



2022-2023 Parent Handbook

Contents

Welcome.....	2-3
Registration and Attendance.....	3-4
Policies and Procedures.....	4-6
Health and Well-Being.....	6-8
Our Program.....	8-13
Tuition and Fees.....	14-15
The Application Process.....	16
Contact Information.....	17

WELCOME!

Philosophy

Rock Spring Children's Center ("Rock Spring" or "the School") is non-discriminatory with regard to race, color, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability and creed and any other status protected by law. Our School offers 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 and a strong, play-based, educational curriculum.

The mission of our program is to provide quality, loving, licensed childcare and preschool education for infants through five year-olds as a nonprofit service to local families. We provide a carefully planned, stimulating, play-based program for the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of young children in a safe, clean, and nurturing environment so that they are thoroughly equipped for kindergarten and beyond. Our teachers, directors, and families work together to create a supportive community in which our children learn and thrive.

Our guiding principle during our long history has been to provide the best quality care for our children that we can reasonably provide. We have accomplished this by hiring the most loving and caring teachers we can find and treating them as well as we can so that their happiness cascades over to our children. As a nonprofit, our tuition is simply a reflection of what it costs to care for each child at the school. However, in order to truly provide the best environment possible, our community of families and caregivers needs the active participation of our parents. **Parental participation is encouraged and expected in such activities as chaperoning field trips, participating in class parties, helping with our fundraisers and donating to the School, coordinating other social events, and/or contributing in any other way to meet the multiple needs of the school.**

We believe that, as a community, we can provide the best environment possible for our children when we all work together to pool our talents and resources. Such a cooperative spirit is the best solution to the challenge we face in balancing the many complex demands of today's world. When our families join our community and experience this cooperative spirit, it quickly becomes apparent why so many have come to see our school as a very special place and an extension of their families.

Location and Hours

Rock Spring Children's Center is located at 6555 Rock Spring Drive (formerly known as 10401 Fernwood Road - same location, but the mailing address changed several years ago), Suite 150 in Bethesda, MD. We are situated at the back side of the Atrium at Rock Spring Park office complex between Route I-270 and Montgomery Mall. The School is open from 7 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday. Extended Care is typically available most days until 6:45pm for an additional fee. Please see the Tuition & Fees section for more details about Extended Care.

Staff

The staff is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. All staff members come to the School 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.

We also periodically hire college and high school students and other volunteers or temporary staff to assist and bring added energy and enthusiasm to the program. Many of our teachers have been with us for 5, 10 or even 25 years. Our teachers and staff have a great reputation as caring, engaged caregivers and educators. They are the main reason that the School has enjoyed such success.

Administration

Rock Spring is licensed by the State of Maryland Department of Education under the authority of the Office of Child Care and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The School is overseen by our School President and a Board of Directors consisting of current and former parents, staff, and members of the community. The daily operations of the School are managed by the Executive Director, Program Director and Operations Director, with oversight by the School President (collectively, "the Director" or "the Administration").

Additions and Amendments

This handbook may be amended at the sole discretion of the Administration at any time during the year. Additionally, new policies and procedures may be added by the Administration on either a trial or permanent basis throughout the year, and the Administration has the authority to deviate from these policies if they deem it appropriate. An electronic version of the policies and procedures described in this handbook is available on the School's website. In the event that additions or amendments are necessary after the publication of the handbook, they will be reflected on the website.

REGISTRATION & ATTENDANCE

Eligibility

Children (6 weeks to pre-kindergarten) are eligible provided they meet health requirements. Registration requires health forms filled out and signed by a physician and a parent, a completed emergency card, application (Infant or Preschool), a signed Tuition Agreement and Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form, paid deposit, and registration fee. All forms must be returned to the School prior to or on the first day of enrollment. **It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that their child's health forms stay current.** Whenever children are scheduled to get shots, parents should get a health form from the office for the doctor to fill out, or bring a copy of the shot records, (including required lead tests at 12 and 24 months old) after such a doctor's visit.

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 with the time and guardian's signature or initials. Daily diaries are to be filled out for infants and toddlers. Parents must notify the School by 10am each day the child is absent or will arrive late. Written notice must be given to the Director at least one calendar month in advance of withdrawal, or parents will forfeit deposits. (Written notice on January 23 would obligate parents to pay through February 23.) All fees through the terminating period are due before the last day. If a family will be terminating enrollment in the middle of a month, they will be billed for the partial month at either the daily rate or the full monthly rate, whichever is less. Families must stay with the School for at least two months, plus give the required notice, in order to be eligible for a return of their deposit (three months for an infant).

