



MARIA
EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States

Parent Handbook

Maria Early Learning Center

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Introduction

Welcome Parents!

The staff and I are excited to have you join us here at Maria Early Learning Center! Your child(ren) is God's precious gift to our world. We treasure the goodness in each child as God's unique creation and offer them caring love in all interactions.

Many of the policies found in this handbook reflect Ohio's mandated rules for licensed child care centers. Others are specific to this learning community. If a policy needs clarification, please ask us.

Thank you again for entrusting us with your child(ren). Together we will delight in watching this child grow in "age, grace, and maturity."

In Mary, Jesus' mother and ours,

The Maria Early Learning Center Team

In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who required alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202)690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

MELC is in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), including:

Administering medication to children with disabilities.

Administering care procedures to children with disabilities.

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Mission Statement

Maria Early Learning Center, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States, offers caring love and education for infants and children in a faith-filled, diverse, supportive and safe community.

Goals

We:

- Respect the developmental uniqueness of each child
- Nurture loving hearts and peaceful actions
- Prepare children for school readiness, success and social confidence
- Collaborate with parents in forming the whole child

Educational Philosophy

Maria Early Learning Center has become known in the community for its child-centered, faith-based, high-quality educational approach in a family oriented environment.

- We believe that children learn through self-directed play; therefore, our classrooms are arranged in “centers” where children can feel free to explore and discover. These centers are intentionally prepared to provide self-directed learning in the areas of literacy, math, science, art, music, drama, and engineering.
- We believe our educators value the individual child as members of our community. We offer a program that emphasizes the highest quality of care and NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices. For that reason, we base decisions on what is best for each child.
- We believe the environment is considered an educator in our program, as a result, our classrooms are designed to promote a deeper level of understanding through the exploration of authentic materials. The Center is filled with natural colors, real wood items, soft furnishings, as well as live animals. The outdoors is always welcomed inside.
- We believe technology facilitates communication between the Center and family; therefore, we utilize a secure platform for real-time information sharing between educators and parents/guardians.
- We believe a faith-based education provides the foundation for developing an on-going, meaningful relationship with God; therefore, we promote respectful interactions in the classroom which supports self-regulation, care for creation, and service to the community.

ODJFS Licensing

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review (front entrance).

For the complete Appendix C to Rule 5180:2-12-07 see the last page of the Parent Handbook.

Enrollment Requirements

The Center accepts children between the ages of six weeks and six years of age. All children are required to have the following documents upon enrollment:

- Child Enrollment and Health Information JFS 01234
- Shot Record
- SUTQ Family Information JFS 01511
- Student Release Information Form
- Intake Policy and Procedures
- Diaper Program Enrollment Form
- MELC Contract/Billing information
- CACFP Enrollment Form

Within the first 30 days of enrollment all children must have an updated shot record on file at the Center. These forms are required to be updated annually.

Ratios

The Center observes the following staff/child ratios and small group sizes for each age group:

Group	Age	Staff/child ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infant One	Six weeks to 12 months	1:5	12
Infant Two	12 months to 18 months (Approximately)	1:6	10
Toddlers	18 to 36 months	1:7	14
Preschool	36 to 48+ months	1:12	24
	48 to 60+ months	1:14	28

Days and Hours of Operation

The Center is open year-round Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Center will be closed on the following days:

- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving
- Up to two days a year for staff in-service
- One staff retreat day

Depending upon when Christmas (Eve) and New Year's Day fall, the Center may be closed for up to 12 consecutive days during the holiday season. Exact dates will be announced each year. Adequate notice will be given in order for alternative childcare arrangements to be made if necessary.

Emergency Closing Plan

Should the Center ever have a weather emergency, such as a snowstorm, or a general emergency, such as no power, any information concerning closings or delays will be reported on Channel 13 (WTVG) and through Procure.

If a weather emergency occurs while children are at the Center such as a level 3, parents will be notified and required to pick up their child(ren) within a reasonable amount of time. If the child's guardian is unable to be reached, the emergency contact person will be notified.

Should some type of emergency occur during hours of operation and the building needs to be evacuated, all of the children will be taken to the Sisters' Residence at Notre Dame Academy (NDA), where parents will be called and the children picked up. In the event of a significant injury or illness, 911 will be called first and the parent notified immediately afterward.

Please see the parent board by the front desk, for a more detailed emergency preparedness and response plan (EPRP) which includes fire, tornado, flooding, blizzards, and earthquakes.

