

Dear Parents,

We are pleased that you and your child are part of Capitol Park Early Learning Center. The staff is committed to make this a successful and rewarding time for you and your child.

The following Parent Handbook outlines all the important areas of our program. Please read it carefully and bring any questions you might have to the attention of the Center Director. The policies and procedures identified in this book were written to ensure that we have the tools we need to offer a quality childcare environment for your child and a financially secure business operation.

Please keep this book handy so you can refer to it whenever you have a question. You will receive any changes, deletions, and additions to this handbook in writing.

Once you have read and understand this handbook please sign the “Adult Expectation Agreement” the “Parent Confidentiality Statement” and the “Parent Handbook Verification Statement” and return it to the Center Director.

Once again, WELCOME.

Our Mission Statement

To provide quality, affordable, childcare services for working families.

Center Goals

- To provide a developmentally appropriate environment in which young children may grow to their fullest potential.
- To offer a curriculum that provides a balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities, large group and small group learning opportunities, and quiet and active play times.
- To offer an environment that is safe, clean, and child-orientated.
- To foster the development of positive relationships among peers and adults.
- To provide families with the needed support to allow them to prosper.

Philosophy

Capitol Park Early Learning Center (CPELC) is dedicated to providing high quality child care to you and your child. We will provide them with a safe environment that encourages them to explore and grow at their own pace.

Parents play a key role in their child's success at Capitol Park. We gather information from you that will help us to provide a program to meet your child's individual needs. We encourage parents to be a part of their child's day. Parents are welcome to come and be a part of their child's day whenever convenient and possible for them to do so.

We believe our program provides your child with daily experiences which are in accordance with their ethnic and cultural background. It is our goal to provide each child the right to express him/herself in a safe and secure environment and to be allowed the freedom to make choices.

Our teachers share our commitment to providing you and your child quality care. We hire only those that are dedicated to helping your child grow and learn. We facilitate employee growth with ongoing training, evaluation, and supervision. Our teachers need to have an understanding of how children grow and develop. We value the input of our teaching staff and treat them as professionals.

Our program is here to ensure that your child develops a positive self-image and a lifelong love of learning. We are committed to this goal and hope that you will join us in making your child's experience one that will last a lifetime.

Operational Policies

Who Can Enroll At Capitol Park?

We accept children between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years of age at our center. The parents of these children embrace our developmental approach to learning. No child shall on the basis of race, color, religious belief, cultural heritage, national origin, gender, sexual preference, political beliefs, and disabilities, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any Center program or activity.

Children with special needs will be considered on an individual basis and the Center will accept children as long as we are assured that we can fully meet the child's needs and the needs of other children in the group with reasonable accommodations. In all cases, the child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to themselves or to other children.

If the Center has no immediate vacancies, a waiting list is maintained for future enrollment vacancies. Vacancies are filled on a first come, first serve basis with consideration given for group composition.

Center Hours of Operation and Holidays

The Center is open from 6:30am-5:30pm., five days a week, twelve months a year except for the following holidays each year.

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Independence Day	3 o'clock Christmas Eve (if weekday)
Labor Day	Christmas Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (to be used as staff Professional Development Day)	
Staff Professional Development Day – Fall (date to be given with 60 day notice)	

Should traditional holidays occur during a weekend or be rescheduled for a long weekend, we will observe the holiday in accordance with the National Holiday Bill. **When Christmas Day, December 25th, falls on a Tuesday, the center will be closed all day Monday, December 24th.**

Weather Conditions

Weather closings are announced on local television and radio stations. Closing of local public school does not mean the center will be closed. We will do everything within our power to offer care to families and children. We will not put the health and safety of our staff and children in jeopardy.

Discipline Policy

The goal of Capitol Park Early Learning Center is to provide a positive program for children and their families. We will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation. We will not use discipline methods that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs. At times, children may have difficulties getting along with others and expressing themselves. When this happens, they let us know in a variety of ways and sometimes they act out their frustration with undesirable behavior. Following is an outline of how we provide guidance.

