



# Parent Handbook

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# WELCOME!

## Philosophy

Rock Spring Children's Center, Inc. is non-discriminatory with regard to race, color, religion, or creed. We offer children an environment where they can develop healthy attitudes, an eagerness to learn, a trust in those who care for them, and an awareness that they are special and loved. Individual needs are met in a stimulating, nurturing program, and talents are developed through shared experiences.

*The mission of our program is to provide quality licensed childcare for infants through five year-olds as a nonprofit service to the community. We provide a carefully planned, stimulating program for the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of young children in a safe, clean, and nurturing environment.*

## Location and Hours

Rock Spring Children's Center is located at 10401 Fernwood Road in Bethesda, MD. We are located within the Rock Spring office complex across the street from Marriott Headquarters. The Center is open from 7 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday.

## Staff

The staff is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care. All staff members come to the Center with excellent references, and a background check is processed for each teacher. Teachers receive annual training in curriculum and child development as well as CPR and First Aid training.

## Administration

The Center is licensed by the State of Maryland under the authority of the Office of Child Care. The parent run Board of eleven members oversees and sets Center policy. The daily operations of the Center are managed by the Executive Director, Program Director and Operations Director.

# REGISTRATION & ATTENDANCE

## Eligibility

Children (6 weeks to 5 years) are eligible provided they meet health requirements. Registration requires health forms signed by a physician and a parent, a complete

emergency card, a signed contract, paid deposit, registration fee, and activities/ field trip fee. All forms must be returned to the Center prior to enrollment. It is advisable for both parents and children to visit the Center a few times before enrolling to acclimate to the classroom.

### **Attendance and Withdrawal**

Upon arrival and departure, a responsible custodial adult (age 16 or older) must accompany the child to the class and sign the child in and out. Daily diaries are to be filled out for infants and toddlers. Parents are expected to notify the Center by 10:00 each day the child is absent or will arrive late. Written notice must be given to the director at least one month in advance of withdrawal, or parents will forfeit deposits. All fees through the terminating period are due before the last day.

### **Requested Withdrawal**

If the Center director judges that the Center's program does not meet the developmental or special needs of a child, or that a child's or parent's behavior threatens the physical or mental health of other children or staff, Rock Spring Children's Center, Inc. reserves the right to terminate that child's enrollment immediately. The same right is reserved in cases where parents do not abide by the rules and regulations of this policy statement.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Visitation**

Parents are invited and encouraged to visit at any time. Formal conferences are scheduled twice a year. Parents who do not attend conferences must submit written notice to the director's office.

### **Pick-up Procedure**

Advance notice and/or written permission from a custodial parent must be provided if anyone other than a custodial parent is to pick up a child. Anyone picking a child up at the end of the day must be at least 16 years old and must provide identification.

### **Holidays**

The Center is closed on Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, the week between Christmas Eve and New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, Rock Spring Children's Center procedure is as follows: If Montgomery County Schools are closed, RSCC opens two hours late. If Montgomery County Schools open two hours late, RSCC opens an hour late. If the

Federal Government is closed, RSCC is closed. Call the Center or check the website before leaving your home.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### Medication

Except for acetaminophen (Tylenol) and topical medications, only one dose of any medication may be administered at the Center unless medication and dosage are otherwise approved in writing by a licensed health practitioner. Prescription medication must be in a container labeled by pharmacy or physician with child's name and expiration date. It may be administered only according to the health practitioner's written instructions or the instructions on the label of medication. Parents must administer the first dose of any medication.

### Emergency Medical Care

Business, home, and emergency numbers must accompany all registration forms. Forms must also include the name of the child's doctor, plus consent for the Center to act on behalf of parents. Parents also sign permission for the Center staff to act if neither parent nor child's doctor can be reached at the time of an emergency. Emergency forms must be updated annually by parents. In case of minor injury, first aid is administered by a staff member. In cases of more serious injuries, parents are notified immediately. Parents receive accident reports to sign as confirmation that they were made aware of injuries.