Requested Withdrawal

If the administration judges that the School'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 or otherwise interferes with the operations of the School, RSCC reserves the right to suspend or 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 handbook. In such a case, no refunds of tuition or deposits would be given. The School may also terminate enrollment for any reason, or no reason, with one calendar month's notice. In that case, any deposits will be applied to the final month's tuition.

In the event that a parent (or other person who has been authorized to pick up or drop off the child) is not abiding by the School's policies or exhibits behavior the administration judges to be a problem, any of the following actions may be taken by the administration at any time: 1) Informal discussion with the parent; 2) Formal discussion with the parent with a written record of the conversation in their file; 3) Formal meeting with the parent to discuss the issues; 4) Fines; 5) Formal meeting with the parent to discuss suspension or termination of enrollment; 6) Suspension or termination of enrollment with notice; 7) Immediate suspension or termination of enrollment.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Visitation

Parents are invited and encouraged to visit at any time. Formal conferences are scheduled with the teachers twice a year. It may be possible to arrange conferences by telephone if necessary, but we do require that parents are engaged in their child's classroom and participate in these conferences. *Note that, due to the COVID-19 emergency, we may have various restrictions in place to limit spread of the cases or parents' time in the School.*

Drop Off and 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 must be at least 16 years old and must provide identification. **Each day, the person picking up or dropping off a child must mark the classroom sign in sheet with the time of drop off and pick up and their signature or initials.**

Parking is available in the parking garage (free for 30 minutes) or the guest parking located throughout the office park. Temporary parking is available in front of the building and in other designated RSCC parking spots by the playground and in the garage for those willing to display a Rock Spring bumper magnet or window sticker on their cars. For the safety of the children and to ensure an orderly traffic pattern, please do not turn your car around in the drop off spaces or pull into them facing the wrong way. If you enter the office park from Rock Spring Drive, please go around the pond so that you can pull into the drop off spaces facing the correct way. Violation of the parking rules or traffic patterns is a safety issue and can result in fines, suspension or immediate termination of enrollment and forfeiture of your deposit. ****Parents must provide vehicle information and license plate numbers for the vehicles of those who will be picking up and/or dropping off children.**

Holidays

The School is closed on Labor Day, Columbus Day (staff training day), Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following Thanksgiving Day, Winter Break (generally from Christmas Eve to just after New Year's Day

depending on which day they fall), Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day (staff training day), Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day. The School will close early the last Friday in August before Montgomery County Public Schools open so the teachers can prepare their classrooms for the new School Year. Additionally, there may be other days where we must close or close early for staff training. These days will be announced several weeks in advance when and if they are necessary.

Inclement Weather

We are extremely sensitive to the difficulties it can cause families when we have to close the School or open late. However, many of our teachers travel further distances than our families to get to the School. Thus, we try to make sure our closure decisions balance both interests and serve the needs of our families while safeguarding the safety and well-being of all RSCC community members.

In an effort to create consistency during snow emergencies or other inclement weather, our policy is as follows:

- (1) If the Federal Government, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Administrative Offices, or Montgomery County Government is closed, RSCC is closed.
- (2) If the Federal Government, MCPS Administrative Offices, or Montgomery County Government have a delayed opening, RSCC will also be delayed (typically a 10am opening for RSCC).
- (3) If MCPS is closed but the Administrative offices are open, RSCC will generally open at least 2 hours late (9am).*
- (4) If MCPS is open two hours late, RSCC will generally open at least 1 hour late (8am).*

**If the issue causing the MCPS delay is one that does not impact RSCC children, for example, concern for children at bus stops during extreme cold, we may open on time even if MCPS is delayed. Such decisions may also consider how the issue impacts RSCC teachers, such as their ability to safely navigate roads and access public transportation, as the school cannot be open without sufficient staff.*

For instances where snow or other inclement weather develops during the day, our policy is as follows:

- (1) If the Federal Government, Montgomery County Schools Administrative Offices, or Montgomery County Government closes, RSCC will also close.*
- (2) If Montgomery County Schools close early, RSCC will also close early.*
- (3) As our pick up times are much later than the schools, RSCC may announce an early closure even if the County schools do not.*

**We will provide enough notice to allow parents time to get to the School and pick up their children. In inclement weather situations where we do not close, we ask that parents try to pick up their children early if they can. This will allow us to start sending our staff home.*

Please check the website, www.rockspringchildrenscenter.com, your email, or call the school and listen to the inclement weather message for updates before leaving your home. Check back frequently if weather or road conditions worsen.

