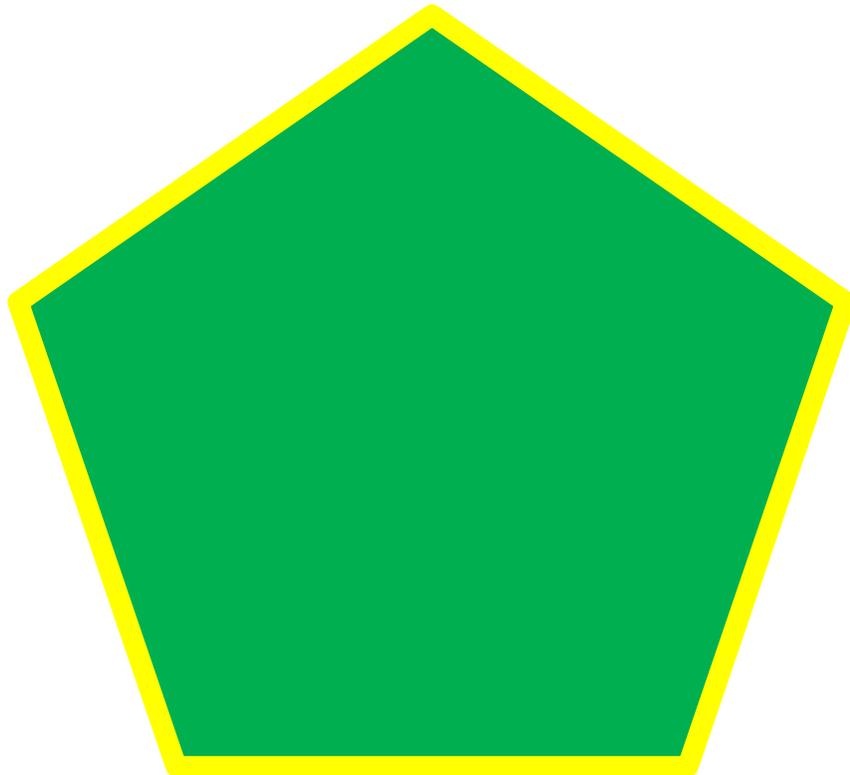


PARENT HANDBOOK

FLAGSTONE SCHOOL Child Development Center



Since 1994



Welcome

Dear Families,

Thank you for considering Flagstone of Alexandria for your childcare needs. We do not take lightly the trust and responsibility parents give us when they enroll a child in our program. As Early Childhood Professionals, we are dedicated to providing the best quality care and developmental program for each of our children.

This Parent Handbook speaks to the mutual obligations **WE** as educators and you as parent/first teacher share in guiding your child. Observing, assisting and directing the child's developing abilities has many joys, frustrations, and moments of wonder for all involved in this process.

We recognize our strengths and our limitations as we plan activities and meaningful experiences to make learning successful and joyful. We will rely on you at times for insight into the very spirit of your child. We hope you will likewise find in us a source of assistance and guidance.

We have chosen the guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children/ National Academy of Early Childhood Programs as framework for our policies and programs. We are committed to ensuring the best away-from-home environment for your child; to providing an exciting, developmentally appropriate preschool experience; and to contributing to your peace of mind while at work.

We welcome the opportunity to share this experience with you.

Sincerely,
JoAnn Barney, *Owner*

Philosophy

The Flagstone of Alexandria Child Development Center's philosophy is that childcare should be an extension of home and family, and an opportunity for the child's continuous exploration in developmental growth. In accord with this philosophy, the center provides a family-style environment that is warm and nurturing as well as educational and stimulating. We believe that childhood needs to be a time of fun, joy and discovery. Our goal is to work together with families to provide each child opportunity for these experiences.

In a safe, healthy, enriched environment each child has the opportunity for a positive learning experience that fosters a strong self-concept and the development of positive socialization skills. Recognizing that children develop through their experiences – physically, emotionally, and socially as well as intellectually ----we strive to create an atmosphere in which the child may explore and discover the world about him/her. We recognize that a child learns best through play and we protect his/her right to those experiences.

