

Parent Handbook



***A Montessori-Based Private School
Infants through Third Grade***

A PEANUT FREE SCHOOL

23443 Cottonwood Parkway
California, MD 20619
www.starmakerschool.org

Updated August 2011

STARMAKER LEARNING CENTER, LLC

A Montessori-Based Private School

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Welcome to Starmaker!

We are pleased that you have chosen Starmaker Learning Center for your child's care and education. It is our goal to help your child during their early formative years to develop into a happy, confident, self-motivated individual by providing a supportive, caring staff and a well-equipped, comfortable and safe learning environment.

Our philosophy of education embraces and builds upon the method of teaching which believes that all children are individuals – each developing at his or her own pace. Therefore, they should be taught individually and allowed the freedom to explore their world in their own way. All children have the basic capacity to grow, to learn and, to lead a constructive and productive life. It is our duty to help each child develop to his/her fullest potential!

Our school has been serving families who are passionately committed to giving their children both a world-class education and an education of the heart and mind that will nurture their self-confidence, personal creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit. We are committed to offering students the most challenging academic program they can handle. Our goal is to inspire them and sow seeds of knowledge and culture in their imagination that will blossom into kindness, respect, and intellectual inquiry. At Starmaker, learning is our passion! If you are one of those special families who believe that an investment in education pays the best dividends, then Starmaker may be the school you have always dreamed of finding for your child.

All students, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, physical ability, or social inheritance, have the right to a quality education. The foundation developed here will stay with your child for life, providing a solid stepping-stone to future learning.

This handbook is provided to give you a ready reference to some of our policies and procedures. We welcome all suggestions and comments to help us better serve you and your child.

We hope this will be just the beginning of a long and rewarding relationship between Starmaker Learning Center and your family. The energy and commitment you bring to this relationship are invaluable. We appreciate your investment in our school and look forward to sharing many great years with you.

Sincerely,
Florence Freeman, MBA
President/CEO



Welcome to Starmaker Learning Center A MONTESSORI-BASED SCHOOL

Welcome to Starmaker Learning Center! We are very happy to have you as a new member of our family and a part of the grander Montessori community!

Our mission is to provide a quality program that contributes to strengthening a child's academic and social standing while providing opportunities for parents to develop quality family time. We believe that a child should be taught individually and provided the freedom to explore the world in their own way.

The Montessori methods and philosophy have been recognized for over one hundred years. Dr. Maria Montessori became the first female physician to graduate from the University of Rome and then went on to pursue careers in psychology and anthropology. Eventually her expertise as a copious examiner by scientific observation led her to become the prominent childhood developmental theorist of her time. Her acclaimed work attracted national recognition that led to the study and devotion of the Montessori Method in the United States mid-century. Those who have learned from her school of thought are attracted to her intellectual and methodical reasoning, as well as an innate understanding of the whole child. Dr. Montessori was the first educator to develop a child-sized classroom and a curriculum that follows the developmental needs and tendencies of children in various stages of development.

Our teachers vary in experience with the Montessori Method; therefore our staff members are required to attend our Montessori events throughout the year. They are also offered Montessori training for assistants as well as the presentations of the core philosophy and techniques. Some of our teachers have undergone a rigorous three-year Montessori Certification schooling program to become certified Montessori Directresses through the American Montessori Society. Our teachers have over 20 years of experience working with children and the Montessori Method.

Our programs excel because they foster a love of learning at the heart of every classroom. Experiences within the classroom are structured, exciting, fresh, and always suited to the needs of the child. The emphasis in our classrooms is not centered on the directresses who act more as facilitators and mentors to the learning processes. The emphasis is geared towards the environment and the class sizes constantly meeting the needs of the child. Montessori believed that in the embryonic state, an infant is physically and emotionally going through a multitude of changes. Therefore, she believed that in a child's first 6 years of development, the child is going through the same external changes as before, yet internally. The child's "absorbent mind" is constantly, yet unconsciously, fishing for stimuli in the environment to cultivate those needs. Our use of didactic Montessori developed materials and our attention to proper class size and the prepared environment constantly support the "whole child;" all emotional, physical, and spiritual manifestations.

The Montessori philosophy is based on the premise that:

- Children shall have the opportunity for independence through their environment;
- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who are different from each other;
- Children create themselves through purposeful activity (hence the Montessori Prepared environment); and
- Children possess unusual sensitivity and mental intuitions for absorbing and learning from their environment.

We encourage each of our families to attend the Montessori Week activities, become subscribers to *M: The Montessori Magazine*, ask questions, or write articles for our school newsletter based on your Montessori experiences within our school! We hope you will find this educational approach as much as a way of life as we do!

