

Lena Sears

Child Development Center Parent Handbook

(Revised Edition - October 1, 2011)



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LENA SEARS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

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LENA SEARS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

Welcome to the Lena Sears Child Development Center (Center). The Center management consists of an executive director, director, and assistant director.

The Center operates as a non-profit corporation offering services for young children and their families. We are licensed by the District of Columbia and have a center capacity of 80 children, ages 4 months to 5 years old

Center Staff

The Center staff is comprised of teachers and assistant teachers. Our teachers have one or more of the following credentials:

- Early Childhood Education degree
- Child Development Associate (CDA) certification
- 90 hours of training from a community college
- 15 credit hours in Early Childhood Education
- One or more years experience in a child development center

Our assistant teachers have at least two or more years of college in early childhood education or a high school diploma and one year of experience in a child development center. Our teachers to child ratios are:

- 4 months – 2 years 1 Teacher: 4 Children
- 2 years – 3 years 1 Teacher: 4 Children
- 3 years – 4 years 1 Teacher: 8 Children
- 4 years – 5 years 1 Teacher: 10 Children

Childcare Philosophy

We believe children need opportunities to create and discover because they learn best as they play and explore their environment. We believe a child-centered atmosphere, which encourages the process rather than the product; helps develop problem-solving skills, build self-esteem, and promote creativity.

With this in mind, our teachers plan activities that are appropriate for each child's age and stage of development. The areas are:

- Social Development
- Emotional Development
- Cognitive Development
- Physical Development

We always keep in mind that each child is a unique individual and will develop at his or her own pace.

Childcare Goals and Objectives

- Provide a caring and knowledgeable staff that is cooperative partners with parents in their child's development.
- Provide a compassionate staff that is sensitive to the family's childcare needs.
- Provide a warm, nurturing, learning environment for all children in the Center.
- Provide a healthy, safe, supportive, and secure environment for all children in the Center.
- Encourage each child's developmental growth by providing an environment that fosters learning through action, inquiry, creativity, and exploration.
- Help each child gain better control and understanding of his/her body through interaction with the environment, materials, and equipment.
- Help each child develop language skills to enable self-expression.
- Promote self-esteem within each child through an environment that encourages independence, decision-making, caring, and sharing.
- Help each child develop social skills so he/she can successfully interact with other children and adults.

Curriculum

We start each day with Christian Education that instills a solid foundation in the teachings of Jesus Christ within each student. Christian Education includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Group Prayer
- Scripture Reading and Memorization
- Bible Songs
- Bible Stories
- Biblical Games

Curriculum (cont'd)

Academically, we follow the concepts of a creative curriculum. This is interactive learning that occurs between teachers, children, and their environment. For example, as a child participates in a pre-planned activity, his natural interest may lead him to add another item from a different learning center to this activity. The teacher then encourages his exploration by asking leading questions or helping him make observations about relationships.

We prepare for this type of curriculum by providing interest areas and/or learning centers. Some examples of these are:

- Art
- Science
- Manipulative
- Dramatic Play
- Blocks
- Language *
- Computers *

* Language

Lena Sears Child Development Center provides Spanish as a foreign language to its students. French and sign language are provided as a part of Mrs. Lewis' curriculum. As the world becomes more multicultural, learning a foreign language at an early age becomes paramount in our society.

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* Computer Lab

The computer lab is an extension of our academic program. It reinforces the A-Beka Curriculum with familiar animated cartoon characters. Many of childhood educational issues can be solved by using computers. Studies have shown that computer applications have improved children's performance in reading, writing, and basic mathematics.

In addition to the emergent curriculum, we use the *A Beka Book* series to enhance learning to keep learning lively, interesting, and memorable.

Our nursery students learn about the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, looking, and smelling). As the nursery students get older they learn to:

- Recognize Numbers and Letters
- Recognize Shapes and Sounds
- Develop Hand and Eye Coordination
- Build Character

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For our preschoolers and kindergartners, we use the *A Beka Book* series as the formal learning curriculum. At this level, some of the things they learn are:

- Writing alphabets and numbers
- Reading using Phonics
- Performing simple math operations
- Developing Character

To provide a complete learning experience for our students, our days are filled with a mixture of small and large group activities. We also encourage individual quiet and active periods for each student.

