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## **Watch Me Grow Parent/Guardian Contract and Handbook**

**Watch Me Grow** Child Development Center mission is to enrich the lives of children by creating a warm, nurturing environment that encourages children to experience developmentally appropriate practice, personal interest, cultural diversity and a lifelong love of learning. The programs goals are to:

- Assist every child to maximize his/her academic and social potential
- Raise self-esteem and promote confidence and feelings of self-awareness
- Foster decision-making skills, development of communication, and cooperative resolutions
- Help children develop a life-long love of learning.

*To the Parent/Guardian(s): Please read this handbook carefully. If you do not understand any provision, feel free to ask one of the Center Directors. This contract establishes your legal rights and responsibilities and those of the Center regarding your child's participation in the Center. Through out this handbook the term "the center" will refer to the Watch Me Grow Child Development Center. Please return the "Parent/Guardian/Guardian Signature" page to the main office.*

**Program Hours:** The Center provides care for all children during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. **Late pick up fee:** Parent/Guardians who arrive at the Center on or after 6:30pm will be charged a \$10.00 fee plus \$1.00 per minute per family for each minute after 6:30pm. Late fees will be charged to the family account and due within five days. A family is subject to termination if late three times in a ninety day period.

**Program Fees:** Fees are based on the age group/classroom the child is currently enrolled in and the number of days attending (where applicable). Program fees will not change until a child transitions to the next age group/classroom.

**Payment:** Fees are calculated on a twelve-month schedule, which includes holidays, Parent/Guardian and teacher conference days, teacher in-service days and days in which the center may be closed for inclement weather. This means the participants pay a set fee for each month.

- **Registration and Deposit:** A non-refundable registration fee of \$175.00 for each child is due in addition to the deposit. The deposit is the last month's tuition paid in advance and is refunded when you leave the Center, unless you fail to give 30-day notice before withdrawing your child.
- **Fees:** Payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month and are considered late by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Payments can be made by check, money order, or credit card. A 2% discount is allotted to those that pay by check. *Payments should not be sent in your child's backpack as there is the potential for it to get lost.* Please mark your check or money order with the name of the child in the program. Fees will remain the same if a child is absent due to family vacation, inclement weather, etc. Please see Administrative Director for extended absence.
- **Returned check policy:** A \$25 charge will be assessed on accounts that have checks returned due to insufficient funds. Child care services will be suspended for the child (ren) until the payment is received in full.
- **Late Payment Fee:** Any payment not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month will be considered late and the family will be charged an additional \$50.00. Payments over 10 days late will result in dismissal from the program. If this occurs, rights to any deposits are forfeited.

- **Changes in Tuition:** A 30-day written notice will be given for any change in tuition
- **Withdrawal by Parent/Guardian:** Families are required to give the center 30-days notice in writing before withdrawing a child. The center will use your deposit for your last month's payment. If the 30-day notice is not given, then the deposit is forfeited.

**Holiday Schedule:** The Center will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Holiday, President's Day, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day following, and the Christmas holiday. The center will also be closed on five additional days for teacher in-service training (two of these days will be consecutive during the month of August), two days for parent/teacher conferences and one in-service teacher training. These dates will be determined by July 1<sup>st</sup> for that calendar year.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** WMG's inclement weather policy is as follows:

- Center closures and delays will be posted by 6:00 a.m. on the Center's outgoing voicemail, and on NBC4 news (<http://www.nbcwashington.com/>).
- If inclement weather occurs during the Center's operating hours, then the school will make a decision by noon as to whether or not the school will close early. Parent/Guardians will be contacted by phone & email, so families should make sure to update their contact information regularly.
- Fees remain the same even if the Center closes due to inclement weather or open late/close early due to inclement weather.

Watch Me Grow Child Development Center reserves the right to close the Center if the safety of the children and /or staff is at risk.

**Classroom Transitions:** Developmental requirements must be met before children can transition into the next classroom. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing approximately 15 to 30-days before a child begins the transition process. WMG has made a commitment to stay aligned with the public school system when it comes to the age requirements for progression of children to the next classroom. Parents may request an exception in writing to the Administrative Director by April 30<sup>th</sup>, but please understand that making a request will not guarantee the exception.

**Snacks/Food:** Watch Me Grow is a peanut free facility. Please refrain from packing any peanut products in your child's lunch, including peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and peanut butter crackers. We make every effort to ensure that the products served at the Center do not contain peanuts or peanut products. The Center provides morning and afternoon snacks for all children, including infants eating solid foods. Catered lunches will be provided for children ages 1 and older. If lunches are supplied by parent/guardian, please send the child's lunch in a labeled lunch bag. Lunches will be refrigerated at a temperature below 40 degrees if they contain potentially hazardous food. Parents must place their child's perishable lunch items in a zip lock bag labeled with the child's first and last name, upon arrival at the center and place the bag in the classroom refrigerator. If your child has special dietary needs, you must supply the morning/afternoon snack and lunch. We encourage you to limit the number of "sweets" in your child's lunch and that you include a fruit or vegetable daily. Watch Me Grow provides organic milk or water with each snack/meal. Watch Me Grow does not have warming facilities for lunches.