Erin Facciolo, Director of Education

Statement of Purpose of Educational Program

Starmaker Learning Center, LLC has been established to provide the community with an opportunity to obtain a quality education for its children in a safe, family-oriented setting. The principle on which our programs are based is the concept that children develop at their own pace and are motivated from within by a natural curiosity and a love of learning. The goals of our programs are to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn and to develop his/her sense of confidence and independence through a purposefully designed classroom environment. Starmaker's curriculum is designed to recognize each child as an individual with the right to be respected as a developing human being. We offer developmentally appropriate programs designed for children from six weeks through the elementary grades.

We use the Montessori philosophy, curriculum, and methods throughout our programs. Our use of didactic Montessori developed materials and our attention to proper class size and the prepared environment constantly support the emphasis on the "whole child" approach.

Starmaker is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for our Kindergarten and Elementary programs and is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care (MSDE OCC) as a childcare facility for our infant, toddler, preprimary, primary, and homework center programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES	2
2.1 Admission.....	2
2.2 Tuition & Fees.....	2
2.2.1 Payment Schedule.....	2
2.2.2 Sibling Discount	3
2.2.3 Scheduled and Unscheduled Closings	3
2.3 Contracts	3
2.3.1 School Contracts.....	3
2.4 Withdrawals	4
2.5 Visitors	5
2.6 Disenrollment Policy	5
2.7 Release of Children To Person Other Than The Parent Or Guardian.....	5
2.8 Arrival, Tardiness, Dismissal and Absences.....	6
2.9 Late Pick-Up/Early Drop-Off.....	7
2.10 Before and After School Students and Absences.....	8
2.11 Fire Drills & Emergencies.....	8
2.12 Emergency Closings/Delays.....	8
2.14 Drug-Free Environment	8
2.15 Problems/Suggestion Process.....	8
2.16 Electronic Communication.....	8
3. FOOD SERVICE	9
3.1 Snacks.....	9
3.2 Breakfast.....	9
3.3 Birthdays	9
3.4 Lunch Program.....	9
3.4.1 Drop-in Lunch Program.....	10
4. PROGRAMS OFFERED	10
4.1 Infant/Toddler Program (6 weeks through 24 months).....	10
4.2 Pre-Primary Program (24 to 36 months)	11
4.3 Primary Classes (ages 2 through 6 years)	11
4.4 Elementary Classes	12
4.5 Before School & After School Program (for children up to 13 years of age)	13
4.6 Summer Program (for children 6 to 13 years old)	14
4.7 Holiday Care	14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
5. STAFF.....	14
5.1 Primary and Elementary Faculty.....	14
5.2 Senior Staff Teachers.....	14
5.3 Teacher's Assistants.....	15
5.4 Others.....	15
STUDENTS.....	15
5.5 Parent/Teacher Conferences.....	15
5.6 Discipline Policy and Behavioral Concerns.....	15
5.7 Student Supplies – What to Bring.....	17
5.7.1 All Children.....	17
5.7.2 Summer Program.....	18
5.8 Toys And Personal Items.....	18
5.9 Destruction Of School Property.....	18
6. MEDICAL POLICY.....	18
6.1 Medication.....	19
6.2 Health Policy.....	22
6.3 Emergency Policy.....	23
6.4 Minor Injuries.....	23
7. PARENTAL PARTICIPATION.....	23
7.1 Field Trips.....	24
8. SCHOOL/HOME COMMUNICATION.....	25
9. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND CHILD ABUSE.....	27
9.1 Sexual Harassment.....	27

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1 Physician and Parental Authorization Form (Side 1).....	21
Figure 2 Physician and Parental Authorization Form (Side 2).....	22

LIST OF APPENDICES

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Page</u>
Appendix A Observation Policy.....	A-1
Appendix B Transportation Safety Rules.....	B-1

1. INTRODUCTION

Starmaker Learning Center (herein after referred to as Starmaker) has been established to provide the community with an opportunity to obtain a quality education for its children in a safe, family-oriented setting. It is a school based on the principle that all children develop at their own pace and should be taught individually. Starmaker is approved by the State of Maryland Board of Education for our Primary and Elementary classes and is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education, Child Care Administration as a childcare facility for children 6 weeks to 13 years.

Starmaker is located at 23443 Cottonwood Parkway in the Wildewood Technology Park, California, Maryland. The facility was especially designed to meet the needs of children ranging in age from 6 weeks to 13 years of age in an open, self-directed environment. We have large, fenced play yards with equipment and activities to meet the needs of the most active youngsters. Our outdoor space also includes a garden area to help teach children the joys of nature.

Starmaker Learning Center has developmental programs designed for children from six weeks through the elementary grades. The underlying principle upon which the programs are based is the concept that children are motivated from within by a natural curiosity and a love of learning. The goals of our programs are to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn and to develop his/her sense of confidence and independence. Starmaker is designed to recognize each child as an individual with the right to be respected as a developing human being.

