Joyful Noise

Handbook



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***Joyful Noise Childcare Parent Handbook***

Welcome to Joyful Noise Childcare. This handbook has been prepared as an informative guide for parents so that they may know and understand my childcare philosophies, and expectations. In order to make our relationship as enjoyable as possible, the following pages contain mutually beneficial requirements that are necessary to ensure that there are no misunderstandings between either party. The words “I”, “me”, or “my” refers to the childcare provider. The words “you” or “your” refer to the child’s parent or guardians. Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to discuss with me any questions or comments that you may have.

# Mission Statement

By Sharing God’s love and grace, Joyful Noise Childcare strives to provide a quality childcare experience for all children by creating relationships that foster open, honest communication between parents, myself, and the children. This will create an environment for each child to feel safe and secure, which will allow them to learn and grow to develop to their fullest potential physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Joyful Noise Childcare serves all children and families regardless of race, religion, or cultural background.

**Child Care Philosophy**

At Joyful Noise Child Care, we believe that children’s play is their work. Our childcare program is modeled after the Reggio Emilia approach to child development, along with an understanding of Lev Vygotsky’s child development theories and Maria Montessori’s teaching practices. We believe in the child being competent, curious, full of knowledge, and potential. Children learn how to interact with the world around them as they manipulate the environment during play. Adults facilitate creative learning experiences, by structuring and changing the childcare environment both inside and outdoors allowing for exploration, as well as individual and group play. The environment is seen as the third teacher and is structured to allow the children the freedom to move between activities at their own pace. We place activities out in the environment in baskets or on trays, for them to explore and learn at their own choosing. They are rotated to coordinate with the projects and activities that interest the children. Small periods are structured, adult-led, activities in a group, such as singing songs, calendar, weather, Storytime, or a game. These experiences teach the children about following directions, taking turns, and working in a group, all skills they will need to succeed in school. The integration of academics into child-centered play provides the best outcomes for the young children in our care. Using the children’s previous experiences, and their own interests we build their minds, increasing vocabulary, while also developing their bodies and strengthening their social skills. The timing of activities such as outdoor play and art or cooking may change depending on when babies are sleeping; as I strive to meet each child’s individual needs.

The materials we have chosen to add to the childcare environment include toys, rattles, puzzles, tables, and chairs made of wood instead of plastic which develop an appreciation for nature and quality and show respect for the child. we have also added many natural materials to the environment, such as rocks, sticks, or plants, along with natural soothing colors. Materials are kept neatly on shelves, hung on hooks, sorted on trays, and separated into baskets.  This also makes putting things away much more logical and enjoyable.  Toys and books are rotated – taking out those that have not been chosen lately and limiting choices so that the children do not become overwhelmed and feel in control of their environment and making clean-up manageable. Materials are chosen to reflect the lives and experiences of the children we serve.

 The child development theorist, Lev Vygotsky, theories of child development impact the structure of our program. He believed that children have two different levels of development: independent performance and assisted performance. Vygotsky believed that through scaffolding, adults and peers could help support children’s achievement of more difficult skills. Scaffolding includes demonstrating, modeling, and adult questioning, to move a child from his current skill level to a higher level. In our multiage group environment, the children have many opportunities to support others as well as to be supported by others. We believe that all children thrive and succeed in this type of environment, regardless of their developmental strengths or weaknesses. They learn teamwork and compassion for others and develop strong social skills they will use for the rest of their life.

Joyful Noise provides an emergent curriculum. This means that the teachers observe the children and carefully learn about what interests them and what questions they have about the world. We try to allow the children to do as much as they can independently. Learning to wash hands, put nap mats away, and clean up after meals is taught to children beginning at about 2 years. Putting coats and shoes on to go outside becomes a learning activity as does cleaning up toys, and following directions. By taking observations we can plan new experiences and activities for the children to meet their interests, skills, and even struggles. The observations are also used by teachers to ensure that children are progressing developmentally. It is our goal to come alongside parents, working with them to facilitate the children's ability to have fun while nurturing a love of exploration and learning. This all takes place in a safe, secure environment, where each child is accepted and loved as a unique individual. We want to see every child with the skills that prepare them to be ready to learn when they reach Kindergarten.

**Program Goals**

* To structure the childcare environment to encourage exploration and learning through play based on the child’s interests.
* To ensure every child is nurtured and comfortable.
* To prepare the environment to provide appropriate play experiences which will contribute to the developmental needs of each individual child
* To facilitate and guide children of all ages to manage social skills, so they can be ready to learn and function in a group of peers, as necessary for a positive school experience.
* To help children foster positive self-help skills, building the confidence they will need for success in life.
* To help your child prepare for kindergarten by age 5 by creating an educational environment and working jointly with parent/guardian in order for your child to learn the skills necessary for school success.
* To provide each child's parent/guardian with daily verbal accounts of how a child is progressing throughout the year.
* To adapt the learning process to fit your child's learning style and any special needs including working with the Infant Toddlers Program if necessary and following a child’s IFP (Individual Family Plan).
* To provide a developmental screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3)
* To provide the opportunity to parents for conferences, to discuss developmental milestones based on the ASQ3 screening.

**Outdoor Educational Experiences, and Physical Fitness**

At Joyful Noise Childcare, we want to provide every child with great educational experiences and a childhood they will remember. After much research and planning we decided to make Joyful Noise a childcare program that embraces the outdoors with a strong emphasis on nature. Research has shown that children who spend time outdoors have better self-regulation and become confident and empathic. They learn about other living things and love the natural world while engaging in numerous hands-on multi-sensory experiences outside of four walls. Outdoors children have the opportunity for child-driven explorations in the natural world which allows them to follow their interests and boosts their natural curiosity. The children develop strong gross motor and fine motor skills while learning about awareness of their body in space. The below list are all skills children gain through nature exposure which help them to succeed in school and later in life.

