

Stepping Stones

Child Development Center



Parent Handbook

11006 Warwick Blvd. #420, Newport News, VA (757)595-9096
12946 Jefferson Ave., Newport News, VA (757)369-2528
795 Pilot House Drive, Newport News, VA (757)706-3844

Hours of Operation

The hours of operation will be from :

5:30 am – 12:00 am., Monday – Friday : Pilot House Locations
5:30 am – 12:00 am ., Monday – Saturday : Warwick & Jefferson Locations

Stepping Stones CDC will be closed on

New Years Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Memorial Day
July 4th
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day & Friday after
Christmas Day

****We will be closing early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve (or may be closed for those days). The times will be Posted. Any changes in the holiday schedule will be posted ahead of time.**

****Staff Development days – The center may be closed for 2 days a year for professional development. A month notice will be given to all parents to help accommodate for alternative care for the day.**

Our mission at Stepping Stones Child Development Center is to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment with positive role models committed to instilling self-esteem and respect for all. To administer developmentally appropriate activities which contribute to the optimal physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional growth and development of all students.

WE OFFER:

- Infant/Toddler program, a Two year old program , a Three and Four year old preschool program, and Before & After School programs.
- Full-Time/ Part-Time
- State Licensed Program
- Age Appropriate Curriculum
- Childcare assistance from the Department of Social Services is accepted.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in.

In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking).

In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors and they notice relationships between things.

The Goals of Our Curriculum

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We're teaching them *how* to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. We're allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We're giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development,

Social Development:

- Getting along in Groups
- Learning responsible behavior (such as sharing)
- Expressing feeling appropriately
- Respecting others

Emotional Development:

- Promoting positive self-image & self-confidence
- Fostering cooperation
- Developing independence, initiative and trust
- Experiencing art, music, drama and dance
- Developing independence and self-control

Cognitive:

- Providing experiences with math and science
- Promoting curiosity about the world by encouraging observation, exploration and experimentation
- Building reading and writing skills
- Fostering imagination and creativity

Language Skills

- Listening, speaking, following directions
- Children learning numbers, relational concepts and classification skills leading to problem solving

Physical:

- Developing large and small muscle skills
- Increasing body awareness
- Improving eye-hand coordination
- Exploring rhythm and movement

To achieve our goal, we feel that an open line of communication with children, parents, and staff is essential to meeting the needs of the individual child and to ensure the best quality of care for your child. We invite and encourage communication between staff and parents. The director is always available to discuss any concerns you may have. Thanks you for sharing your child with us!

1. Registration Procedures:

Parents are encouraged to visit the center before enrollment. Each new parent must complete enrollment forms and pay required registration fees.

Enrollment Forms include: Child Registration Forms & Parent Contract
USDA Food Program Forms
Documentation to prove child's identity
Immunizations & VA Health Form

2. Authorized and Unauthorized Persons:

It is important for parents to notify us in writing of any persons authorized to pick up their children. Anyone picking up your child should be prepared to show proper identification. ***We must have appropriate paperwork such as custody papers on file if a parent is not allowed to pick up the child.

3. Arrivals and Departures:

Sign in and Sign out; It is mandatory for parents to sign in each child upon arrival, and to walk the child to his/or her appropriate classroom. It is also mandatory for parents to sign out the child and notify the staff member upon departure. Children are not allowed to leave the building without a designated person to pick them up. A sibling must be 16 years or older to pick up your child.

***Please try to stick to the same arrival times as much as possible. We schedule our staff according to the times that the children are usually here. If your child is normally here at 10:00, and comes in at 7:00, it will throw off the ratios for the room, thus causing a staff member to have too many children.

4. Late Pick Up Charge:

Parents who pick up their child(ren) after the regular closing time of 12:00 am are charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child, payable to the center upon pick up. Payment is due no later than Friday of the same week. If arriving after closing Time becomes a consistent problem, termination of care may result.

***If a parent is more than 30 min. late, and none of the emergency contacts can be reached, law requires that the center call social services to pick up your child.

5. Payment of Fees:

Tuition is due on Monday of each week. If payment is not received on Monday, a late payment fee of \$20.00 will be applied to your account. If payment is not received by Tuesday upon arrival, your child will not be accepted for care. **All rates are based on no more than 10 ½ hours per day.** Any child in care for more than 10 ½ hours on a particular day will be charged an additional fee.

DSS Monthly Copay's – Due by the 5th of each month

Registration Fees are charged upon enrollment, and are due annually thereafter (usually charged during the month of August.)

6. Parent Contract:

A contract will be signed each year. This is a legal agreement between Stepping Stones Child Development Center and the parent's or guardian's to ensure proper payment and expectations. A new contract must be signed anytime there is a change in childcare services.

