

A Child's Garden



# Family Handbook



Wee Lad & Lassie

Updated 02/12/25

## **RESOLUTION**

March 31, 1987

Wee Lad & Lassie Early Learning Center and A Child's Garden admit students without regard to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, sex, disability, or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the center. The center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religious creed, ancestry, sex, disability, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other center administered programs. This same statement of policy also applies to employees.

Dr. Lisa Buchy

Magic Years, Inc.  
Pearl Education, Inc.

## **WELCOME**

Dear Parent,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie, where your child or children will receive the very best in early childhood education and top-quality childcare. We are delighted that you have chosen to enroll your child in the stimulating and creative early learning educational programs offered by our centers.

The administration and staff of A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie strive to provide positive learning experiences that will foster a love of learning and will lay the foundation for your child's academic career. It is our sincere hope that you will find this handbook helpful in discovering more about our programs and in answering any questions you might have.

Please feel free to call upon our Director and Administrator if you have additional questions, concerns, or suggestions, which might make our center a better place for your child.

We are looking forward to an enjoyable relationship that will benefit your child and the family unit as a whole.

## **OUR HISTORY**

Wee Lad & Lassie has been providing a Pre-Kindergarten program and quality childcare to the Arnold area since 1969. The facility completed a substantial expansion in the summer of 1985. This gave Wee Lad & Lassie a licensed capacity of 35 children. In the fall of 1987, Wee Lad & Lassie was granted approval by the Maryland State Board of Education to operate a nursery school program and kindergarten program within the licensed group child care center. This approval was granted upon verification that the teaching staff and the instructional curriculum met Maryland State Department of Education requirements. In the summer of 1997, Wee Lad & Lassie completed another expansion to include a full-day Kindergarten program as well as administrative offices.

In March 2001, our sister school, *A Child's Garden*, was added as our second campus. The program at *A Child's Garden* is designed to meet the specific needs of the very young learner. We are now able to offer programs for children ages 18 months through the 3-year-old preschool year in this building. Students then graduate to the Wee Lad & Lassie site to complete their Pre-Kindergarten year.

## **LICENSURE & ACCREDITATION**

Both locations are fully licensed under the Maryland State Department of Education administered by the Office of Childcare. Wee Lad & Lassie also holds a Certificate of Approval from the Maryland State Board of Education as a non-public school.

Both of our locations received the Maryland State Department of Education Early Childhood Accreditation in 2005 and were re-accredited in 2008 and 2011. This accreditation certifies that our programs meet the standards for quality early childhood programs and recognizes our dedication to maintaining educational excellence in the early learning years.

Wee Lad & Lassie and *A Child's Garden* participate in Maryland EXCELS, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that recognizes the accomplishments of early childhood

programs through a set of standards with 5 levels. Both schools are proud to have attained a check level 5 rating.

*Wee Lad & Lassie and A Child's Garden follow the Maryland State Department of Education required ratio of students to teachers at a minimum. However, we typically exceed this ratio as we believe small groups provide the best learning environment for young children.*

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY & MISSION**

We believe our school is a special place, unique to a child's experience, and designed to provide the components of a high-quality early childhood educational program. Recognizing how crucial and important the early years or childhood are, we believe in inspiring children to reach their highest potential academically, social, physically, and artistically.

The components of our program are:

- A stimulating environment, rich with opportunities for learning in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and the Arts, which enhances the child's natural curiosity and desire to learn in an atmosphere of loving care.
- Low adult-to-child ratios, which are associated with more extensive teacher-child interaction and the ability to individualize learning. Small group size provides more opportunities for teachers to encourage exploration, problem-solving, and promote language development.
- The development of cognitive, social-emotional, and motor skills, which are related to early learning and later academic achievement.
- Degreed teachers will teach using the principles of developmentally appropriate practice, and are committed to continued growth as professionals to improve the learning of all students.
- Mutually beneficial relationships with families to develop the knowledge of individual children, so we can teach in the context that they develop and learn best.
- Respect and appreciation for the diversity of the global community and welcoming adults and children of all abilities.

- An MSDE approved curriculum that reflects the principles of developmentally appropriate research and literature-based practices.

**Our mission** is to provide a stimulating, developmentally appropriate environment that enhances the child's natural curiosity and desire to learn in an atmosphere of loving care with individual attention to children's needs and learning styles, respecting parents as partners in the learning community.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

- Wee Lad & Lassie is open from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.
  - The telephone number is 410-647-2178.
- A Child's Garden is open from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.
  - The telephone number is 410-647-2300.
- A late pick-up fee will be assessed for children who are picked up after 5:00 PM.