To provide the best possible experiences for your child, we will communicate with you in a variety of ways. These include home visits, telephone contact during available hours and greeting you when picking up and dropping off your child. We will get to know you and your child. In this way, we can work together to build on the child's strengths. Parents are encouraged to ask questions about their child's behavior and the guidance being used in the classroom. Communication between staff and families is vital to forming a working partnership that benefits everyone.

We use positive reinforcement to build self-esteem in children and celebrate their successes. We praise, give "thumbs up", and handshakes, pats on the backs and "high fives" on a regular basis. When challenging behavior is mild, "planned ignoring" is used.

When all the above methods are used and staff decides that more methods are needed to insure success for you and your child further approach is initiated.

When children are engaged in behavior that is harmful to themselves, others, or the classroom you may be asked to pick your child up from the program. If the behaviors still continue and staff intervention is not effective you may be asked to withdraw from the program.

Preventing and Reporting Child Abuse

The protection and safety of children is an important goal of Capitol Park. All staff members receive training in the area of prevention and reporting. **CENTER STAFF ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS AND ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ANY SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE.** Suspected cases may include: unexplained (or vague history for) bruises, burns, or fractures, frequent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing for weather conditions; unmet physical, emotional or medical needs; unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual behavior; or history of abuse/neglect reported by the child. Reports are always confidential and made with the child's safety in mind. Please contact the center staff if you have questions or concerns.

As required by law, all staff working with young children are screened for any previous child abuse charges.

Adult Expectation Agreement

One of the most important ways that staff can reinforce positive behavior is to demonstrate positive behavior for children. Children learn how to behave and interact with others by watching how significant adults in their lives express themselves and perform daily tasks.

Because of this, it is important that adults provide a good example and are good role models for the children. Both parents and staff share this important responsibility. Therefore, a certain level of conduct is expected of adults in the classrooms, adjacent buildings, hallways and parking lots located close to the center.

These expectations include no profanity, threatening, shouting, cell phone use in the center or adult discussions of highly personal nature. If a family member needs to discuss a personal matter with the staff, please call the center before the children arrive or after the children leave. Discussing personal issues in front of the children can be highly disruptive and unsettling.

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is essential to the quality of services provided for families. Information that families share with Center personnel and volunteers is used to provide the best experience for families and children.

We are committed to respecting and safeguarding all information about the families we work with. To ensure this, each Center employee/volunteer signs a statement of confidentiality. In addition, children's records are kept in locked files at all times.

Children's experiences, relationships, behaviors, development, challenges and successes are an important part of their Center life. Because parents, volunteers, and consultants are members of the team they are expected to maintain confidentiality. This means that as a volunteer what you can see and hear about children and families needs to be held in strict confidence. Also, any information you see or hear about staff must be kept confidential.

When everyone associated with Center maintains confidentiality then the integrity and reputation of families, staff, and the program is maintained.

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome at the Center at anytime. Prior notice to management or teachers is not necessary, however, be aware that there are certain times of the day when children are napping and visitors in the room can disturb their rest.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

If you have a grievance regarding any part of the center or its operations, you should take it to the Center director and they will investigate your grievance to determine what action should be taken. Grievance decisions are subject to appeal in writing of the President and Treasurer of the Board of Directors.

Capitol Park Early Learning Center (CPELC) believes that employees should have an opportunity to express their concerns or disagreements with decisions affecting their employment. We believe that open communication and productive problem solving fosters better working relationships. Therefore, it is our policy to deal directly with our employees in resolving any problems, differences, or disputes which may arise with respect to company policies, practices, or other matters affecting your work. CPELC may refuse to accept a grievance that is not submitted on a timely basis.

To implement the policy described above, we have adopted the following two-step problem solving procedure:

Step 1. If you have a work-related problem or complaint, you should promptly make an appointment with your supervisor, if applicable, the Center Director or Assistant Director to discuss the matter. When you meet with your supervisor, please describe your problem or complaint as clearly as possible and use specific examples.