Daily Schedules

Infants*

6:30-8:00	Morning arrival; free play
8:00-8:45	Breakfast
8:00-10:00	Free play; story time; diaper changes
10:00-11:00	Gross motor activities inside or outside
11:00-11:30	Diapers and hand washing
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:15	Clean up and prepare for naps
12:15-2:30	Naps (schedule varies for each child)
2:30-3:00	Diapers; clean up; diaper changes
3:00-3:30	Snack
3:30-5:00	Activities/outdoor play
5:00-6:00	Diaper changes/departures

*Due to the nature of infants, they have individualized schedules for feeding, napping, and/or diaper changing. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher for more information on what your child's schedule will look like at while at the Center. Our teachers are happy to meet with you to discuss what works best for your child and family.

Toddlers

6:30-8:00	Morning arrival; free play
8:00-8:45	Breakfast
8:00-10:00	Free play; diaper changes; gross motor activities
10:00-11:30	Circle time; sensory play; art activities
11:30-11:45	Diapers and hand washing
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:30	Clean up and prepare for nap
12:30-2:30	Nap
2:30-3:00	Diaper changes and free play
3:00-3:30	Snack
3:30-4:45	Activities/outdoor play
4:45-6:00	Diaper changes/ departures/combine in family room

Preschool/PreK

6:30-8:00	Morning arrival; free play
8:00-8:45	Breakfast
8:00-9:15	Free play; bathroom and handwashing
9:15-9:30	Circle time
9:30-10:30	Project and small group activities
10:30-11:30	Gross motor activities inside/outside
11:30-11:45	Bathroom and handwashing
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:30	Clean up and prepare for nap
12:30-2:30	Nap
2:30-3:00	Bathroom, hand washing, quiet reading
3:00-3:20	Snack
3:20-3:45	Group time
3:45-6:00	Outdoor/free play

Staff

The Director, who provides leadership and supervision of the staff and overall management of the Center, possesses a master's degree in Education or related field. Lead teachers generally hold a minimum of an associate degree in early childhood education; many have BA's in related fields. All assistant teachers possess credentials as child development associates or are working towards receiving the credential. All staff annually attend a minimum of six clock hours of additional training. Staff are certified in first aid, CPR and child abuse. The staff are mandated reports. Additionally, most are certified in common childhood illnesses.

Most importantly, all staff live the Center's core values: respect, caring love, building a sense of community and attention to the needs of the individual child.

Religious Instruction

In keeping with its mission to provide children with a supportive faith community, teachers introduce even the youngest children to rituals that encourage a relationship with God. Daily, for example, teachers bless each child with a simple sign of the cross. Toddler children begin to pray at meal times and listen to simple biblical stories. Once weekly a Sister of Notre Dame spends time with the PreK classroom introducing the children to many stories of both the Old and New Testament as well as to the liturgical meaning of such feasts as Christmas and Easter. Preschool children also learn rote prayers as well as simple meditation.

Parents who may have questions about the Center's religion curriculum are encouraged to speak with the child's teacher or the Director.

Curriculum

Lead teachers in each room plan daily lessons using Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and Creative Curriculum. Children are observed using the Vine Assessment. Families who wish can access these standards at <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Content-Standards>.

- Parents can find weekly lesson plans posted in each room. The Center does not report child level data to DCY pursuant to 5180:2-17 of the Administrative Code.

Online Portfolio

Center teachers use a web-based system, Procure for providing families with daily reports, activity documentation (including photos/videos) and assessments. Essentially, Procure documents a child's journey at the Center. The Center creates a child's online cubby and families will receive an e-vite with a link to connect to it.

Transitioning

Planning for transitions helps children adjust to new settings, demonstrates respect for their unique needs and ensures that there is continuity in their care and services. Because parents are our collaborators, it is important that transitions include their input. Transitions happen when:

- Children enter the Center for the first time.
- Children move up to an older age group.
- Children go from PreK to kindergarten.
- Children move to a different learning community.

When a child enters the program for the first time, the parents and Director/Assistant Director will discuss a transition plan which will include the following elements:

- Child are able to spend time in the classroom where assigned prior to the date of enrollment. Parents are required to accompany the child during this visit.
- Teachers will greet the child and parents and introduce them to the group.
- Teachers will meet with the child's parent at the conclusion of the "visit" to discuss critical health information, child's preferences, family expectations and two to three "transition goals." These goals will be reviewed at the next parent-teacher conference date.
- Teachers will encourage parents to visit or call often to see how their child is doing.

When a child moves to an older age group, the transition plan will be as follows:

- Parents will receive a letter announcing the pending transition and seeking their permission for the move-up.
- Daily, for the week prior to the actual move-up date, the child will visit their new room for two or more hours each day. The child's parents are invited to participate in one of these visit days.
- Prior to the transition, the teacher will meet with the child's parents to create transition goals for the child. These goals will be reviewed and/or revised at the next parent-teacher conference date.
- Teachers will discuss the "Individualized Transition Plan" for each child prior to the practice week.
- Teachers receiving a child new to their room will be responsible for reading the child's file prior to the transition.

