MISSION
The George Mason University Child Development Center was established to support University faculty, staff, and students by providing a quality on-site child care and play-based early childhood education program.

PHILOSOPHY
The Mason CDC provides a positive and nurturing learning environment that encourages the overall development of each individual child while supporting each family's culture, language, ethnicity, and structure. Our play-based program emphasizes the principles of Emergent Curriculum and the Developmental-Interactionist Approach. Developed and studied at the Bank Street College of Education, the guiding principles of this educational framework are as follows:

• Work with children is based on one’s deep knowledge of child development, and especially the interdependence of social-emotional, physical, and intellectual growth.
• Our understanding of children occurs through daily observation and recording achieved through teacher-child interactions, reflection of children's work, and conversation with family members as well as colleagues who have also worked with them.
• A well-prepared physical environment is created for children’s active participation in their own learning.
• The social-emotional needs of children are supported with respect and kindness. While the overall program emphasizes a sense of community, it values each individual as a unique part of that community.

Our program’s curriculum, activities, and schedule grow out of the characteristics of each classroom’s diverse population, children’s needs and interests, as well as the teacher’s own strengths and interests. Our emergent philosophy emphasizes “following the child” through observation and meaningful interactions whereby activities develop out of the interests of the children and a scaffolding, or “stacking” of skills supports the ongoing development of each child.

During early childhood, the support and development of the whole child is essential to success in both school and life. Our holistic approach nurtures the healthy growth of children in each area of development through family partnerships, a nutritious whole food menu, and activities which provide children the opportunity to learn skills for self-regulation and develop awareness of their own body and emotions.
ENROLLMENT and TRANSITIONS

The Child Development Center prioritizes enrollment to primarily serve faculty, staff, and students of George Mason University, offering a full-day early childhood education program for children 2-5 years of age. We are also open for community enrollments. We operate from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday on a year-round basis. Center closings correspond with the Administrative calendar of George Mason University, closure announcements received through the Mason Alert system, and an additional three-day period each summer as well as Columbus Day for professional development.

Waitlist Procedures and Fee

Families wishing to enroll in our program must first secure a space on our Waitlist by completing the following registration process:

Please complete an initial registration form, located on our website www.hr.gmu.edu/cdc. Once you have completed your form, please submit to the management team of the CDC either via fax, email, mail, or in person, along with a NON-REFUNDABLE family waitlist fee of $75. We date-stamp registration forms as they are received to maintain order of application.

Once your form is reviewed, you will be placed on the waitlist in accordance with the priority system below, and we will contact you to confirm receipt of your registration. Once registered for the Waitlist, your child will remain on the list until space is available, or you notify us that you are no longer interested in enrolling your child in our program. Families are entitled to two offers in correlation to their desired start time. Should you receive an offer PRIOR to your desired start, the offer does NOT affect your two chances for enrollment and you will remain on the list if you desire. You may contact us at any time to acquire a status update on availability at the center; however, accuracy of projections increases as we near your desired start. For questions and updates, please email us at cdc@gmu.edu.

Enrollment Priorities and Procedures

The George Mason University Child Development Center observes the following enrollment priority system:

- Children of currently enrolled families
- Mason faculty, staff, and students desiring full-time enrollment
- Mason faculty, staff, and students desiring part-time enrollment
- Mason vendors desiring full-time enrollment
- Mason vendors desiring part-time enrollment
• Community families desiring full-time enrollment
• Community families desiring part-time enrollment

Please note: If enrolled as Mason affiliated family and your employment at George Mason ends or student status expires, families will be changed to non-Mason status, and a new tuition rate will be applied the first of the month following the separation. All families are responsible for informing CDC of a change in Mason affiliated status and G#’s are periodically verified. Should CDC learn of a change in status, tuition rates will be adjusted and prorated as necessary.

