

PARENT HANDBOOK



**5617 Mapledale Plaza
Dale City, VA 22193
703-590-2946**

Discovering

Discovery Learning Center offers a unique blend of childcare services that are designed to meet each of a child's developmental needs resulting in Whole Child Development. Our program features the Highreach Early Learning curriculum, designed for Preschool children ages 2-1/2 to 4, a Kindergarten half-day program for Kindergarteners currently attending public schools. We offer before and after school programs in our Fantastic Kids Club designed for school-age children ages 6 to 10 years. In addition, we provide transportation to and from most area public schools, full day summer camp programs. Our Educational Enrichment Program features small group instruction in phonics, visual arts, foreign languages and multiculturalism. At Discovery Learning Center, our families get the full package and in return, we get the opportunity to love, educate and nurture their children everyday.

Caterpillars

This program is designed to meet the developmental needs of children ages 2-1/2 to 3 yrs. The teachers use the Highreach Learning "Caterpillar" Level Curriculum to introduce independence, encourage intellectual communication, become familiar with shapes, colors, numbers and alphabets and to exercise fine and large motor skills. The two year olds in this program are required to be potty trained prior to enrollment.

Butterflies

Once children graduate from the Caterpillar program level of Highreach, they change into beautiful "Butterflies". This higher level proves to be more challenging and is designed to prepare children for Kindergarten. For more information about our Highreach Learning curriculum please visit the program web site at www.Highreach.com.

Busy Bees

Following an unforgettable graduation ceremony in June, future Kindergarteners will move into our Busy Bees classroom where they will participate in activities which support what they are learning in public schools. The Busy Bee teacher encourages children to be more responsible by assigning such tasks as table washer, line leader and floor sweeper. We want to promote good work & study habits for years to come.

Fantastic Kids Club

If you are a part of this club, you are automatically FANTASTIC! This is a cool club for school-agers in grades 1st through 5th grade. Features of this program are Homework Club, Monday club meetings, quarterly motifs, periodic fieldtrips, classroom projects, games, outdoor sports and more. The environment is set up for children to participate in a number of daily choice activities independently or with a Team Leader. School-age children love being a part of this fun and educational club.

It takes a village.....

We are family at Discovery, we believe it takes a village to raise a child. We are a family owned business. Our professional management team knows all too well the impact that a loving and trusting caregiver can have on a child's precious life. The early years are an essential part of growing up and parents need to feel comfortable with the people they are trusting with their children. We want to be recognized not only for our solid family values and educational program, we want to also be remembered as a name you can trust, Discovery Learning Center.

Parent Communications

Parents will receive quarterly progress notes, weekly lesson plans and daily communication about their child's day. Each month we send home a family newsletter to communicate information about special events & program updates.

Hours of Operation

Discovery Learning Center is open 6:00am - 6:30pm Monday through Friday year round. excluding the following holidays when the center will be closed: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day. In consideration of our faculty, Discovery Learning Center will close each year at 3:00pm on the following days: Christmas Eve & New Years Eve. Discovery Learning Center will also close for inclement weather when the Federal Government and or Prince William County Government closes. Please listen to WTOP Radio for closings. We will contact you if the severity of the weather dictates an early closing.

Registration Fee

Discovery Learning Center charges an initial registration fee of \$25.00 for the first child and \$10.00 for each additional child in a family. In addition, an annual registration fee for the school year is due by September 30th each year.

Tuition

Tuition is charged for the week your child is attending. Tuition is based on your enrollment at DLC not based on your child's attendance. Tuition is due each week on Monday. If tuition is not received before the close of business on Wednesday, a late fee of \$35.00 will be assessed. Payments should be made by cash, check, charge, money order or cashiers check. In the event of teacher work days, snow days or school holidays, there will be a \$10.00 per day fee for grade 1st thru 5th and a \$7.00 per day fee for kindergarten. If tuition is not paid by Friday, the child will not be admitted the following Monday until all past due and current tuition is paid along with any applicable late fees. If tuition and late fees are not brought current within 10 days, the child's enrollment will be terminated and the parents' account will be subject to collections activity.