When a child leaves the Center, the transition plan will be as follows:

- Teachers will help children leaving PreK for kindergarten to adjust to the changes they will experience.
- Teachers will collect all child's work to send along with the child.

Transfer of a Child's Record

Maria Early Learning Center may disclose personally identifiable information from a child's record under two circumstances: 1.) written consent from a parent or guardian or 2.) the receipt of a court order. Such records include any medical and health information, the child's educational progress and record of attendance.

At the time of enrollment, transfer to another childcare center or entry into kindergarten, parents/guardians sign an "Authorization for Release/Request of Student Records" form authorizing the Center to request the records from a previous childcare or release the records should an elementary school request them. These forms are included in the enrollment packets for new students if the child is transferring from another childcare facility, or are distributed at the time of departure.

Health Screening Referral Process

A teacher and/or the Director may suggest a referral for assessment by a health care provider or the community agency *Help Me Grow* if, for example, an ASQ:3 screening indicates such a referral would be warranted or if the teacher/director observes a continuing health issue and/or recent change in the health status of the child. Such referrals as well as follow-up actions will be documented in the child's health record on *Procare*

At the time of enrollment parents receive an ASQ:3 questionnaire that is age-appropriate for their child(ren). Upon receipt of the completed ASQ:3, the teacher documents the information by scanning the summary into *Procare* noting the date of completion, the results and any recommendations for additional referrals. Annually thereafter parents receive the ASQ:3 for completion. While the screening is administered annually, there is provision to screen at more frequent intervals if there appears to be a need to do so. Maria Early Learning Center does not report this data to the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY)

Food Program

Providing a healthy, well-balanced daily menu is one way the Center demonstrates caring love for the children. The Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsored by the federal government. ODJFS requires the Center to meet one-third of the child's recommended daily dietary allowance.

Breakfast: Breakfast is served daily from 8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. to any child seated at the table and ready to eat. The staff is responsible for serving the food to the children.

Lunch: Lunch is served daily from 11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Snack: An afternoon snack is provided after nap time.

Menus

Weekly menus are posted on *Procare* and at the front desk. The Chef and Assistant Director occasionally change the menu; any changes will be posted. Teachers share in meal times with children to positively model healthy eating and optimize learning and social opportunities that meal times provide.

Special Diets – Infant Feeding – Breast Feeding

Special Diets:

Personal Preference: For cultural or religious reasons some families may wish to substitute select menu items. Families are responsible for the menu substitutions. In this case, the Center does not offer a reduction in the weekly rate. Requests from a parent or guardian eliminating the

service of any one of the four food groups or altering the amount of food required to be served at meals to meet the daily recommended dietary allowance as required by the federal food program (CACFP) must be signed and dated by the child's attending physician using the required *Health Care Plan Documentation & Permission to Administer Medication for Early Care and Education Programs*. This DCY required form can be downloaded from the Center's website.

Parents or guardians submit these forms to the teacher who will inform the chef and administration staff.

Food Allergies: When children with food allergies attend the Center, families will be required to complete a *Health Care Plan Documentation & Permission to Administer Medication for Early Care and Education Programs*. Based on the child's Care Plan, caregivers will receive training and put into practice:

- Preventing exposure to specific food(s) that trigger allergy
- Recognizing symptoms of allergic reaction
- Treating allergic reaction

Individual child's food allergies will be posted prominently in the room and in the Center's kitchen. Care will be taken to maintain confidentiality.

For children with food allergies, the Center strongly encourages families to bring their own substitutions. The Center will provide a fixed substitution for any of the food items documented on the Care Plan if no substitution is brought in.

All supplemental food needs to be in a well labeled container marked with the child's name and date. Items also need to be peanut free.

Infant Meals: At the time of enrollment parents of infants indicate if they wish to participate in the Center's food program for infants as stipulated by the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

The infant will be fed according to the written instructions from the parent or the attending physician and according to USDA guidelines. Parents provide all sterilized bottles to be used for their child. Bottles are clearly labeled with the child's name, contents and date. At one year of age, infants eat the food stipulated on the weekly menu for all the children.

Breast Feeding/Pumping

A mother who wishes to breast-feed her baby is encouraged to make arrangements with the Infant Room teachers. Any mother who wishes to pump breastmilk at the Center is encouraged to see the administration staff to discuss a private location. The Center supports breastfeeding and/or pumping and is happy to work with you to accommodate this.

Nut-Free Facility

The number of children who have severe allergies to nuts and peanut products has greatly increased over the past few years. Several children, in fact, have life-threatening allergies involving nuts or peanuts. For this reason, the Center strives to maintain a peanut/nut-free program. The Center, however, does serve some products that are manufactured in a facility that may be produced in a factory where nuts are present.