If any of your family’s information (i.e. home or work phone numbers, address, Mason affiliation) changes or you need to adjust the number of days, hours of care needed for your child(ren) - subject to availability, please contact the center. Changes to schedule and withdraws require 30 days’ notice.

Offers are primarily extended in the Spring for Summer/Fall enrollment each school year. Occasionally space becomes available mid-year. When space is available, families will be contacted in accordance with our priority guidelines listed above, as well as based on desired start date and date of registration. When a family accepts an offered space, a deposit of one month’s tuition is due within 10 business days to secure the space, along with a family registration fee of $50. Your tuition deposit will be credited toward your child’s first month’s tuition. Should your child begin the program mid-month, you will receive the credit balance in your second month. Once a space is secured, families will receive an enrollment packet via email. Paperwork is requested at least 1 week prior to enrollment in order to allow for processing. Children may not begin at the Center until the enrollment packet has been completed and approved.

Tuition

All tuition payments must be made using either Touchnet, our online credit card payment system, your personal bank’s BillPay, or Payroll Deduction. Tuition is due on the first of each month. A $25 late fee will be charged to your account when tuition is received after the 10th of the month. Monthly statements are sent to all families via email. Tuition details and fees are available on the CDC website. A $50 fee will be charged to your account in the event a check is returned due to non-sufficient funds. The CDC does NOT provide credit for absences due to illness, vacations, or extensive travel abroad.

Tuition is subject to change at the discretion of center management and the University. Should you desire a change in your child’s current schedule the CDC requires 30 day’s written notice. In the event that you decrease your child’s schedule you are not guaranteed a full-time schedule at a later date.

Transitions

Transitions of currently enrolled children take place annually in late August/September. Every March families complete a re-registration process whereby all relevant enrollment information is updated as needed and continued space for the following school year is
secured with payment of a $50 Annual Registration fee. Transitions of children are based on age and developmental readiness. Most children progress to the next age group if their birthday falls prior to December 31 of that school year. Exceptions do occur through partnership with a child’s parents, teacher, and CDC management. Any concerns will be discussed with families prior to any child remaining for an additional year in any age group.

To support the transition of newly enrolling children we recommend the following:
- A minimum of 1 scheduled visit for parent and child in child’s new classroom.
- Meeting between parent and child’s new teacher. Sharing of questions, concerns, allergies, etc. is strongly encouraged prior to starting the program to ensure the best support for your child.

Separation or Withdrawal from the Program

The George Mason Child Development Center reserves the right to require withdrawal of a family from our program. Prior to such a decision, documentation must show evidence of discussions, outreach, or on-going non-compliance with University and/or CDC policies. Examples of why such a decision would be reached are listed, but not limited to those below:

- Long-term pattern of behavior that is harmful to other children or staff, such as repeated biting, that after extensive documented intervention remains unresolved.
- Tuition that is over 2 months in arrears.
- Behavior by any parent that is considered threatening to another family or any member of the CDC staff.

COMMUNICATION

We value and facilitate frequent communication between parents and teachers, and consider this exchange an important contribution to the planning and implementation of the program.

Confidentiality

The CDC observes written policies of both Virginia Department of Social Services, and George Mason University for the protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of children’s records. Disclosure of children’s records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality requires parental consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect). Active children’s files are maintained in a locked file cabinet in the Assistant Director’s office. Teachers have access to these with permission from the Director or Assistant Director; files will be read on site and are
never removed from the CDC. Files of children who have graduated or withdrawn from the CDC are archived in compliance with University policy as well as Virginia Department of Social Services standards. We carefully maintain confidentiality and respect the family’s right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. Exceptions to this policy occur only when we have reason to believe that a child’s welfare is at risk and it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child’s interest.

**Classroom Contact**

All questions and concerns regarding your child should be directed first to your child’s Lead or Assistant Teacher. If you are unable to reach the teacher or have additional concerns, contact the Director or Assistant Director at 703-993-5960.

