

About the Center

A. Philosophy

Sugar Plums Child Development Center is designed to meet the emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs of children in a safe, home-like, and loving environment. The unique characteristics of each child are valued in our center. Our well-trained and talented staff nurtures each child's interests and developmental advances. Childhood should be a time of joy, love, and adventure. At Sugar Plums, we appreciate children: their diversity, their challenges, and their successes. Our child-caring philosophy is based on flexibility and primary care for the children. The Center respects and accommodates the developmental stages of a child.

Our infant rooms are designed to reflect a home-like feeling with an eating area, sleeping area, and a play area. Infants are on individual schedules, as determined by their parents. Plenty of stimulating toys are available for the infants and their caregivers to explore. Our staff understands the importance of talking and singing to the babies throughout the day.

The staff has great respect for the success of our toddlers and two-year olds. We applaud and cheer for each new step. These children are marching (or rather, toddling!) toward more independence each day, and need to have many choices of activities. For this, flexibility is tied into our lesson plans to accommodate the changing interests of toddlers. Toys and equipment are selected that help develop gross and fine motor skills. These children may also choose art activities, music and dance, or exploring books. Toddlers and twos play hard and get tired, and they need to be held and cuddled. The staff is always ready to provide a loving lap to sit in.

The preschoolers' area provides them with the opportunity to explore and choose activities as they see fit. Art, music, gross and fine motor activities, dramatic play, blocks, science, and books are some of the interest areas around the room. Our staff plan activities for the group as well as for individual children, in order to foster their development in all areas.

Our great respect for the individual derives from the findings of Jean Piaget, the Swiss epistemologist, who discovered the developmental thought process of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. From Piaget's work, early childhood educators know that children learn best through play. Children are given a variety of rich experiences to help introduce new concepts about the world around them; as well, as reinforce skills children are mastering.

Our center is a home-away-from home for both the children and parents. Excellent communication with parents is top priority. With daily communication through conversation, email and written notes, the staff and parents form a team to help each child's day run smoothly. Parent involvement activities are held frequently for parents to interact with each other and the staff in a relaxed setting. Parents are always welcome to drop in at the Center anytime during the day.

B. Goals

Sugar Plums gives love and respect to all children. It is a busy and happy place. We are delighted that you have chosen to make our center your and your child's "home away from home." We have established the highest standards to follow, as laid out by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Along with these standards we promise to always:

1. PROVIDE A SAFE, LOVING, AND STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN TO GROW AND DEVELOP

Children need to feel secure and cared for at all times. Sugar Plums provides a nurturing environment, which enables children to feel safe. Therefore, they are free to explore their world as individuals.

2. HELP EACH FAMILY MAINTAIN THEIR CHILD'S GOOD HEALTH AND PROMOTE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Nutritious snacks and lunches are served throughout the day; our staff maintains strict hygiene practices; and activities designed to help develop large and small muscles are provided daily.

3. HELP EACH CHILD FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY WITH PEERS AND WITH ADULTS

Children are placed in groups according to their ages. There are four groups: Gumdrops, Lemondrops, Lollipops, and Sugar Plums. The children move developmentally through the Center, therefore creating mixed age groups. This grouping style helps children learn from each other and respect individual differences and rates of development. The teachers will help your child develop language skills to help resolve conflicts with peers, and will be alert to opportunities that arise for teaching social skills. In the early years, children must learn to trust their caregivers and thus develop a strong positive self-concept. Our staff will work hard on helping your child develop trust and positive self-esteem.

4. HELP EACH CHILD DEVELOP HIS OR HER COGNITIVE ABILITIES TO THE FULLEST.

An enormous amount of learning takes place from birth to age five. This fosters as much learning as possible; educational games and activities are planned to meet the child's individual level of development. Many of the activities are derived from the discoveries of Jean Piaget, Eric Erikson, and Maria Montessori. A major goal of our teachers is to be alert for the "teachable moment." That moment comes during the course of your child's play when it is most appropriate for your child to hear his or her teacher introduce a new concept or ask a leading question.

C. Emergent Curriculum

An emergent curriculum is based on flexibility and choices for the children. We respect and accommodate the development stages of the child and our curriculum reflects individual needs. Activities are planned to both challenge and encourage learning by incorporating the various learning styles and creating meaningful connections.

