**LITTLE BUBBLE**

**Child Care, LLC HANDBOOK**

2025

Version II

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 Welcome to Little Bubble Child Care, LLC! In this handbook, you will find all the answers to questions you may have! This handbook is your guide to all the child care’s policies. Please refer to this when questions arise; if you are unclear of something in this handbook, or you have further questions, feel free to contact us! We are delighted to care for your little bubbles and help them grow in every aspect of life!

\*We operate on a non-discriminatory status, regardless of race, ethnicity, color, sex, disability, or age.\*

# Operating Procedures

 We offer full-time and part-time care for children aged six weeks to twelve years. Our operating days are Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 5:30pm, excluding holidays. We offer a Christian-based curriculum, that also follows MSDE’s Public School Standards. Our Child Care follows MSDE: Office of Child Care’s regulations Subtitle 15: FAMILY CHILD CARE. These regulations can be found on the MSDE: Office of Child Care’s website at <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations>.

# Program’s Philosophy

We believe that children are naturally curious beings that are growing fast. They require love, patience, flexibility, routine, experiences, and time to develop. These ingredients are what we strive to provide to each child in my program, every day.

We believe that a teacher should provide a safe, inclusive environment to which each child feels loved and safe to express themselves, has many opportunities to explore and experiment, and has a developmentally appropriate program that lets the children be children. The perfect program has to be able to adapt and consistently reflect on their methods and environment. Thus, we strive to create an environment that meets the developmental needs of each child. We bring the best learning experience to children with disabilities ranging from emotional, social, cognitive, or physical by creating an environment that welcomes their differences and interests.

Our teaching philosophy is inspired by the theorist Jerome Bruner, the Waldorf teaching method, and discipline that aligns with Conscious Discipline, all centered on play.

It has been proven that play stimulates the child’s senses and development by creating new experiences, experimenting, exploring, building on prior knowledge, sharpening skills, and building relationships. Thus, we strive to create a play rich environment. Jerome Bruner and the Waldorf Teaching Method supports the learning through play science.

A positive discipline method such as Conscious Discipline, allows the children to self-regulate and function in a healthy manner without the fear of punishment. Our positive discipline allows for natural consequences as well as tools for self-regulation and teacher support. We believe that **teaching** self-regulation skills and emotions will help the children go through life with skills to maintain relationships and work-ethic.

We center our program around the Christian Faith. Jerome Bruner explains that a child needs not only their physical, mental, and emotional development to be met, but also spiritual development. We center our program with God’s love for all of us and show each other how differences make our world work.

Our philosophy is to educate each child from body to soul and mind, with play, creativity, and positive discipline. We believe that with these ingredients, a teacher will have a safe, inclusive, and positive learning environment where the children can learn about themselves and the world through their own imagination and creativity at their own pace. Innovation is not solely based on intellect alone, but inspired by imagination. If we all think the same, or our imagination fades, we are not able to create new objects, medicines, defenses, etc. Teachers should be embracing each child’s thinking and encouraging it throughout their development.

# Holidays

We are closed on the following holidays:

* New Years Day
* Good Friday
* Resurrection Monday
* Memorial Day
* Independence Day
* Labor Day
* Veterans Day
* Thanksgiving Day
* Christmas Eve
* Christmas Day

Tuition payments are expected for all Holidays except Good Friday, Resurrection Monday, and Christmas Day.

# Provider Vacation and Sick Days

 Every one needs a break from their work environment and home. As the sole owner and caretaker of Little Bubble Child Care, LLC, there are a lot of responsibilities. This is why I will have two weeks (10 business days) of **paid** vacation time every year and 5 (business) days of **paid** sick days. When I do go on vacation, I will give everyone at least one month notice. When I take sick days, I will notify everyone as soon as I can. If I consume all vacation and sick leave, I am still permitted to take vacation or sick leave **without** pay. One month notice will still apply for vacation.

