



handy family book

2017-2018



INSIDE YOU WILL FIND
Welcome Letter
Policies and Procedures
Program Information
Enrollment Guidelines
Wonders Programs
and Contacts



Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year!

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When we created the Handy Family Book ten years ago, our goal was to compile all of the useful and essential information that families might need while their children are enrolled at Wonders. We hope that you will take a few moments to review this year's edition and that you will keep it handy throughout the year.

Most of the policies and procedures that you will find in the Handy Book are required by state licensing and accreditation standards. Several Wonders procedures have been developed over the years, with the input of families and staff, who provide us with valuable annual feedback and ongoing input. We appreciate this partnership and want to continue to strengthen the work that we do together. If you have questions about any aspect of the Handy Book, please contact me.

Wonders teachers and directors will keep you informed of classroom and program activities and other Wonders news all year long. We hope that in addition to reading this Handy Book, you will read the e-newsletters and keep up to date with the many happenings through our website, Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter feeds. While we love the various ways that we can use technology to connect with you, what we like best is saying hello each day.

All the best for a terrific year and I look forward to seeing you at the many Wonders family events throughout the year.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Hurt". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joanne Hurt

Executive Director

jhurt@wonderslearning.org



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Our History

Founded in 1976 to provide non-profit, quality child care to working families in Chevy Chase, Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day has expanded from a single center in the basement of All Saints' Church to ten programs in DC and Maryland. We offer infant/toddler care, early learning education, extended day and summer camp.

Our Mission

Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day is committed to creating and advancing high quality, diverse educational communities that teach children the foundations of life-long learning and social responsibility.

Our Vision

Wonders aims to be an innovative non-profit community leader and advocate, recognized for highest quality early childhood and school age education and social responsibility.

Our Organization

The Board of Directors of Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day, a nonprofit organization since 1976, governs our organization. This volunteer Board is made up of current and alumni parents, community members and experts in the field of education. The programs are administered by Joanne Hurt, Executive Director; Nikki Jessee, Deputy Executive Director; and Lynn Taylor-Moore, Director of Finance and Administration. Each of the ten programs is managed by a Program Director.

Edgemoor Early Learning Program and Leland Early Learning Program are both accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). All programs meet the licensing requirements for their jurisdiction.

We take special care in our hiring practices to ensure excellent teaching skills and a professional work culture. We are proud of the dedication, diversity and creativity our staff brings to the classrooms and programs. Wonders staff are leaders in the field.

Wonders has utilized strict and disciplined hiring procedures for over 40 years. We advertise positions broadly and consider applicants carefully. Our recruitment process includes phone and in-person interviews, classroom observations and reference checks. The Executive Director makes the final hiring decision and offer of employment. All new hires undergo complete local and FBI background checks.

All new staff members participate in a thorough orientation with our Human Resources Manager and the Program Director. We review developmentally appropriate practices and curriculum planning and positive interaction strategies with children, families and colleagues.

All new hires receive a copy of the employee handbook that details our policies and standards of conduct.

Every staff member is also given a copy of, and is required to read and abide by, the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment. The Code offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth the principles and responsibilities for providing safe, healthy, nurturing and responsive settings for children.



Snapshot of Important Policies and Procedures

For a listing of all Wonders programs, please see the back page of this book.

Hours of Operation

Early Learning Programs 7:30 am to 6:30 pm
Before School Programs 7:00 am to first bell
After School Programs dismissal bell to 6:30 pm

Program Operation

Early Learning Programs 12 months
Extended Day Programs School year (10 months)
Summer Camp 2 months

Extended Day Half Days and Full Days

We provide care on the days when school is closed for certain holidays and all teacher meetings. On full days, the extended day program begins at 7:00 am and ends at 6:30 pm for all school age programs, except Milton Gottesman, which runs from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. On half days, the extended day program begins at dismissal and ends at 6:30 pm (6:00 pm at Milton Gottesman).

Drop-In Policy

There are two extended day drop-in options:

- a) a child who is enrolled in an Extended Day Program as drop-in only;
- b) a child who regularly attends an Early Learning or Extended Day program on a part-time basis and needs an occasional extra day of care.

Drop-in fees for children who are currently enrolled will be assessed at the daily rate, to be added to your monthly invoice. Families whose children who are enrolled as drop-ins only must participate in the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for fee payment. All drop-ins must be scheduled in advance with the Program Director.

Late Pick Up Policy

There is a fee if you arrive to pick up your child after closing. You must sign a Late Pick Up form upon arrival. Thirty dollars is assessed for the first fifteen minutes (or any portion of the 15 minutes), and an additional \$30 for each 15 minute interval or portion thereafter.

Tuition

Tuition is due the 10th of each month for Early Learning Programs and the 15th of each month for Extended Day Programs. Payment may be made by signing up for the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), enrolling in automatic credit card payment or by check or money order. Mail checks to the business office—5272 River Road, Suite 530, Bethesda, MD 20816—or place in the tuition box at your program site. A late fee of \$50 is assessed against all account balances after the due date.

Enrollment Forms

All required forms must be completed and returned to your Program Director prior to your child's first day of attendance.

Disclosure Policy

All child and family information is kept confidential by Wonders staff. Information is immediately available to:

- * Administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent of legal guardian for the access to records
- * The child's parents or legal guardian
- * Regulatory authorities on request.

