

*Updated July 2014*



*Heritage Child Development Center  
Heritage Clubhouse  
Children First Child Development Center*

## ***Parent Handbook***

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## **OUR STATEMENT**

WELCOME to the Cheers School Family Child Development Centers. Here at CHEERS we are dedicated to a bright inviting atmosphere filled with Learning, Literacy and Love. We are pleased that you have chosen to entrust your child's care and development to us. We offer children a daily experience that is stimulating, challenging, fun and above all, safe.

We believe that children naturally want to learn and that the learning experience is maximized in an environment where the child feels safe and secure. At CHEERS, it is our mission is to provide an environment "Where children know love, sense security, and embrace education."

All CHEERS staff members are expected to meet and/or exceed our high standards and in return we provide them with competitive wages, excellent benefits, continuing education and professional respect.

### **Therefore, we hold our staff members responsible for:**

- Building your child's self-esteem and confidence by being respectful, positive, accepting and caring.
- Keeping the child development center environment safe, healthy, clean and inviting.
- Providing a curriculum that is age appropriate, hands-on, creative, up-to-date and one that will encourage your child to become a life long learner.

### **As an organization, we strive to:**

- Create a welcoming environment for the children, parents and surrounding community.
- Maintain an environment that is clean and safe.
- Establish a partnership with the parents through effective communication that includes caring and helpful feedback.
- Operate a child development center based on teamwork, and one which includes caring, empathy and respect.
- Participate in yearly training to maintain professionalism.
- Provide care and learning that meets your child's educational and developmental needs and abilities.
- Operate in a fiscally sound manner.
- Operate under the established policies and procedures as set forth by the CHEERS School Family Board and those of our state licensing agency.

As always, we welcome your feedback on our performance and encourage suggestions as to how you feel we can improve our program or our facilities. Please do not hesitate to contact your Center's Site Supervisor to discuss any concerns you may have.

### **OUR COMMITMENT**

#### ***To the Children....***

Our first and main commitment is to the children in our care. We are committed and focused on providing each child with a stable, healthy, learning environment. We offer each child a safe place to learn and experience new things.

#### ***To the Parents....***

Our second commitment is to the parents of the children in our care. We are committed to sharing your child's daily activities with you through open verbal communication and reports sent home daily. We ask that the lines of communication be kept open and that you speak with us if you have any questions or concerns.

#### ***To the Community....***

Our third commitment is to the surrounding towns and communities. We are committed to keeping our school property clean and up to date. We pride ourselves on our grounds and buildings and want to make every effort to share what the children are doing with the community.

#### ***Licensing***

Each of the CHEERS School Family Centers is licensed by the appropriate state agencies. Heritage and The Clubhouse are licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services. Children First is licensed by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. Parents have the right to report any complaints or problems to their respective licensing agency.

### **OUR MISSION AND COMMITMENT:**

***To provide a learning environment where children know love, sense security, and embrace education.***

## **HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION**

The CHEERS School Family is incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. It began as a single child development program. In 1997 Heritage opened its doors serving 24 children. By 2005 the CHEERS school family was serving close to 300 families in three locations. The following is a small glimpse at our Family History.

- September 1997 - Heritage Child Development Center (HCDC) opened in Parish Hall of Grace Episcopal Church in Berryville, VA. The program served 24 children while waiting for the new building to be completed.
- June 1998 – The new building was completed with a capacity of 82 children.
- June 2001 – Heritage expanded to a second site for its school-age program. Thus beginning The Clubhouse which served 35 children.
- April 2002 – The Children First Child Development Center (CFCDC) opened as a “sister center” in Kearneysville, WV. Our Children First center served 99 children.
- December 2004 – the final documents were signed by the respective Board of Directors to legally merge the two organizations. The two organizations collectively served 247 children between the ages of six weeks and 12 years.
- January 2005 – The Heritage Clubhouse expanded to a second building on site, bringing the Clubhouse capacity to 63 children and the CHEERS School Family to 275 children, with expansion capacity of a half-day program to 295 children.

Both Heritage and Children First were founded by local businesses and individuals who were committed to bringing quality child care to our growing communities. Without their commitment of time, talent and resources the child development centers would not exist.

A Board of Directors determines all financial, legal and corporate policies and decisions. An Executive Director oversees the senior management of the centers and serves on the Board. Each center has parent representatives on the Board, as well as representatives from their respective communities. A site supervisor handles the day-to-day operations of the Centers and manages a staff of an administrative assistant, teachers, assistant teachers, mentors, and a chef.