Step 2. If you are still dissatisfied after you receive the center Director's/ Assistant Director's response, you should promptly submit a written request for review to the Center's Board of Directors who will carefully consider the matter and issue a written determination (after a meeting if appropriate). Requests should be made within thirty days of the incident or adverse action. Grievance filed past the 30 day measure may be denied. Your request should include a copy of your request to the center Director a brief description of his/her response. The decision of the Board will be final.

All complaints regarding ethics or legality, including illegal discrimination or harassment, will be handled and investigated in as confidential manner as circumstances permit. No employee will be penalized or retaliated against in any way for making complaints in good faith.

Parking

Handicap parking spaces are only to be used when a sticker is visible. The city does patrol the lots and may issue tickets.

Parking is available to the parent/guardians in the parking lots that are adjacent to the playground. **There is absolutely no parking allowed in the alley directly in front of the building.** The alley is city property and your car will be ticketed and towed. Any parent found parking in the alley will be given a warning. After that you will be charged \$10.00 for every violation. The \$10.00 fine will be paid before your child can return to the Center.

Please be extremely careful when driving through the Center's parking areas. There are small children walking through the lot. **DO NOT** leave your car running while you are inside the building.

Smoking

Capitol Park Early Learning Center is a smoke free environment. We ask all adults to be positive role models for our children. There is no smoking allowed on the Center's grounds, this includes the parking lot. **Please extinguish all smoking material prior to leaving your automobile.**

Enrollment Policies

Capitol Park Early Learning Center strives to provide families with a thorough preview of our agency and its' requirements for enrollment.

The following components are required prior to enrollment.

- A tour of our facility (preferably with your child present)
- Allow time to observe and have your child interact within the potential classroom.
- A meeting with the Center Director to discuss your needs and concerns and to answer any questions.
- Determine tuition rate and eligibility for funding.

These additional components are required before the day of enrollment prior to your child beginning care.

- A current physical exam (dated within the last 12 months)
- Immunization card completed and signed by your child's physician.
- Completed enrollment packet (includes emergency telephone numbers, pick-up information, and parental agreement forms.)
- If state subsidized copy of "Notice of Decision" worker's name and telephone number.
- Deposit or Co-payment.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

- Your child must be signed in upon arrival and signed out upon departure. The computer located at the basement entrance is used for this purpose.
- Children must be escorted by their parent/guardian into the Center and their classroom. Parents will assist their child with removing their coat and placing in their cubby/locker. Contact with the teacher is encouraged so that the teacher is aware of the child's arrival. **All children are expected to arrive at the center no later than 9:00 am.** Arrival by 9:00am ensures that your child is receiving the full benefit of their classroom program. It also automatically includes your child in the lunch count.
- You will be asked to fill out an Emergency/Pick-up Authorization Form naming people that **YOU** will allow to pick-up your child if you cannot, due to an emergency.
- Any person authorized by you to pick up your child must be 18 years of age or older.
- NO ONE will be allowed to pick up your child from the Center at anytime unless the person is on the emergency release form and presents a photo I.D.
- If you send an individual to pick up your child they will need to present a photo I.D. DO NOT give this person your access code.

We understand that occasional conflicts may occur, (medical appointments, transportation difficulties, etc.) If this does occur, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call the Center by 9:00am to inform the staff of the child's late arrival.

Late Pick-up

Your child needs to attend the full session each day. It is important for children to develop good habits for being on time.

- If your child is chronically tardy, a conference will be scheduled to discuss how the situation can be corrected.
- Your child needs to be picked up at the scheduled time each day. When children are left at the Center after closing time, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child is charged. This late fee must be paid prior to the child returning to the center. If a child remains at the Center for thirty (30) minutes after the closing time and no one can be contacted by phone to pick-up the child, the staff will call Child Protective Services.
- Continuous lateness may result in suspension of childcare services.

