



Gabina Learning Center

Preserving the Sweetness of Childhood

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Parent Handbook



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Welcome to Gabina Learning Center!

Gabina Learning Center has grown out of a love for my own children. My daughter's name, Gabina, means honey. She's the bright and busy bee that has inspired this endeavor. After caring for and educating children alongside my daughter and son for years, I decided to see how far I could take my enjoyment of watching children blossom. From this, Gabina Learning Center was born.

I believe in first-class early childhood education. My goal is to encourage creativity and independence in young children in a relaxed, home-like setting.

At Gabina Learning Center, your child's day will be filled with activities that encourage them to blossom. Through age and developmentally appropriate activities, your child's love of learning will be encouraged and their independence and self-esteem will grow. They will also learn to interact with others with the same respect and courtesy that is shown to them. In an environment filled with love, patience, and kindness they will become their best selves.

This Parent Handbook is one means of forming a partnership with you so that, together, we can create a warm, affectionate, trusting, challenging, and educational environment for your child(ren).

Gabina Learning Center's staff are committed to providing a professional, quality service that will foster the growth and development of your child.

Thank you for choosing us!

Basria Dur

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Philosophy

Gabina Learning Center is dedicated to providing quality, professional care to children aged two months to twelve years and their families. Gabina Learning Center believes in the principle that infants and toddlers grow best in environments that provide experiences aimed at fostering their development in five major areas.

- Social/Emotional: A warm, consistent and caring environment
- Gross Motor: Large muscle development and coordination
- Fine Motor: Small muscle development and hand-eye coordination
- Language: Communication and listening
- Cognitive: Problem solving and challenges for young minds

We encourage young children to develop at their own rates without pressure to perform beyond their developmental readiness.

Our staff provides affection and stimulating developmental activities. Throughout the day, your child will experience lots of cuddling, laughing, smiling and conversation. The Director and staff are available to talk with you throughout the day. You are invited to call or visit anytime during operational hours. The staff is available to spend time talking to you at the beginning and end of your child's day and/or by appointment.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Gabina Learning Center is a nonsectarian learning center. Gabina Learning Center admits children of any race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities and does not discriminate in administration of its educational programs or admission policies.

Certifications & Accreditation

Gabina Learning Center is licensed to provide child care by the state of Maryland. We guarantee that all staff are current in their First-Aid, Infant/Child CPR, and SIDS prevention training and certifications.

Accreditation is an official review process performed by a nationally-recognized outside agency. The process of achieving and maintaining accreditation is no easy feat. It involves staff and family participation, classroom observations, and health and safety checks. The accrediting agencies have high standards that often go well above and beyond our state's minimum



licensing requirements for child care centers. We strive to meet these high standards in order to achieve this mark of excellence and we appreciate your support in this process!

As a new child care center (transitioning from in-home care), Gabina Learning Center is currently pursuing our accreditation from one of three national early childhood accreditation agencies:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC)
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)

Educational Programs

Our highly qualified and professional teachers will guide and encourage your child in every stage of his or her development. We firmly believe in the need for open and thorough communication between teachers and each family to provide loving care for each child and confidence for each parent.

INFANTS

The infant program serves children from the age of eight weeks until the age of 18 months. The program is designed to promote feelings of belonging and the loving care which help infants to grow and develop to their full potential. Children eat, sleep, and play according to his or her own schedule. Every infant is an individual with unique abilities, desires and emotions. Our program is designed to meet the individual needs of each child and to provide them with educational experiences. In our infant group, we provide a creative and stimulating program which encourages visual and linguistic stimulation as well as gross and fine motor experiences to enhance learning through their own natural curiosity.

TODDLERS

Our toddler program serves children from 18 months to 36 months. The toddler program is designed to provide stimulating experiences for the children where they can learn through their own inquisitiveness. The emphasis during the toddler years is on building self-confidence and fostering the natural curiosity that toddlers possess. Throughout the day toddlers enjoy the large variety of play materials that are readily made available to them. Art, music, language and science activities geared to little hands are also introduced.

