



4214 Old Town Road
Huntingtown, MD 20639
Phone: (410) 414-5084
Fax: (410) 535-2252

MSDE Accredited
www.noahsarklearningcenter.com

Children Learn What They Live

By Dorothy Law Nolte

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

he learns to find love in the world.





Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc. (NALC)

NALC welcomes children ages six weeks through fifth grade. Applications for enrollment are considered without regard to race, creed, disability, national origin, or gender. NALC will make every effort to accommodate all children unless the child's presence poses a direct threat to the health or safety to others, or requires a fundamental alteration of the program. If a child with special needs can function within our program, the Director and parent/guardian will create a plan to ensure the needs of the child are met.

Infants and Toddlers

A loving, nurturing environment is provided for young children from six weeks to two years of age. A developmental program is created with the help of the parents/guardians based on the needs of each child. Parents/guardians are asked to supply formula, milk, and baby food to assure consistency in the child's diet between home and NALC.

Preschool

Age-appropriate classes with learning activities, physical development, and socialization skill-building are provided for children from 2 to 5 years of age. Full-time and part-time care is offered with a minimum of 2 (two) days per week. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided.

Before/After School Care

A program for children who attend Plum Point, Sunderland, or Huntingtown Elementary School, kindergarten through fifth grade. Care is provided on days when Calvert County Public Schools are closed. Breakfast and snack are provided.

Summer Camp @ Noah's Ark

Summer Camp @ Noah's Ark is an exciting place to provide your child with memories that will last a lifetime! Summer Camp serves children who have completed Kindergarten through 5th grade. Activities include field trips, special events, swimming, bike riding, and museums – even time to hang out with friends. Summer camp applications and calendars are available every year in March.



History of Noah's Ark

Toni Healey began as a preschool teacher in 1981. As she learned and developed her own curriculum style, she moved into a position as the director of a local church child care center. In 2003, an opportunity arose that allowed Toni and her husband, Pat, to purchase a house and property at the current location on Old Town Road. NALC has seen many changes to the original building along with the surrounding playgrounds and parking areas. NALC was established in November of 2003 with the hard work and dedication of this couple. In July 2007, NALC expanded into the building adjacent to the property which allowed the program to include infants and toddlers.

Creating a safe, comfortable, creative environment for children to learn and develop the way God intended has been Toni's passion in life for more than 30 years. She shares her devotion to children with her husband and family, as well as with a large, carefully chosen, well-trained staff.

Pat Healey is retired from the "World of Wireless" and has begun his second career with NALC. He accomplishes much of the behind-the-scenes maintenance of buildings and grounds. Mr. Pat, as the children call him, is responsible for keeping things up and running!

Patra Healey, Toni's daughter, joined the partnership in 2005. She is currently the Executive Director for NALC. Patra and Toni have worked very closely over the years which fashioned a strong team. Patra is fluent in NALC's curriculum, as well as the financial and marketing aspects of Noah's Ark. She has made it her life's dream to carry on the legacy her mother created.

**Mission**

Our mission is to be an outreach to the community, providing quality childcare in a safe, nurturing, Christian environment.

Vision

Our vision is a Christian childcare center that demonstrates the relevancy of Jesus Christ in every aspect of center life; that respects the individuality and worth of every child and encourages a love of learning that will last a lifetime.

Philosophy

The young child absorbs the world through his senses and lives in imitation (role playing) and imagination. Children learn best by doing, and play is the serious work of childhood. At Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc., children sing, paint and cook. They perform puppet shows, dress up, and transform blocks into ships and castles, houses and trains. Becoming fully engaged in imaginative play is the child's best foundation and preparation for learning.

Daily activities are open-ended so that each child may explore possibilities and experiment with materials without adult determined models. The activities are teacher guided with child selection. Verbal expression of thoughts and feelings is encouraged during circle time, small groups, meal times and play times. Children play outdoors at least twice daily during the year on a mulched, fenced play yard with outdoor equipment, including climbing structures, bikes, swings, and sand play.

