Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS

Early Learning Center
2017-2018 Parent Manual

(Licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care)

Welcome to the RLC Family

It is with great pleasure I welcome your family to the **Recreational Licensed Child Care program (RLC)**, a section of the Recreational Licensed Child Care and Community Services Division of Howard County Recreation and Parks. The RLC Division has been in operation since 1986, proudly serving the children and families of Howard County during the school year and summer. Over the years the division has grown to include camps, middle school programs, preschool programs (known as Early Learning Centers (ELC)), two Therapeutic Recreation after-school programs and programs for teens. Currently we are in 22 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, Cedar Lane School and 4 Early Learning Centers. We also now encompass Trips and Tours, along with programs for citizens aged 55+. Please visit our website for more information: www.howardcountymd.gov/RAP.

Our Recreational Licensed Child Care program has grown to serve more than 2,500 county residents. Our programs offer a variety of activities for your child(ren), including active group games to keep them moving and healthy, hands-on activities and healthy cooking projects. Throughout the year there are opportunities for children to participate in ***intra-school competitions*** in football, basketball, a spelling bee, a team hand ball event and a track and field event. There is something here for every child!

We are licensed and inspected by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. The Office of Child Care sets regulations; Recreation and Parks sets policies and procedures. These guidelines are all in place to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care. We are participating in the Maryland EXCELS program.

The mission of our child care programs are to: **"Provide a safe, nurturing and quality program for the youth of Howard County."** We believe in providing services to all residents without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, national origin, physical/mental ability, gender, creed or any other basis. Our programs are equal opportunity programs. We are looking forward to a fun-filled year together! Thank you for giving us the opportunity to take care of your most precious asset – your child(ren).

With Warm Regards,

Nicola Morgal

Nicola Morgal, CPRP
Recreation and Parks Superintendent
Recreation Licensed Child Care and Community Services Division

Recreational Licensed Child Care and Community Services Division Information

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Joynel K. Young, Recreation Manager	410-313-2637
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Therapeutic Recreation & Accommodation Services	
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Triadelphia Ridge Elem. ELC	410-313-5471
Roger Carter Comm. Ctr. ELC	410-313-2749

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About Us

Our Philosophy:
Howard County Early Learning Centers (ELC) seek to provide a safe, nurturing, active and creative learning environment for children of all abilities. We are mindful of each child's cultural background and learning needs when planning activities.
Through fun, purposeful and engaging activities they will:

- Learn to work independently and in cooperative groups
- Foster intellectual curiosity
- Explore the environment with developmentally appropriate play; teacher directed and self-paced activities
- Acquire the social, academic and emotional skills necessary for a successful transition into kindergarten.
- Develop their confidence and help them reach their fullest potential

They will participate in a variety of instructional and self-directed activities throughout the day. The programs focus on each child's social and emotional development, reading and math readiness and fine and gross motor skills.

Each Early Learning Center Director is responsible for the overall content of the program. Throughout the month the children will participate in hands-on activities focusing on arts and crafts, science, nature, music, drama, different cultures and cooking. There are also cognitive and academic activities to enhance your child's language arts/math skills in preparation for kindergarten. Activities are presented using a variety of learning modalities and lesson plans are based on the needs and abilities of the children. The center will post a schedule of the weekly activities, parent reminders and snack menus, if applicable. In each classroom our lesson plans are guided by the state approved Teaching Strategies for Early Childhood; the Creative Curriculum for Preschool. Parents are encouraged to peruse the monthly plans posted on the parent board (by the sign-in/out sheet) to be fully engaged in the classroom activities. This will also allow for reinforcements at home of the skills or learning objectives that they are working on at school.

Each Director uses developmentally appropriate practices and classroom materials when planning the monthly classroom activities to address the individual needs of each child; including those who may be in need of extra services. Centers are set-up throughout the program and are typically labeled, items are easily accessible and on low shelving. The Directors will rotate centers and other materials as needed so they are relevant to the monthly themes. The more generic learning materials are rotated on a monthly basis. The monthly plans:

- Are inclusive of each child's needs, interests and considers their skill level and cultural backgrounds Age-appropriate learning domains such as:
    - Social and Personal Development – achieving a sense of self, working cooperatively, becoming confident.
    - Language and Literacy – listening skills, verbal expression, word recognition
    - Mathematical Thinking – problem solving, counting, sequencing, time and money
    - Science – reasoning, critical thinking, predicting
    - Social Studies – relationships, community, culture and language, geography
    - Creative Expression - dance, songs, acting, storytelling, building and role play
    - Physical Development and Health – sportsmanship, nutrition, safety
- Include information and feedback gained from the parents/guardians through conversations throughout the year, beginning with the parent orientation, parent conferences and program evaluations, but mostly in the daily conversation at drop-off and pick-up.

Our staff has the knowledge, flexibility and experience to modify the plans to meet the individual needs of each child. We can offer extra help or allow the child to work more independently based on their skill level across the learning domains. Staff can give individual assistance to those who need some extra help and create peer partners for those who have quickly grasped a learning objective. Depending on how often the programs meet, observations are conducted throughout the week (in different settings) to assess the children's progress, which also helps to guide activity planning too.

The programs are licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care. All staff members must complete a criminal background check and medical examination. They also must have experience and training specific to preschool-aged children and take continuing education classes annually. Many staff are credentialed by the state of Maryland. Please consult with the Director if you have any questions regarding the program content. All sites are participants in the Maryland EXCELS program. The content of each program follows established guidelines but weekly themes and schedules may differ by site.

ADMISSION TO CARE

Before your child can attend any Recreational Licensed Child Care program, the following forms must be on file: Forms are available for download at https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/FormsandPublications.