Public Health Emergency Closures

While we certainly hope that it will not be the case, there may be instances when it will be necessary for the School 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 School is required to close in compliance with a federal, state or local government order or when the School is required or advised to close to address a confirmed or suspected outbreak amongst staff or children.

Please be advised that, in the event that the School must close for any period of time due to a public health emergency, no refunds will be issued for those periods when the School is closed. However, tuition for those periods may be credited as a donation to our nonprofit 501(c)(3) School.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Medication

In order for the school to administer any medication, whether prescription or over the counter, parents must fill out a medication administration form and have it signed (or have a signed note) by the child's pediatrician or licensed health practitioner authorizing both the administration of the medication and the dosage. Prescription medication must be in a container labeled by a pharmacy or physician with child's name, dosage, date of the prescription, name of the medicine, administration schedule, any special instructions ("Take with food"), duration of the prescription, and expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable. Parents must administer the first dose of any prescription medication.

Emergency Medical Care

Business, home, and emergency phone numbers, as well as email addresses, must accompany all registration forms. Forms must also include the name of the child's doctor, plus consent for the School to act on behalf of parents. Parents also sign permission for the School staff to act if neither parent nor child's doctor can be reached at the time of an emergency. It is the parents' responsibility to keep these emergency forms updated. 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 (such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rash or discolored mucus that accompanies other symptoms). Parents will be contacted and asked to remove a child from care within 1 hour should the School suspect a child is ill. Children sent home may not return until they have been free of illness for at least 24 hours. The Administration may request something in writing from a child's doctor or other health professional confirming the child is free from illness if deemed necessary. Children who have missed three consecutive days of school due to illness need a written note from the parent or doctor stating that the child may return to a regular schedule. Children too ill to play outdoors are too ill to come to the School. Please make a backup plan for illness prior to enrolling your child. The administration may alter these general policies for specific illnesses if they deem it appropriate. *For example, during the COVID-19 emergency, the sick policy includes anyone in the child's household that has COVID and the exclusionary timeline has generally been between 5 and 10 days.*

COVID-19

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

- Cough & cold symptoms
- Sore throat
- Fever

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- New loss of taste or smell

Families must promptly notify the School 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, RSCC administrators will work directly with any affected or potentially affected families to provide direction and guidance as when the child may return to the School. Such requirements may change based on the most recent guidance from the CDC and other authorities.

The School facility has upgraded its ventilation, cleaning and sanitization practices during COVID. For example, ceiling fans were installed in every classroom, air purifiers added throughout the School, the building ventilation system was upgraded to bring in more outside air and use high quality filters. While regular cleaning and sanitization were already a part of child care practices, the frequency of these efforts was increased as well.

Vaccinations, masking, proper exclusionary practices, and testing have also been critical to the School's efforts to minimize the impact of COVID on our children & families. The School sends out regular updates to communicate changes to these different strategies which we update as the circumstances evolve. RSCC seeks to find a "moderate" approach to these issues to best balance the vast number of concerns & issues surrounding COVID. If you are seeking a program this is either very strict or very liberal on COVID policies, RSCC may not be the best choice for your family. We continue to do our best to limit the spread of COVID, ensure the safety of the children in our care, & protect our staff, but we also recognize that this is a multi-year issue and strict policies just aren't feasible for young children in a child care setting for so long.

For example, here are some of our recently communicated policies as of August 2022:

COVID Vaccinations

All RSCC staff have been fully vaccinated & boosted. All RSCC families are strongly encouraged to fully vaccinate & boost all members of their household. We continue to do what we can to reduce the risk of COVID as a significant health risk to our staff & families.

COVID Masking

All visitors (including RSCC parents) are required to wear a high quality mask to enter the School. RSCC staff are required to mask when inside the School and not actively eating or drinking. Children 2 and older are strongly encouraged to mask unless eating, drinking, or napping. When COVID case numbers in our community drop, we reduce our staff & child masking requirements & recommendations to allow more flexibility in the classrooms. The Health Department does not allow children under 2 to mask. Our staff and children are not required to mask outdoors.