We believe children "learn by doing" and have set up an exciting indoor and outdoor learning environment for children to explore. Classrooms have learning centers with materials that provide a wide range of experiences in all skill areas. The goal of our curriculum, which is based on the Maryland Model for School Readiness and approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, encourages children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." Mark 9:37

The Holy Bible, New International Version

Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc. (NALC)	i
History of Noah's Ark	ii
Mission.....	iii
Vision.....	iii
Philosophy	iii
I. CENTER OPERATION	1
Licensing.....	1
Open Door Policy	1
Days and Hours of Operation.....	1
Inclement Weather	1
Parking	1
II. DAILY ROUTINE	2
Arrival	2
Curriculum	2
Media Policy	3
Outdoor Play/Natural Environment.....	3
Naptime	3
Pickup/Late Pickup	3
III. STAFF.....	4
Classroom Staff and Training	4
Babysitting Policy	4
IV. CHILDREN.....	4
Clothing and Personal Items	4
Transitioning to a New Classroom.....	5
Cubby Items	5
Valuables.....	5
Non-discrimination Policy	5
V. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES	6
Application for Enrollment	6
Part-time Enrollment.....	6
Infant Enrollment	6
Termination of Care by the Parent/Guardian.....	6
Termination of Care by NALC	7
VI. PAYMENTS AND FEES.....	7
Registration Fee.....	7

Security Deposit.....	7
Tuition	7
Late Tuition.....	8
Cost of Collecting Delinquent Accounts	8
Returned Check Policy	8
VII. APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE.....	8
Discipline.....	8
VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY	8
Child Abuse Reporting	8
Illness	8
Emergency Form.....	10
Injuries	10
Medication Administration	11
Nutrition	11
Allergies and Special Diets.....	11
Fire Safety.....	11
Emergency Preparedness	12
IX. TOUCHING AND NURTURING	12
A Place of Care and Comfort.....	12
Nurturing.....	12
Safety and Guidance	12
Hygiene.....	12
X. COMMUNICATION	12
Parent/Guardian - Staff.....	12
Conferences & Assessments	13
Community Resources	13
Administrative.....	14
XI. SPECIAL EVENTS.....	14
Field Trips.....	14
XII. GENERAL POLICIES OF NALC.....	14

I. CENTER OPERATION

Licensing

Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc. (NALC) is licensed and inspected annually by the Office of Child Care (OCC), Maryland State Department of Education. Summer Camp @ Noah's Ark is licensed annually through the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. Our license is posted in the front office and may be viewed at any time.

Open Door Policy

All parents/guardians of enrolled children are welcome to stop in at any time. We want you to feel free to look into our busy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at work or play. Join us for lunch, classroom parties, or simply to observe.

Days and Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday
6am - 6pm
410.414.5084

We are open year round, with the exception of ten (10) holidays and two (2) in-service training days:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas

The in-service days are the day preceding public school opening in late August and the third Friday in March for FA/CPR training.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, NALC will be closed on the Friday preceding the holiday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, NALC will be closed on the Monday immediately following the holiday.

Inclement Weather

NALC will make every effort to be open on a consistent basis, but will close if conditions are dangerous or roads impassable. A recorded message will be available on the main line by 5:30am if NALC will be closed. We will also list any closings on Channel 4 News and the NALC Facebook page. (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Noahs-Ark-Learning-Center-Inc-Noahs-Ark-Too/481186568577980>).

Parking

Parking is minimal directly in front of the NALC building and is intended for pick-up and drop-off only. If you wish to spend extra time visiting with a teacher or parent, please park at the far end of the parking lot.

II. DAILY ROUTINE

Drop-off Tips

New places may be overwhelming for some children. Setting aside extra time during drop off, especially on your child's first day and maybe during the first few weeks, will help your child settle into their new routine. It may be helpful if you, your child, and the teacher develop a drop off routine, i.e. waving from the window, blowing kisses, etc.

When you leave, be sure to say "good-bye," and remind your child of the time when you will return. Slipping out unnoticed may cause anxiety in your child.

Change can be difficult; communication and follow-through are key. We want your child to feel safe and secure, and we want you to feel the same. If you find that you are going to be later than anticipated during your child's first week or if you are concerned, don't hesitate to call. Call as you need, but please note that the teachers have more time available to talk during naptime (1pm-3pm).