# Snow Days/Power Outages

 Little Bubble Child Care will attempt to stay open during inclement weather. In the event of a tornado, flooding, hurricane, blizzard, etc., I am required to shelter in place with the children and contact parents. If the weather is unsafe for parents to commute to child care, I would urge you to stay home until the weather is safe. During inclement weather, if the child attends, a waiver must be signed at drop-off. This waiver explains that Little Bubble Child Care, LLC and it's residents are not responsible for any damage or injury on the property during inclement weather. In the event of a power outage, I am required to notify parents for pick-up. When the program does not have power or heat, it is unsafe for the children. You may contact us if you are unsure of the program’s status.

# Admission Requirements

 Little Bubble Child Care is open to all families in our community and we operate on a non-discriminatory basis. We encourage families to be open and participate in our programs as we explore each child’s culture. The only requirements to participate in our program are to complete and maintain each child’s paperwork and comply with the rules in this handbook and in the parent contract.

# Change of Address/Contact Information

 It is important to keep us updated on any information on your child, especially contact information. If there was a change in contact information, residence, or any other important change, please let us know as soon as possible.

# Contract Renewal

 We ask all families to renew their contract by their initial contract end date, to continue care. A letter and text message, as well as a verbal reminder will be sent out one month and two weeks prior to the contract end date. Families will sign the same contract or a new contract with changes they wish to be made. Failure to renew the contract will result in termination of care and re-enrollment will be necessary to return. If there is a waiting list, the family will be moved to the end.

# Removing Your Child from Our Program

 Little Bubble Child Care requires a two-week (10 business days) notice before removing your child(ren) from our program with tuition before the service period. Re-enrollment will occur if the child will re-attend our program.

# Contract Breech/Termination

 Here at Little Bubble Child Care, we try to be very understanding and open. We ask that important changes and information, is shared with us as soon as possible. If we are aware of something that may breech the contract because the parents let us know, we may be able to help and void a contract breech. This is depending on the situation, of course. If the contract is breeched, there will be a contract breech warning letter sent. With each letter sent, we will ask for a meeting, whenever convenient for the parents. If three letters are sent, care for the child may be terminated with a termination letter. If there is any threat to our business, the children, families, or to Ms Elizabeth, immediate termination will occur. Please note that the letters may be typed, texted, or emailed.

# Arrival/Pick-up

 During arrival, the child(ren) must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Upon arrival, the child must be signed in and we encourage the families to stay in the parent area. Please use the arrival time in the morning to drop off your child, as it will interfere with the daily schedule. If the child will arrive later than the arrival time in contract, please let us know so that we are aware and can better prepare. When picking up your child(ren), please sign them out and gather their things. Only people who are listed in the child(ren)’s emergency form or have written approval from family, with a valid ID, are permitted to pick-up the child. If someone not listed to pick up the child(ren), we will call the primary parent or guardian to confirm.

 Children are to be picked up **BY** 5:30 pm. They should be signed out and out of the program at 5:30. Please abide by the contract times, as it will interfere the schedules and routines. Late fees will occur based on contact. If after hours, the late fee is $10 every 5 minutes. To avoid late fees, please ask Ms Elizabeth for permission to stay after hours.

# Payment/Return Checks

 Families can choose from the options on the contract, of when their payments will be do. The options listed on the contract are **Weekly, Bi-Weekly,** and **Monthly.** Please note: ALL PAYMENTS ARE DUE ONE (1) BUSINESS DAY BEFORE CARE SERVICE PERIOD. When choosing weekly payments, payments are due every Friday. Bi-weekly payments are due every other Friday. Monthly payments are due on the first business day of each month. We charge for the upcoming care. We **DO NOT** charge a deposit or enrollment fee.

 There are many payment options that we accept – personal checks, money orders, cashier’s checks, cash, and online payments. We have Venmo and Parachute as online payment options. All families are automatically enrolled in Parachute for their tuition account. See Ms. Elizabeth on the transaction fees for online payments.

 Failure to pay in full on the chosen payment contract option will result in a verbal and/or written warning and $10 per day in late fees. After five (non-business) days of unpaid tuition, the child will lose care until all debts are paid in full. If tuition is not paid within two (non-business) weeks, the child’s enrollment spot will be filled and all dues will need to be paid. Failure to pay within one month may result in legal action.