Exclusionary Time Frames

The current COVID guidance requires exclusion from RSCC for 5-10 days depending on multiple factors such as dates of symptom onset or close contact events, ability of infected persons in the household to effectively quarantine, dates & results of tests, and the resolution of symptoms. It is a rather fact intensive analysis, which is why we ask you to notify us as soon as possible so we can be sure we have all of the details we need to determine the shortest possible

timelines for return that keep the rest of the School protected.

Testing

The PCR test is the most sensitive test to determine initial COVID positivity. However, we have continued to see instances of symptomatic people have both negative PCR & rapid antigen tests who end up testing positive 1-3 days later. Since the PCR test is a bigger challenge for many to obtain, with a longer wait time for results, daily testing with rapid antigen tests may be a good idea for symptomatic people in a child care setting (especially if you have any reason to suspect COVID).

The PCR test has also been very helpful at day 5 after a known COVID "close contact" exposure to give a good indication of whether you are in the clear (followed by close monitoring to day 10). The rapid tests still seem to correlate well to infectiousness and have been incredibly helpful in getting our children & staff back after 5 days rather than 10. The rapid tests have also been helpful to screen those with minor symptoms unlikely to be COVID and as a precaution for those who may have had a less significant exposure. We frequently require testing of our staff and sometimes require it for our children when we have a series of cases in a particular classroom.

All RSCC families should maintain a good supply of at-home COVID rapid tests so that they can test members of their household whenever needed.

Biting

Biting is an unfortunate but common developmental behavior for young children. Children bite for a variety of reasons, including frustration. Children who bite are removed from situations and told such things as, "Biting hurts. We only bite food." The bitten child will be comforted, the area washed, and ice applied if necessary. Parents of both children involved are notified and an accident report is written, keeping confidential the name of the other child. The School has a great deal of experience working with children to help them through biting behaviors. If biting persists to such a degree that the safety of other children or staff becomes seriously threatened, the child who is biting may be removed from enrollment at the discretion of the Director until this phase of development has passed.

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.

Medical Conditions

Parents of children with an infectious disease, or other serious medical condition, shall notify the Director of the School in writing prior to enrollment, or as soon as the parents learn of any such condition. Infectious diseases can include, but are not limited to, conditions such as encephalitis, e-coli, lyme disease, pertussis or meningitis, as well as chronic illnesses such as hepatitis. Serious medical conditions can include, but are not limited to, allergies, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, or any other such chronic diseases.

For the safety and proper care of the child, parents will need to submit a statement from the child's physician, as well as other health forms, to provide complete and accurate information about the disease or medical issue. Any and all such documents will be kept confidential.

All reports will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine what accommodations, if any, can be made to ensure the safety of the child in question and the other children attending the School, and whether a child can be permitted to enroll or continue at the School.

Vaccinations

In order to be admitted or to continue enrollment in the School, children and staff must be up to date on the vaccinations required by the State of Maryland.

Confidentiality

Our policy is to make every effort to keep health and well-being issues as confidential as possible. For example, if your child is bitten, we do not tell parents the name of the biter. If there is an accident involving two children, the report will indicate the nature of the accident but not the name of the other child. Please respect this and do not ask teachers or directors for information about other children.

Social Media

As a courtesy to all members of the RSCC community, please be mindful that our parents hold a range of views on posting pictures and videos of children to social media. While some are perfectly comfortable with posting pictures of their children, some view this as an unsafe practice. Before publicly posting pictures or videos of a school event, please consult with the parents of any children appearing in those images and/or make efforts to show only your child.

OUR PROGRAM

Curriculum

The play-based curriculum at Rock Spring consists of three components: A formal curriculum called the Creative Curriculum, thematic units, and learning through play. All components begin in the toddler rooms, around 15 months, with the formal curriculum becoming more prominent in the preschool classrooms, ages three and above. Each curricular theme is integrated into various disciplines: art and music, science and math, language and literature, dramatic play, games and movement, etc. Children are encouraged to learn and interact through "hands-on" experiences within all components of the curriculum. 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 toddlers through pre-k students participate in a music and movement enrichment class each week with an art specialist. A pre-kindergarten enrichment class is available for children who just miss the cutoff for kindergarten (typically September, October, and November birthdates depending on the number of spaces available). This class is designed to strengthen and reinforce the basic concepts learned in the other pre-kindergarten classrooms and provide stimulation and enrichment for children who have already had exposure to the pre-k curriculum.