### **PERSONNEL**

Our staff is carefully chosen so we can be sure that they meet or exceed the requirements set by the state of Maryland. Additionally, we provide an orientation meeting as well as a staff manual on policy and procedures in order to ensure quality training. All staff members must have completed a recent medical exam, a criminal background check, and a personnel information form - all of which are submitted to the Childcare Administration. Our administration, teachers, and senior staff must attend workshops and seminars annually so that we can keep abreast of the latest developments in the field of child development and practices. In addition, our staff is trained in First Aid and CPR classes.

We are very fortunate to have staff members who have been with us for many years. Please make a point to establish a relationship with your child's teacher to enhance your child's experience here.

## WEE LAD & LASSIE STAFF

- *Lisa Herbst* (Owner and Administrator of Preschools since 1985): with Wee Lad & Lassie since 1989; B.S. from Penn State University, M. Ed. in Early Childhood Education from Towson University, Ed. D. with a specialization in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education from Johns Hopkins University
- *Laurie Cloud* (Assistant Director): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 1999
- *Charlie Wright* (Lead Pre-K Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2017; A.A. in Early Childhood Education from Lake Superior State University
- *Leigh Baker* (Lead Pre-K Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2023; MSDE certified teacher in early childhood education, reading, and special education, with a Master's Degree in special education and a post graduate certificate in dyslexia.
- *Courtney Johnson* (Three's Lead Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2018; A.A. in Elementary Education from Anne Arundel Community College; Towson University student.
- *Alyssa Fortune* (Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2019; Anne Arundel Community College student
- *Stephanie Malafarina* (Two's Lead Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2020; A.A. in Early Childhood from Anne Arundel Community College; Towson University student.
- *Lindsay Wooster* (Two's Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2021; A.A. in Early Childhood from Anne Arundel Community College; Towson University Student
- *Morgan Smith* (Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2020; Anne Arundel Community College student
- *Gabrielle Reynolds* (Teacher): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2021; A.A. in Early Childhood from Anne Arundel Community College; Towson University student
- *Frankie Nicklin* (Teacher Assistant): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2022; Anne Arundel Community College student.
- *Ashley Steckler* (Teacher): Preschool Teacher Certification. Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2022.
- *Riley Panuska* (Teacher Assistant): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2023.
- *Jaeda Raup-West* (Teacher Assistant): Wee Lad & Lassie employee since 2023.

## A CHILD'S GARDEN STAFF

- *Lisa Herbst* (Owner and Administrator of Preschools since 1985): with Wee Lad & Lassie since 1989; B.S. from Penn State University, M. Ed. in Early Childhood Education from Towson University, Ed. D. with a specialization in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education from Johns Hopkins University
- *Grace Johnson* (Director): A Child's Garden employee since 2021; B.A in Psychology from Loyola University
- *Mariah Mister* (Three's Assistant Teacher): A Child's Garden employee since 2023.
- *Tracy Deckman* (Three's Assistant Teacher/Floater) A Child's Garden employee since 2023; BA in Communication from University of Maryland College Park
- *Lindsay Dumbrowski* (Lead Toddler/Two's Teacher) A Child's Garden employee since 2022. Preschool teacher/infant toddler certification. Anne Arundel Community College student.
- *Zoey Groves* (Young Two's Lead Teacher): A Child's Garden employee since 2022. Preschool teacher certification. Anne Arundel Community College student.
- *Maranda Groves* (Young Two's Assistant Teacher) A Child's Garden employee since 2023.
- *Madisyn Eaton* (afternoon assistant) A Child's Garden employee since 2022.
- *Emma Gray* (afternoon assistant) A Child's Garden employee since 2023.

## **ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION**

Currently enrolled students and their siblings are given enrollment priority for the following school year. Re-enrollment is offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Regular enrollment occurs on a revolving basis throughout the year as space is available. At the time of enrollment, parents are required to complete an application accompanied by a non-refundable payment for registration and a non-refundable deposit for two weeks of your child's tuition. An insurance fee will be billed to your account yearly and an activity fee will be billed semi-annually. These fees are recurring for each school year.

Upon enrollment, the parent will receive a packet of paperwork or may download them from our website. They must be completed before a student's first day. These forms include:

1. Health Inventory - to be completed by parent and child's physician
2. Immunization Record
3. Emergency Information Card - to be completed by parent
4. Family Information Acknowledgement form
5. Family Information form
6. Permission slip
7. Bug spray and sunscreen permission form
8. Any other required forms

Please be sure to keep your child's emergency card current. It provides us with phone numbers and names of people who are authorized to pick up your child.