Returned Checks

Discovery Learning Center charges \$25.00 for each returned check. Parents are expected to replace returned checks within 2 days of notification by their Bank or Discovery Learning Center. Discovery Learning Center will require payment be guaranteed funds in the event 2 checks are returned within a calendar year.

Vacation

After a child has been continually enrolled for a period of six months, the child is entitled to one weeks vacation with no tuition due to maintain their enrollment. Only one week may be used each year from the date of enrollment. Parents must notify director two weeks in advance of their intention to use the earned vacation.

Multi-Child Discount

Discovery Learning Center offers a 10% tuition discount for the second child; a 5% tuition discount for the third child, taken off the lowest tuitions.

Disenrollment

Discovery Learning Center reserves the right to disenroll for non-payment, failure to follow policies, and in the event of behavior issues.

Withdrawal from the center

Parents are required to give two weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw their child from the center. Without such written notice, parents are liable to pay the center for two weeks tuition, late fees, collection fees and reasonable attorney fees.

Late Pick Up

Late pick-up fees of \$1.00 per minute will be incurred whenever pick-up is made after closing. Incurred late fees are immediately due. If no one listed on the child's enrollment forms responds to our telephone calls, the local police and or Department of Social Services will be notified exactly one hour after closing.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

- ◆ When dropping off and picking up your child, parents must turn off the motor to their car.
- ◆ Parents are required to escort their child into the building, in the proper classroom, and notify the classroom supervisor of the child's arrival.
- ◆ Parents are required to check-in their child's arrival by logging them into the center with their 4 digit code.
- ◆ Parents are required to check-out their child's departure by logging them out of the center with their 4 digit code.
- ◆ Children are not allowed to check themselves in or out of our system.

For the safety of your child, please keep emergency/pick up and custody information current.

Children will be released only to those individuals who have been authorized on the child's registration form, or added to the list in writing. In the event a parent forgets to give written permission for a particular person to pick up a child, a phone call placed to the center is acceptable. Please give us the persons complete name as it appears on the Photo ID they will be presenting us for verification. A caregiver may request photo identification if she does not recognize the person picking up the child. In the absence of a custody agreement on file with the center, either parent will be allowed to pick up the child.

Food

Discovery Learning Center provides a complimentary cereal breakfast, an A.M. snack and a P.M. snack. Hot catered lunches are provided for preschoolers year round and for kindergarteners during the school year. Snack and lunch menus will be posted on the parents board on a monthly basis. Children may on occasion bring nutritious food from home. Please remind children that sharing or trading of food is not allowed due to allergies. The use of a lunch box is recommended.

Outside Play

Daily outdoor playtime is very important for a child's development. The temperature must be at least 40 degrees for the 2-5 year olds and 35 degrees for the older children. Please dress you child appropriately. All the children are required to go outside.

Children's Bedding and Clothing

We request that you send an extra set of clothing, according to the weather at the time of the year for your child to use in case of an accident. All of the clothing should be labeled inside with your child's name. Items will be stored inside your child's cubby.

For children who take naps, we require that you send a blanket and crib sheet for your child. On the last day of the school week, all nap items are to be taken home, washed, and then returned again on Monday.

Clothing should be easy for the child to manage during restroom breaks. Bodysuits that snap at the crotch and belts are not recommended. The children should be able to go to the restroom and take care of themselves. Clothing should be casual, durable, and washable. Discovery Learning Center will not be responsible for any damaged article of clothing.

Rubber soled shoes are requested because they are safer for running and climbing. Dress shoes with slippery soles and open toe sandals are not permitted.