Arrival

NALC opens at 6am, at which time the doors are unlocked by a staff member. In compliance with our Child Care License, the doors are locked until NALC opens for the day.

An adult **must** accompany your child to the classroom and initial sign-in/out at *every* drop-off and pick-up.

A cubby will be designated for your child's personal belongings, i.e. coats, change of clothes, etc.

Please make sure the teacher is aware of your child's presence before you leave.

Breakfast is served by 9am. Breakfast for school-agers is served at 7:30am. If you would like your child to eat breakfast with us, please be sure to arrive before it is served.

Curriculum

To begin their learning experience, children are grouped in classes according to age and/or developmental level. Beyond that, curriculum is a combination of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, presented in a setting that offers a variety of age-appropriate learning experiences. Our program emphasizes exploration, problem-solving, and discovery skills in the areas of science, art, music and movement, dramatic play, expressive and receptive language development, social studies, math, pre reading, large and fine motor, and social skills. Books are available for individual reading and reading experiences with the teachers daily.

The Christian aspect of our curriculum may be found in prayer before meals and snack time, music, stories, and other occasional lesson elements. NALC is a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Accredited center.(Noah's Ark Too! is in the process of becoming Accredited.) Creative Curriculum, an MSDE approved curriculum, is implemented at both locations. This curriculum is chosen based on its ability to include all developmental domains while considering the needs of each child. Lesson plans are written on a weekly basis and approved by the Director. Teachers observe and assess

each child on a continual basis and create lesson plans according to individual needs which may include IEP's and IFSP's.

The age-appropriate units are well rounded and all inclusive. Multi-cultural activities are incorporated with the lesson plans. Manipulatives, toys and activities rotate on a monthly basis in each classroom.

Media Policy

Screen time at the NALC (video, computer, DVD, etc.) will be confined to times that are directly related to learning experiences. We feel that passive technology is not an effective educational tool and therefore it is not utilized often. At NALC children do not watch television but if they do watch DVD's or videos it is less than 30 minutes per week. There is no screen time for children under 2 years of age.

Outdoor Play/Natural Environment

Outdoor activities are important and just as necessary as our indoor program. Both are essential to the health, education, and development of your child. Our playground is a fenced, mulched, play yard with sandbox, veranda, swings, slide, climber, trees, bikes, tires, and a small garden house. Staff members are present at all times when children are playing in the outdoor play area.

When we deem the weather is too extreme (hot or cold), we will limit time spent on the playground. On rainy days, the children may play on the covered porches. On all other days, per OCC regulations, we will go outside at least twice a day. Reminder: if your child is well enough to come to NALC, he/she is well enough to go outside.

Naptime

ALL infants, toddlers and pre-school children will rest every day. Young children work and play very hard and need rest.

Naptime is from 1-3pm daily. Not all children will sleep, but they are required to rest quietly on their cots during rest time. OCC requires a minimum one-hour rest period and in most instances, the children will fall asleep when provided the appropriate conditions.

NALC provides a crib/cot and crib/cot sheets although parents/guardians are welcome to provide a sheet for their child. Parents/guardians are asked to provide a small blanket and a small pillow (if you wish) for the child to use at naptime. Blankets and pillows cases are sent home to be laundered. NALC will launder crib/cot sheets.

Pickup/Late Pickup

NALC closes at 6pm Monday – Friday.

Your child must be picked up no later than 6pm by an authorized adult. It is the responsibility of the adult picking up your child to sign him/her out on the daily sign in/out book located in the main office, or classroom. The adult's initials must accompany the sign in/out time.

Please be sure the teacher knows that your child is leaving with you.

A late fee of \$1 per minute past closing will be charged, payable to the staff member on duty upon your late arrival.

If someone other than a parent/guardian is going to pick up, please inform NALC in writing. All adults picking up a child, other than the parents/guardians, will be asked to verify their identity. **A valid photo I.D. is required and may be copied.**

In the event that any adult arrives to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the police will be notified. If this occurs more than once, Child Protective Services will be notified.