Our staff becomes familiar with the children's interests and development through extensive observation. Through observation they are able to develop profiles for each individual child and create individual activity plans to incorporate into their lessons. Staff creates lesson plans that stress personal experience and therefore encourage many open-ended learning situations where the children can learn and create at their own developmental rate. Weekly lesson plans consist of clearly marked goals and objectives, as well as activities, but do not limit learning to time lines.

Since children learn through play, we plan our indoor and outdoor time to encourage this activity. Through play, children reenact experiences, try out different roles, express ideas, develop vocabulary, process information, widen their world view and relate to each other. Children learn by doing, so we provide first hand experience as a basis for expanding knowledge about our physical world. We believe adults need to facilitate learning by discussing with the children what they see, hear, smell, touch, feel, helping them to increase their understanding. Therefore, at times during the day, teachers direct group discussions, introduce concepts and learning experiences. Knowing that all children learn from what adults do, we model behavior we want to encourage. We strive to show understanding and respect for each person and use words to express needs and feelings. We try to learn from our mistakes instead of labeling them failures. We believe that growth and development happen best in a supportive, safe, orderly environment where rules, limits, expectations, and plans are known. We strive to be clear, consistent and firm in these areas.

D. Discipline

We want to provide many opportunities for children to develop self-discipline. A trusting relationship must be established between staff and child. Discipline is built on mutual respect and trust.

We believe in a positive approach to discipline. We offer guidance and direction, not punishment. Children are praised for displaying positive behavior; while negative behavior is immediately discouraged and given little attention. We expect our staff to:

- *Praise and encourage good behavior
- *Set realistic limits or behavior expectations which are clear and developmentally appropriate
- *Be consistent once limits are established
- *Help the child to verbalize feelings and not to act them out inappropriately

In case of special problems, the director will contact the parents so that a joint effort at solving the problem will be made.

We do not permit any discipline related to food, toileting, or naps. Any use of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited. An employee who uses corporal punishment will be terminated immediately.

We try to change behavior by using space, time and materials creatively, and by stressing positive social reinforcers. In terms of space, we should be aware that too little space or

congested traffic patterns may cause conflict as children interfere with each other's activities. Too little time to complete activities in a relaxed way, or too much time devoted to an

activity so that the children are bored or have to wait can also cause behavior difficulties. There also needs to be enough experience with any one activity to develop it fully. We also need to be sure activities and expectations are age-appropriate. Discipline means helping children learn to control their own behavior and solve their own problems. It does not mean punishment. Sugar Plums firmly believes discipline includes guidance, modeling, and redirection.

E. Non-Discriminatory Policy

Sugar Plums admits children and employs personnel without regard to race, color, creed, gender, religion or national origin. The center will not discriminate against children with disabilities where reasonable accommodations can be made without undue hardship on the corporation.

Laws and regulations, which protect people with special needs against discrimination, cover any center employees with life-threatening illnesses or communicable diseases. Employees can work at our center as long as they meet acceptable performance and attendance standards and all medical evidence indicates that their condition is not a threat to themselves or others in the workplace. The health conditions of all employees are personal and confidential.

The center will make every effort possible to mainstream children with differing abilities into our program, in accordance to the 1992 Americans with Disabilities Act. Our staff will assess each child on an individual basis, working closely with his/her family and other professionals. We are prepared to make reasonable accommodations and carry out necessary adaptations that are readily achievable.

The decision to accept a child with a life threatening illness or disability will be made on a case by case basis by a panel consisting of the child's physician/therapist, public health personnel, the Director, and the parent. This panel will determine whether the child may pose an undue risk to others, whether the child development center setting may pose an undue risk to the child, whether the child development center has sufficient personnel to meet the needs of the child, and a timetable for periodic review of the decision. The child's right to privacy will be respected and personnel will be advised of the child's condition on a need to know basis.

The center, however, may terminate a child's enrollment after attempting to accommodate their needs. In some instances, a decision to terminate enrollment may be made in order to meet the best interest of the child requiring another type of program. If the child becomes an "undue burden" or poses a significant risk to health and safety standards of others or themselves, the child may be excluded. Any expenses for observation and testing incurred will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

F. Staff

Our well trained staff is caring, loving and respectful of children as individuals. Staff members have been selected on the basis of their intelligence, resourcefulness, their ability to stimulate creativity, and foster development in four areas: social, emotional, physical, and intellectual.