We greatly appreciate your continued help and support in our effort to provide a safe environment for the children in our program by adhering to the following guidelines:

- No products containing peanuts/nuts may be brought into the building.
- No homemade food items will be accepted for celebrations.
- Anyone who eats peanut/nut products should wash well BEFORE arriving at the Center (including hands, face, clean clothes).

Treats for Birthdays and Special Occasions

A family wishing to bring a birthday snack for their child should first check with the room teachers for any additional food allergies and restrictions before bringing anything. If any homemade item is brought into the Center for celebrations, they will be offered at departure time and the decision to allow the child to eat the item will be left up to the guardian.

Scheduling

Parents are asked to notify the Center of any days a child/ren will not be present. Parents will be responsible for full program fees regardless of occasional absences.

Part-time enrollees:

- Parents will be charged accordingly for scheduled days on a monthly basis.
- Credits will not be given for days missed. If a child is scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays, but will not be able to attend on a specific Tuesday, no credit will be given for the day.
- If a scheduled day falls on a holiday, parents will not be charged for that day. If, however, the Center closes for a single day in a one-week period for any other reason, and the day was scheduled, there will be a charge for that day.

The Center does not allow parents to have a rotating schedule. All part-time enrollees must have a set schedule. Part-time enrollees are not eligible for vacation leave, sick leave, or sibling discounts.

Vacation Leave

Families will be permitted one week of vacation leave when tuition will not be charged under the following conditions:

- Child/ren have been enrolled for the last ninety (90) days
- Child/ren are enrolled full-time for all twelve months
- Fees have been paid as contracted for at least ninety (90) days

If you pay monthly, you will be granted an additional week of vacation. Please see your contract for additional details.

Sick Leave

Families will be permitted sick leave credit when tuition will not be charged under the following conditions:

- Child/ren have been enrolled for the last ninety (90) days
- Child/ren have been absent for five (5) consecutive days
- Fees have been paid as scheduled for ninety (90) days

Billing

Parents will receive via email a monthly billing statement of tuition charges. All fees and overtime charges are outlined in the current tuition charge sheet. In the absence of a court order stating otherwise, both parents are responsible for 100% of all fees incurred.

All payments are first posted to a family's eldest child's account. In the event that one or more child(ren) is withdrawn from the Center, all payments from that day forward will be applied to the account of the withdrawn child/ren in the event a balance exists.

Arrival/Departure

For the child's safety, the Center requires that a parent/guardian or their designated adult age 18 or older accompany the child into the building and into the hands of an attending staff member. In general, parents are asked not to bring children to the Center during naptime.

A parent/guardian may list other adults, age 18 or older, on a *Student Release form*.

This person is required to show a picture ID when picking up the child. If authorization changes at any time, parents must contact the office immediately. No child will be released from the Center unless identity is assured and/or a picture ID card is displayed to the attending staff member. A new parent/guardian will be asked to show an attending staff member a picture ID card when picking up a child.

The Center recognizes those listed on the child's intake paper as the child's parents to be the legal guardians of the child. Therefore, staff members will release the child to either parent without requesting permission from the other. In the event of divorce, separation, or any other situation that would involve one parent having sole custody of the minor child, intact legal papers stating such must be filed with the Director in order for the Center's staff to prevent a child's noncustodial parent from leaving the Center with the child.

Both at the early morning arrival and late afternoon departure Center staff who are trained in first aid, communicable disease, child abuse and CPR are present to provide the necessary supervision.

Late Pickup Policy

Maria Early Learning Center's policy of supervision of children whose parents are late or fail to pick up their children is as follows:

- The Center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. A parent is expected to pick up the child and exit the building prior to 6:00 p.m.
- The Center will make every effort to contact parents/guardians or emergency contact persons when children are not picked up. When such persons cannot be reached, the Center will contact the Children's Services Board for advice and assistance.
- The Center will charge a late fee per child for pick-up or personal use of the building after 6:00 p.m. The amount of the late fee is detailed on the current tuition charge sheet.
- The Center will prepare and deliver a statement showing the late pick-up fee that will serve as a written notice.
 - After three (3) such notices in any twelve (12) month period, the Director reserves the right to place the family on a probationary period of 3 months where pickup will be no later than 5:30 p.m. If the probationary guidelines are not met, the Director reserves the right to terminate childcare services.

Child's Medical Statement

Each child attending the Center shall be examined by a licensed physician prior to the date of admission or within thirty days after the date of admission. The physician is affirming that the child is free from apparent communicable disease and is in suitable condition for enrollment in a childcare center. The physician is also affirming that the child has had the immunizations required by the state department of health for infants and toddlers. The Center will provide a *Child's Medical Statement* at the time of enrollment. This form must be updated annually by the child's physician. In addition to recording immunizations, the Center must have assurance that the child continues to be in suitable physical condition for enrollment in a child daycare center. The Center will send a reminder that the child's annual physical is due within 30 days of the expiration date. If the Child's Medical Statement is not returned by the thirteenth month annually, the child may not attend the Center per DCY guidelines.

