guardian volunteer opportunities and assist in planning MCCA approved events. Meetings should be scheduled at a convenient time to encourage working families to attend and are chaired by the Center or Program Director. Participation in parent meetings is voluntary and parents are not agents and have no management or decision making authority on behalf of MCCA.

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

### ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AGREEMENT

Each parent/guardian signs an Enrollment and Financial Agreement at the time of enrollment of the child and may be required to sign periodic amendments. The Enrollment and Financial Agreement states, in part:

- Parents/guardians shall initially pay a **nonrefundable deposit equal to one month's tuition** upon signing the agreement and shall be responsible for making regular payments thereafter. Tuition is due in advance of services rendered and payment is due by the first day of each month for MCCA to provide care for that month.
- MCCA will not refund or prorate tuition fees due to illness, vacations, holidays, emergency closings, voluntary absences or other cancellations.
- MCCA reserves the right to suspend care if a tuition bill is not paid in full. MCCA reserves the right to add late fees, penalties and other charges to delinquent accounts.
- MCCA must receive **written notice of withdrawal at least 30 days prior to the withdrawal date.** Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of a 30 day notice withdrawal period even if they choose to withdraw the child upon fewer than 30 days notice.

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### CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Parents/guardians may be eligible for the State of Maryland's Purchase of Care (POC) or Montgomery County's Working Parents Assistance program (WPA). Call the Montgomery County Childcare subsidy office at 240-777-1155 for more information.

### FAMILY EMERGENCY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

MCCA offers Emergency Scholarships through a reserve fund. Families experiencing a sudden emergency (such as death, illness or loss of job) may apply for this temporary financial support. To apply, submit a letter describing the emergency need to your Center or Program Director along with your last three pay stubs, most recent Federal or State tax return, and a listing of your monthly expenses. Applications are reviewed and awards are made by the MCCA Executive Director subject to the availability of funds.

### BILLING

Billing is done by the MCCA Main Office which handles accounting for all MCCA programs. Bills are mailed by the middle of the month and are due by the first of the next month. If payment is not received by the tenth of the month, a \$30.00 late fee will be charged. A fee will also be charged to families for a check returned to MCCA by the bank. If a second check is returned to MCCA, the family may be asked to pay all future bills by money order, bank check or cash. If a child's account goes into collections, the child may not be enrolled in any other MCCA program.

In addition to monthly tuition charges, additional fees, such as registration, activity or late pick up fees may be added to monthly charges. These fees are nonrefundable and payable when billed. Please check with your Center or Program Director.

### VACATIONS/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MCCA does not hold spaces for children who leave the program for the summer, extended vacations, maternity leave of parents/guardians, etc., unless full time tuition fees are paid during the absence.

### FAMILY REFERRALS DISCOUNT

A family may be awarded a tuition discount if they refer an eligible candidate for a staff position (job opening) and the referred candidate is hired by MCCA. The discount is applied once the candidate has worked for the center for three months. Additionally, families may be awarded a discount toward tuition if they refer a family that enrolls in a MCCA program. This discount will be posted to the referring family's account once the referral family submits a contract for care and pays all related fees and deposits. The amount of discount is subject to change. Contact the MCCA Administrative Office for more information.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN COLLECTIONS FOR CENTER STAFF

Parent/guardian solicitation, collection and distribution of money as gifts from parents/guardians to program staff is strictly optional. Staff gifts are appreciated but not expected or required and perceived or real equity issues can cause staff morale issues. The amount paid to any one staff member in any one

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gift giving cycle (e.g., holidays, Week of the Young Child, etc.) cannot exceed \$25.00. The IRS has ruled that such gifts are taxable. As such, if a parent/guardian or group of parents/guardians initiates a gift giving campaign they must follow MCCA guidelines and all donations must be distributed to MCCA employees through the MCCA payroll system.

Please note: MCCA staff are eligible to receive other monetary bonuses and holiday gifts during the year weighted for years of service and positions held.