- Health Inventory – Is made of two (2) parts: Part I is completed by a parent/guardian and Part II is completed by a physician. Part II cannot be dated more than one year prior to admission to the program.
- Emergency Contact Form - Completed by parent/guardian and lists all information needed to reach parents/emergency contacts and designates who else may pick up your child. A new form is completed every school year and summer season.
- Parent Contract - This form is to be completed by the responsible billing party. Financial information is confidential and per state law, we will not give out any financial information regarding your child's fees to any party other than the actual payer.
- A "Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care" pamphlet: Please read this pamphlet, complete and sign the tear-off coupon on the back.
- Immunization record – This form is completed by a physician.

Children who turn 3 or 4 years old by ***September 1, 2017*** may enroll in the 3- and 4-year-old program respectively. **2017-2018 Programs:**

BUSHY PARK ES:
3 year old: Tues and Thurs from 9:30 AM–1:30 PM
4 year old: Mon/Wed/Fri from 9:30 AM–3:00 PM

FULTON ES:
3 year old: Tues and Thurs from 9:30 AM–1:30 PM
4 year old: Mon/Wed/Fri from 9:30 AM–3:00 PM

ROGER CARTER COMMUNITY CENTER:
3-5 year old: Mon- Fri from 9:30 AM–3:00 PM
3-5 year old: Mon- Fri from 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

TRIADELPHIA RIDGE:
3 year old: Mon/ Wed/Thur from 9 AM–11:30 AM
4 year old: Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs from Noon–3 PM

Early Learning Center Sample Daily Schedule

Below is a sample of the daily schedule for Bushy Park ES, Fulton ES and Roger Carter Comm. Center.

9:30-9:45am	**Arrival / Welcome** Tabletop manipulatives, literacy center-kid's choice, quiet centers (Self-directed; Fine motor & social skills, reading readiness & language development)
9:45-10am	**Circle Time / Announcements** Calendar, weather, songs, story (Group etiquette, cooperation, citizenship, social skills)
10-10:30am	**Numbers / Math** (Teacher-initiated & small group work; sequencing, time, sorting, problem solving)
10:30-11am	**Letters/Language Arts** (Teacher-initiated & small group work or self-directed; recognition, phonics, sight words)
11-11:30am	**Work-Out Time (outside/gym)** (Gross motor skills - large and/or small group)
11:30am-12pm	**Lunch** (Socially connect with conversations about healthy habits; learn math concepts & work on fine motor skills)
12-12:45pm	**Rest Time**
12:45-1:10pm	**Learning Centers-Kid's Choice** (Self-directed activities)
1:10-1:40pm	**Science / Nature / Safety / Multicultural / Social Studies / Drama / Cooking Activities** (Rotates daily)
1:40-2:10pm	**Creative Expression** (Hands on project - self-paced)
2:10-2:30pm	**Organized Group Game** (Whole group activity)
2:30-3pm	**Snack / Books on Carpet / Goodbyes**

For those who are attending Roger Carter extended program before and after care consists of group & individual activities, group games and a snack (8:30-9:30 am and 3-4:30 pm).

- Please check the Parent Board for ELC announcements
- Themes, shape, color, number, letter and value change monthly.
- Show & Tell will rotate depending on the theme of the week.
- Transitions include 5 minute reminders, with count down when switching activities, clean-up song etc.
- Literacy Center is an option during rotations for when children complete their activity.
- TV's are not a part of our daily schedule and if they are used it's as an educational aide. They are not used more than once a month regardless.
- Centers will change with the monthly themes.
- 3-year-old class has math on Tuesday and language on Thursday.

ELC Program Seasonal Curriculum

Shape:	Color:	Math:	Letter:	Motor Skill:	Multicultural:	Safety:	Building Character
Circle	Red, blue, yellow (primary colors)	Number readiness, Collecting and organizing data	Aa, Bb	Balance (one foot)	Friends Abound, How are we alike and different	Safe play, rules, playground safety	Respect
Triangle	Orange, black	Measurement, Number readiness, Numbers and Numeration sets	Cc, Dd, Ee	Hopping	Say hello/ goodbye in other languages	Fire Safety, Emergency - dialing 911	Caring
Square	Brown, purple	Sequencing 1st - 5th, problem solving, classifying, graphing	Ff, Gg, Hh	Catch and Throw	Food from other countries	Transportation safety (seat belts, road and bicycle safety)	Fairness
Star	Green, Gold	Estimation, problem solving, zero, identify and order 0-9	Ii, Jj	Jumping	Holidays of other countries	Say No to Strangers	Responsibility
Rectangle	White, Purple, Yellow	Money, problem solving, geometry and prediction	Kk, Ll, Mm, Nn	Buttoning, Zippering, Tying Shoes	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr./ Chinese New Year	Being safe if lost (name, address, phone)	Trustworthy
Heart	Pink	Time, estimation, problem solving, fractions (cooking) and patterns	Oo, Pp, Qq	Walking variations	Black History Month / Authors Dr. Seuss and others	Keeping safe with our pets and animals	Citizenship
Rhombus (Diamond)	Green, Gray	Measurement (length, width), problem solving, solid figure (cylinder, cube)	Rr, Ss, Tt	Skipping	Music from other countries, clothing from other countries	Poison Control	Helpfulness
Oval, Pentagon	Pastels	Estimation, counting to 30, problem solving	Uu, Vv, Ww	Climbing	Count to 10 in other languages	Keeping safe in sun and water	Etiquette - Gimmie 5
Octagon	Silver, Gold	Time, money, measurement	Xx, Yy, Zz	Rolling	Games from other countries	Review/ Classroom Safety	Kindness

All of our Early Learning Centers follow the same outline, however, the arrangement may vary when themes and learning objectives are covered. Math and language rotate for the 3-year-old class, while the 4-year-old class receives both daily. Each center follows weekly themes and works on the following items monthly: letters, colors, shapes, motor skills, safety and values.

