



MISSION

The goal at Dawn's Early Light ECC is to promote the healthy, well-being of each individual child during their early years by providing a healthy, safe, and productive learning environment emphasizing developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). Within this environment, children can develop socially and executive laying the foundation for future successes.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe by understanding the whole child that we as facilitators can help the child attain optimal growth and development at each age.

PROGRAM

The child's self-concepts such as individuality, socialism, independent productivity and creative expression are enhanced through planned lessons and open-ended activities. Opportunities are provided each day for the child in the following domains:

Social Foundations

Language and Literacy

Physical Well Being

The Arts

Math, Science and Social Studies



Tools & Curriculum

Developmentally appropriate tools and curriculum help the child achieve success at every age from birth to 5 years. Dawn's Early Light follows Teaching Strategies as a guide for planning and recording developmental milestones and Learning Without Tears for kindergarten readiness.

Each classroom follows a daily schedule including times for reading, music, diapering and potty training, indoor and outdoor play and meal time that is shared with parents to add to the child's emotional development. Routine is a vital component to social foundations. Language and literacy opportunity.

Classroom materials and tools for learning are accessible to each child throughout the day. Age appropriate materials and tools are placed on low shelves within the children's reach. Guidance from the teacher helps promote the child's confidence in using materials appropriately and responsibly. The child learns from responsibility and takes pride in accomplishments.

The child meets together in a large group for circle time each day and opportunities are made within the lesson to work in two or three small groups with skill based criteria. Child to Teacher time is during free play.



Parent Connection

Family involvement is beneficial to the child and to the success of the program. Dawn's Early Light maintains an Open-Door policy to our families welcoming new ideas, participation and educational support. We have developed several ways to communicate to the families:

Monthly newsletter and calendar

HiMama App (download to your phone)

Classroom Newsletter

Director's Desk (del.dunkirk@comcast.net)

Website

Conferences (Twice per year and upon request)

Volunteer Opportunities Volunteers receive a discount in tuition of up to 10%

Work the Scholastic Book Fair

Read a story to the class

Coordinate holiday snacks

Present your career

Chaperone a field trip

Donate free items to the classroom

Graduation Help

Gatherings

Open House Night (September)

Pumpkin Patch Trip (October)

Halloween Trunk or Treat (October)

Thanksgiving Luncheon (November)

Christmas Concert (December)

Read Across America (March)

Grandparent's Day (April)

Preschool Graduation (May)



Inclusivity

Our center provides an inclusive setting for all children. Children gain a better understanding and knowledge of our diverse culture by working with one another regardless of their individual needs. Staff is trained to provide reasonable accommodations to children with special needs based on the following:

1. A written plan of care that includes instructions for any procedure necessary for the health of the child.
 2. The plan will be modified and revised as often as deemed necessary to meet the changing needs of the individual child.
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1. Parents will receive referrals for developmental assistance.
 2. Therapists, when requested, may work with the child on site.
 3. Staff is trained to follow IFSP and other written plans.

School Age Children

Our before and after school program provides a safe and healthy environment for children 5 through 10 years of age each day before school and after school including days when schools are closed. We encourage caring, honesty, respect, friendship and responsibility. Homework assistance is provided each day except for Friday. Incentives are provided for completed homework and good behavior. In Dunkirk, the students attend Mt. Harmony. In Prince Frederick, the students attend Calvert and Barstow.

Dawn's Early Light Summer Adventures begins when school lets out in June and continues until school resumes in September. We provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities led by trained staff to give the children a memorable experience. Children form a sense of community and lasting friendships. Activities range from weekly outings and craft projects to organized games.

Our Staff

Dawn's Early Light understands that it is our staff that maintains the quality level of our center. Understanding this, we strive to hire top quality professionals who believe in the uniqueness of children as set forth in our philosophy. Each staff member is credentialed through the Maryland State Dept of Education. Certifications are posted or kept in the office.

Our staff members understand that they too are continuing to learn each day and with each challenge. Ongoing professional development provides continuing education and other opportunities for staff to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field, including: new programs and practices, routines, pending policy, legislation and regulatory changes.

In addition to staff training, all staff working directly with the children are adequately acquainted in their orientation:

1. Center's philosophy goals
2. Emergency health and safety procedures
3. Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures and expectations for ethical conduct.

At ninety days they go through an informal review and once a year after that.

Our employees go through appropriate screening techniques, including state and federal background checks. Our directors observe the teachers in their classrooms on an on-going basis. The staff is trained to be friendly and accommodating.