Our teachers offer the tenderness, warmth, and patience so essential to this young age. Children feel comfortable in our toddler class settings when their parents leave. Deep respect



for each child ensures that your toddler will truly love his or her school environment and, from that, develop a long lasting love for learning.

PRESCHOOLERS

Gabina Learning Center has a preschool program that serves children aged three through five years. Our preschool program prepares children socially and academically, as well as, supports and encourages the development of independence, responsibility, and confidence, all of which are essential for the child's ongoing success in kindergarten.

Our preschool program focuses on each child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development by offering concrete, hands-on activities for the child to explore. The preschool curriculum is designed to actively engage each child in developmentally age appropriate activities exploring the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. Our skilled teachers prepare curriculum that is exciting and challenging, as well as supportive of each child's own learning style.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

As children 6 -12 years of age enter elementary school they are beginning to develop close relationships in peer groups, can communicate more effectively with peers and adults and are better able to problem solve and use abstract thinking. To develop these skills we offer a very small and personalized before and after school program to balance with the more structured school setting.

Enrollment and Registration

As stated in our philosophy, enrollment shall be granted without discrimination in regards to sex, race, color, religion, special needs, or political preference. Currently enrolled students and their siblings are given enrollment priority. Regular enrollment occurs on a revolving basis throughout the year as space is available.

At the time of enrollment, parents/guardians are required to complete a full registration form and medical history accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee. Please see our financial policies for more information.



Getting to Know our Families

Gabina Learning Center builds a positive relationship with each of our families by being familiar with their unique characteristics, strengths and issues important to each of them. To develop partnerships with the families we create a welcoming environment and opportunities for involvement.

All family data is kept strictly confidential. Please see our Online Privacy and Confidentiality Policies (included in your Parent Packet).

Communication

You may visit the center at any time, but please remember that while your child is in the center, class rules that encourage appropriate behavior still apply for your child. Each family is provided access to our online Parent Portal through our website www.gabinalearningcenter.com and its app (coming soon!). The Parent Portal and its app are provided via the Child Care Center management software we use, called Sandbox (runsandbox.com). Some of the ways we will communicate with you:

- Email
- Phone
- Our secure, online Parent Portal, including:
 - Daily logs
 - Notes
 - Photos (Consent Form on p. 17)
- Social Media: We have Facebook and Twitter accounts only of general information use. See our privacy policy. No information or photos of any child in the center will be use without permission.

Authorization to Release a Child

A child will be released to parents and those adults identified by the parents as authorized to pick-up their child. If another adult will pick up your child, we will release the child only after notification from the parent in writing. Verbal authorization can only be made to the Director. Proper I.D. must be given before the child is released. It is your responsibility to update the emergency contact and authorized pick-up list via the Parent Portal.



Emergency Contacts

Your emergency contacts listed on your emergency card will be contacted in the event that you are unable to be reached. Please adhere to the following policies:

1. Provide at least two (2) contacts that live in a 20 mile radius of Gabina Learning Center.
2. Your contacts should know that they have been recorded as emergency contacts and are responsible for your child in the event that you cannot be reached.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, Gabina Learning Center will follow the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) operational status. However, to preserve the safety of our staff and children we will close if conditions warrant such action, even if area schools remain open. It is at the discretion of the Director to make the decision to delay opening, close early, or remain closed throughout the day due to weather and/or facility safety (lack of electricity, etc).

Please monitor the PGCPS operational status. Additionally, notification of operational status will be made in the Parent Portal and on our social media accounts. We will also email/call parents to the best of our ability.

Emergency Procedures

An Emergency Evacuation Procedure is posted in the center. The center is protected by smoke detectors located in each room. In the event of an emergency, we would begin calling parents to advise them of our location if it changes, and to request that the children be picked up as quickly and safely as possible. For cases where parents cannot be reached we would begin calling your emergency contact numbers.

