



921-B Generals Highway
Millersville, MD 21108
410.923.2832

The Baldwin Early Learning Center Parent Handbook

Baldwin Early Learning Center admits students of any race, color, special needs, or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to or made available to students to the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administrations of its educational policies, programs and the athletic and other school administered programs.

Updated: 1/28/18, 9/9/19,
11/9/2020

Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

To teach children Christian values in a safe and loving environment.

The Philosophy of Our Center

Early Childhood development is a process that is continually changing and expanding, therefore both structured and unstructured activities are offered for children. Our philosophy is one of freedom to learn, grow, and make choices. The children are encouraged to make choices based on their interests.

We believe that children learn through play and we have structured the environment to reflect that belief. We believe that every child is a child of God and is valuable to society.

We believe that Baldwin Early Learning Center can provide a service to the community by offering high quality child care in a Christian atmosphere.

We believe that play is work and when properly supervised and directed, it will assist children in learning how to cooperate, care for others and develop their own creative potential.

We believe that adults who care for children must be sensitive to the "whole child" and provide developmentally appropriate activities for positive growth.

We believe in supporting children and their families with their primary languages and cultures. We provide resources in Spanish as well as English. Many of the classroom items are labeled in Spanish in order to support our Spanish speaking families. Families are encouraged to share their culture through discussion, classroom visitation, and sharing of cultural artifacts.

Affiliation Statement

Baldwin Early Learning Center is affiliated with the Baldwin Memorial United Methodist Church as part of its mission of community outreach. As a subsidiary of the church, Baldwin Early Learning Center is non-profit and tax exempt.

Curriculum Statement

Baldwin Early Learning Center uses the state approved curriculum Investigator Club for those children in our Preschool 3 and Pre-K programs. The teacher of our two year olds uses the state approved curriculum called Healthy Beginnings. The reason these programs were selected was because the curricula teach to the whole child which aligns with the philosophy of Baldwin Early Learning Center. To learn more about these curricula, please follow the links: www.investigatorclub.com and www.marylandhealthybeginnings.org.

Baldwin Early Learning Center and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA assures full civil rights to individuals with disabilities, including access to and accommodations in preschools and child care settings. Under the ADA, Baldwin Early Learning Center cannot and will not discriminate against parents or children with special needs, nor will we charge more than we would for any other child.

Baldwin Early Learning Center 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. As with all families who plan to enroll their child with us, we hold a Pre-enrollment Conference with the parents/guardians and the teacher. During this conference, a plan will be created in order to set up the least restrictive environment for the child.

Baldwin Early Learning Center is willing to make "reasonable accommodations" which meet the children's individual needs.

Our staff meets licensing and credentialing requirements by attending classes and workshops on including children with special needs.

Enrollment and Registration

Enrollment shall be granted without discrimination in regards to sex, race, color, religion, special needs, or political preference. 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/guardians are required to complete a registration form accompanied by a non-refundable payment.

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

1. Health Inventory
2. Immunization Record (all immunizations must be up to date for the child's age)
3. Emergency Information Card
4. Permission slips
5. Family Information Form

At least one complete change of clothing should be kept at the center at all times. We ask that you enclose it in a gallon size ziplock bag labelled with your child's name.

Tuition and Additional Fees

- ❖ **Registration:** There is a nonrefundable registration fee per child that is due annually upon registration. There is a non-refundable registration fee for the summer. This fee covers all administrative costs associated with enrollment.
- ❖ **Bounced check:** A \$45.00 fee will be assessed for returned checks.
- ❖ **Tuition Advance:** Before your child can begin care, an advance payment of one week will be collected. This will be applied to your last week of service. Payments will be credited annually. A new advanced payment is due at time of registration.
- ❖ **Tuition:** Tuition is due by **Monday** for the current week. If tuition is not received by Monday a \$35 (thirty-five) late fee will be charged. If tuition is unpaid after one full week, your child will not be admitted to our school until the payment is collected. **Tuition payments are not subject to reduction or refund due to absence from a school closing, holiday, vacation, or illness.**
- ❖ **Nap Mats** are furnished by the center for rest time. Parents are asked to purchase bedding for the mat from the center at an additional fee of \$25.00. All items are to be labeled with your child's name, washed on Friday and returned to the center on the following Monday.