All senior staff members have experience and credentials in early childhood education or a related field. All assistant staff members have experience and training. Continuing education is a key ingredient to providing a quality program. Sugar Plums will close at 5:30 p.m. on the last Wednesday of the month for staff training. Parents will be notified two weeks in advance if there are any changes. We pride ourselves on the fact that we provide over 20 hours a year of ongoing in-service training, including CPR and first aid, for all our staff members. Their understanding of the needs of working parents and their ability to work with you for the benefit of your child is an essential part of their unique qualifications. All staff members must have a criminal background check and a complete physical, as required by Maryland Licensing.

G. Legal Structure and Organization

Sugar Plums is a privately owned organization under the laws of the State of Maryland. The Director reports directly to the owner.

H. Licensing

Our center is a licensed child development center in the state of Maryland and must comply with extensive regulations in order to maintain its license. Many of the procedures in this handbook are required by licensing regulations. A copy of the licensing regulations are filed in the Center's office.

Enrollment Policies and Procedures

A. Eligibility

Children are accepted on a first come, first serve basis. The Center does give siblings of enrolled children preference over new applicants. Both full time and part-time spaces are available. Acceptance for a part-time space will depend on our center's ability to pair the desired attendance schedule to another family to create one full-time slot. Part time days available are 3 days: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or 2 days: Tuesday and Thursday.

B. Enrollment

Wait list applications are available at the Center's office. Signed and completed applications must be returned with a \$100 application fee. The wait list fee is non-refundable, regardless of whether your child is accepted into the program. Upon acceptance into the program, a \$125 registration fee is due as well as a security deposit equal to half of one month's tuition payment. The security deposit will be applied to the last tuition payment. All financial obligations must be paid in full, including the first month's tuition, before your child's first day of attendance at the center.

Maryland licensing requirements mandate pre-enrollment of your child prior to the first time your child attends the center. No child can be admitted to the Center without being pre-enrolled. Therefore, parents will need to complete a pre-enrollment package.

C. Withdrawal

A one-month written notice is required prior to withdrawal from the Center or the security deposit is automatically forfeited. The security deposit will be applied to the last month's tuition, provided that Sugar Plums has received written notification of withdrawal no later than the first day of the month preceding your child's withdrawal date.

D. Dismissal from the Center

The Center reserves the right to terminate your child's enrollment in the center if any of the following conditions arise:

- .The center judges that your child's behavior threatens the physical or mental health of other children in the center.
- .Tuition is ten days late.
- .A child picked up after the center closes three times in one month.
- .A child is brought to the center ill more than three times in one month.
- .If the program is unable to meet the developmental or special needs of the child due to extreme hardship.
- .If the terms of the enrollment agreement and parent handbook are not abided by.

E. Physical & Immunizations

In compliance with Maryland licensing regulations, your child must have a physical examination (including a statement of known allergies) and obtain all age-appropriate immunizations as required, before your child's first day of attendance at the center. After admission to the Center, parents are responsible for regularly updating their child's health files to reflect new immunizations to keep the records current.

Tuition and Fees

A. Tuition

Tuition is due by the first of the month. In the event the first falls on a weekend, tuition is due on Monday. Reminder notices are posted. All tuition is due by 6:00 p.m. on the first. Tuition is considered overdue by the second and delinquent on the tenth. A late charge of \$15 will be charged for each day that tuition is overdue. If no payment has been made by the tenth, you will be notified that enrollment will be terminated.

Tuition is due year-round irrespective of absences due to vacations, illness, or closings of the Center due to federal holidays, inclement weather, or the like. Tuition can be paid by personal check, money order, cashier's check, cash, or E-Check. The fee for a returned check is \$50 plus late fees (\$15/day) from the day it was due. Payment by cash, money order, or cashier's check will be required if two checks should be returned within a one-year period. Families receive a

ten percent discount on their tuition for the older child's tuition when more than one child attends. All checks should be made payable to "**Sugar Plums.**"

B. Annual Registration The annual registration fee is \$125.00. The fee is collected every year by all families at the New Year. If your child starts between February and October you will pay the fee at your start date (for the current year) and then at the New Year.

