

EXPERIENCE GATEWAY LEARNING CENTER

Parent Handbook 2023-2024 School Year

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A Ministry of Gateway Church

*“Start children off in the way they
should go, and even when they are old,
they will not turn from it.”*

Proverbs 22:6 NIV

Welcome to Gateway Learning Center!

Dear Parent:

Gateway Learning Center (GLC) welcomes you and thanks you ahead of time for choosing us to educate and care for your most precious gift, your child. We count it an honor to have this opportunity to provide care for your child during these formative years. GLC looks forward to playing a foundational role in your child's growth, and we pledge to serve your family in a spirit of excellence, and a heart of love.

We believe that each child has the right to learn and grow in their own individual way. Our center uses a whole-child approach to teaching, nurturing all areas of a child's development and learning. We take pride in our fun, "hands-on" classroom learning environment. Each teacher strives to provide engaging, age-appropriate, educational experiences that will stimulate a life-long love for learning in your child.

We understand that the first years of a child's life are the most important. Our goal is to assist families in providing a strong and solid foundation that can be built upon successfully throughout the child's life. We believe that providing developmentally appropriate programs will help your child develop autonomy, and a positive self-image. Our environments are safe, clean, and child-oriented to ensure comfortability and security.

All teachers and staff at GLC are mandated to follow all State of MD regulations for employment in a childcare center including but not limited to fingerprinting and background checks. Staff are CPR & First Aid certified. Teachers and aides are required to meet qualifications and be cleared through the local MD licensing office. Staff are required to complete ongoing training, and early childhood workshops continuously. GLC is a Licensed Child Care Center, regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Childcare (MSDE, OCC). GLC complies with all regulations according to COMAR.

Gateway Learning Center is pleased to provide your family with excellent childcare. We truly hope to exceed all your expectations and create wonderful memories which can be treasured for years to come.

Best Regards,
Gateway Learning Center

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Mission Statement

Gateway Learning Center's mission is to provide excellent early educational experiences which will help each child to develop and grow in a loving, safe, and healthy environment.

Statement of Faith

Salvation is given by faith through our Lord and Savior.

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

"For by Grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8

The Bible is God's word to us and reveals His will for us.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart." Proverbs 22:6

The Bible is full of instruction for us to grow and become all we were created to be.

Objectives

- To provide parents/guardians with a safe, and nurturing environment where their child can learn and grow.
- To provide staff that will strive to meet the emotional, social, and physical needs of each child in a self-directed, cohesive manner.
- To create a happy, warm, and exciting environment that is inviting, comfortable, flexible, and manageable for the children.
- To provide multicultural learning environments which teach respect for self and others individual differences.
- To provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that are engaging and facilitate hands on learning.
- To offer individual guidance to children based upon careful observation of each child's needs and in keeping with parent/guardian direction.
- To create a positive and mutually supportive working relationship with the children's teachers and families, building a stable and consistent support for the child to learn and grow.

Philosophy

Gateway Learning Center believes that all children are uniquely and wonderfully made in the image of God. We believe that each child must learn and grow in their own individual way. Our center strives to provide each child with an excellent learning experience through creating positive, safe, and nurturing environments. By implementing research-based quality teaching experiences, and positive interactive play experiences with others, children will easily develop a

positive self-perception of themselves and the world around them. Gateway Learning Center believes that each child is a gift from God and that the first years of life are foundational and most important.

General Center Information

Phone: 301.582.4595 ext.216

GLC Director: Misty Brittingham

Email: info.gatewaylc@gmail.com

Phone: 301.582.4595 ext.223(personal), ext.216(center)

Lead Pastor: Pastor Ray Sewell

Email: Pastorraysewell@gmail.com

Phone: 301.582.4595

Hours of Operation

Our facility is open Monday- Friday 6:30 AM-5:30 PM.

We are closed on the following Holidays every year:

Presidents Day, Good Friday, Easter, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day

Due to nap time, we do not accept drop offs between 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, except for doctor/dentist, or court appointments

Late Fees

Late fees are charged for children remaining at Gateway Learning Center after closing at 5:30PM. Please alert the center by calling (301)582-4595 to notify staff if you are going to be late. If there is a child remaining at the center after 5:45, by law the staff is required to report the child to Social Services.

*Late Charges are \$1 per minute for the first 10 minutes late.

*After the first 10 minutes late, the fee increases to \$2 per minute.

*After 20 minutes late, the fee increases to \$5 per minute thereafter.

*Payment of late charge must be paid at time of late pickup and given directly to the teachers closing.

*If your child is 15 minutes or more late, and staff has not had communication from the parent, staff will call all listed emergency pickups. If staff are not able to contact anyone, they are required to call Social Services and report the incident.