 We charge for part-time care and full-time care differently. Each age group will also be different. Tuition is based on **nine** hours; over ninehours is an **additional** $25/week. In case of a national emergency, where schools are doing hybrid, there will be additional fees in order to accommodate the school schedule and extra labor involved (NOT LISTED IN HERE AS IT WILL DEPEND ON THE EVENT). Active military and law enforcement officers will receive a 5% discount on service charge each week as gratitude for their service.

Prices are below PER WEEK:

Part-time (4 or less hours)

Infant/toddler- $110

Preschool- $95

Pre-k (in school)- $80

Pre-k (out of school)- $95

School-age (in school)- $62.50

School-age (out of school)- $95

Full-time (Over 4 hours)

Infant/toddler- $220

Preschool- $190

Pre-k (in school)- $160

Pre-k (out of school)- $190

School-age (in school)- $125

School-age (out of school)- $190

 We will provide receipts of payment within two business days of the received payment.

The children have 5 (business) vacation days each year, that tuition is not charged. Once the vacation days are used up, tuition will be charged. If the family wishes to use a vacation day, please let Ms Elizabeth know at least **one month prior** and we will prorate the next service period or give a refund. Vacation days are only to be used when the child is out of care for an **entire** day. If the child attends and has to be sent home, tuition in full is due.

# Child Care Scholarships

 We participate in the Maryland Excels program that allows us to accept Child Care Scholarships. Child Care Scholarships, here forth referred to as CCS, is a Maryland State funded program for families to aid in finding quality child care. The state will subsidize the child care tuition based on family income, employment, and provider tuition rates.

 We encourage EACH family to look into the program, or ask Ms Elizabeth for more information or how to get started!

 If a family participates in the CCS program, the family is responsible for covering tuition if there is an issue with CCS. This may arise if applications are not submitted and approved before the last week of the month, the invoices are not validated by the parent or provider in time, or another issue. If, for whatever reason, the tuition is not paid by CCS, Ms Elizabeth may inform the family of a tuition balance.

 In the case CCS Central has paid tuition late and family has already paid, the family will have the choice between a credit or refund. Late fees will not be applied until 5 (non-business) days have passed since notice of tuition balance.

# Program Information

 Little Bubble Child Care provides an *Infant and Toddler Program* for children six weeks to twenty-four months of age. In this program, we offer a safe and explorable environment for the children to unleash their curiosity and develop their minds, bodies, and souls. With many opportunities presented to the children, the children will build relationships with staff and other children to promote their self-esteem and academic skills.

 Little Bubble Child Care provides a *Preschool Program* that enriches their past experiences with new ones and gather new and improved knowledge about the environment around them. The *Preschool Program* is for children two and older, until they are placed in a school program. This program is centered around play, with a set time for formal instruction. The children will gather ideas from themes and activities they complete.

 The infant and preschool programs use Investigator’s Club. Investigator’s Club is a Maryland State approved curriculum, where we individualize instruction to accommodate children of all abilities.

 The last program that Little Bubble Child Care provides, is a *Summer Program* for all children six weeks to twelve years old. During the *Summer Program,* the children will explore a selected Vacation Bible School. The VBS will vary each year, to add spice to the summer.

 All of our programs are based in the Catholic faith. We do not require children to practice the Catholic faith with us, however we do encourage it and our curriculum and program is revolved around it. We respect all other religions, and we will explore others as well to let the children know that there are different religions around the world and even in our community. If you do not feel comfortable with your child taking part in this, let us know and we will do our best to follow your requests!

Within all of these programs, we provide breakfast, a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. There are monthly menus located in each month’s newsletter that shows what the children will be having. Children may bring a packed meal if they wish. We provide a variety of infant formula and food as well, but we would prefer parents and families to supply as much as they can for their infant. Please let us know if your child has any allergies or sensitivities to food! This will help to ensure that all children are safe, and substitutions can be made for that child.

Lastly, we offer many opportunities for physical activity. We encourage families to dress their children according to the weather as we try to go outdoors for a minimum of thirty minutes per day – rain, snow, or shine. We try to take daily walks two time per day around the neighborhood. If the weather is unsafe or children are not dressed appropriately, we will stay indoors. While not being able to go outside safely, we have various free-play activities/materials readily available for free-play. These activities and materials focus on gross motor skills.