Food for Infants

The School will provide some brands of formula for infants if parents want to use it. Special formula, breast milk, and lunch must be provided by parents. Bottle nipples must have a protective cap and breast milk must be pre-bottled or stored in freezer bags marked with first and last name and date the milk was expressed. Space can be provided for breast feeding at the School. All food should be labeled with the child's name, dated, and kept at or below 45 degrees during transport. 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. Additionally, the School has some brands of formula available and when the infants are old enough, breakfast and a snack are provided. If you would like to use the School's formula, please let the office know and fill out the form we will provide you.

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 and toddlers. An additional late snack is provided for toddlers. Parents must provide ready-to-eat lunch in labeled containers. Food can be refrigerated at the School, and microwaves are available to heat food if appropriate containers are provided. For an additional charge, hot lunch may be purchased instead. Organic milk is provided at no extra charge. Bottles are no longer offered to children once they enter the toddler rooms. The food and milk provided by the School is for consumption during school hours. Please do not take food without authorization or fill up milk cups for consumption outside of school.

Strollers and Car Seats

Unfortunately, the School does not have space for parents to leave strollers and/or car seats on a daily basis. Parents need to take these items with them each day and be sure they have enough equipment for each parent, grandparent or others who may be picking up or dropping off their children.

Clothing and Bedding

A complete change of clothes, including shoes for emergencies, must be provided for each child. The change of clothes should account for changing weather. In addition, parents provide sheets and blankets for cots, an adequate supply of disposable diapers, and wipes for children not toilet-trained. Fitted sheets are provided for the infants. Children who are being toilet-trained need several changes of clothing per day. All clothes, bedding, and other provisions must be clearly labeled by parents before bringing them to the School.

Napping and Sleeping

Maryland licensing regulations require that infants be placed on their backs to sleep and that blankets, pillows, bumper pads and other bedding items are not used. A written note from the child's pediatrician is required for any exceptions to this policy. Toddler through pre-k classes all take scheduled, mandatory naps/rest periods during the day on cots and/or mats. Parents need to bring in a sheet and blanket for the cots and mats. Everyone must rest 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

Field trips are a mandatory part of the School curriculum, designed to enrich your child's experience, especially in the summer months. Age-appropriate trips are planned each year for children starting in the two year old classrooms. For transportation, parent volunteers are needed to help drive the children and to provide adequate supervision. Parents who are not going on a particular field trip will need to leave car seats and their child will be matched with another family. If, for any reason, a child does not attend a particular trip, parents must make alternate arrangements for childcare during the duration of the field trip at their own expense. **We ask that you have someone from your family (mom, dad, aunt, uncle,**

grandparent) chaperone at least half of the field trips. In the event that not enough parents volunteer for a field trip, the trip may be cancelled or families who have not participated as chaperones in at least half of the trips will have to make alternate arrangements for childcare. We understand the demands that our families have on their time, but we need you to do everything possible to be active participants in your child's education and activities. These trips end up not only being a great experience for the children, but also a cherished memory for the chaperones. *(The field trip frequency and format has had to be altered significantly during COVID. We are uncertain when we can return to our customary routine of 1 to 3 field trips per year. When we are not able to go to a destination, we have attempted to replace that trip with a similar type of event at the School. For example, instead of a trip to the pumpkin patch, we had pumpkins delivered and placed on our playground so that the children had a similar experience.)*

Pets

Fish, butterflies/insects, and small animals may sometimes be in classrooms. In addition, the School typically has some type of petting zoo field trip or in-school visit.

Screen Time

Rock Spring does not allow the use of passive screen time, such as television shows and movies, for children during the school day. Interactive technology is allowed for children two and older in limited amounts to support the curriculum or other developmental objectives. Examples of interactive technology may include such things as children's computers, iPads or tablets, and touch tables. This technology is only used while under teacher direction and is not permitted during meal or snack times.

Outdoor Play

It is essential that children get time outside each and every day possible. Children need time to be exposed to the fresh air and to have the opportunity to run, jump, climb and play. We closely follow the recommendations of the County Health Department, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other national child care health organizations to ensure our practices are consistent with their recommendations. Outdoor play can be extremely important to deterring the spread of colds and other illnesses our children can catch when confined to the classroom all day.