- ❖ **Public School Closings:** School-Age children (Grades K - 5) may attend Baldwin Early Learning Center when Millersville Elementary School is closed at no additional cost other than your normal weekly tuition if they are signed up for **both before and after care** services. Closures include 2 hr. delays, early dismissals, and full day closures. If your child attends before or after care only then they will be charged \$15.00 per day for full day closure as well as early dismissal days.
- ❖ **Inclement weather /Emergency closing payment:** Payment is expected as usual for the first two days that Baldwin Early Learning Center is closed, whether the event is weather related or facility related. In the event that the building which houses the ELC cannot be occupied due to things such as power outage, lack of water or septic access, or damage to the building from environmental issues, to name a few possibilities, and that the children cannot be temporarily located at another location such as the Church's Sanctuary, parents are responsible for the first **two consecutive days** of the outage. Parents are not responsible for outages from the same incident that extends beyond two consecutive days. *Please see page 10 for additional information concerning closings.*
- ❖ **Late Fee for Pickup.** If you arrive after our closing time to pick up your child, you will incur a charge of \$2.00 every minute after closing time. The charge is per family if you have more than one child. If you are running late, please notify the school and make other arrangements to have your child picked up. For half-day students, pick up time is at 12:30. If you arrive after 12:30, you will incur a late charge of \$2.00 per minute. The late pick-up fee should be paid either online or in your check when you make your next tuition payment.

Termination of Services

- ❖ **Termination of Services by parent:** In the event that you need to terminate your agreement with our school for any reason, two weeks written notice is required. If you abruptly withdraw your child without just notification, you become responsible for two additional weeks of tuition less your advanced payment. With the proper advance notification, you may use your advanced payment towards your last week of service.
- ❖ **Termination of Services by center:** It is our goal to assist each child develop self-discipline and self-control. We will not allow any child to hurt another by being cruel and abusive either physically or verbally. If this specific behavior is a continual occurrence, we will have conferences with parents to try different approaches. When all avenues are exhausted and there is no improvement, it will be the decision of the directors to dismiss the child from our center. Baldwin Early Learning Center will forfeit the advanced payment and refund any remaining balance to the parent within 30 days of dismissal.

Health and Safety Policies

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

- ❖ Smoking is prohibited at all times, and at all locations of Baldwin Early Learning Center, including properties and grounds. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, visitors and contractors. Baldwin Early Learning Center also prohibits littering the campus with remains of any tobacco products.
- ❖ Upon arrival and departure, you are required to notify a teacher and sign your child in and out every day. It is necessary for the staff to have an accurate count of children in attendance on a daily basis in case of an emergency evacuation. If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please notify the directors. We will not release a child to anyone not listed by the parent on the Emergency Contact Form unless we receive written permission. Be sure that the person picking up your child has a picture I.D. (driver's license, etc.)
- ❖ Staff members / teachers will not release a child to any parent, relative, or other authorized adult that appears to be impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol. In the event this situation occurs, a phone call will be made to the parent or emergency contact person.
- ❖ In cases where family court or other legal entities have established visitation or custody rights, a copy of the court orders must be provided to the center. A copy of the court orders will be maintained in the child's school file. The courts orders will be strictly adhered to by the Baldwin Early Learning Center.
- ❖ All exterior doors, as well as the classroom doors, are kept locked to insure the safety of our children. Our foyer has a camera and a buzzer which allows the office to see and hear each person as she/he arrives. Each staff member has a key which is used to unlock and relock the doors.
- ❖ Playground Safety: Cones are placed at both entrances of the parking lot, designating it as an area which should not be crossed by vehicles at any time. The children cross to the playground and use the area for bicycle/trike play.
- ❖ An Emergency Evacuation Procedure is posted in each classroom. The center is protected by smoke detectors located in each classroom. Fire drills are practiced each month and Shelter in Place drills twice per year.
- ❖ Parents agree, by signing the Emergency Adult Agreement, to allow Baldwin Early Learning Center to secure medical aid for your child. All medical expenses, if any, are the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- ❖ No medicines will be administered by the center to your child unless a medications 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 completed form from the doctor. The medications are stored in an area which is inaccessible to the children. If possible, send in only the amount of medicine needed for the duration of time we are to administer it to the child.