Familiarity with growth patterns enables our staff to know what to expect of each child and how to interact in taking individual children from one skill level to the next at their own pace in a way that is challenging and leads to success.

We believe that an important function of a child development center is to provide services, support and assistance to parents. We strive to serve as an educational resource for parents and provide emotional support to help with the everyday challenges of parenting.

We recognize our own limitations and know that we cannot teach young children everything needed for the future, but we will work diligently to foster the inquiring mind. To this end, we emphasize experiences and experiments allowing a child to answer his/her own questions. For we believe that having discovered the answers, the child will never forget

FLAGSTONE PLEDGE

OUR PLEDGE:

We are committed to providing a quality program and pledge to:

RESPECT And love the child's uniqueness and individuality

TEACH And guide with sensitivity the child's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development.

ENCOURAGE A joyful self-motivation to create, inquire, learn and succeed

NURTURE A safe, healthy environment in which self-esteem thrives.

WELCOME And work openly with parents, honoring their trust and recognizing them as first teacher.

DISCIPLINE Through modeling proper acceptable behavior, never embarrassing, hurting or humiliating.

EMPLOY Only trained, qualified teachers, committed to the rights of children.

TRAIN Staff in current educational practices approved for programs for young children and provide a work place responsive to their professional need.

ESTABLISH High quality programs, developmentally appropriate to their needs of children.

COMMIT To offering parenting services which will foster more opportunity for family quality time.

Guidance/Discipline

The purpose of guidance and discipline is to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop inner controls. Any form of discipline involves specific learning processes. Therefore, when we redirect or guide a child's behavior we consider the child's age, intellectual development, emotional make-up and past experiences. We are committed to the mission of helping children acquire the living skills needed to be confident, successful and happy. Helping the child establish a sense of self as a very important person is one of our primary goals. Positive choices in discipline create a good environment in which a child can learn and explore his/her limits. We look at our methods and alternatives from the view point of "What will the child learn from discipline?"

When disciplining, we make sure the child perceives a positive rather than negative self-image. Only the child's actions are criticized. Our options for guidance and discipline are:

- Providing continual positive acknowledgement of acceptable behavior
- Redirecting the child while separating him/her from an undesirable situation
- Ignoring momentarily in appropriate behavior while focusing on and giving attention to other desirable behavior
- Making an "I statement" such "I am angry because that hurts me. "We do not use "you statements, "such as, "You are a bad boy for doing that". These are interpreted by the child as judgments of his/her worth.



Curriculum

The most important characteristic of a good center is its curriculum or plan for learning. The curriculum of our Flagstone School is cognitively-oriented, based on both teacher and child-planned and initiated activities. The whole child is the focus of attention. Equal treatment is given to physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Each child is viewed as an individual who may be in a different stage of growth in each of these areas. Familiarity with growth patterns enables the teacher to know what to expect of the child and how to take the child from one skill level to the next. This is done at the child's own pace and in a way that is challenging and leads to success.

All activities in the School are based on developmental model that is, that each child moves at his or her own pace through the natural stages of development and that his progression is best achieved through interaction with the environment. Interaction and movement are basic to early learning as the child gains knowledge about the physical world. For a young child, the world exists only as far as he or she can reach, so the environment within reach of the child is extremely important. We provide a learning environment designed especially for young children. The activities in this environment revolve around key experiences intended to promote intellectual and social development.

The curriculum within the environment is designed to allow children to choose from a variety of exciting educational activities and equipment. This opportunity to make choices allows the child to progress at his or her developmental level while stimulating learning. The need to learn and the desire to understand motivate each child to seek new and interesting challenges. This process helps foster independence, decision-making and responsibility.

The arrangement of our rooms determines the quality of interaction between each child and the materials, as well as between the child and the other children and staff. The arrangement of the rooms encourages and provides children with opportunities to explore materials, make choices, make friends, and become increasingly self-confident.