Authorized Release Policy

Gateway Learning Center follows the MSDE licensing regulations for child pick up which states, "To protect children from harm (and the center from liability), the operator may not release a child to anyone except the child's parent or legal guardian, an identified person who has been explicitly named by the parent, or an identified Child Protection Services worker (COMAR 13A.16.07, Child Protection).

In summary, GLC will not release your child to anyone unless they are the parent or guardian, an authorized person, or child protection worker. Authorized persons are to be listed on the child's OCC 1214 Emergency form. Authorized pick up persons must provide valid ID to the staff at the entrance of the learning center. GLC encourages the parent to communicate any changes in pick up to the staff to avoid any confusion. If the pickup person's name is not listed on the emergency contact form, we WILL NOT release the child under any circumstances.

In regards to individual pick up times, each child is held to the times on their tuition contract. If the parent will be later than the time on their contract, a late fee may be charged.

Parent Drop Off and Pick up

Pick up and drop off times for children are individual and reflect the care needs of the parent. Parents work with the provider to set during the child registration process on the Tuition Contract Agreement Form. Parents must stay within the contracted times for care and may not exceed those times for staffing purposes. The Director builds the staff schedule according to the needs of the families in care and the contract reflects those needs. If children are left in care outside of those agreed upon times, the child/staff ratios may be conflicted.

In addition to keeping contract times, another good practice policy GLC enforces is that children may not be dropped off any morning later than 9:30 AM unless there is an approved excuse such as doctor appointment. Drop offs later than 9:30 AM interrupt learning times, classroom schedules, as well as create an added need for staff to answer the door that are not available to do so.

Also, drop off and pick up procedures are vital to the organization and safety of our program. All children must be dropped off at the main entrance including infants. Parents must sign their child in on Procure, then deliver them to their classroom teacher before leaving. Pick up times are similar, parents must sign their child out on Procure, then retrieve them from the classroom. Infant parents may use the infant door for pick up only.

GLC strives to provide quality care and remain compliant with the MSDE regulations for child/staff ratios.

Curriculum

Gateway Learning Center uses Creative Curriculum (CC), which is a widely used and MSDE approved, domain-based curriculum, fostering a whole child approach to learning. Every classroom at GLC implements CC with its shared weekly theme's, exploration centers, weekly lesson plans, and engaging activities that promotes learning in all domains of development, according to the ages and stages of the children.

Each classroom at GLC is set-up in centers for hands-on learning and play throughout the day. Each center reflects a domain of learning, the centers are age appropriate to the group of students in the room. The centers in each room consist of math, science, reading, social studies, dramatic play, music, sensory, table toys, blocks, and art.

Additional times consist of outdoor/indoor gross play which is included twice a day before nap and after, "free play", and teachers have one-on-one times with each child according to developmental goals or individual needs of the child.

Our Staff

Our center staff are qualified through the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care. Each staff member has been fingerprinted , and cleared via background check according to MSDE Regulations for approval of childcare center staff.

Additionally, GLC staff members are carefully selected for employment pending experience and education in Early Childhood Education. Staff is encouraged to pursue Early Child Care courses to further education, and work toward desirable certifications. Each staff member is required to complete specific training mandated by state licensure regulations.

Our Programs

Our **Infant/Toddler class** focuses on developing supportive, trusting relationships with teachers and class friends. We provide a safe learning environment for infants and toddlers to explore and discover their world and grow to their individual optimal developmental level.

Our **Two's class** is designed to transition toddlers into a more traditional classroom setting than the infant/toddler rooms. This room's focus is on self-help skills such as potty-training, language development, regulating emotions, and learning daily routines. This class offers a variety of gross motor activities that are age appropriate to accommodate the short attention span. Another big focus in the two's room is to develop the child's eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, and following directions. The children will learn colors, shapes, days of the week, weather, sign language, and much more. These are all skills that the child will need to be successful in older classroom's as they learn and grow.

Our **Mixed Two's/Three's Class** mirror's our two's room, yet offers a more flexible wider range of learning skills to children who have turned 3 but are needing more time before transitioning to find themselves either being more advanced as a 2, or needing a little more time before transitioning to the 3's. Once again, potty training is a big focus in this classroom and can be a good option for children who have not mastered the potty skills required for a 3's room.

Our **Three's Class** continues to work on and master skills that were introduced in the 2's room. This includes establishing daily routines, following directions, sharing, making friends, and independently cleaning up after themselves. During this stage of learning, there is an increased focus on learning experiences in all domains. It is very important that the students are building relationships with their teachers and peers, which is proven to facilitate successful child development. With that said, if a child is behind in any area of development, they will receive more targeted one-on-one instruction from the teacher. This approach helps the child and ensures their preparation for the four's and five's (PreK) class. Specific daily instruction in the 3's room includes but is not limited to: number, letter, and shape recognition, writing, expanded vocabulary, art expression, math, and science exploration. GLC does prefer children to be potty trained upon entering a three's room. Occasional accidents, and wearing a pullup at naptime is okay.