# Field Trips

 As a part of our program, we will try to get the children out to explore our community. We will go on field trips as a part of our theme for the month. We will send out permission slips to families four weeks before the adventure. We may take trips to the Church for Daily Mass on Thursdays, as part of our religion Thursdays. On Mondays, we may go to the library. More information on all of this, will be posted in the monthly newsletters. Those that do not wish to participate in these activities, will stay at the Child Care with one of our substitutes until we come back.

# Parent Involvement/Volunteers

 We encourage all families to be involved in our program. We will have many opportunities for parents to participate in with our program. We also ask our families to be volunteers when we go on our field trips and our Church and library days. This will help us manage the children on our trips, and it will give the families and children time to build stronger relationships. Parent involvement is important in our curriculum, as well as our children.

# Nutrition Policy

Proper nutrition of all humans is required to be happy and healthy. We ensure that each child gets the proper nutrition. With guidance from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), we closely monitor the sugar intake, ingredients, and quality of the food we serve. More information on our participation in CACFP is in the following section labeled “Child and Adult Care Food Program”.

 Our Breakfasts are different each day and cereal is always available. We strive to cook and serve whole food lunch that rotate on a five-week schedule. Our snacks are closely monitored with their ingredients. Our menus change every Lenten Season, Spring/Summer, and Fall/Winter. We encourage families to send us their favorite recipes to try.

 With a medical form completed by a physician, we accommodate and provide alternative meals for children with sensitivities or allergies. These alternative meals follow the CACFP guidelines.

 We do not believe in forcing a child to eat, but we do give the child full serving of the food provided. We encourage them to taste the food each and every time it is served. If they do not like it, they do not have to eat it. We encourage children to eat by explaining how it’s good for them, what it tastes like, and how it’s made or where it came from. We also allow the children to spectate and sometimes help prepare food and this helps to make the children more comfortable with the food. Doing small lessons and activities or simply reading a book about trying new foods, encourages the children and they enjoy the activities!

 Foods from home are acceptable, under the conditions that they are nutritious. This includes, but is not limited to; sugar intake, grains, and ingredients. There are more guidelines on acceptable foods from home that are permitted at our program, in the parent box attached to the parent area. Families are welcome to take home the resources that guide in making healthy food choices, how to encourage healthy eating habits, recipes, and more. Foods that do not follow those guidelines will be put in a Ziploc bag if opened, returned to the parent, and the child will be given appropriate substitutes.

# Child and Adult Care Food Program

 Little Bubble Child Care participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). By participating in this program, we are ensuring that the children in our care, are getting the appropriate nutrition based on their age. We are required to take attendance of each child every day, and record what they all eat throughout the day. This is not a requirement for your child to participate in. We get reimbursed for the meals we serve and how many children we serve, every month. The amount depends on the attendance, so your participation is greatly appreciated! More information can be found in your enrollment packet. If you have any questions, contact us!

# Daily Routine

 We will have daily routines that will guide all of us throughout the day and provide a safe environment for all children. We will attempt to stay by this routine, so that the children will always know what to expect for the day. Below is a rough template of our daily routine. This may change and all changes will be posted in the parent area, newsletter, and on the walls for the children to refer to.

Here is the no school / summertime routine:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 6:00 – 7:15 am | Arrival / child-selected free play / provider greets children and families |
| 7:15 – 7:30 am | Clean up / potty time / dance songs |
| 7:30 – 8:00 am | Breakfast |
| 8:00 – 8:15 am | Clean up / potty time / dance songs |
| 8:15 – 9:00 am | Child selected free play / outdoor play (weather permitting) |
| 9:15 – 9:30 am | Clean up / potty time / dance songs |
| 9:30 – 9:45 am | Morning Snack |
| 9:45 – 10:00 am | Clean up / potty time / dance songs  |
| 10:15 – 10:30 am | Circle time/morning meeting (whole group) |
| 10:30 – 10:45 am | Teacher-guided lessons\* (small group and individual) |
| 10:45 - 11:00 am | Clean up / potty time / dance songs |
| 11:00 – 11:45 am | Child-selected free play / outdoor play (weather permitting) |
| 11:45 – 12:00 pm | Clean up / potty time / dance songs |
| 12:00 – 12:15 pm | Quiet play (reading, art, puzzles) |
| 12:15 – 12:45 pm | Lunch |
| 12:45 – 1:00 pm | Clean up / potty time / provider reads books |
| 1:00 – 3:00 pm | Nap time / quiet time\*\* |
| 3:00 – 3:25 pm  | Potty time / afternoon snack |
| 3:25 – 5:30 pm  | Child Selected free play / dismissal |