Increased feelings of calmness

Increased endorphin levels and dopamine production (promotes happiness)

Restored capacity for concentration and attention

Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression

Reduced irritability

Lowered blood pressure and reduced cortisol (stress hormone)

Reduced feelings of isolation.

Encouraged freedom and self-direction

Increased social skills and cooperation

Increased opportunities for multi-sensory experiences which help with the development of self-regulation

Increased flexibility, dexterity, and strength

During most days we spend as much time out in nature as possible, weather permitting. We believe that there is very little bad weather on the lower shore of Maryland. All weather is fun and exciting to children when they are dressed for the weather. They love puddles and mud, which usually isn’t high on grown-ups' lists of must-do activities. We are outside in all kinds of weather. We eat lunch outside many days, we read outside, and we plan our educational activities for outside. Many days we even take afternoon naps outdoors. In spring and fall many days we are outdoors for most of the day. While every day we aim for at least one hour outdoors, in some instances this is not possible such as in stormy weather, when it is colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, or over 90 degrees with high humidity. If the weather makes it difficult to go outside, due to rain, or extreme heat or cold, other indoor gross motor activities will be provided for the children to participate in with their friends.

All children are encouraged to participate to the best of their ability. Some activities will be altered to provide ways for a younger child or a special needs child to participate.

When the children sleep outdoors they are on the mats with rubber mats under them to insulate them from the ground. They are offered extra blankets in colder weather. We have found the children are most comfortable sleeping outdoors when it is over 50 degrees. We also consider the humidity levels during warmer months. During the warmer months, there are always numerous ways to spend time in the shade.

 We ask parents to provide mud/rain suits along with boots to leave at childcare. We also ask parents of all children to bring warm winter coats, mittens, and hats for cooler weather, In the summer bathing suits, extra changes of clothing, and crocks or water shoes are required for warm weather. The children learn so much from free play and instructional time outside, allowing them to experience the seasons firsthand

**Professional Development**

I, Miss Cherry, chose the field of family childcare as my profession. I began this career in 1992. I love what I do. I am honored that you have chosen us to care for your child. In addition to being registered by the Office of Child Care through the State of Maryland, as a licensed family childcare provider, I also hold a Level 6 Childcare Credential, and MD EXCELS Level 3. I was a nationally accredited family childcare provider for over 12 years. In the process of achieving these credentials, I have taken many childcare and child development classes. In December 2018, I finished my bachelor’s degree in child development through Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

# Level 6 Maryland Childcare Credential

The Maryland Child Care Credential is a voluntary program that recognizes childcare providers who go beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations. There are six credential levels, each one recognizing a childcare provider’s achievement of a specified number of training hours, years of experience, and professional activities that lead to quality childcare. Participating providers complete training in topic areas in order to develop the knowledge and skills they need to provide the highest quality care for the children and families they serve. The Credential is valid for one year and may be renewed annually. I am a level 5 and will be moving to level 6 now that my Child development degree is complete.

**NAFCC National Accreditation**

The National Association for Family Child Care has developed and is implementing the National Accreditation Program for Family Child Care. National Accreditation assesses family childcare providers and their facilities. Six quality standard areas must be assessed. These include Relationships, Environment, Activities, Developmental Learning Goals, Safety and Health, and Professional and Business Practices. There are requirements within these standards that must be met before a provider can receive National Accreditation. Providers must complete a minimum of 125 hours of training, complete a self-study, and be observed by a nationally approved early childcare observer. Once all the requirements have been met and the observation visit has been successfully completed, National Accreditation is awarded for a period of three years. I received my first National Accreditation in March 2003, and I was accredited through January 2020. At this point, I have chosen to drop my NAFCC Accreditation. Daily struggles with my own daughter who was diagnosed with Autism have led me to decide that the childcare children I care for, and the staff who work with me, as well as myself and my daughter, would be better served by creating a lower stress environment. I learned a lot and believe in the accreditation process.

**Maryland EXCELS Level 3**

Maryland EXCELS is a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). A QRIS is a program that awards ratings to family providers, center-based childcare programs, public school preschool programs, childcare programs, and school-age before and after-school programs that meet increasingly higher standards of quality in key areas. Maryland EXCELS includes standards in different areas of early care and education, including licensing, learning environments, staffing and professional development, developmentally appropriate learning and program practices, child assessment, program administration and policies, and accreditation. I was at level 5, but currently hold a level 3 which is as high as I can go with pursuing a NAFCC Accreditation Renewal.

**A little about me**

Joyful Noise Childcare began providing reliable, loving care in New Jersey in 1992. I was a single mom with a love for children and a desire to stay home with my daughter. After several negative childcare experiences with my own child, I set out to provide a safe, nurturing environment for other children while staying home with my daughter. In 1997, I married my wonderful supportive husband, Jon and we have had two additional beautiful daughters. We moved to Salisbury, Maryland in October 1999, and have continued to provide the same quality care for the children here on the Eastern Shore. In 2007 we became licensed for foster care and soon adopted another daughter, and in 2010 we were blessed with our fifth daughter, who we later adopted. In 2015 we adopted twin dynamic 8-year-old sons. We are now parents to five beautiful daughters, who range in age from 33 years old down to 13 years old, and twin 19-year-old sons.

Our 2 youngest children are still at home. Our 26-year-old daughter, Meaghan returned home in 2019 with a husband, Alex, and two stepchildren Kayleb and Aubrey. In 2021 Meaghan and Alex welcomed a son Nate. Our 24-year-old daughter returned home after four years of serving in the United States Marines. Together we form a large extended family that works together.

Meaghan Currently works with me in our childcare program full-time. She has taken all the basic training required by the state of MD and in December 20123 she finished the Infant/ Toddler Critical Competencies. This is an additional 24 hours in teaching infants and toddlers.