Our **Four's and Five's Class (PreK)** is designed to build a solid foundation for successful entry into Kindergarten. Daily lessons are based upon WCPS standards and focus on

letter sounds, formation, and literacy skills. Hands-on activities are an integral part of this classroom to keep the children actively involved in learning. The classroom is arranged in centers that focus on art experiences, manipulative play, dramatic play, science and sensory activities, as well as children's literature.

Our **School Age Summer Program** incorporates recreational, fun learning experiences, with a focus in STEM and literacy activities to minimize children's summer learning loss. Summer Camp offers field trips, group game play, and center fun days to keep children excited, engaged, socializing, and enjoying their summer break. The staff responsible for teaching this age group are trained and experienced in planning summer programs.

Our **School Age Before and After School Program** is offered to local elementary school-aged children attending Hickory, Williamsport Elementary, Fountain Rock Elementary Schools, and others in the surrounding areas. Gateway DOES NOT currently offer transportation from these schools. **Families participating in Before Care must have their child/children signed into the center by 7:35 AM.** This is a hard requirement to avoid missing the bus and the child not making it to school, in which event GLC cannot transport them and would have to call the parent to come back and take them.

What to Bring the First Day of Care

Starting the First Day of care each child will be given a cubby for their items. Each classroom is different on the items needed but a general list is listed below. If your classroom requires any additional items, the teacher will notify you.

- Blanket, small pillow, crib sheet.
- Change of weather appropriate clothing.
- Velcro side Pull ups
- Wipes
- Extra socks, and underwear
- Family photo
- Comfort Object
- Formula or Breastmilk
- Diaper Rash ointment (need Med. Admin form from Director)

Parent Drop Off and Pick up

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In addition to keeping contract times, another good practice policy GLC enforces is that children may not be dropped off any morning later than 9:30 AM unless there is an approved excuse such as doctor appointment. Drop offs later than 9:30 AM interrupt learning times, classroom schedules, as well as create an added need for staff to answer the door that are not

available to do so.

Also, drop off and pick up procedures are vital to the organization and safety of our program. All children must be dropped off at the main entrance including infants. Parents must sign their child in on Procure, then deliver them to their classroom teacher before leaving. Pick up times are similar, parents must sign their child out on Procure, then retrieve them from the classroom. Infant parents may use the infant door for pick up only.

GLC strives to provide quality care and remain compliant with the MSDE regulations for child/staff ratios.

Chapel

All classes participate in a weekly Chapel service, along with daily bible devotions that add to our Chapel teaching. Chapel consists of interactive age appropriate worship time, followed by engaging activities, and applicable Bible inspired teachings to assist in moral development. The director and/or pastoral staff will share responsibilities in leading chapel services on Friday's 9:30 - 10:00 AM.

Admission Policy

Children can be admitted to Gateway Learning Center from 6 weeks old to 12 years old. Families are asked to arrange a tour of the facilities prior to enrolling in our school. During the tour the family will be given a registration packet. In order to register the following items must be completed and submitted to Gateway Learning Center:

- Parent Handbook Signature Page
- Tuition Contract
- Completed Meal Benefit & Food Application Form
- Completed Emergency Form
- Complete Health Inventory Packet including Immunization Record
- Complete A Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care
- Any additional individual PRN medical paperwork (including allergies, medication, asthma action plan)
- Copy of IEP, IFSP, Behavior Plans if applicable

After completing the registration packet, parent/guardians call the center to schedule an appointment with the Director to submit all completed paperwork. There is a \$50 registration fee due at this appointment, along with the first week's tuition payment. Additionally, individuals who will be responsible for dropping off and picking up the child, will need to have their fingerprint registered into the Procure system located at the sign in table.

Trial Period

The first two weeks of care at Gateway Learning Center is considered a "trial period". During this "trial period", the parent(s) or the Center may determine if they should continue the care contract, or terminate the care contract for any reason. This must be done with a written 2 week notice.

Withdraws

Should parents decide to terminate their educational partnership with Gateway Learning Center, they are required to submit a written two-week notice to the Director. All fees must be

paid in full prior to the Last Day of care. If proper notice is not given, and the parent terminates before the two-week timeframe, that difference will be reflected on their Procure account. Should any account be left outstanding, with no attempt to reconcile the payments, legal action will be pursued to collect those funds left delinquent.