### Illness

At the discretion of the director, a child will be refused entry or sent home when there are visible signs of illness (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rash or discolored mucus that accompanies other symptoms). Children's parents will be contacted and asked to remove a child from care within an hour should the Center suspect a child is ill. Children sent home may not return until they have been free of illness for at least 24 hours; the director may request written consent from a child's doctor. Children too ill to play outdoors are too ill to come to the Center. Please make a backup plan for illness prior to enrolling your child.

### Biting

Biting is unfortunately a normal developmental behavior for young children. Children bite for a variety of reasons, including frustration. Biters are removed from situations and told in a strong voice, "Biting hurts. We only bite food." Parents of both children involved are notified and an accident report is written. If biting persists, the biter may be removed from enrollment at the discretion of the director until this phase of development has passed. After a bite, the bitten child will be comforted, the area washed, and ice applied if necessary.

## Suspected Child Abuse

Maryland law requires staff to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Protective Services. Parents are not required to be notified of such action.

## HIV

Parents of HIV-infected children shall notify the director of the Center, in writing, confirmed by the individual's personal physician or other health care provider, of the HIV status. All reports will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a child will be permitted to enroll or continue at the Center.

# OUR PROGRAM

## Curriculum

Each class has activities and equipment to meet children's interests and challenge their capabilities. Children are encouraged to learn and interact through "hands-on" experiences. Lesson plans will be posted in each classroom every week. Teachers use an emergent thematic approach to curriculum. Each theme is integrated into various disciplines: art and music, science and math, language and literature, dramatic play, games and movement, etc. Emphasis is placed on the social skills of sharing, communication, self-concept, and meeting personal needs. Children have many opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. Additionally, all preschoolers participate in music and movement enrichment classes each week with art specialists.

## Food for Infants

All infant food is provided by parents. Bottle nipples must be protected; breast milk must be pre-bottled. Space is provided for breast feeding. All food should be labeled, dated, and refrigerated at 45 degrees. A chart is kept on each child's feeding schedule to include amount consumed, sequence of introducing solid foods, and recommendations for introducing new foods. Parents take bottles home at the end of each day for washing.

## Food for Older Children

Breakfast, consisting of three food groups, and an afternoon snack, consisting of at least two food groups, will be provided for preschoolers. An additional late snack is provided for toddlers. Ready-to-eat lunch is provided by parents in labeled containers. For an additional charge a hot lunch may be purchased. Food can be refrigerated at the Center, and microwaves are available to heat food if appropriate containers are provided. Milk is provided at no extra charge, though bottles are no longer offered to children after their second birthday.

## Clothing and Bedding

A complete change of clothes, including shoes for emergency, must be provided for each child. The change of clothes should account for changing weather. In addition, parents provide sheets and blankets for cots and cribs, an adequate supply of

disposable diapers and/or training pants, and wipes for children not toilet-trained. Children who are being toilet-trained need several changes of clothing per day.

## **Napping and Sleeping**

We follow the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) suggestion that all infants be placed on their backs to sleep. Parents who prefer other sleep positions must provide a written request. The AAP also discourages the use of crib bumper pads. Toddler – 4 year old classes all take scheduled, mandatory naps during the day on cots. Parents need to bring in a sheet and blanket for the cot. Everyone must rest on a cot during nap time. Those students who are still awake after an hour may look at books or play quiet games on their cots. It is not our policy to keep children awake or to awaken them early from naps.

## **Field Trips**

Age-appropriate field trips are planned well in advance for children age two to five. For transportation, parent volunteers may drive, or the Center may lease a van. In either case, parents need to leave car seats. Parent volunteers are needed to drive and to provide adequate supervision and trip success. A field trip fee is imposed based on the number of trips and anticipated expenses. Please note that field trips are a mandatory part of the Center curriculum, designed to enrich your child's experience. Parents of a child who does not attend a particular trip must make alternate arrangements for childcare that day at their own expense.