Classrooms

Little Patriots
6 weeks to 18 months
Open 7am-5pm daily

The Navigators & Trail Blazers
18 months to 36 months (Toddler Program)

The Explorers
3 and 4 year olds (Preschool)

The Pioneers
4 and 5 year olds (Kindergarten Readiness)



Discipline and Guidance

Our goal is to provide your child with a positive and consistent approach to guidance. Safety is our foremost concern. A variety of methods are used to promote learning and exploration each day. Each child should arrive in comfortable clothing in order to enjoy the activity. Play includes sand and water, painting and playdoh, running and jumping. Some children will be learning to dress. Rules are introduced to promote a healthy and safe learning environment for everyone to work and play. Social skills and emotional management play a key role not only in young learners but later in life as well.

If an undesirable behavior occurs, the child will be walked away from the group and talked to about the consequences of his or her behavior. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to clean up his/her area and try another activity. If the problem involves another child, both children will be helped to talk through the dispute. The goal is that sooner rather than later, the child will be responsible for his or her own problem solving. The staff is trained to always re-direct.

Persistent behavioral issues or aggression would be handled with a conference to include the Director and a plan of action . Refusal to provide care is at the discretion of Dawn's Early Light, Inc. Staff is trained to maintain a comfortable space for the children. Parents can receive resources for children with behavioral needs:

The Promise Resource Center (Awesome staff. Very helpful!)

Calvert County Infants & Toddlers (Free! Attentive and professional)

Conferences

Twice per year in the fall and spring teacher's share each child's progress with one or both parents. The staff is trained to follow suggestions from parents to improve the child's success.

Assessments

Each child in our program has a portfolio that reflects the progression of the child's development through classroom observations and notes, work samples and photos which guide the teacher in planning for that child.

Physical Fitness

Our goal is to have children be as active as possible throughout the day while in our care.

Children ages 1-2 have 30 minutes of structured and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity per day.

Children ages 3-5 are provided with at least 60 minutes of structured and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity per day.

Children of all ages are provided twice per day with indoor and outdoor areas for performing large muscle activities like climbing, running, balance and ball play. Staff are trained to promote healthy choices.

Physical fitness is incorporated in our program in various ways.

Themes

All About Me

My Body

5 Senses

Dental Health and Nutrition

Biting

Biting is a release of frustration. It is a natural behavior frequently exhibited by young children. These children are still discovering orally and do not have the processing skills to properly understand their range of emotions. It is important to understand that when children bite, they are sending a signal for help. It is important to understand that there is nothing caregivers or you as parents can do to stop the behavior. In a group care situation, try as we might, at some point your child will bite or be bitten. Each case is treated individually and meeting with staff tends to help where all sides will be considered.

We do, however, take cases of biting seriously. An accident report is prepared and signed by the parent of the biter. The child that has been bitten is given lots of hugs while the bite mark is cleaned with soap and water and ice is applied. An accident report is written for the bite and the parents are informed. As in the case with all disputes between children, no names are given.

Food Allergies

Parents are required to list informative medical needs of a child including known allergies on the Emergency Form. The staff is trained to serve food in the class room following the written food guideline.

Parents are required to provide food from home when allergies prevent the child from eating center meals.

Nutrition

Dawn’s Early Light provides morning/afternoon snack as well as hot lunches. Fresh fruit and vegetables are provided daily with lunch. Fresh fruit and veggies are also served at least once a week with snack. We serve 100% juice or 1% milk at meal times. 1% milk is served with lunch. Drinks with added sweeteners and caffeine are not permitted to be served to children. Children have access to water throughout the day. The staff is trained to monitor sugar intake of the child at meal time and encourage good eating habits.

Tuition and Expenses

Tuition is due one week in advance to be submitted the Friday prior. Dawn’s Early Light reserves the right to refuse services due to non-payment. A \$5 late fee is applied to each day the payment is not received. Tuition can be paid weekly or bi-weekly.

We make every effort to stay open for your convenience. On holidays, snow days and sick days, tuition will not be reduced.

Deposit

A deposit equal to one week’s tuition is due before the first day of attendance to be applied to the final week of attendance. Withdrawal notices must be received to the Director at least one month in advance to avoid further charges.

Late Pick Up Fees

Our center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. The staff is trained to collect the fee at the time of the parent’s arrival. If no contact has been made with the parent or emergency contacts, staff is trained to contact CCPS (Calvert County Protective Services) to pick up the child.

- First Late Pick Up..... No charge
- Second Late pick Up.....\$25.00
- Third Late pick Up.....\$75.00
- Fourth Late pick up.....\$100.00
- 5 or more.....Dismissal from center

Withdrawal

You may withdraw from Dawn's Early Light at anytime of the year. However, your required deposit will not be refunded or applied to your tuition unless two week's written notice is presented to the Director. Written notices may be sent via e-mail to del.dunkirk@comcast.net. Dawn's Early Light is a private for-profit center and as such we reserve the right to refuse care under certain conditions. The following are only examples and are not intended to limit our rights:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Consistent communication difficulties between parents and Dawn's Early Light
- Repeated failure to abide by the regulations set forth in this handbook
- Exhaustion of all reasonable efforts regarding child or adult behavior concerns;
- Harmful behavior from children requiring medical attention
- For any other reason which, in the opinion of the management, is in the best interest of the center.