Health

Parents will be contacted when a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, experiencing vomiting, diarrhea or exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease. Parents are expected to pick up an ill child as soon as possible. If a child has a fever the temperature must remain normal for 24 hours before the child can return to the center. Prescription medication must be administered at home for 24 hours before the child can return to the center. This 24-hour period helps to ensure that the child is no longer contagious. Children experiencing vomiting and diarrhea cannot return to the center until the condition has abated. A doctor's written permission slip to return to school is required for a child previously infected by a contagious disease.

Medication

Prescription and nonprescription medication can be given to a child under the following guidelines:

- ◆ Medication form signed by parents.
- ◆ Medicine shall be labeled with child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount, and the time or times to be given.
- ◆ Dosage must be consistent with the manufacturer's instructions for age, duration and dosage.
- ◆ Medication shall be in the original container with the prescription label or direction label attached.
- ◆ When needed, medication shall be refrigerated.
- ◆ Parent's authorization for medication shall expire or be renewed after 10 work days.
- ◆ Long-term prescription drug use and over-the-counter medication may be allowed with written authorization from the child's physician and parent.

Over-the-counter skin products

All nonprescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products can be given to a child under the following guidelines:

- ◆ Written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions.
- ◆ Products shall be labeled with child's name, the dosage amount, and the time or times to be given.
- ◆ Dosage must be consistent with the manufacturer's instructions for age, duration and dosage.

Behavioral Guidance

In order to promote the child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being and growth, Discovery staff shall interact with the child and one another to provide needed help, comfort, support and:

- ◆ Respect personal privacy;
- ◆ Respect difference in cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds
- ◆ Promote ways of getting along
- ◆ Encourage independence and self-direction
- ◆ Use consistency in applying expectations.

Behavioral guidance shall be constructive in nature, age and stage appropriate, and shall be intended to redirect children to appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts.

Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Virginia law requires that all personnel working in a licensed child care center must report any suspected abuse or neglect (physical, sexual or emotional). There is a criminal penalty for violating this obligation to report. The same law protects the person reporting from reprisal by holding all records and reports confidential. All Discovery Learning Center caregivers are aware of this moral and professional responsibility. The director and caregiver will jointly contact the appropriate local agency to report the information.

If Your Child is Bitten

Child development research indicates that approximately fifty percent of all children enrolled in child care centers will be bitten. Toddlers especially will often use biting as a form of communication. Discovery Learning Center will strive to minimize biting accidents. However, it is highly likely that your child will be bitten at some time. If this should occur, we will do our best to comfort your child and care for his or her needs immediately. We will also inform the parents of the biter and work with them and their child to change this behavior.

If your Child Bites Another Child

Although we acknowledge that biting is a developmental stage, it is very serious and is unacceptable. If your child bites, Discovery Learning Center will develop a plan with you to try to correct the problem. However, if the biting is aggressive, breaks skin, or does not lessen within a reasonable period of time. Discovery Learning Center may ask you to temporarily dis-enroll your child until the biting diminishes. If biting continues upon your child's return, you may be asked to withdraw your child until he or she is older.

Confidentiality

Discovery Learning Center respects the right of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral and developmental records and information concerning their child. These rights to privacy and confidentiality are protected by various federal and state statutes, local ordinances and regulatory rules. If your child is involved in an altercation or biting incident with another child, Discovery Learning Center will not reveal the biter's identity to the parents of the other child without prior written consent from the biter's parents, except as required by law.

Emergency Procedures

Please be aware that in case of an emergency that would warrant evacuation procedures, children and staff of Discovery Learning Center will evacuate to:

Fire Station 18 at 5849 Dale Blvd
Dale City, Virginia 22193
703-680-3533

Should further measures or relocation be ordered by the Fire Marshall or local authorities, please contact Fire Station 18 for additional information. Every attempt will be made by DLC management to contact families by telephone, posted notification or our telephone messaging system as the case follows.

Evacuation procedures will be implemented only as ordered by local authorities or in any direct circumstance which would warrant such action to ensure the safety of your children