7. Absenteeism:

When your child cannot attend the center due to sickness, holidays, loss of power, or inclement weather (ie, snow, etc.), the center is unable to reimburse or exchange for another day.

8. Vacation Time:

Each family will have 2 weeks a year that they can use as vacation time. The rate for the week will be reduced to 50% off of regular tuition. The vacation schedule will run from Jan. to Dec. So if you register your child during the second half of the year (beginning after June), you will only have one vacation week to use until the first of the year.

9. Returned Check Fees:

Returned check Fee - \$55.00 (After receiving a returned check, it will be at the center's discretion as to whether or not the parent will be allowed to continue writing checks for tuition.)

10. Delinquent Accounts:

Every effort will be made to collect all fees owed. When no response is made to a weekly reminder, further collection procedures will be taken if needed, as well as dismissal from our program. Stepping Stones may use a collection agency or court proceedings to collect delinquent accounts. The parent or guardian will be responsible for paying all additional costs incurred to collect the amount owed.

11. Dis-enrollment from child care center:

Children will be dis-enrolled from the center for the following reasons:

- a. Parent's request, with a 2 week written notice given to the director
- b. Failure to pay appropriate fees in a timely manner
- c. Failure to turn in appropriate paperwork required for enrollment, including Health Form
- d. When upon evaluation, the lead teacher and the director concludes that the services offered are not conducive for the need of the child's physical, emotional, or educational needs
- e. If the child's behavior becomes a danger or threat to the safety of others.

12. Emergency Procedures:

In case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called immediately. If CPR or air obstruction clearance is needed, a staff member will begin the process. We call the parent's or guardian's home and work numbers immediately. If unable to reach one of the parents or guardians, emergency contacts will be called. If the child needs to be taken to the hospital, the ambulance will transport them to the nearest available medical facility.

13. Inclement Weather:

In the case of inclement weather such as snow or other hazardous weather conditions, A message concerning closure will be left on the center's answering machine. Also, if possible a note will be posted on the front door. Every attempt is made to remain open, however the safety and well-being of the children and staff of our center comes first and foremost. Tuition rates will remain the same for missed days due to inclement weather.

15. Curriculum:

The preschool classes currently use a combination of the ABEKA curriculum and Applebaum curriculum (which is theme based).

This curriculum focuses on phonics as well as values and character education. There are Some religious aspects that are incorporated such as bible songs and bible stories. This is non-denominational, and only teaches basic things such as saying grace before lunch and snacks, learning to be kind, sharing, obeying, telling the truth, and to be helpers. All class activities are age appropriate. These will include but not be limited to activities for creative expression, music and movement, development of fine and gross motor skills, language and communication skills, and social skills. As a center, we do celebrate Holidays. We do art work as well as other activities pertaining to the Holiday, including parties. We do understand that some families have different beliefs and do not celebrate Holidays. But as a Center we do not exclude a child from the classrooms planned activities if the child is in attendance. If you wish for your child not to participate in a certain activity, you are more than welcome to pick up your child before the activity begins.

16. Age appropriate Policies

Infant Room: Formula: All bottles must be pre-made, and labeled with the child's name and date. All baby cereal and baby food will be provided by the center. Around 10-11 months, table food will be introduced.

Sippy cups will be introduced, and children are weaned off the bottle.

Children must be on table food and sippy cups when moving to the Toddler room.

Shoes need to be introduced, as children must wear shoes in the Toddler room.

Toddler Room: Sippy cups are used, no bottles.

Table food is used, no baby food.

Whole milk is used, unless there is an allergy to milk. (Need Doctor Documentation if there is an allergy.)

Shoes must be worn.

Two's Room: No pacifiers.

No sippy cups, regular cups are used.

Potty training is introduced. (Must be completely potty trained to move up to the three's class.)

17. Rest Time:

Rest time is from 12:30-2:30 each day. Cots/Mats will be provided. (Cribs for infants).

Parents are to provide 1 crib size sheet (as a cot cover) and 1 small blanket for your child.

DSS Regulations state that each child must have a bottom and top for their cot.

**If a child is brought in during naptime, they need to be prepared to take a nap.

18. Toileting:

Children who are not toilet trained will be changed no less than every 2 hours, or immediately when soiled. Parents must provide disposable diapers, pull ups and wipes

daily. Diapers, pull ups and wipes boxes must be label with the child's name. Cloth diapers may be used only if the child has a doctor documented allergy to disposable diapers. We will work with children to become toilet trained in our two year old room as long as there is consistency between the parent and the caregiver. The parent must realize that we cannot do it alone. All children must be fully toilet trained in order to move up to the three's classroom.

As per DSS regulations, soiled clothing is placed in a plastic bag to be picked up by the parent. We are not allowed to clean or wash soiled clothing.