C. Drop-In

Full day drop-in care may be available for enrolled part time children. Drop in care is conditional to space availability. Drop-in care is also available for outside families. They will follow the full-time application process. A \$125.00 registration fee will be required at registration. The fee for daily drop in is \$90.00 a day.

D. Overtime Charges

Parents should arrive in enough time to exit the Center by 6:00 p.m. A fee of \$2.00 per minute goes into effect at 6:01 p.m. At the actual time of pick-up, parents will be required to fill out an overtime form and pay the late fee that night directly to the staff member caring for the child. Sugar Plums does not receive this fee. If a child is picked up late three times in one month, enrollment may be terminated. In case of an emergency that will cause a parent to be late, notification to the Center should be given as soon as possible. However, even in case of an emergency, parents are still required to pay late fees.

Center Policies & Procedures

A. Hours of Operation

The center operates from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, year-round. The center is closed for the following Federal Holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
MLK's Birthday	Columbus Day
President's Day	Veterans Day (1 day)
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day (2 days)
Independence Day	Christmas Day (2 days)

The Center also closes at 5:30 on the last Wednesday of each month in order to provide in-service training for the staff.

B. Inclement Weather Policy

If Montgomery County school offices are closed, Sugar Plums will also be closed.

If Montgomery County schools are closed, Sugar Plums will be on a two hour delay. When Montgomery County schools are on a one or two hour delay, the center will follow. If you are unsure of the center's status, please call (301)468-6003. In the event of a closing or delay, a detailed message will be left on the answering machine no later than 6:00 am. If Sugar Plums is closed you will receive a phone call from the owner through an automated phone service. This call is ONLY for closings.

Once the center is open, and inclement weather is in the forecast, the director/owner will decide if Sugar Plums will close. Decisions to close early will be based on the safety of Sugar Plums' children, family, and staff. **Reimbursement will not be given for center closing.**

C. Sign In/Out

Parents are asked to sign their child in at the time of arrival and sign out at departure. The sign in sheet is located in the classrooms. As a "home away from home" for you and your child, we encourage you to visit the center at any time. No advance notice is required. Parents may wish to join their child for lunch or take them out for a walk. When removing children from the center during the day, parents will need to let the teacher know and sign the child out and sign their child in again.

D. Parking

There is designated pick up and drop off parking in front of the center and to the right of the center coming from Old Georgetown Road.

E. Group Size and Staff-Child Ratios

The center has four major programs: the Infant program (Gumdrops), the Toddler program (Lemondrops), the Two's program (Lollipops) and the Preschool program (Sugar Plums). Children are moved to the next-older program when they are developmentally ready and space permits. Tuition varies and is based on the age of the child. The following are the various programs we offer and ratios we observe:

Gumdrops I	Group of 6 with a 3:1 ratio, ages 2-8 months
Gumdrops II	Group of 6 with a 3:1 ratio, ages 9-15 months
Lemondrop A	Group of 9 with 3:1 ratio, ages 18-24 months
Lemondrop B	Group of 6 with 3:1 ratio, ages 15-18 months
Lollipops	Group of 12 with 6:1 ratio, ages 2-3 years
Sugar Plums	Group of 20 with 10:1 ratio, ages 3-5 years

F. Legal Custody

If you have sole custody of your child and the other parent is not authorized to pick up your child, you must instruct the center of this fact and must provide the center's Director with a certified copy of the court order confirming the custody. The center cannot refuse to release a child to a parent or legal guardian who has or shares legal custody of the child and who presents photographic identification and is on file at the center. In most cases, both parents have equal custody rights unless a court or valid written separation-agreement provides otherwise. Therefore, if you do not authorize your child's other parent or guardian to pick up your child, you must provide the center with a certified copy of the court order or separation agreement awarding custody solely to you or denying custody to the other parent or guardian.

In the rare circumstance where the senior staff member who is present determines, in his or her sole judgement, that the safety of the staff and/or children is threatened by an unauthorized person determined to remove a child from the center, the center cannot guarantee that the child will not be released to that person. If you are experiencing custody difficulties, we strongly urge you to keep the center staff fully advised of circumstances that might affect the center.