TELEVISION
TV, computer time and tablets are not a part of our monthly planning and will not be used more than once per month if at all. If they are used, they will be age-appropriate and educational and used in conjunction with an academic subject, e.g. Sid the Science Kid, they are limited to no more than 30 minutes per month. Most programs do not have any computers or tablets available to them.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL PROCEDURES
Children must be escorted into the building each day and signed in by a parent/guardian. Your child will then put his/her items in the assigned cubby. Hooks are located underneath for coats, sweaters and totes. Teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance record for each child to maintain Office of Child Care regulations. Please notify staff of any absences whether due to illness, planned vacations, medical appointments, etc. Children must be picked up at the end of their respective program (11:30, 1:30 PM, 3 PM or 4:30 PM) depending on the location/session. Please remember to sign them out daily. Staff is required to remain on site until every child is picked up. If you need to pick your child up prior to dismissal, please notify the staff.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION
It is essential all work and home telephone numbers be kept current, as well as any change of address. Parents are responsible for this pertinent information for the protection of their child(ren), so please notify the Program Director of any changes. Updates are required in January in order to stay in compliance with Office of Child Care requirements. Registration MUST also be informed in writing either by FAX: 410-313-4658 or E-Mail registration@howardcountymd.gov. When picking up your child, teachers will ask for a driver's license as identification. If someone **not listed** on your emergency card is picking up your child, please make sure the staff is notified in writing in advance. Only individuals listed by the parent/guardian may pick up a child without previous written notification. We will not release your child to anyone who does not have the proper identification. If there are custody concerns, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the staff in writing with a copy of a court order.

EMERGENCY PREPREPAREDNESS PLAN
Each site has a plan in place in case of emergencies or natural disasters. These plans are created typically by the site Director during a 6 hour MSDE approved training. They encompass two different plans based on the seriousness and type of emergency. You can speak with the Director for the locations used or check out the Emergency Evacuation Plan posted on the parent board. Once each month we conduct a practice fire drill and twice a year we practice both emergency preparedness drills.

CLOTHING/TOILETING
We recommend your child be dressed in clothes that do not restrict participation in activities. We frequently use the outdoor playground, so please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. Label all clothing that can be removed, such as coats, mittens, boots, scarves and hats. Please send in a complete set of extra clothes in a plastic bag, clearly marked with your child's name. The set should be switched as the seasons change. We are trying to avoid having a child in shorts in February. Staff

members are not permitted to change diapers; therefore it's a requirement that all students be toilet trained and able to use the toilet independently. Parents must be available to change an "accident" within 10 minutes of notification.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS
Under no circumstances are staff permitted to provide participants with transportation to/from a program. Field trips will be taken a few times a year. Parents will provide transportation for their child to/from the trip and remain with their children throughout the trip. No staff will be at the site during trips, so all children must attend the outing. Some examples of past field trips are the Baltimore Aquarium and Sharps Farm.

PROPERTY DAMAGE/VANDALISM
In the event it is determined a participant is responsible for vandalizing Board of Education, Recreation and Parks or another participants' property, the parents/guardians shall be financially responsible for all damages. This may include replacement or restoration of damaged property. Parents/guardians will receive an itemized bill of the damaged property.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS (Inclement Weather/Snow Day Policy)
Schools Closed or Delayed Opening - Inclement weather begins before school starts:

1. Listen to local radio (i.e. **WBAL** 1090) and television stations for Howard County Public School (HCPSS) closing or delayed opening.
2. If HCPSS schools are closed, all **preschool programs are also closed**, regardless of the location.
3. **If HCPSS schools are delayed, :**
    a. Triadelphia Ridge ELC - class is canceled for the 3 year-old program. The 4 year-old program will be held at its normal time (Noon – 3 pm).
    b. Programs at Bushy Park ES & Fulton ES will follow the same time delay as schools.
        i. If schools are delayed one hour programs begin at 10:30 am.
        ii. If schools are delayed 90 minutes programs begin at 11:00 am.
        iii. If schools are delayed 2 hours programs begin at 11:30 am.
    c. Roger Carter ELC – please speak to the staff for inclement weather information for both classes.

(In the event that more than *three days are missed due to inclement weather or another unscheduled closing*, an adjustment will be made in your May tuition payment.)

Delayed Opening	**1 hr Delay**	**90 min. Delay**	**2 hour Delay**
Bushy Park	10:30 am	11:00 am	11:30 am
Fulton	10:30 am	11:00 am	11:30 am
Roger Carter	10:30 am	11:00 am	11:30 am
Triadelphia Ridge 3's	No Program	No Program	No Program
Triadelphia Ridge 4's	Noon	Noon	Noon

Early Dismissal – If inclement weather begins while preschool is in session, centers will close at the same time the public schools close. Most often the public schools try to make a decision about early closings by Noon.

1. If this happens a staff member will contact you to pick up your child.
2. If you cannot be reached or are unable to get to the school, the emergency contact names will be called in the order listed and asked to pick up your child.

Early Closing	2 hr early dismissal	90 hr early dismissal	1 hr early dismissal
Bushy Park	1 pm	1:30 pm	2 pm
Fulton	1 pm	1:30 pm	2 pm
Roger Carter	Please check with the program staff		
Triadelphia Ridge 3 year old program	N/A - Program ends at 11:30 am	N/A - Program ends at 11:30 am	N/A - Program ends at 11:30 am
Triadelphia Ridge 4 year old program	No program	No program	No Program

Inclusion Information

The Department of Recreation & Parks is pleased to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) regulations. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to register for our programs. At registration please include information regarding your child's disability and any accommodation requests. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) you may provide a copy for informational purposes. The information contained in the IEP will be used by the Therapeutic Recreation and Accommodations staff as supplemental material for the accommodation plan after you have completed the Departmental Assessment Intake form. Please remember we are a recreation-based program setting and not an academic one. Your child's accommodation plan will be prepared with the intent to make their experience in our licensed child care program as successful as possible. It is our goal to have each child participate as fully as possible in all of our recreation activities with the least restrictive environments.