In cases of emergency, every effort must be made to arrange for another authorized person to pick up your child. **Staff members will not be allowed to transport children to their parent/guardian under any circumstances.** Child Protective Services will be notified if a child is not picked up within one hour of closing time.

III. STAFF

Classroom Staff and Training

Staff members at NALC have been selected based upon their dedication to children, educational and experience levels, and their ability to carry out the goals of NALC. All staff meets state requirements, including a criminal background check, and are chosen on the basis of their contribution to the team. On-the-job training is given, as well as opportunities for continuing education.

We proudly display Staff Certificates for the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program in our main office/entry area. This state-run program recognizes child care providers who exceed licensing requirements by completing program suggested continuing educational training. Our staff devote much of their time and energy into maintaining their training every year. This program encourages child care providers to be well-rounded in their education, which makes for a better teacher. Please take note of the Certificates, as we are very proud to display them.

A staff member with CPR and First Aid training is on site at all times during operating hours in compliance with licensing requirements.

NALC's staff-to-child ratio meets or exceeds all state requirements.

Babysitting Policy

NALC recognizes that from time to time parents/guardians may ask individual staff members to provide in-home babysitting care for their children. NALC assumes **no** responsibility for our employees when they are off duty. All contracts for babysitting are between the parent/guardian and the babysitter.

NALC staff is not permitted to transport children from the center without prior, written permission from the parent/guardian.

IV. CHILDREN

Clothing and Personal Items

Daily wear should be washable play clothing, as we provide many experiences that include paint, glue, sand, water, dirt and other messy materials. We want your child to be fully engaged in the activities of the day.

Please provide appropriate clothing, including boots, for the day's weather and ground conditions, such as snow or rain. On cold days, be sure your preschooler has a hat, boots, and *mittens*.

Properly fitted, rubber-soled play shoes for climbing, riding, and running safely are recommended. Loose sandals, smooth-bottom shoes, and flip-flops are not recommended; please do not send your child in such footwear.

All clothing sent with your child, including blankets, pillows, coats, hats, mittens and boots, ***must be labeled with her/his name*** to ensure proper return.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Children will make a transition to the next program/classroom based on their age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. There is no set formula. This allows for greater flexibility so that each classroom can change to fit the developmental characteristics of the children enrolled.

During the transition from one program/classroom to another, current and future teachers meet with you, and your child is gently integrated into the new environment through a series of visits to the new classroom. We encourage you to visit the new classroom as often as you can so that you too can become accustomed to the environment and bond with the teachers. Special attention is given to your family to support you through these changes. You are encouraged to discuss with the staff and administration communication methods that work best for you in order to maintain ongoing dialogue throughout your child's transition.

Cubby Items

Please check your child's cubby daily and remember to replace any items that have been worn or bagged to be sent home. Your child's cubby should contain the following, depending on their needs and the season:

- Complete change of clothing appropriate for the season (underwear, diapers, wipes, shirt, socks, pants, dress, skirt, shoes, etc.)
- Sweater, sweatshirt, jacket or coat

Valuables

Valuable items (jewelry, money, handheld electronic games, etc.) are **NOT** be brought to NACL. NALC is not responsible for such items.

Non-discrimination Policy

If you or your child has a special religious or cultural consideration regarding limitations in food, celebrations, clothing, etc., please advise the director and/or your child's teacher. Every effort will be made to comply with your wishes in this regard.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations in a childcare setting. Using an individual profile completed by parents at enrollment, NALC assess the particular needs of a child and family and engages in an interactive dialogue with parents/guardians, caregivers, and

medical professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and to safely integrate the child into the program, given each individual's capabilities, and to the extent which is feasible. Any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with center administration or staff will be held in the strictest confidence.

If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant at any time. If the center is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby. All breast milk bottles are to be marked with the child's first and last name and the date.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Application for Enrollment

Applications for enrollment may be obtained from the front office or the NALC website. Once completed, the forms should be returned to NALC with a non-refundable application fee. This fee ensures the applicant of placement, and in the event of no vacancies, the applicant will be placed on a waiting list.