Field Trips & Special Events

We view field trips and special events as an extension to our strong Christian and foundational education program. Parents are invited to participate in field trips, special events and other programs.

One of our regular activities is to visit the Francis Gregory Library. The library is located on Alabama Ave SE, Washington, DC, which is within walking distance of the school. The library has a wonderful program for children! The children enjoy books, filmstrips, puzzles, puppets, blocks and much more.

Outdoor Play

All children participate in two hours of outdoor play every day. In the summer the children do not go out if there has been a code red or orange alert. In the winter the children do not go out if the temperature is below 32°F.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is mandatory for all students entering the Center upon departure from outdoor play, bathroom breaks or whenever necessary.

Sign In and Out Procedure:

Signing your child in and out of school is a mandatory procedure that has been mandated by the Licensing and Voucher Department of the Office of the State of Superintendent of Education. These forms become a matter of record, and may be requested at any given time.

Labeling Items

It is the parent's responsibility to label all items belonging to children. This is a group setting and this practice helps to eliminate confusion.

Supplies

Parents are responsible for supplying sufficient items for their child. It is very important that all items are labeled and seasonally appropriate. Please be responsible for the following items:

- Two changes of clothing
 - 2 undershirts
 - 2 outer shirts
 - 2 pairs of pants or dresses
 - 2 pairs of socks
 - 2 pairs of underwear
 - 2 Boxes of Kleenex
 - Sheet and Blanket (to be taken home each Friday)
 - Wipes
 - Pull-ups

***NOTE:** Children that are being potty-trained need to bring extra items including rubber (plastic) pants. The rubber pants will hopefully limit the amount of soiled clothing.

Potty Training

The Center staff work with the parents to help children master this skill. Children are taken to the restroom at regular intervals during the day to get them accustomed to going regularly. Also, children are allowed to use the restroom whenever they indicate they need to.

Diapering

Children are expected to enter the facility with a clean and soil free diaper. If your child happens to relieve him/her self on the way to school, please take a few minutes and change them. The teacher will ensure that all children are changed and clean when you pick them up from child care.

Children that are in diapers or pull ups are required to have a week supply to accommodate their needs, along with a box of wipes.

Mailbox

Parents are expected to check your child's mailbox daily for tuition statement and correspondence from the child care center's office and your child's teacher.

Discipline

One of the goals in guiding young children is teaching them to become self-disciplined. However, self-control takes a long time to develop and requires nurturing and understanding from adults. Therefore, any corrective action teacher's use will be appropriate to the child's development level. Accordingly, we will not permit:

- Physically punishing, threatening, or shaming children.
- Denying food to any child.

However, to eliminate negative behavior we will:

- Redirect a child's attention.
- Use a thinking or timeout chair.

Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are held three (3) times a year to discuss student's developmental progress. The focus of these conferences will be:

- Physical Development
- Cognitive Development
- Emotional Development
- Social Development

Each day, parents receive Daily Progress Reports to keep them informed of students' daily activities. Parents or the center staff can request additional conferences as necessary.

Complaint Procedures

All complaints must be reported to the Center management either in person or by telephone. Call the Center telephone number, **(202) 584-7761**, for assistance.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All cases or suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect will be reported to the Child Protective Services Division of the Department of Human Services and/or the police department immediately.

Food and Nutrition

Parents of infants who are not yet able to eat table food will have to provide daily portions of baby food and formula. Two snacks and a hot lunch are provided daily for all other children at the center. Parents are responsible for providing breakfast. A weekly/monthly menu of snack and lunch items is available in advance.

Nutritional Information and Recommendations for Foods Brought from Home

Eating is a very important part of a child's growth and development. The Center provides nutritious meals from the four basic food groups: fruit and vegetables, meat, milk, and bread and cereal. We encourage good eating habits by serving only nutritious meals. Parents are asked to ensure any foods brought from home to supplement or replace the foods served by the Center are equally nutritious.