Inclusion/Accommodations may include but are not limited to:

- Training provided for program and inclusion support staff.
- An increase in staff/participant ratio (two weeks advanced notice).
- Sign Language interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Adaptive activity equipment and/or supplies.
- Assistance in the provision of health services, which do not require medical training.

Inclusion/Accommodations services don't include:

- Providing a separate area or alternate activities for a significant portion (more than 25%) of the scheduled structured program.
- Exemptions of program rules and regulations regardless of ability or disability for the safety of all program participants and staff.
- Guarantee of specific staff for programs.
- Individualized therapy within a program.
- Purchasing of personal custom devices.

If a private companion is hired by a family, the following must be on file at the center before the private companion can attend the program, as per the MSDE Office of Child Care: employment medical report, results of FBI and Maryland state criminal background checks, a release of information, an individual personnel information form, a copy of their driver's license, a completed center orientation checklist, volunteer application and agreement, and a statement of duties. These forms are all available by contacting the Therapeutic and Inclusion Services Manager at 410-313-4628 or spotts@howardcountymd.gov.

NUTRITION: LUNCH / SNACKS
*Parents provide snack daily - Triadelphia Ridge
*Parents provide lunch daily - Bushy Park, Fulton and Roger Carter

Each child will need to bring his/her own snack to Triadelphia Ridge and lunch at all the other sites each day**.** We recommend using simple lunch bag with a Velcro closure that a young child can manage with ease. Please pack foods that are nutritious and contain as little sugar as possible. Meals and snacks should emphasize nutrient-rich foods (e.g. fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or non-fat dairy and lean meats). All foods should be trans-fat free. During lunch staff will seek to make sure all of the children's lunches/snacks are nutritious and well balanced. For snack, we ask that you send only one food item and a drink. Snack time is not a mealtime. We provide fresh fruits and/or vegetables at all of the programs during lunch and/or snack time. Children are encouraged to try the day's offering that are typically served family style. This allows the children to serve themselves. Some examples of healthy snacks are:

Cut-up fruit	*Crackers and cheese*	*Goldfish crackers*	*Milk*
Cut-up veggies and dip	*Half of a sandwich*	*Fruit cups*	*Yogurt*
Cottage cheese cups	*100% fruit juice*	*Water*	

Safe, fresh drinking water is available to children at all times indoors and outdoors, including during meals and snacks. Our staff offers water to children often during the day.
Snack and lunch time are also an important part of our instructional day. Staff use mealtime as an opportunity to teach nutrition and food concepts. Adults eat with the children to encourage social interaction and conversation, and ask questions and talk about nutrition concepts related to the foods they are eating. Teachers remind children to take small portions and encourage, without forcing, each child to eat or taste their food. Teachers help children gauge level of fullness when requests for second helpings are made. Students learn to serve themselves, observe and model good manners at the table and take the responsibility for cleaning up after themselves. Food is never used as a punishment or reward in our center. Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks also follows the County Executive's Healthy Nutrition Program, Executive Order 09-2012.

Healthy lunches contain a serving each of fruit (½ cup), meat or meat alternate (1oz), whole grain (1oz) and low fat milk (½ cup), as well as two servings of vegetable (totaling ½ cup). Healthy food preparation techniques are also suggested, such as steamed vegetables, baked foods, etc. Foods that do not meet healthy standards, such as soda, sweetened tea, fruit drinks, full-fat and flavored milk, candy, cookies, sugary cereals are not recommended for snack or lunch time. Most of these types of foods have sugar or a sugar derivative as their first ingredient and therefore do not fulfill a child's nutritional needs. Since refrigerator space is not available, families are asked to put an ice pack in their child's snack/lunch bag. **Please do not bring any nut products of any kind into the program.** Even a slight residue on chairs, toys or carpets can cause a life-threatening reaction in a child with a peanut/tree nut allergy. We know birthdays are special for the children, the teachers will ask you if you would like to provide a treat on or near your child's birthday. Please speak with staff for suggestions or ideas and the staff will be happy to help. Fresh fruit, fruit snacks, rice cereal treats or prepackaged items are some possibilities, as long as they are packaged in a nut-free facility. No homemade food is allowed to be brought in to our programs.

A menu is provided for you to see a sample of the snacks we serve. When we have fresh fruit or vegetables, it will be written on the menu that is posted on the parent board. For any family nights or special events all food brought to the center MUST be store bought due to children with severe allergies.

Sample Snack Menu Planner:

AM = Cheerios w/ Milk and Grape Juice PM = Cheez-Its and Apple Juice Additional Items	AM = Gingersnaps w/ Applesauce and Water PM = Granola Bars w/ Orange Juice Additional Items	AM = Ritz Crackers w/ Pears and Water PM = Pretzels and Grape Juice Additional Items	AM = Kix w/ Milk and Orange Juice PM = Cheese and Crackers w/ Grape Juice Additional Items	AM = Teddy Grahams w/ Apple Juice PM = Pears w/ Goldfish and Water Additional Items

We have fresh fruits and or vegetables available daily and supplement lunches as necessary to ensure that the children are receiving properly balanced meals and snacks. There are also have cooking activities each week or month (depending on the program) where the children are given opportunities to try new or different healthy foods.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

We provide all children with numerous opportunities for physical activity throughout the day; children are not sedentary for more than 45 minutes at a time. Preschoolers have at least 15-30 minutes of structured physical activity and at least 30 minutes (depending on the program hours) of unstructured physical activity daily. All children are provided outdoor time at least once daily, weather and air quality permitting.