While wind speed and air quality may impact our practices, we generally go out for at least an hour every day when the temperatures are between 32 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. While infants and mobile babies do not go outside for outdoor time if the weather is below freezing or hotter than 95, at the discretion of the Administration, the older children (toddlers and above) go out for 10 - 20 minutes at a time (less time for toddlers and twos, more time for the threes/fours/fives). The only times the older children generally do not go outside at all is when there are storms/ heavy precipitation, the temperature is colder than 10 degrees, hotter than 100, or in the afternoons when the air quality is rated Code Red. The Directors pay close attention to air quality ratings, heat indices, wind chills and other weather factors that could impact the children and make other adjustments about outdoor play time accordingly.

Please make sure you dress your child appropriately and apply sunscreen every morning, especially in the summer. The teachers will reapply sunscreen as needed during the day, but it is important that parents put sunscreen on their children each morning in the summer. We also ask that you provide swimsuits and water shoes for water play for the summer months. As the weather turns colder, please send your child with hats, gloves and appropriately weighted jackets. When snow is on the ground, please make sure your child has snow pants and boots. **Please put your child's name on everything they bring!**

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 may result in termination of enrollment. However, we work closely with families, who are willing, to recommend interventions, consultations, and professional assistance to address issues.

Transitions

Children transition from one classroom to the next throughout the year. Transition decisions are made by the Administration and are based on a number of factors such as the age, maturity and developmental level of the children, and the availability of spaces in and composition of the various classrooms at the School. The School contains more than one room for each age range of children and children move to whichever classroom has space when a child is ready to transition. While we can consider parental preference as a factor when a child moves to the next classroom, it is only one of many factors, such as age of the children and gender balance for the classrooms, that we must consider. Planning transition patterns is an extremely complex process and our guiding principal is the best interests of all children and the School as a whole. We cannot take into account preferences to stay with other children from a previous classroom. The children from the School interact with each other across classrooms and benefit from having a large circle of friends.

We understand that transitions can be an emotional event, but it is usually more difficult for the parents than the children. We work with parents and children in the week prior to a transition to help make the change as smooth as possible. If the School decides that a child needs to transition to a new classroom, parents must cooperate with this decision so that all children at the School are getting the most sensible transitions we can provide.

School - Parent Communication

It is crucial to the success of the interactions between parents and School that a positive, productive and trusting relationship is established and maintained. To that end, the School engages in multiple methods to keep parents engaged and informed - physical methods such as white boards, newsletters, notices and fliers, as well as electronic methods such as email and our website. In addition, teachers in each classroom communicate using notes in your child's cubby as well as white boards or other notices on their doors. Some rooms also use email or blogs to send out weekly or daily updates of what is happening in the classrooms. The Directors may share parent email addresses only with other parents and only for social purposes such as invitations for birthday parties or class playdates. Parents wishing to communicate with

other parents for other purposes should talk with the Directors about appropriate methods of communication (flyers, newsletter submission, email from the School, etc.).

If there is ever a problem, parents should feel comfortable discussing issues with teachers and/or Directors. However, we ask that parents be mindful that the School is a childcare and preschool **community** made up of many families and children. We try to approach each issue with a community-minded and cooperative spirit so that we do the best we can for each child and the School Community as a whole.

Teacher Babysitting/Outside Work

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. We love our teachers, but can only guarantee they are suitable caretakers in the School setting where they are under our supervision. We love our families, but cannot guarantee to the teachers that they will be good employers. The Administration reserves the right to demand that any such outside employment ends at any time for any or no reason.

Child Custody/Separation/Divorce/Other Personal Issues

Issues relating to child custody, separation and/or divorce or other personal issues are between the parties involved and should not involve the School or its personnel. The School does not enforce custody agreements, nor does it facilitate supervised visitation. Teachers and administrators need to be focused on the children at the School rather than the outside personal issues of the families. If the Administration judges that a family's personal situation becomes or threatens to become a problem, this is grounds for immediate termination of enrollment.

While we sympathize with families wrestling with these types of issues, the School needs clear "all or nothing" directions regarding who is allowed to pick up children. For example, "only mom is allowed to pick up" or "only dad or dad's mother are allowed to pick up" or "both parents are allowed to pick up." If there is a custody arrangement regarding different parents picking up on certain days, and the wrong parent picks up, this is an issue to be taken up with a lawyer or the Court, not with the School.