Please be aware that the Parents Guide To Regulate Child Care can be found at:

<http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/84577FAC-09F7-4933-8A9C-649D7CB04678/14988/ParentBrochureMSDEDecember2007.pdf>

In making enrollment decisions, the Director will select the applicants according to the earliest application date. This policy has been established to ensure that when there are no immediate vacancies in the appropriate age group; children are enrolled in a fair and consistent manner.

Part-time Enrollment

Parents/guardians may choose full-time or part-time enrollment depending upon your needs. Part-time students may choose a selection of two or three days per week if space is available. The Director and parents/guardians will agree upon an attendance schedule, which is included in the application.

If, on occasion, you need for your child to attend on an additional day and space permits, your account will be charged for the additional day. This will be considered an addition to your current attendance schedule. Days may not be swapped, unless done permanently.

Infant Enrollment

NALC is aware that predicting start dates for newborns can be difficult. If your infant is unable to begin care and the position is in demand, you may be asked to pay tuition until your infant is able to begin. This guarantees a position will be available for your infant.

Termination of Care by the Parent/Guardian

Parents/guardians may voluntarily withdraw their child from NALC by submitting written notice as far in advance as possible, but no less than two weeks prior to the child's withdrawal date. The security deposit will be applied to the last two weeks of attendance.

Parents/guardians who give less than the minimum notice will lose their initial deposit.

Termination of Care by NALC

We recognize that, although we are proud of our program, we cannot meet the needs of every family. If for any reason our program does not satisfy your requirements, we will be happy to discuss your concerns. If the Director feels that we cannot meet the needs of your child, we may suggest termination after all other possibilities have been reviewed. We reserve the right to terminate the care arrangement on a timeline that is in the best interest of the child.

Other reasons that may result in the termination of a specific care arrangement include:

- Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats by a parent/guardians toward NALC staff or other parents or children
- Parents/guardians disciplining, in any way, children other than their own while at NACL
- Lack of cooperation from parents/guardians with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent/guardian-staff meetings
- A child enrolled in NALC's care exhibits special needs or requires assistance related to a serious illness that cannot be met in our program. In such a case, NALC will make every effort to put the parents/guardians in touch with other appropriate resources or facilities to determine together the best course for the child
- Seriously delinquent accounts (see **Late Tuition**)

VI. PAYMENTS AND FEES

Registration Fee

When a child is enrolled, the parent/guardian must fill out an application and submit it with a non-refundable application fee. Once the fee and application are submitted, the registration process can move forward. If there are no vacancies, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list and will be enrolled as soon as a space becomes available.

Security Deposit

At the time of enrollment, the parent/guardian must pay a security deposit equal to a bi-weekly tuition payment. This deposit ensures a space for the child and is applied toward the last two weeks the child is at NACL, provided at least two weeks' written notice is given and all other financial obligations are met.

Tuition

Payments are accepted in the following forms:

Personal Check
Money Order

Certified/Cashier's Check
Cash with receipt given

Tuition is due bi-weekly and during the first week of the tuition period. Notices of due dates will be posted at the front desk. The agreed upon tuition is due, regardless of closings, inclement weather and attendance. Every effort will be made to keep tuition realistic and competitive, but rates may increase to

meet the expenses of operating NALC. If the rates are increased, a 30 (thirty) day notice will be provided.

*Note: If you would like to be billed monthly, please contact the Executive Director in writing.

Late Tuition

Tuition is due by closing on Friday of tuition week. A \$20 late fee is applied to all unpaid invoices. Please contact the Executive Director if you have any questions regarding payment or need to make special arrangements.

If your account is more than two weeks delinquent on tuition or other fees, your child may be suspended from NALC. Once the account is current and at the Director's discretion, the child may return to NALC. Should the parent/guardian become delinquent again on tuition or fees, dismissal may occur.

Cost of Collecting Delinquent Accounts

Parents/guardians agree to pay any and all costs incurred by NALC due to efforts required to collect a delinquent account. Costs covered by this provision include, but are not limited to, fees assessed by private process servers, court costs, and attorney's fees.

Returned Check Policy

If a check is returned to us from the bank, full payment of the amount due, plus a \$25.00 fee must be paid. If two checks in a row are returned or chronic instances occur, it will then become necessary for future payments to NALC to be made in an alternative form, i.e., money order, certified check, cashier's check or cash.