Infant Formula and Food Policy

Parents must prepare their infant's bottles before arrival. All formula/milk bottles must be prepared and ready for consumption. All bottles, jar food, lunches and box food must be clearly labeled with the infant's/toddler's name and date.

Children with Nutritional Special Needs

Children that cannot consume the food and milk provided by Lena Sears Child Development Center must provide their child meals or a portion thereof.

Medication Administration

Lena Sears Child Development Center's staff or director will administer medication that is prescribed by a licensed physician. All prescription medication must be clearly labeled with the child's name, date, dosage and name of physician.

The Center will administer lotions and creams to children with the parent's written consent. The written consent must be signed and dated by the parent. **We will not orally administer any over the counter medication/s.** The parent and physician must complete and sign the "Medical Authorization Form" before medication is given.

The parent(s) must administer the first dosage to the child.

Medication Administration cont'd

- Must be taken home on a daily basis.
- Must be kept in the refrigerator when needed
- Must be kept in the First Aid box in the child's classroom.

Illnesses

Parents must wash their child's hands each and every morning before dropping them off into class.

The Center is inadequately staffed to care for sick children. Therefore, all children must be able to participate in all activities of the day, including outdoor play. Parents should keep their child home if they:

- Are extremely fatigued
- Are excessively irritable
- Are in need of one-on-one attention

Children exhibiting signs of illness during a 24-hour period prior to scheduled attendance at the Center should be kept home until the symptoms of illness have disappeared. Upon arrival at the Center, a child exhibiting signs of illness will not be allowed to attend childcare that day. A child with a fever of 100°F or higher must have a normal temperature for 24 hours before returning to school. This 24-hour safety zone is also in effect for, but not limited to:

- **Diarrhea**
- **Vomiting**
- **Newly medicated infections**
- **Contagious disease**
- **Heavy runny nose or cloudy mucus**
- **Persistent bloody nose**
- **Any undiagnosed or contagious skin condition**

Any and all communicable diseases, such as, chicken pox or Coxsackie's virus must be reported immediately and typically call for a one week absence from the center. In such cases, **a follow-up doctor's visit is required and a doctor's note** before your child will be readmitted to the Center. If your child becomes sick during the school day, we will call you to pick him/her up within one hour. If you cannot be reached or are unable to pick up your child, we will call the next person listed as an emergency contact.

Your child still has to be picked up within one hour of us notifying you (or your contact). We will charge our normal late fee, if the child remains in the Center more than one hour after you have been contacted. These fees are due at the time of pick up. In this instance, children are unable to return to the Center until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

Medical Notes/ Medical Absence

Children that need to see a pediatrician must do so before they can return to school. Please, bring your child's note or excuse to the child care center office.

Absences

Parent's must inform the child care center office when a child/children will be absent from school or late entering school. **Voucher families that are absent from school five days can be expelled from school without the proper documentation.**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome:

To reduce the risk of SID, research states that putting an infant on their back to sleep is safest. All infants will be placed on their backs when sleeping. If infants are able to turn themselves on to their stomachs, then we will not turn them over again.

Medical Emergency Plan

Medical emergencies occurring on the Center premises will be handled in the following manner:

- An ambulance will be called immediately.
- The parent will be called immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be notified.
- The Director, Assistant Director, or Teacher will accompany the child to the hospital in the parent's/guardian's absence.
- An Incident/Accident form will be completed. A copy of the form will be given to the parent and the original form will be placed in the child's Center file.

Emergencies occurring away from the premises will be handled in like manner. Teachers carry Emergency Treatment or Emergency Consent Forms and Parental Contact forms with them on field trips.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

In case of an emergency Lena Sears Child Development Center will evacuate the building and assemble at the corner of 38th and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E. (corner close to Marian Miller Community Center). As in fire drills, teachers will take the roll book and emergency bag with them when exiting the building. At the assembly area (the corner) the staff will immediately notify the fire department and take a head count to ensure that everyone is present and accounted. After the head count we will precede to Anne Beers Elementary School located at 3600 Alabama Avenue, S.E. Washington, D.C. (the building right next to the Francis Gregory Library). Staff will then notify parents.