In the case of severe weather similar activities are provided inside. Our center provides equipment and materials for active play and movement that support the development of gross motor skills and are appropriate for all children. During outdoor play, children practice gross motor skills with a variety of activities, such as running, skipping, kicking and throwing balls; all the while reinforcing good sportsmanship, team building and social skills. Children who may have special needs can participate in physical activities with their peers or through an accommodation plan, established by the Therapeutic Recreation Manager.

Our facilities are regularly inspected to ensure the safety of all children and teachers make sure the outdoor environment is safe for play before the children go outside. Teachers are stationed at different points around the playground to be able to watch all the children. Teachers are required to participate in physical activity with their students to increase child participation and model healthy levels of activity. Check out the *Lets Move – America's Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids* at www.letsmove.gov/active-families or the *NFL Play 60* at www.nflrush.com/play60/kids for ways to get the children of today healthy and moving.

INJURY

The parent or guardian will be notified during program time if a child sustains any significant injury. Otherwise parents will be notified when they pick-up their child at the end of the program. In the event of a serious injury, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital for treatment however the hospital requires parental consent to begin treatment. An accident form will be completed for all injuries and kept on file at HCRP Headquarters. If you would like a copy of the accident/incident report please visit the website, https://www.howardcountymd.gov/PIA, to request a copy.

ILLNESS

In the event a child becomes ill during our program, every attempt will be made to contact the parents/guardians first. If the staff are unable to reach them, they will begin contacting the persons listed as the emergency contacts. Your child will be made to feel as comfortable as possible until someone arrives to pick them up. Please notify us in the event your child contracts a communicable disease such as measles, chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc. If your child is vomiting or has a fever, they must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the program. If a child is absent due to illness for three days, a note from the physician is required stating the child may return to the program. If your child will not be attending class, please notify the staff.

If your child has any of the following, please keep him/her home until symptoms improve:

•Diarrhea and/or vomiting •Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) •Temperature over 99º F
•Contagious disease •Severe head cold •Earaches
•Sore throat and/or severe/persistent cough
•Skin rashes – not treated by a physician

Children MUST BE free from fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea for 24 hours prior to returning to the program.

HEAD LICE POLICY

If a child is found to have head lice, the parents/guardians will be notified. All rest-time items will be sent home for washing. The child will only be readmitted to the program after the staff determines that treatment has been effective, typically 24 hours once treatment began. A notice and a communicable disease fact sheet will be posted at the center. There are several products on the market that can be used to kill head lice. Some products are available over the counter and some require a prescription. *All persons* in the household should be treated and the treatment procedure is available at the centers. There are other communicable diseases that will require notices and information to be sent home.

SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

In accordance with the procedures set forth in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, any staff member having reasonable cause to believe that a child known to him/her in a professional capacity may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report the matter to the program supervisor. The proper authorities will be notified as the staff are mandatory reporters.

MEDICATION

A Medication Administration Authorization Form, which must accompany all prescribed medication, is available at each site, on-line or by calling 410-313-7275. On the form, the parent/guardian includes specific details on the type of medication, dosage, time to be given and how many days this medication is to be administered. All medication must be in the original container with the child's name, name of medication, physician's name, dosage, and expiration date listed. Medication can be administered only according to the instructions on the label and a minimum of one dose of prescription medication must be administered at home first. All medication will be in a locked box per licensing regulations. Please make sure that the teachers are aware of any allergies your child may have as we do have cooking projects and special celebrations. All allergies must be noted on part 2 (completed by the doctor) of the Health Inventory. If it is necessary that an Epi-pen be available at school, **we recommend 2 Epi-pens be on hand, but require 1 Epi-pen.** Over the counter medicines can be administered at the center only with a physician's authorization.

BEHAVIOR

Children are expected to show respect for staff, program property and other children in the program. ELC staff doesn't administer harsh verbal or corporal punishments. Discipline is centered on reminders, re-direction, a quiet area, verbal management or other best practices. Staff will keep parents updated as needed in situations involving their children. Even with our procedures set in place, persistent or unacceptable behavioral problems may occasionally occur. Some conflict amongst children is to be expected as children are still developing social skills. When children are with each other, their personalities won't mix perfectly all the time; this is a normal part of children's total growth and development. Some young children have a hard time seeing other people's point of view and so they think their needs are the most important. It is important to **recognize that each child is unique**. Different children respond positively to different activities, guidance strategies and communication styles. Staff will encourage and model sharing, being respectful and hands to self. Even with our procedures set in place, persistent or unacceptable behavioral problems may occasionally occur. If problems should arise, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks staff has been given the following guidelines:

- *First Offense:* Verbal warning/reprimand with redirection to other appropriate choices, documentation and notification of parent/guardian.
- *Second Offense*: Consultation with parent/guardian with documentation and parent conference with Division Manager.
- *Final Offense*: Possible suspension or dismissal from the program.

The Department of Recreation and Parks reserves the right to limit, deny or expel a participant when the health and/or safety of the individual, other participants, staff, volunteers, and/or the public is threatened. Any child observed in a physical fight with another child **will automatically be** suspended from the program. Behavior problems that *may* result in program expulsion include but are not limited to: behavior presenting a danger to the participant, other participants, or the staff and/or action that persists after a behavior modification plan has been implemented. We will make every effort to provide a safe, constructive recreation program; we will work to create positive climate that minimizes the potential for inappropriate behavior. However, we will need your assistance to ensure that your child adheres to the rules and regulations of the program by reinforcing appropriate behaviors at home. When misbehavior occurs, appropriate modification techniques will be administered and documentation will occur. Under no circumstances are participants to be subjected to verbal or physical abuse by other participants or staff. Parents/guardians will be contacted if inappropriate behavior persists. We need your assistance to ensure that your child adheres to the rules and regulations of the program by reinforcing appropriate behaviors at home.

