



Parent Handbook

2016-2017

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Philosophy

“Little Hearts At Play”

Center Stage Preschool is a Montessori inspired preschool with a special focus in fine arts, performing arts, and global awareness. Our core belief, based on research, is that children between 2 ½ and 6 years of age are going through an adsorbent phase within their development. During this phase of growth, children are able to absorb their environment and are capable of learning without conscious effort. Our program consists of developmental activities to foster your child’s Social, Emotional, Physical, Psychological and Academic growth within an atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement and exploration. Our environment has been created with your individual child's development in mind.

We strongly believe that:

- Children are natural learners.
- Children learn through their senses.
- Children need the freedom to explore
- Children are highly influenced by their environment.
- Children learn by observing others.

Center Stage Preschool protects your child's right to learn and explore at their own pace. In order to shield the children from undue pressure, there are no grades and no tests. At Center Stage, we document daily observations and development in order to provide parents with updated and specific information regarding their child’s development and progress in multiple fields. Knowing that freedom to explore is one of our core beliefs, we have set up our classrooms to be child sized in every way. Everything in our classroom is child accessible, from toys to tables and chairs: all are scaled to their size. The classrooms and environment help children feel safe and inspire them to explore their surroundings in carefree ways. In short, we seek to cultivate socially-oriented, imaginative children, busy with self-chosen, uninterrupted tasks.

Center Stage Preschool believes our open floor plan and mixed age group will build your child's:

- Self-esteem
- Respect for Self & Others
- Curiosity & Imagination
- Social Interaction & Problem Solving

- Independence & Sustainability
- Coordination & Concentration Skills
- Observation Skills

Our Curriculum

What sets Center Stage Preschool apart is our teaching approach. Learning should be fun. Teachers at Center Stage Preschool facilitate learning and are always ready to encourage and guide without getting in the way of a child's natural ability to learn. Our teachers seek to guide, not control. Throughout our prepared environment, your child will be free to:

- Explore
- Create
- Problem-solve
- Make choices
- Be productive
- Choose to work alone or in a group
- Learn within their own individual zone of proximal development

At Center Stage Preschool we “Let The Children Play”...Our Core Values are:

- Teachers are guides
- Open classes
- Mixed age groups
- Freedom to explore
- Learning at your own pace
- Simple, organized classrooms
- Opportunities to experience an environment where dramatic play, dance, song, poetry and fine arts are encouraged.

Year At A Glance

Center Stage is closed New Years eve & day, Christmas Eve & Day, Easter weekend, Memorial day, and Labor day.

Parental Involvement

Center Stage welcomes parental involvement in a variety of ways, and offers many volunteer opportunities to have fun and connect with the children. Parents are more than welcome to volunteer for lunch and other special activities in the scheduled curriculum. Center Stage seeks to enlighten our children by exposing them to different and unique cultures through art, language, food, and history. We welcome parents to volunteer as long as they are willing to have a background check before participating with other children. We ask that parents keep their contact information updated and correct at all times

Open Door Policy

Center Stage Preschool maintains an Open Door Policy in which parents are allowed access to their children at all times and are welcome to enter the facility at all times. However, anyone deemed a threat/destructive to a child/ the program will be asked to leave. Non-custodial parents can be denied access if there is a court order that gives the custodial parent permission to deny access.