I continue to improve my professionalism through additional training, membership in the local childcare association and the Mary State Family Child Care Association, as well as through articles and emails about changes in the field of child development and childcare. I also mentor and train other providers. The process of obtaining my childcare credentials has changed my mission. While I still strive to provide a safe nurturing environment; I also aim to help each child grow, so that she or he will be “ready to learn” when they start school. Each day we can be found doing a lot of playing, but the playing now has a purpose.

**Communication**

Communication is very important to me. When we accept a new family into my business, we like to be sure that we can share openly, any concerns or questions that may arise. There must be a similar childcare philosophy between us. Parents are a child’s first and most important teacher. we welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind, that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the children. Sensitive issues will be discussed in private, outside of regular childcare hours, either by telephone or conference.

We use the Daily Connect App to communicate with all parents so you know what your child is doing and learning throughout the day. We upload a yearly calendar with days off, and any other pertinent or fun information that may be of interest to you. Once a parent signs a contract with us, they will be sent a message with information on how to sign up for the app.

Parents are encouraged to call us at any time. Please be aware if we are busy with the children, we may not be able to answer. If you leave a message, we will call you back as soon as possible. we maintain an open-door policy during childcare hours. We will also discuss your child’s daily activities and routines with you regularly. We encourage parents, to participate in our daily activities, as your schedule permits. Together, we will love and nurture your child in hopes of developing a mature, responsible, loving, and independent individual, ready to face the world and all its challenges.

## Enrollment Policy

There are several forms that We must have completed and turned in to us **BEFORE** wecan assume the responsibility of caring for your child. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!** The forms are as follows: signed Contract and Rate Agreement, Consent for Medical Treatment, Authorization for Transportation, Emergency Information Form, All About My Child, Health Inventory, Immunization Certificate, and your child’s IEP and IFSP if applicable. If your child takes any medications that we will need to distribute, we will also need a medication information form. Parents are required to keep me informed of any change of address, telephone numbers, and other pertinent information listed on all the above forms. please feel free to ask if there are any questions about completing the above.

## State Licensing

We have been licensed by the state of Maryland Childcare Administration, 210 Baptist Street, Suite 32, Salisbury, MD 21801. They may be reached at (410)543-6731. You may find our Childcare license posted next to the front door. Please check out The MSDE Parents guide to regulated Care. This link is also available on the Joyful Noise Childcare Website. <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide_to_regulated_child_care.pdf>

## Security Deposit

When new families enter care, a security deposit will apply for all slots held longer than one week. Parents will be required to pay the regular weekly fee for two weeks as a security deposit. All fee rules apply. These monies are non-refundable should you withdraw your child before our agreed-upon start date. Childcare slots are on a first come first serve basis, so slots will not be held unless a security deposit has been paid. If paying a deposit for an infant spot, which is currently occupied by a child who will be turning two; All paperwork must be returned to me no later than three weeks before beginning care to hold a spot. If a parent is interested in holding an infant spot that will become available in the future due to a child turning two, they must be willing to pay half rate for this spot until it becomes available. This fee is unreturnable. It often takes months for us to fill a spot and we can not hold a spot even one that will be able in the future without commitment from a parent. Otherwise, the program ends up losing income.

## Trial Period

All new children will be cared for on a two-week trial period beginning on the child’s first actual day of care. During that time, the parent or provider may terminate the childcare agreement with 24 hours’ notice. Fees paid are non-refundable. After the trial period, a two-week written notice is required to terminate the agreement. (See termination policy)

**Payment Procedures**

**Your specific rates will be outlined in your contract and rate agreement.** **Payment is payable in advance, no later than pick-up time on Friday of each week. Drop-In care must be paid for at the beginning of the week, at drop-off time.**  If this day is a holiday, payment is expected on the previous day. If you go away on vacation, payment is due **BEFORE** you leave. If it is my planned day(s) off, your payment is expected **BEFORE**  such days. In cases of illness, your payment is still expected. If I close the childcare due to my illness or emergency, payment will be accepted on your first day back to childcare. Payments may be made by check or cash or through CASH app. If you would like to use CASH app let me know and I can send an invitation to your phone to help with setting it up. Checks must be dated for the day they are due. There will be a late fee of $10.00 for each day that payments are received late. Repeated late payments may be grounds for termination. I ask you to consider how you would feel if your employer came to you on your expected payday and told you that your paycheck would be delayed. I will give you a minimum of two weeks' notice of any increase in your childcare fee.

Teachers Clause- A teacher or professor can choose to keep their child home through the summer when school is not in session. They are still responsible for the payment for the childcare spot if they would like a childcare spot the following fall. The cost of the childcare spot can either be distributed throughout payments during the school year or they can choose to continue normal payments throughout the summer. Only if I can fill a summer spot with a school-age child, I am willing to discount the summer rate. Keep in mind that the costs of operating a childcare do not go down when a child is not present. Many teachers choose to send their children two or three days a week during the summer. This keeps the child in the routine of coming to childcare while giving them personal time and quality time with their children.

**Childcare Subsidy Program**

Unfortunately, Joyful Noise Childcare does not currently accept the MD Childcare Scholarship. This has become necessary due to not getting paid on time, repeated mistakes, and Childcare Central losing paperwork multiple times. We are choosing to spend more time with the children and less time and frustration doing paperwork. While maintaining a quality program that is not possible when we are not being paid consistently.

**Returned Checks**

If a check is returned to me, for non-sufficient funds or any other reason, the parent will be required to pay a $25.00 fee for the returned item, a $10.00 late fee/day, and any other fees that I incur because of the returned check. Childcare service will be immediately halted until full payment of tuition, late fees, and NSF charges have been paid in cash. In addition, We will only accept cash payments from the parent from that point forward. If it is necessary to take collection action, the parent will be responsible for any associated costs; this includes but is not limited to collection fees, attorney fees, judgment fees, and court costs.