All children enrolled in the Center will have received those vaccinations recommended by the state of Ohio for each age level. The Center will *not enroll* children whose families' desire immunization exemption for religious or personal reasons even though Ohio Code permits exemptions. Documentation of immunizations must be on record within 30 days of enrollment.

In the event of a medical emergency 911 will be called and, if necessary, transport to the nearest

medical facility. The emergency transportation authorization signed at the time of enrollment outlines this procedure. The Center reserves the right to refuse services to any child whose parent declines to give permission to transport in the event of an emergency.

Children's records shall be confidential but shall be available to the Ohio department of job and family services for the purpose of administering Chapter 5104. of the Revised Code and Chapter 5101:2-12 of the Administrative Code. The immunization records shall be subject to review by the Ohio department of health (ODH) for disease outbreak control and for immunization level assessment purposes.

Medication

The Center will comply with The Ohio Department of Children and Youths requirement to use the *Health Care Plan Documentation & Permission to Administer Medication for Early Care and Education Programs* form. This form is available at the front desk or online at the DCY website.

Staff will administer medication with the written, dated and signed permission of the parent/guardian and the child's physician. The Center will only administer medication, if the required dosage is more than 2 times a day.

The following procedures must be followed exactly before staff may dispense any medication.

- Submit form *Health Care Plan Documentation & Permission to Administer Medication for Early Care and Education Programs* with a parental signature and instructions for prescription medication.
- Physician signature and parental signature and instructions for over-the-counter medication and special diets. Label medicine: name of child; name of medicine; amount to be given; time; date; method of administration. Deliver the medication in a pre-measured container or include an "alligator spoon." A teaspoon cannot be used to dispense medication.
- Parent/guardian will deliver medicine and the signed form to the child's teacher.
- The Center shall not administer any medication, food supplement, medical food, or topical product until after the child has received the first dose or application at least once prior to the Center administering a dose or applying the product, to avoid unexpected reactions.

Maria Early Learning Center reserves the right to refuse to administer any medications.

Included in the enrollment packet is a blanket consent form that is signed to give permission for the Center to use sunscreen, diaper cream, and hand lotion. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide these items.

Special Medical Management Procedures

If a child in care has a special medical management procedure (physician ordered), an adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever the child is present. The trained adult may be a staff member that has gone through training by the physician and/or parent.

Absent Day(s)

Please notify the Center when your child will be absent for any reason but especially in case of illness. If you have not made contact (Procure, email, phone call) by 10 a.m., the Center will attempt to reach you to verify the child(ren) is safe.

Illnesses

Parents are asked to inform the Center when their child has any contagious disease other than a common cold.

Any child that exhibits any of the following symptoms will be isolated and discharged immediately from the Center:

- Temperature of at least 100.4°F using a temporal thermometer (99.4 degrees Fahrenheit – axillary [armpit] thermometer) when in combination with any other sign or symptom of illness.
- Diarrhea, 3 or more abnormally loose stools *unexplained* in a 24-hour period.
- Vomiting more than once or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness.
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation.
- Severe coughing causing a child to be red or blue in the face, or making a whooping sound.
- Difficult, rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching, or eye pain.
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
- Unusually dark urine or gray/white stools.
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.

When a child displays any of the above symptoms, the child will be isolated away from other children and a parent will be contacted to pick up the child within a reasonable time period. Emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child if parents are unable to come within a reasonable time period. In the event of a medical or dental emergency, the Center will call 911.

In most cases a child may return to the Center when symptoms are no longer present. However, written permission from the child's physician is required for readmission to the Center after the child has recovered from: chicken pox, impetigo, conjunctivitis, ringworm, scabies, croup, fifth disease, scarlet fever/strep throat, or any other illness deemed necessary by the Director.

When a child is sent home with a fever of 100.4°F or higher the parents are asked to keep the

child home for a minimum of 24 hours (one business day) or until the child is fever-free without the aid of a fever reducing medicine.

Parents will be notified of a communicable disease reported to the Director by a notice posted at the front desk. A communicable disease chart is located on the parent board for reference. The Center reports to the Lucas County Health Department any outbreaks of communicable diseases.

COVID-19

The Center is required to notify DCY and the Lucas County Health Department of any staff or child who has a positive PCR test. The Center will also notify our families of any exposure as well as our plan to minimize the spread. This plan may include the Center having to quarantine a classroom and/or closing the entire Center.