Discipline Policy

A child who is having difficulty for any reason will be re-directed to another activity with teacher assistance. In the event that a child's behavior is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group. The child will be taken aside to sit with a staff member where he/she can gain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child will always be in an area where he/she is in full view of, and can be supervised and supported by a staff member. Interaction between the child and a staff member will take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.



Any method of discipline which frightens, demeans, or humiliates a child is strictly prohibited.

A Note about Biting

Biting is an unfortunate but common developmental behavior for young children. Children bite for a variety of reasons. Children who bite will be removed from the classroom. A teacher will discuss how biting is wrong and how it feels to be bitten. The bitten child will be immediately comforted, the area washed, and ice applied if necessary. Parents of both children involved will be notified. If biting persists to such a degree that the safety of other children or staff becomes seriously threatened, the child who is biting may be removed from enrollment at the discretion of the Director until this phase of development has passed.

Child Abuse Policy

All staff of the Gabina Learning Center are mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or maltreatment on the part of an employee, parent, or others. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is strictly prohibited. Any means of corporal punishment will not be tolerated. Additionally, withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited. If any type of abuse or neglect is suspected it will be reported as mandated by county and state law.

Daily Routine

Hours of Operation

Gabina Learning Center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The center will be closed for all federal holidays.

Arrival & Departure

Parents are responsible for signing children in and out at the front desk. This procedure is extremely important for attendance records and safety measures in emergencies.

Parents are welcome to stay briefly to help their child adjust to the group and to smooth the separation if the child is anxious about saying goodbye. Sometimes, however, a smile, cheerful goodbye kiss and a reassuring word is all that is needed. Rest assured that if your child is



having a difficult time settling down and is crying for a prolonged period of time, we will contact you.

Our concern is for the children's safety, therefore we ask that once the child has been released to your care at day's end, your child not be permitted to run about unattended.

Meals

The major meal of the day is served at lunch. Nutritious snacks are provided twice a day. Parents must provide their own formula or expressed milk for nursing infants. Candy and chewing gum are not permitted.

Parents must inform the center of any special dietary requirements, including food allergies. **Please notify us of any new allergies immediately.**

Rest Time

Maryland guidelines require that all the children under the age of five have at least a two hour rest period every day. No child will ever be forced to sleep, however they are encouraged to remain quiet during this time.

Infants will be allowed to nap according to their own bodily needs. Infants sleep in provided cribs and the toddlers sleep on mats. Nap times may vary according to our daily activities. You will be able to track when your child sleeps in our online Parent Portal.

For the children sleeping on mats, please send a crib sheet, pillow, and two blankets that can be kept at the daycare for your child. As necessary, crib sheets, pillow covers, and blankets must be taken home on Friday for laundry and returned on Monday.

Personal Belongings

A favorite stuffed animal may ease the transition from home and comfort a child feeling anxious. The director and staff reserve the right to refuse any toys deemed potentially dangerous on a case by case basis. It is recommended that other toys be left in the car or at home, so as not to be lost, broken, or envied by others.

Clothing

Children need to be comfortable for their daily play and learning activities. Cold/hot weather does not necessarily keep us indoors, so please ensure that children have appropriate clothing



for the day's weather changes. All clothing should be labeled with the family's name to reduce loss.

A full set of extra clothes should be kept at the center, even for the oldest children. When accidents of play, feeding, or toileting happen, we know you would want your child to be comfortable. Extra sets will need to be replaced as soon as possible if your child uses them.

Shoes need to be appropriate for indoor/outdoor play. Sandals or snow boots, for health reasons need to be replaced with indoor shoes. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are required for safe play; an extra pair may be left in the child's cubby and teachers will gladly help with the changes.

Financial Policies

TUITION POLICY

At time of enrollment and before care can begin, a deposit of 2 weeks' tuition and non-refundable registration fee (\$99) will be due.

Tuition is payable in full by the 1st day of the month. Online payment is possible through the Parent Portal. Checks should be made payable to Gabina Learning Center. There will be a \$25.00 insufficient funds fee for all checks returned to us unpaid from the bank.