Custodial/Non-Custodial Pick-Up Policy

The Capitol Park Early Learning Center respects the rights of both custodial and non-custodial parents. Both parents will be allowed to pick-up and designate pick-up persons for their child (ren) on their assigned days, unless the following are on file at the Center.

1. Court order contact limitation papers.
2. Guardianship papers.

If a parent who is NOT allowed to pick-up a child comes to the Center (and the above paperwork is on file) the parent will be asked to leave and told that the police will be called if they do not leave. If the parent tries to leave with the child, the staff will not attempt to physically restrain the parent or the child, or place themselves in danger to keep the child at the Center. The Center will notify the police immediately.

Withdrawal

If you find you no longer need child care services, we ask that you provide a TWO WEEK NOTICE. In the event the notice is not provided, you will be financially responsible for the two weeks.

We reserve the right to ask a parent to withdraw a child from the Center on a temporary or permanent basis after other avenues of reconciling the difficulties have been exhausted. These circumstances will include, but are not limited to the following.

- Consistently picking up a child after closing.
- Failure to make timely payments of fees.
- Excessively disruptive or negative behavior by the child or parent.

Items Your Child Will Need at the Center

There are a number of things you should bring with your child to the center. Every child at the Center needs a complete change of clothing. Infants and toddlers often need two or three changes. **BE SURE TO LABEL EACH ARTICLE OF CLOTHING THAT IS BROUGHT TO THE CENTER WITH PERMANENT MARKER.**

Parents of infants, toddlers, and older children when appropriate are asked to bring a daily supply of disposable diapers and wipes. We change children often, so plan on 8-10 diapers for an infant and at least 6 for toddlers and twos.

If parents choose to bring in a can of formula they must also supply **four** bottles of their choice. These bottles must have a cap. If bottles are not brought in the infant staff will use the bottles we have on hand. All bottles will be washed and sanitized at the end of the day.

Children in the infant room are fed on demand/cue. We will do our best to follow the schedule you would like for your child. However, if your child is showing obvious signs of being hungry before the scheduled time we will feed him/her. It is for this reason that we need to have an adequate supply of either breast milk or formula on hand.

Outdoor Policy/Clothing

Weather permitting, all children play outside each day. Fresh air and large gross motor activity is good for children and helps reduce the spread of illness. If children are too ill to play outdoors, children need to remain at home. For extenuating medical needs, a doctor's note is required for a child not to participate in outdoor play (to stay indoors). Two adults must be on the playground at all times. If there is not an extra adult available your child will be placed in another classroom while his or her class goes outside.

Outdoor activities will be canceled when the wind chill is 0 degrees or below or the heat index is 98 degrees or greater. Please send your child to the Center in comfortable, sturdy shoes, socks, and clothing that may get dirty. Outerwear (hats, mittens, scarves, boots, etc.) should be sent daily as appropriate for weather.

Potty Training Policy

When your child begins to show signs of being "ready" to begin potty training we will discuss with you how you would like to proceed. This is an important milestone in a child's growth and development and we want to approach it as we do all milestones, relaxed and prepared.

If both teachers and parents agree to start this training you will need to supply the following items pull ups, underwear and several changes of clothing including socks.

Tuition Policies

Capitol Park Early Learning Center is a community service non-profit agency. The Center is funded in part by the United Way, State, County, Federal and private pay clients. Your child's fee is determined on a weekly basis. Tuition payments are the Center's main source of revenue. Each funding source has requirements for attendance that directly affect tuition payment. It is your responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to these requirements. Private pay families are expected to pay their weekly tuition payment in full on the first day their child attends the Center. Tuition is based on a 52-week calendar. No credit will be given for any Holidays the Center is closed.

Please make sure you sign the Payment Contract found in your enrollment packet. A new Payment Contract needs to be signed whenever there is a change in your funding source, co-payment and payment schedule.