Should Gateway Learning Center hold all rights to terminate their childcare contract due to a child's harmful behavior, account delinquency, or for any other reason, depending on the severity of the reason, there could be a written notice or it could be an immediate expulsion.

Termination of Care

Occasionally, a child will experience some difficulty in adapting to the daycare's environment or abiding by the daycare rules of behavior. A conference will be scheduled if your child should experience some difficulty. We will work closely with you to see if the problem can be resolved. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive to the group, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child from daycare.

You must give a two weeks notice when voluntarily withdrawing your child from Gateway Learning Center. You will be responsible for all final payments through the end of the notice period, whether in attendance or not.

If the rules and policies set forth are not followed, we reserve the right to terminate the daycare contract agreement at any time. In such an event, we will be paid in full through the end of the week in which such termination occurs.

The child care arrangements will be terminated immediately for any of the following reasons (but not limited to):

- * Failure to comply with the policies set forth in the parent handbook.
- * Failure to comply with the contract.
- * Destructive or hurtful behavior of a child that persists even with parent cooperation in stopping the behavior.
- * Non-payment of childcare or late fees and/or recurring late payment of fees.
- * Repeated failure to pick up the child at scheduled times.
- * Failure to show up for 5 consecutive days without any communication or payment.
- * Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- * Blatant disrespect towards the provider or provider's family.
- * If a parent knowingly brings their child ill with symptoms of fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or any other symptoms as stated in the sick child policy.
- * Consistent child-rearing style differences between the parent and provider.
- * False information given by a parent either verbally or in writing.

If for any reason legal services are needed, Gateway Learning Center, the childcare Director, or Gateway Pastor's and staff will not be responsible for any legal or court costs incurred.

Communication

Gateway Learning Center believes that communication with our parents is a key factor in creating a successful partnership. Upon your child's enrollment, the Director will give you contact information for the Center and walk you through our accounting and communication system using Procure. Upon your first week of care, you can expect to receive your child's classroom welcome packet with personal information and classroom schedule. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's progress and/or behavior, please first discuss with

the classroom teacher directly. If at any time you feel that your concerns are not being addressed appropriately, or if you have questions, please contact the Director.

If at any time you have a concern with your child's teacher, please do not discuss the concerns in the classroom or in the presence of the children. We ask that you set up a scheduled conference with the Director to discuss any sensitive matters.

***Please make sure to have the ProCare app downloaded on your cell phone to receive daily reports.**

Transitions

Initial Transition into Center

The Center takes many steps to make sure that children transition successfully into our program. For example, our center Director welcomes all new families by first scheduling a tour of the facility. The Learning Center tour consists of entering at the GLC Welcome Board which gives a visual representation of the entire center. It shows all the classrooms, teachers, workers, and important news. The center Director then walks the families through each classroom introducing them to the teachers and staff. In addition to classrooms, they are walked through the entire facility including the cafeteria, bathrooms, gym, and outdoor play area. Parents should expect to spend about 20 minutes on a typical tour of the center.

After touring, the parent may schedule a good time for the teacher and parent to come back and visit their child's classroom during the normal daytime activities. This is, however, an optional step. If the child is familiar with preschool or the parent 'opts out', no worries. This step is not required.

The last step of initial transition from home to daycare is registering your child. This step requires one last meeting with the Director before the child may start. During this meeting the parent and Director will go over all required forms and center policies, ensuring clarity. The Director will gladly offer any answers to questions or concerns regarding policies, tuition, food program, and child information. The parent should also bring with them their child's cubby items, and family photo for the classroom family tree. For infant's entering care, the Director will need to set up a meeting with the infant teacher to go over items, and special procedures. Lastly, the parent is required to have their child's registration fee and the first week tuition to pay in full.

On the child's first day of care, the child and parent are completely prepared and ready. Your child's teacher will provide a meet the teacher packet with general classroom information. Procare is used for daily reports, classroom/center announcements, and communication with teachers and the Director. Parents may feel free to call the center directly during naptime if preferred. We do ask that calls are made during rest periods 12:30-2:30, to help with availability without disrupting learning times. Please be sure to download the Procare app and have it ready by the First Day of Care. We don't want anyone to feel left 'out of the know' or miss communications efforts from the teacher.

Transition within the Center

When it is time for children to transition within our program, GLC makes sure that the transition is a success. For currently enrolled children, who are ready to 'move up' to an older classroom, the new classroom teacher will stagger them in by arranging a minimum of four visits, within a two weeks period preceding the expected 'move up' to their new room. The four visits consist of a circle time, center time, half day, and full day visit. The parent will receive a visit slip from the new teacher on these days to update the parent on how it went. Move ups are possible quarterly throughout the year; the beginning of Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer months. Additionally, we use our rainy days for classroom shift play days. On rainy days, the twos will play in the preschool room. The preschool plays in the PreK room and the PreK room plays in the after- school room. This keeps the children entertained and eliminates boredom on rainy days while allowing children to experience their new classroom. During this experience in their new classrooms, their new teachers are also present. This helps them to familiarize themselves and be more comfortable with their new classroom environments.