- ❖ Non-prescription medications must be accompanied by a medication order form filled out and signed by the parent and must be in its original container. We are permitted to administer medication only one time during an illness for non-prescription medications. Upon arrival, you must sign in and notify a staff member of your child's need for medicine, and provide the medicine order form to the directors so that it can be properly stored. The dispensation of medication is undertaken as a professional courtesy, and is not required by law. Our center reserves the right to refuse to dispense medication to any child if necessary procedures are not followed.
- ❖ Our staff makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, minor accidents may occur. In order to keep you informed, you will be asked to sign an accident report, which will give you the details of the accident and first aid measures taken. Scrapes and minor cuts are treated with soap, warm water, and a Band-Aid. Bumps are treated with a cold compress. In the case of a head injury, a family member will be called and the child will be observed closely for signs of a concussion. If the injury is of serious nature, we will contact emergency response teams and you will be contacted immediately. If we cannot contact you, we will contact the first person on your emergency contact form. We will continue our attempt to contact you or individuals on your emergency contact form until we are successful.

Illness Policy

- ❖ We need your cooperation in keeping our school a healthy place for your child. To ensure success, we need you to watch for symptoms of contagious illnesses. This is to protect your child, as well as the other children attending our school. Please keep your child home if he/she has conjunctivitis, an elevated temperature of 100 degrees or more, diarrhea, vomiting, severe congestion, wheezing, yellow/green nose drainage, ear or throat infection, impetigo, ringworm or lice until they have been treated for 24 hours, or **any symptoms of a more severe illness such as COVID-19 which includes shortness of breath, coughing, and a fever.**

If your child shows any signs of the listed illnesses while in attendance at our school, we will do our best to make the child comfortable while arrangements are made to have the child picked up. If a parent cannot be located within 15 minutes of the child's illness, the next person on the emergency contact form will be notified. Children who are sent home due to illness will not be permitted to return to the school until all signs of their illness have been gone for 24 hours. The only exception to this rule would be if a licensed physician indicates in writing that the child presents no health risk to others and is now able to participate in all regular school activities. Certain communicable diseases are required to be reported to the Department of Health so that control measures if needed can be implemented. **Parents and staff are required to notify the school immediately if a child or family member has been exposed to or developed a known or suspected communicable disease.**

Baldwin Early Learning Center cannot be held responsible if your child contracts an illness while in attendance.

Children must be fever free without the use of medications for a 24 hour period before returning to school. In the case of a more severe illness such as COVID-19, we must notify the CDC and the Office of Child Care who will determine when your child may return.

In light of the unique and difficult challenges and concerns posed by the recent COVID-19 public health crisis, effective immediately, Baldwin Early Learning Center (BELC) is amending the 2019-2020 Parent Handbook to implement the enclosed policies. All other provisions of the handbook shall remain in full force and effect.

We understand that this is a scary time for our community and we will be making reasonable efforts to ensure the safety of our staff, children and families, including the introduction and enforcement of these new policies. We will continue to monitor the situation and may add to, or modify, and BELC policies, including these, as may be necessary and appropriate.

As a condition of your child's continued enrollment at BELC, all parents or guardians will be required to sign the last page of this handbook.

Public Health Emergency Closures

While we certainly hope that it will not be the case, there may be future instances when it will be necessary for the center to close as the result of a public health emergency such as the COVID-19 outbreak. This may include, but will not necessarily be limited to, instances when BELC is required to close in compliance with a federal, state or local government order or when the center is required or advised to close to address a confirmed or suspected outbreak amongst the staff or children.

Please be advised that, in the event that BELC must close for any period of time due to a public health emergency, no refunds will be issued for those periods when the center is closed and the usual tuition payment shall be made. If, in the event, that your child must remain out of the center for 2 weeks or more due to COVID, 50% of your tuition payment shall be made to your child's second week of absence.

COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified the following as common symptoms of COVID-19 (check CDC.gov for the latest information):

-Cough -Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing -Fever -Chills -Muscle pain -Sore throat -New loss of taste or smell

Families must promptly notify the center in the event that any member of a child's household(s):

1. has tested positive for COVID-19
2. is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or
3. is known to have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

In such event, under no circumstances should the child or any other member of the household enter the center until the recommended period of self-isolation has been completed or it has been otherwise confirmed that no members of the household are infected with COVID-19. Baldwin will work directly with any affected or potentially affected families to provide direction and guidance as when the child may return to the center. Such requirements may change based on the most recent guidance from the CDC and other authorities.

In addition, children may not come to the center if they or any member of the household are experiencing fever or symptoms of any contagious illness. Children may return when they (or the member of their household) are fever and symptom free for 72 hours. In certain cases, a child may be able to return sooner than 72 hours if they can provide satisfactory medical evidence that they have no risk of being contagious.