NEWSLETTERS and PARENT INFORMATION
Each month you will receive a newsletter conveying upcoming monthly events, special activities, registration information and other center communications. In supporting the "Go Green" initiative, all newsletters will be sent electronically. There will be a hard copy at the site for those who do not have email access. We are requesting one regularly used email address per family. Email addresses will not be 'sold' or given to any other organization. It is very important you provide your site Director with any changes to your email account throughout the school year. At each center, in the vicinity of the sign-in sheets is a parent board with information such as the daily schedule/activity plans, monthly menu, our license to operate and the COMAR regulations that guide our program, are available for you to peruse.

PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS
Each site has on open house date the week before school begins. Staff are on-site should parents want to drop-off paperwork or meet the staff. There are also family events throughout the school year such as talent shows, family breakfasts etc. We encourage parents to be a part of their child's program if possible. If you have any special talent or skills you would like to share, please speak to the site Director. At times throughout the year parents will visit and be part of the program i.e. as a special guest speaker, chaperone on a trip etc. If it is a one-time volunteer, the individual must fill out a volunteer form online and print the completed form to take to the center. This is not applicable to family events such as "Muffins for Moms" etc. If anyone (parents, therapist, special educators, etc.) will be visiting on a regular basis they must be fingerprinted and complete a more in-depth volunteer application, a Release of Information (notarized), physical form and an Individual Personnel Information form.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS
Customer feedback is essential in maintaining high quality child care centers.
Evaluations are typically sent twice a year via email; once in the fall and once in the spring (the same email address you provided for the newsletter is used). We urge parents/guardians to take the time to discuss the questions and responses with your child(ren) and include them in the feedback provided. They are our most important customer and we would like to provide the best service possible. If you require a hard copy of the evaluation there will be a few available at each center.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS
The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks will not be responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged personal property. Items such as electronic games, tablets, cell phones, mp3 players, jewelry, money, sports equipment, toys, etc. should not be brought to the program. Staff have also been instructed not to hold personal belongings.

FAMILY CONFERENCES
Each day during center time and group time the staff (Director & teacher) observe the children and we take notes on the children's growth and development. We also note any areas of concern where the child may need more focus. We share all of this information with the parents at the conferences. We also use the information in developing lesson plans to assist the children in meeting their goals. if at any time you need to speak to the teachers about your child's progress, please make arrangements ahead of time so they can provide you with adequate time, their full attention and privacy. **Arrival and dismissal times are not always appropriate times for discussing your child**. Observations are completed in the fall and spring; your site Director will have times available (outside of instruction time) to hold a parent/teacher conference. Staff are available daily to speak with you about either the program or your child. However, we will also offer 'conference' time; once in the fall and once in the spring. This is a chance for you to meet with the Director and have their full attention and complete privacy. There will be a sign-up sheet if you would like to have an opportunity to speak to the Director more in-depth about your child

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Looking for a weekend class for your child or a cooking class for yourself? Be sure to check out our seasonal brochure at https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/Programs. There is something for everyone in the family! Our registration department can be contacted at 410-313-7275. Robinson Nature Center (https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/Facilities/Robinson-Nature-Center or 410-313-0400) has a planetarium, offers hiking programs and much more for the entire family. The diverse programs offered by the Columbia Festival of the Arts are worth checking out at www.columbiafestival.org or 410-715-3400.

The Howard County Library system has wonderful programs offering academic assistance to all Howard County children, along with a plethora of other programs (www.hclibrary.org). If you are looking for resources in parenting check out the Office of Children's Services (or their Family First Institute) at www.howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-1940. Healthy Howard (www.healthyhoward.org) *"Healthy Howard is an initiative that's unique to Maryland and the region. We're bringing together all facets of the community to create a public health model that can improve the health and well-being of every resident."* The local Health Department (410-313-6300) can offer assistance and resources too. You can reach the ARC at www.archoward.org if you are looking for resources for individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities. Or try The CARE Center at 410-313-CARE (2273) for information or resources to help with you or your child with the following services or referrals:

- Behavior Issues
- Finding Child Care
- Child Care Assistance
- County Resources
- Special Needs
- Parenting Classes
- Health Care
- Mental Health Concerns
- Grandparents Support
- Financial Assistance
- Support Groups
- Adolescent Concerns
- School Age Programs
- Camps

The CARE Center's CARE Line is a FREE information and referral service for people who have questions about children in Howard County. CARE Center staff work with families to identify their needs and help find solutions. For assistance, call 410-313-CARE (410-313-2273) or email: children@howardcountymd.gov

Each year we review, update and look for new resources in our community to share with you. New resources are posted as they become available throughout the school year. All of this information is made available for you at the sign-in/out table and on the Parent Information Board.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

We have established these expectations in order to assist in providing a safe and happy environment where everyone feels accepted. The staff does reinforce these ideas on a daily basis to help each child be better prepared socially. We have established these expectations in order to assist in providing a safe and happy environment where everyone feels accepted. The staff reinforces these ideas on a daily basis to help each child be better prepared socially.

CHILDREN:

- Children will be kind and respectful to everyone.
- Children are expected to keep all body parts to themselves (e.g. no hitting, spitting, biting, etc.).
- Children will treat everyone as they would like to be treated. Children will not threaten to do physical harm (e.g. raise of a fist, swing an object, etc.) to another child or center staff.
- Children will not bring any real/toy weapons to the center.
- If a child is hit or intimidated or harassed for any reason, he/she is to report the incident to center staff so proper disciplinary action can be taken.
- Children will not leave their group for any reason without permission. Staff are responsible for the children's safety and must know their whereabouts at all times.
- Children will participate in all activities unless there is a medical reason why they may not.