Discovery Learning Centers

Our Center's physical environment is divided into discovery learning centers. Each of these discovery learning centers has a wide variety of materials within sight and reach of children so as to promote quality interactions. These learning centers are designed to develop concepts through a variety of methods. The discovery learning centers arranged in each room are art, blocks, dramatic play, manipulative, books, and discovery/exploration.

Daily Routines

An order of daily routines is needed for a curriculum to be successful in providing positive interaction and learning experiences for each child. The daily routine consists of a sequence of events that occurs each day in the classroom. The routine is consistent, enabling even the youngest children to predict what will happen and develop internal controls. The daily routine provides for a variety of interactions with both children and adults. There is time for each child to work individually with a teacher, in small groups, in a large group, alone, and with other children. Daily routines provide the framework within which the individual learning style and developing abilities of the child can flourish.

The long term goals of our curriculum are to facilitate each child's ability to:

- Make choices and decisions
- Develop self-discipline
- Work with cooperative efforts and shared leadership
- Develop knowledge of concepts, skill in the arts and comfort with physical movement.
- Being able to freely express thoughts, ideas, and feelings; and to speak dramatize; comprehend others' spoken, written and dramatic presentations.
- Apply reasoning abilities to a wide range of situations.
- Be creative and inquisitive, demonstrate initiative, and be open to knowledge and other people's points of view.

The specific goals of the programs for each age group are to enhance developmentally appropriate abilities within the whole child; that is, the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. The behaviors are discussed in parent-teacher conferences and the developmental profiles for each child.

Classroom Ratios

We are governed by VA State Licensing and we follow the required ratio pattern, and NAEYC recommended ratios for best practices. Therefore ratios are maintained according to VA State Licensing throughout the day, however, for best practices during instructional part of the day we use the recommended best practice of NAEYC.

Here are the following ratios:

VA State Licensing:

4:1 (6 weeks – 14months)
5:1 (15months – 2years)
8:1 (2years – 3years)
10:1 (3years – 5years)

NAEYC Recommended Ratios

4:1 (2months – 15months)
4:1 (12months – 28months)
6:1 (21months – 36months)
9:1 (30months – 48months)

Meals and Snacks

The Flagstone provides Catered meals by Jeffery's Catering, Monday – Fridays, breakfast, lunch and snack. All meals are planned with reduced amounts of salt, sugar and fats. Milk and 100% juice are served. A Menu Is posted in each room and in the offices. Infants and children not yet eating table foods shall have their foods provided from home. Special diets requiring non-milk products are provided from home. Allergies and restrictions are posted for safety attention and noted items are eliminated from servings for individual child.

Sign-in and Sign-out

Parents or the designated guardian must sign in and out daily. Parents will be provided a daily report about their child's day, such as sleeping or eating habits; their activities and their general overall day. The report is also used for parents to communicate with the teachers of any special information for that day of school.

It is the policy of the Center to release children to no one other than a Parent unless the Center has permission to do so. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the appropriate form up-to-date with names and signatures of individuals who may pick up the child. Please share with the staff and the child which individual will be picking up the child from the Center on a particular day. Custody papers must be on file at the Center in order to deny pick-up by a noncustodial parent.

Reporting Absence/Late Arrival

Parents need to call the Center before 9 am when the child is going to be absent or arrive at a time different than usual. Teachers appreciate knowing changes in arrivals and departures to facilitate classroom scheduling.

When the parent is late for pick-up, please call the school to inform staff and **a late fee will be assessed to your account.**

Health

Licensing requirements prevent us from keeping a child who is ill. In addition to the possibility of spreading the illness, the child is generally miserable and may find coping with numbers of children very difficult.

We understand the problems which can occur when you are called to leave your work to come pick up an ill child. For that reason, we will try to determine your child's condition and allow you to stay at work whenever possible. When we determine that your little one is ill enough to need you, or when she/he awakens ill in the morning, please be considerate and make arrangements for other care.

The center will inform parents of any illness to which the child is exposed. Notification will placed in the entrance area of the specific room and also on the main parent board for general information. Our goal is to keep children at the Center as healthy as possible. To do this, we need everyone's cooperation.