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**APPENDIX I**

**MCCA Opening and Closing Schedule for the 2016-2017 School Year – SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>MCPS Action</b>	<b>MCCA Status</b>
Friday, August 26	Closed	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Changeover Day</b>
Monday, August 29	First Day of School for MCPS	<b>Open</b>
Monday, September 5	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Monday, September 12	No School – MCPS Professional Day	<b>Open</b>
Friday, September 30	Early Release	<b>Open</b>
Monday, October 3	No School	<b>Open</b>
Monday, October 10	SCHOOL OPEN	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Professional Day</b>
Wednesday, October 12	No School	<b>Open</b>
Monday, November 7	No School – MCPS Professional Day	<b>Open</b>
Tuesday, November 8	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – Election Day</b>
Thurs./Fri., November 10-11	Early Release	<b>Open</b>
Wednesday, November 23	Early Release	<b>Open</b>
Thursday, November 24	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Friday, November 25	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Friday, December 23	SCHOOL OPEN	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Monday, December 26	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Tuesday, December 27	No School – Winter Break	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Wed./Fri. December 28-30	No School - Winter Break	<b>Open</b>
Monday, January 2	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Monday, January 16	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Friday, January 20	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>Open</b>
Friday, January 27	No School - MCPS Professional Day	<b>Open</b>
Monday, February 20	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Friday, March 3	Early Release	<b>Open</b>
Friday, April 7	No School - MCPS Professional Day	<b>Open</b>
April 10-14	No School - Spring Break/MCPS Holiday	<b>Open</b>
Monday, April 17	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>Open</b>
Monday, May 29	No School – MCPS Holiday	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Friday, June 16	Early Release - Last Day of School	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Changeover Day</b>
Tuesday, July 4	Closed – 4 <sup>th</sup> of July	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Holiday</b>
Friday, August 18	Closed	<b>CLOSED – MCCA Changeover Day</b>

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MCCA's opening and closing schedule is subject to change due to weather, emergency closings, MCPS schedule changes and other circumstances at the discretion of the Executive Director. No make-up days or refunds will be provided. Advance notice of schedule changes will be provided to MCCA families as soon as possible based on specific closing related circumstances.

**APPENDIX II**

**ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION SYMPTOMS**

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Licensing Regulations do not permit sick children to be brought to child care, or to remain in care after it is discovered that they are ill. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up their child within one hour of being notified that their child is ill. Emergency numbers need to be kept up to date, so please notify the program of any changes.

**GENERAL SIGNS OF ILLNESS**

- Warm to the touch and/or has a flush face; temperature above 100 degrees
- Uncontrolled coughing or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Itchy skin or head
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Unusual spots or rash

If your child is sent home, s/he should remain at home, symptom-free, for at least 24 hours or you must submit a written statement from the health care provider approving the earlier return to the program. Please notify the program office within 24 hours if your child has developed a known communicable disease. More information about communicable diseases can be found at:

<http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

**ILLNESS GUIDELINES**

Below are the guidelines that MCCA uses to determine if a child is to be sent home and how we will support the child's return to our program. These policies have been established for the health and safety of your child as well as the staff and other children in the program.

If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or greater, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up him/her. The programs will use an auxiliary temperature (under arm) that requires adding one degree to the reading. For example, if the auxiliary temperature reads 99 degrees, one degree is added to that number, and the resulting actual temperature is 100 degrees. (NOTE: Accommodations are made in certain situations such as teething and children with higher than usual normal body temperatures, when accompanied with a licensed health practitioner's note.)

When a child is sent home with a fever of 100 degrees or greater, s/he may not return to child care until 24 hours after the fever has broken without the use of medications. For example: a child develops a fever on a Monday morning and is sent home; the parent gives the child medication (such as children's

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Tylenol) during the day on Monday; the child's fever breaks at 7:00 pm Monday night and the parent does not give the child anymore medication; if the fever does not return for 24 hours from 7:00 pm Monday night, the child can return to the program the following Wednesday.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the program if their child becomes acutely ill so that we can notify other families. This will allow us to take steps to try to limit the risk of further infection. Some examples are strep throat, pink eye etc... When a child is diagnosed as having a contagious illness, such as strep throat, pink eye, etc., s/he is excluded from the child care program for 24 hours after antibiotics have begun.