**Conferences**

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled twice a year typically in the Fall/Winter and Spring to discuss your child’s developmental progress. Additional conferences may be scheduled with your child’s teacher as needed at any time throughout the school year.

**Daily Reports**

A daily report is completed for each child prior to their departure each day. Here teachers highlight the basic activities of the day such as mealtime, toileting/diapering, rest, and a detail related to curriculum. The report’s purpose is to give you a snapshot of your child’s day and support conversation with you about school each day.

**Newsletters**

Teachers share classroom and center-wide information and upcoming event details through a monthly, electronic newsletter or email communication.

**Inclement Weather Advisories**

The CDC will follow the University’s administrative schedule on closings. Upon enrollment, all families are required to register for Mason Alerts at [www.ready.gmu.edu](http://www.ready.gmu.edu). You may also call 703-993-1000 (general GMU information line) for details. If GMU closes early due to weather or power loss, parents are required to pick-up children within 60 minutes of notification

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Our approach to behavior management is based on respect for each individual child. We recognize that young children often times have big emotions for which they do not yet have the skills to express themselves appropriately. Through a supportive and
inquiry-based approach we focus on understanding the feelings behind any inappropriate/harmful action and provide children with more effective means of expressing themselves. We have a responsibility to each child to implement positive behavioral guidance through empathy and modelling. Teacher-child interactions that potentially harm, humiliate, disrespect, punish, or intimidate are prohibited.

Essential to every early childhood classroom are a variety of behavior management systems, such as Center Choice Boards, Classroom Rules, Classroom Jobs, etc. Such systems, when implemented effectively and consistently, support children's ability to make choices and regulate behaviors independently under the supervision of their teachers. Focusing on behavior management from a proactive perspective rather than always reactive better promotes each child's unique, positive self-image. Through our proactive methods of behavior management, we support the development of a child's problem solving skills, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and long-term success and well-being. Teachers collaborate actively with parents to best support each child's overall development.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illness Prevention

In accordance with Virginia Department of Social Services and Child Care Licensing Regulations, children will be excluded from the program when exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature over 101 degrees
- Recurrent vomiting or diarrhea
- A communicable disease

In the event that a child is sent home due to illness, s/he is required to remain home the entire next day and until symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours. Parents must pick-up sick children within 1 hour from CDC notification. Please inform the CDC immediately if there are any infectious diseases present in your home, and whenever possible refrain from bringing sick siblings into the Center in order to help prevent the spread of infection. Children who are not able to participate fully in the regular daily program should not be sent to school. Children must be well enough to participate with the group and to go outside during recess. **Administering fever-reducing medications to your child in order for them to attend school is prohibited by VA DSS.** Please notify center management and adhere to the following guidelines when your child is diagnosed with any of the following communicable illnesses:

- **Chicken Pox:** Exclude from school for minimum of 5 days after eruptions appear or until all scabs are dried.
- **Strep Throat and Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye):** Exclude from the school for minimum of 24 hours to allow for at least 2 doses of antibiotic
- **Influenza and Diarrhea Illnesses:** Exclude from school for minimum of 24 hours following resolution of fever/diarrhea.
• **Coxsackies (Hand, Foot and Mouth Syndrome):** Exclude from school until blisters appear dry and not oozing. Must be minimum of 24 hours since the last blister appeared. Requires a note from the doctor confirming child is free of contagion while blisters persist.

• **Hepatitis, impetigo, mononucleosis, scabies, bronchitis, pneumonia and pertussis (whooping cough):** Doctor’s note required confirming child is free of contagion and able to resume normal activities at school.

**Medication Authorization**

MAT trained staff of the CDC are authorized to administer medication to children on behalf of a parent when absolutely necessary. Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home. In the event that a child requires medication, parents must request required forms from a member of center management.