Dental Exam

All Children three years of age and older are required by the Office of the State of Superintendent of Education Licensing Department to have an oral exam by a licensed Dentist annually.

Immunizations & Physicals

An annual physical examination is required in order for your child to attend child care. The examination form must be completed by a **licensed physician** and mandated with the **Doctor's office stamp**. Along with the health exam, tuberculosis (TB) and lead-screening tests must be performed with the results and date clearly indicated on the form. Immunizations must be completed at the appropriate age. The Department of Health requires that the TB test and lead-screening test be done **annually**.

District of Columbia Annual Forms

The District of Columbia requires the following forms to be completed annually.

- Authorization for Child's Emergency Medical Treatment
- Registration Record for Child Receiving Care Away From Home Travel and
- Activity Authorization (Field Trip)
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Center Hours

The Center is open year round Monday through Friday, from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Contact Information

Current addresses and telephone numbers for both home and work must be kept up-to-date in case of emergencies.

Arrival and Departure

- All students **must** be at school by: **9:00 A.M.** With the exception of extenuating circumstances (**subject to the director's approval**), students arriving after 9:00 A.M. will be **denied entry**.
- All parents **must** pick up their child/children by: **6:00 P.M.** or incur late fees (see *LENA SEARS CDC Payment Policies* section).
- All parents must sign their child in and out every day.
- Parents should notify the Center director of doctor appointments at least 48 hours in advance.
- Parents must notify the Center director if their child will be absent on any given day.
- **Parents must notify the Center director when students are absent two days or more.**
- Parents needing to take their child from the Center during the course of the day must inform the teacher and sign the child out.
- Parents must notify the Center in advance if someone other than the parent will be picking up their child. Identification is required.
- All parents must be sure that a staff member has acknowledged the arrival and departure of their child and that all children are dropped off and picked up by the parent in the classroom. No child shall escort him or herself into or leave their classroom alone.
- Parents of infants must complete an arrival form every morning, detailing their child's activities prior to arrival.

School Closing

The school is closed on all Federal Holidays, and the day after Thanksgiving. Please, check the "Yearly Calendar" for all school closing. The center does not celebrate Halloween in any form..

Inclement Weather & Emergency Closing

Please, watch Fox 5 News – WTTG - Washington, DC for school closing

Lena Sears Child Development Center follows the District of Columbia Public School's Closing System. **If the District of Columbia is closed for any reason then Lena Sears Child Development Center will be closed.** If there is a delayed opening issued for the District of Columbia Public School System then Lena Sears Child Development Center will follow those same guidelines.

If there is an emergency while school is open pertaining to the weather, heat, water, electricity, etc., we are obligated to follow the guidelines set for by our licensing department and must close the Center. It is imperative that all contact information is kept accurate, so that we may contact parents in cases of emergencies.

PARENTS, MUST PICK-UP OR ARRANGE AN ALTERNATE PERSON TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD IN CASES OF EMERGENCIES - WITHIN AN HOUR OF COMMUNICATION FROM THE SCHOOL.

Summer Program

The fun and excitement does not stop during the summer for children enrolled at the Center. During the summer children are involved in swimming, weekly field trips and special events. The children enjoy more outdoor learning and fun.

Also during the summer months a Summer Camp program is offered for children 6 to 12 years old. **The Marian Miller Community Center** camp provides a well-balanced, fun-filled program that is designed to stimulate and educate young minds. The Camp's program provides a safe fun-filled summer by giving campers a taste of many different activities in a Christian environment.

Parking

Parking is available for drop off and pick up, however please do not park in the spaces designated for church leaders. Also, please do not leave cars parked on the Center lot during the day while you are at work – they may be ticketed and towed without warning.