Changes in Enrollment — for more information, see Enrollment Guidelines

Between August 1 and October 1, changes in your child's enrollment schedule will not be accepted. After October 1, written requests will be received and honored in the order of receipt. All changes in enrollment are subject to availability and the discretion of the Program Director.

Illness — for more information, see Health Guidelines

Children who become ill while at the center will be removed from classroom activities to rest until a parent or designee arrives. When notified, it is expected that parents/guardians will promptly come to pick up the child. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts listed on the emergency card.

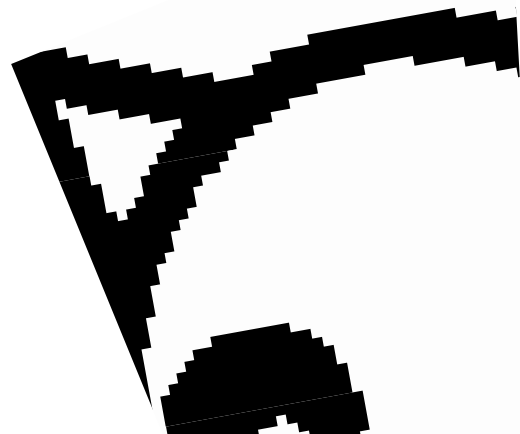
- * Children must remain at home for 24 hours after a fever has broken.
- * Children must remain at home for 24 hours after vomiting has ended, unless clearance has been given by a health care provider.

Program Information

Early Learning Programs: Infants and Toddlers, Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten

Wonders' early learning programs are designed to nurture each child's social and emotional development while providing learning experiences that enhance development. Infants and toddlers are respected and responded to as individuals. Infants are not expected to conform to a set schedule; instead their caregivers use flexible schedules for feeding, diapering, sleeping and playing to meet each infant's needs. As the toddlers' desire for independence increases, we provide them with more and more opportunities to make choices and to interact with their surroundings.

Preschoolers' learning is thoughtfully and intentionally supported in the areas of language arts, mathematical thinking, science, social studies, the arts, motor skills and social-emotional learning. Children learn skills to help them take care of themselves and each other. The teachers guide children in their discoveries and foster the skills of life-long learning.



Activities are based on the premise that children learn by doing. We believe that your child will discover and learn by making the decisions needed to work through an activity, rather than being told exactly how to accomplish a task. As a result of this process-oriented approach, you will find that no two art projects look the same. Your child will discover many individual approaches to accomplish a task. We support the interests of each child, helping him or her grow in his or her social-emotional and cognitive skill development through hands-on experimentation with materials and concepts.

Curriculum planning in all of our early learning programs is guided by The Creative Curriculum, a comprehensive, research-based approach to teaching. We believe in using teaching methods that match the way children develop and learn.

Family conferences will be held twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. Conferences are an opportunity for parents and teachers to meet to review your child's progress in all areas of development and to set goals for continued growth and learning. Although we will be sharing information with you about your child on a daily basis, the conference is a valuable time for teachers and parents to partner with the focus on your child.

Personal Care Items

Diapers and wipes for infants and toddlers are supplied by the parents or guardians.

Developmental Screening

Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) is a well regarded, research based developmental screening tool. This tool is completed by parents while interacting with their child in order to provide a “quick check” or “snapshot” of the child's current development in several areas. The ASQ-3 is recommended by the Maryland State Department of Education for use because it has been found to reliably reveal children's strengths and uncover any possible potential areas of concern. Children sometimes first reveal new skills at home so this questionnaire will help our teachers better plan for your child's next milestones.

“Potty Learning”

If your child is less than three years old, he or she may not be using the toilet. Potty learning is a part of the program in our two year old classrooms. It is our goal to provide a positive learning experience that is developmentally appropriate for each child in the process of learning about elimination. Bathroom breaks will be positive. The teachers will help your child become interested in learning about using the bathroom and feel successful about his or her progress. We will work together with you to plan positive reinforcement and motivation.

Wonders' Policy When Children Bite

Biting is a common, though potentially alarming, behavior among infants and toddlers. Biting is often a temporary phase as, typically, this behavior fades as the child's development progresses. Biting is usually a child's attempt to fulfill a need or deal with a challenge. Infants and toddlers may bite for many different reasons, including hunger, fatigue, teething or frustration.

At Wonders, biting is taken seriously and is addressed proactively and on a case-by-case basis. When a bite occurs, the child who has been bitten will immediately receive first aid, comfort and emotional care. The child who has bitten will be removed from the immediate situation and told, in words appropriate for her or his age, that biting hurts and is not okay. The child will then be closely "shadowed" by a staff member for the remainder of the day. The parents of both children will be notified by phone as soon as possible and in writing on the day of the incident.

When a child bites a second time it becomes necessary for the child's family members, teachers and the center administration to come together as a team to create a detailed developmentally appropriate guidance plan. The individualized plan will include preventative measures, strategies for both school and home, guidelines for documentation, and checkpoints for assessing the plan's effectiveness. Depending on the situation, and only with parental consent, the advice of a developmental consultant with expertise in biting causes and interventions may be sought and included in the plan of action.