Center Hours: 6:30-5:30 Monday-Friday

Tuition Rates

The Capitol Park Early Learning Center only offers full-time childcare.

Infant/Toddler Program: \$180.00 per week
Two/Preschool: \$150.00 per week

Children may attend up to 10 hours a day. If you exceed 10 hours you will be charged for the additional hours.

Registration Fee

A \$25.00 non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of enrollment or to hold a slot.

Deposits

A deposit equal to one week's tuition shall be required upon acceptance for admission to the program. If you receive outside funding assistance your deposit is equal to your determined co-payment. This deposit secures the child's placement at the Center and will be applied to any unpaid fee when the child is withdrawn.

Late Payments/Delinquent Tuitions

Your tuition is considered late if it is not paid by noon Wednesday of any given week. A ten-dollar late fee will be added to your account. An account is considered delinquent if it is not paid by Friday of any given week. Your child can not return to the Center until you have met with the Center Director to make arrangements to satisfy your account.

Returned Check Fee

If a parent pays tuition with a check and that check is returned to the Center as NSF, the parent will be charged a return check fee of \$20.00. The fee plus the amount of the check must be paid to the Center in a money order before the child can return to the Center. If this happens twice the parent will be required to make all tuition payments with a money order or cash.

Communication and Participation

How Will We Communicate About My Child?

Infant and toddler parents will communicate with the primary teacher concerning their child's day. Parents of infants, toddlers, and two-year old children can expect written communication daily. Parents are expected to pick up this daily communication form from their child's clipboard. This communication includes important information about your child's physical bodily functions as well as his or her disposition.

The teachers in the preschool and pre-kindergarten programs will give written feedback on a regular basis. Conferences will be held twice a year with parents. Talking with your child each day about experiences and feelings will bridge your child's day between the Center and home.

Each classroom has a Parent Information Bulletin Board. Teachers prepare lesson plans that are posted on this board. These plans are usually based around a weekly theme. Books, activities, songs related to the theme will be outlined on this lesson plan. Take a minute each week to review this form and we look forward to your contributing any information on themes for which you hold a special interest. Also listed on the Parent Information Bulletin Board are a class schedule, a teacher schedule and articles of interest.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors oversees Capitol Park Early Learning Center. Members on this board hold expertise in the areas of education, human resources, law and finances. It is very important to have parent participation on this board. As an active parent you will often see and be part of what happens in the Center that other members of the board typically do not have the opportunity to witness. If you are interested in holding a seat on the Board of Directors please make your interests known to the Center Director. The Board meets quarterly.

Health Practices

Capitol Park Early Learning Center strives to offer families and children comprehensive quality child care services. This goal often requires us to exceed the minimum rules and regulations set forth by the State Department of Human Services. State regulations require that children at the Center have an annual physical exam and that their immunizations are up-to-date for the child's age. We will notify you a month prior to the expiration date for your child's physical. It is your responsibility to get the physical up-dated and returned to the center. NO child will be allowed to attend the Center without a current physical or immunization record.

During the course of the year your child will participate in various screenings provided by various agencies. These screens include weight, vision, hearing, speech, language, developmental, mental, and dental. Mental health professionals will be observing each classroom and working with center staff to ensure that the children are part of an environment conducive to learning and growing. As concerns are identified, parents/guardians receive a referral letter discussing results and recommendations if more testing or treatment is needed. The center will follow-up with families that receive a referral recommendation and that information will become part of your child's file.

Medication

Whenever possible we ask for you to arrange for medications to be given at home. Ask your child's physician to adjust the dosage so that you can administer the medications prior to attending the center and upon arrival home. If home administration is not possible the following guidelines must be followed:

- The Center must have written doctor's orders with administering instructions.
- The Center must have medication in the original container with a pharmacy label. This must be left at the center during the duration of time/days the medication is to be given. Most pharmacies will dispense medications in two containers, one for home and one for school, if requested.
- The Center must have written parent authorization requesting and authorizing staff to give medication as prescribed.
- If the medication is ongoing, the parent must sign a new form monthly allowing for continuous dispensing of the medication.
- "Over the Counter" medications are not permitted unless authorized by a physician. Tylenol or Motrin will not be given if the child is running a fever.