**Nap time:** Please bring a crib sized fitted sheet or a fitted twin sheet and a light weight blanket for your child's naptime. A small pillow and one "sleep/nap buddy" can also accompany the child, as long as all nap items fit inside the **Watch Me Grow** tote for storage. It is the parent's responsibility to take all nap items home to wash on Fridays.

**\*\*At 12 months children will be transitioned to cots for naps.**

**Clothing:** Your child should be comfortably dressed depending upon the weather, including *secure* footwear. This eliminates flip-flops, "cros" and clog-type footwear. The children will go outside twice a day unless there is inclement weather and it is important that they be dressed appropriately. The children have art activities, water play and often have accidents, please send a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing (including shoes if possible), marked with child's first and last name to leave at the Center.

**Behavior Policy:** The goal of the Center's behavior policy is to make the experience positive for every child and to help the child recognize their abilities to make appropriate choices and develop self-regulation. Children are experiencing an important period of growth and development during early childhood and their potential to learn is unbounded. The Center will provide a caring and patient environment. Children are encouraged and helped to make age appropriate decisions. The children are expected to:

- Follow directions
- Use age appropriate language
- Show respect for each other, adults, and property
- Use gentle hands and feet

Staff will set limits and redirect behavior to encourage self-regulation and teach and promote friendship skills and positive behavior.

Policy on aggressive behavior: If a child engages in behavior that is physically or verbally harmful to others, the staff will redirect and teach what is needed for the child to do, based on their age; For example, use words to express themselves or get a teacher to help them communicate what they are trying to say. In addition, with the parent's permission, we will ask assistance of our Early Intervention Specialist at FSI, to observe and recommend next steps and strategies for the teachers and the parent as needed. Examples of aggressive behavior include but are not limited to: biting, hitting, kicking, scratching, and offensive language.

Administrative steps that are followed when aggressive behavior occurs:

1. An incident report will be generated for the child's Parent/Guardian and the center.
2. If a child has harmed another child, the Parent/Guardian of the harmed child will be informed of the incident, but not the identity of the aggressor.
3. If a child repeats the physically or verbally harmful behavior, and the redirection techniques listed above have not shown improvement in the child's behavior, the Parent/Guardian will be called and the child will need to be picked up immediately.
4. A Parent/Guardian/staff conference may be scheduled if the inappropriate behavior persists. The purpose of this conference is to develop a joint strategy between the Parent/Guardian(s) and staff, which will have a positive effect on the child's behavior.

**Potty Training:** Potty training is an exciting time in your child's development. A discussion will take place about how to begin potty training when the family and/or teachers see signs that the child may be ready to start the process. Rest assured that the teachers and staff at Watch Me Grow wish to partner with you in this process to help your little one be successful by offering knowledge, support and encouragement.

**Termination by Center:** The Center may terminate a child's position effective immediately depending if the child or Parent/Guardian's behavior threatens the physical or mental health of other children/staff in the Center.

**Emergencies:** Should your child have a medical emergency, the following steps will be taken:

- First Aid will be administered.
- If necessary, 911 will be called.
- The one of the Center Directors will call the Parent/Guardian/guardian or the listed emergency contact.
- If needed, a staff member will accompany the child to the nearest hospital.
- The one of the Center Directors will file an incident report.

The Center is not responsible for any cost incurred for such injuries or treatment.

**Absences:** If you will be late dropping off your child and/or your child will be absent from the program for any reason, we ask that you notify the Center by 9:00a.m. Please send notifications regarding prolonged absences (i.e., vacations) in writing or by email to one of the Center Directors and Teachers. WMG staff will contact Parent/Guardian a child is absent without notification. All families are responsible for paying the full month's tuition even if a child is absent due to illness, vacation, or other causes such as bad weather, power outages, or holidays.

**Sickness:** It is in the best interest of WMG families and staff that children do not attend the Center when they exhibit any of the following:

- A temperature of 101 degrees or more
- A temperature of 99.5 and other symptoms
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea (2 or more episodes within a 24hr. period)
- A persistent cough and/or purulent drainage
- **Any** contagious illness: such as conjunctivitis, chickenpox, Fifth disease, head lice, impetigo, etc. If your child exhibits any of the above, or they are unable to participate in all aspects of the program, you will be notified and must arrange for your child to be picked up within one hour of notification.
- If your child is excluded from care due to illness, they may not return until they have been symptom free, and **without any medication for 24 hours**. If your child has a contagious illness, there must be written documentation giving permission to return to the center from the child's pediatrician.
- If your child is absent from the center for 3 or more days, there must be written documentation giving permission for your children to return to the center from your child's pediatrician.

**Administering Medication:** If a child requires medication to be administered while in the care of Watch Me Grow, the medication (prescription and/or over-the-counter) must be in the original container with the exact directions for administering the medication on the container. The medication (prescription and/or over-the-counter) must be accompanied by a prescription order and a signed Medication Administration form (**to be completed by both parents and physician**). **WMG will NOT administer any medication (prescription and/or over-the-counter) without a signed Medication Administration Form from the doctor.** Medications will not be stored at the center or administered on an as needed basis, specific instructions of when to administer the medication and definitive start and stop dates **MUST** be listed on the Medication Administration Form. The medication instructions may not exceed 6 months. Children may not carry any medication on their possession or in their backpacks.