If your child will stay for naptime, the purchase price of a cot sheet will be added to your account. A tote bag should be brought to school with a small blanket, pillow, and completed change of clothes. Tote bags shall be taken home weekly to have the bedding laundered. Please keep a complete change of clothes appropriate to the season at school. A complete change includes a shirt, pants or dress, underpants, and socks.

We hold an Open House annually and will enroll new students after current students have been given the chance to re-enroll.



## TUITION POLICIES

Your child's tuition bill will be placed in their cubby by the 1st of each month. Tuition is due by the 5th of each month. A late payment fee of \$25.00 will be added to any tuition bill not paid on time. Please pay your tuition with a personal check or cash. There will be a \$25.00 fee added for checks returned from your bank. Special tuition payment plans are available upon request.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

As per your application agreement, you must give a two-week notice of your intent to withdraw your child from our school. If you do not give us a two-week notice, you will continue to be charged tuition. **If your child is withdrawn before the end of the school year, you forfeit the two-week deposit you paid at the time of enrollment.**

## HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

For the physical safety of your child and of the other children enrolled in the center, the following safety and health policies will be enforced:

1. Parents are required to bring children into the building and are to make certain a staff member is present before leaving.
2. Children will not be released until a parent (or another person who is authorized by the parent to pick up the child) comes to the center and signs the child out.
3. An Emergency Evacuation Procedure as required by the Anne Arundel County Fire Department is posted in each classroom. Parents, teachers, and aides should become familiar with this evacuation procedure. The center is protected by a smoke and fire alarm system. Smoke or fire in any part of the building will be alarmed throughout the center. There is a **no smoking** policy on the school property. This is a requirement of the Fire Marshall.
4. Parents agree that in the event of an emergency illness, the center has permission to secure medical aid for your child. All medical expenses, if any, are the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

5. No medicines will be administered by the center to your child unless a medication form is signed by a physician and is brought to the center along with the medicine. The form should state when and how the medicine is to be administered. These forms are available in the office. All medicines must be in its original packaging with a pharmacy label affixed. All medicines are to be brought to the office with the appropriate paperwork. No non-prescription medicines will be administered without a complete form from the doctor. The medicines are stored in a box either on top of the refrigerator, inside the refrigerator, or in the classroom medical backpack - depending on the requirements on the medicine. If possible, send in only the amount of medicine needed for the duration of time we are to administer it to the child.

❖ Children with food allergies or asthma are required to complete an Allergy/Asthma Action Plan.

6. Due to children's various allergies, Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden has a no pet policy.

7. Volunteers are limited to student's parents and college students earning college student teaching hours. No volunteer will be left unsupervised with a child.

### **ILLNESS POLICY**

In general, we define three reasons to exclude sick children:

1. The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in routine activities
2. The child requires more care than the staff is able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children
3. The illness is on the list of diagnosed symptoms or conditions for which exclusion is recommended (see below), usually because of the chance of spreading.

The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children with the following symptoms should be excluded from childcare/preschool either to reduce the risk of spreading the infection, or to allow children the time to recover to the point where they can be safely cared for.

- ★ Change in temperature accompanied by behavior change
- ★ Lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability or crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs of severe illness
- ★ Blood in stools
- ★ Diarrhea (watery, less formed, frequent stools) not explained by diet change or medication and that poses a risk to others because it cannot be managed successfully by diapers or toilet use.
- ★ Vomiting two or more times in a 24-hour period
- ★ Persistent abdominal pain
- ★ Mouth sores in a drooling child
- ★ Rash with fever or behavior change
- ★ Pus coming from the eyes (purulent conjunctivitis)
- ★ Persistent honey-colored crusts (impetigo) on face or body
- ★ Children pox, even in a vaccinated child
- ★ Scabies or head lice until treated

In addition, children who have been medically diagnosed with certain conditions are excluded, and a note from the medical provider is required before a child is allowed to return. Common diagnoses that are in this category include:

- ★ Strep throat
- ★ Tuberculosis
- ★ Whooping cough (pertussis)
- ★ Mumps
- ★ Hepatitis A
- ★ Measles
- ★ Rubella
- ★ Herpes Simplex

If a child becomes ill during the day, we will contact the parents. If we are unable to reach you, the people designated as emergency contacts will be called. Your child may be brought back to school when they are free of fever or other symptoms listed above for 24 hours. If your child

visits their pediatrician and is not contagious, they may return before the 24 hours has elapsed, provided we have a doctor's note.

For those emergencies requiring immediate medical attention, your child will be taken to the nearest emergency hospital in the company of a staff member. Every effort will be made to contact the parents, guardians, and the child's physician.

Dr. Ginsburg, pediatrician, is the physician on-call for our schools. She is located at 844 Ritchie Hwy, Suite 206, Severna Park, MD. The phone number is 410-647-8300. Parents may designate the physician of their choice, but we retain the right to consult or call Dr. Ginsburg in the event that the family physician is not available.