Staff specifically trained to administer medication will give the medication to your child. Staff will record when the medication was given and the dosage. Another staff member will witness administering of medications. Parents must keep staff up-to-date of any medication changes throughout the year.

Illness and Exclusion Policy

Keeping children well is hard work. To help keep all children as healthy as possible no child may come to or remain at school when they have the following.

Active Head Lice:(live lice in the hair)	Must provide proof of treatment, (Box or bottle of product used) to return to the Center.
Cold, Sore Throat, Cough: (prevents the child from comfortable participation in program activities or demands a greater need for care than staff can provide.)	Cough and drainage must be under moderate control and child must be well enough to participate in routine classroom activities as determined by Center staff.
Vomiting, Diarrhea (3), and Loose Stools (3):	Must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning.
Temperature of 101 degrees or greater:	Must be fever free for 24 hours <u>without medication</u> before returning.
Chicken Pox:	Out of school for 7 days and all pox must be scabbed and dry.
Red or Draining Eyes:	Symptom free, doctor's clearance
Skin Rash:	Symptom free, doctor's clearance
Yellow Skin or Eyes Gray/White Stools:	Doctor's clearance
Stiff Neck:	Doctor's clearance
Serious Illness, Injury:	Doctor's clearance
Hepatitis A:	Out of school for 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice, under treatment, and approved by a physician for return to the classroom. doctor's clearance.

If a child becomes ill at school, the parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up as soon as possible. Before an unexpected illness occurs, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan in place to pick up or have the child picked up, and alternative child care arrangements made, if needed. All persons that may pick up a sick child must be listed on the Pick-up Authorization form.

Safety Practices

If a child experiences an unusual occurrence or is injured during the Center hours, a written Incident Report is completed. Parents/guardians are asked to sign the report to verify they have been notified of the occurrence/injury. Parents will receive a copy of the report. In the case of a head injury, parents will be provided with a list of signs and symptoms to watch for in their child as head injury symptoms may develop several hours after the injury occurs.

Emergency Situations

The following are plans that the Center will follow during specific emergency situations. Staff are trained regularly on these procedures.

Blizzards: In the event of a blizzard, parents will be contacted if a severe weather warning has been issued. Children will be kept warm, safe, and fed while in the building.

Chemical Spills: In the event that a chemical has been spilled, the Poison Control Center will be called immediately. We will evacuate children outside, if the spill is inside, or keep them inside if the spill is outside. We will wait for information and directions from the Poison Control and contact parents.

Earthquakes: In the event of an earthquake the Center Director will advise staff to take their children in the center classroom and to remain there until the earthquake subsides. Parents will be notified for pick-up.

Fire: The fire alarm will sound and/or verbal notice will be given by a designated staff person(s) for children to exit the building through a door closest to their classroom. Teachers will be responsible for bringing their classroom attendance list and for evacuating the building as quickly as possible. The Center Director will call 911 and check all classrooms, bathrooms, storage areas, etc. for any children who may be still inside.

Flood: In the event that flood warnings have been issued, all staff and children will be notified by the Center Director to move upstairs to the Fellowship Hall and/or Church Sanctuary. If evacuation is necessary, we will go across the street to East High School. Parents will be notified to pick up their children at East High School.

Intruders: In the event that an intruder is on the premises, 911 will be called immediately. The Center Director will move all children into rooms that have doors that can be closed: i.e. infant room, bathrooms, office, and preschool II room. Doors will be closed and blocked. Children and staff will remain in these rooms until the police have demonstrated to us that it is safe to come out.

Intoxicated Parents: If a parent arrives to pick-up their child and is obviously intoxicated, we will ask that parent to remain in the office, while we call a person listed on the emergency contact sheet to come and pick-up the child and the parent. If the parent refuses and takes the child, we will contact the police department.