Following the creation of an agreed upon support plan, if it is determined the parents are not following the plan or if the intervention measures have been ineffective, the steps outlined within the Wonders Behavior Policy (see page 17) may be implemented.

Nap Time

For nap time, (excluding infants) please supply a small pillow, a blanket and a favorite soft bedtime item (stuffed animal, special blanket, etc.), which has been marked with your child's name. We provide cot sheets at Leland and parents provide cot sheets at Edgemoor. All infants under twelve (12) months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep unless we have written instructions from a physician. We work with all children to find ways to make them feel comfortable and secure in their classrooms. For children who do not sleep for the entire nap period, quiet toys and books are available.

The Pre-Kindergarten programs will have a mid-day rest time each day.



Tooth Brushing

Wonders early learning programs offer tooth brushing opportunities once a day. This program will be implemented safely by following all regulations for infection control as set by the Centers for Disease Control. The children will brush their teeth with direct supervision by their teachers using toothpaste with fluoride as approved by the American Dental Association. Parents will provide new, individually labeled toothbrushes every three months for school. New toothbrushes will also be needed for individual children after they have contracted any contagious illness.

Wonders Family Advisory Council

The Wonders Family Advisory Council (FAC) is focused on supporting the collaboration between the families and the administration of each of our early learning programs. Members of the Council serve as liaisons between parents and the program directors at each site and the administrative team. The Family Advisory Council also plans parent activities and coordinates volunteer efforts to support Wonders throughout the school year.

Duties of Council members

- * Serve as a room parent
- * Develop a working knowledge of Wonders program policies and procedures
- * Communicate information, as needed, to families
- * Communicate feedback such as ideas, concerns, suggestions to program staff
- * Welcome new families to the classroom
- * Recruit and organize parent volunteers
- * Help organize center-wide events (ex. potlucks)
- * Help communicate and encourage Wonders development efforts (fundraising)

Meetings take place 4 times a year. An email list of Council members from both Edgemoor and Leland is provided to facilitate communication throughout the year.

New Council members are welcomed throughout the year. Questions or suggestions may be directed to Nikki Jessee (njessee@wonderslearning.org).



Extended Day: Before and After School

The primary goal in our extended day program is to create communities for children and their families that are fun, nurturing, and enriching. Children are active learners. Wonders' extended day programs provide an environment where children can safely grow through self-guided and structured play. In addition to fostering imagination, play challenges children to expand social, emotional, and intellectual tools. Extended Day teachers carefully plan the program to balance homework with exercise and promote healthy eating habits.

The before school program is designed as a gentle transition time from home to school. Children have the opportunity to read, finish homework, play board games or create artwork. Outside time and active games are also offered.

The after school program curriculum is designed to foster social and emotional learning in a play-based environment. Activities are designed to create opportunities for all children to explore new concepts and build friendships. Activities incorporate seven learning areas: language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, personal and social development, physical development and the arts. The afternoon is a blend of child initiated and teacher initiated activities including outdoor play, afternoon snack, group time, choice times, homework and reading time.

On days when schools have scheduled early dismissal or are closed, we provide a half or full day program. These longer days give us the opportunity to enhance our programming by planning special events, inviting specialists in to share their expertise or exploring the larger community on field trips.

Important Information for All Programs

Family Participation

Family participation is a founding principle of Wonders. We welcome families to join us in our programs. You may wish to volunteer to chaperone a field trip, join us for breakfast or come in time to join us in an afternoon activity or game. We appreciate how hectic the mornings and evenings can be for families, but please know that you are always welcome in our programs.

There are several ways that family members can volunteer at Wonders, including but not limited to:

- * Pink Party committee
- * Chaperone for field trips
- * Early learning classroom parent photographer
- * Materials preparation
- * Story reader
- * Routine maintenance
- * Sharing hobbies, work-related information
- * Library helper
- * Program support
- * Serving on the Wonders Board of Directors or Board Committee
- * Community partnerships
- * Grant writing
- * Minor repairs and equipment assembly
- * Playground clean-up
- * Organizing and/or staffing for the Book Fairs
- * Organizing and/or staffing for the Wonders Family Picnic



We do believe in the saying, “it takes a village to raise a child.” There are many ways you can support the important work of Wonders and enhance the learning experience of our children.

Giving

Wonders is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and, from our very beginnings in 1976 with one classroom and seven children, donations have played a vital role in helping us support and advance the Wonders mission. Donations to Wonders support Teacher Professional Development, Program Development and Financial Assistance for Tuition. We receive donations from our extended Wonders family of parents, alumni families and community and corporate partners. All donations are tax deductible.

Wonders’ Annual Pink Party is the most visible fundraising event of the year. Staff, board members and parents from all Wonders programs come together to celebrate, but there will be other opportunities to contribute to Wonders. You’ll hear more from the Board throughout the year. We thank you in advance for your support!

Anti-bias and Social Justice Education

A vital aspect of our program is our commitment to anti-bias and social justice education. We carefully create an environment that reflects not only the cultures of the families we serve but the world around us. We believe this validates children’s experiences, teaches the importance of valuing similarities and differences and builds the connection between home and school.

The Four Goals of Anti-bias Education are:

- * Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
- * Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
- * Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
- * Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

Guiding children to accept and respect individual differences is an integral part of our program. We provide an inclusive learning environment through an engaging curriculum, service learning and by promoting respectful relationships.