### **Supplemental Illness Policy due to Covid 19**

This supplement is meant to provide a plan to protect staff, children, and their families from the spread of COVID-19 and has been developed using the guidance of the CDC and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). This is living and evolving document that will be updated and revised as new information and guidance becomes available. Please read and follow the guidelines in this plan carefully to protect the health of our learning community. In addition, please review and follow the illness policy that is currently in effect. If you have any questions about this document or the updated policies and procedures, please contact the program office.

### **Staying Home When Sick**

Staff and students/children who have symptoms of an infectious illness such as COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infections, should not attend or work in a school or child care program and should be tested for COVID-19 if appropriate. Staff and families are instructed to notify the school or child care program when a staff or student/child has a reportable infectious disease, including a positive test for COVID-19.

It is recommended that persons with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested. If the test is negative, they may return when symptoms are improved and they have no fever for 24 hours without medication

### **Staff or Child Tests Positive for Covid 19**

All persons who test positive for COVID-19 or have suspected COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should complete isolation as follows:

- Stay home for at least 5 full days from the date of symptom onset if symptomatic or from the date of the positive test if no symptoms. Day 0 is considered the day symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the day of the positive test (based on the date of testing) if asymptomatic.
- After day 5, if the person has no symptoms or if symptoms are improved and they have had no fever for at least 24 hours without medication, they may return to school or child care if they wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10)
- If unable to wear a mask, they may return to school or child care if they have a negative test at day 5 or later; otherwise, they should remain at home for day 6 through day 10.

A negative test at day 10 or after is not needed to return.

### **Contact Tracing and Quarantine of Close Contacts**

Universal contact tracing is no longer recommended in schools and child care programs. When a COVID-19 case has been identified in a staff member or a student/child.

- The staff member with COVID-19 or family of the student/child with COVID-19 is encouraged to notify their own/their child's close contacts.
- Schools and child care programs should provide notification of the COVID-19 case to the school or child care community at the cohort level (e.g. classroom, grade, sports team, bus route, etc.).
- Staff and students/children who may be close contacts, regardless of their vaccination status, can continue to attend school and child care as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- A test at 3-5 days after exposure is recommended, especially for those who cannot wear a mask (ex. children under 2 years of age).

## **MEDICATION**

Medication may only be administered with a properly completed Medication Administration Authorization form completed by the child's doctor and parents. This includes:

- Prior written authorization from the child's parent and doctor. Authorization includes:
  - Child's name
  - Parent's signature and date signed
  - Identification of medication and dosage for the child
  - Dates on which the medication is to be administered
  - Time to administer the medication or conditions for which the medication is to be administered
- Prescriptions must be labeled by the pharmacy with:
  - Child's name
  - Expiration date that indicates the medication is still usable
- At least one dose has been given at home
- Amount, date, and time of administration, as well as who administered the medication to the child, is recorded on the child's personal record
- Medication must be administered according to the health practitioner's written instructions on the label

## **SPECIAL NEEDS (Disabilities or Special Health Care Needs)**

Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden believes all children benefit from a high-quality preschool education. If your child requires accommodations for a special need, please let us know at the time of enrollment so we may create a plan to meet your child's needs.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Our child care center's philosophy is to keep your child/children safe at all times when they are in our care. With recent world and local events, we have developed an emergency plan that will be put into place in the event that special circumstances require a different type of care. Plans

for these special types of care were implemented recently. Staff is trained in the appropriate response and local emergency management is aware of these plans. The specific type of emergency will guide where and what special care will be provided.

***Shelter at the site*** - This plan would be put into place in the event of a weather emergency or unsafe outside conditions or threats. In this plan, children will be cared for indoors at the center. The center may be secured or locked to restrict entry. Parents will be notified if they need to pick up their child before their regular time.

***Evacuation to another site*** - This plan would be put into place in the event that it is not safe for the children to remain at the center. In this situation, staff has predetermined alternate sites for care. Our first choice is to evacuate to the Jones Station Fire Department on B & A Blvd in Severna Park, MD. Our second choice is to evacuate to the Severna Park High School on Benfield Blvd. We have gained permission from both of these locations to shelter there. The choice of site is determined by the specific emergency and what would be an appropriate alternate site.

***Method to contact parents*** - In the event of an emergency, parents will be called, a note will be placed on the door, and radio/TV stations will be alerted to provide more specific information. You can also check for information on our website at [www.weeladandlassie.com](http://www.weeladandlassie.com) or [www.achildsgarden2.com](http://www.achildsgarden2.com). We ask that you provide the office with a priority phone number that we would call first and would most likely be answered immediately.