Health Records

Parents are required to submit an initial shot record when registering. Records are updated annually according to Maryland Child Care Regulations. Parents are responsible for providing DEL with an updated copy of immunization records as shots are administered by the doctor and to update the contact information form. Failure to provide these records upon request will lead to a child's exclusion from care. Payment for child care will be required during this exclusion.

- Health Inventory & Immunization Record (both parent and doctor completed)
- Lead Test Completed
- Dawn's Early Light, Inc. Signed Parental Contract
- Emergency Card (every line completed)
- Getting To Know You Form
- Infant/Toddler Plan (under 2)
- ASQ Screening Form
- Photo Release
- Email address submitted to del.dunkirk@comcast.net (Dunkirk) or pfcenter@comcast.net (Prince Frederick)

What to Bring:

Infant Room

Health Forms / Updated Shots

Bottles pre-prepared

Unopened jars of food

Snack foods

Sippy Cup for water

Pacifier / Comfort item

Diapers for one month

Wipes fragrance free for one month

Toddler to 3

Health Forms / Updated Shots

Sippy Cup or Water Bottle

Coat and hat in winter

Spare clothes kept here

Backpack with small blanket and crib sized bed sheet

Diapers and wipes for one month

Food items (optional, not required)

Preschoolers to 5

Health Forms / Updated shots

Coat and hat in winter

Spare clothes kept here

Backpack with small blanket and crib sized bed sheet

Food items (optional, not required)

Accounting

Parents can request receipts and statements by emailing the office. The Director is the only staff who can provide signatures.

Key Fobs

Access into the center is secure at all times. The doors remain locked throughout operational hours. The key fob allows access into the center. Parents must purchase a key fob per person and pay a deposit of \$25.00 per key. Deposits will be mailed within 14 days of key return.

Health and Safety

The staff are trained to observe children including their health and safety. Children not well enough to participate in the program are not well enough to be present. Children who show any of the following symptoms listed below must be excluded from the center.

- Temperature of 101 or higher (100.5 for infants)
- Rash – Child may not return without a doctor's note or if rash is open, oozing or itching; open skin has to be healed before returning to care
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Red and runny eyes – Child may not return until they have been on medication for at least 24 hours and there is no goop or drainage in or around the eye. If the child is documented to have a medical reason (clogged tear duct or allergies) the child may return the next day if "pink eye" is not present in the center.
- Noticeable change in behavior
- Virus
- Coxsackie's (Hand, foot and mouth) – Child may not return to the center until all blisters have disappeared and the child is eating normally.
- Strep Throat – Child may not return until she/he has been on medication for at least 24 hours
- Chicken Pox – Child may not return until all blisters have had the scabs fall off.
- Thrush – Child may not return to the center until the child has been on medication for at least 24 hours and has resumed normal eating patterns.
- Lice-Child must not have any nits before returning to care. Staff are trained to search a child's hair.

Medication

Staff specially trained to administer medicine to children must have:

Original Medicine bottle labeled with name

Authorization form completed by doctor

Medication returned home each night

The application of over-the-counter topical ointments or lotions, such as diaper rash ointment or sunscreen, can be applied per the parents' instruction with a parent signed medication form.

EMERGENCIES

While all efforts are made to protect your child from injury, occasionally accidents do occur. First Aid will be provided to minor accidents such as a scrapes, bumps or small cuts. Parents are contacted directly for more serious injuries. The lead staff is trained to manage emergencies and consult with Director. A staff member travels with the injured child to the closest hospital until family arrives.

Poison

All poisonous materials will be kept out of reach. However, should your child ingest a poisonous substance, we will follow the instructions of the Poison Control Center.

1-800-222-1222

Screen Time

Our program offers a variety of activities to keep children engaged and moving. Screen time is limited to according to age. Tablets are used to support the curriculum where needed. Educational games and musicals are used to enhance cognitive thinking.

Vacation

Tuition vacation weeks are offered each year for children enrolled for 12 consecutive months. You must give two week's notice to receive your vacation credit while the child is on vacation.. Vacation weeks do not accumulate. Vacation credit may only be used for full weeks (5 consecutive days)

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather does affect the opening of the center. Closings, late openings and early dismissals are posted on our website within a reasonable amount of time during bad weather. Parents are required to submit a working email address to get information out quickly and efficiently. Weather closings are posted on the answering service and on the website.