**Hours of Operation**

**Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 7:30 AM to 5:15 PM. Your specific hours will be outlined in your contract and rate agreement.** We require two weeks' notice if you need to change your enrollment hours. We also reserve the right to terminate if the new hours will not work our childcare business. We offer full-time and part-time care. Parents are responsible for paying all fees for contracted days, regardless of whether their child is in attendance or not. **Please be courteous and call if your child will not be in attendance or will be arriving late.** This is extremely helpful for planning purposes for both the provider and the other children.

**Late Fees**

**Parent contracts/Rate Agreement state scheduled childcare hours. If your child is dropped off before, or picked up after these times, you will be charged a late/early fee.** Joyful Noise will charge an overtime rate of $2.00 per child for each 15 minutes that a parent is late, or early. (Note: This is only if prior arrangements have been made with us) If no prior arrangements have been made for late/early care, There will be a charge of $5.00 for every 5 minutes or portion thereof. Late fees will be strictly enforced. This is to ensure that children are picked up on time so as not to impose on our family time. Late drop-off does not constitute late pick-up. Payment of penalties is expected, in cash, at the time of pick up. If cash payment is not made at this time, it will be required the next day at drop off. If it is not paid at the next drop-off time, your child will not be allowed to stay for care on that day, until payment is made. The above penalties will also be charged to you if Grandma or another person is supposed to arrive to pick up your child and is late / early. It is your responsibility to have your child dropped off or picked up at the allotted time. If you know, in advance that you will be unavoidably late, it is your responsibility to have an authorized alternative person pick up your child. **Continuous early drop-off or late pick-up will mean a breach of contract, and your child’s position in childcare will be terminated.**

\*\*Please understand that there are planning, preparation, and cleaning activities that are associated with my business, which cannot be completed during normal hours of operation. For us to be the best providers we can be, it is important to have adequate time to spend with our family. Your cooperation with time scheduling is greatly appreciated.

**Arrivals and Departures Transitions**

**Please Sign your children In, on the Daily Connect App upon arrival**. This gives us a written record of your child’s attendance, hours, and the person who brought/ picked up your child each day. Children are to arrive clean and fed (unless they arrive just before mealtime). It is normal for some children to have difficulties separating from parents, or to cry when being dropped off for childcare. Parents can help their child take off their coats and shoes. I will provide hugs and cuddling to any child if they have difficulty separating. Children who are arriving during quiet time will be expected to remain quiet until quiet time is over so that others will not be disturbed from their naps.

Please be very brief with your departure (5 minutes should be sufficient). Prolonged “goodbyes” make separation more difficult for your child. This is a time of testing, when two different authority figures are present (parent and provider), and the children like to test to see if the rules still apply. We will try our best to send your child home with a clean diaper and would appreciate the same consideration when your child is dropped off at childcare. During arrivals and departures, parents are expected to reinforce the rules of childcare. If you choose not to reinforce childcare rules, we will remind your child that their behavior is inappropriate and take immediate action to correct him/ her if needed. Please be in control of your child at these times. **Please remember to sign your child out on the Daily Connect App at the end of the day.** Parents are required to enter the house at the time of drop-off, as well as pick-up time. Parents are never to just “let the kids out" without coming inside. Please refrain from using cell phones during drop off and pick up. This allows for better parent/provider communication. Please help us in the enforcement of these rules to create a better environment for all.

Our normal procedure is to release a child only to his / her parents or another pre-authorized adult. If someone other than the parent is to pick up the child, we require prior notice. Please inform emergency contacts or people designated to pick up your child that if we do not know them, we will need to ask for photo identification. **There will be no exceptions!** This is not meant to offend anyone. This is simply a measure to protect your children.

Please make sure all cars are parked at the curb and turned off. Idling Cars are not permitted in Childcare drop-off/ pick-areas per the Maryland Department of Education. Please do not block neighbors' driveways during drop-off and pick-up times.

## Absences

There will be no refunds or adjustments made to your childcare fee for time your child misses due to illness, holidays, or days off. These will be paid days.

**Holidays and Vacation**

Childcare will be closed for the following holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas. When any of these holidays fall on a Saturday, Childcare will be closed on the preceding Friday, with pay. When the holiday falls on a Sunday, childcare will be closed on the following Monday, with pay. You will be required to pay for the Mondays or Fridays taken if that would be a normally scheduled day for your child to be in attendance. For me to be the best provider I can be, I will need time to relax with my family and to accomplish household or childcare projects, or attend training, seminars, or conferences. Each year, I may take up to ten personal/professional/sick days. These days are paid in full. I will take three weeks vacation. Parents will pay the normal weekly rate for vacation time. One of these weeks will be taken the week between Christmas and New Year's. The remaining week will be taken during the summer months. A calendar is provided with most professional/vacation/holiday days in which Joyful Noise is closed for the year, by the end of January. Occasionally some changes need to be made, we will give two weeks advanced notice if there is a change to the calendar.

**Substitute Care**

There will be occasions when one of the primary providers will need to be absent for short periods (i.e., doctors’ appointments, childcare training, or field trips with the older children). Either Meaghan or Cherry will always be with the children. When one of us is not available, my daughter, Meredith, and my husband Jon are both licensed substitutes. Parents will be notified as to the time of the providers’ absence, and who the substitute provider will be.

Although I will make every attempt to be available each day, there will be occasions when another family member or I am ill. If I am unable to provide service due to any personal or family illness or emergency, you will be notified as soon as possible. It will be your responsibility to obtain backup care and to arrange payment for this care.

**Personal Belongings**

Please discourage children from bringing toys from home. Little ones have a difficult time sharing with others, and it’s even harder with their own special toys. If it is necessary, they bring a toy and limit it to *one* special toy. Toy weapons are not permitted under any circumstances (NO EXCEPTIONS). If personal toys from home become a problem, they will be put away in a safe place, and given to the parent at the end of the day. Children may bring a special blanket or “lovies” for nap time. Joyful Noise Childcare will not be responsible for loss or breakage of a child’s personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child’s name.