***Emergency ends/reuniting with children*** - When the emergency ends, parents will be informed and reunited with their children as soon as possible. The contact methods listed above will be used to inform parents.

The purpose for sharing this information with you is not to cause you worry, but to reassure you that we are prepared to handle all types of emergencies in a way that will ensure the safety of your children. In the event of an actual emergency, please do not call the center - it will be important to keep the lines open. If you have questions regarding this information, talk with the center director or your child's teacher.

### **RESOURCES & REFERRALS**

Should the need arise, below are resources for parents that are in need of specialists in the medical field:

Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Division of Special Education  
Maryland Infant-Toddler Program  
410-222-6911  
Birth - 2 years, 9 months

Child Find Program  
410-766-6662  
2 years, 10 months - 5th birthday

Arundel Child Care Connections  
410-222-1712  
Children Arriving Mentally Prepared for School (CHAMPS) Program  
Early Childhood Behavioral/Mental Health Services  
[www.arundelccc.org](http://www.arundelccc.org)

Psychological Resource Associates  
Dr. Joyce Cooper-Kahn  
479 Jumpers Hole Road, Severna Park, MD  
410-647-8840



Network of Care

[www.annearundel.md.networkofcare.org](http://www.annearundel.md.networkofcare.org)

Mental and Behavioral Health Services

The Parenting Center

Anne Arundel Community College

[www.aacc.edu/parenting](http://www.aacc.edu/parenting)

The Behavioral, Emotional Support and Training (BEST) Program

*Disclaimer: This listing of resources and links does not express or suggest endorsement of these organizations by Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden. Each family must find the resources that best meet the needs of their individual children.*

### **HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS**

Please refer to your school year calendar for a list of holidays and other scheduled school closings.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER/EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

In most but not all circumstances we follow Anne Arundel County's decision regarding weather-related closures, especially on the first day of a weather event. However, based on circumstances at our building and with our staff, we sometimes make an independent decision on the first and subsequent days of a weather event. The best way to stay informed is to check your email for information regarding early dismissals, late openings or closings. We do our best to decide the night before or by 6:00 am, depending on the timing of the weather event. If at any time you feel it is unsafe for you and your child to travel to school, it is your prerogative to keep them home from school.

If the snow begins late in the day, we appreciate the prompt pickup of your child to enable our staff to get home safely.

A suggestion we have found to be helpful to parents is to make plans with other parents for days when schools are closed. One parent can plan to take the first day off from work and have their child's friend(s) over to his/her house. Then, the other parent reciprocates, which allows each set of parents to miss only  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the time from work. This is also a good way to keep your child busy while having to remain at home!

## **COMMUNICATION**

As you are taken on your guided tour through the school, the parent bulletin boards, logs, parent mailboxes, etc. will be pointed out to you. These, as well as those mentioned below, are available to you in order to facilitate ease of communication.

We are here to be of service to you and your children. Please help us keep the lines of communication open by calling us if your child will be absent. If you have a concern, problem, or question, please come to the office to discuss it with us. If you have a change of address or telephone number at work or at home, please notify the center so we can update our records and keep the channels of communication open.

You will receive a newsletter/calendar each month, which outlines our themes and special activities. It is important to read it thoroughly! Please check your child's bulletin board for specifics about their day. The staff will also leave notes periodically in your child's cubby. Please check it daily.

Besides those mentioned above, we may choose to communicate through:

- **Emails (our primary source of communication)**
  - Our email addresses are [weeladlassie@verizon.net](mailto:weeladlassie@verizon.net) and [achildsgarden2@verizon.net](mailto:achildsgarden2@verizon.net)
- Letters
- Phone calls
- Website
  - [www.weeladandlassie.com](http://www.weeladandlassie.com)

- [www.achildsgarden2.com](http://www.achildsgarden2.com)

- Planned meetings/conferences

## **FAMILY SUPPORT**

Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden have a commitment to support and respond to the needs of children and their families. Our family-friendly supports include:

- Children's book lending library
- Family resource library
- Child care during parent conferences and meetings
- Parent information nights
- Tuition scholarships
- Information and referral to child and family support services

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & INVOLVEMENT**

Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden have a commitment to support family's involvement in their child's education. These opportunities include:

- Meet Your Teacher
- Parent Teacher conferences (Fall, Spring)
- Literacy Nights
- Open House
- Parent Information nights
- Guest Reader opportunities
- Field trips
- Annual Read-A-Thon
- Annual Parent Survey
- Parties/Special Events
  - Holiday parties, Earth Day Celebration, Mother's/Father's Day Breakfast and Family Appreciation Week
- Requests for parent volunteers as needed in the classroom

Effective family engagement strategies create a culture of high expectations where family members support their children's learning at home and follow their child's performance. Family members serve as active guides and advocates for their child's education. In order to fully include families as reciprocal partners, the following policies serve to guide the processes of decision making, grievance resolution, and problem solving.