VII. APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

Discipline

Historically speaking, discipline has always meant instruction. At NALC, we use discipline as a form of education, rather than punishment. The goal is to teach or instruct children to develop independence, a sense of responsibility to self and others, and to self-regulate. These skills will help your child develop confidence, security, and positive moral standards. The guidance tools provide the child with appropriate choices, redirection and problem solving. Rules are clear and concise and developed with input from the children. Rules and expectations are reviewed daily so children understand and know what is expected.

VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Child Abuse Reporting

The Director will make every effort to discuss any unusual behaviors that cause concern; however, parents/guardians must understand that child care staff in Maryland is required by state law to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation to Child Protective Services.

Illness

It is important that we be made aware of any chronic or current medical conditions affecting your child. We also need to know of actual or possible exposure to communicable diseases, accidents or injuries away from NALC. This aides our staff in caring for your child.

For the health and safety of all children and staff, your child may not come to NALC, or will be sent home, if we observe any of the following symptoms:

- a. A temperature of 101 degrees or higher
- b. Vomiting
- c. Diarrhea
- d. An unidentified rash
- e. Jaundice
- f. Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
- g. Head Lice
- h. Any communicable disease

Our staff understands that infants will occasionally run fevers while teething, can have loose stools when trying new foods, and may sometimes spit up. These conditions are taken into account when observing for illness.

We encourage you to notify NALC by phone or email if your child will be absent.

If your child becomes ill while at NALC, we will call you to pick up your child. Your child must be picked up within one hour or other arrangements must be made.

If your child has a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, he/she may not return to NALC the next day and should not return until the symptoms have been absent for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication.

If your child is sent home because of illness, his/her bedding must be taken home and laundered before it is brought back to NALC.

The Health Department requires that you report any communicable disease to us IMMEDIATELY. NALC will notify parents/guardians of incidents of contagious diseases. Names of children and families will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Head Lice

If your child is reported to have head lice, we require a letter from the Health Department, a school nurse or your child's doctor stating that she/he is free of nits and may return to NALC.

Outdoor play is healthy – even in the winter

Studies have shown, contrary to the common belief that "exposure to cold air causes a cold," fresh air is good and healthy. When children and adults spend a long time together in indoor spaces, germs and illnesses pass easily from one person to another through sneezing, coughing, etc. In fresh, outdoor air, children do not have to re-breathe the germs of the group and the chance for spreading infection is reduced.

Children of all ages enjoy and benefit from playing outdoors in all except the MOST extreme weather. Daily outdoor play is healthy and burns energy. It gives children an opportunity for a change in environment, a balance in play and routine, and encourages large muscle activities which enhances gross-motor development. Even children who are mildly ill but active should go outside if the weather is not severe. Staff and children alike will feel refreshed when fresh air is part of the daily routine. Taking children outdoors daily, even in winter, can be a healthy part of their schedule and is safe when clothing is appropriate.

The way we feel about cold, wet, or snowy weather and indoor temperatures may be affected by where we live and what we are used to. Children living in colder climates tend to play outside in the winter more than children living in warmer climates.

Please be aware that if your child comes to school, he/she will go outside to play.

Outdoor play improves indoor air quality

Germs causing disease multiply in warm, dark, damp environments, so it is important to keep the environment clean and dry. Adequate ventilation, humidity and temperature control helps us resist illness and increase our ability to get well after sickness. Colds, sore throats, and other infections of the respiratory system are common in cold weather and are usually caused by viruses. Child care providers have the potential to improve the health of children in their care by having children play for extended periods outdoors in the fresh air.

Hand washing is the *single MOST effective* way to reduce the spread of infection.

Emergency Form

The emergency form is one of our most important tools. **It must have your most up-to-date information.** We keep this card on file so we can contact you in case of any emergency.

It is your responsibility to inform NALC of any changes in phone numbers, addresses, persons authorized (or no longer authorized) for pickup, or other pertinent information. Parents/guardians must provide NALC with legal documentation in the event that a child is not to be released to a legal parent/guardian e.g. divorce/custody disputes, restraining orders. A copy of a legal parenting plan must be on file at NALC indicating parental rights and restrictions.