We define family as “People living together, either related or not, who care for and love one another.” Our goal is to be inclusive of the groupings that constitute a family system and we encourage children to share aspects of their home lives. When the children have questions about family, we attempt to answer them honestly and with sensitivity to individual circumstances. We understand that each family may approach this topic in a unique way. Our goal is to support these efforts in any way that we can.

Wonders also welcomes and supports English Language Learners and can coordinate translation and interpretation services when necessary.

Suggested Communication Path for Families with Wonders Staff and Administrators

This guide does not preclude families contacting any Wonders administrator with questions/concerns before communicating with a classroom teacher.

(Find program director contact information for each site on the last page of this handbook.)



Giving Us Feedback

In our ongoing effort to be as responsive and collaborative with families as possible, we will ask you to complete a Program Survey each program year. This survey provides us with useful feedback that informs our work and helps us as we plan long- and short-term goals for program improvement. Of course, we welcome your input any time of year. All of our staff members are receptive to your feedback.

Inclusion

Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day makes every effort to accommodate children with special needs. We work closely with families to assess our ability to meet their child's needs and establish an open dialogue to ensure a successful experience in a Wonders program. Classroom teachers receive focused training to provide them with the tools needed to make the classroom accessible and supportive. If it is determined that one-on-one support is necessary, we will discuss arrangements with your family.

We have a partnership with Child Development Consultants, LLC that provides consultation to our teachers and families when we believe a child would benefit from their expertise. Child Development Consultants' staff includes trained occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists and behavior therapists. Consultants from Child Development Consultants visit preschools and child care centers. The team serves as a community resource for teachers, parents and child care providers in support of children's successful participation in preschool classrooms and school age programs. Members of the Child Development Consultant team observe children in the classroom and prepare a report for the family and teachers. They make specific suggestions so that teachers can differentiate their approaches for children who need additional supports. The decision to invite Child Development Consultants in for a consultation is made jointly between the family and teachers. Parents sign a consent form prior to an observation. If your child is currently participating in therapy, we request that you share this information with your child's teacher so we can best support him or her in the classroom.

Daily Arrival and Dismissal

Your child must be escorted into the program in the morning and from the program at the end of the day by an adult who is listed on your dismissal authorization form. If alternative arrangements have been made, the staff must be informed in person, in writing or by phone. All individuals listed on the dismissal authorization form and those who are occasionally authorized to pick up your child must be at least 16 years of age. Wonders staff will check the identification of anyone they have not previously met.

Wonders reserves the right to refuse releasing the child to anyone who appears to be impaired by or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In the event that the person responsible for your child's arrival or departure appears to be impaired, our staff members will contact those listed as emergency contacts to make alternative arrangements. If the individual becomes agitated or aggressive, our staff will contact the police for assistance.

If a family has child custody arrangements, a copy of the Custody Information form must be in your child's file along with supporting legal documents. If there are specific restrictions mandated by a court order, we must have a copy of the order on file in order to adhere to its requirements. In all other circumstances, we will release your child to either parent.

Developmentally Appropriate Guidance

Our learning environments and teaching practices are designed to support children's social and emotional learning and growth. We foster this learning through positive relationships, clear expectations, developmentally appropriate consequences, and when needed, intervention. This guidance system relies on the knowledge and skills of our teachers and directors, our collaboration with parents, and the support of experts who specialize in child development and mental health. Wonders' teachers set clear boundaries and explain the classroom expectations.

Once these guidelines have been established, they remain consistent. When children need behavioral guidance, teachers help the children understand and describe the situation, their feelings, and possible alternative solutions to the problem. They follow up by helping the children plan how they will cope with future situations and remind them, when and if the need arises. Redirecting children towards more appropriate behaviors and providing alternate choices are key strategies for teachers. The aim is, within limits, to give children the power to solve their problems and nurture the skills they will need to do so.

Because our teachers know what is developmentally appropriate behavior for the children in their classrooms, they are able to effectively address challenging behaviors when they arise. We inform parents/guardians of the behaviors and the strategies used to address the situation. When a child exhibits challenging behaviors that are persistent and/or unusual, the parents or guardians will be informed and a behavior plan will be developed to support the child and address the challenging behaviors. Through careful observation and ongoing communication with the parents/guardian, it may be recommended that additional expert consultation is needed. If this is the case, we require that the parent/guardian actively participate in the evaluation and strategy/support process. When an individual support plan is developed, we work closely as a team to identify the child's needs and to assess Wonders' ability to address those needs. If additional resources are required, we work closely with the parents/guardians to provide those resources. There may be situations that require the parent/guardian to pay for a one-on-one staff person to work directly with the child.

If it is determined that Wonders is unable to address a child's needs, Wonders will help the family identify a more appropriate environment and the teachers and parents/guardians will develop a transition plan to minimize the disruption to the child and family

Field Trips and Learning Adventures

Venturing out of the classroom fosters children's connectedness within the community and offers opportunities to try new experiences.

You will be notified of an impending field trip at least three weeks before the trip. The departure time, destination and chaperone sign-up will also be posted. On field trip days, we request that your child arrive at least 15 minutes prior to our departure time. If your child arrives after the group has departed, children in early learning programs will stay at the program. Extended day parents will need to take your child to the trip destination or make other arrangements.