Child or Family Member Travel

Until further notice, families must promptly notify the center in the event that a child or any member of the child's household will be travelling out of the United States or to any location with a large number of cases such as an area that is on a "lockdown" or has a "Stay At Home Order". Depending on the means and destination of travel, BELC may require that the child be kept home for a reasonable period after the child or the member of the household has returned from travel. As this is a rapidly evolving situation, we encourage families to discuss contemplated travel and any stay at home period that may be required thereafter, with BELC prior to finalizing their travel plans.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Our child care center's philosophy is to keep your child(ren) safe at all times when he/she is 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. 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 and 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 Baldwin Memorial United Methodist Church at 921 General's Highway. Our second choice is to evacuate to Millersville Elementary School at 1601 Millersville Road.** 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, parent will be called and a note will be placed on the door indicating our location. **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 child(ren). 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.

General Classroom Policies

- ❖ Please provide written notes or call the office in the morning @ 410 923-2832 regarding information pertinent to your child. You may also email us at baldwinlc21108@gmail.com.
- ❖ Children may bring items of interest to the center for Show and Tell, only on scheduled days. Children may bring only one item at a time. Special items for naptime are the exception to this rule.
- ❖ Birthdays are important to young children. They may bring a special treat for snack time to celebrate their birthday. Please schedule this with your child's teacher.
- ❖ Parents are always welcome. However, at this time, we are not allowing family members into the classrooms until after closing time.
- ❖ Parent Conferences are scheduled twice a year. Your child's teacher will schedule and contact you regarding your conference.

Positive Discipline

Baldwin Early Learning Center's staff maintains a safe, non-threatening environment. Our staff fosters creativity, encourages exploration and allows children to make discoveries. We also set limits, and encourage self-discipline. We establish boundaries to reassure that young children have order and stability.

It is the policy of our center to minimize disciplinary issues and to help children monitor their own behavior through the use of positive reinforcement. Our staff encourages self-control, self-direction, responsibility, and cooperation. Our staff is trained in the use of positive discipline. Positive discipline instructs children what they should do rather than what they should not do. The

staff also utilizes redirection when disciplining the children as well as providing alternate choices when need be. We encourage our staff to teach the children problem-solving skills. We believe that helping the children work through problems and come to acceptable solutions is preferable to punishment.

A visual schedule of the day's routine as well as general classroom rules is posted in each classroom.

When and ONLY when the behavior places a child or teacher in danger, the child may be removed from the group situation. The child will be removed not longer than one minute per each year of age. More importantly, the child will then take part in a discussion, with a staff member, regarding appropriate behavior. Aggressive behavior towards other children or staff members will **not** be tolerated. Parents will be asked to pick their child up if there is consistent aggressive behavior. We will make every effort to work with the child and the parent to promote proper behavior for the safety of all involved; however, if the persistent aggressive behavior continues to be a problem we reserve the right to ask for the parent to remove the child for the day or from our program.

Hours of Operation

At this point in time, we are open from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. We are open year round and offer a summer program for children age 2 through age 11.

Holidays

Our school will be closed on the major holidays listed below. Payment is expected for these holidays. We are required to follow strict child-staff ratios; therefore, we are unable to switch your child's day of attendance in the event of a holiday.

New Year's Day MLK Day President's Day Memorial Day July 4th Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day Friday after Thanksgiving Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

We will close for 2 days in June and 2 days in August to prepare for the summer and fall programs: No payment is expected for these days.

Inclement weather / emergency closing

In the event of inclement weather, we will make every attempt to open the center while ensuring the safety of our staff and the children in our care.

We base our decision to have a delayed opening or to be closed on the decisions made by Ft. Meade. The center will determine if a closure or a delay is necessary. To be notified when there is a delay or closure, text "ftmeadealerts" to 40404.

We will send e-mail to all our families and will change our voice mail.

If Anne Arundel Government is closed, Baldwin will **not** open. Please call our voicemail by 6:00 a.m. or check your email to learn of the decision.

If inclement weather /an emergency should occur during business hours, we will make every reasonable attempt to remain open. However, in the case of extremely dangerous road conditions or a statewide emergency it may be necessary for the school to close early. If we need to close early, you will be notified to pick up your child as soon as possible. Keep all emergency information current so that we can immediately contact you.