All parents are members of the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). The school principal holds monthly PIC meetings to coordinate programs such as parent participation, fund-raising and special parent or staff events.

## **THE STAFF**

We are enormously proud of our staff, and feel that it is their professionalism and commitment to the children that greatly contributes to the success of our Centers. The Site Supervisor, along with a senior staff member in charge, directs the daily

operations of each Center. Teachers, assistant teachers and mentors are employed for each of our classrooms. We also have our own in house chef.

Unfortunately, the child care industry nationwide experiences a high turnover rate. But, here at CHEERS we strive to treat staff members as professionals. Our teacher's qualifications and training exceed state licensing requirements. We have high standards for our staff and we promote from within our organization for those willing to take part in the training and activities appropriate to the position. The CHEERS School Family promotes and rewards excellence.

The site supervisor makes all staffing decisions, following the CHEERS School Family policies and procedures. If a staff member gives notice or is terminated, the principal will attempt to notify parents and a replacement will be sought as quickly as possible. Any questions or concerns about staffing should be directed to the site supervisor. Please remember that due to confidentiality this should be handled in private.

### **STAFF RECOGNITION**

Childcare workers are notoriously under-paid and under-appreciated, especially in light of the stress of working with small children. If you are pleased with your child's classroom staff please take a few minutes and tell them.

Throughout the year, the administration does several things to recognize the wonderful work that our staff do each and every day. Every quarter, we honor one of our staff members at each location as STAR Performer and once a year a Caregiver of the Year is chosen. Parents are strongly encouraged to nominate a staff member who has gone "above and beyond" for their child. Nominations can be found on the lobby counter, as well as on our web site. At Christmas, the Board designates a sum of money for a holiday bonus and the parents are asked to contribute to this bonus in lieu of gifts. *This is strictly voluntary.* Once the monies are collected, the administration designates the funds based on the staff member's employment status (i.e. fulltime, part time) and tenure at the center. As a non-profit organization, these donations are tax-deductible

### **ABUSE**

We will NOT tolerate any type of abuse toward children, staff or parents. Center employees are legally responsible to report any suspicions of child abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional) or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). Professionals from the surrounding communities annually provide training to teach staff members what to look for and how to respond. These reports are kept confidential and are intended to protect all involved.

## **ANNUAL FUNDRAISING**

CHEERS is a non-profit organization and we must raise funds to meet our ever rising costs. Current tuition only meets approximately 84% of our total operating budget. Each year our Centers solicit the help of parents in requesting donations and participating in PIC fundraisers. The purpose of this fundraising is to support the needs of our programs and our staff. Donations collected from parents, grandparents, businesses, and the community are used to help support specialized staff training, classroom supplies, and other ancillary services.

## **THE UNITED WAY**

Our Centers are members of The United Way. Each Center participates in the United Way's Capital Campaign and parents can make tax-deductible donations directly to The United Way or through their employer and designate them to any one of our three Centers.

## **COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN**

CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 300 CFC campaigns throughout the country and internationally to help to raise millions of dollars each year. Pledges made by Federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season (September 1st to December 15th) support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world. **Our CFC number is 97171.**

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **WAITING LIST**

Each of our centers enrolls on a first come first serve basis. When a classroom reaches capacity, the center will maintain a waiting list. Enrolled children and their siblings and the children of staff members will be given priority. Employees of certain local businesses have secondary priority status over families living in the community, who do not work for one of the participating businesses. Priority will always be given to full-time enrollments.

If a space is not available when requested, parents have the option of being placed on the waiting list. Our waiting list requires a \$40.00 non-refundable registration fee, and completed waiting list application. It is critical that this document be completed, even for unborn children. Parents should remain in contact with the

center's office during the waiting period. Your waiting list application will stay active until a space for your child has been secured or you request to be removed.

When a space becomes available the waiting list is reviewed. If a space becomes available before the time it is needed, the parent has the option of paying full tuition to reserve the space or they can wait for the next open space.

Please understand that we cannot guarantee any child's enrollment even if placed on the waiting list. Maintaining appropriate classroom enrollment according to age is a priority to meet licensing standards and the Site Supervisor has sole authority in making decisions related to enrollment.