G. Main Authorization

Children will only be released to authorized individuals. Initial authorization will be made on the enrollment agreement and pictures of authorized people should be submitted. No child will be released to someone whose picture is not on file. In order to authorize any additional persons, parents must give authorization in writing and include a photo of that person. Authorization by telephone is not sufficient. Anyone newly authorized will be subject to a photo-ID check. If an unauthorized person should arrive at the center to pick up a child, the staff will notify the parent immediately. All persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least sixteen years old.

H. Release of a Child to an Intoxicated or Drugged Individual

If, in the opinion of the senior staff member present at the center, a parent or authorized person who arrives to transport the child home from the center is in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will:

1. Notify the Director or Operator of the situation
2. Notify the other parent or guardian of the situation
3. Offer to call a relative, friend, or taxi (at the parent's expense) to drive the person and child home.

If the parent or authorized person insists on driving the child home, the center's senior staff member present will notify the local police department.

I. Child Abuse

All staff members have been oriented in observing and detecting the four forms of child abuse: neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional. State licensing and federal laws mandate that child care staff report any evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to child protective services. Persons found guilty of failure to report abuse may be subject to fine or prosecution by the authorities.

J. Absence

Parents should notify the center of any absences by 9:30 a.m. Sugar Plums has a voice mail system set during non-working hours for notification of unanticipated absences. Refunds will not be given for any absences. In the event of a planned absence (vacation, doctor's appointment, etc.), please notify your child's teacher in advance.

K. Illness (Sick Policy)

We understand that children will occasionally get sick and that this situation can be upsetting and disruptive to the normal routine. The center is not equipped to handle sick children, and the Maryland Health Department does not permit children to remain in the center if they have signs or symptoms of communicable disease. Before your child enters the center, it is strongly recommended that you make a plan to provide care in case of illness. Signs or symptoms of communicable disease are fever over 100 degrees, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, frequent cough, heavy running nose, frequent sneezing, skin irritation/rash, discharge from the eyes, etc. during a 24-hour period. Prior to a scheduled attendance at the center, parents should keep the child at home until the symptoms have disappeared or a note from the physician accompanies the child stating that the child does not have a contagious condition.

Should a child develop obvious symptoms of illness or display what would be considered abnormal behavior (such as refusal to eat, unusual fatigue, excessive irritability) while at the center, a decision will be made by the Director that the child may not be permitted to remain at the center for the duration of the day. In such an instance, "early pick-up" is required to take place as soon as possible, and no later than one hour from the time the staff person calls a parent to advise them of the need for early pick up. Failure to pick up a sick child within one hour of notification will result in a late fee. Staff will make repeated efforts to contact parents, or a child's designated alternative emergency contact, in order to assure that notice of the need for pick-up is received. Parents can facilitate this effort by taking steps to assure that they can be reached in case of an emergency such as providing a cell number or pager. If a child is sent home with an illness, they may not return to the center for a minimum of one full school day or until all symptoms have disappeared (i.e. If a child is sent home on Monday, they may not return until Wednesday). If a child is out for three or more days, a doctor's note will be required.

It should be noted that any child with an undiagnosed or contagious skin-condition cannot attend the center until diagnosed by a physician/nurse practitioner. The child cannot return to

school without a doctor's note. Parents must notify the center in the event that their child is

diagnosed as having any communicable disease/infection (e.g. strep throat, scarlet fever, head lice, chicken pox, and measles). Exposure notices will also be sent home informing parents of any communicable disease, infection period, and when an infected child will be allowed to return to the Center.

In order to attend the center, a child must be well enough to eat meals and snacks provided by the center and to go outdoors. Our staff will call parents when it seems that a child is developing a health problem. We hope that such early communication can facilitate the resolution of health problems as they occur, thereby preventing the spread of illness.

Please be prepared to follow the Director's decision regarding early pick up. The Director and staff realize that keeping your child at home may be inconvenient; however, when every parent cooperates, the spread of illness is kept to a minimum.