Security

Safety is everyone's responsibility! Upon enrollment, parents are given an access code to use when entering the building. **Please do not give this code to anyone.** When you arrive at the parking lot entrance ring the doorbell and give the access code. Please do not let strangers into the building. If you are unsure about an individual, please notify the office immediately. The access code will be changed from time to time for increased security.

TIMELY PAYMENTS

Timely payments are essential to the health of our child development center. Some of the areas your financial investments support are:

- The quality of care given to your child.
- The quality of staff available to care for your child.
- The quality of your child’s education.
- The variety and quality of supplies used to help your child achieve learning goals.
- The variety and quality of activities enjoyed by your child.

The Lena Sears CDC staff is here to support your family by caring for your child while you work. We have a vested interest in providing the best possible care for your little ones.

Remember, your support is essential to the strength of our center. Together we can provide an extraordinary environment for your child to grow in.

LENA SEARS CHILD DEVELOPMENT PAYMENT POLICIES

Tuition and Fees

1. **New** weekly tuition and activity fee rates become effective beginning **October 1, 2011**. The rates are as follows:

Effective Oct. 1, 2011

CLASSES	OLD RATES	NEW RATES	ACTIVITY FEE	Drop In Daily Rates
Baby Lambs	\$ 270.00	\$ 280.00	N/A	\$ 56.00
King Kids	\$ 176.00	\$ 186.00	\$ 145.00	\$ 37.20
Beavers	\$ 164.00	\$ 174.00	\$ 170.00	\$ 34.80
Tenderhearts	\$ 146.00	\$ 156.00	\$ 198.00	\$ 31.20
Scholars	\$ 130.00	\$ 140.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 28.00

2. **Tuition payments are due on Fridays, by 6:00 pm, in advance** of the week(s) services are to be rendered. For example, a weekly tuition payment received on Friday, September 30, 2011 would cover services to be rendered Monday, October 3 through Friday, October 7, 2011.

PAYMENT POLICIES cont'd

3. **Registration fees** (a non-refundable fee of \$25 per student), Tuition (required minimum payment of one week) **and** Activity fees (total balance) are all due upon initial enrollment into the center. Once initially paid, **Activity fees** will be charged annually in accordance with the anniversary date of the child. Unpaid fees will be categorized with unpaid tuition when figuring delinquencies.
4. Parents have the option of paying weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. However, these payments must always be made ***in advance*** of the time period services are to be rendered. Monthly payments are due on or before the 1st of each month and should correspond to the number of Fridays in that month.
5. **“Drop In” Students.** Drop In students are those students who need to use the center on a *daily rate* basis from time to time during the year. Drop-In students will be handled on a case by case basis. **Ideal candidates for this service will be those students who have left the center (via graduation) and are now attending public/private schools and left in good standing with no balances owed to the Center.** Rates will generally be determined based on the age of the child and the last classroom to which the child would belong had they attended the center on a full time basis. For example, for the upcoming school year, the drop in rate for a child who is age 5 and has graduated from the center (as a Tenderheart), would be a daily rate of \$31.20 per day (\$156 / 5 days).
6. **Automated Tuition Deduction is available to all students that join the center!**

Tuition Express (our automated Tuition Processing System) is now our *preferred* method of collecting and processing tuition and fee payments for **all new students**. Although it is not mandatory, enrollment is strongly encouraged. If you choose not to enroll in ***Tuition Express*** after this date, the Center reserves the right to charge a \$5 “handling fee” to your account each billing cycle, as we will be forced to continue processing your payments manually.

Tuition Express registration forms are available and can be obtained via the Center Director’s office or the Executive Office located on the 4th Floor.

7. **Late Pick-up Fees** are charged **per child** and are due immediately upon the parent’s late arrival. Late pick-up fees are **\$20 for the first minute and \$1 per minute thereafter**. Class entry will be refused to any child whose parents have not paid late pick-up fees.
8. Parents are expected to give written notice **two weeks in advance** of withdrawing their child from the center. A **\$50** fee will be charged for withdrawing without proper notice.