Lost or Abducted Children: If a child becomes lost or abducted, the parent will be notified immediately and 911 will be called.

Power Failure: If the Center should lose power for more than 1 ½ hours we will begin to contact the parents from the church phones or cellular phones. Classrooms will be provided with flashlights. Without adequate heat, air conditioning, or cooking appliances, we would not be able to provide quality care to the children and every effort will be made to request parents to pick-up their child.

Tornado: The director(s) will be responsible for keeping an eye on the skies, and an ear to the weather radio. If the weather should become severe, verbal notice will be given to staff. If Polk County issues a tornado warning and/or the sirens go off, the Director will notify the teachers to move the children into the inner rooms of the Center. There may be times that we move the children prior to the sirens being sounded due to high winds and/or other potential danger. An emergency pack will be kept at the Center containing flashlights, a battery operated radio, bottled water and snacks. Children will return to their rooms when the warning has expired.

Nutrition Practices

Children receive breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Menus are posted on the classroom and bulletin boards.

Children are encouraged to try new foods but are never forced to eat them. Food is never used as a reward or punishment. Meals will be served family style. Your child will learn to pass food, take the desired amount of each food, engage in conversation during mealtime, and clean up at the end of the meal. The times listed below are approximate:

Meal times:

Infants:	On Demand	
Toddlers:	Breakfast	8:00 – 8:30
	Lunch	11:00 – 11:30
	Snack	2:30 – 3:00
Two-Year Olds:	Breakfast	8:00 – 8:30
	Lunch	11:00 – 11:30
	Snack	3:00 – 3:30
Preschool:	Breakfast	8:30 – 9:00
	Lunch	11:30 – 12:00
	Snack	3:00 – 3:20

Religious Food Preferences

Religious preferences will be accommodated although the variety of food offered may be limited. Parents need to put religious requests in writing. Center staff will be happy to work with you to fill out the proper paperwork.

Food Allergies

If a child has a FOOD ALLERGY or intolerance Center Staff must have a note from the child's doctor explaining what foods the child may not have and what foods can be substituted. Please bring a small picture of your child so it can be posted on the food allergy list for easy identification. A food allergy form is posted in the office.

Foods From Home

Recent reoccurring outbreaks of Hepatitis have made it necessary to institute a center policy that forbids families to bring foods that have been prepared at home. While we welcome your desire to participate in our programs we ask that all food items in the Center be either store bought or prepared at the Center. Birthday and other celebrations can be just as festive if you purchase store bought treats or send in a cake mix for the children to prepare. Please try to keep good nutrition in mind when you are planning these celebrations. Juice pops, ice cream, and even fruit salad can be a wonderful treat.

Curriculum

Health and Safety

Capitol Park Early Learning Center reinforces the learning of healthy habits. Classroom activities include: outdoor and classroom safety, tooth brushing, hand washing, fire and poison safety, nutrition, automobile and personal safety, expressing feelings, and solving conflicts positively.

Nutrition

Good nutrition helps build healthy children. Nutrition education will be available to both parents and children. We encourage and promote healthy attitudes toward nutrition by teaching the Food Pyramid and "We Made it Together" food activities. Cooking is a fun and educational activity that parents and children can share together.

Infant/Toddler Programs

We focus on activities that teach the babies about themselves, others, their surroundings, and the world outside. Caregivers work with infants to develop a trusting relationship that fosters healthy social and emotional development, as well as language acquisition and motor control. Toddlers are encouraged to build on and move toward independence. Problem solving, understanding abstract concepts, toileting, and cooperation are introduced. The child's language development is a key objective of this level.

Two-Year Old Program

We focus on language in our two-year old classroom. This program looks at the individual child, and strives to meet his or her needs rather than the child meeting the programs needs. We stimulate both language and cognitive development through the use of puppets and props that motivate and capture the interests of your child. All programs are implemented individually or in small groups.