Your signature on the General Authorization and Release Form indicates your consent for your child to participate in all field trips.

A higher adult to child ratio will increase the safety and success of our field trips, therefore, we follow strict adult to child ratios. We count on available parent volunteers for our early learning trips. If we do not have enough parent volunteers, trips will be cancelled.

Because the options for age-appropriate field trips are greatly increased for preschool-age children, we plan field trips for our older preschool classrooms. While being transported in our Wonders van, the children are secured in safety seats with backs.

To enrich and extend the learning of younger children, we focus on in-house learning adventures in which specialists visit the classrooms. These visiting specialists fit with the classes' current curricular study topics and developmental goals.

Family Events

Throughout the year, you will be invited to participate in several family events. These events allow us to share in celebration, learn from one another, build community and just have fun. We encourage you to join us at the start of the school year for an orientation meeting at which time you will learn about your child's day and center procedures. We will also have pot luck dinners, family game nights and parent education seminars. Information about these events will be distributed prior to each event.

Birthday Celebrations

We know birthdays are significant and exciting events in children's lives so in our classrooms we recognize each child's special day. We will enthusiastically sing and share best wishes together as a class community. If you choose to, you may share a special snack for the class to enjoy along with the planned menu items.

Two weeks prior to your child's birthday your classroom teachers will contact you via email asking whether you intend to share a birthday snack. You will be asked to please indicate your choice of birthday snack from our pre-approved food item list and to then supply enough for the entire class on the morning of the designated day. This list of possible birthday snack items made in approved facilities will be distributed at the start of the school year. Wonders uses this list in order to ensure the health and safety of children and staff with allergies and other health concerns. NAEYC guidelines state that all food that comes from home to be shared among children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. Please remember that Edgemoor and Leland are a peanut and nut restricted environment so we ask that you check food labels for the ingredients list and allergen exposure alerts.

One week before a class birthday, teachers will post a notice letting parents know what birthday snack has been planned and each family will be asked to sign off on whether or not their child may have this snack. If your child may not have a particular birthday snack, your teachers will coordinate with you regarding supplying an alternative item

Nutrition

We provide a healthy snack at each of our programs and a prepared lunch at the Edgemoor and Leland Early Learning programs. The snacks offered at Milton Gottesman are Kosher. We follow USDA and state nutritional guidelines for the foods we serve, and limit salts, sugars and fat. We intentionally offer familiar as well as unfamiliar foods to encourage a wide range of healthy eating habits.

Our staff members create a relaxed environment for eating—teachers sit with the children, engage in conversation, promote self-help skills, model respectful interactions and encourage community-building.

We let children eat as little or as much of the food that is presented to them. We do not force children to eat certain foods nor certain amounts of food. Children will eat more on some days than on others. This is to be expected during their development.

Extended Day children must bring lunch during full day programs. We encourage you to provide balanced and healthful food items for lunch. Please do not send more than one sweet snack. We do not permit candy, gum, or soda in lunches- these will be sent home with your child. Similarly, staff in our early learning programs will monitor any food that is brought from home and will keep a supply of nutritious food on hand in order to supplement with healthy options as necessary.

We work with families to be responsive to food allergies. If your child has a food allergy, please notify your Program Director. Wonders Early Learning at Edgemoor and Leland are both peanut and nut free centers due to the presence of infants and toddlers in the program.

We support breastfeeding in our early learning centers by accepting, storing and serving expressed breast milk for feedings, providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding if parent choose to come to the center for feedings, and coordinating feedings with an infant's parents.

Early Learning Program Directories

As a courtesy to our families and to provide an effective means of communication between administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents, we distribute program directories in our Early Learning Programs. The directory, including the contact information provided therein, should be used only for individual, private communication for Wonders-related purposes. The directory should not be used for any other purpose, including, but not limited to: the transmission of any advertising, promotional, or other commercial materials; the transmission of any political communications; or the transmission of communications that are abusive, defamatory or obscene. Families may opt out of having contact information published in the directory by checking the “Do Not Publish” box on the Email Directory Form.



Inclement Weather Policies

We make every effort to remain open during inclement weather. Our goal is to make sound decisions based on the safety of families and staff, while still meeting families' needs for child care. *If the Federal Government is closed, Wonders is closed.*

Wonders may close or delay opening at the discretion of the Executive Director.

We make every effort to communicate a decision to close or delay opening as quickly as possible. Decisions are announced at or before 6:00 am. There are many ways to learn about center closings or delays:

- * Wonders website www.wonderslearning.org
(look for the red banner at the top of the page)
- * Wonders facebook page
www.facebook.com/#!/wonderslearnings
- * twitter at www.twitter.com/#!/wonderslearning
- * email blast from your center director

If the program closes early, you will be notified by phone and email, as well as a posting on our website, Facebook and Twitter. It is imperative that you arrange to have your child picked up as soon as possible in the event of an early closing. Staff will stay until all children are picked up.

Decisions are made separately for Concord Hill, Horace Mann, Milton Gottesman and Montgomery County Programs.

Wonders at Horace Mann

If District of Columbia Public Schools are open, Wonders will be open. Delays generally follow Administrative Office openings and closings.

Wonders at Milton Gottesman

If Milton Gottesman is open, Wonders will be open. Delays and closings are determined by the Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capitol.