\* Children with IEPs/IFSPs will have work appropriate for them, while still participating with the group

\*\* School-age children can do appropriate quiet time activities that will not disturb the children who are sleeping; all children under the age of **eight** will be encouraged to nap appropriate to their age.

NOTE: For infants, we accommodate the schedule for their needs, this includes feeding, sleeping, activities. Infant activities are throughout the day and developmentally appropriate.

# Inclusion Policy and IEP/IFSP

 We want to ensure that each child gets the opportunities and experiences that help them develop knowledge and skills. If a child has a disability that may interfere with their learning and they have an IEP or an IFSP, we ask the family to provide a copy of it to include in the child’s portfolio. This is optional and confidential. We will make the necessary accommodation and modifications to ensure that the child receives the best experiences and education. There will also be community resources in the parent box and can be made available upon request.

We also strive and encourage to create a relationship with the early intervention services and health care providers to ensure communication and to help support the family and child. Assessments may be performed more often than typical to strategize and reflect on the care given. This allows the family, health care providers, and anyone else working with the child, as well as Ms Elizabeth, to track the progress and re-evaluate care and curriculum to better serve the child.

We value each individual difference and strive to build confidence and self-esteem for each child.

# Newsletters and Notices

 Every month, we produce a newsletter. In this newsletter, there is information on our theme for the month, community events, important messages, and reminders. The newsletters will be available by the sign in sheets for families to take home. Important dates or notes can be found on our calendar by the parent area and on our sign-in sheet. Parent letters and notices will be kept by the sign in sheet with the child’s last name. We do not send reminders via text. It is the parents’ responsibility to check for updates through the three methods listed above. We will verbally notify families of any changes and keep our calendar up-to-date.

# Screenings and Assessments

 To effectively reflect on our curriculum, we will routinely do screenings and assessments on all children. Assessments will be completed every 6 months, unless otherwise needed. These screenings and assessments will measure each child’s growth and find areas of improvement. With this information, we can adjust our curriculum accordingly. All information gathered will be confidential and shared to only the child’s family.

# Conferences

 Following each assessment, we will ask parents for a conference. During these conferences, we will discuss the child’s results and have time to reflect on their growth and development. This will be a time for parents and families to ask any questions or concerns they may have, or to give suggestions that may help their child. Conferences will be done at least twice a year. Notice of upcoming conference dates and times will be sent out in the newsletter and on the parent board. On the parent board, parents will be able to choose the date and time they would like to schedule the conference.

 If a parent would like to schedule a conference outside of the normal conference dates, they are encouraged to fill out a “Conference Request” and hand it to one of the staff members.

# Discipline Policy

 The proper discipline has a powerful effect on children’s behavior. Showing the children how to act and manage their emotions, is a big part of discipline. The staff of Little Bubble Child Care, LLC model the behavior we expect/encourage from the children. Following this, is the Conscious Discipline Model that we use as a tool to manage and learn our emotions. We have Feeling Buddies and a safe space for the children when they are feeling a strong emotion and need time to understand the emotions by themselves. This is a voluntary action that we encourage the children to participate in.

 The children help make the boundaries of the classroom. This allows the children to have a voice in the classroom and helps them to remember the boundaries. We evaluate the boundaries every few months to ensure that our classroom is growing with us!

We use many forms of positive discipline throughout the day by giving them opportunities to make their own choices through various play materials and activities. Redirection is frequently used when a child may be struggling to follow the boundaries set by the class. Redirection involves offering other play materials or activities they may enjoy. They may choose from the options given or suggest another option. The children are free to choose what they play with and how they play, safely. We may use picture cards or point to the activities to ensure the child understands which activities and can physically see what looks appealing to them. Redirection also involves descriptive praise to children who are following the boundaries of the class.