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

A non-refundable fee of \$40.00 per child or \$60.00 per family is charged to all new applicants at the time of registration. This fee is also charged to families placed on the waiting list. (The Clubhouse Summer Camp registration fee is \$40.00.) A yearly re-enrollment fee of \$20.00 is billed in September. Every fall each family will be asked to update their child's files and emergency information.

### **DEPOSIT**

At the time of registration, all parents are required to make a \$100.00 tuition deposit, per child. This deposit will be returned to the parents when a written two week's notice for withdrawal is given and paid for. Any unearned Helping Hands fees must be paid to close out your account. On the child's first day of enrollment, payment is due for the tuition period during which the child enrolls.

### **ADMISSION PROCEDURE**

Prior to enrollment, parents must bring their child in for a tour of our center. If enrollment is requested the Site Supervisor will review the enrollment packet with the parents, collect the \$40.00 registration fee and the \$100.00 deposit. An enrollment date will be set and the first tuition payment will be determined and is then due on your child's first day of attendance.

### **The Following Forms MUST Be Filled Out, Signed and Returned Before Your Child Can Begin Class At Any Of Our Centers**

- Emergency Card
- Proof of birth (Original Birth Certificate or Official Hospital Certificate)
- Confidential Family History
- State Medical Form & Immunization Record
- Enrollment Agreement
- Financial Agreement
- Helping Hands Participation

- USDA Enrollment Form or Eligibility Form
- Legal or Custody Papers
- Recent Photo of the student

### **HEALTH EXEMPTIONS**

Immunization records are a state requirement for enrollment. In the event that there is a medical reason for not immunizing a child, a note from the child's medical professional must accompany the enrollment materials. Likewise if there is a Religious reason for not immunizing your child we will need a note from the child's medical professional stating that they are aware of your reason and that the child has otherwise been found well and is fit to attend public school.

### **ADMISSION POLICY**

Our Centers extend open enrollment to all children from six weeks to twelve years of age, without regard to sex, race, or creed. All children are enrolled on a trial basis. If after the trial period, it is decided that we cannot meet the needs of your child, a two week notice will be given to enable you to find other care.

Children with special needs will also be considered for admission. Before being accepted into our Center the Site Supervisor may confer with the licensing agency to ensure that ratios are being met in regards to your child's diagnosis. Other specialists may be brought in to determine if the Center can meet the specific needs of the child. It is our desire to see each child cared for to the best of our abilities, but we do understand that we will not be the right center for every child. If this is the case we will be open and honest with you and will help in any way we can to help find alternate care for your child.

### **PARENT VISITS**

Parents are always welcome at our Centers any time. Children may be taken for walks or to lunch by their parents. We do, however, request that you inform your child's teacher of your plans and we ask that you sign your child in and out of his or her classroom.

### **CLASSROOM ADVANCEMENT**

Children advance to the next class based on their age and development. The teaching staff will evaluate the child and then the Site Supervisor will speak with the child's parents to discuss the child's progress. At that time it will be determined if the child is developmentally ready to advance. Parents are asked to voice their questions and concerns at this time and will be asked to sign a transition letter. A transition procedure and timetable will be set at this time.

## **TUITION**

The Board of Directors determines tuition annually. Tuition is paid twice a month and is due on the first and the fifteenth of each month. If tuition is not paid within two business days of the due date, a late fee of \$20.00 will be assessed on the third day, and your child will not be permitted to attend the following day. If tuition is not paid by the fifth day and a payment plan has not been formed, enrollment will be terminated and the deposit forfeited.

Our Centers have a **no cash** policy and will only accept personal checks, automatic withdrawals, business checks, money orders and credit cards. There will be a \$25.00 fee assessed on any check or credit card that is returned for insufficient funds. If more than two checks are returned or a credit card is declined two times, we will require that your child's tuition payments be made by money order or a different credit card.

We realize that parents have special circumstances that exist concerning paydays or child support payments that fall on days that are inconsistent with tuition days. However your child's tuition account must be maintained with timely payments and the Site Supervisor will be glad to assist you in coordinating a payment schedule that will keep your account current or prepaid. If a family experiences temporary difficulties, see the Site Supervisor to discuss a possible scholarship. *Any variation in payment amounts or schedule must be in writing and signed by both the Site Supervisor and parent.*

A discount is offered to families with more than one child enrolled in the Centers. A 10% discount will be applied to the older child's tuition (full-time enrollments only). There is no discount for: vacations, school closing, holidays or sick days.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Our Centers participate with Social Service agencies to provide care to low-income families. In Virginia, this program is funded through the Virginia Department of Social Services. In West Virginia, this program is funded through Mountain Heart. Parents who believe they qualify may speak to the Site Supervisor who will direct them to the appropriate agencies. These low-income spaces are limited and have specific policies associated with the respective programs. The Site Supervisor will provide guidance for families who qualify.