VA DSS regulations permit MAT trained CDC staff to administer medication to children when the following requirements are met:

- The medication is in the original container, labeled with the child’s name and prescription label or direction label is attached.
- Authorization form is consistent with the manufacturer’s instructions for age, duration and dosage.
- Authorization form on file is complete, dated, signed, and includes a duration of administration not to exceed 10 days. Any medication authorization requiring longer than 10 days is considered long-term, requires a physician signature, and may not exceed/requires updated authorization every 6 months.
- Parents are responsible for administering the first day’s dosage of any new medication at home.
- Prescriptions for medication are valid only up to 6 months. When an authorization for medication expires, you must pick up the medication within 14 days or renew the authorization. Medications not picked up by the parent within 14 days will be discarded by the CDC.
- All medications are stored in a locked cabinet in the CDC clinic, with the exception of Epi-Pens and items required for Diabetes Management which are kept near the child, in a back-pack or classroom cabinet at all times.

**Diaper Cream/Topical OTC Ointments/Insect Repellent and Sunscreen**

Parents who wish the CDC to apply diaper cream/other topical OTC ointment including Insect Repellent and Sunscreen must complete and sign an authorization form required by VA DSS. The product shall be in the original container and labeled with the child’s first and last name. Any known adverse reactions to previous use of the product must be disclosed on the authorization form. Forms must be updated annually. In the event that Sunscreen or Insect Repellent does not have an expiration date, we recognize that
Minor Injuries

In the event that your child experiences a minor injury (scrape, bruise, or bump, etc.) while in attendance at the CDC, a trained staff member will administer First Aid consisting of cleaning the area, applying ice and bandage if necessary. All Administration, Lead and Assistant Teachers are certified in First Aid and CPR.

When a child experiences a serious injury or allergic reaction, the CDC will call 911 first, and notify parents next. For emergency purposes, parents must keep the CDC informed of changes in work and home phone numbers and addresses. Should a child require transport by an ambulance, a teacher will accompany him/her or follow the ambulance to the hospital. A CDC staff person will remain with the child until his/her parent(s) have reached the hospital. Parents must complete – and have notarized - forms provided by Fairfax Hospital Association to avoid any delay of necessary treatment.

All incidents resulting in injury to a child will be recorded on an Incident Report Form. Parents are required to review and sign the form upon pick-up of their child, and will receive a copy for their records. When children sustain injury on the face or head, or get bitten by another child, parents will receive a phone call from the child's teacher or member of center administration prior to receiving the Incident Report.

Nutrition

The Mason CDC provides daily breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack in partnership with Sodexo, Mason's authorized food vendor. Breakfast is served daily from 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. When you do not arrive in time for breakfast you may provide your child an optional morning snack that will be served between 9:00/9:30 a.m. Food provided from home should be nutritious and low in sugar. The CDC emphasizes sugary treats are limited to celebrations and special occasions.

CDC food is prepared and delivered fresh each day with an emphasis on whole foods that are locally-sourced whenever possible. We offer both a regular or vegetarian menu and can accommodate most dietary needs. If we are unable to meet a child's dietary needs, parents may provide a nut-free alternative from home.

Allergy Policy and Procedures

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety of children with allergies at all times. Allergy and Food Preference Lists are kept by Administration, updated as needed, and shared with all classrooms. Parents are required to share knowledge of food and other allergies at the time of enrollment. Information must be recorded on VA DSS required form which will be provided to parents by CDC Administration.

March 2019
Classrooms are provided placemats of RED and BLUE, each labeled with child’s picture, name, and allergy/preference information if applicable. Children with food allergies or parent preferences will be given a RED mat. Mats are placed on the table PRIOR to any food being served. Children requiring milk other than cow’s milk must have a personal cup provided by parents which is then labeled by the classroom teachers with red tape along with the child’s FIRST AND LAST NAME. These cups will be cleaned and stored in the center kitchen. Mats are wiped down by a member of staff with standard bleach and water solution after each use.