We practice problem-solving with the children by acknowledging their feelings, reflecting on the problem, brainstorming solutions, and testing the solutions. We provide guidance and allow the children to make decisions and effort.

To help reduce negative behaviors, we reward positive behavior with descriptive praise, ensure their needs are met, watch for signs of frustration or anger, ensure a developmentally appropriate program, use appropriate transitions between activities, adjust to the needs of the child, and build and maintain strong relationships with each child.

# Screen/Technology Time

 Our screen and technology time will be limited to thirty minutes per week and is used to facilitate learning experiences. Very seldom will we use technology in our curriculum, but it can be a helpful tool and we will use it when we believe will be beneficial. We may use services such as YouTube or educational websites to expand our activities and lessons. We use child appropriate interactive videos, such as exercise videos, as transitions, brain breaks, or as a calm down method. We do **not** use screen time for children under **two.**

# Safety

 To ensure the safety of the children, all of our staff is highly trained in CPR and First Aid. We have evacuation routes with emergency numbers by each exit and we have an emergency bag ready to go. If families would like copies of our emergency protocols, they can request them at any time.

# Sick Child Policy

 Keeping our program safe, also means reducing the risk of sickness. We strive to provide the cleanest space for our children, but sometimes being clean and disinfected does not help. If your child is feeling under the weather, we advise them to stay home until 24 hours of no symptoms. Symptoms include: inconsolable, excessive runny nose or cough, low-grade fever, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, redish/pink eyes. Doctor’s note is **NOT** accepted.

If a child becomes sick under our care, we will contact the parent to have them pick up the child. The child needs to be picked up within an hour. If the child is not picked up within an hour or there is no response from the family, emergency contacts will be contacted **AND** fees of $10/five minutes may occur. Meanwhile, we will attempt to keep the sick child away from the others and make them as comfortable as we can until they are picked up.

 We require notice if any child has contracted any disease or sickness. We will inform other families if there is a contagious illness reported at the program. Names and any identifying information are confidential.

# Medications

 Our staff is equipped with the qualifications, knowledge, and experience in administering medications. If your child needs medication administered during our care, there are several options to administer the medication. With a completed and signed Medication Form, we are able to administer the medication to the child; we will document every step on a separate paper for the parents to look over. The parent may also come to the program to administer the medication to their child. The last option is to have the child’s health care provider come and administer the medication to the child. The choice is whatever you feel comfortable with!

# Sun Screen/Bug Spray

 We value outdoor play, but in the summer months, it can be nasty. The sun is very powerful and the bugs are very buggy. We encourage parents to provide us with sun protection and bug spray for their child, along with a signature for permission for us to apply the sun protection and bug spray. For younger children, we suggest bringing the child with a sun hat to protect their scalp from the sun. Sunscreen and bug sprays will be sent home at the end of each calendar year and new ones will need to be acquired before the warm weather occurs.

# Attire

 Please bring your child in weather appropriate attire. We suggest keeping a few pair of clothes in their cubbies in case of weather changes, or mistakes. A good rule of thumb is to be prepared for the crazy Maryland weather changes. Try to regularly switch out their clothes every season. We suggest a pair of tennis shoes and water shoes, along with child appropriate water clothes. We do not allow our children to wear bikinis or be shirtless, even during water play. We will try to provide clothes if needed for that day, but we would like for them to be returned, so that other children may be able to wear them if needed.

 We supply blankets, sheets, and pillows to all children that take naps, these will be washed weekly and as needed. We will also wash clothes that have been dirtied from our care and returned to the child’s cubbies.

# Items from Home

 We all want to show our friends our cool stuff from home, but we want to limit how much we bring to the program, to avoid confusion and arguments. We allow items from home, but we encourage the children to take their items home with them each night and to keep them in their cubbies when they are not using them.

# Supplies

 Parents of all children are expected to supply the child’s diapers, clothes, pacifiers, lotions, and any other personal item. We will try our best to keep extra supplies on hand in case of emergencies. We provide formula (decided by Ms. Elizabeth), wipes, snacks and meals, water bottles, and craft supplies. We appreciate any donations!