L. Medication

Non-Prescription Medication

We encourage parents to visit the center to administer over-the-counter medicines such as cough syrup or Tylenol. The staff can administer over-the-counter medication **only** when **written authorization** by a physician has been received. Parents must give the first dosage at home. Non-prescription medication must be given to the staff in the original bottle and are kept in either a locked box in the refrigerator or the office. Parents are also responsible for providing a measuring cup, spoon, or dropper for administering medication. Parents must complete a medication form specifying the child's name, name of medicine, dosages, and times to be administered, and the name and phone number of the child's physician. Once the form is completed, a staff member will administer the medication and mark the times and dosages of the administration on the form. Afterwards, the Director or Senior Staff will sign the form to confirm the administration of the medication. A physician may write standing orders for allergy medicine; however, parents will need to update these orders every 3 months.

Prescription Medication

In order for our staff to administer prescription medications, parents must fill out a medication form with your child's name, name of medicine, dosages, and times to be administered. The staff can **only** administer medication when **written authorization** by a physician has been received. Parents are also responsible for providing a measuring cup, spoon, or dropper for administering medication. Prescription medication is kept in either the locked box in the refrigerator or the office. Prescription medication must be given to the office staff in the original prescription bottle with pharmacist's label. Only medicine prescribed for the child in question will be given. Parents' or siblings' prescriptions will not be administered. Once the completed form is submitted, a staff member will administer the medication and mark the times of administration on the form. Afterwards, the Director will sign the form to confirm the administration of the medication. As with non-prescription medication, parents are welcome to come to the center to administer the medicine.

Aspirin

Aspirin will not be given at any time, because of the danger of Reye's syndrome.

Acetaminophen will only be given for symptoms resulting from inoculations, with a doctor's note and parent-signed form.

M. Emergency Procedures

If it is in the opinion of the staff on-site at the time that a child's injury/serious illness may warrant emergency treatment, **911** will be called and the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified after **911** has been called. The emergency medical treatment form signed by the parent at the time of enrollment allows the center to have the child transported to the hospital emergency room and treated. If an ambulance is called, parents will be responsible for the cost of the ambulance.

For less-serious injuries, parents will, at the discretion of the Director, be notified by telephone call or by note at the end of the day, depending upon the degree of injury.

Although we make every effort to keep your child safe, children are most likely to experience some bumps, bruises, and scratches during the early years. Accident/Incident reports will be completed by the staff to notify the parents of any injury during their child's day.

N. Biting Information

Biting is a normal phase in the development of many children 12 months to three years old. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most upsetting experiences for children, parents, and staff involved. Children bite for many reasons, including:

- Anxiety, stress or frustration
- A way of showing affection
- A need for autonomy or control
- Inexperience in social interactions
- Inability to express self verbally
- Exploration of cause and effect relationships
- Imitation of another child
- Teething
- Oral exploration
- Hunger or fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts

If a biting incident occurs, staff must complete two reports. One is an accident report notifying the parents of the child who was bitten, and the other is an incident report notifying the parents of the child who did the biting. Each report is signed by the teacher, the parent, and the Director.

The teacher will discuss the incident with other staff who were present in an attempt to determine the reason for the biting and ways to prevent another incident. Through positive interactions, positive discipline, a developmentally appropriate curriculum, and skillful time and space management, staff is constantly working to eliminate many of the factors involved in biting incidents. The staff may need to re-evaluate one or more of these aspects in regard to a specific child to better meet their needs. The staff will then observe the child and watch

for further biting attempts. If a child attempts to bite, the teacher will say firmly, *“Biting hurts! It’s not okay to bite.”* If she can immediately determine the cause of the bite, she will also address it. For example, if two children start to get mad at each other, and one child attempts to bite the other, the teacher would say, *“You’re really mad. You want that toy. Let’s use our words instead of biting.”*

If biting continues to be a problem, the teacher will meet with the parents to discuss patterns of biting and possible motivators for the biting incidents. Articles and ideas will be shared and the teacher and parent will agree upon strategies to use at home and at the center. A follow-up meeting will be arranged to discuss how the strategies are working.

If all attempts at working through the problem with the child fail, the teacher and the Director will meet with the parents to determine what other options may be more appropriate for the child during the time. They may include changing the child’s hours, days or classroom, or making other child care arrangements such as one-on-one care in the child’s home, center care in a smaller group setting, family child care, or a vacation from the center.

It is important for all parents to know that according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, there are no known cases of HIV transmission through biting between children. In 1985, the CDC conducted a study of HIV-infected children who had bitten their non-infected playmates, and concluded that there was no transfer of the disease. Further, non-infected children bit children who were HIV-positive, and again, the disease was not transmitted.