Facility-related closings: in the event that the building which houses BELC cannot be occupied due to things such as power outage, lack of water or septic access, or damage to the building from environmental issues, to name a few possibilities, and that the children cannot be temporarily located at another location such as the Church's Sanctuary, parents are responsible for the first two consecutive days of the outage. Parents are not responsible for outages for the same incident that extend beyond two consecutive days.

Parent Communication

Our center has an open door policy. However, due to COVID-19 and its variants, parents are restricted as to their visitations. We feel that communication is the key to providing a healthy learning environment for your child. We encourage you to let the staff know about the daily routine, likes, dislikes, discipline strategies, and any other relevant information regarding your child. We will keep you informed of our curriculum and daily events through our monthly calendar, newsletter, emails or daily notes.

Meals

Breakfast will be served to the children who arrive prior to 8:30am. Baldwin Early Learning Center follows the guidelines of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Milk or water will be available with all breakfast entrées.

A mid-morning snack is served by our staff that consists of choices recommended by the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA). You are responsible to send a lunch for your child in a small labeled lunch box. Milk or juice is provided for breakfast, snacks, and lunch, so there is no need to send a drink unless your child is on a special diet. Parents are also reminded to pack an afternoon snack of a *healthy choice*. Please be sure that the food is "ready to eat", i.e. fruit peeled and sliced. We also provide utensils for all meals. **Please refrain from sending items easily choked on in your child's lunch or snack. Please be sure grapes, carrots, hot dogs, etc. are sliced.**

Nutrition Policy

Although families are responsible for packing the child's lunch, the staff monitors the food items which are in the lunch box. Should a lunch contain a peanut butter product, that child will sit at a table with classmates who are not allergic to peanut butter. Additionally, if the staff determines that a lunch contains only items which are not considered "healthy" choices, we will supplement the

lunch with food from the center's supply to fulfill the missing food group(s). For instance, if there is no fruit in the lunch, we will offer fruit to the child. Should a lunch containing only non-healthy choices continue to be sent in with the child, the directors will have a conference with the family and provide resources about healthy food choices.

Special Diet

If your child has any food allergies, your physician's written instructions concerning such allergies must be on file at the center. Please notify us if your child has any food restrictions due to religious beliefs or a medical condition. We will ask parents for their permission to place their child on a posted allergy list to ensure that all staff is well informed of this information.

Special Programs

Families will be informed of any and all special programs which have been scheduled by the center.

Christmas Program: A Christmas program is scheduled during the month of December. All children at the center are encouraged to participate. You will be notified if a program is scheduled this year.

Pastor Phil's Corner

Pastor Phil's Corner was implemented in 2001 when he began his mission at the Baldwin Memorial UM Church (BMUMC). Pastor Phillip Tocknell is no stranger to the children of the childcare center. He greets the staff and each child on a daily basis with words of wisdom and a great big smile. With the love that Pastor Phil has for the children, his wish is to be very active with the center. The doors of the BMUMC are always open and Pastor Phil invites everyone to worship with the church. Pastor Phil is also available for spiritual counseling and guidance at any time regardless of your church membership or religious preference. The staff and children of Baldwin Early Learning Center are very blessed to have such a wonderful Christian leader to teach the love of God to the children.

Toys from Home

Children are to leave their personal toys at home to prevent breakage, loss, and disagreements. They may bring a special toy on Show-n-Tell days only or a "comfort" stuffed animal for during nap time. The teacher will inform parents of the days when Show-n-Tell occur during the week. Please refrain from sending expensive or sentimental items such as family heirlooms to the center. School age children may bring in toys only on days they attend Baldwin all day. Baldwin cannot be held responsible for personal items should they become lost, broken or stolen from the center.

Parking

Enter the main parking lot using the driveway with the **in** arrow. Exit the main parking lot using the driveway with the **out** arrow. Do not leave the lot going out of the entrance.

Go slow. Please DO NOT SPEED. Be extra cautious when leaving a parking space as a child may be entering or exiting a car.

Baldwin asks that parents **do not leave children unattended** in the parking lot or playground area and that your keys are kept with you at all times.

Please be sure to turn your car off while picking or dropping off children.