Transition to School Setting

Transitioning children into new programs or school settings requires careful planning. To make sure that children's transitions are successful, our center facilitates the transition to elementary school starting with sending home the Spring Kindergarten Handout for parents for their child's school district. Along with the school's handout we include a large yellow envelope containing a copy of each child's Health Inventory, gives dates of Kindergarten registration at their prospective elementary schools, and informs parents of other documentation needed for Kindergarten registration. Additionally, the teachers will send home to parents their child's portfolio and assessment records from their time at the center. This allows our parents to be prepared before going to the elementary schools to register. As a bonus, a community friend visits the center with their school bus. This helps our children to familiarize themselves with riding a bus and learn bus safety.

Individuals with Special Healthcare Needs

It is important to have clear transition plans in place, particularly for children with special health care needs or disabilities. In my/our program, I/we make sure these transitions are successful by the center uses ASQ-3 assessment to screen children for developmental delays. If a child's assessment shows a developmental delay, the teacher will inform the Director. The director will set up a conference with the child's parents. At the conference, the assessment and concerns are shared with the parent's choices on intervention. The center uses the Birth to Five Program, The Thrive program at Brook Lane Services and The Pediatric Movement center to give parents choices on intervention. The Director guides parents by sharing resources such as the public library, doctor's offices, and the Maryland State Department of Education as places that can provide additional information on the developmental delay. The Director, also through email, stays in contact with the early intervention program to ensure progress is being made with the child. If parents have additional concerns and questions, the Director and teachers help find resources.

Other Information

Other information our center has found to be helpful in ensuring successful transitions for children includes: during transition times the teachers are very good at changing the classroom material and items around to fit the culture of the new children coming into the room.

General transition periods for children are September, January, March, and June. The Director and teachers will decide the best times for transitioning children up to the next classroom based on age, availability, the individual child, and potty-training needs. Any 2-year-old child must be at least partially potty trained before being transitioned into a 3-year-old classroom. Transitions will be discussed with parents before any change is made, and the child will be familiarized with the new teacher and classroom before they are fully transitioned. Director and teacher may request a parent conference if needed to facilitate the transition should they feel it necessary. PreK students transitioning to Kindergarten will be taught school readiness skills according to the Maryland standards for PreK readiness. Tuition will be reflective of the classroom, not the age of the child. Under special circumstances pertaining to availability this may be waived per Director approval.

Financial Agreement and Tuition Contract

Upon enrollment at Gateway Learning Center all families are required to comply with the Parent Handbook and Tuition Contract. This contract is an agreement between Gateway Learning Center and the parent/guardians enrolling their child/children for childcare services. In signing and receiving services, parents/guardians agree to be financially responsible for their childcare services, paying tuition charges entirely and consistently throughout their contracted year. All families are responsible for their weekly tuition while their child is enrolled at Gateway Learning Center, regardless of attendance or closures. All registration fees must accompany the registration packet when submitted to enrollment. All contracts will be renewed annually, the first week of January. Renewal fees are listed below and will automatically be charged to your account at that time. Should the parent/guardian wish to change care options, they need to submit a new Tuition Contract form to the Director. All contracts are pending approval and subject to center availability. Upon approval, the Director will facilitate these changes and provide appropriate paperwork. **All contract options and charges for childcare services are listed in the charts below.**

Infant-PreK Tuition Charts

Classrooms Rates for Auto Recurring Pay	Infants 6wks-24mo.	2's	3-5's
Full-time (M-F)	\$260	\$200	\$180
PT/3 days (M, W, F)	N/A	\$155	\$135
PT/2 days (T, Th)	N/A	\$120	\$105

Classroom Rates for Credit, Cash or	Infants 6wks-24mo.	2's	3-5's

Check Pay (6% service fee)			
Full-time (M-F)	\$276	\$212	\$191
PT/3 days (M, W, F)	N/A	\$165	\$142
PT/2 days (T, Th)	N/A	\$128	\$112

School Age Program Tuition Chart for Auto-Recurring Pay

Drop-In (Full Day) Rate	Before School Only	After School Only	Before & After
\$60(2 yrs), \$55 (3-12 yrs)	\$50	\$65	\$115

School Age Program Tuition Chart for Increased Amounts (Credit, Cash, Check)

Drop-In (Full Day) Rate	Before School Only	After School Only	Before & After
\$64 (2 yrs), \$59 (3-12 yrs)	\$53	\$69	\$122

Additional charges include an initial registration and annual fee.