For readmission to the Center the child must be symptom-free for 24hours following:

22 VAC 40-185-490. Preventing the spread of disease

A child **shall not** be allowed to attend the center for the day if he has:

1. A temperature over 101°F;

- a. Temperature of/over 100 (arm/oral). We understand that babies tend to run a fever when teething and will take into consideration when making a decision.

2. Recurrent vomiting or diarrhea; or

- a. Watery or greenish bowel movements that look different than normal and occur more frequently than normal; 2 or more during an hour. New foods may cause diarrhea in babies. So please note: when introducing new foods please inform staff of any changes that may occur.
- b. Vomiting more than just the normal spitting up in babies, or that which can occur after excessive physical exercise or fatigue.

A child **shall not** be allowed to without a doctor's note for the following:

A communicable diseases

The following illnesses require a doctor's note. A period of 24-48 hours after the first dose of medication before readmission to the Center is required as indicated below:

Please note: Failure to provide a doctor's note upon returning to school, your child will not be readmitted.

- 24hours Undetermined rashes
- 48hours Strep Throat
- 24hours Ear Infection
- 24hours Bronchitis
- 24hours Conjunctivitis
- 24hours Lice
- 48hours Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie)

Chicken Pox: requires 10 days isolation, including weekends and all pox must be scabbed over and dry before admission to the Center

VA State Regulations States:

Our Responsibility (The Center): A statement that the center will notify the parent when the child becomes ill and that the parent will arrange to have the child picked up as soon as possible if so requested by the center; and

Your Responsibility (The Parent): A statement that the parent will inform the center within 24 hours or the next business day after his child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.

Administering Medication

Only prescribed medication, in its original container with the child's full name and required dosage, may be administered by the Center. Parents must complete the Center's permission slip available in each room. Non-prescribed medication will be administered only if accompanied by the written prescription of the doctor and the signed permission of the parents.

No medication may be kept on the person of the child or stored in the cubby. All medication must be handed over to the staff person on duty upon arrival. Medications will be stored and locked in a locked medication box and refrigerated if necessary. Staff will make every effort possible to administer the medication at the times requested, or as near to that as schedules permit. For your information, staff will maintain a record of times your child's medicine was administered.

Parental Involvement

We encourage Parents to become actively involved in the Center.

We welcome parent visits during any part of the day. Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch, those special moments just before nap, outings away from the Center, and whenever their work schedules permit.

We believe continual parent/teacher communication is the true strength of the program. Only by remaining closely in touch and sharing with one another observations on the child's developmental growth can we plan the best course to help guide emerging skills.

In an effort to foster such communication:

Daily written reports are prepared about the child's day. Quarterly parent-teacher conferences; Classroom meetings are held to discuss program, practices, and general information. Parent information boards are set up in each classroom to keep you abreast of the room's schedule, curriculum and special events.

A centralized parent information board is set up in the reception area providing status on fire drill, menu, special programs and visitors coming to the Center.

We welcome the opportunity to speak with parents and share thoughts about the child, childrearing views and educational practices. We are here for the needs of the children and their families. Parent's concerns about their child should be addressed first with the teacher or Center Director, and if necessary, brought to the attention of Flagstone Associates, Inc.

Administration

The School Is directed by an early childhood management company, Flagstone Associates, Inc., which staffs the school with individuals who have a high level of early childhood expertise and who support the characteristics of high quality that are outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children/National Academy of Early Childhood Programs the School is in compliance with Virginia Child Care Licensing and it also meets the

requirements for liability insurance. The school hires staff and enrolls children without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or political affiliation. The school may enroll children with special needs if their needs can be met by the staff and facility.

Flagstone School opens 7:00am - 6:00pm Monday through Friday, with the exception of all Federal Holidays, the day after Thanksgiving and six days for staff training. The staff training days are scheduled day and ½ the first three quarters and three consecutive days right before the Labor Day weekend. (Monthly Calendars are provided for you informational needs) Tuition credits are not given for these days. Please see the enrollment packet for inclement weather policy.

Parents provide all transportation to and from the School. Field trips are taken within the immediate area to locations which can be accessed via walking, metro, or bus. For extended field trips arrangements are made for a rental of a school bus with seat belts. Signed permission slips from parents/legal guardians are required for a child's participation in field trips and special programs.