**Supplies**

Parents are responsible for supplying diapers, baby wipes, and a full change of clothing appropriate for the weather. We ask all parents to supply mud/rain suits and rain Boots to be left at childcare. During the summer months, please supply a bathing suit, Crocks or water shoes, sunscreen, and bug spray for your child. Parents may bring a whole package of diapers. (We will let you know when supplies run low.) Soiled clothing will be sent home, and a clean change of clothing should be brought in to replace them the next day. **All items need to be labeled with your child’s initials**. It is the parent’s responsibility to make sure we have all the required supplies for your child. Failure to do so will be grounds for termination of childcare. Please keep in mind, that if each child does not have a needed item, (such as boots, coat, or swimsuit) it may prevent all the children from going outside or participating in activities. **If it becomes necessary for us to purchase supplies, the parent will be billed accordingly on their next payment due date.**

**Curriculum**

 Our educational activities revolve around a literature-rich, seasonal theme-based curriculum. The children learn about the wonderful world of literature, puppets, the alphabet, phonemic awareness, social studies, science (from a biblical perspective), early math concepts, gross motor skills, fine motor skills (needed for writing and using scissors), art exploration, music appreciation, and cooking, tactile exploration. They also learn social skills, responsibility, independence, and empathy which are necessary to thrive in life and succeed in school. Curriculum and activities are planned based on developmental guidelines, found in Healthy Beginnings and the Maryland Early Learning Standards. If you would like more information on Healthy Beginnings, it can be found at <http://www.marylandhealthybeginnings.org/>.

While some of our activities are adult-led, much of the children’s day is spent engaging in child-led activities. Joyful Noise Childcare includes an environment that is structured to allow self-exploration and learning based on the Creative Curriculum for Family Childcare. Activities and toys are changed on a bi-weekly basis to support the various season themes we are learning about, and the developmental milestones each child is working on at the time based on Maryland Early Learning Standards.

We teach values based on biblical principles. Our curriculum includes field trips and other activities to teach your child about the world around them. Our goal is for all children to leave our care with a natural love of learning and exploring. This will enable them to become a successful student and a productive member of society.

Special Needs

Every child has special needs (either health or developmental) that must be met by both the child’s parents and his provider. However, some children may require more intense, long-term special care. Since there is such a wide variety of “special needs” each case will be reviewed individually. The provider will request a copy of a child’s IEP or IEFP (If one has been written) for lesson planning purposes and to help the child reach his or her goals. Therapists can (and have) worked with children while in care at Joyful Noise. All children are included in daily activities to the best of their abilities. As with all children graduating to a school environment, the provider will work with the parents, the child, and any other agency/therapist needed to provide a smooth transition of care into the school environment.

Daily lesson plans are made to meet each child at their own level. I strive to work with each child where they are challenged, but not frustrated. This enables each child to grow to his greatest potential. Daily informal assessments are made, and activities are adjusted to provide meaningful learning experiences without frustration. Activities are often altered as needed to allow for different children's developmental levels.

**Screen Time**

Joyful Noise believes it is in the best interest of young children to limit television ![MC900432517[1]]()watching and computer play. Therefore, television is used as a teaching tool to reinforce our current lessons. Children will only be allowed limited computer time to play educational games or to do school projects as needed. Internet access is only allowed for school projects and only while children are in sight, sitting at the dining room table. Children are always offered other activities during viewing times. Those under two are engaged in other activities at these times nearby or in adjacent rooms.

**Developmental Screenings and Conferences**

 The children are observed through play to determine if they are meeting developmental guidelines through Ages and Stages of Developmental Screenings. Screenings are done within ninety days of enrollment and all children are screened twice a year once in the fall (Sept-Dec) and once in the spring (April-June). These observations and screenings will be shared with parents in person or through notes sent home. Conferences will be offered after childcare hours at the end of the day after any assessment to allow me to share the results of the developmental screening and to plan for upcoming goals for your child. Please feel free to ask any questions or offer insights into your child’s development. The conference schedule will be posted on the parent bulletin board. A note will be sent home on announced in a newsletter to notify parents of the opportunity to sign up for conferences. At Joyful Noise, we feel it is important to observe each child regularly; this is done to be able to ensure all children are learning and progressing. Daily observations will be shared verbally and through e-mails with parents and with other community resources working with your child such as Easter Seals, Infant Toddlers, or Early Intervention at parents’ request. If you determine that you would like your child to be assessed by Infant and Toddler, we will be available to provide documentation to them about your child with your consent.

**Daily Schedule**

The daily schedule will be posted by the front door. Young children and babies enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day flow more smoothly and allows the children to anticipate coming events. We will adhere to the schedule to the best of our ability, keeping in mind that anything can happen when children are involved. There will be times when we must adjust the schedule. We would appreciate it if you consider the schedule when picking up or dropping off your children. It is better if arrivals and departures do not occur during quiet time. If you must pick up or drop off your children during these times, please take note that children may be asleep.

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**Field Trips / Outings**

Occasionally, we may have the opportunity to take field trips. All children will be placed in safety-approved car seats as required by Maryland state law. Parents may be requested to pay any fees associated with the trip and will be required to sign a permission slip that we will carry with us. We will also carry copies of each child’s emergency medical forms. All children carry a name tag inside their clothing which has Miss Cherry’s name and cell phone number on it in case they get separated from the group. Children are also instructed to find a person who works in the place we are visiting should they be separated and to stay in one place to help us find them. In the event of an emergency, you will be notified immediately. It is not required that your child attend the field trips, but it will be your responsibility to find alternate care. You will still be required to pay your regular childcare fees.Since our children are home-schooled, we must transport all children regularly, for extracurricular activities, and social outings. Therefore, we require you to fill out a general permission slip for these purposes, as well as a “Consent to Transport” form. Please be aware that this form is different from the Regular Permission slip form**.**

**Transition Policy for School-age Children Returning from School to Program**

When children come back to Joyful Noise Childcare from school at the end of the day, they are offered a snack. They can engage in free play or play outside weather permitting. We do not do homework when children come in from school. They need this time to decompress and relax. We also feel it helps parents to be involved in doing homework, you as a parent become more aware of your child’s progress in school.