19. Medication:

The staff will administer medications to your child only if a medication authorization form is completed. The medication form is good for only 10 days. Any medication that needs to be taken for more than 10 days will require a long term medication form filled out by the child's physician. Correct dosage for your child's age must be printed on the bottle in order for us to administer. We cannot administer any medication that has directions such as "Under age 2, consult a doctor" unless we have written directions on dosage from your child's doctor.

All emergency medications, such as inhalers, nebulizers, and epi-pens may not be administered without the medication authorization form completed by a doctor. The authorization will be good for 6 months.

****We will not administer any medication that the parent can give at home. IE... If the medication states to be given twice daily, it can be given in the morning and evening at home. We will not be responsible for giving any more medication than we absolutely have to give. It is still left up to the director's discretion, as to whether medication will be administered.**

The parents have the following responsibilities:

- a. Complete and sign a Medication Authorization form for the medication to be given.
- b. Provide and label administration dispenser with the child's name (dropper, medicine cup, syringe, etc.)
- c. Store medication in original container and a dispenser in a plastic ziplock bag. The child's name and dosage amount should be on the front of the bag.
- d. Review the medication with the director or your child's teacher who will administer the medication.

All medications will be stored in a locked container. Refrigerated medications will be stored in a locked box inside the kitchen's refrigerator. All medications will be returned to the parent after 10 days. If the parent does not pick up the medication after the 10 days, we are required to dispose of the medication.

****Diaper ointment may be administered to your child with a completed and signed Medication Authorization form. The ointment will only be administered for the number of days written on the container. After that amount of time, the medicine form must be signed by a physician for any additional days.**

****Sunscreen will be administered to your child with a completed and signed Medication Authorization form. A blanket form may be signed for the entire summer. Sunscreen must be provided by the parent, and labeled with the child's name.**

Insect Repellent may be administered only if absolutely necessary. A medication form must be filled out and may only be used for 10 days without doctor authorization.

20. Illness and Health Policy:

The children will be inspected daily for any signs or symptoms of health problems. If they show any signs or symptoms of illness while at the center, you will be notified to pick up your child. (Parents must pick up children within 1 hour of child becoming ill).

The following guidelines will be considered in determining if your child should be kept out of the center.

- a. A fever of 100 or higher
- b. Vomiting
- c. Diarrhea
- d. Eyes that show any signs of infection or pink eye

All children must be free of fever, diarrhea and vomiting before returning to the center.

****We will not administer Tylenol, diarrhea or vomiting medications in order to mask the symptoms so that a child can remain in care. This policy is made to protect each and every child. ***The Director will make the final decision as to whether your child can be accepted into care for the day. This may override a doctor's note if we feel that your child is too sick to be in care for the day.**

*****When a child is in care, they must be able to fully participate with the other children. This includes outside time, and regular meals. We cannot keep one child inside while the rest of the class goes outside. We do not have additional staff to watch one child. Also, the child must be able to eat regular meals. We do not give Pedialyte as a substitution because a child cannot tolerate regular food or milk. If they cannot tolerate regular foods or milk, they may need an additional day at home.**

21. Injuries:

Unfortunately, these do occur. We do fill out accident reports whenever an injury does occur. You will be asked to sign the report and give back to the teacher to be filed. If a head injury does occur, it is our policy to notify the parents. If we cannot reach you, rest assured we are keeping a close eye on your child. Our staff members are well trained in CPR/First Aid, and are sensitive to each child's individual needs

22. Biting:

Biting is an occupational hazard of children, mostly between the ages of 12 months and 36 months. Young children do not have impulse control. Don't be terribly surprised or upset, as children do grow out of it.

23. Nutrition:

The Center is enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We provide the children with a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack each day. You will find the breakfast/lunch/snack menus posted on the bulletin board outside the kitchen.

Due to CACFP regulations, it is our policy to only serve the foods listed on our planned menu's. If your child has a milk or food allergy, you are required to provide documentation from your child's doctor stating the allergy, and any foods that your child cannot have. Otherwise, they will be served what is on our menu. (**"A documented allergy"** is the only reason a particular food may not be served to your child, not because they don't like it.)

If there is a day that your child cannot eat what is being served **due to a documented allergy**, we will make a substitution, as long as it's something we can provide.

****Breakfast is only served from 8:00-8:30 (If your child arrives after 8:30, they will need to be fed before coming.**

****Lunch is served at 11:00 for Toddlers, & 11:30 for 2's, 3's, & 4's (Your child has to be here by those times in order to be served a meal. If your child is normally here in the morning and will be arriving close to lunch time instead, please call ahead so that we know they are coming. Otherwise, they may not get counted in the lunch count, thus enough food may not be prepared.**

*****All parents are required to fill out all requested CACFP paperwork upon enrollment, and yearly after that. All information is kept confidential, as "all children qualify" for the program under one of the three categories, whether it be Free, Reduced, or Paid. Meals are served at no extra cost to the parent, as long as all CACFP paperwork is current.**

24. Clothing:

Washable play clothes are best suited for preschoolers. A complete change of clothes will need to be given to your child's teacher in case of an accident. Please place clothes in a zip lock bag with the child's name on the front. All clothing must have your child's name. Please replace the next day as accidents occur. If your child needs a change of clothes, and does not have one, you will be required to bring them, upon receiving a phone call. We cannot leave a child sitting in wet or soiled clothing.