Your child's emergency form must be updated and initialed annually. We will notify you when it is time to update your child's card.

Injuries

The Staff at NALC is very attentive to the children and do their best to keep an eye on them. Children play hard, and at times scrapes may happen. You will be made aware of minor injuries upon pickup with an Accident Report. You will need to sign this report stating that you have been made aware of the accident.

For minor injuries, the child will be given first aid as necessary. Parents/guardians will be contacted if our staff feels it is advisable.

If we feel your child needs medical attention, but it is not an emergency, we will call you so that you can decide his/her treatment.

In a medical emergency, where a child needs immediate attention, 911 will be called and then a parent/guardian will be contacted.

Any expenses incurred from the above procedures will be borne by the child's family.

For all injuries, major and minor, we will complete an **Accident Report** for you to review and sign upon pickup. **An injury log is kept for minor injuries incurred by school-age children. The injury log is kept on file at NALC in the school-age room.**

Medication Administration

We realize that there are times when administering medication at NALC is necessary. A Medication Administration Permission Form, which requires your signature and your physician's medical order, and a prescription that instructs us on how to administer your child's medication, must be provided and placed on file. Hand the medication and the Medication Administration Permission Form to your child's teacher so that he/she will know that your child is to receive medication that day.

No medication will be given to your child without the form and prescription, including over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol (acetaminophen), Sudafed or other antihistamines, cough syrup, or vitamins.

All medication must be in its original container with the child's name, dosage, and expiration date clearly legible.

Because children react differently to medications, your child must have had at least one dose of the medication before receiving it at the NALC.

NALC stores all medications safely and properly in a manner that ensures they are inaccessible to children. Medicine is **not** to be placed in your child's backpack or cubby.

NALC understands that children may have severe allergies that require the use of an Epinephrine Pen, Benadryl, or something similar. Documentation is required from your child's doctor to include why the medication is needed and when it should be administered.

An Epinephrine Pen will be stored in the classroom out of reach of the children. If your child has an allergic reaction, the medication will be administered immediately and a parent/guardian will be notified.

Nutrition

Good nutrition is fundamental to children's emotional, physical, and mental development. We follow the child care nutrition guidelines from MSDE Office of Child Care for all meals and snacks. Nutritionally balanced foods are catered, prepared and served every day. A variety of whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables are served daily. Meals are served family style in most classrooms. Each child is encouraged to serve him/herself, and try new foods.

Food is available only at scheduled times. Meal and snack times are provided every three hours to maintain the requirements for healthy nutrition. Breakfast is served at 9am, lunch at 12pm, snack at 3pm.

Weekly menus are available in the main office/entry area.

Allergies and Special Diets

Sometimes a child requires a special diet due to allergies, food sensitivities, or other reasons. NALC **MUST** be notified, **in writing**, about any food allergies that your child may have. We ask that the parent/guardian provide an alternative meal for their child if he/she is unable to eat what is on the menu.

Fire Safety

In accordance with state fire laws, a monthly fire drill is conducted in which all children and staff participate. Once each year, as part of our renewal inspection by OCC, the State Fire Marshall

inspects NALC. The inspection includes the fire drill record, smoke detectors, emergency lights and fire extinguishers that are located strategically throughout the building.

Emergency Preparedness

Noah's Ark has a written Emergency Preparedness Plan, which is part of an overall Risk Management Plan for the center. If you would like to review it, please stop by the front office. The plan is reviewed on a bi-annual basis and updated as needed.

IX. TOUCHING AND NURTURING

A Place of Care and Comfort

Because of the nature of caring for children, your child will experience routine physical contact with our staff while at NALC. Children require physical contact for care and healthy development.

Nurturing

This includes hugs and handholding, carrying, cuddling, and back rubbing at nap time. This type of contact is never made against the expressed wishes of the child.

Safety and Guidance

This includes restraining children from harmful or hurtful situations, separating children involved in conflict, guiding children by gently leading them, and administering first aid to injuries.

Hygiene

This includes face and hand washing, assisting and cleaning children when toileting accidents occur, examining rashes or unusual marks, nose blowing, diaper changes, and helping with necessary clothing changes.