Parents/guardians are required to inform the program management if their child is infected with or has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease (for example, whooping cough (pertussis), rubella, hepatitis A, mumps, TB). MCCA cannot admit a child who is infected with a communicable disease during the period of communicability as indicated by the Office of Child Care. Re-admission to child care requires a written note by a licensed health practitioner such as the child's pediatrician.

Other symptoms of illness which require exclusion from MCCA programs include a change in bowel habits (i.e., loose, watery, stools that occur more than twice or with other symptoms), vomiting that occurs more than twice or with additional symptoms, undiagnosed rashes and cold symptoms that do not subside. When a child is sent home for any of these symptoms, s/he may not return to the center for 24 hours, or if returning to the program earlier, must submit a written statement from the health care provider approving the return. A doctor's note indicating that the child is not contagious will be needed if the symptoms persist.

### MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

The Center staff are permitted to give medication (prescription and over-the-counter) only if parents/guardians have completed the "Medication Administration Authorization Form" (DHR/CCA1216). Any medication must be properly labeled and in its original container. At least one dose of a prescription medicine is to be given to the child at home before the Center can dispense the medication.

Medications include:

- prescription medications
- non-prescription medications (including Tylenol, cough drops, and cold medication)

NOTE: Lotion, sunscreen, lip balm, diaper ointment, diaper powder may only be administered with the Basic Needs Product Form signed by the child's parent or legal guardian (physician's signature not required).

The Medication Administration Authorization Form (DHR/CCA1216) must contain:

- the child's name
- approval for Center to administer the medication
- the name of the medication to be administered
- the dosage amounts
- the times for medication to be administered
- possible side effects from the medication, if any, completed by the doctor



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- the beginning and ending dates that the medication should be administered

Note: A new Medication Administration Authorization Form will be required every 12 months or when medication doses change.

This information can be faxed directly or hand delivered to program management. MCCA will not dispense medication if we do not have this information.

Medications may not be sent to the center in a child's lunch or back pack. Please hand-deliver all medications to the child's teacher.

Children CANNOT bring medication and take it themselves no matter what age they are. The Director, parents, guardians and teaching team will develop a plan together when a field trip is scheduled on a day when medication is required. MCCA staff will administer treatments for conditions connected with a disability following appropriate training in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**APPENDIX III**

**TOYS FROM HOME POLICY**

MCCA recognizes the important roles that toys from home can play in the lives of the children in our programs. Staff and families working in partnership can support the developmental growth of the children and provide a safe and enriching learning environment that includes these elements of home. The following policies apply as they relate to toys brought from home:

**COMFORT TOYS**

Infants, toddlers and preschool children often use specific toys from home as "comfort toys". Comfort toys can help a child in their emotional development, by providing a support as they adjust to the separation from their families, and learn to cope with all the stress that being away from home for long hours can cause. "Comfort Toys" are often stuffed animals or dolls, but can also be items such as a blanket, a special hat or T-shirt, or even toys such as footballs, trucks, horses, dinosaurs, etc.

Family members should let staff know what their child's "comfort toy" is. Comfort toys will not have to be shared and will be readily available to the child throughout the day. If a child chooses to share their toy, staff will discourage "selective sharing" and encourage the child to share it equally. If they do not want to share it equally it will be put in the child's cubby or backpack.

**TOYS DEPICTING VIOLENCE**

Students should not bring to school any object that looks like a weapon or could be used as a weapon, including toy guns or knives, water guns, etc.

- Toys depicting violent themes, i.e. toy guns, knives or swords, action figures, etc. will not be permitted to be brought to the center from home.

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- If staff have knowledge that children have these types of toys in the center, the toy will be removed from the classroom, stored in the center's office and returned to the family at the end of the day.
- Video games (for computers, phones, iPads, Game Boys, etc.) brought to the program may not depict violent themes. If a child is found to be playing this type of game at the program they will be in violation of this policy and the game/toy will be removed from the classroom, and all conditions as spelled out in the Electronic Toys section will be applied.