Volunteers

- i. **TB Clearance:** All classroom volunteers must have TB skin clearance (even chaperones) before being allowed to volunteer. TB tests can be done for free or a nominal fee at most medical offices.
- ii. **Volunteer Sign-ups:** Parents must sign up in advance with teacher for volunteer positions. If all spots are taken for a certain day, another day must be chosen.
- iii. **Child Safety:** No volunteer is to be left alone with children, even in the bathroom. Exception: Parent may take their own child to the bathroom if no other children are present or other children are supervised by teacher. Parents cannot shut the door on student bathrooms. If parents want privacy for their child in the bathroom, they should take their child to the church bathrooms in the social hall.
- iv. **Siblings:** Volunteers/Parents are not allowed to bring siblings on volunteer days. We are licensed for a certain number of children and our license and insurance will not cover us in the event of an accident/incident that involves the sibling.
- v. **Teacher Support:** Volunteers/Parents are there to assist the teacher, therefore, parents take an assisting role, asking teacher what and how they need help.
- vi. **Discipline:** Parents are not responsible for disciplining their child during their time in class. Parents are not to “step in” when staff members are disciplining children.
- vii. **Confidentiality:** Volunteers must keep the confidentiality of the teacher, class, and children. If there is an incident involving children in the program, the volunteer is to share the information only with the lead teacher and the director. No information is to be given to the parents of the children involved, other staff members, or other outside persons.
- viii. **Behavior Standard:** Volunteers/Parents who are disruptive to class or disrespectful to teaching staff will be asked to volunteer in a way other than in the classroom. If the parent is continually disrespectful of staff, the parent and director will have a conference to determine whether or not Peace Preschool is the right “fit” for that family.

Daily Schedule

We offer a variety of daily activities that vary greatly day to day at Center Stage. This is a basic overview of Center Stage Preschool's daily schedule.

6:30am Open

Early arrivals will play quiet table-top games, read books, and complete puzzles. Children will work on manipulative/practical life skills, such as putting flowers in vases, or center prep.

8:30am Welcome

Children will proceed with their daily rituals, putting their belongings in cubbies, and greeting teachers and students. Students will partake in the morning meet up circle, and teachers will discuss the daily agenda.

9:00am

Transition into core montessori curriculum blocks. Children will have free movement during this time, and a snack when they decide.

11:00am

Outside play, outdoor activities and crafts, as well as outdoor classes.

11:50am

Hand washing, and prepping for lunch.

12:00pm

Staff & children will partake in family style dining for lunch.

12:45pm

Recharge Block: Children and staff will get ready to prepare for nap time.

2:00pm

Core curriculum time consisting of: Fine/performing arts, arts and crafts, and imaginative play. Snack is provided to each child during this time.

4:00pm

Outside/free play.

5:00pm

End of the day circle time. Children will partake in group story time, and will prepare for parental pick-up.

6:00pm

Quiet time. Children will be able to play quiet table-top games, play with textural elements, and read in the library.

6:30pm

Parent/guardian pick-up. Preschool is closed.

Dress Code

At Center Stage, we believe the classroom extends to the outdoors. We take the children outside to explore our playground and play area as much as possible, and safety is of the utmost importance. For this reason, we ask that your children dress temperature appropriately, and wear closed toe shoes while at the preschool. Upon the first day of enrollment, we ask that you provide an extra change of clothing for your child to keep in their cubby in case of accidents. Clothing must be in a zip-lock bag, with their name labeled on it.

Enrollment Procedures

Admission & Withdrawal

Center Stage Preschool has no entrance exam, however we require that children be toilet trained prior to their first day. After acquiring our registration and medical forms in-person or on our website, please fill them out and return them to Center Stage Preschool. A two week written notice is required should you choose to withdraw your child from Center Stage Preschool, and will give the same courtesy in return. The two weeks will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance.

In an effort to create the best learning environment possible for your child, we ask that you discuss any educational, social, or developmental concerns about our program prior to the child's first day of enrollment with us.

Anyone who terminates daycare and has a balance that is outstanding will need to have the account settled within 30 days. All accounts not settled within 30 days will be turned over to a collections agency regardless of amount owed. All accounts turned over to collections will have a \$20 per week late fee plus 35% collections fee added to amount due.

Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to a successful preschool program. Monthly newsletters and weekly activity and lunch plans are sent in advance via email to parents, and are always posted in the classroom. For non-emergency information, CSA communicates with parents in a variety of ways:

- Telephone
- Email
- Website (www.centerstagepreschool.com)

Children who endanger other children

At Center Stage one of our primary goals is to provide a safe, nurturing, and pleasant environment for all of the children we serve. We recognize that one of our jobs is to help children learn appropriate ways to handle conflicts. We work on this as conflicts arise, helping children find satisfactory solutions. We also have "Conflict Resolution" and "Empathy Learning"

as a part of our curriculum. We understand that many preschoolers may use misguided behavior because they have not yet learned what it is acceptable behavior. However, at times a child's behavior may endanger others. We want to ensure parents that we will address such behavior immediately following these guidelines:

Termination of Services

Other reasons which may result in the termination of a specific care arrangement include:

- Non-payment for preschool services and/or lack of adherence to our tuition payment policies.
- Routinely late picking up your child.
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time.
- Lack of cooperation by the parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
- Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats by parents toward program staff will not be tolerated. This will result in immediate termination.
- Failure to complete the required forms.
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations.
- Serious illness of child.

We will give two weeks notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not the child is in attendance. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance.

Disagreement between Center Stage and parents

Center Stage is committed to high quality education. We hope that Center Stage is a pleasant experience for the staff and families. Sometimes, however, conflicts will arise between the staff and a parent. We have found that through open communication, most conflict can be resolved promptly and to everyone's satisfaction. We encourage open dialogue and respectful sharing of our concerns. The director should be informed of any conflict and will assist with a resolution if required.

Staff Qualifications

Training & Development

Our highly qualified and screened teachers and staff meet all requirements and regulations set by the Virginia Department of Social Services' Standards For Licensed Child Day Centers. (Staff Qualifications And Training; Part III; 22 VAC 40-185-180).

Operational Responsibilities

Hours of Operation

Center Stage Preschool operates from 6:30AM to 6:30PM, Monday through Friday. Currently there is no need for a drop off that early, our Center has an open time of 7:15 AM. Please give us advanced notice if you need an earlier drop off time, and our staff will be happy to accommodate. The school is closed on weekends, along with most government holidays. Center Stage will be closed whenever there is a government wide closure for inclement weather. The school will otherwise be open for our parents convenience. Center Stage will notify all parents of said closures as soon as possible. In case of an Emergency Early Dismissal, parents will be notified immediately.

Nutrition & Food

We do not allow outside food on CSA premises to keep students and staff alike safe from allergies and disease. No peanuts, or any type of tree nuts are allowed. We provide our students with a variety of nutritious and tasty food every day to keep them focused and energetic. Each child is provided with a nutritious morning and afternoon snack, as well as a hot lunch. At centerstage, we support family-style dining to enable children to learn and practice many useful social skills such as taking turns, passing food to others, saying please and thank you, and helping to set the table. In family style dining, all food is placed in serving bowls on the table and children are encouraged to serve themselves or serve themselves with help from an adult. Parents will receive a monthly menu in advance for informational and health purposes. We gladly provide vegetarian options upon request. There will be individualized exceptions made by the director if there are health or religious related issues.

Birthday Policy

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. We are so happy as a Center to celebrate the birthdays of our students. We must keep the “no outside food” policy in place for the protection of our children and staff. Center Stage Preschool asks that if parents which to bring in something special to celebrate their child's birthday, that it will meet the following criteria.

- No outside food
- Age appropriate party favors, age 3-6 years
- Non choking hazard items, ie. colorful pencils, sticker, party favors, etc.

All party favors must be approved by the director prior to being handed to the students.

Record Keeping & Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. In order to customize your child's experience with us, we will keep confidential records containing parent and child information deemed pertinent to development. This information includes names, gender, birth date, allergies, medication or food intolerance information, etc. Center Stage takes confidentiality very seriously and makes every effort to

protect each family's privacy. Communication among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest they first contact the teacher via email or in person to arrange a convenient time to discuss.