# Transitional Policy for Children Entering School Back To School Clipart Images – Browse 28,847 Stock Photos ...

Prior to your child entering school for the first time, the provider will work with your child through hands-on role-playing, reading about things to be expected at school, providing information on the annual Resource Fair sponsored by the Wicomico County Board of Education, assisting your child with learning how to write his full name, ensuring your child knows his address and phone number, providing information necessary for school registration, altering your child’s schedule to wean them from the need of an afternoon nap, and any other task that may make your child’s transition to school as easy as possible.

It is important that both the provider and his parents be involved in this process. Please keep in mind that some local schools do NOT offer before and/or after school for children in Pre-K. You are welcome to apply to the Board of Education for special permission to keep your child in our program for before and after-school care, but please plan accordingly. Special permission is granted on a case by case basis and is dependent on enrolled class size. The Board of Education has declined special permission in the past. If you wish to keep your child enrolled, we are willing to walk your child to and from school. If you choose to enroll your child in Pre-K we cannot pick up or drop off from 11: 00 m p to 1:00 pm. This timing is too disruptive to the routines of the other children in care. We will be happy to provide your child’s most recent Ages and States Assessment, and any other needed documentation for this transition to school.

 You will need to make sure to provide appropriate outerwear and an umbrella. The umbrella may stay here in your child’s cubbie and will be used as necessary to keep dry in transit.

This is a special time for your child, and we will be there to support both you and your child at this time. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with us so that we can work together to ensure your child’s success.

**Nutrition**

Joyful Noise Childcare strived to provide safe nutritious food for all children in care. This begins with hand washing. Meals are planned according to FDA guidelines. Please let me know if your child has any dietary special needs. Meals are served family style, allowing the children to help themselves. All breakfasts include a starch, a fruit, and 1% milk. (Children under 2 years of age are required to be given whole milk). Some breakfasts include a protein, but not all. (Federal Food Program policies, not mine) Lunch contains, meat, a starch, two vegetables and or fruits, and milk. Afternoon snacks include servings of foods from any two food groups. All juice offered to the children is 100%juice cut in half with water. This is offered to encourage the kids to drink more water with fewer calories than a glass of 100% juice. The children also have unlimited access to water for drinking during the day. Joyful Noise Childcare is part of a whole foods household. We aim to provide the foods which are closest to nature. We use very little processed or commercially premade foods. The children are offered whole wheat bread and several natural grains. We make every effort to avoid foods high in saturated fats, high fructose corn syrup, food dies, and artificial sweeteners. Our menus are planned around the fresh fruits and vegetables that are available in season, locally as much as possible. The children will receive at least four fresh fruits and vegetables a week. We are happy to share any recipes your child likes with you so that you may serve them at home too. Any foods sent from home will be monitored to ensure they meet FDA guidelines. Joyful Noise aims to provide all children in our care with the fuel they need to succeed and grow at no additional cost to parents.

 There are set mealtimes on the schedule, posted on the parent bulletin board. Breakfast is served from 7:30 until 8:45 AM. Lunch is served from 11:30 to 12:15 p.m. Snack is served from 3:30-4:00 pm. You are responsible for feeding your child if he/she will arrive after mealtime **(No Exceptions).**  All menus are available for you to look at per your request. They are posted on the refrigerator in the kitchen.Except for special occasions and when requested, please do not send any food drink, or candy with your child.

Please notify us if your child has any food allergies or sensitivities. As required by the Federal Food program these must be documented by a note from your child’s physician. We will accommodate these in meal preparation and scheduling. Cultural and religious dietary preferences can also be considered in meal planning.

 We believe mealtime should be a pleasant time, therefore children are always offered food, but not forced to eat it. We do encourage each child to try one or two bites of everything. They must try a little of everything before being given seconds of anything. Sometimes they are surprised by what they like. If a child refuses to eat their meal, please keep in mind that there will be no additional food served until the next designated meal/snack time. We will not administer a modified / special diet to your child unless medically necessary.

**Infant Nutrition**

We can offer food for infants, but we have found it is easier for both parents and the provider if parents supply food until the child has been exposed to all types of foods**.**  If parents choose to supply food, this will include formula, infant cereal, and baby food. If a mother is breastfeeding, breast milk may be brought in bags labeled with the child’s name and date. We have a shelf in the freezer to accommodate storing breast milk. We will take it out as necessary and thaw it for feedings. Infants are always fed on demand. All infants are held while receiving a bottle. You will need to supply bottles, which will need to be labeled with your child’s name. You may bring a can of formula, bottles, boiled water, cereal, and baby food to leave at childcare, or you may bring these items daily. The Federal Food Program and Office of Child Care Licensing require that we have more breast milk or formula on hand than your child usually eats in a day. Please supply additional breast milk to freeze or formula. This is necessary because as your baby goes through growth spurts, they may decide they are hungrier than usual. Hungry, crying babies are not happy and upset everyone. Once a child has had all foods except for nuts and eggs, together, we will work towards transitioning your child to eating with the other children and they will be enrolled in the Federal Food Program.

## Toilet Training

Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family when your child is ready. Until he/she is successful, in his/her toileting he/she should wear clothes that promote his / her independence. In addition, parents must have two complete changes of clothes (including socks). Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps, zippers, belts, overalls, and “Onesies”. These are difficult for children to remove “in a hurry”. Parents must supply training pants and rubber pants. In our years of childcare experience, pull-ups are not a very effective tool for potty training. The children quickly learn they can wet in them, and it does not matter. Pull-ups stay dry. Training pants allow the child to feel wet, which is the natural consequence of not using the toilet.