One-time Initial Registration	Annual (January)
\$75	\$50

Tuition Policy

For our center to operate efficiently, payments must be made consistently and in entirety. GLC is a non-profit organization and operation costs to run our center are not subsidized by the church.

GLC uses Procure for all account information, this is your account. Please refer to your account and keep it in good standing to avoid any unwanted fees

- **Tuition payments are due on the First day of care each week.** Payments are considered late if payment is not made by 5:30 pm on Monday (First Day of care). A \$5 late fee, per day, will be automatically applied to your Procure account until tuition is paid in full.

- Preferred method of payment is ACH recurring payments using Procure. Additionally, payments may be made by cash or check. GLC will cover all processing charges for recurring ACH payments). If you are paying by check please make a check payable to “*Gateway Learning Center*” and include your child’s name on the check along with dates of service to help with processing. **In the event your check is returned for insufficient funds, your account will be charged a \$35.00 NSF fee.** Parents may opt out of ACH, to pay using a credit card through Procure, but tuition rates are increased to cover all service fees associated with this option. *See Tuition Chart for details.*
- Tuition discounts: multi-child, veteran, police, and active Gateway church member. A 10% discount may be applied when applicable, see Director for details.
- Only one discount may apply per family. The discount will be applied to the lowest child tuition rate on the account.
- Discounts must be requested upon registration.
- Non-payment for two weeks will be treated as a withdrawal. (See withdraw)
- Fees are non-transferable and cannot be transferred from one child to another for any reason.
- All families are responsible for tuition weekly throughout their child’s enrollment, regardless of attendance or closures.

Parent Vacations

All families which have been enrolled and are attending Gateway Learning Center on a full time, 12-month basis, are entitled to a **one-week vacation** in which they are **not** required to pay their normal rate of service. The family must be enrolled for 12 full months before this credit can be used. If a family has met the criteria for a vacation credit, they must complete a *Parent Vacation Request form* within two (2) weeks of the requested vacation dates and submit it to the Director via email or drop it in the tuition box. Only if procedure is followed will the credit be applied to the Procure account.

****Vacation time cannot be taken during holiday weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year’s; these are BLACK OUT WEEKS for vacation.**

Attendance

Gateway Learning Center considers attendance an essential factor in the developmental success of each child. Structured learning times differ according to classroom schedules. Upon enrollment, the teacher will submit their classroom schedule to the parent/guardian for reference. Learning time is very important for your child’s development, and minimal interruptions are key to successful classroom management. Please keep this in mind when determining drop off times. Children may **NOT** be dropped off after 9:30 AM without a doctor’s note of excusal. Additionally, if your child is absent for more than 2 consecutive days, please notify the teacher, or center of reason.

Inclement Weather

If there is inclement weather, Gateway Learning Center will take in consideration Washington County Public Schools closing procedures along with the safety of our children and staff. Announcements will be available by 6:00 AM the morning of, or the morning after weather happenings through Gateway Learning Center's ProCare app. In the event of an early dismissal, center staff will make phone calls to parents, and send messages via ProCare. We ask that in the event of early school closings, that you make conscious efforts to pick up your child as soon as possible. **There will not be adjustments or changes to tuition payments because of any early closing or inclement weather delays/closings.**

***Late fees will be applied and required immediately if late picking up for an early dismissal. The late fee is \$1 per Minute for the first 10 Minutes, after the first 10 minutes, the late fee is increased to \$2 per minute.**

Sick Child Policy

Children who appear ill or feverish are taken to the office and parents are called. Parents must pick up their children as soon as possible. If your child has a fever, diarrhea or is vomiting, they should not return to Gateway Learning Center until they have been free of these symptoms for 24 hours without medication.

Please do not bring your child to school or allow your child to attend classes if your child displays the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or more.
- Diarrhea-loose or watery stool that is not associated with diet change.
- Vomiting-2 or more times within 24 hours.
- Severe coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Yellowish eyes or skin
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)- Must be under treatment for 24 hours prior to returning to school
- Chicken pox- must remain home until all lesions are dried over
- Head lice
- Impetigo
- Unknown Rash
- Runny nose with yellow or green discharge or
- Any other condition that may be deemed contagious.

Hand, Foot, Mouth Policy

Hand, Foot, Mouth is a virus that is contagious and spreads very easily among children. Symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) usually include fever, mouth sores, and skin rash. The rash is commonly found on the hands and feet. Hand, foot, and mouth disease is common in infants and children younger than 5 years old. Most children have mild symptoms for 5 days. Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) spreads easily through:

- Person-to-person contact.
- Droplets are made when a person who is sick with HFMD sneezes, coughs, or talks.
- Contact with contaminated surfaces and objects.