Positive Behavior Policy

Center Stage believes every child is unique and learns differently. We deploy a variety of Montessori inspired strategies to successfully redirect and refocus student behavior when necessary. We work to attain discipline or correction of negative behaviors through the use of redirection to spontaneous and engaging activities. When necessary, our teachers will patiently keep the child close to them while assessing the situation, and will respectfully model self-regulatory behavior.

Help with separation issues

We understand young children often have difficulty with separation. We want to reassure you that we are always ready to talk to you and comfort your child. Always say good-bye with a kiss, hug and a wave! Be firm, but friendly about leaving. If your child whines or clings, prolonging the good-bye will only make it harder for yourself and your child. Saying good-bye

- Be consistent
- Follow the same routine – walk in, hang up coat, find choice cards
- Always say good-bye

We are there to help during these transition times and help to comfort your child once you leave. We offer comforting words such as, "I know it's hard to say good-bye." Once you have gone through your good-bye routines a few times, your child will get to know what to expect and the good-byes will be less difficult. After a short period of time, your child's anxiety about you leaving ends quickly after you leave. Should this not be the case, we want you to know that we would call you to let you know how he/she is doing.

Your child will pick up on your confidence about having chosen a good place to him/her to be while you are away. Good feelings are contagious. So the first step in adjusting to saying good-bye is to be sure you are comfortable with your decision to enroll your child in our program.

Please let us know if we can be of further help. We want you to know that separation adjustment is normal and we have the experience of help you and your child ease through this transition time.

End of the Program

- Prepare for children "moving on" using books, music and games
- All other children leaving the program – a special good-bye activity is planned to help the children make a smooth transition
- Children/parents invited back to visit

Absence & Attendance

If your child will be absent from our program, please notify us as early as possible. If your child is not well enough to play, please keep them home until they are feeling better. Please keep in mind that our school does not refund monthly fees due to illness.

Inclement Weather

Center Stage will only be closed if there is a government wide shutdown in case of inclement weather. We reserve the right to make a decision for our staff and students base on safety, in which case the parents will be contacted directly with a personal phone call or text.

Playground & Classroom

Children are always supervised and monitored by teachers while in our gated playground. Our playground is covered by a roof overhang to provide children with shade and protection from the sun and rain. Various non-poisonous and safe plants are located within the playground as well as textural elements. Classroom and playground safety checks are completed daily before children enter the playground or classroom.

Perspective on Biting

Biting is a very common behavior among children birth to three years of age. Biting is a form of communication and is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. At Center Stage Preschool we believe by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can proactively prevent many biting behaviors by the environment which we create for the children.

We understand that children biting other children, is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to deal with in group child care settings. It can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the families, and the caregivers involved.

For many toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem. Toddlers try it out as a way to get what they want from another toddler. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. They discover that biting is a sure-fire way to cause the other child to drop what they are holding so the biter can pick it up. However, they experience the disapproval of the adults nearby and eventually learn other ways of gaining possession of objects or expressing difficult feelings.

For other children, biting is a persistent and chronic problem. They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

In order to alleviate some of triggers for biting, Center Stage has many practices in place that are known to help prevent incidences of biting in small children.

- Quality relationships: Staff develops nurturing relationships with the children and gets to know each child individually. Staff is given many opportunities for professional development to help he/she learn ways to build quality relationships with the children.
- Environmental influences on child's behaviors: Children are given opportunities to work in both small and large groups; there is a variety of work and children are taught how to share "work;" the environment in a Montessori classroom is often quiet and productive which is very soothing to children; and staff are very aware of and willing to help a child that is feeling overwhelmed.
- Targeted social-emotional supports: Children have a daily routine that they follow which consists of circle time, time to pursue own work, and snack time. Children learn early how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and alleviate stress. Staff talks about emotions/feelings through books and other work and teaches strategies such as yoga to help children learn to calm themselves.

No matter what the cause, it is important to be aware of the potential problem before it happens. Therefore, Center Stage Preschool, after researching we have adopted the following action plan.