There will be no refund for missed days due to illness while the child is enrolled unless prior arrangements are made. Should the center not open or close early because of severe weather conditions, tuition will not be refunded or discounted.

LATE PAYMENTS

There will be a \$35.00 late payment fee charged to each monthly bill for any bill that is received after the 5th day of the month. It is center policy that children may be required to withdraw from enrollment in the center when tuition is more than 14 days (2 weeks) in arrears.

WITHDRAWAL, SCHEDULE CHANGES, & TERMINATION

Written notice of 30 days is required before the withdrawal or schedule change request of an enrolled child.



If the Director of the center determines that a child is unsuited for the center's environment, the parents will be consulted. If discussed adjustments are not made, the child will be given a 2 weeks grace period for the parent(s) to make alternate arrangements and the child shall be withdrawn and all agreements will be terminated.

Health Policies

The health policy of the Gabina Learning Center is designed to best meet the needs of our children, families and staff. No policy will eliminate the problem of illness endemic to group care – especially of young children. No policy will satisfy all the populations the center serves, and no policy can entirely eliminate the element of subjective judgment inherent to individual situations. The center adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act in the application of its health policies.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

Staff will perform a visual health check of each child upon drop-off every morning. If a child appears unwell, concerns will be brought to the parent's attention before their departure.

Signs/symptoms of illness include: Severe coughing, sneezing, breathing difficulty, discharge from the nose, ears or eyes, diarrhea or vomiting. Should any of these symptoms present themselves the child will be excluded until a medical evaluation allows inclusion. A doctor's note must be submitted stating that the child is not contagious and indicating the date that they can return to group care.

In order to minimize the spread of illness among children, it is important that parents have arrangements available for alternative care whenever your child shows signs of illness. The following symptoms will necessitate exclusion from the center:

FEVERS

A temperature of 100° F or higher is reason for exclusion from group care. A child who has been sent home with a fever of 100° F or higher may return to the center after being fever free for 24 hours without any medication.

SEVERE COLDS

Colds with extreme symptoms of excessive coughing, sneezing, nose drainage that is yellow or green and which interferes with a child's ability to eat, sleep or play is reason for exclusion.



DIARRHEA

Bowel movements that are extremely loose, watery and frequent are reasons for exclusion. A child should be free from diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the center.

Note: Diarrhea in children can be extremely contagious. Bowel movements that cannot be contained in a diaper or a toilet pose a high risk of contagion. Young children, especially infants, may have frequent or loose stools regularly or in response to a variety of conditions, but these are different from diarrhea. One or two meals should be eaten during the “24 hours free from diarrhea” period (overnight with no meals eaten should not be considered 24 hours free from diarrhea). Secondary symptoms of crying, pain, refusal to eat, etc., must be considered.

VOMITING

Vomiting is a reason for exclusion. As with diarrhea, 24 hours should pass (with at least one meal eaten) without an episode of vomiting before a child returns to the center.

Note: Infants can spit up or throw up for many different reasons. With no other symptoms present we would wait to see if an infant threw up a second time before calling the parent to pick up the child.

RASHES

Rashes must be physician diagnosed as non-contagious for a child to be in the center.

MOUTH SORES

Mouth sores with drooling are reason for exclusion, unless the child’s pediatrician provides written notice that the condition is non-contagious.

CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye)

Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye is reason for exclusion. A child may return to the center 24 hours after medication is begun.

TEETHING

Teething can cause low-grade fever (under 100 F), crankiness, loose bowel movements and a clear, runny nose. Teething is NOT a reason for exclusion.



SYMPTOMS OF CONTAGIOUS CHILDHOOD DISEASE

Symptoms of contagious childhood diseases are reason for exclusion. Parents should notify us if their child has been exposed to any contagious disease or illness. Exposure to contagious disease is not a reason for exclusion, but merits staff awareness for monitoring the child's health.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE SEVERE ILLNESS

Signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, undefined irritability, persistent discomfort, crying or difficult breathing are reasons for exclusion.