PAYMENT POLICIES cont'd

PERSONAL CHECKS

9. LENA SEARS CDC NO LONGER ACCEPTS CASH. All payments must be made in the form of personal check, certified check, money order, or automated tuition deduction.
10. All returned checks or automated tuition deduction charge-backs are subject to a \$25 return check fee as well as a \$15 late fee.
11. **Check writing privileges will be withdrawn if two checks are returned on any account.** Certified checks or money orders must be used for all future payments.

REFUNDS, CREDITS, AND DISCOUNTS

12. Cash refunds will not be made. Any credits will be used to cover charges incurred while the child is enrolled in the center.
13. One free week of **Vacation Credit** is awarded after 12 continuous months of enrollment in the center. This credit should **only** be utilized to compensate a one week (5 consecutive business day) period of child's "**non-attendance**" of the center. Parents should submit a written notice in the payment box two weeks in advance of intended vacation week to have this credit applied to your account.
14. **Helping Hands credits** are available to parents who volunteer in the classroom during staff meetings and teacher training sessions. This credit is equal to \$20 per hour and is limited to one credit per month. To take advantage of this credit, parents must complete a Helping Hands voucher, have it signed by the CDC director or co-director, and place it in the payment box on the same day they volunteer.
15. **Sibling discounts** are available to families with two or more children enrolled in the center. The discounts are:
 - a. Two children from the same immediate family will receive a \$10 per week credit towards the younger child's tuition.
 - b. Three or more children from the same immediate family will receive a \$20 per week credit towards the two youngest children's tuition, not to exceed \$40 per week.
 - c. Families who have **monthly** tuition bills **greater than** \$1,000/month will receive a \$50 per week credit towards the younger child's tuition, not to exceed \$200 per month.

PAYMENT POLICIES cont'd

16. A **\$50 referral credit** (a one-time credit *per referral*) will be issued to the account of the parent who successfully refers another client to enroll in the Center. The referred client must complete one full week at the Center and must have all initial application fees paid in full.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

17. **Any payments made after Fridays at 6 p.m. are considered late.**

A fee of ***\$15 per week*** is charged for all late payments.

Tuition is due in full regardless of illness, holidays, vacations, leave, snow closing, emergency closing, etc.

18. **We reserve the right to refuse service to any child whose account is *one week delinquent*.** All accounts with outstanding balances equal to one week of tuition and/or unpaid fees are considered delinquent and will be treated so by the accounting department. The accounting department will use two phases of contact for resolving delinquent accounts:

- a. *Initial contact* regarding delinquencies equal to one week of tuition and/or unpaid fees will be made via an account statement, placed in your child's mailbox, with a note requesting payment of the outstanding balance.
- b. *Second contact* regarding existing delinquencies will be made (the following week) via an **IMPORTANT NOTICE** requesting payment by a certain due date or your child will be suspended from the Center. If existing delinquencies remain unresolved two business days after suspension, your child's enrollment will be terminated.

ACCOUNTING DISCREPANCIES

19. Parents should keep all receipts and statements.
20. Parents should notify the accounting department immediately with concerns regarding the accuracy of their account statement. Parents are expected to provide receipts in the case of unposted payments.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Helping Hands

The “Helping Hands Program” is designed to encourage parents to assist teachers in the classroom. Parents can share their work experience, cultural information, and more. Currently, parents are earning Helping Hands points by volunteering in the classroom during “Staff Meeting and Staff Training.”

Each time a parent volunteers in the classroom is worth 1 point. Each point is worth a \$20 deduction from your regular tuition. All volunteering must be pre-approved. Please remember to fill out a “Helping Hands Voucher” at the completion of volunteering or service.

OBLIGATIONS

The Center exercises its obligation to require the withdrawal of a child anytime it becomes evident that the attitude of the child or parent is uncooperative.

A child can be asked to withdraw if he/she is out for a week without officially informing the center in writing. A child is not withdrawn on verbal request.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Lena Sears Child Development Center shall not divulge any personal or financial information to other parents or staff at any time. We will also not discuss the development or progress of students to another entity without the parent’s verbal or written consent. The exception would be in cases of legal or court involvement.