As upsetting as biting may be, it is a normal part of many children’s development. It is important for the adults involved to keep this developmental phase in perspective. Fortunately, like other developmental phases, biting soon ends!

O. Insurance

An accident policy is carried by the center for all children. This is an “excess” policy, covering over-and-above personal insurance, meaning that the center’s policy picks up what medical expenses a family’s insurance does not cover. If a child requires medical care due to an accident at the center, please ask the Director for an insurance form.

P. Playground and Outdoor Walks

Play is the essence of being a young child: not only is it lots of fun, but it is also the way in which children learn and develop. We are fortunate to have a large playground for running, climbing, triking, and jumping. Weather permitting; children are taken outside at least twice a day. Children should have appropriate outdoor clothing (i.e. shorts, hats, jacket, and mittens) as dictated by the day’s weather. Along with outdoor play, the children will also have the opportunity to take walks in the neighborhood, in strollers, and specially designed wagons. Children are taken outside unless the weather is below 30 degrees or above 90 degrees.

Q. Field Trips

Field trips are exciting opportunities for fun and learning. Children will benefit from field trips by using the community as a resource. Whether it is seeing the spring flowers, reading a new book at the library, walking to the local farmer's market, or taking a trip to the grocery store, we encourage parents to participate in field trips whenever they can. A variety of field trips will be planned and teachers will incorporate the trips into their regular planning.

All children are encouraged, but not required, to attend field trips. General permission for events will be included in the pre-enrollment package. Payment for particular field trips may be required and specific permission forms will be requested prior to the event.

R. Nutrition

The center is committed to good nutrition. Breakfast should be provided at home before coming to Sugar Plums each morning. Sugar Plums will provide a healthy morning snack. Each classroom will have their own refrigerator for the convenience to store lunches. Food time is an educational and social opportunity. Learning about different foods and enjoying the company of peers are daily goals. Children are served a light morning snack, and nutritious afternoon snacks each day. This should not compete with their dinner which should be fed at home after pick up time.

Monthly menus for snacks are posted and copies are sent home on the first of each month. Snacks are made with natural, healthy ingredients; however, parents are responsible for substituting foods for their child due to dietary/religious restrictions or personal preference. It is also the parents' responsibility to notify the staff of any intolerance or allergies their child has to certain foods.

All toddlers and pre-schoolers should bring a lunch. **Families are required to pack their child's lunch each day. All food needs to be in plastic containers. Once your child receives snacks from Sugar Plums we will also provide milk with snack. Please bring one empty cup for milk

Infants are fed on demand. Parents provide adequate supplies of formula or breast milk in ready prepared bottles and food for their infant's daily consumption. Mothers are welcome to breast feed at the center. However, we ask that mothers inform staff of their arrival times for feeding. Mothers should notify their baby's primary caregiver if they will be late. The staff will wait only 15 minutes before feeding a hungry baby.

S. Birthdays

Children may enjoy celebrating their birthday at the center. We encourage parents to discuss contributions to the celebration with their child's teacher. A special treat such as a cake, cupcakes, cookies, muffins or fresh fruit is permissible. Chocolate and peanut butter are **not** allowed because so many children are allergic to them. We also respectfully request that no latex balloons be used. This is a serious choking hazard for young children.

T. Personal Articles

Parents are responsible for supplying all diapers and diapering supplies (wipes, ointments, etc...). Children in diapers are required to keep at least two changes of clothing at the center.

Older children should have at least one. Infants need two portable-crib sized sheets and two blankets.

Children enrolled in the Lemondrops, Lollipops, or Sugar Plums classroom should have a small blanket and two portable- crib sheets for use at naptime. All blankets and clothing

should be plainly marked with the child's name. Children may not bring toys, money, food, candy, gum, glass or toy weapons from home. A special toy, such as a soft cuddle toy or blanket needed by the child to feel secure is fine.

Children love to interact with their environment, whether it is the water in the water table or the pudding they are eating. Therefore, children's clothing should be easily washable. Children should be dressed appropriately to go outside and have shoes that adequately protect the feet. Flip-flops or slip-on sandals are not allowed. When appropriate, an extra sweater, hat, and mittens should be kept in your child's cubby.