### **DECISION MAKING**

Families are invited to actively take part in decision-making opportunities concerning their children's education. You and your child's teacher will collaborate in establishing goals for your child's education and learning both at home and at school. This process begins with the Family Information form, which is completed upon your child's enrollment. Each family has the opportunity to articulate their child's strengths, areas of challenge, and desired learning goals. You will continue to refine your child's learning goals at the family/teacher conferences held three times throughout the school year. At the conferences, each family has the opportunity to discuss observations (both at school and at home), view their child's work samples, and share any concerns or questions about their child's progress.

### **GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION & PROBLEM SOLVING**

Ongoing, two-way communication is the most effective method to prevent conflict between families and staff members. In case of a disagreement, each has the responsibility to respectfully consider the other's views and act in the best interests of children involved. Families who have a conflict with a staff member should first contact the person directly to resolve the issue. If there is no resolution, or if it is not feasible to contact the person directly, please contact the Director, who will work with both parties to resolve the problem.

## CURRICULUM

### Wee Lad & Lassie

- Two's Class - Creative Curriculum
- Three's Class - Children Explore Their World
- Pre-K Class - Children Study Their World

### A Child's Garden

- Two's Class - Creative Curriculum
- Three's Class - Children Study Their World
- Children Study Their World

Please visit our websites [www.weeladandlassie.com](http://www.weeladandlassie.com) and [www.achildsgarden2.com](http://www.achildsgarden2.com) for detailed curriculum information.

## DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

The Developmental Screening, *Ages and Stages*, will be recommended or conducted as needed.

## NUTRITION POLICY/FOOD ALLERGIES

**PLEASE NOTE: We are a peanut-free and nut-free facility.** Please let the director and your child's teacher know if your child has any food allergies. Together, we will develop a plan to meet your child's needs. We request that you do not bring any "treats" to share at school unless it has been requested by the classroom teacher.

Our policy is that the sandwich or main course must be finished before "treats" can be eaten.

Please do not send foods that must be heated. Putting heated foods in a thermos is a good way to serve warm food for lunch. Please send a drink for your child to have with lunch. To support your child's healthy eating habits, we monitor and supplement lunches as necessary to ensure children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals. If we have any concerns, we will contact you.

The school will provide a nutritious morning and afternoon snack that limits fat, sugar, and salt.

These snacks may include fruits/vegetables and whole grains. Our menu can be found in our upstairs kitchen, posted on the refrigerator.

### **PHYSICAL WELL BEING AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT**

In early childhood, the foundation for healthy living starts to form, and educators can do a lot to instill confidence and pave a path for positive, safe choices that can last a lifetime. Healthy foods and regular activity are like fuel for our children's developing minds and bodies, and early opportunities to develop muscle groups and fine motor skills can make a real difference. Teachers plan weekly activities to promote physical fitness.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Celebrating a birthday at school is a very special opportunity for children. Due to a wide variety of food allergies, food sensitivities, and individual family dietary choice, as well as our curricular emphasis on healthy eating, we will no longer accept food items as a birthday treat.

Beginning in November 2012, Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden started a new birthday tradition that shifts the focus from the food to your child. To help us promote a love of books and literacy, we would like to suggest that you send in a book for us to read to the class to celebrate your child's birthday. You may also send in a book to donate to the school library, which we will label in honor of your child's birthday. Also, feel free to be a guest reader on your child's birthday and share the special book with the class.

### **TECHNOLOGY & SCREEN TIME POLICY**

Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden use interactive technology (laptops and iPads) to promote effective learning and development. They are used intentionally within the framework of developmentally appropriate practice to support our learning goals and curriculum. Teachers will facilitate creative use of technology and encourage social engagement with other children and adults during this time. This interactive technology will be used to support, but may not replace creative play, physical activity, hands-on exploration, outdoor experiences, social interactions, and other developmentally appropriate learning activities. Children under 2 years old may not be permitted to view any passive (non-interactive television, videos, and streaming media)

technology. Children 2 years or older may not be permitted to view more than 30 minutes of age-appropriate, educational passive (non-interactive television, videos, and streaming media) technology per week.

### **TRANSITION PROTOCOL**

In order to ensure a smooth transition between classrooms, teachers will provide the upcoming year's teacher with your child's portfolio, progress reports, and an articulation form. Children moving from the Three's Program to Pre-Kindergarten will also participate in a Fly-Up Day to familiarize them with the pre-k class and teachers. If your child will be leaving our program and attending another school, we will supply your new school with your child's records after we receive a "Release of Records" permission form. Our websites also provide information to parents on the transition from our program to public school.