Preschool Program

The learning program or curriculum in each of our classrooms is based on principles of child development, individualization for each child, and culturally relevant practices. Each classroom is arranged in a variety of learning centers to include blocks, table toys (manipulatives), dramatic play and housekeeping corner, art, science, math, literacy, sensory (sand and water), computer, music and movement, and outdoors. As experiences are planned for children in each of the learning centers, the teachers will take into account each child's interests, strengths, needs, and family and cultural background.

Individualization of the program for each child is an important aspect of our program. Each child then has an Individual Child's Plan that includes specific goals and strategies for accomplishing the goals. Individual goals for children are implemented within the daily learning program and supported by the family. Center staff and the parents on an on-going basis review this plan.

Field Trips

Children over the age of three will have the opportunity to participate in Center planned field trips. Field trips give children the opportunity to learn about and explore the surrounding community. A field trip might be a short trip to the neighborhood grocery store or post office or a longer trip to a zoo, museum, or park. Parents are provided advance notice in writing about all center field trips. Specific information concerning the field trip such as destination, times, type of transportation, what to wear and bring along is included in the advance notice.

You will receive a permission form for your child for each field trip taken by the center. You must return the signed permission form to the center by the deadline date, indicating whether your child will participate on the field trip. If you do not want your child to participate on the field trip, then he/she will stay at the center and be placed in another classroom.

For most of our field trips we need parent volunteers to help supervise, which will help make the experience successful and safe for everyone. Two to three children are assigned to one adult during the field trip. Staff takes along a backpack that includes first aid materials and copies of the Emergency/Pick-up Authorization Form in case parents need to be contacted for an emergency.

Recording Children in Our Center

The children entrusted to the care of Capitol Park are entitled to privacy as well as confidentiality. In order for parents to understand the education of their children, staff will take photographs and video *to be used during conferences or for use within the center ONLY*. Pictures, audio recording or video recording of children in our care to be used outside of the center for any reason is strictly prohibited.

Anti-Discrimination Policy for the United States Department of Agriculture

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture, (USDA), civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs).

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audio tape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program of USDA's TARGET center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, the program information is available in languages other than English.

Adult Expectation Agreement

Center staff and family members share the same goals for our children. We want them to learn, develop, and become independent. One of the ways that the center works toward this goal is to provide a classroom that is a safe and loving environment for all children. The daily schedule, the child-size furniture, the way that all of us talk with the children, contributes to their learning and helps them develop a positive feeling about themselves.

Because of this, it is important that adults provide a good example and are good role models for the children. Both parents and staff share this important responsibility. Therefore, a certain level of conduct is expected of adults in the classrooms, adjacent buildings, hallways, and parking lots located close to the center.

These expectations include no profanity, threatening, shouting, cell phone use or adult discussions of a highly personal nature. If a family member needs to discuss personal matter with the staff, please call the center before the children arrive or after the children leave. Discussing personal issues in front of the children can be highly disruptive and unsettling.

If all adults associated with the classrooms do not follow these expectations, consequences will need to be enforced so that the children can experience a positive learning environment.

As a valued Center team member please read and sign the following statement to acknowledge your agreement.

I understand that adults are expected to provide a good example and be a good role model for children in the Center's classrooms. I also understand that consequences will be enforced, if these expectations are not met.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent Confidentiality Statement

It is important to keep all information shared with the Center staff strictly confidential and a release of information must be signed to release this information.

Parents must keep all information concerning other Center staff, volunteers, children and families confidential.

My signature at the bottom of this page indicates that I understand the above information and agree to the following confidentiality.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent Handbook Verification Statement

I have read and agree to all the information and expectations outlined in this handbook. I have asked any questions that I have and received answers to these questions that I might have. My signature signifies that I will follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in this handbook while in the center or classroom, on any field trips, at all parent meetings and gatherings, and other Center sponsored events or activities.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