Response to Biting - Action Plan

Before biting occurs:

- i. Distribute the written policy When a Child is Bitten to all families upon enrollment.
- ii. Create an environment which meets the developmental needs of the children. Monitor and supervise all children while working and/or playing. Redirect in situations where a potential biting incident may occur. Maintain an environment that elicits calm, thoughtful behavior.

When a child is bitten:

For the biter:

- i. The biter is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as "biting is not okay – it hurts." We will avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter. Caring attention will be focused on the child who was bitten.
- ii. The biter will not be allowed to return to work/play and will be talked to on a level which he/she can understand. "I can see that you want that truck, but I can't let you hurt him. We don't put our teeth on people."
- iii. The child will be redirected to other work/play.
- iv. Staff will complete a Center Stage incident report* and notify the family of the biter when the child is picked up for the day.

For the victim:

- i. Staff will separate the child who was bitten from the biter.
- ii. Special attention will be given to comfort the child.
- iii. Staff will administer appropriate first aid as follows:
 - Assess the wound and if it is bleeding, apply pressure directly to the wound, using a clean, dry cloth, until the bleeding stops.
 - Clean the bite wound with a mild soap and warm running water for approximately 3 - 5 minutes.
 - Rinse thoroughly, and pat dry with a clean, dry cloth.
 - Cover the wound with a clean, dry dressing.
 - Should the wound require immediate medical attention, appropriate action will be taken and parents will be notified immediately.
 - Staff will then complete a CSP incident report* to notify family of the victim that the child has been bitten.
 - Classroom staff will confer with the director to review the context of the biting incident, whether adequate supervision was present and whether the environment contributed to the biting incident. If changes in supervision and/or environment are warranted, then those changes will be implemented.

Linens, Bed mats & Pillows

Center Stage provides cushioned bed mats in our classroom for nap time. All mats will be sanitized by staff immediately after and in between use. Parents are asked to provide any needed linens and pillows for their child's personal use. We prefer the child to have a bottom sheet, top sheet or blanket, and a small child sized pillow with a washable pillow case. Your child's linens must be sanitized at home weekly.

Child Abuse

Center Stage Preschool has a legal responsibility to report all suspected past, present, and possible child abuse to the Authorities. Child abuse includes any activity that endangers the security or development of a child through neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The safety and well being of our students is of the utmost, absolute importance.

Supervision of Children

Releasing Children

Upon enrollment, each parent completes an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent form. This form provides authorization for select individuals to pick-up children from the center. There is no exception to this rule, and we urge parents to make sure they have notified Center Stage with written consent of any change in the arrival or dismissal of their child from Center Stage Preschool. The door to Center Stage is always secure. For the safety and security of children, please never leave your child alone outside of the building. Do not leave any child unattended in a vehicle. If we are not familiar with the person attempting to pick-up a child, we will request

photo identification and check the “Emergency Contact” form. No children will be released to unauthorized people, under any circumstances.

Drop Off & Pick Up

Full day programs run from 8:30am to 6:00pm. After 6, children partake in quiet time or outdoor play. Pick up for full day programs as late as 6:30pm. AM half-day programs run from 8:30am to 11:50am, with drop off as early as 6:30am. PM half-day programs run from 2-6, with pick up no later than 6:30.

If parents are late for pick-up after 6:30pm, we provide a 10 minute grace period incurring a fee of \$1.00 per minute after said period. Upon second incident, we provide a 5 minute grace period incurring a fee of \$1.00 per minute after said period. Upon third incident, we provide no grace period and parents will be charged late fees. If late pick up is a continuing occurrence, the director will speak to parents about alternative options.

Restraining orders

In the event of a court order restraining one parent or guardian from a child, the Provider must have a legal copy of the restraining order and a written note from the custodial parent. Without these items on file the Provider cannot prevent the non-custodial parent from picking up the child.