### **BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline means teaching appropriate behavior. Our discipline goals include teaching respect of self, others, and property, self-control, problem-solving skills, and understanding feelings (others and own) and how to express them in appropriate ways.

*Wee Lad & Lassie/A Child's Garden* us praise and positive reinforcement as the most effective method of behavioral management for children. When children receive positive understanding and respectful interaction with adults, they develop a health self-concept, problem-solving abilities, and self-regulation skills.

The staff will utilize some of the following methods to encourage socially acceptable behavior:

- Positive verbal praise
- Modeling of expected behavior
- Provide engaging activities for children

- Modeling and teaching the children the skills of cooperation, manners, respect, and tolerance

Realistic behavior goals are set for each child based on their level of development. Based on our beliefs of how children learn and develop values, the staff will practice the following:

- **Redirection** - We will redirect the child away from the problem behavior. This often involves interesting the child in another activity to eliminate potential difficulty. We might ask a child to help us with an activity or ask that they move to a quieter, calmer area of the classroom.
- **Logical Consequences** - The consequences of a behavior have to make sense to the child. For example, throwing sand outdoors will result in a conversation about how other children could be injured and there would be no sand left to play with. The child could be removed from playing in the sandbox for a short time.
- **Ignoring Behavior** - This can happen only for behaviors that are not aggressive or injurious to other children. A teacher may "plan to ignore" a behavior if a child is behaving in a negative way to receive attention.
- **Take a Break** - As a last resort and only if other behavior management techniques are not successful, our staff may provide the child with a brief amount of time away from the group by asking them to sit for a moment until they gain their composure. This is done with respect for the child and is not intended as a punishment, but as an opportunity for the child to relax and gain composure before they re-engage themselves with the other children in an appropriate manner.

### **SEPARATION POLICY**

At Wee Lad & Lassie/ A Child's Garden our goal is to promote children's social-emotional and



behavioral health and to appropriately address and bring resources to challenging behavior. However, as young children develop social emotional skills, learn to participate positively in a group learning environment, and receive guidance from adults other than their family members, they may respond to situations with externalized behaviors (e.g., defiance, noncompliance and aggression). We attempt to create a developmentally appropriate program that meets the needs of each child and precludes the need for children to respond with externalized behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment.

Based on the long-term benefits to children of participation in high-quality early childhood programs, our goal is not to suspend or separate a child from care. Instead, we attempt to collaborate with families to bring the needed resources and strategies to a situation to meet a child's needs for skill development. To accomplish this goal, a strong partnership with families is critical so that we are working together to support children effectively.

Our hope is that these efforts will result in suspension and separation being used only when there are extraordinary circumstances, a determination of a serious safety threat, or the inability of a family to work in partnership with us. While we will make efforts to reduce or eliminate such circumstances and/or threats with the provision of reasonable modifications, we reserve the right to suspend or separate from a child in a situation we deem necessary in accordance with applicable law.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE & ASSESSMENT**

### **Pre-K and Three's Class**

The Early Learning Assessment (ELA) is a formative assessment process through which early childhood teachers collect and use assessment information to tailor instruction to the individual needs of each child. It is an ongoing, planned, and intentional practice to evaluate learning. Assessment results will be shared with families during parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled according to our school year calendar (October & March). You may request an additional conference with your child's teacher at any time during the year.

### **Two's Class**

Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled according to our school year calendar (October & March). You may request an additional conference with your child's teacher at any time during the year.

### Toddler Class

Toddlers are evaluated using the Ounce Scale, published by Pearson. This developmentally appropriate observation assessment is used to evaluate and document toddlers' development in multiple domains of learning. The results are shared with families in October & March at family conferences. Families may request a conference with their teacher at any time during the school year.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The center will be evaluated annually using an annual survey. The program survey will be sent home each spring to families, staff, and administration. We ask for your help in improving our program by giving us your honest feedback on the survey. We will use your feedback for program improvement!

### **CLOTHING**

Parents are urged to dress their children in comfortable clothes that they can manipulate themselves in. Children should wear shoes suitable for running and climbing (we do not allow jellies, sandals without straps, or flip-flops). Every effort will be made to prevent clothes from becoming stained. However, accidents sometimes happen so please do not send your child to the center in their best attire. Children should have an extra set of clothes at the center in case of an accident that would soil their clothes. Extra garments should be labeled with the child's name. Please make certain that your child's outer garments are warm enough for outdoor play. Please remember to send mittens, hats, and boots during the winter months. The children all go outside every day for a period of time unless the weather is very bad. All coats, sweaters, raincoats, and boots should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

## **EQUIPMENT**

All playground equipment, educational toys, and recreational toys are carefully inspected on a regular basis to ensure the safety of your children. Should parents become aware of any potential health or accident hazard, they are requested to inform a staff member of the hazard as soon as possible.