Wonders Montgomery County Programs

(Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Concord Hill, Edgemoor, Leland, Little Falls & Somerset)

The following outlines the most likely Wonders schedule based upon Montgomery County Schools' inclement weather decisions.

- * If MCPS Schools are CLOSED and MCPS Administrative offices are CLOSED then Wonders is CLOSED
- * If MCPS Schools are CLOSED and MCPS Administrative Offices have a delayed opening, Wonders will have a delayed opening.
- * If MCPS Schools are CLOSED or DELAYED TWO HOURS and MCPS Administrative offices are OPEN ON TIME then Wonders is OPEN ON TIME.
- * If MCPS Schools CLOSE EARLY and MCPS Administrative offices are OPEN then Wonders will close ONE HOUR EARLY.

Closings Due to Power Outages

Licensing regulations require us to close for the following reasons:

- * No electricity
- * No water

If we need to close due to any of these reasons, decision will be made by 11:00 am and pick up will be 1:00 pm. In the case of the extended day programs, there will be no after school program. We will contact families by phone and email to communicate this information.

Weather Guidelines

Outdoor play is essential to children's health and well-being. Children need to run, climb and play outdoors. The time children spend outdoors each day is just as important to their learning as the time they spend in their classrooms. The outdoors offers many ways to enrich the curriculum and support children's learning and development.

It is our goal to take the children outside each day. We utilize weather guidelines to ensure that we have limited outdoor play during extreme weather. Flexibility in the schedule also allows us to extend our outdoor play on fair weather days.

The following guidelines have been established for healthy outdoor play:

Cold Weather

- * Temperature/wind chills of 30°F or higher:
Regular outdoor play times are followed
- * Temperature/wind chills between 15-30°F: 15 to 20 minutes maximum outdoor play time
- * Temperature/wind chills of 15°F or below:
No outdoor play time

We ask that children have winter coats, hats and gloves each day during the winter season. We will put snow clothes on children when snow is on the ground. Therefore, we request that all children have snow clothes (snow pants, boots, etc.) with them as the weather dictates.

Hot Weather Temperatures/Heat Index of 96° or higher and/or Code Red Air Quality:

- * Outdoor activities will be limited to 15 minutes at a time. The total amount of outdoor time for the day will not exceed one hour.
- * Infants and toddlers do not go out at all on Code Red days and we reduce outside time on Code Orange days.
- * Outdoor field trips or field trips requiring an un-air-conditioned bus ride of more than 45 minutes one way will be substituted with an indoor trip with a shorter bus ride. Swimming outdoors must be limited to one hour.
- * We always take medications, on our trips, that has been provided by the parents of children who have asthma or other diagnosed respiratory illnesses, will be taken on trips.
- * Cold water will be available.

Health Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed with our consulting physician and comply with DC and Maryland licensing requirements. It is our goal to curtail illness and promote healthy environments in our centers.

All children are required to wash their hands upon entering the center each day.



The following require a child to leave the center:

- * A fever of 100.4°F or higher
- * Breathing difficulty
- * Diarrhea more than twice
- * Mucus or pus draining from eyes
- * Vomiting
- * Persistent wheezing or coughing
- * Lethargy that interferes with regular classroom activities

Children who become ill while at the center will be removed from classroom activities to rest until a parent or designee arrives. When notified, parents/guardians are expected to come promptly to pick up the child. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on the emergency card.

- * Children must remain at home for 24 hours after a fever has broken.
- * Children must remain at home for 24 hours after vomiting has ended, unless clearance has been given by a health care provider.

These communicable illnesses require a child to leave the center and stay at home until the illness is no longer contagious:

- * Strep throat
- * Chicken pox
- * Viral diseases
- * Flu
- * Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- * Pinworms
- * Head lice

Written clearance from a health care provider indicating that the child is no longer contagious is required prior to the child's return to the classroom.

All absences should be communicated to the center by 9:00 am. Please notify us if the illness is contagious, so we can alert families to be vigilant for signs of illness. We welcome children back to the center when they are ready to join us in all our activities, including outdoor play. If children are too ill to participate in outdoor play, indoor accommodations are made as long as the child is not contagious. For our NAEYC accredited Early Learning programs, a child may not be readmitted to care after an absence of 3 days or more due to illness without a written statement from the parent or physician that the child may return to a regular schedule.

Medication

Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications (including over the counter drugs) will not be administered without a completed Medication Authorization Form signed by parent and health care provider. If a form is not available, the health care provider may use stationary or a prescription pad to make the request which must include the following: child's full name, date, name of medication, dosage, administration schedule, administration route, special instructions of the medication, duration, special instructions for administration, possible side effects, and health care provider's signature. All nonprescription diaper rash treatments, sunscreen, insect repellent lip balm and lotions must be accompanied by a completed Medication Authorization Form signed by the parent. Medication must be provided to the classroom teacher or program director in the original container in which the medicine was dispensed, including pharmacy label. Never place medicine in a lunch box or back pack. Over the counter drugs ordered by the health care provider must be marked with the child's name.

Emergencies

In the event of an extreme medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment, the following procedures will be followed:

- * Parents/Guardians will be notified via phone and, concurrently, the staff will contact emergency personnel.
- * The responding emergency team will determine whether hospitalization is necessary.