Special Birthday

Birthdays are celebrated a little differently in each Classroom. Families can inquire about your child's birthday celebration in his/her respective Classroom. Families who wish to provide a small, special snack time treat may do so, but must make advanced arrangements with the Classroom teacher. Baldwin discourages families from distributing birthday invitations to private birthday parties via the school unless the entire Class is invited. We suggest that you use the telephone directory information which will be given to you at the beginning of each school year.

Field Trips

We will schedule various field trips throughout the year. We will need many parent volunteers. A completed permission slip must be submitted for each child in order for them to attend the field trip. If the children are riding in a car, they must be in car seats. We will not participate in field trips unless we have enough parent volunteers and drivers.

Fundraisers

As is the nature of any privately funded educational institution, all of the funds required to provide a quality program cannot come from tuition alone. Baldwin Early Learning Center conducts fund-raisers each year. Funds from these projects go directly to benefit the children's program at Baldwin.

Volunteering

We welcome parents interested in volunteering, however, at this time, we cannot allow volunteers in the classroom. We will notify you when this restriction is lifted. Activities such as puppet shows, book reading or even class lessons can add tremendous richness to the lives of these children. If you are gifted in one of these areas, you may assist as little or as much as you'd like, contingent on our schedules. Please speak with the Directors to make arrangements. Activities must be offered to all children on a class by class basis. **If you volunteer more than once a week you will be required to have a medical form and background check on file at Baldwin.**

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO REGULATED CHILD CARE

Important Information for Parents of Children in Child Care Facilities

*A publication of the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Early
Childhood Development*

Office of Child Care

www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/child_care.htm

This page provides information about:

- The requirements that State regulated family child care homes and child care centers must meet.*
- Your rights and responsibilities as the parent of a child in regulated care, and*
- How and where to file a complaint if you believe your child care provider has violated State child care licensing regulations.*

Who regulates child care?

All child care in Maryland is regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Childhood Development. Within the Division, child care licensing is the specific responsibility of the Office of Child Care (OCC), Licensing Branch. All child care facilities must meet minimum health, safety, and program standards set by Maryland law. To remain licensed, facilities must maintain compliance with those standards. Every licensed facility is inspected by OCC at least once each year to evaluate the facility's compliance with child care regulations.

OCC's thirteen Regional Offices are responsible for licensing activities, including:

- Issuing child care licenses;*
- Inspecting child care facilities;*
- Investigating complaints against licensed child care facilities;*
- Investigating reports of unlicensed (illegal) child care; and*
- Taking enforcement action when necessary to achieve compliance with regulations.*

There are two types of regulated child care facilities:

Family child care homes and child care centers.

Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers Must Meet the Following Requirements:

- Have the approval of OCC, the fire department and other local agencies, as required (i.e., zoning, health, and environment).
- Provide care only in the areas of the facility that have been approved for use.
- Have the license issued by OCC posted where it is easily and clearly visible to parents.
- The license shows:
 - >the maximum number of children who may be present at the same time;
 - >the age groups which may be served; and
 - >the facility's approved hours of operation.
- At all times, each child must be supervised in a manner appropriate to the child's age, activities, and individual needs.
- All areas of the facility used for child care must be clean, well lit, and properly ventilated. Room temperatures should be comfortable.
- If food service is provided, food must be stored, prepared, and served in a safe, sanitary and healthful manner.
- The facility must offer a daily program of indoor and outdoor activities that are appropriate to the age, needs and capabilities of each child.
- An up-to-date emergency information card must be on file and maintained for each child.
- The facility must post an approved emergency evacuation plan and conduct evacuation drills at least monthly.
- Child discipline procedures must be appropriate to a child's age and maturity level and may not include the deliberate infliction of physical or emotional pain. **Corporal punishment of any kind is strictly prohibited.**

There are certain requirements that apply only to homes or centers.

Family Child Care Homes

- Up to 8 children may be in care at the same time if the home meets certain physical requirements. No more than 2 children under the age of two, including the caregiver's own, may be in care at the same time unless the home has been approved to serve additional children in this age group and an additional adult is present. Under no circumstance may care be provided at the same time to more than 4 children under the age of two.

- Each applicant for a family child care license must:
 - >Have a criminal background check and child abuse/neglect clearance;
 - >Submit a recent medical evaluation; and
 - >Complete pre-service training requirements, including certification in first aid and CPR.
- Each adult resident of the home must also have a criminal background check and child abuse/neglect clearance. f
- After becoming licensed, the caregiver must periodically complete additional training. Also, current certification in first aid and CPR must be maintained at all times.
- Each caregiver must have at least one substitute who is available to care for the children in the event of the caregiver's temporary absence from the home. Each substitute is subject to approval by OCC and must have a child abuse/neglect clearance. If paid by the caregiver, a substitute must also have a criminal background check. Before allowing a substitute to provide care, the caregiver must tell the substitute how to reach parents in the event of an emergency and familiarize the substitute with the home's child health and safety procedures.