At GLC, if your child is in a classroom where HFMD has more than 2 confirmed cases, they must report this to the Health Department. At this time, the only prevention measures are to

wash hands, avoid close contact with sick individuals, and to thoroughly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared items, such as toys and doorknobs. In GLC's efforts to clean the area, the center may need to close temporarily to initiate proper cleaning procedures without the children physically in the area. This will be decided on a case by case basis and GLC hold's full right to operate the childcare program in whatever capacity is best to maintain the health and safety of its students and staff.

If your child is confirmed to have HFMD, your child may not return to care earlier than 5 days. In addition, your child must be fever free for over 24 hours without any medication, all blisters must be dry, no coughing or drooling due to mouth sores may be present, and the child must be well enough to participate in routine activities with no problems or tiredness. Upon returning your child to care from having HFMD, you must have clearance from the Director, which means you must speak with him/her before dropping your child off for care to ensure that the guidelines have been met for a safe return.

Medication

We realize that there are times when it is necessary for children to be administered medicine while at Gateway Learning Center. All medications must be in the appropriate prescription bottle with a dated label with the child's name. Bring all medication to the Gateway Learning Center office. Do not take medication into the classroom. **A MSDE Medication Authorization Form must be completed by the doctor before we can administer medicine to children.** All over-the counter medication requires the same procedure and form.

Emergency Procedures

Parents are required to provide the Gateway Learning Center staff with current emergency contact information upon admission and to update annually. Any changes to emergency contact information should be given to the office when they occur.

In the event of a natural disaster, proper child releasing policies will remain in effect. If a situation does arise, parents will be contacted. Your child will be kept at Gateway Learning Center until you are able to pick him/her up.

Nutrition Policy

Gateway Learning Center participates in the Child & Adult Care Food Program which allows us to provide daily meals including breakfast at 8:30 daily, lunch at times ranging from 11:15-11:45 depending upon class, and an afternoon snack following naptime at 2:30 daily. There is no cost associated with this program. There is an application that must be completed upon enrollment, and annually thereafter. A menu and nutrition guideline will be posted in the entry hallway by the Director's office, and in the cafeteria for your convenience. Parents may not bring food from home.

- If your child has a food allergy, please notify the Director immediately, and complete a Food Allergy form. This information will then be posted in the kitchen and in the child's classroom.
- Parents of Infants provide breastmilk or formula; the center provides solid food components.

Discipline Policy

The purpose of a Behavior Policy is to create a clear plan for desirable behavior between the parent and the provider. Clear expectations and agreement between home and school help children to develop desirable school behavior through self-control and taking responsibility for their own actions. Teachers are responsible for interacting with children in a consistent, respectful, and positive manner. Positive statements and redirection will be used to guide children from making poor choices to better choices. Additionally, positive reinforcement by the teacher to redirect children towards more desirable behavior.

Gateway Learning Center uses Conscious Discipline methodology practices which is a widely used evidence and research-based practice to assist in this developmental process. The conscious skills that are taught and utilized includes composure, encouragement, assertiveness, choices, empathy, positive intent, and consequences.

Additional discipline strategies include:

- Setting clear and consistent expectations for age appropriate classroom behavior.
- Classroom teachers and children work together to develop clear and concise rules.
- Valuing mistakes as learned opportunities.
- Modeling skills that help children solve their own problems.
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors towards desirable outcomes.
- Giving children choices of ways to modify behavior or activity.
- Encouraging children to use their words and work together to solve problems.
- Guiding children in methods to resolving conflict.
- Children are offered time to reflect on their behavior.

Undesirable Child Behavior Policy

In the event, that a child's behavior becomes consistently disruptive or harmful to others, the parents will be notified by the director. Communication may be formal or informal or done through daily teacher reports or requested conferences. If a conference is scheduled, the parent or teacher will discuss strategies to promote positive behavior and develop a plan for change and/or accommodations that will promote desired change. If this step is taken, your child will be placed on a behavior plan which utilizes a daily tracking chart of behavior containing anecdotal notes/incident reports, and daily behavior reports that require daily confirmation of the parent's receipt through initialing and returning the folder. The reason for this intensified attention to the behavior is for a few reasons. First and foremost, the child will learn that the parent and teacher are combining their efforts through communication to support them. The behavior may worsen initially after implementation of the plan, but consistency is key. In the event that both the parent and teacher feel this effort is not helping and/or the parent is not fulfilling their part of the plan through daily communications, working together, and/or report confirmations, the child may be asked to leave the program. With that said, it is Gateway Learning Center's intent to fully work with families and be a support to help in any way.