Please make sure to check with the front desk on the most updated COVID policy, as it is a fluid situation with ongoing changes. The Center does adhere to the guidance of the CDC and the Lucas County Health Department.

Injuries

A DCY *Form: Incident/Injury Report* will be completed when an illness, accident or injury requires first aid treatment; a bump or blow to the head occurs; emergency transport is required; or an unusual or unexpected event happens that jeopardizes the safety of children or staff, such as a child leaving the center unattended. A parent/guardian will receive the incident report to review and sign on the day that the incident occurred. The Center will provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the incident report. In the event of a medical or dental emergency, we will call 911. Maria Early Learning Center will not enroll or will discharge from the Center any child whose parent/guardian elects not to give permission for emergency transportation.

Safety

To ensure the safety of each child, Maria Early Learning Center has established the following guidelines:

- No child shall ever be left alone unsupervised.
- There is always immediate access to a working telephone.
- No spray aerosols will be used in the presence of a child.
- The Director and/or staff member is required to notify the local public services agency immediately when they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.
- Emergency exit plans are posted in each room.
- Monthly fire drills and periodic tornado and lockdown drills are held.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation, the children will be taken to the Sisters' Residence at Notre Dame Academy (NDA).
- No smoking in the building or outside areas is permitted.
- Fire arms are not permitted in the building.

Appropriate Language, Media, and Conduct

Our center is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and age-appropriate environment for every child. Children will not be exposed to inappropriate language, media, or behavior while in our care. Staff model positive behavior and ensure that all conversations, activities, and materials are suitable for children's ages and developmental levels.

Building Security and Access

To ensure the safety of each child and staff member the Center has implemented the following security measures and access to the building.

- A staff member must do a visual screening before allowing anyone to enter the building. After the staff member recognizes the individual they may buzz them in. The front doors remain locked at all times. This is our only visitor/parent access entrance. We do not hand out key cards or codes for entering/exiting our building.
 - If a staff member is unsure who is at the door, they will walk to the door and speak with the individual before allowing them to enter.
 - Located at the front desk is a visitor log.
- Classrooms may only unlock the back playground entrance if they are outside. When the last classroom enters the building they are required to relock the door.
- The Center has three exterior cameras so that office personnel can visibly see who is at these entrances.

Child Guidance

Through guidance and management a child learns socially acceptable behaviors that help to form positive social relationships. These social relationships can then enhance good self-esteem. In guiding and managing a child, all Maria Early Learning Center staff members will follow state-licensing regulations.

These regulations include:

1. A child care staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their guidance and management.
2. When a child's behavior is unacceptable, the child care staff member shall:
 - a. Use developmentally appropriate techniques suitable to the child's age and circumstances.
 - b. Use developmentally appropriate separation from the situation, only as necessary.
 - c. Communicate and consult with parents/guardians in implementing any specific behavior management plan.
 - d. Types of guidance and management used can include:
 - positive reinforcement
 - redirection
 - natural and logical consequences; if need be removal from the area
 - parent conferences

- dismissal

3. When a child's behavior is unacceptable, the staff member shall not:

- Abuse or neglect a child.
- Utilize cruel, harsh, unusual or extreme techniques.
- Utilize any form of corporal punishment, such as, but not limited to: hitting, punching, pinching, shaking or biting.
- Delegate children to manage or discipline other children.
- Use physical restraints to confine a child; however, holding children for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so that the child may regain control is allowed.
- Place a child in a locked room or confine a child in any enclosed area.
- Confine a child to equipment such as cribs or high chairs.
- Humiliate, threaten or frighten a child.
- Subject a child to profane language or verbal abuse.
- Make derogatory or sarcastic remarks about a child or his/her family.
- Punish a child for failure to eat, sleep or toileting accidents.
- Withhold any food (including snacks and treats), rest or toilet use.
- Punish an entire group of children due to the unacceptable behavior of one or a few.
- Isolate and restrict a child from all activities for an extended period of time.

Biting

When biting occurs at the Center, staff will administer appropriate treatment as well as fill out the required ODJFS paperwork (Incident Report- JFS 01299). The identity of the biter will be kept confidential. A copy of this report will be given to the parents. Biting should be recognized as a typical stage of development due to the lack of verbal skills and the limited vocabulary young children have; however, it is highly discouraged and viewed as an unacceptable behavior. A general plan of action has been developed by the Center to help eliminate this undesirable behavior. If biting becomes excessive, removal from the center may be necessary. Due to the complexity of biting, the policy is at the discretion of the director. The director will look at the age of the children involved in the incident and develop a plan of action that is age appropriate for the individual child.