The Board also designates a significant percentage of all fundraising income for moderate income families in need. This might be as a one-time grant to help a family through a difficult time or it may be a moderate, ongoing reduction in tuition

to help a qualifying family. Please see the site supervisor, as needed, for more information.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

If you choose to withdraw your child from our Center you must give a two week paid, written notice. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your original deposit. If proper procedures are followed, your deposit will be returned within 4-6 weeks of your child's last day. Any unearned points from the Helping Hands program must be paid to close your account with us.

### **COLLECTIONS**

Occasionally, a family will withdraw due to financial reasons. If this is the case, please see the Site Supervisor to see if your family qualifies for tuition assistance or a tuition payment plan. Any variations to tuition must be made in writing and signed by both the parent and the Site Supervisor.

We will do everything we can to work with families facing financial problems, but any unresolved past-due balances will be turned over to a collection agency within 30 days of withdrawal. The parent will then be responsible for any and all fees including court costs, associated with the collection of this debt.

### **HELPING HANDS PROGRAM**

Our Centers rely on parent participation. To insure that all parents share in this responsibility, our Centers have a point system, where families are expected to earn a maximum of 12 points per year for performing a variety of tasks in the Center. Part-time parent points are pro-rated. Points may be earned by serving on committees, providing upkeep and maintenance to our buildings and grounds, computer assistance or any number of other tasks. If a family does not earn all of their points by year's end the remaining points will be billed along with tuition. In the event that the family withdraws from our Center the unearned points must be paid to finalize your account with us.

Each of our Centers has a bulletin board listing tasks and items that are needed in our classrooms. Simply complete the task or purchase the item needed and return your helping hand and receipt to the front desk to have the points credited to your account. Parents find this a great way to meet other parents, and participate in the school family. In order to help you keep track of your points you will receive a quarterly update on your remaining points.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (PIC)**

Parents are encouraged to participate in our Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). The site supervisor coordinates monthly meetings and all enrolled parents are invited and encouraged to attend. These meetings are held at the end of the day during operating hours.

At these meetings parents and the site supervisor will coordinate programs such as parent participation in fund-raising and special parent and staff events. This provides a valuable way to be involved in your child's early education and a way to earn Helping Hands Points. Due to confidentiality, we feel that it is not appropriate to bring up program staffing or policy issues at the PIC meetings. Any such concerns or questions must be brought privately to the site supervisor.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Children First and Heritage Child Development Centers are open from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM. Our Clubhouse Center is open from 6:30AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday during the summer and from 3:00 PM to 6:30 PM during the school year. Our Centers follow a strict hours of operation policy. No child will be accepted into our centers before 6:30 AM and likewise you are expected to pick your child up on time by 6:30 PM. *Inquire about extended hours care with your site supervisor (5:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.). Additional fees will apply.*

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Our Centers will strive to be open for most snow days, however, when a major weather system is predicted, there is a chance that we may need to close. On these days the Executive Director will confer with the site supervisors and a decision about operations will be made by 5:15 am.

Our operating schedule will then be announced on WINC 92.5. Messages will be posted on the parent hotline voice mail at 955-4195 at Heritage & the Clubhouse and 728-1100 ext. 8 at Children First. You can also find the information on the center's Facebook page and web site ([www.CheersSchoolFamily.org](http://www.CheersSchoolFamily.org)). You may sign up for text alerts through Remind101. Please see your Site Supervisor for more information regarding the text alert service.

If our Centers have already opened and worsening weather conditions necessitate an early closing, call the phone numbers listed above for operation updates. When possible, we strive to give families 2-hours notice of early closure.

On inclement and severe weather days, it is required that all children come in within 90 minutes of the scheduled opening time so that meals can be planned and

adequate staffing is available. If a child arrives after the 90 minute period, care cannot be guaranteed if staffing is inadequate.

### **TARDINESS & ABSENTEEISM**

As a child development center, the educational part of our day happens between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Parents are asked to bring their children in no later than 9:00 AM. Children need consistency and it is in your child's best interest to be present and to participate in the learning experience. If your child will be late or not attending class for the day, we ask that you call the Center by 9:00 AM to inform our staff. Parents are responsible for payment even if the child does not attend.