Child Care Centers

The center director and staff members who have group supervision responsibilities must meet minimum education, experience, and training qualifications. They must also meet continued training requirements each year.

The center director and all paid center employees must complete a criminal background check and a child abuse/neglect clearance, and submit a medical evaluation.

f]n each Classroom, staff/child ratios and maximum group size requirements must be maintained at all times. The following table shows some basic age groupings and the applicable requirements:

Age Group	Ratio	Maximum Size
0 –18 months	1:3	6
18 – 24 months	1:3	9
2 years	1:6	12
3 –4 years	1:10	20
5 years or older	1:15	30

For every 20 children present, there must be at least one staff member who is currently certified in first aid and CPR. The There are certain requirements that apply only to homes or centers.

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Child Care Consumer

You have the right to:

- Expect that your child's care meets the standards set by Maryland's child care licensing regulations (NOTE: the regulations are available online at:
- [www.marylandpublicschools.org/M\\$DE/divisions/child_care/regulate;](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/M$DE/divisions/child_care/regulate;)
- Visit the facility without prior notification any time your child is there;
- See the rooms and outside play area where care is provided during program hours;

- Be notified if someone in the family child care home smokes. In child care centers, smoking is prohibited;
- Receive advance notice when a substitute will be caring for your child in a family child care home for more than two hours at a time;
- Give written permission before a caregiver may take your child swimming, wading, or on field trips;
- Give written authorization before any medication may be administered to your child; f
- Be notified **immediately** of any serious injury or accident. If your child has a non-serious injury or accident, you must be notified on the same day;
- File a complaint with OCC if you believe that the caregiver has violated child care regulations. Any complaint you make to OCC about the care your child is receiving will be promptly investigated by OCC;

Review the public portion of the licensing file for the facility where your child is or has been enrolled, or where you are considering enrolling your child.

How Do I File a Complaint?

If you wish to file a complaint, contact the OCC Regional Office in the area where the child care facility is located.

Complaints may be filed anonymously. Listed below are the Regional Offices and their main telephone numbers:

Region

1 – Anne Arundel County	410-514-7850
2 – Baltimore City	410-554-8300
3 – Baltimore County	410-583-6200
4 – Prince George’s County	301-333-6940
5 – Montgomery County	240-314-1400
6 – Howard County	410-750-8770
7 – Western Maryland	
Hagerstown – Main Office	301-791-4585
Allegany Co. Field Office	301-777-2385
Garrett Co. Field Office	301-334-3426
8 – Upper Shore	410-819-5801
Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties	
9 – Lower Shore	410-713-3430
Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties	
10 – Southern Maryland	301-475-3770
Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s Counties	
11 – North Central	410-272-5358

Cecil and Harford Counties

12 – Frederick County

301-696-9766

13 – Carroll County

410-751-5438

The OCC Regional Office will investigate your complaint to determine if child care licensing regulations have been violated.

If you need additional help, you may contact the main office of the OCC Licensing Branch:

Program Manager, Licensing Branch
MSDE Office of Child Care
200 West Baltimore Street, 10th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-767-7805

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Maryland Child Care Credential Maryland has a voluntary child care credentialing program that recognizes child care providers' education, experience and professional activities at six levels.

Credentialed providers are authorized and encouraged to display the seal issued by the MSDE Office of Child Care.

Program Accreditation

Child care programs have the option of becoming state or nationally accredited. Accreditation means that the facility and staff have met program standards of quality.

Child Care and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all child care programs to make reasonable efforts to accommodate children with disabilities. For more information about the ADA, please contact the OCC Regional Office in your area or one of the following organizations:

LOCATE: Child Care

Maryland Committee for Children, Inc.
608 Water Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 752-7588
www.mdchildcare.org

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 767-3670
(800) 305-6441 (within Maryland) www.md-council.org

Acknowledgement of Receipt

(Please complete and return this page to the center's office)

I, _____, have received, read and understand the Parent handbook for Baldwin Early Learning Center Center for the current school year.

Parent Signature

Date