The plan of action for children 10-18 months *may include* items such as:

- Specialty materials (teething necklace, sensory items, etc)
- Request to have a check-up by the pediatrician (teething issues)
- Referral to a Renewed Mind, Help Me Grow, Harbor, etc.
- Being sent home (2 bites in one day)

The plan of action for children 18 months – 36 months *may include* items such as:

- Request to have a check-up by the pediatrician or dentist
- If the family is working with a specialist, the center will request to meet with them.
- Referral to A Renewed Mind, Help Me Grow, Harbor, etc.

- Being sent home (2 bites in one day)
- One day suspension (3 times in one day or 5 times in one week)
 - One week suspension (2nd offense)
 - Disenrollment (3rd offense)

The plan of action for children 36 months and up *may include* items such as:

- Referral to A Renewed Mind
- Request to have the school system send someone out to observe the child
- Time in the office
- Agreed upon consequence (Parent, teachers, and director)
- If an IEP is available, the Center will request to speak with someone from the team
- One day suspension (2 bites in one week)
 - One week suspension (2nd offense)
 - Disenrollment (3rd offense)

Proactive steps/actions the Center will take in general for biting:

- Using a biting chart to gather data to see if a pattern can be seen
- Calling in a specialist to observe the classroom and teachers
- Adding additional staff when available
- Separating the group into smaller groups throughout the day
- Having the P.A.T.H.S specialist observe the classroom teachers and classroom
- Sending staff for additional training

Clothing

The child will be most comfortable in clothing that is appropriate for the weather and allows for freedom of movement. The clothing should be easy to care for, as the child will have the opportunity to try many activities. The Center recommends that two sets of clearly labeled underwear and outerwear be kept in a container in the outside hall cubby. The clothing should be checked regularly to make sure that it still fits and is weather appropriate. For safety reasons, the Center encourages the wearing of closed-toed shoes.

Routine Outside Play

Outdoor play is an important part of the daily curriculum and provides multiple benefits:

- Outdoor play relieves stress and reduces anxiety.
- Physical activity increases strength and coordination.
- Children learn leadership, cooperation and problem solving skills.
- Children develop an appreciation for nature and become more aware of their environmental surroundings.

If a child is well enough to come to the Center, he/she is well enough to go outside. Children play outside daily when:

- Temperatures are at or above 25° F with consideration given to the wind chill factor.
- Temperatures are at or below 90° F with consideration given to the heat index.

- There is light precipitation (e.g. snow flurries, drizzle).

When the weather is inclement, the children will play on the patio or in the family room.

In the spirit of cooperative learning, Center personnel and parents have a shared responsibility to foster the health and well-being of each child. It is the parent's responsibility to send children to the Center appropriately dressed for outdoor activities. All children should wear hats, mittens/gloves, long pants and coats (boots in snowy weather) when going outdoors in cold weather.

Water Play

In warm weather, children may go swimming in a wading pool or play in a sprinkler. If a wading pool is used, the water will be less than eighteen inches in depth. The pool will be emptied and disinfected after each use. The required ratio of adults to children will be met at all times. Parents will provide a bathing suit and towel which will be taken home and laundered after each use. Parents must give written permission for their child to participate in water play. This permission is updated annually, or at the parent's request.

Diapers

A parent of an infant or toddler needs to provide enough disposable diapers and diaper wipes for his/her child.

As a convenience for families who so choose, the Center has a diaper program providing weekly diapers and wipes for a small fee.

Toddler and infant children will be changed every two hours or when soiled, unless specific instructions are given to the child's teacher.

We request that children arrive at the Center in a fresh diaper daily.

Toilet-Training

The teachers actively help most older toddlers to become fully toilet-trained by age three. Double-layered training underwear is especially helpful. Please dress your child in clothing that is easy to remove and enables him/her to be independent and use the toilet by him/herself.

While it is not mandatory that a child be completely potty-trained prior to entering preschool, it is helpful that the child come dressed in pull-ups at age three.

Naps

State law requires that children be provided active and quiet times. Therefore, each child is provided with a cot covered with a sheet for a two hour nap in the afternoon. Please supply a small labeled blanket to be kept at the Center for use at naptime. Each Friday blankets are sent

home for washing. One comfort item, stuffed animal or doll, may be brought in for naptime. The Center is not responsible for comfort items that are lost or damaged. Any child who does not fall asleep during a designated nap time shall have the opportunity to engage in quiet activities on their cot. Rest and nap areas shall be lighted to allow for visual supervision of all children at all times.

Toys from Home

Children are to keep personal toys at home. The Center is not responsible for toys that are lost or damaged.

Field Trips and Outings

Occasionally, the preschool classes may plan a field trip on campus. For example, other sponsored schools of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States may invite the children to a performance. At other times the children interact with the retired Sisters at their residence at Notre Dame Academy (NDA). In all cases the children walk to the event in the care of a minimum of three teachers. If a parent/guardian elects not to have their child participate in the field trip, the Center will arrange for the child to be cared for at the center during the trip.