- * If a hospital visit is required, the child will be transported to the closest hospital by ambulance and will be accompanied by a staff member.
- * If injury occurs while the class is participating in an off campus field trip, the injured child will be transported to the closest hospital with a staff member.
- * In the event the injury does not require an ambulance, but does require a hospital visit, you will be contacted and may elect to have the Program Director or other staff member transport your child to the hospital where you can join them.
- * In the event the parents are not available, Wonders will notify the emergency contacts listed on the emergency cards.

Fire Drills

Evacuation fire drills are practiced every month. The drills take place at varying times of the day. Records of the drills are maintained at each site.



Emergency Contingency Plans

A copy of the emergency plan for each center is posted at each site.

Clothing

Children should wear sneakers or rubber soled shoes to prevent injury during outdoor play. Please remove any cords or strings, which may become entangled in playground equipment, from jackets, sweatshirts and other outerwear.

Please do not dress your child in personalized clothing or other identifying accessories, to prevent identification by strangers.

Please dress your child in weather-appropriate clothing at all times. We go outside in a variety of weather conditions.

Children in our early learning programs must have a change of weather-appropriate clothing stored in the classroom. Please be sure to label each item with your child's name and include two pairs of underwear, socks, shirts and long or short pants.

Babysitting Policy

In an effort to maintain the professional status of our staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by Wonders staff of currently-enrolled Wonders students is discouraged. Should you hire any Wonders staff for any reason, it must be off of Wonders premises, and with the understanding it is AT YOUR OWN RISK and that such arrangements and payment for services are solely between you and the staff member. Private arrangements are not sanctioned by Wonders and you agree to indemnify Wonders and hold it harmless against any and all claims arising out of any such arrangement. Families who choose to hire Wonders staff must sign a waiver, which is available on our website.

Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and/or Neglect

All child care providers are required by law to report any suspected cases of physical, mental or sexual abuse and neglect to the Office of Child Protective Services. Once a report is made, staff members are expected to cooperate with any investigation undertaken by Child Protective Services or the police.

Enrollment Guidelines

Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day is dedicated to a policy of non-discrimination. We enroll children on a first come, first served basis, but do give alumni, siblings and children of staff priority at all of our sites. Additionally, due to our required lease arrangement, employees of the Montgomery County government receive priority at Wonders Early Learning at Edgemoor and Leland. The number of spaces available for enrollment at each site is determined by the licensed capacity of each classroom.

Steps to Apply

- * Contact Wonders with any questions or to request additional information.
- * Open houses are available at our Early Learning programs and program tours are available at our Extended Day programs.
- * Submit an online application with a \$100 non-refundable Application Fee for the Early Learning Program and \$40 non-refundable Application Fee for the Extended Day Program.
- * If a full or part time space is available, you will be asked to submit a deposit (if applicable) and a non-refundable registration fee.
- * Drop-in only enrollment requires an annual nonrefundable registration fee and enrollment in the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for payment. No deposit is required for Drop-in only enrollment.
- * There is an annual non-refundable registration fee in the Extended Day Program.
- * If no spaces are available, your application will be held on a waiting list at no additional cost.

Refunds and Withdrawals

- * Your deposit will be held until you indicate your decision to withdraw from the program. For your convenience, the deposit will hold your child's space from year to year.
- * Early learning programs are 12 month programs. Written notice of withdrawal must be received by the Program Director at least 30 days in advance of the last day your child will attend. You are responsible for the full tuition during the last 30 days of enrollment.
- * School age programs are 10 month programs. To withdraw you must submit 30 days' written notice to the Program Director. You are responsible for the full tuition during the last 30 days of enrollment.
- * You may choose to use your deposit as a contribution to the Wonders Financial Assistance Fund or have it refunded to you. Failure to comply with the notification requirement will result in forfeiture of your deposit.
- * Refund checks typically require six weeks' processing time after the child's enrollment ends.
- * For early learning programs, changes in days enrolled in the summer are subject to availability and are approved at the sole and absolute discretion of the Program Director.



Changes in Enrollment

If you wish to change the number of days your child is enrolled, you must submit this request in writing at least 30 days prior to the anticipated change date. We cannot accept requests for changes between August 1 and October 1. All changes are subject to availability and the discretion of the Program Director. Additional days will be granted only if space is available.

Reducing days is not automatic, as we must be able to fill the newly vacated spot. Families are responsible for the full payment of the original schedule until notified by Wonders that the change has been made.

Tuition Policies

When you enroll, the Program Director will confirm the monthly tuition amount. Each family will receive an enrollment agreement which must be signed prior to matriculation. Your signature on this document indicates your agreement to pay the applicable fees throughout your child's enrollment and to abide by our policies. The following policies govern our tuition procedures:

Payment

- * Tuition invoices are issued on the 1st of every month and payment is due on the 10th of each month for Early Learning Programs and the 15th of each month for School Age Programs.
- * Early Learning Program Invoices cover the month following the invoice date.