If your child has a mid-morning doctor's appointment we ask that you DO NOT bring the child in during lunch or nap time. This is very hard and unfair to the other children. Most of the children in our centers come in very early and need the rest period after working and playing all morning. When a child is brought in late and does not sleep he or she often ruins nap time for the other children.

### **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

If you are late picking up your child there will be a fee of \$5.00 per every 5 minutes after 6:30 PM. The late pick-up fee will be assessed by either the site supervisor or senior staff member in charge and will be charged to your next billing cycle.

In the event that parents expect to be late due to extreme weather or other conditions, please make alternative arrangements to have your child picked up by one of the people listed on your child's Emergency Information Card.

Late Pick-up can be frightening to a child. It is extremely important that parents notify our Center of the estimated time of late arrival or of alternative pick-up arrangements so that our staff can comfort and assure your child. If the site supervisor does not hear from a parent within fifteen minutes of closing, the staff will try calling the parents and if needed, calling the emergency contacts on your child's Emergency Information Card.

If no one can be contacted, the Department of Social Services will be contacted and asked to take possession of the child. In this case, phone messages will be left for the parents and information on these arrangements will be posted on the Center door.

### **HOLIDAY CLOSINGS**

Our Centers will be closed on the following holidays if the holiday falls on a weekday. If there is to be a change in dates you will be notified at least two weeks in advance.

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Our Centers are also closed two days a year for In-Service days. These days are used to completely clean the centers and for staff training. Generally the days are as follows.

- In May – The Friday before Memorial Day
- In October – The Monday of Columbus Day

### **PART-TIME CARE**

Part-time care, although convenient for some, is extremely difficult on most children due to the inconsistency. Our programs are based on full-time enrollment and developing a strong school family. Children need to feel as though they belong, which can be trying for a part-time child.

However part-time care may be offered for children over the age of two, if the space is available. If a particular classroom is under-enrolled, two children may share a full-time slot, as long as they complement one another. For example, a child enrolled Monday, Wednesday and Friday can be matched with a child enrolled Tuesday and Thursday. If a complement cannot be maintained and the classroom is reaching capacity, the following will happen:

1. Parents will receive two weeks notice that a full-time space is needed.
2. The site supervisor will work with parents to identify a child to complement your child's attendance. Parents are encouraged to find a complement on their own.
3. If a complement cannot be found, parents have the first option at the full-time space. If parents are not interested in the space, they will need to make other arrangements for their child's care.

### **TERMINATION POLICY**

Our Centers reserve the right to terminate care of a child in any of the following instances. This in no way meant to be an all inclusive list.

1. Consistent late payment of tuition or a disregard of payment agreements.
2. Consistent late pick-up of your child after our 6:30 PM closing time.
3. Failure to comply with our Center's sick policy
4. Any display of physical, verbal or psychological abuse to a child, staff member or parent.
5. Failure to keep all medical, emergency and personal information updated.
6. Continual disregard for our Center's policies and procedures.
7. Any inappropriate behavior or condition, deemed by the Board, which could result in harm to the children, parents, staff or reputation of our Center.
8. Solicitation of staff to work in another position either for you or for another center.
9. When, in view of the Center's administration, the relationship between a parent and a staff member is such that it adversely impacts the provision of services for the child.
10. Non participation in the Helping Hands program or failure to make payment for Helping Hands fees.
11. A pattern of injurious treatment by a child to other children or staff members.
12. The inability of the Center to meet a child's needs or a parent's expectations.

### **EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Parents who wish to withdraw their child for a temporary leave of absence in excess of two weeks or longer have three options.

1. Parents may stop sending the child, but continue to pay 100% of the tuition rate to guarantee re-entry on a specified date. A space will be reserved for a maximum of two months.

2. After giving the site supervisor two weeks written notice of intent to temporarily withdraw a child, parents may discontinue payment. The child's space will be offered to another child, but the child's name will remain at the top of the waiting list for re-enrollment at a later date.
3. If the family can find another child to fill the space during the leave of absence a time sharing arrangement can be accommodated.

All parents must put in writing, a request for a Leave of Absence indicating one of the three options listed above. The request must be submitted to the site supervisor two weeks prior to the date of withdrawal in order to re-enroll the child.