Parent Rosters

Parents may request a parent roster that includes the names and telephone numbers of the parents of the children enrolled in their child's classroom. Only parents that choose to be included on the roster will be included in a printout. Please see the front desk for this information.

Notification of Changes

Parents are asked to notify the office whenever there are changes in the parent's name, home address, phone number, the child's scheduling or custody agreement.

Parents are asked to give a two-week notice when they plan to withdraw a child.

Tax-Exempt Number

The Center is a nonprofit entity. Its tax-exempt number is 34-1847346.

Parent Communication and Participation

Parents/guardians are able to talk with the staff or to call the staff at the Center any time to discuss concerns or issues with them. If setting up an appointment seems more comfortable, please feel free to request a time to meet with the staff. An appointment is ideal both for privacy and to assure that staff are attending to children at all times. If concerns addressed with staff fail to be resolved, please contact the Director.

Likewise, if a staff member has a concern involving a child, they will speak with the child's parent. If a mutually satisfying resolution is not reached, the staff member will consult with the Director.

Annually there are two mandatory parent-teacher conferences.

A quarterly newsletter will be sent to each family's home email address. Please read these carefully as they contain important dates and other announcements.

Parents/guardians are welcome to share time and talents. Opportunities include the following: reading to the children, helping out with art projects, and room parties.

Prayer Request Journal

Believing in the power of prayer, the Center invites parents to make requests using the prayer journal located at the lobby desk. Staff members as well as the Sisters of Notre Dame will hold your needs and intentions in our prayer.

Shoeless Environment

In keeping with our mission to provide loving care, the Center offers in the Infant Room a physical environment that is free as possible of contaminants that outside shoes may carry into the space where infants crawl and walk. Before entering the Infant Room, all adults must remove their outside shoes and enter in stocking feet or slippers. Parents wishing to store a pair of slippers and/or socks may do so in one of the empty cubbies outside of the room. Also, the Center will provide paper shoe boots for parents' convenience. Caregivers will wear shoes that are sanitized or used only in the Center.

Child Abuse Allegations

In the case of alleged child abuse or neglect while a child is in the care of Maria Early Learning Center, all care for the child and legal reporting procedures will be followed such as conducting an investigation as well as notifying ODJFS so they can assist with the investigation. The Director will consult with the Center's legal department as to the best course of action for the alleged staff member: unpaid leave, paid leave, non-ratio job duties, so on. Maria Early Learning Center takes all accusations seriously and will follow all recommendations from ODJFS, Lucas County Children Services, local law enforcement, as well as our legal department.

Termination of Services to a Family

The Director shall retain the right to terminate services to a family. The reasons for terminations include, but are not limited to:

- Unpaid fees.
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services forms not updated as required.
- Consistent late pick-up after 6:00 p.m.
- A pattern of disruptive or abnormal behavior of the parent or child as determined by the Director.
- Other serious infractions as determined by the Director.

In the event child care services are terminated due to behavior, the Center is required to notify ODJFS. Confidentiality will be maintained when completing the required forms.

Negotiating Difficulties and Differences

If differences should arise between families and the director that cannot be resolved, the parents may request by letter a meeting with the board chair. Likewise, if the Director cannot resolve an issue or conflict with a parent, he/she will look to the board of trustees for guidance. The board is under no obligation to have a response within any certain timeframe. All efforts will be made to have a response in a timely fashion.

Center Parent Information

Note: A copy of this document is required to be given to the parent upon enrollment of their child in the licensed child care center.

The child care center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free phone number is listed on the license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules governing child care are available for review online at <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-5180:2-12>.

Administrators and each employee of the center are required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center is permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center, or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall notify the Administrator of their presence.

Licensing records, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, are available for review upon written request from DCY. Early care and education program information and inspections are also online using the Child Care Search Tool on the DCY website at <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-families/early-care-education/child-care-search>.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or DCY. HHS and DCY are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call:
OCC/ACF/HHS
Southwest Region
1301 Young Street, Suite 958
Dallas, TX 75202
214-767-3849

Write or Call:
ODJFS
Bureau of Civil Rights
30 E. Broad St., 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-3414
(614) 644-2703 (voice)
1-866-277-6353 (toll free)
(614) 752-6381 (fax)
1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961
bcr-fax@jfs.ohio.gov (e-fax)
Civil_Rights@jfs.ohio.gov (e-mail)

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, please visit <https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-families>.

For more information on Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your child, please visit <https://medicaid.ohio.gov/families-and-individuals/citizen-programs-and-initiatives/healthchek/> and <https://ohioearlyintervention.org>.

For information on cash food assistance, please visit <https://jfs.ohio.gov/cash-food-assistance>.