Scholarships / Financial Assistance

Partial scholarships are available for families with financial need. Interested families should submit a letter of request along with tax returns for the previous two years and current pay stubs or other evidence of current income. This information will be confidentially reviewed by the Administration. Applications are accepted throughout the year and awards are made in a non-discriminatory way, without regard to race, color, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability and creed or any other status protected by federal, state or local law. Assistance is limited and awards are typically about \$500 per month.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition Schedule (effective September 2022)

Tuition and fees are based on the type of classroom your child is in and change when children move from one class to the next. All tuition rates are monthly regardless of class days per month -there are no discounts or credits for holidays or absences. Tuition and fees are subject to change. The School attempts to provide notice at least three months in advance of such changes. Tuition rates adjust each September (usually about 5%).

RSCC Tuition Rates Sept 2022-Aug 2023

<u>Classroom</u>	<u>Average Ratio</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
Infants & Mobile Babies (6 weeks to between 15 and 18 months)	1:3	\$2620
Toddlers (15 months to 24 months)	1:3	\$2595
Twos	1:4	\$2200
Threes	1:7	\$2115
Fours (pre-k)	1:9	\$2100
Fives (pre-k enrichment)	1:10	\$2100

The School offers drop in service, space permitting, at a daily rate for RSCC families who need short term care. The fees are \$125 per day for preschoolers and \$145 per day for infants and toddlers. Drop-in services must be reserved in advance and are only available when space allows.

When families start or end enrollment in the middle of a month, tuition is charged at the daily rate or at the full monthly rate, whichever is less.

Checks should be made payable to Rock Spring Children's Center or simply to "RSCC". Unless prior written arrangements are made, all fees must be received on or before the first 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 \$35 fee is charged for each returned check. If tuition is not paid by the 10th day of the month, enrollment will be suspended until the tuition is paid. Failure to pay and/or repeated late payments may result in immediate dismissal from the School and forfeiture of deposit.

Deposits and Other Fees / Tuition:

- A deposit of one month's tuition is required to hold a space when offered. The deposit is held by the School and applied to the child's last monthly statement provided parents provide written notice at least one calendar month prior to withdrawal and the child has been enrolled in the School for at least 2 months.
- **If you accept a space and then elect to not enroll your child at RSCC for any reason, you would FORFEIT this deposit.** We typically offer spots and accept deposits about 2-4 months ahead of when the spot is available. If a family changes plans after accepting a spot, we have to scramble to find a replacement family. Sometimes we are successful, but sometimes we are not

and the School loses money. In addition to the extra resources we have to expend to find a new family, this situation also results in us having turned down other families who very much wanted to become a part of RSCC who then commit to other arrangements. We need families to be absolutely sure they are committed to coming when they accept a space by putting down their deposit.

- A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 per child is required at the time of enrollment. This is credited from your waitlist fee if you paid one.
- The School provides weekly music and movement classes. By popular demand, we also have some outside specialized services that come to the School and offer such extracurricular activities as ballet, soccer, JumpBunch, and other fun activities. Families interested in those activities for their children pay those companies directly to participate. *NOTE- Outside services may limited during COVID-19 or other health emergencies.*
- Parents are responsible for bringing lunch for their children and any special food or drinks that they may require (such as bottles for infants). The School provides breakfast, an afternoon snack (two for the toddlers), and milk. For those who prefer, we have an arrangement with an outside food service to provide lunch each day for the older children. The cost of the lunch service is \$75 per month or \$5 per day if you opt for certain days. There is an additional \$6 charge for any day you do not bring a lunch for your child if you are not signed up for lunch (it happens sometimes, but we don't want it to happen too often!).
- A cash fine of \$10 for each 15 minutes or portion thereof is paid directly to the staff for late pick-up of a child. Continual late pickup will result in dismissal from the School. If you know you won't be able to pick up by 6pm, extended care until 6:45pm is available on most days at an additional charge of \$100 per month or \$10 per use. However, you must notify the School by 4pm if you plan to use this service. Extended care is not available on days where we close early, have staff meetings or school events at the end of the School day, and other days that will be announced in advance. *NOTE- Extended care may not be available during COVID-19 or other health emergencies. Please contact the Office if you wish to arrange extended care or want to determine if any restrictions are currently in place.*
- While we understand that families sometimes need part-time and temporary options, the School does not offer these options. Unfortunately, the high cost of operating a child care program necessitates that all of our spots are completely utilized on a full time basis.

The Application Process

If you are interested in a spot at the School, please fill out a waitlist form on our website and then contact us to come to an open house or arrange a tour. After you have had a chance to see the School and you have paid the waitlist fee, you may be 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 after he or she is born. Every time you contact us, it is written on your waitlist form. Most people worry that they are going to be bothering us if they are regularly e-mailing or calling. You're not! We enjoy getting to know prospective families and it helps us determine which candidates continue to be interested in a space.