**Policy for prevention of child abuse:** Staff Recruitment, Training, and Supervision

- Prospective employees and program volunteers will have thorough reference and background checks.
- All new staff and volunteers will be made aware of their legal requirements to report child abuse to the appropriate authorities.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained in signs of possible child abuse and neglect.
- Administrative staff from Family Services, Inc. will make unannounced visits to the program site to assure that standards regarding policies, program quality, and staff performance are being followed.

**Use of Car Seats:** Maryland Child Passenger Safety Law states that:

- **Every child** under 8 years old must ride in a booster seat or other appropriate child safety seat, unless the child is 4ft. 9in. or taller, or weighs more than 65lbs.
- **Every child** from 8 to 16 years old who is not secured in a car seat must be secured in the vehicle's seat belt.
- The back seat is the safest place, and children under 13years old should ride in the back seat.

Watch Me Grow is under the review and control of the local law enforcement, and we will inform local authorities if we feel a child is not being restrained properly or being left unattended in a car. Please take every precaution to ensure the safety and well being of your child.

NOTE: Please remember to turn off your car engine when picking up and/or dropping off your child to ensure everyone's safety.

**Additional Information:**

- Parents/Guardians who arrange for child care by a Watch Me Grow staff member outside of the Center understand that the arrangements is not related to Watch Me Grow and/or Family Services, Inc. and release responsibility associated to this arrangement from Watch Me Grow and/or Family Services, Inc.
- Children must be completely potty trained before entering the 3's program. We ask parents to supply a change of clothing, to be kept onsite, for accidents. A child wearing pull-ups is not considered potty trained.

- Children may wish to bring toys from home, but they will be asked to keep their toys in their cubby, unless otherwise specified by the classroom teacher. WMG will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items.
- Children are not allowed to bring money, matches, pocketknives, weapons, or expensive items to the program. These items will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian. If a child is found with a weapon or dangerous item, or makes dangerous threats, the proper authorities will be contacted.
- You are welcome to help your child celebrate his/her birthday at school. All birthday celebrations will take place at 3:30 p.m. during afternoon snack. We ask that celebrations be limited to cake or cupcakes and milk, water or juice (no soda please). All food products brought into the center for special events must have the ingredients label and be peanut-free. Please do not distribute party favors. Please do not exchange invitations and presents at school unless all children in the classroom are included.
- Unclaimed clothing and miscellaneous supplies are kept in a bin labeled “Lost and Found” located near the parent board. Periodically, items without nametags that are not claimed will be donated to a charitable organization.
- Parents/Guardians should use their 4-digit ID code to gain access to the building and to clock their child in/out. The 4-digit codes should not be shared with friends and/or family that may drop off and/or pick up your child on occasion. Parents should accompany their child in the halls at all times during drop off and pick up. Children should not run in the hallways, as it can be very dangerous.

**If you have a question about any WMG policy, please contact the Center Director.  
Watch Me Grow Parent Handbook Receipt Acknowledgement**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Child's Name (please print)**

I have received a copy of the Watch Me Grow Child Development Center Parent/Guardian Handbook and Contract for \_\_\_\_\_ (school year). I have read and agree to abide by the policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Parent/Guardian, please **initial** to indicate you have read and understand the following policies/statements:

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission to Watch Me Grow Child Development Center to perform CPR and First Aid to my child as needed and if deemed necessary to call a doctor or obtain medical and/or surgical care for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, should an emergency arise. I understand and approve my child to be transported off the center premises for medical emergencies. It is understood that a conscientious effort will be made to locate me and that any expense incurred herein will be accepted by me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give Watch Me Grow Child Development Center permission to take photographs of my child for purposes of labeling my child's belongings, my child's portfolio, and understand that any photographs taken will not be sold or used for marketing purposes for the Center without my permission.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Watch Me Grow Child Development Center has installed security cameras by every exterior door and playgrounds. I recognize that my child and I may be videotaped by a security camera while on the grounds at the Center. I will also notify authorized persons that pick up or drop off my child at Watch Me Grow that they may be videotaped by a security camera.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my child will not be released from the Center's care to anyone other than the Parent/Guardian or the person listed on the child's emergency card. In the event that my emergency contact will be picking up my child, I understand that this person will need to provide the Center with a photo ID as well as with my family password. The password I have assigned for my family is \_\_\_\_\_. I also understand that my families' security code to enter the building is confidential and should not be shared with anyone including my emergency contact.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my current tuition is \_\_\_\_\_. I agree to pay it every month. I understand that my tuition is late after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and that I will be charged a \$50.00 late fee. There is a \$25 charge for returned checks.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that WMG center closes at 6:30 p.m. I understand that there will be a \$10.00 charge if a child is picked up after 6:30 p.m., in addition to a \$1.00 per minute charge beginning at 6:31 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian/Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Center Director Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**