ABSENCE

Please call us if your child will be absent and let us know why. Contagious illnesses must be posted at the front desk, so other parents know what is going around. To be cleared by for group care, we need:

1. The child to be seen by a doctor.
2. A note from the doctor indicating:
 - a. the diagnosis;
 - b. that the child is not contagious;
 - c. the date that the child may return to group care.

A child will continue to be excluded if the appropriate note is not received before the child is brought to school. No adjustments are made in tuition for absence due to illness.

HEALTH LAW REQUIREMENTS

A complete physical examination is required by state law. It must be within 30 days prior to enrollment if the child is over 6 months old and within 15 days if the child is under 6 months old. An updated physical examination is required yearly, on the expiration date of the current physical. Your child will be excluded if their physical has expired until an updated physical has been submitted.

Maryland Department of Health sets minimum required immunizations for attendance in nursery, daycare, and Pre-K programs. Documentation of immunizations is required from the child's physician, including regular updates.



MEDICATION POLICY

Gabina Learning Center staff will administer prescription medications only under the following conditions:

1. The first dose is always administered at home.
2. You provide written permission to the center, with full instructions as to dosage, and times to administer medication. (Forms are available from the office for this purpose)
3. All prescribed medications must have the original label with the child's name on the bottle.
4. Non-prescription medications will be administered on request with written permission as per recommended dosages on medicine bottle.

IN CASE OF INJURY

Basic first aid will be performed for all cuts, scrapes, bumps and otherwise minor boo-boos. In the event of a more serious injury, a parent will be notified. If the parents are not available, the emergency contacts will be called. In a true medical emergency, 911 will be called and/or your child may be taken to the closest Emergency Room by the Director, unless the parents have designated an alternate emergency plan.

SUDDEN ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you; if you cannot be reached your emergency contacts will be notified and asked to pick up your child. Please ensure that emergency contacts are aware that they have been listed on your emergency contact list. Please be sure to notify us the very day your work phone number changes, so that you are most efficiently reached. Children with contagious illnesses need to be picked up within a reasonable amount of time to limit their exposure to the other children.

TOILET TRAINING

We are more than happy to encourage potty training as long as the child is ready (typically between 2 and 3 years old). The initial start needs to be done at home for at least two weeks with success before it can be effectively started in group care. Parents will be required to supply pull-ups and wipes. Children will be allowed to come to daycare in cotton training pants/underwear after they have been accident free for at least two weeks in pull-ups. Communication between parents and our staff is imperative for a successful transition from diapers to toilet.



A Final Note

We realize this is a lot of information to absorb. It is important that you feel comfortable with our policies and procedures. If you do not understand something or have a concern with one or more of our policies and/or procedures, it is important that you express that to us before enrolling your child in Gabina Learning Center. We are always open to suggestions and feel communication is a very important part of a quality child care.

If there are any problems or concerns in the future, we encourage you to talk to us about them. If a lengthy discussion is needed, a time that is convenient for both of us will be scheduled, as the other children still need our attention during business hours.

We reserve the right to amend any portion of the Parent Handbook at any time. If and when we do make a change, you will be given a copy.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and care for your little one. We look forward to a future of keeping your child smiling and safe.

Note: By signing below, it is understood that all of the policies and procedures of Gabina Learning Center Parent Handbook are understood and agreed upon.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Gabina Learning Center Director Signature

Date



Photo Consent Form - Parent Portal

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____, grant permission to Gabina Learning Center Staff to take photograph(s) or electronic media images of my child to be shared with me securely through the Parent Portal provided by Gabina Learning Center. I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time by notifying the Director of Gabina Learning Center in writing. The revocation will not affect any actions taken before the receipt of this written notification. Images will be stored securely in the Parent Portal provided by our child care management software (Sandbox) and only authorized staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) will have access to them. They will be kept only long enough to post them to the parent portal and after that time deleted.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____