### CELL PHONES

Another part of our high tech society includes the use of cell phones. We are finding that more and more families are utilizing cell phones as a means of staying connected, and that more and more of the school aged children in our programs have cell phones. While we appreciate the convenience that cell phones can provide to families in relaying information to their children about changes in schedules or who will be picking the child up from the program, it is essential that any information of this nature be communicated directly to the staff rather than through the child. In an effort to ensure that children are using their cell phones properly, are learning appropriate cell phone courtesy, are keeping the lines open for their families to stay connected, and that staff are kept directly in the information loop, we have the following policies regarding cell phones:

- Cell phone use when the child is at the center is limited to incoming calls from their primary caregivers. Children will not be permitted to make any outgoing calls on their cell phones. Children will be permitted to make outgoing calls to their family members using the center phone as deemed necessary.
- During the time children are at the center they will be encouraged to keep their cell phones on their person (on vibrate mode), in their cubbies or backpack, or they can be secured in the center office.
- Family members must inform staff directly concerning any information such as changes in the child's schedule, changes in who will be picking up the child, etc. Family members should call the center phone to relay this information. If the family member calls the child's cell phone with this type of information they should ask to speak with the child's teacher or the director to share the information with them as well as with the child.

The center or MCCA cannot be held accountable for lost, stolen, or broken cell phones. The family must assume all risks of the cell phone being at the center. As with any other personal item brought from home, if the rules and policies are not being adhered to, the cell phone will be confiscated by the staff and properly stored until it can be turned over to the family member at the end of the day.

If you have any questions regarding these policies please speak with your Center or Program Director or call the MCCA main office at 301-984-7680 and speak with the Education Director or the Executive Director.

## APPENDIX IV

### MEDIA POLICY

In this era of technology there are growing opportunities for children to be exposed to computers and media within the course of their time at the center. MCCA's goal is to preserve hands on experiences while recognizing the changing role of media in children's early experiences. To ensure that these opportunities enhance children's experiences and avoid exposure to inappropriate content the following guidelines will be followed for all MCCA programs:

- All media programs will conform to MCCA's educational philosophy and be age appropriate, prescreened, and approved prior to use or viewing.
- Violent themes or images will not be permitted.
- Expectations regarding time and frequency of use of computers and other media devices will be clearly established and communicated with children and families.
- Staff will actively monitor content and supervise children during use and provide guidance as needed.
- The Internet will not be enabled or available on any computer or device used by children while in an MCCA program.
- Copying or transferring copyrighted materials and software without authorization will not be permitted.
- Noncompliance with these guidelines may include, but not be limited to, loss of privileges, suspension or expulsion from a MCCA program.
- There is no screen time for children under two years old.

#### RADIO AND TELEVISION

The use of radio or television in classrooms is not permitted due to the lack of control of content. Audio recordings of age appropriate music or stories can be used as part of classroom activities.

#### COMPUTERS FOR CHILDREN

Computers available for children's use will be positioned in the classroom for easy monitoring and supervision. Teaching staff will implement a clear system for use that provides equitable access for all enrolled children. No Internet access will be enabled or available on any MCCA computer or device used by children while in a MCCA program.

#### MOVIES, VIDEOS AND LIVE PERFORMANCES

Theatre experiences on site or as field trip destinations may occur intermittently during the course of a year. The focus of these experiences is to expand children's imaginations and exposure to the theatrical arts. The use of videos (copyright permitting) and trips to the movies are limited and content will be researched in advance to ensure that it is developmentally appropriate.

#### PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Video game systems are not utilized in MCCA programs. School-age children are permitted to bring handheld devices for limited use on Fridays, school holidays and during summer programming. Teaching staff designate clear times for use. Children may choose to play alone or share a device with others provided the item does not cause disruptive or exclusionary play. Electronic devices will be stored with

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the child's belongings when not in use. The family and child assume all risks associated with bringing in electronic items including loss and damage. Children not following guidelines will lose the privilege of bringing devices from home on established media days.