In accordance with law and rule, and in accordance with our own philosophies, no child will be subject to corporal punishment.

X. COMMUNICATION

Parent/Guardian - Staff

NALC seeks to develop trusting relationships with our families. Open communication is a building block in creating these types of relationships. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you have with your child's teacher during arrival, departure, or call during naptime (1pm-3pm). Please know that the directors are also willing to assist you with any concerns you may have.

It is very important that you communicate to the staff any special or out-of-the-ordinary happenings in your child's life outside NALC. By knowing the situation, we can be alert to any changes in your child's mood and behavior. Examples include:

- Death/Illness
- Parent/guardian separation/Divorce
- Sleepless nights
- Death of a pet
- New baby on the way

- Out-of-town guests
- Substitute caregivers
- Medications

The following requests/changes must be given **in writing**:

- If you are going to be at a different address/phone number for the day
- If you need to make a change in the days your child attends, add or subtract days, or if you need to withdraw your child
- If you need to add or subtract names from your child's Emergency Card
- Any food allergies
- Termination of enrollment
- Changes in billing schedule

All information on our families is kept in the strictest confidence.

Conferences & Assessments

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) and Healthy Beginnings (Infants and Toddlers) are tools NALC uses for developmental assessments. These tools contain developmental checklists and anecdotal records which staff complete through observations. Using these observations, lesson plans are developed to set goals and objectives for each child. The staff set up conferences and meet with parents to discuss their child's progression and development based on these observations and assessments. Future goals will be set for each child during these conferences. Conferences are the perfect time to discuss any concerns you may have in your child's growth and development. Conferences are offered 1-2 times per year

MSDE has implemented a new state regulation for all children in regulated care. Beginning July 1, 2016 all children up through pre-kindergarten, attending our program, will have developmental screenings conducted. Children birth to 36 months will be required to have two screenings per year. Children 37 months to pre-kindergarten will have one screening per year. All findings will be discussed with parents.

Community Resources

Community Resources are available in the front office and given to families, care givers, and staff as a need arises. Pamphlets and flyers are reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis by the Administrative Assistant. New resources are added when received. These resources include:

Calvert County Infants and Toddlers
Calvert County Child Find
Autism Project
Health Choice
Pediatric Rehabilitation Services
March of Dimes
Calvert County Health Department
Project First Choice
Computer Club
Promise Resource Center
Perpetual Preschool.com
Parent's Place

Calvert County School Resources
Library info
Count Down To Kindergarten-tips
Chesapeake Family Magazine
College of Southern Maryland Catalog

Flyers and pamphlets are available in English and Spanish.

Administrative

The white board in the front office is specifically for communication with parents/guardians. Please check the white board daily for any notifications regarding closings, field trips, programs, and other pertinent information.

Email is often used by the directors to contact parents/guardians regarding their child's care, newsletters, update, special events, or tuition.

XI. SPECIAL EVENTS

Field Trips

Our preschoolers take several field trips each year. A signed permission form is needed for each child to participate in each trip. You will receive advance information concerning the trip, including time, place and what will be needed.

If you do not want your child to take part in the field trip, he/she may not come to NALC that day as all staff will be on the field trip.

Note: Infants and toddlers are excluded from this policy.

Transportation by school bus will be provided for all field trips. To offset the expense of the bus the cost will be charged to all children and parents/guardians who participate. Payment must be made at the time the permission slip is returned.

All parents, guardians, grandparents, or other adult family members are welcome to join us on our field trips.

XII. GENERAL POLICIES OF NALC

Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc. reserves the right to make policy changes at any time when it is in the best interest of NALC and will not compromise the quality of the care provided. Any changes made to the rules, regulations, or policies of Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc. while your child is enrolled shall not nullify any other rule or regulation or policy as set forth in the *Parent Handbook*.

Noah's Ark Learning Center, Inc. reserves the right to make exceptions to any rule or policy listed herein where we feel it is in the best interest of the children and NALC.

Each parent/guardian is responsible to uphold all policies as stated in this handbook and has agreed to the terms by signing the Parent Agreement during the application process.