Dunkirk phone: 301-855-6300

Prince Frederick phone: 410-525-5625

www.dawnsearlylight.net

Holiday Closings

The center is closed on the following days:

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Day After

Christmas Eve- Closed at 4:00

Christmas Day – Closed

December 26th - Closed

New Year's Eve Day- Closed at 4:00

New Year's Day

Good Friday (Friday before Easter)

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Unforeseen Closures

If for some reason the center is closed for unforeseen reasons, no discount in tuition will be available. Some examples of this might be:

Hurricane or Tornado Damage

Flood or Electrical Outage

Government Request

Emergency Plan in Effect

Emergency Preparedness

We conduct fire drills monthly throughout the year with three "emergency scenarios" conducted per year. This ensures that staff and children are familiar with the location and operation should we experience fire, tornado, flooding, earthquake, power outage, or acts of terrorism. Parents are required to submit a working telephone number at all times for the staff to reach you while the children are in our care.

Program Evaluation

We look for your feedback each year. The survey will be distributed each May to assure the quality of services provided. Those concerns are then openly shared and solutions are made. Parents can contact the Director at any time to discuss serious concerns and the child's teacher has been trained to be attentive to the needs of the parents.

Birthday Parties – Check in with your child's teacher for allergies and other restrictions.

Holiday Parties – Parents are asked to donate an item.

Field Trips – Our center takes 3 to 4 field trips per year as the outing pertains to the children's needs. Permission slips will be put out in each classroom for parents to review and sign allowing their child to attend a field trip. We use a private bus company to travel to and from our destination. Chaperones are asked to follow the bus on all trips in their own vehicle due to bus capacity.

Transition to Kindergarten Day – The children who will attend kindergarten in the fall are invited to the local elementary school for an hour of classroom participation each May. The children travel by bus to Mt. Harmony (Dunkirk) or Calvert Elementary (Prince Frederick). The date is announced on the May calendar.

Preschool Graduation – This ceremony marks the end of preschool for children who will be starting kindergarten in the fall. All families are welcome to join us.

Parent Information Area – Located in each entryway, parents can find current information

Visiting – Dawn's Early Light has a complete open door policy. We welcome you, the parent, unannounced visits. If there is a custodial arrangement in place, a copy of the custody agreement or court order must be included in your child's file so that we can comply with your visitation and pick up needs. All other visitors must show ID to enter the center.

Entrance – The front doors will be locked for the entire day. Each parent who enters the building is required to have a key. Key fobs are purchased in the office and a deposit of \$25.00 is required.

Deposits are returned by mail upon receipt of the key when you withdraw from the program.

Parking Lot Safety - Children are not permitted to roam inside or outside the center without supervision. Parents are required to escort children to and from the center responsibly by holding their child's hand. It is against Maryland law leave a child unattended in a car. For everyone's safety parents are asked to watch children closely and hold their hand arriving and departing. The speed limit is 10 mph in the parking lot.

Dropping Off and Picking Up – It is important for your child's safety that you drop off and pick up within your child's assigned classroom. Do not allow children to "find their own way" to their group. The child will be released to either parent listed on the emergency card unless a copy of a custody agreement or court order is in your child's file.

Absenteeism – Parents are required to report all illnesses to the classroom teacher. Please notify an absence through HiMama by 10:30 a.m. A child is not permitted to arrive to the program after 10:30 without prior notification.

Clothing – Remember that we are in a constant state of discovery. Discovery is messy business. Do not dress your child in something that would inhibit their movement or their ability to explore. Please remember to dress them appropriately for the season and as if everyday they will be outside. Shoes are very important and should not be worn carelessly. Our playground is grounded with large wood chips that find their way into sandals and flip flops. It is best to wear tennis shoes, if possible, while at the center.

Toys – We have gone to great lengths to select toys that are appropriate and promote discovery through safe and positive messages. On certain days throughout the year we will have Show and Tell days where children may bring an item from home to share and discuss with their friends in class in order to expand classroom learning. Staff are trained to remove objects from the class room that do not promote development.

Class Pictures – Creative Images is here one day each Spring to take individual and class photos. There is no obligation to pay. Proofs can be viewed within two weeks and parents order directly with the company.

Summer Camp Field Trips

Our "Summer Adventures" program for school age children ages 5 to 10 during the summer months offers field trips and fun activities that are age appropriate. All forms and permission slips are completed before any child can participate. The children must follow all rules and regulations read to them in order to attend each trip. Registration and the Activity Fee for Summer Adventures **must collected by April 30th**.

To reach us by email:

Dunkirk – del.dunkirk@comcast.net

Prince Frederick Center – pfcenter@comcast.net





PARENT HANDBOOK

2018-2019