- * Extended Day Program billing is based on 10 equal monthly invoices. Each invoice has a billing cycle. The first tuition invoice is issued on August 1st, and subsequently on the first of every month, and last tuition invoice is issued on May 1st. The first and last tuition invoices will be prorated if the first or last day of enrollment does not coincide with our billing cycle.
- * If your child's first day falls between billing periods, you will receive a prorated invoice. This tuition payment is due, in addition to the deposit and registration fee.
- * Payments received after the due date will incur a late fee of \$50.
- * Invoices are emailed to families.
- * To avoid the incorrect posting of payments, please write your child's name on every check or money order.
- * Payments must be made to Wonders and mailed to 5272 River Road, Suite 530, Bethesda, MD 20816 or placed in the tuition box at each program site.
- * Requests to be billed via credit card to needs to be sent to the Family Accounts Manager at soliaee@wonderslearning.org
- * Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) is available to all families. You may enroll in this program by completing a short form and submitting a voided check.
- * Wonders reserves the right to change the tuition rate with one month's notification to parents.

- * Families whose accounts are in arrears for one month or more will no longer be admitted to the program.
- * A \$35 charge will be assessed in the event that a check is returned due to insufficient funds. A 2.5% credit card processing fee will be assessed to those families using a credit card. All drop-in only families must enroll in the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program.
- * The full tuition rate is due regardless of absence due to illness, vacation, inclement weather closings, federal holidays or other causes.

Financial Assistance

Wonders offers a unique financial program that annually provides approximately \$300,000 in child care tuition-assistance to families. The Wonders Financial Assistance Fund is fundamental to who we are as a child care organization and a community. We strive to make our programs accessible to as many families as possible.

Applying for tuition assistance

- * Families may apply for tuition assistance after enrolling in the program.

- * Interested families must complete the application form (available at each program site, the business office and on our website) and submit it with documentation to the Financial Assistance Coordinator at soliaee@wonderslearning.org
- * The Financial Assistance Committee confidentially reviews each application.
- * If tuition assistance is awarded, you will receive notification from the Committee via email.
- * Applications will be accepted throughout the year.
- * Families receiving tuition assistance must reapply annually and must be current in their tuition payments in order for their application to be considered.
- * We also accept Child Care Subsidy vouchers such as Working Parents Assistance and Purchase of Care. All Program Directors have information about these programs.

Required Enrollment Forms

Parents must submit the required forms prior to enrollment for each child enrolled in Wonders programs, including the drop-in only option. A complete list of forms is available on our website (www.wonderslearning.org/enroll/wonders-forms).

These forms ensure that we meet state licensing requirements and have a greater understanding of each child and family. All information must be current.



Wonders Programs and Contacts

Bethesda Extended Day

Before and After School Care
Mike Macalinao, Program Director
bethesda@wonderslearning.org
Bethesda Elementary School
7600 Arlington Road
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 654-6003

Chevy Chase Extended Day

Before and After School Care
Gerald Bolden, Program Director
chevychase@wonderslearning.org
Chevy Chase Elementary School
4015 Rosemary Street
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 366-9064

Concord Hill Extended Day

Before and After School Care
Ebony Ellis, Program Director
concordhill@wonderslearning.org
Concord Hill School
6050 Wisconsin Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 654-7914

Edgemoor Early Learning

Full Day: Infants, Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten
Miciel DeMarco, Program Director
edgemoor@wonderslearning.org
4805 Edgemoor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 907-4080

Horace Mann Extended Day

Before and After School Care, Enrichment Classes
Mariel Valerio, Program Director
horacemann@wonderslearning.org
Horace Mann Elementary School
4430 Newark Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(240) 994-9429

Milton Gottesman Extended Day

After School Care, Enrichment Classes
Peter Truitt, Program Director
milton@wonderslearning.org
Milton Gottesman
6045 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011

Milton Gottesman New North
9115 Goergia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(202) 291-5142

Leland Early Learning

Full Day Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten
Sharon Buttari, Program Director
leland@wonderslearning.org
4301 Willow Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 654-8143

Little Falls Extended Day

Before & After School Care
(Serving Wood Acres Elementary)
Kenny Shuford, Program Director
littlefalls@wonderslearning.org
St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
5450 Massachusetts Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20816
(240) 383-9094

Somerset Extended Day

Before & After School Care
Ebony Ellis, Program Director
somerset@wonderslearning.org
Somerset Elementary School
5811 Warwick Place
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(240) 740-1108

Wonders Summer Camp

summercamp@wonderslearning.org
Horace Mann Elementary School
4430 Newark Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(240) 994-9429

Little Falls
5450 Massachusetts Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20816
(240) 383-9094

Wonders Business Office

admin@wonderslearning.org
5272 River Road, Suite 530
Bethesda, MD 20816
(301) 654-5339
Fax (301) 652-9533



- 1 Wonders Extended Day at Bethesda
- 2 Wonders Extended Day at Chevy Chase
- 3 Wonders Early Learning at Edgemoor
- 4 Wonders Extended Day at Horace Mann & Wonders Summer Camp
- 5 Wonders Extended Day at Milton Gotesman
- 6 Wonders Early Learning at Leland
- 7 Wonders Extended Day at Little Falls & Wonders Summer Camp
- 8 Wonders Extended Day at Somerset
- 9 Wonders Extended Day at Concord Hill
- 10 Wonders Business Office

Final note about communications

Please make sure you have provided us with current contact information so that if we ever need to reach you, we can.

Please remember to contact us if you move, change an email or telephone number.

wonderslearning.org