### **PARKING LOT SAFETY**

Our Center's parking lots are ONE WAY. Please pull into and out of the parking lot headed in the correct direction. Please park in the designated spaces only. Our Centers DO NOT assume responsibility for theft or damage of personal property. Due to health and safety concerns, please comply with the following:

- Please turn off your vehicles motor.
- All children must be brought into the center.
- TEACH your children to never leave the building without you.
- HOLD your child's hand when walking into and out of the Center.
- BE ALERT for moving vehicles and teach your child to be alert.
- BE CAREFUL of banging doors. Help children with heavy doors so little fingers are not mashed.
- ALWAYS remember to correctly buckle your child into a child safety seat or booster seat. *If the center is aware of your child riding in a car without the proper child safety seat, it is obligated to report the incident to Child Protective Services or the local police department. Due to liability, the centers do not keep extra safety seats at the schools.*
- Our centers are SMOKE-FREE facilities. This includes the parking lot, center grounds, and inside the building.

### **ABOUT OUR DAY**

#### **ARRIVAL**

Parents are required to personally escort their child into their classroom each morning. Please remove child's outerwear and hang it in his cubby, sign in your child on the sign-in sheet that is posted in each classroom. Infant parents must also complete the top half of the Daily Report located on the child's clipboard.

Parents are asked to inform staff of any schedule changes such as late arrival or early pick-up so accommodations can be made. Always let the staff know if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child. Please put all requests, reminders and other changes in writing so that the staff has a visual reminder of what needs to be done during the day.

If your child is having a difficult time separating in the morning, speak with the staff about establishing a Good-bye Ritual that may help to comfort your child. Be assured that once you leave, the child will be personally comforted and cared for by a staff member until the child is settled into the routine. Feel free to call about your child later in the day.

### **THINGS YOUR CHILD WILL NEED**

- We ask that you provide your child with at least one clean set of clothing to keep on hand here at our Center. This should include underwear, socks, shoes and outerwear. Make sure that all clothes are seasonally appropriate.
- a blanket
- a supply of diapers and wipes
- diaper cream
- formula or breast milk if not using center supplied formula

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Each classroom follows a daily schedule and lesson plans that have been determined by the teacher and reviewed by the principal. These are age appropriate and will change somewhat as your child grows. Lesson plans are posted in the hallway near each room and we encourage parents to review them weekly to familiarize themselves with weekly themes and daily activities.

Throughout the day, children will transition through indoor and outdoor activities, group and individual activities, quiet time and structured and free play. These routines are very important to the growth and development of your child.

When you and your child are ready we will do everything we can to aid you as you potty train your little one. When a toddler exhibits signs of readiness such as the ability to follow sequenced directions and an awareness of bodily functions, the teacher will discuss potty training techniques with the parents to help the child become successful. We stress cooperation, consistency and commitment on the parent's part. At no time will a child be bribed, punished or degraded for toileting accidents. Two part clothes, elastic waist bands and simple fasteners on clothes make toileting easier.

## **MEALS**

Meals will be served by the Centers in the morning, mid-day and afternoon. Menus are posted on the parent bulletin board in the front lobby. Our Centers serve a balanced diet that meets or exceeds USDA food requirements. Therefore, children are served center-prepared foods and are allowed substitutions only under the following conditions:

- Children with special diets will be accommodated when a physician's note detailing the food sensitivities is given the site supervisor.
- Dietary restrictions based on religious beliefs will be honored with a written statement from the parent or clergy.

**Due to food allergies, all Centers are nut-free schools.**

## **REST TIME**

After an active morning and full lunch, the children rest on cots for approximately 2 hours in the afternoon, as required by licensing regulations. They may either sleep or lay quietly. Soft music is played and the children are taught to calm themselves to sleep. Staff members will be relieving each other for lunch breaks during this time while the children rest.

A favorite blanket must be brought in each Monday. On Friday all blankets are sent home so that they can be laundered.

## **EMERGENCY CARDS/ AUTHORIZED PICK-UP**

Our Centers anticipate that there will occasionally be times when personal pick-up is not possible. The child will only be released to an alternate person under the following conditions.

- Parents may notify the Center by phone of any individual authorized to pick up the child, who is listed on the Emergency Card.
- Written notification with parent's signature, personally presented by the parent, is the only acceptable notification if your child is to leave with someone not listed on the card.
- A photo ID must be presented at time of pick-up.