**Naps and Quiet Time**

All children (regardless of age) are required to lie down for a rest period in the afternoon. All children must rest quietly during this period, on their mats. Children may bring a “lovie” to cuddle during nap time. Older children will be allowed to read books during this time. Quiet time gives everyone a much-needed break. It is also our only opportunity to take a break, clean up, do paperwork, and do planning. Infants nap at varying times, and their schedules will be accommodated. Infants under 12 months nap in a pack-n-play. Over 12 months, they are given a mat, crib sheet, and blanket for rest periods. Children over 12 months that parents want to remain napping in a pack-n-play may write a letter stating that they wish for their child to remain in a pack-play until the parents and provider feel it is in the child's best interest to be moved to a nap mat. This is a State of Maryland Policy.



## Open Door Policy

Parents are invited to drop in, unannounced, at any time during childcare hours. We would appreciate your taking into consideration the schedule when dropping in or calling. Remember that visitors usually cause children to react in an excited manner which does not usually occur when I am alone with the children. We do ask that parents try to avoid naptime, if possible, as barking dogs tend to wake the children.

## Parental Involvement

Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in childcare. Some ways in which parents can participate include chaperoning and helping their child at home with concepts that we are working on. Parents can also attend parent/provider conferences, read the app daily, volunteer to read, or help provide treats or other items for a holiday party. We encourage parents to feel free to stop by as your schedule permits. Parents are required to enter the house at the time of drop-off, as well as pick-up time. This allows for better parent/provider communication.

**Parent Resources**

The provider has available and/or access to a wide variety of program information. If a parent has a question or need, please ask and we may have information readily available or provide leads to other programs in the community. Currently, we have information on the local library services plus their quarterly calendar, the Delmarva Shorebirds game and event calendar, Wicomico Infant and Toddler Program, Child Find, LOCATE Childcare, information from the IRS, WIC information, Childcare Subsidy information, Energy Assistance information, and application, as well as information on local fairs and events as they happen. We love it if parents could share any information that the other parents may find interesting. We can add fliers to the Daily Connect app. All information is updated as new information becomes available.

## Birthdays and Parties

Each child’s birthday is his / her special day. Parents are invited to provide a cake, cupcakes, or treats to celebrate their child’s special day. We will also have a holiday party for each major holiday. Sign-up sheets will be posted on the bulletin board, for your assistance on these days.

**Pets** In our home we love animals. We have three dogs, Dolly, Sophia, and Lucy, and cats, Dime, Nickle, and Bluey. The children interact with the animals daily. The cats tend to hide. The dogs love to be loved on and played with. The children often help to feed the animals or give them treats. Everyone is taught to use gentle hands with the animals. We also have a flock of chickens in a backyard coop. The children help feed them and bring in the eggs daily. We encouraged the children not to move quickly around the animals or to sneak up on them. The dogs are great companions and love to curl up with the children. It is our goal to help the children learn respect and compassion while befriending the animals in our program. While we do our best to keep everyone safe and happy, occasionally minor accidents will occur. This is part of learning how to interact with animals.

**Alcohol, Cannabis, Illegal drugs, Smoking and Vaping**

Joyful Noise Childcare does not permit any adults in the childcare setting to\* possess, consume, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or an illegal or nonprescribed controlled dangerous substance while present at the childcare program. This applies during the hours of operation while providing or assisting with the care of children during an off-site program activity, and during transporting children. Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis edibles, smoking, and vaping paraphernalia and byproducts shall be stored appropriately and kept out of the reach of the children in care.

**House Rules**

Please respect us, our profession, and our home. The respect that you show us including our home, furnishings, equipment, yard, and other children and adults, will communicate itself to your child. Mutual respect will make for a better working relationship. There are certain house rules that all children will be taught and expected to follow. The following rules are enforced for the safety and well-being of everyone. There will be no running permitted in the house. There will be no standing or climbing on chairs, tables, or furniture. There will be no use of obscene, derogatory, or disrespectful language. Children are not permitted to lift and or carry other children while in our home or on our property. Respectful treatment of other people and all property, toys, and furniture is expected. Willful destruction of property will be charged to the parent at the cost of replacing the item. No smoking will be permitted on the premises. (no exceptions).

**Positive Behavior Strategies**

Joyful Noise Childcare strives to provide an encouraging, positive, and supportive environment. The environment is structured to allow children to make many daily choices as to what they want to play and explore, and with whom they want to play. Our goal is to teach children to respect each other and the environment while being held accountable for their behavior.

At the beginning of the year, the children, Meaghan and I sit down and work on creating a list of six or seven rules. They are posted on the dining room wall with the morning meeting materials. We review these rules daily and the children provide explanations of how they can obey these rules. If a child disobeys a rule, we will ask them what they are doing wrong. It is often another child who will remind the child what they are doing wrong. If we discover that children are not picking up, we will ask everyone to put their listening ears on and think about why this is a problem and how they can fix it. They respond with answers about breaking the toys if they get stepped on, and people tripping and getting hurt. The children work together to clean up. we encourage them and redirect a child who is not helping by asking them which type of toys they would like to put away next, or who they would like to help. We try to allow the children the opportunity to correct their behavior by asking questions to redirect.

Positive behavior is reinforced with lots of high-fives, and we try to catch them being good and praise them. If we are waiting in line to wash hands, we will pick out a child who is standing nice and quiet waiting their turn, and praise them for their good behavior.

Finally, if a child is being uncooperative or struggling to positively interact with their peers repeatedly, they may be asked to go to the Quiet Corner. In the Quiet Corner, there is a picture list of positive behavior strategies taped to the wall. These are choices of how they can choose to handle a confrontation, such as telling an adult, using their words to explain, walking away, and playing something else. There are also quiet bottles of sand filled with little objects to occupy them and help them redirect themselves as they cool off, and several books about manners and emotions. After several minutes (depending on the child’s age). I will ask them if they are ready to talk. We will then discuss how they could have handled the situation differently. The child then decides if they are ready to apologize to whomever they have offended. They then can either hug or shake hands with their friend and apologize, or they can stay in the Quiet corner until they are ready to apologize and join their friends.