PARENTS:

- Keep program staff informed of changes to all paperwork (emergency card or health inventory), attendance, contact phone numbers, email addresses or custodial agreements mandated by the courts.
- Sign your child(ren) in and out daily with the time and your initials.
- It will be necessary to show photo identification to the staff when picking up your child(ren).
- Be on time to pick up your child. If you find you may be late, please contact the center as soon as possible.
- Have the centers' phone number available to contact the program whenever the need arises.
- Stay current with monthly payments and keep all registration information current.
- Read the monthly newsletter for the most up-to-date center happenings and registration information.
- Please conduct yourselves in a professional and kind manner at all times to other children, parents and site staff. Failure to do so may result in your child's dismissal from the program.
- Keep children who are sick (see page 14) home from the program as necessary.
- Make sure children are appropriately dressed for the season and their change of clothes on site is changed with the seasons. We don't want a child in shorts in January. ☺
- It is the parent's responsibility to read, understand and comply with the full contents of this manual.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Pre-Registration Period

October 3-31, 2017 will begin pre-registration for the 2018-2019 school year for the children currently enrolled in the 2017-2018 school year.

Open Enrollment

If you miss pre-registration (no extensions or exceptions), then you will need to register through open enrollment beginning **November 1, 2017**. Telephone, walk-in and mail-in registrations are processed as received from that date forward, either where space is available or as additions to the waiting list.

A $50 non-refundable registration fee is required to register in advance for the upcoming school year. Telephone, walk-in and mail-in registrations are processed as received from that date forward, either where space is available or as additions to the waiting list. Unfortunately, registration is not available online.

Payment Due Date

The $50 non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of enrollment for either returning or incoming participants. The full September payment will be invoiced in **July 2018, due by July 17, 2018**. Fees are subject to change and will not be posted for the fall until the spring of the same year. Should your needs change, we ask you to notify us in writing as soon as you are aware of the change EITHER fax 410-313-4658 or via email to registration@howardcountymd.gov see refund policy on page 22. Our tax ID number is 52-6000965.

PAYMENT

Payments for the Recreational Licensed Child Care Program are due two weeks in advance on the seventeenth of each month. The Childcare Contract must be signed by the party responsible for billing per child. Although we can accept payments from other parties, we can only have one party responsible for the payments. Invoices for all fees incurred will only be charged and sent to the person on record as the billing party. A contract must be on file for each child or they will not be allowed to continue in the program. The federal Tax ID number is 52-6000965 and is printed on your receipt. You can now download a yearly report of your payments through your Recreation & Parks account. You must keep your receipts or print them from your online account. Recreation and Parks will not process post-dated checks. Payment Options:

- Option 1: For automatic credit card monthly deductions, complete the authorization form included in the registration package. It can be downloaded from our website at www.howardcountymd.gov/rap
- Option 2: A convenient coupon book is available for your use. Please include a coupon with each payment (make checks payable to Director of Finance) and mail to Attn: RLC Registration, 7120 Oakland Mills Rd., Columbia, MD 21046.
- Option 3: For on-line credit card payment options, see the Howard County Recreation and Parks website: https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Recreation-and-Parks/MM-Registration. Please note you must request and be approved for an on-line account before you can make payments on-line. In addition, fees are billed to the parent who signs the Contract and will only show up under their on-line account.
- Option 4: Telephone credit card payments can be made from Monday through Friday 8 am-4:30 pm at 410-313-7275. Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover are accepted.

- Option 5: On-line Bank Checks mailed without coupon. Please put your child's program location (and last name if different) in the memo section for these payments. Several issues have arisen with these types of payments, please note the following:
  - A late fee will be assessed if on-line bank checks are received after the payment deadline. Please make sure your bank knows the payment is due on the 17th of each month.

In the event payment is not received, the following procedures will be followed:

- On the first business day after the three-day grace period, late fees are assessed to the participants account. This fee must be paid in conjunction with the monthly fee owed (no exceptions).
- On the following consecutive days, the payer will receive an email advisory and a mailed invoice, advising of the accounts delinquent status and indicating payment is due to avoid termination of service.
- Delinquent notifications will also be delivered via correspondence during your Drop-Off or Pick-up.
- Should the balance not be resolved by the last day of the month, to which the payment was due, the child will be REMOVED from the program and not allowed to continue.
- Should a child be removed from the program, due to a delinquent account, a certified letter will be sent to the payer to advise collection activity will begin.
- Any arrears remaining after 30 days from the date of the certified letter, will be forwarded to the Office of Law for collections.

ADDITIONAL FEES:

- Late payments: Payments for the Recreational Licensed Child Care Programs are due two weeks in advance, on the seventeenth of each month. A late payment fee of $50 will be assessed if payment is not received within three calendar days of the due date. Failure to keep payments current will result in termination of your child's participation in the program. In the event payment is not received, the following procedures will be followed:
  - An invoice will be sent from the registration office indicating the amount owed, the date due and a reminder that your child will not be permitted to participate in the program effective 15 days from the date of the invoice.
  - A certified letter will be sent indicating the last day of your child's participation in the program.
  - Delinquent payments will be turned over to the Office of Law for collection within 30 days of date on the above mentioned certified letter. Questions regarding delinquent payments should be directed to 410-313-7275.
- Returned Checks: Howard County charges a $35 administrative fee for any check returned.
- September's Fee: once registered for the next upcoming school year with the Registration fee required, the September payment will be due July 17th prior to the start of the school year.
- Late Pick-up Charges: These fees cover additional expenses incurred when a child is not picked up by the close of the program (11:30am, 1:30pm, 3pm or 4:30pm). The payer on record from the Parent Contract will be billed for these fees. The time is determined by the clock in the Recreation and Parks Activity Room. The following process applies:
  - First and Second late pick-up: Late slip and fees assessed as follows, $10 per child for the first fifteen minutes beyond the close of the program and $5 per child for each five minute period after that time.
  - Third late pick-up: Late slip and fees assessed, followed by notification from the RLC Coordinator.
  - Fourth late pick-up: Late slip, fees, possible suspension from the program.