It is very difficult to give estimates as to when we are expecting openings. The enrollment process is rather tricky, especially for infants. Current families get priority for siblings and this can take up a lot of the openings. On the other hand, families sometimes move or have other changes in circumstance that causes unexpected openings. As a result, spots can become open much sooner or later than we anticipate. This is why we encourage families to have several care options in place and to keep in touch about your interest and flexibility. Typically, offers of enrollment will start at the beginning of a month. Flexibility in your enrollment start date can improve your chances of getting an offer.

When a spot becomes available for your child, we will notify you to see if you are still interested. If you are, we will send you a formal offer email. You will need to send in a non-refundable deposit equal to one month's tuition to secure your spot. You will also receive a packet of information including an application, a copy of this handbook, 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!

Current Family Waitlist

Expecting a new addition to the family? Be sure to get on the waitlist as soon as you know that you will want an additional spot at the School. While we do our best to accommodate our current families, we cannot always guarantee that a spot will be available. The best way to ensure a spot is open for you around the time of your preference is to get on the waitlist as soon as possible. Simply fill out the online waitlist form and mark that you are a current family. When the form is completed and the waitlist fee is submitted (which gets credited to your registration fee at the time of enrollment), you have secured your place in line for an available spot. While we cannot make any guarantees, when enough notice is given, we are typically able to have spots available for current families within one to two months of the requested start date.

Our Contact Information

Rock Spring Children's Center
6555 Rock Spring Drive, Suite 150
Bethesda, Md 20817
301-530-4526
www.RockSpringChildrensCenter.com

Our Tax ID Number is 52-1854414

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

Or, you may contact one of us directly:

Carrie Meyer
Executive Director
Carrie@RockSpringCC.Com

Sandra Acklin
Operations Director
Sandra@RockSpringCC.com

For more general issues or concerns about the School, you may also contact:

Shaun Rose
School President
Shaun@RockSpringCC.com



2022-2023 Tuition Agreement & Waiver

We acknowledge that we received a copy of the 2022-2023 RSCC Parent Handbook and that enrolling our child at the School obligates us to pay the listed tuition and to follow all School policies and procedures.

We understand that RSCC is a non-profit community of families and caregivers and that our enrollment means that we will be active participants in school events (**especially the annual fundraiser!!!**) and other efforts to create a great environment for our children as well as future children.

We agree to follow all policies and procedures described in the handbook (**especially the traffic and parking policies!!!**) as well as any additional policies and procedures communicated by the Administration throughout the school year.

We understand that failure to follow school policies or procedures may result in fines, immediate suspension or termination of enrollment at RSCC and forfeiture of deposit.

In consideration for our family's enrollment in RSCC programs and receipt of services from RSCC we further agree as follows:

- We acknowledge that, if we choose to have our child enter RSCC property and/or participate in RSCC programs, we do so voluntarily and at our own risk and that we hereby release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue RSCC, its officers, agents or employees ("Releasees") from and for any and all liability claims, demands, actions and causes of action of any kind or nature. This includes, but is not limited to, claims of negligence, arising out of, or related to any loss or personal injury, that our child or any member of our family may sustain from contracting, or being exposed to COVID-19 or other infectious disease.
- This release and waiver of liability shall be governed by the laws of the State of Maryland. We agree that if any portion of this release and waiver of liability is found to be void or unenforceable, the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

- We acknowledge that this release and waiver of liability will be binding on our family members, spouse, heirs, assigns, personal representatives and anyone else entitled to act on our, or our child's, behalf to the extent and that my signature below shall be deemed as a release, waiver, discharge and covenant not to sue the Releasees to the extent set forth above.

- By signing below, we acknowledge that we have read and fully understand the release and waiver of liability as set forth above and have signed voluntarily and under our own free will.

Signatures: _____
Parent / Guardian #1

Parent / Guardian #2

Car #1
Make & Model: _____
License Plate: _____

Car #2
Make & Model: _____
License Plate: _____

Other cars that will be regularly picking up or dropping off: _____

*Please note that both parents/guardians must sign this form except in the case of single parent families. A completed form must be returned to the office as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, August 26, 2022 (or by your child's first day for families that join during the school year). We will need to suspend enrollment until the form is returned if you are late (so please do not put it off).