The Director of Gateway Learning Center has the discretionary authority to make determinations and apply these guidelines to specific situations. The Director will finalize all disciplinary action decisions.

Damaged or Broken Items Policy

In the event that the child displays undesirable behavior and purposefully, and/or continuously

breaks/seriously damages property of GLC, the parent may be required to replace the item or refund the center for the loss.

Child Care Screen Time Policy

In order of compliance with the State of Maryland Child Care Regulations, Gateway Learning Center will only allow 30 minutes of age-appropriate, educational passive technology per week. **Md. Code Regs. 13A.17.09.01(E)(3)**
An occasional exception may be made only in the special event of a holiday, project, or special event day.

Outside Play

Outside play is a vital part of our daily program. Children will be going outside to play when the weather is acceptable meaning temperatures between 35-90 degrees. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play according to the season. Gateway Learning Center will incorporate at least one hour of active gross motor play per full day.

Change of Clothes

Parents are asked to bring one change of clothes labeled and placed in their cubby. Please be aware that your child's clothes will need to be exchanged according to the change of seasons and growth of your child. Additionally, parents are required to provide all pull ups and wipes for their child. **Pull ups** must be **Velcro tab** only.

Quiet time

Children have a need for both active and quiet times. The center balances active times by incorporating a planned rest period each day from 12:30-2:30 pm. Parents are asked to provide a fitted crib sheet to cover the child's cot for sanitary purposes. Additionally, parents must supply a blanket and small pillow which will be taken home at the end of every week to be washed. Additionally, children may have one comfort object, and a family photo will be displayed for their comfort. All belongings should have the child's initials and need to be taken home on Fridays to be cleaned and returned on Monday mornings.

Due to nap time, we do not accept drop offs for between 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, except for doctor/dentist, or court appointment

Personal Possessions

Gateway Learning Center is not responsible for any lost or stolen items brought to school. It is recommended that toys are not brought in. Your help and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Open Door Policy

Gateway Learning Center maintains an "Open Door" policy. Parent's are encouraged to take interest in their child's care and early educational development.

- We offer parents to observe parts of their child's day. We feel observation increases a parent's understanding of what our classrooms do, and what their child's day looks like.

- If you find it difficult to separate from your child, you may want to limit visits, as this may become a disruption to the class and difficult for the child.
- Please be mindful that we do observe a 2-hour rest time everyday beginning between 12:30-2:30.
- Nursing mothers are welcome to their infant's classroom whenever possible. A private area is arranged for your convenience.

Birthdays

For birthday celebrations, cupcakes may be brought in during snack to share with the class. Please let your child's teacher know if you are planning to bring in anything special.

Gateway Learning Center

Inclusion Policy

Gateway Learning Center does not discriminate against anyone based on religion, sex, gender, race, color, national and/or ethnic origin or disability.

All students of Gateway Learning Center will participate in an annual developmental screening. Should any concerns arise after the screening, we will partner with parents and local referral agencies to ensure your child's needs are being met.

We welcome children of all abilities including those with special healthcare needs. If your child has an IEP/IFSP please provide a copy to the director to ensure that appropriate accommodations/modifications are met. Additionally, if your child has a special healthcare need please be forthcoming in communicating that need to the Director and teacher to facilitate appropriate communication and accommodations.

Please sign and detach this page and return to the director confirming that you have read and understand the policies and procedures in this handbook.

Please READ and SIGN:

I have read the policies in the Gateway Learning Center Parent Handbook and understand their application to me and my child.

Parents Signature: _____

Date: _____

Photo Release Permission Slip

As a parent or guardian of this student, I hereby consent to the use of photographs/videotape taken during the course of the school year for publicity, promotional and/or educational purposes (including publications, presentation or broadcast via newspaper, internet or other media sources). I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use, or for damages.

Yes, I give consent for Gateway Learning Center to photograph my child for school purposes and/or at school events.

No, I do not authorize Gateway Learning Center to photograph my child for any event.

Child's Name: _____

Parents Name: _____

Parents Signature: _____

Date: _____

Gateway Learning Center

Holiday Closures

President's Day ~ Monday, February 19th, 2024

Good Friday ~ Friday, March 29th, 2024

Easter Monday ~ Monday, April 1st, 2024

Memorial Day ~ Monday, May 27th, 2024

**Independence Day ~ Thursday-Friday,
July 3th & 4th, 2024**

Labor Day ~ Monday, September 2nd, 2024

**Thanksgiving Break ~ Wednesday -Friday,
November 27th ~ November 28th, 2024**

**Christmas Break ~ Monday, December 23rd,
2024- Wednesday,
January 1st, 2024**