## **FAMILY VISITING POLICY**

We believe a partnership between families and the preschool is vital in supporting children's optimal growth and development. We welcome family members to visit our programs and classrooms at any time. Our open-door policy extends to all aspects of children's activities and events, including daily classroom activities, meal and snack times, recess, holiday events, field trips, etc.

## **TEACHER BABYSITTING**

If a parent and teacher enter into an agreement to provide care or perform other work outside of the school, they do so at their own risk. The school will not be responsible or liable for anything that might occur between a teacher and family outside of the school. Such work may not adversely affect the operation of the school. The Administration reserves the right to demand that any such outside employment ends at any time for any or no reason.

## **DISABILITY NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie believes all children benefit from a high-quality preschool education and is committed to making its programs and activities available on a nondiscriminatory basis. A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will not discriminate against any child on the basis of disability, including children with developmental disabilities. A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will make reasonable modifications for children with disabilities, both applicants and those already enrolled, on a case-by-case basis, to permit them to participate in its programs, services, or activities. However, A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie cannot make accommodations which require fundamentally altering the nature of its programs, services, or activities.

A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie recognizes that children with disabilities who participate in educational programs may require individualized assistance or reasonable modifications which do not require a fundamental alteration of the program to allow for participation in the most

integrated setting and therefore one policy cannot dictate the particular protocol for all individuals. In the event, a child poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others at A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie and that risk cannot be eliminated by a reasonable modification of policies, practices, or procedures which does not require a fundamental alteration to its programs or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services which do not require a fundamental alteration of the program, then the child may be excluded.

## **PROCEDURES REGARDING DISABILITIES**

Parent(s) or guardian(s) who have a child with a disability and request a modification or accommodation for their child should submit the request via email to Dr. Lisa Buchy at [weeladandlassie@verizon.net](mailto:weeladandlassie@verizon.net); and [achildsgarden2@verizon.net](mailto:achildsgarden2@verizon.net). While parent(s) or guardian(s) of a child with a disability may submit a request for a reasonable modification at any time, to the extent possible, they are requested to notify A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie at the time of enrollment, or as soon as a need for a modification is known. Parent(s) or guardian(s) who have a question regarding disability issues may contact Dr. Buchy at 410-647-2178 or 410-647-2300.

A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will promptly consider all requests for reasonable modifications. A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will individually assess the needs of each child with disabilities, including children with developmental disabilities, on a case-by-case basis and work with families to provide reasonable modifications in accordance with its Policy and applicable laws. To this end, A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will assess the level of assistance or supervision that is necessary for participation in the most integrated setting and to provide assistance that is appropriate and consistent with each child's needs. A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will provide a response to a request for modification, in writing, no later than fifteen (15) business days from the date the request is received. If the request for modification is not granted, A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie may request a discussion with the parent(s) or guardian(s) regarding the requested modification. Following the discussion with the parent(s) or guardian(s), A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie may request additional information or guidance from the child's healthcare provider or parent(s) or guardian(s) as necessary. A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie shall not be deemed to be refusing to make a reasonable accommodation in the event the child's healthcare provider or parent(s) or guardian(s) refuses or fails to provide the additional information and/or the parent(s) or guardian(s) refuse or fail to cooperate with A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie. If an agreement cannot be reached for A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie to provide requested modifications, A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) and Dr. Buchy in writing of its final determination, documenting which

modifications A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will provide and which modifications it will not provide, explaining that the modification not provided would not be reasonable or would fundamentally alter the nature of its service, program, or activity.

If A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie is considering denying, suspending, or terminating the enrollment of a child whose disability impacts behavior, on the basis that such child poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will conduct an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence, to ascertain: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aides or services will mitigate the risk.

Before excluding or terminating the enrollment of a child with a disability based on behavioral or other concerns, A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie will consider reasonable modifications to address concerns and convene a meeting with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) and, where applicable, the child's IEP team to determine if new or additional individualized supports or interventions to mitigate behavior or other concerns are reasonable. If A Child's Garden/Wee Lad & Lassie determines that it needs to deny, suspend, or terminate the enrollment of a child with a disability, it will document its reason for the decision and will submit that documentation to the parent(s) or guardian(s) and Dr. Buchy.

We are a smoke free, drug free, gun free facility