If we feel there is a chronic behavioral issue, we will let you know, so that we can work together to solve the problem. If the problem does continue, other arrangements for the care of your child will have to be made for the safety and well-being of all. There will be no spanking, physical/verbal abuse, or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will be withheld as a means of punishment. As a registered family childcare provider, we have the responsibility, by law, to report any evidence of child abuse or neglect. This is for the benefit of your child.

## Illness Policy

Under no circumstances will parents be allowed to bring a sick child into my home. If my family or I become ill, due to exposure, all of the parents may need to arrange for alternate care of their children. Because this is disruptive to other children, and their families, as well as my own, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced for the health, safety, and well-being of all concerned.

Symptoms requiring removal of the child from childcare:

1. Fever
2. Temperature is over 101 degrees, the child needs to be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours, without the aid of Tylenol or other fever-reducing aides, before returning to childcare.
3. Diarrhea, runny or watery stools (two or more) within 4 hours.
4. Vomiting
5. Runny nose, discharge of any color other than clear.
6. Persistent cough
7. Runny and or crusty eyes – watery, matted, and or red/pink eyes.
8. Rash (excludes diaper rash)
9. Any communicable diseases – chicken pox, measles, strep throat, ringworm, lice, etc…

If your child does contract a communicable disease, please notify us, so that other parents can be informed of the symptoms to watch for.

If your child becomes ill while under our care, you will be notified immediately. You are required to pick up your child within 1 hour of notification. We reserve the right to determine when a child should be sent home due to illness. Children may return to care 24 hours after symptoms of illness have ended, or with written authorization from your child’s physician. Please keep in mind how you would feel if another parent were to bring their sick child to Childcare and expose your child to their ailment. Sick children are usually irritable and fussy. This makes participation in normal activities difficult for your child as well as the provider and other children. Therefore, for all concerned, please keep your sick child at home.

## Medications

Prescription medications, ointments, and creams can be given to your child if needed. Parents are required to supply the medications in their original containers, with their child’s name on them. You must also fill out, and sign, a medical consent form before medication can be administered.

The provider can give non-prescription medications one time per illness, with parental consent. If continued use of non-prescription medications is needed, you will be required to fill out, and have your doctor sign, the medical consent form provided by me.

**Medical Emergencies**In case of emergency, We will administer the necessary first aid. We will call 911, and your child will be transported to the nearest hospital. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY. If an ambulance is called to transport your child, the cost of the ambulance will be your responsibility. You are also responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment.

The owner of Joyful Noise Childcare, or employees, or my family will not be held liable for any sickness/injury of either parents/guardians or child, while on these premises, or while the child is in the company of myself during field trips or outings.

**Inclement Weather Policy**

On snowy or icy days, when roads are not passable and /or the Federal Government

is closed, Joyful Noise will be closed with no reduction in fee. It is your responsibility to call, in the morning, to find out if there will be a closing or late opening. Also, if the government closes during the day due to changes in weather or power shortage, Joyful Noise may close with no reduction in fee.

## Termination Policy

We reserve the right to terminate childcare for the following reasons ( but not limited to): failure to pay (will result in immediate termination), failure of child to adjust after a two-week trial period, physical or verbal abuse of any person or property by parent or child, lack of compliance with handbook and contract policies, serious illness of provider or any member of the provider’s family, serious illness of a child in care, false or misleading information given to the provider by the parent either verbally or in written form (will result in immediate termination, at provider’s discretion).

You are required to give two weeks' written notice when you decide to terminate childcare. The two weeks will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not your child is in attendance. I will also give two weeks' written notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not your child is in attendance. I reserve the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of myself or other children in attendance. In this situation, the two-week payment of tuition is still required. Termination notice will not be accepted while the provider is on vacation. You may pay two weeks' fees instead of two weeks' notice.

## Rate Increases

Like most women today, we must work to help my family make ends meet. We chose family childcare because we love working with children, and we think it’s important to have a variety of happy, healthy, and safe places for our children. However, contrary to popular belief, there is not a lot of money to be made in-home childcare. What you pay will buy quality childcare, nutritious meals, and a nurturing environment for your child. Your fees must also provide my income, including taxes and social security along with payment for staff. Beyond that, your fees pay for special insurance, training, food, toys, equipment, art supplies, and all of the other things your child will use. Like other self-employed workers, family childcare providers do not get the benefits that many employees take for granted such as health / dental insurance, life insurance, unemployment insurance, retirement, flexible time off, etc… Family childcare is also very restrictive and there is absolutely no room for growth because the state of Maryland dictates the size of my business. We often cannot take time off for appointments or obligations without careful planning and covering our responsibilities. To protect our rights and our income, you will find that a guaranteed wage is part of this contract. We hope this gives you a better picture of the true cost of childcare.

We have been in the business of childcare for more than 30 years now. We have learned many new things from other providers, workshops, and continuing education. We are always striving to operate our business more professionally. All of this is helping to give your child the best possible care. For these reasons and cost of living increases, this rate increase will be reflected when annual contract renewals are signed every August. I appreciate your understanding in this matter.

## Revisions to the Handbook and Contract

A new contract will be signed by all families each August and/or when changes are made. I reserve the right to make changes in policies as we deem necessary or as required by the state of Maryland. You will be notified with a written addendum, to be placed with your parent handbook, of any changes to the contract documents. You will be given at least 2 weeks notice before changes take effect. 

## In Closing

Please remember that although we chose this profession because of our love for children, it is also our job. Our family depends on this income, just as your family depends on yours. Prompt fee payment, adherence to drop off and pick up times, consideration for your sick child, and consideration for our personal time are greatly appreciated. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to speak with us. Thank you for choosing Joyful Noise Childcare.