25. Discipline:

Discipline consists of positive reinforcement, redirection and time outs. Discipline will be constructive and educational in nature. It will include such measures as diversion, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, and praise for appropriate behavior. When separation is used, it shall be brief and appropriate for the child's age. The child will be within sight and sound of an adult in a safe, lighted area. Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks about the child, his family, or his race, religion, or cultural background shall not be used nor permitted. Children will not be subjected to threats or coercion such as forced feeding, threats of loss or denial of food, or other punishment for refusal to eat. Punishment shall not be associated with toileting.

26. Child Abuse & Neglect:

All suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported. The Center Director will be notified immediately and will make contact with the appropriate authorities.

27. Items brought to the center:

Most of the classrooms have a scheduled "show-n-tell" day in which your child may bring a special item from home to share with his/her class. Please have your child's name written on the item. Other than this scheduled day, please do not allow your child to bring in toys, personal items, etc. to school. Stepping Stones Child Development Center is not responsible for any items brought to the center that may be broke or lost, including toys, clothes, coats, hats, mittens, etc.

28. Visitors to the classroom

We do not allow grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, etc. to come in and visit children in the classrooms. This interrupts the classroom and distracts the children. Parents are always welcome to come check on their child. But, We do ask parents not to Just hang out in the classrooms, as the teachers attention is taken off of the children. It

also takes away from activity time and learning time that the teacher needs to be involved in. (Thank you ahead of time for your cooperation in this matter).

29. Confidentiality Agreement:

Any and all paperwork and information regarding your child will be kept in a filing cabinet in the director's office. No information will be shared or discussed unless authorized by the parent/guardian or requested by subpoena for court.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

POLICY STATEMENT

All of the children we serve in our program deserve special attention. Many children have special needs that may require more attention than others. The goal of our program is to serve all children to the best of our ability. When children come to our center with identified special needs, Stepping Stones CDC has the following policy:

- Stepping Stones CDC follows the teacher/child ratio that is mandated by the State of Virginia.
- When a parent enrolls the child, please make sure you complete the part of the application that identifies whether the child has any “Chronic physical problems/pertinent development information/special accommodations needed” to help the director with assessing the child’s needs while they are attending this program.
- Also on the application, please let us know whether or not your child has an IEP or IFSP with the public school system. Also, please share any other available assessments about your child’s abilities.
- A mutual decision will be made among the Administrator, Director, and Parent, about whether a trial placement is in the child’s best interest to insure that their needs can be met by our program, and that the child is placed in the appropriate classroom.
- If minor modifications need to be made to meet the child’s needs, this will be addressed among the director, parent, and teacher, and evaluation of the modifications will be made to insure the child’s needs are being met.
- Parents will be expected to be involved with the staff in setting goals for the child while attending the center.
- To the extent possible, program teachers will contribute to professional assessments and intervention plans.
- If it is determined that the program can meet the child’s needs, every attempt will be made to integrate the child in ongoing group activities with other children in the classroom.
- Child care center staff will follow through with activities and interactions recommended by other professionals working with the child (such as the Bitse team, or any Therapists that may need to come into the center).
- As much of the professional intervention that is needed as possible, will be carried out within the regular activities in the classroom. (For example speech or physical therapy)
- No changes will be made to the child’s placement in a specific classroom, or to their enrollment in the program, without a parent conference to address and come to mutual conclusion about recommendations for the child.
- There are times that our program may be unable to meet the needs of a child. At that time, it will be recommended to the parent that their child may be better suited with a different type of program.

TRANSFER OF CHILD'S RECORDS POLICY

There may be occasions when parents request a child's records from Stepping Stones to be made available to another school, child care center, or agency where the child may be receiving services.

Stepping Stones CDC can give the child's records directly to the parents. Or, the parent must sign the appropriate permission to release information form for Stepping Stones CDC to release the information to another agency or school.

Examples of information about the child that Stepping Stones CDC would have available to release includes but is not limited to:

- 1. Learning styles and abilities**
- 2. Medical Concerns**
- 3. Safety Concerns**
- 4. Discipline Concerns**
- 5. Developmental Assessments**

Parents should request a conference with the Director to discuss transfer of any records to another school, child care program, or agency. Written permission must be give for any information to be given out.