In the event that we suspect a child experiences an allergic reaction, teachers will notify management immediately and follow protocol for that particular child included on the Allergy List. Only MAT trained personnel may administer medication if needed. There is always a MAT trained staff member present during CDC hours of operation.

**Center Visits**

The Mason CDC maintains an open-door policy, welcoming parents, family members, and caregivers to visit throughout the day. Parents and legal guardians are provided a key fob for entry upon enrollment. Guests are permitted either with escort by authorized family member, or in the case of volunteers/interns, with prior approval of center management. All guests are required to sign-in at the front table. We strive to nurture a community environment that embraces all cultures and family structures. We encourage families to share their traditions and expertise with the greater CDC community or your child’s class, and believe that parent partnerships are the foundation to supporting each child’s development.

As a Mason early learning center, we support the growth of developing educators enrolled at the University. Through partnerships with the College of Education and Human Development, Mason students have an opportunity to complete field work and observations at the CDC if space permits. All candidates are interviewed by center management, and complete federal and local background screenings if completing fieldwork of 15 hours or more in the classroom. Mason students complete field experience opportunities throughout the academic year. In the event that a Mason student has a case study assignment requiring a more in-depth interaction with a specific child, parental permission will be obtained in advance. For questions or concerns please speak with CDC Administration.

While visiting the CDC, we ask that all individuals respect the routines and policies of the center to ensure the health and safety of all children and staff.

**Release of Children**

Only a child’s parents/guardians or adults previously approved by parent/guardian will be permitted to take a child from the CDC. Parents may update initial information provided at the time of enrollment when necessary. Adults not recognized by CDC staff will be asked to provide photo identification and pick-up authorization will be confirmed by a Center Administrator prior to release of a child.
Custodial Guidelines

In the event that a family experiences a change in marital status/custodial rights, appropriate legal documents must be provided to CDC Director/Assistant Director. Personal information pertaining to children and families is protected by University Confidentiality policies and kept secure in a locked cabinet in the offices of Director/Assistant Director. Should any unfamiliar, or suspected, unauthorized individual request release of a child, CDC staff will implement the following guidelines:

- Require review of photo identification
- Confirm individual’s pick-up authorization status in family database and/or child’s file. If there is a certified copy of a court order or separation agreement showing that the unauthorized person does not have custody, we will advise the person and not release the child.
- Notify the child’s other parent or other authorized person as soon as possible.
- Notify GMU security if necessary at 703-993-2810.

Emergency Preparedness

Bi-annual Shelter in Place drills and monthly Fire Drills are conducted in partnership with Mason Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Department.

In the event of an emergency evacuation or lock-down situation, the Child Development Center will follow procedures developed in collaboration with Mason EHS. When such procedures are under periodic review and development, the CDC will follow the larger Mason emergency response plan. For security reasons, the details of the emergency response plan are not made available to the public, however more information may be found at https://ehs.gmu.edu/emergencymanagement

PROGRAM DETAILS

Teaching Staff

Mason CDC Staff consists of the following teaching positions:

- Lead Teacher
- Assistant Teacher
- Teaching Assistant

All positions require a variety of eligibility requirements ranging from previous experience to an educational degree/certification. All CDC Staff meet or exceed VA DSS teaching requirements. All staff must continue their professional growth through completion of 16 hours of annual in-service. Prior to employment, all staff complete state and federal background checks, including fingerprints and search of the Child Protection Registry. Daily staff schedules are staggered to help maintain teacher to child ratios

March 2019
recommended by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Teacher qualifications are responsive to those described in Standards of Excellence developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The Lead Teacher for each classroom has at minimum an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field with an additional 12 credits of coursework in education, or a Child Development Associate’s certificate (CDA) and at least five years’ experience working with young children. Assistant Teachers meet their professional requirements with either an Associate’s degree/equivalent, or several years of experience and training, or a CDA. Teaching Assistants are made up of Mason student and non-student part-time employees, and typically have experience working with children, a degree in related field, or working towards a degree in related field.

All Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers are trained in First Aid/CPR. Although Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers support the same class throughout the year with little exception, Teacher Assistants (part-time employees) may move throughout center in the event of staff absences to ensure we maintain our classroom ratios. Consistency of care is a priority for our program and we make every effort to maintain the location of all staff.

**Arrival**

Children must be escorted by parent/guardian/caregiver to join their class each day upon arrival. Upon joining the class, parent must ensure one of the staff knows they have arrived prior to leaving their child. Parents are responsible for signing in their child and must leave a contact number for the day.

**Departure**

We encourage parents to empty your child’s file folder and check cubby daily. Children are signed out with signature and time picked-up is documented. Parents must ensure a staff member knows they are taking their child prior to leaving for the day.

**Late Pick-Up**

The CDC closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. All children are expected to be out of the building at that time. If an unforeseen issue prevents you from arriving on time, parents must call their child’s classroom or the center’s main number (703)993-5960 as early as possible. At 6:00 p.m., if we have not yet heard from you, an Administrator will contact you to ensure you are on the way. Beginning at 6:00 p.m., a $25.00 late fee will be charged to your account. Beginning at 6:15 p.m. and every 15 minute increment thereafter, an additional $15 will be charged to your account. In the event that we are unable to reach a parent, emergency contacts will be called. Should we be unable to contact anyone authorized to pick-up a child by 6:30 p.m., Mason Police will be notified for assistance.
Absence

If your child will be absent due to illness, kindly notify the center via phone/email at (703) 993-5960 or cdc@gmu.edu. Should you schedule time away from the center for your child, please inform your child’s teacher or a member of Administration.

Exceptional Needs Assessment

If a parent or teacher believes that a child may benefit from support of a specialist to help reach developmental milestones, the Director or Assistant Director should be notified. The CDC can provide families with information for Child Find, a free service provided through Fairfax County Public Schools Department of Special Services, Early Childhood Identification and Services (ECID&S) program. Child Find screenings are free to children ages 20 months to 5 years old who are Fairfax County or Fairfax City residents.

The Mason CDC is an inclusive environment and we strive to partner with families and related service providers to meet the needs of all children. To determine if the CDC program will be able to best support the development of each child, a classroom visit may be required. Parents of children with IFSPs or IEPs prior to enrollment will, upon receiving an offer of enrollment, provide a copy of the document to CDC Administration as part of the enrollment packet.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the child’s experience at the Center. Our trips are age-appropriate in length and focus, and relate to areas of curriculum and their interests. We frequently explore the Mason Campus by walking outside, enjoying the special programs offered, and meeting with members of the community. If transportation is required for a field trip, a permission slip must be signed in order for your child to attend. Some field trips require an additional fee. On occasion parents will be invited to serve as chaperones.

Clothing for children

Children should be dressed for play at school. We encourage children to learn through their senses. Young children acquire new information best through active, hands-on play which at times gets messy. Please take that into consideration when helping your child dress for school. Extra clothes and underwear should be kept in a backpack in your child’s cubby, regardless of their age since spills or accidents can happen to anyone.

Children play and explore outside every day for a minimum of 2 hours, weather permitting. We closely monitor for inclement weather and air-quality alerts prior to going outdoors. Make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Layers that can be added or removed are recommended. We ask that you apply sunscreen to your child before coming to the CDC when appropriate.
Children are not permitted to wear flip flops or Crocs to school due to their lack of proper support and potential for injury. All clothing should be labeled with your child’s name.

It is important for all children to explore outdoors daily. However, we recognize seasonal allergies can challenge some children. Should your child experience any discomfort from seasonal allergies please touch base with center management and seek advice from your pediatrician on how to best manage your child’s symptoms.