## **Discipline**

We believe that setting limits gives children the security of knowing that adults will take responsibility for stopping unacceptable behavior. This is done by making rules understandable and acceptable to all children.

Staff members are trained to remain alert to group situations, redirect uncooperative children to other activities, redirect an entire activity in a more wholesome direction, allow children to work out their own solutions, and encourage them to use words instead of resorting to unacceptable actions.

When children do not respond to these efforts, they are removed from a situation and asked to move to another area of the room until they regain control of their actions. Staff, then, communicate with children to know if they "feel better inside." Children are encouraged to understand that they are responsible for their actions and to seek appropriate ways to have needs met.

If these efforts are unsuccessful, children may be taken to the director's office and if necessary parents are called to pick up children. Unsuccessful efforts to redirect persistent unacceptable behavior will result in enrollment termination.

## TUITION AND FEES

### **Tuition Schedule (effective October 2008)**

Fees are based on Caregiver-to-child ratio and Class size, and change when Children move from one age group to the next. All fees are monthly regardless of class days per month –there are no discounts or credits for holidays or absences. Fees are subject to change; the Center provides notice at least three months in advance of fee changes.

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Ratio</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Infants + Mobile Babies (6 weeks to 18 months)	1:3	\$1670
Toddlers (18 months to 2 years old)	1:3	\$1645
Twos	1:4	\$1345
Threes	1:6	\$1235
Fours	1:8	\$1235

Checks should be made payable to Rock Spring Children's Center or simply to "RSCC." Unless prior written arrangements are made, all fees are due by the fourth business day of each month. A late fee of \$25 is imposed for payments not received by the fifth of the month, plus a \$5 fee per day thereafter until balances are paid in full. A \$25 fee is charged for each returned check.

### Other Fees

- A full month's deposit is required to hold a space. The deposit is retained by the Center and is applied to the child's last monthly statement provided parents give written notice at least one month prior to withdrawal. Families who withdraw their child prior to attending the Center forfeit the deposit.
- A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 per child is required at the time of enrollment.
- An annual \$100 activity fee is charged in September for children currently enrolled, and upon enrollment for children in the toddler class and older.
- A summer field trip fee is charged in June for children age two to five.
- A cash fine of \$10 for each 15 minutes or part thereof is paid directly to staff for late pick-up of a child. Continual late pick-up will result in dismissal from the Center.
- A drop-in fee will be applied for any child dropping in the Center (space permitting). The fees are \$75 per day for preschoolers and \$85 per day for infants.

## **The Application Process**

Now that you have received your tour, you're probably wondering what to do next. The process is really simple and it only requires a few minutes of your time each month.

First and foremost, **STAY IN TOUCH!** We need to know that you are still interested in a spot, have not found other care, or if you are pregnant, all of your new baby's information. Every time you contact us it is written on your waitlist form or attached if it is in e-mail form. Most people worry that they are going to be bothering us if they are constantly e-mailing or calling. You're not! We enjoy getting to know perspective families and being able to determine which candidates are really interested.

We can only give you an estimate as to when we are expecting openings. Also, we will notify you as soon as we know what openings we have. Unfortunately, the enrollment game can be a tricky one with variables such as children moving and current mothers getting pregnant. Spots can become open sooner or later than we anticipated.

When a spot becomes available for your child, you will receive a packet of information including an application, registration forms, medical record request forms, and other documents needed for your child's folder. When your deposit and registration fees are collected, the spot is officially yours!

## Our Contact Information

Though we gladly accept your phone calls at any point, the best way to contact us is through e-mail. Our e-mail is:

**[office@rockspringcc.com](mailto:office@rockspringcc.com)**

Also, feel free to visit our website to obtain current information about the center.

**[www.RockSpringChildrensCenter.com](http://www.RockSpringChildrensCenter.com)**

**Thank you for visiting!**