*Please do not give your security key card to any emergency contacts.* The individual picking up the child must provide proper identification, register as a visitor and be escorted through the building. Children will not be released to

anyone without proper verification. Please remember to keep the Emergency Card current.

If a parent is prohibited from picking up a child, the custodial parent must provide a copy of the custody order to be kept in the child's file. Without this documentation, Center Administration cannot prevent the other parent from leaving with the child. Our Centers will attempt to contact you if this occurs.

Our Centers will not engage in disagreements between family members.

### **SECURITY**

As required by our licensing agency, the local police and fire departments have visited our Centers, reviewed the policies and procedures, and are very familiar with our programs and the layout of our buildings. The preschool sites have security doors and silent alarms and Heritage has security cameras. *Please keep the red door closed at all times and do not hold the door for another parent unless you know them.* Notify a staff member if you have concerns about any suspicious activity or individuals. Do not hesitate to dial 911, if necessary.

### **EMERGENCIES**

All center staff members are trained on how to respond to both man-made and natural emergencies. Disaster drills are done routinely to assure that our staff knows how to respond swiftly in an emergency. If, for any reason our Center must be evacuated, the children will be taken to the following sites:

- Heritage Child Development Center – Children and staff will be moved to the Mary Hardesty House immediately behind the center. If something catastrophic occurs, children will go to the Greenfield Senior Living.
- Children First Child Development Center – Children and staff will be moved to R & L Landscaping. If something catastrophic occurs, children will go to AMS around the corner.
- Heritage Clubhouse – The children will walk to the Enders Funeral Home across the street.

### **ACCIDENT OR INJURY**

In the event that your child is injured, first aid will be administered and an accident report will be completed and placed on your child's clipboard. The reports must be signed and then a copy is kept at our Center.

If an injury requires medical attention you will immediately be notified to pick-up your child. If the injury requires calling 911, you will be notified to meet a staff member and your child at the hospital.

Heritage Child Development Center and The Clubhouse emergencies would be transported to the Winchester Medical Center.

| Children First would transport to Jefferson Memorial.

It is extremely important that all emergency card information and numbers are kept up to date and that your emergency contacts understand who they are and what they are expected to do.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Our Centers employ the Conscious Discipline philosophy of Dr. Becky Bailey which incorporates recent brain research that proves that the brain operates most efficiently when it feels safe. The teacher's number one job is to keep the children safe, emotionally, as well as physically.

Children are taught that words have power. Words are more powerful than hands that hit or teeth that bite. We focus our energy on teaching children what we want them to do. Our staff is trained in Conscious Discipline and incorporates seven skills into all aspects of the classroom and curriculum.

| One of the skills is Composure, related to anger management. Each classroom has a "SAFE PLACE" where children can retreat. There are icons for a Star, Balloon and a Drain for children to choose from. These are simple activities that teach children to breathe deeply, to oxygenate their blood, and get them back into a more calm state. I Love You Rituals are another technique, including songs and simple finger games that teach cooperation, gentle touch and nurturing. *If you have questions about the work of Dr. Bailey, log on to [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com).*

### **DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS**

While our staff does not make diagnosis about possible developmental issues, they do sometimes have concerns about the children. Our goal would then be to get your child the help that he needs to correct any issue. The site supervisor would set up a parent conference to discuss our concerns. At that time, the principal may be able to recommend that the area school system be contacted on how best to handle the child's issues.

### **CHILD BEHAVIOR ISSUES**

The centers take behavior issues seriously. Should a pattern of aggressive behavior be determined, a parent / teacher conference will be required. A behavior plan will be developed on an individual basis.

### **POLICY REGARDING SEXUALITY**

The Clubhouse at Children First Child Development Center and Heritage both have a policy regarding Child Interaction and Discussion of Sexuality. This policy is made available to parents as a separate handout.

### **ILLNESS**

State licensing requires that that all Centers comply with or exceed the following criteria in order to maintain the highest standard of health possible in a daycare setting. Parents are **NOT** to bring children to the Center with any of the following conditions:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or more at CFCDC or a temperature of 101 degrees or more at HCDC & Clubhouse (the difference is due to State licensing and health department standards)
- Unexplained rash
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Flu-like or severe cold symptoms
- Any potentially contagious conditions

This is not an all inclusive list. If any of these symptoms become apparent while your child is in our Center, you will be called to pick up your child as quickly as possible.

Due to the fact that these illnesses spread so quickly in a child care setting, you will be required to pick up your child within 1 hour of being contacted. After the one hour time limit, there will be a \$5.00 per 5 minute late pickup fee charged to your account.