Emergency Plan

All staff have are current with certification and training in First Aid/ CPR. The Center uses the following emergency plan:

In the event a child is ill child or injured the child will be cared for until the parent is notified and an accident report is completed. Parents are requested to read and sign the accident /24-hour notice report when they come to the Center. A copy will be kept in the child's file, and one will made available to the parent.

For a more serious injury, first aid is administered, emergency help is requested immediately then the parent. For a more serious injury, first aid is administered, emergency help is requested immediately then the parent is called. The child's health record is reviewed for allergies to medication. The notarized form signed at the enrollment authorizing permission for the emergency treatment accompanies the child to the medical facility. In an extreme emergency, 911 is dialed for emergency help.

In the event of an emergency and we are shut down on or off site we ask for the following:

Ample supply for 2-3 days

Infants/Toddlers Classroom:

2 bottles

ready made formula

1 pack of diapers

1 pack of wipes

Changing pad

2-3 extra clothing (weather appropriate)

Parental Emergency Form

Juniors/Senior/Pre-K Classroom

2-3 outfits (weather appropriate)

Shoes

2 empty water bottles

Wipes

1 pack of diapers or underwear (were applicable)

Changing pad

Waterproof jacket

1 blanket

Parental Emergency Form

Classroom Information

INFANTS ROOM

Five crib sheets, two blankets. (NO MOBILES are permitted)

Folding Changing Mat and 1 Box of Plastic Bags (food storage size)

Ample change of clothing (based on weather)

Ample Bibs

1 Box of Diapers and 1 Box of Wipes

Formula (pre-mixed and bottled) Baby food and cereals as needed

Extra Plastic Bottles and Nipples (2)

Family Photo

TODDLERS ROOM

2 Cot sheets (twin fitted fits well) and Pillowcase (**NO PILLOWS**)

Favorite napping blanket and stuffed toy

Folding Changing Mat and 1 Box of Plastic Bags (food storage size)

Ample change of clothing (based on weather)

3 Bibs

1 Box of Diapers and 1 Box of Wipes

1 Sippy cup w/lid as introduced

Tooth Brush and Toothpaste (no fluoride)

Family Photo

JUNIORS ROOM

2 Cot sheets (twin fitted fits well) and Pillowcase (**NO PILLOWS**)

Favorite napping blanket and stuffed toy

Ample change of clothing (based on weather)

1 Box of Plastic Bags (food storage size)

1 Box of Wipes

Disposable diapers/underwear as needed

Tooth Brush and Toothpaste

Family Photo

SENIORS / PRE-K

A cot sheet nap-time blanket and favorite stuffed toy
Pillowcase (NO PILLOWS)
Extra pair of socks, two or three extra pairs of underwear
2 changes of clothing (based on weather)
Tooth Brush and Toothpaste
Family Photo

Labeling

In compliance with licensing requirements and for the safeguarding of personal belongings, parents are required to have each child's full name printed permanently on all personal possessions and clothing.

Label the inside rim of collar or waistband of outer garments. All socks, underwear, cot sheets, blankets must also be labeled.

Bottles, drinking cups, food containers, toothbrushes, baby wipes, boxes of diapers, powder, ointment, diaper bags and back packs must be labeled.

Toys from Home

Children should be discouraged from bringing toys and other valuable possessions to the Center, with the exception of special sharing times and the favorite cuddly toy used during nap time. This can be difficult at first; however things can get broken and sharing these treasures is often difficult.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothing giving them freedom to play without fear of getting dirty. They should have shoes that will stay on and will protect their feet.

Please Note: During Fall/Winter continue with the outdoors, please in weather appropriate labeled clothing. Also during the summer months sandals/flip flops are not permitted. Only closed toe shoes with socks.

Birthdays

You may provide a special **store bought snack** for your child's classroom on your child's birthday. Please meet with the teacher about ideas for foods or snacks for celebration which contain limited sugar. For safety reasons, please refrain from providing balloons.