Transportation

All children must have a reliable source of transportation to and from Center Stage Preschool. It is extremely important that all children be picked up on time. If you or your child’s authorized guardian will be late, please notify us by telephone as soon as possible to make special arrangements. Parents who fail to pick up their child on time will incur a charge of \$1.00 per minute. Parents who are repeatedly late will be asked to make other childcare arrangements.

Medical & Health Procedures

Preventing Spread of Disease

Center Stage Preschool takes every step to provide a clean and healthy environment for our students and staff alike. Center Stage combats cross contamination and the spread of disease by maintaining proper safety procedures, as well as proper hand washing and toiletry procedures for staff and children. Staff and children’s hands shall be washed with soap and running water or disposable wipes before and after eating meals or snacks, and after toileting. Your child will be unable to attend Center Stage while they have a temperature over 101°F, recurrent vomiting, diarrhea, or a communicable disease. *See Attachment for Communicable Disease Reference Chart.*

First Aid

All of Center Stage Preschool’s staff have valid and updated VA-CPR Certifications. Certain members of our staff will be MAT Certified (Medical Administer Training). Center Stage is equipped with all state regulated first aid and emergency/non-emergency supplies. First aid kits

are available in all play areas indoor and outdoor, and are easily accessible to staff but not children.

Medication Procedures

All medications must be accompanied by a medication authorization form signed by the parent/guardian, as well as instructions for administering medication. The Medication Authorization Form must be submitted prior to the day the medication is brought in. All medication will be stored in an appropriate environment inaccessible to children. No medication is allowed to be stored in the cubbies or backpacks. All medications must come in their original containers.

Accident & Illness

Our staff is trained in accident prevention in the classroom and on the playground. Should a non-emergency accident occur, parents will be notified immediately and documentation of said incident will be provided to parents, and will be entered into the child's record. All regulatory emergency procedures will be followed, and emergency services will be contacted. Each time a medication is administered to a child will be documented in their record. Our staff shall inform parents immediately of any adverse reactions to medication administered.

Sunscreen & OTC Skin Products

Hypo-allergenic sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 is always available in the center for children, as long as the child's parent/guardian has consented. All over-the-counter skin products are used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation, and will not be used or kept beyond the expiration date. For precautionary measures, these requirements must be met If you would like to provide sunscreen or insect repellent for your child:

- Written authorization noting any known adverse reactions.
- Must be in their original containers and labeled with child's name.

Head Lice

If your child has head lice, please do not send them to school until proper precautions have been taken. If any child in our classroom is found to have head lice, all parents will be immediately notified and that child will be sent home for the day.

Toys from home

To keep your child's belongings and environment safe, we do not allow outside toys or blankets to be brought into Center Stage Preschool, with the exception of teacher specified days.

Weapon Policy

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises,

in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. A zero tolerance policy on dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., gun, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items knives, swords etc. Violation may result in a student suspension/expulsion.

Emergency Provisions

Center Stage Preschool constantly remains in compliance with all regulatory drills, and maintain annual building, fire, health, and safety inspection records. Our staff and building site meet all the requirements set forth by the Standards For Licensed Child Day Centers. Our trained staff always has an emergency preparedness plan available regarding various emergency scenarios such as fire, inclement weather, criminal activity, etc.

Detailed Emergency and Evacuation Procedures are provided separately from this handbook in our Emergency Response Plan.

Parent Agreement

This signed agreement shall be placed in your child's record upon enrollment. After signing, please return to Center Stage staff. By signing this agreement, you accept all previous information stated in this handbook and these following statements:

- Center Stage is able to authorize emergency medical care should an emergency occur when the parent cannot be located immediately, unless the parent states in writing an objection to the provision of such care on religious or other grounds.
- Center Stage Preschool 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 school.
- The parent will inform Center Stage Preschool within 24 hours or the next business day after their 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.

X _____
Parent/Guardian Full Name

X _____
Date