What to Bring

Gumdrops:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| · Prepared bottles and nipples | · Portable-crib sized sheets (2) |
| · Food | · Blankets, small (2) |
| · Changes of clothing (3) | · Teething gel/sunscreen |
| · Disposable diapers | · Pacifiers, if desires |
| · Wipes/ointment | |

Lemondrops:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| · Disposable diapers | · Blanket (1) |
| · Wipes and diapering supplies | · Child's toy for nap |
| · Changes of clothing | · Teething gel/sunscreen |
| · Portable-crib sheet (2) | |

Lollipops & Sugars:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| · Portable-crib sheet (2) | · Pillow |
| · Change of clothing (2) | · Child's toy |
| · Blanket, small | |

T. Communication Between Parents and Staff

A newsletter describing the activities at the center is distributed monthly. Daily sheets describing each child's day will go home to parents as well. Individual news items will be placed in children's cubbies. We understand that as a parent you experience new challenges each day. Our staff is valuable resources that can help parents meet these challenges, whether they involve potty training or choosing appropriate books.

Please let the staff know of any physical or emotional problems that your child may have. Any changes in routine may display itself in behavioral changes. In order for the staff to help each child work out any problems, we need to know if they are worrying about something (move, baby, death, illness in the family, etc...).

U. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held annually and on an as-needed basis. We encourage parents to talk with teachers on a regular basis. Parents can feel free to call the teachers and the office staff at any time during the day. If a teacher is unavailable, a message will be taken and a phone call will be returned at the earliest opportunity.

V. Parent Participation

Parent participation is an important part of what makes Sugar Plums a special place for both parents and children. Volunteering can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as reading a story, attending a field trip, assisting in fundraising, construction, painting, toy fixing, grocery shopping, etc.

W. Open Door Policy

Our center is open for parents to visit at any time. Please feel free to drop in and visit at any time. Parents are a valuable resource. If a parent has a project they would like to share with a class, please let the teacher know so she can schedule a time for sharing with the children.

Specialists who wish to observe a child must make an appointment and have written permission from the parents on file before they can visit the classroom or discuss a child with a teacher.

Y. Publicity

If the center is approached by news media to photograph or interview a child, permission will be obtained prior to any contact with the media.

Z. Babysitting Policy

It is a violation of Sugar Plums Policy for a Sugar Plums employee to baby sit, host sleepovers, or spend time one-on-one with your child outside of the Sugar Plums program.

In the event you enter into an arrangement with a Sugar Plums employee to baby-sit for your child outside of the employee's work hours and outside center hours, it must be done away from the center with the full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters such an agreement as a private citizen and NOT as a Sugar Plums' employee. Sugar Plums cannot be responsible for its employees away from the center, outside of their working hours and will not be liable for their acts or omission when not on Sugar Plums property. If you enter into an independent agreement with a Sugar Plums employee to care for your child, and this arrangement results in the person leaving Sugar Plums' employment, Sugar Plums will charge you a finder's fee of \$2,000.

A **DDENDUM A: Biting**

At Sugar Plums we work with a child development specialist as well as a pediatrician concerning issues of biting.

It is important to note that children can bite at different stages of their lives for different reasons.

Infants:

- may bite to explore;
- use their mouths to explore because their mouths are one of the most developed parts of their bodies;
- sometimes use biting as a primitive form of communication;
- typically do not connect biting to pain;
- may bite because they are excited or over-stimulated;
- sometimes bite out of frustration.

Toddlers:

- may bite when they experience a stressful event or change in routine;
- may be more apt to bite if they have not interacted with adults for at least 5 minutes;
- may bite as a self-defense strategy;
- may simply be imitating other toddlers who bite.

If a child becomes a biter, Sugar Plums will contact the parent immediately. After a second biting incident, the child will be removed from Sugar Plums for one week. After a third biting incident, the child will be removed for two weeks. If the child continues to bite, he/she will be removed from Sugar Plums indefinitely.

RECEIPT OF UNDERSTANDING

I have received the Sugar Plums Child Development Center Parent Handbook given to me. I have read the material and fully understand all policies and procedures for the center. I understand that if the terms of the parent handbook are not abided by, my child may be dismissed from the Center.

Parent's signature

Date