Your child may then return only after being symptom and fever free without the aid of medication for 24 hours.

**We ask that you let us know if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness.** This will allow us to alert other parents and hopefully stop the spread of the illness.

## **ALLERGIES**

Please notify the staff of any allergies or sensitivities that your child experiences. If these conditions are of a nature that requires medical attention or medication, please be sure that the staff has the proper instructions and medical notification on hand to care for your child.

## **MEDICATION**

We have staff members in each Center who have been trained in Medication Administration. These individuals are the only staff members who can give your child his medication.

All medication must be brought to the Center in the original dated container. The label must show a current date, and your child's name. We CANNOT give out of date medication.

Any over the counter drugs must state that the product can be given to your child's age group on the label or we cannot give the medication your child.

All medications must have a completely filled out and signed medication form for us to administer the medication to your child.

A special long term medication form must be filled out by your child's health care professional for us to be able to keep medication on hand for your child.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are a wonderful time for children and we enjoy helping the children celebrate. You are more than welcome to celebrate your child's special day with his class at the Center. Please be sure to notify your child's teacher at least one week in advance that you plan on bringing in a special snack for your child's birthday. Due to the impact of sugar and additives on some of the children we request that all drinks be 100% juice. Cupcakes, cakes and cookies are fine, but due to allergies and the growing concern of food borne illness we now require that all treats be purchased from a bakery or store. This helps us keep children with allergies safe. **All items must be nut-free and processed in a nut-free facility to ensure the safety of children with allergies.**

## **CONCERNS**

At CHEERS we try hard to meet the needs of all our children and families, but we cannot meet all needs. In the event there is a problem or concern with a child's care, first express that concern to the child's teacher and then the principal. If the

issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, document the concern in writing and direct it to the Executive Director who will schedule a meeting within ten days. If the issue is not resolved within ten days, the written matter shall be brought to a committee of the Board of Directors for final resolution.

If you have a policy issue to be brought to the Board, all requests should be in writing and delivered to the Center at least one week prior to the next scheduled Board meeting. Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month. The Board will not consider a program, curriculum or staff issue. The site supervisor and Executive Director will resolve those issues.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is a difficult task in child care, but our Centers take it seriously. Please feel free to call the Center, schedule a conference or write a note about any issues that impact your child or family.

**STAFF IDENTIFICATION** – All Center personnel wear an apron or a staff shirt and an ID badge. This is for your convenience and your child’s safety.

**BULLETIN BOARDS** – The Center has a Parent Bulletin Board hanging in the lobby for parent notices and information. Each classroom has a hallway bulletin board. Please check these regularly. It is your responsibility to stay informed.

**CLIPBOARDS/MAILBOXES** – Each child has a clipboard for daily reports hanging above their cubby. There are also assigned mailboxes in the lobby for receipts, notices, flyers and newsletters. Likewise, please use clipboards as a central location to place information for staff use.

**DAILY REPORTS** – Classroom staff will complete a brief summary of each child’s day. These will be posted on the classroom cubby clipboards. These are used to give parents positive information. If there is a concern, the staff will contact parents directly.

***NOTE! Write It Down*** – Please write down any information related to your child. The Center cannot be responsible for verbal messages. At times, there is simply too much commotion and staff members may get distracted. If it’s important to you, put it on paper!

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

CHEERS School Family Federal Tax ID # 54-1825504

Mailing address: Heritage Child Development Center  
PO Box 846  
Berryville, VA 22611

Street address: 224 Mosby Road  
Berryville, VA 22611  
540-955-4194 (Office)  
540-955-4195 (Parent Hotline)  
540-955-4196 (Fax)

The Clubhouse  
1065 West Main Street  
Berryville, VA 22611  
540-955-6305 (Office)  
540-955-6304 (Fax)

Mailing address: Children First Child Development Center  
PO Box 344  
Kearneysville, WV 25430

Street address: 95 Children's Way  
Kearneysville, WV 25430  
304-728-1100 (Office)  
304-728-1100 ext. 8 (Parent Hotline)  
304-728-1119 (Fax)

The CHEERS School Family Main Office  
PO Box 873  
Berryville, VA 22611  
540-955-1338 Executive Director  
[CheersExecutiveDirector@verizon.net](mailto:CheersExecutiveDirector@verizon.net)

CHEERS School Family Parent Handbook updated

07/2014