**Nap Time**

State licensing requires that all children in full-day programs be provided with a designated rest period for at least one hour but no more than two hours. Staff will play quiet music and gently rub children’s backs to help them relax. After the first 30 minutes, children not sleeping may engage in quiet activities.

**Birthdays and Other Holidays**

Birthdays are very important for young children, and we would love to help celebrate this very special occasion. We request the celebration be kept simple. We suggest a special healthy snack for the afternoon snack time. Prior to sending in any birthday treats, please check with your child’s teacher to determine if allergies are present for any of the children in the classroom. All treats MUST be nut-free.

We understand that birthday parties are often planned for CDC children outside of school as well. Whenever possible, we encourage parents to consider inviting all children in the class. Should you wish to send electronic invitations, your child’s classroom teacher will be able to share the emails of all parents who have provided consent for us to do so.

We recognize that holidays are an important part of family life, and we value the integration of broad cultural and linguistic diversity representing all CDC children and families in our curriculum. We emphasize holiday experiences around family traditions. We are honored to have families come into the classrooms to share special traditions with children, keeping in mind that the Mason CDC is a secular institution. If you wish to share an activity, story, recipe, etc., please speak with your child’s teacher.

**Lost and Found**

Lost items are displayed in the front hallway. Please remember to label all coats, hats, mittens etc. Unclaimed items will be used as extras for the CDC, or given to charity at the end of each semester.

**Schedules**

Schedules of daily routines are posted in each classroom. Each day consists of a balance of indoor and outdoor activities, large and small motor exploration, as well as active and quiet experiences. While children will engage in structured large and small
group times throughout the day, our program recognizes that children also learn from child-initiated, independent exploration, which is emphasized each day as well.

Your Child’s 1st Day

We encourage and recommend each child visit the CDC (with a parent) prior to enrollment. These introductory visits are scheduled through the Director/Assistant Director, and allow your child to see the classroom and meet classmates and teachers. In addition, visits allow teachers a chance to begin forming a bond with your child, which is an essential part of a successful transition. During the visit, you will be able to ask the teachers questions and through observations, begin to become familiar with our routines and program. For liability reasons, a parent or caregiver MUST remain on site for the duration of the visit.

On your child’s first day(s) at the CDC, allow enough time when you arrive to settle him/her into an activity before you leave. At times, children experience greater difficulty when a parent prolongs their stay, at which time it may be beneficial to leave more promptly. Teachers can assist in making this decision. Saying good-bye is essential to maintaining the trust you have established with your young child. Although it can cause tears, good-byes and reassurance of a return after work can help children understand and adjust to the separation process. It is not unusual for the first week to pass without tears, only to have drop-offs become more difficult later on. If this happens, don’t be discouraged. Continue to remind your child that you will return later in the day, give your hugs and kisses, and then leave. Teachers will comfort your child and assist him/her in focusing on an activity. You are welcome to call the classroom or an administrator to check on your child’s progress at any time.

Parking

The CDC parking lot is reserved for short term use by our families during peak drop-off and pick-up times. During CDC events, when possible we will provide families a pass for General Parking in Rappahannock deck to support overflow from our lot. At those times, we ask all parents with regular parking already established on campus to utilize those spaces during the event. Those needing to park longer than drop-off and pick-up must receive an authorized pass from the CDC Administrative Offices.

School Supplies

Two to three full sets of extra clothing. Check your child’s extra clothing frequently to ensure correct size and seasonal appropriateness. Replenish items when necessary.

Reusable water bottle with permanently attached lid, labeled clearly with your child’s full name.

A crib sheet, light weight blanket, and special “lovey” (if desired) for rest time. A pillowcase is also requested to store nap items when not in use.
Blankets and sheets will be sent home once a week for washing. Pillows are not permitted.

Sunscreen and insect repellant (if desired) clearly labeled with your child's name and corresponding authorization form.

Diapers and wipes if necessary.

The George Mason Child Development Center is a NAEYC accredited center and a licensed facility Virginia Department of Social Services.