- The fees for a fifth late pick-up or more may be doubled or result in an increase of the fee stated above. Failure to make such payments will result in program suspension or dismissal. Each center has a separate telephone number for the classroom. Please contact them in the event you are running late. We expect you to let us know who will be picking up your child by the end of the program and not that you will be arriving 10-20 minutes late. If the child still remains in our care thirty minutes after the end of the program, the police and Child Protective Services will be contacted. Continual lateness may result in dismissal from the program.

SINGLE PAYMENT POLICY

The Department's policy requires full payment by one person for enrollment/monthly tuition fees. Payments can be made by cash, check, money order or credit card. The Department does not accept partial payment of fees from one person with a promise that the remainder of the fees will be paid at another time or by another person.

- Accounts which require two payers:
  - *Incorrect form of payment*: Person A pays half then, at a later time Person B pays the remaining half; or Person A and Person B place two separate checks for the combined fee.
  - *Correct form of payment*: Person A pays full payment directly to the Director of Finance. It is then Person A's responsibility to obtain funds from Person B.

RECEIPTS/FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Internet payments do not generate receipts. You may access them yourself on-line. Receipts are automatically mailed upon receipt of payment if made by coupon, telephone, fax or credit card. Please retain for tax purposes. Our federal tax ID number is 52-6000965. We cannot generate year-end reports for tax purposes. You can now download a yearly report of your payments through your Recreation & Parks account and/or please keep monthly receipts. Financial information is confidential and as per state law, we cannot/will not give out any financial information regarding your child's care and fees to any party other than to the actual payee. Please do not have your spouse or another party call regarding balance due or payment records.

To access Financial Receipts On-line

- https://apm.activecommunities.com/howardcounty/?
- Once you arrive at the website, Select the blue icon, 'Sign –In'
- Select 'My Account"
- Under 'Account Payments Include', Select 'List of Account Payments', to obtain past receipts.

To access one cumulative Tax Receipt"

- https://apm.activecommunities.com/howardcounty/?
- Once you arrive at the website, Select the blue icon, 'Sign –In'
- Select 'My Account"
- Under 'Account Activity', Select 'Print Tax Receipts'

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

For those parents who receive assistance from Social Services, it is imperative you complete the Child Care Assistance Application form and meet with your social worker before registering for the program. The $50 registration fee is not eligible to be covered by POC vouchers or scholarship rates. For parents who may not be eligible for financial assistance from Social Services, the Department of Recreation and Parks has a Scholarship Program and payment plans. Tuition may be reduced if there is a financial need. We are sensitive to the needs of participants and are willing to work out special arrangements. Copies of the scholarship application and guidelines can be found on our website, www.howardcountymd.gov/rap; or you may call, email our Registration Department, (410) 313-7275, registration@howardcountymd.gov.

PROGRAM STATUS
A family's need may change during the course of the school year. You must notify us immediately if you wish to change sessions. Please put your advanced notification of change(s) or withdrawal from the program in writing to Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, Attn: RLC Registration, at registration@howardcountymd.gov or fax to 410-313-4658.

PROGRAM CREDITS
In the event of unusually inclement weather or repeated mechanical failure, we can grant what has been called a "snow credit." The decision to grant a "snow credit"' is based on how many consecutive days' schools are closed and how often this occurs. It is not automatic that "snow credits" will be issued every time schools are closed due to inclement weather.

REFUND POLICY
The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks understand that a parent's need for child care may change during the course of the school year. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule. In the event a refund is necessary, you must send the request in writing. You may fax the request to 410-313-4658 or email registration@howardcountymd.gov. The $50 registration fee is non-refundable. All program refunds follow the Department policy as stated in the seasonal guide:

"We recognize that you may wish to withdraw for a variety of reasons, but our policy encourages early decisions so as to not affect other customers or our ability to efficiently deliver the programs. At a minimum, all refund requests are subject to a 20% administrative fee. Additional fees may be assessed to recover costs associated with the program. Class programs require at least two weeks advance notice of withdraw to avoid the additional fees."

Advanced notification is required for all refund requests, as there are no retroactive refunds. Refund requests are generally granted due to parental schedule changes, securing another childcare provider, or a move by the family. Please allow approximately four weeks to process your request. Credit towards the next month's payment will be given if a child is absent due to illness for *at least five successive days*. For a medical credit, a note from a physician is necessary. Please notify the Registration Department in writing.

CONCLUSION

We are pleased to be able to offer this service and will make every effort to make your child's experience a positive one. Our center encourages family involvement to support and promote children's healthy eating and physical activity habits. We welcome family input and communicate in ways that respect families' cultures and customs. Nutrition education and physical activity information is provided for parents through the electronic monthly newsletter. We encourage parents to communicate any concerns about their child's eating or physical activity habits. We also encourage parents to contact us with any questions or suggestions about our nutrition and physical activity practices. The Recreational Licensed Child Care Program is licensed by the Office of Child Care within the Maryland Department of Education. The local regional telephone number is 410-750-8771. Please feel free to contact them with any questions or concerns. Finally, we want to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to get to know you and your family and are looking forward to a great year ahead!