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2. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

We have listed our policies as they pertain to you and your child. If you have any questions concerning our policies, please stop in, or call the office to speak with the Director and/or CEO. We are always willing to answer your questions and explain Starmaker's policies and procedures. **Please complete the handbook receipt and acknowledgment form and return to the Director.** You also are welcome to visit the School to observe your child's class in action. (See Appendix A, Observation Policy)

2.1 Admission

No person will be denied enrollment in any of Starmaker Learning Center programs because of race, color, creed, national origin or social inheritance.

The parent or guardian initiates admission by completing the Application for Enrollment, submitting a \$150 for one child or \$250 for multiple children non-refundable application fee, and meeting with the Director. The Director will explain the various programs we offer, as well as our philosophy and educational goals through an orientation interview. The parents and child will then meet with the child's prospective teacher to discuss the child's background and needs. The child is evaluated on the basis of readiness for the chosen program.

Upon agreement of the appropriate program, the teacher and the parents will select a start date and schedule an orientation with the teacher. **Upon enrollment, the first month's non refundable tuition is due.**

The parents will be provided with the necessary forms to enroll the child at Starmaker. By law, submission of an Application, an Emergency Card, a Health Inventory, Lead Screening and an Immunization forms are required **BEFORE** the child can be admitted to Starmaker. We ask that you complete a Student Questionnaire, and a Tuition Agreement (agreement must be returned before the first day of school).

School registration for the upcoming school year is conducted each spring and throughout the summer. Early applicants will receive priority in class placement. Spaces in each of our programs are filled first from our current students, then from our waiting list, and then from new applicants. Due to the nature of our Programs, children may be accepted into the program year round, as space is available.

TOILET TRAINING IS REQUIRED for your child to be enrolled in our Primary programs.

2.2 Tuition & Fees

In order for the school to meet its financial obligation, you are requested to make prompt payment of tuition and other assessed fees. Payment for your child's tuition is to be mailed directly to the school or placed into our payment box at the front desk. The school accepts tuition payments by credit cards (Visa and MasterCard), checks, money orders, or cash. Tuition is paid on a monthly basis. **Upon enrollment, the first month's non refundable tuition is due.**

2.2.1 Payment Schedule

All tuition is payable in advance. All activity fees are due prior to participation in the activity. Parents are requested to mark their calendars as a reminder of the payment due date (s), as no reminder notices are sent. In the event that circumstances may delay your payments, it is incumbent upon the parent to make the Director and/or CEO aware of the delay. This notification does not prevent the assessment of

late charges, but does allow the CEO time to make any financial adjustments that may be necessary.

Payment Policy:

PAYMENTS are due on or before the 1st of each month. A late charge of \$35 will be added to your account on the 6th of each month. If tuition is not received, your student will be disenrolled by the 16th of each month. Parents whose accounts are consistently not paid by the 10th of each month will be asked to leave a credit card on file. Please avoid the extra cost required to collect tuition by paying on time.

There are special circumstances when parents cannot meet their obligations on time. When these circumstances arise, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the CEO and/or Director so that a payment plan can be arranged. If a payment plan is opted for, then it must be approved by the CEO. Any violation of the payment plan will lead to immediate disenrollment and the account will be turned over to our collections agency.

Our returned check fee is \$35.00 per submission of the check. After two returned checks, parents will be required to pay by money order or cash.

2.2.2 Discounts

A 10% reduction for the lowest cost program will be granted when more than one child is enrolled on a full-time basis from the same family. A 5% discount is available to parents who pay their annual tuition up front for **full time students only**. As an incentive, a 10% discount is available to parents who pay their annual tuition by check only. A 5% discount is available to BAE employees. **No discount is available for part-timers who pay annually.**

2.2.3 Scheduled and Unscheduled Closings

There is no credit on tuition for scheduled or unscheduled closings. All school holidays, closings, and vacation periods have been built into the tuition fees.

2.2.4 Tuition increases.

Starmaker reserves the right to raise the cost of tuition to meet their fiscal responsibilities. Tuition increases are posted in March or April and take effect in September of that calendar year.

2.3 Contracts

2.3.1 School/Childcare Contracts

School contracts are due in the spring of each year for the fall. The school year runs from September through the last day of school in June for our Kindergarten, elementary, and homework center programs and August for all other programs. Contracts begin when a student is enrolled and ends in August following the enrollment. A \$40.00 renewal fee is required, per family with the contract. Parents have a choice of paying for the entire school year or making monthly payments. Payments are expected over all the holiday breaks, as they are already factored into the fee schedule. Other payment arrangements are reviewed and approved on a case by case basis by the CEO. To accommodate parents, Starmaker now offers two types of contracts – 12 month and 10 month contracts with two different tuition schedules. Please discuss these options with director during enrollment or contract renewal period.

Starmaker reserves the right to opt out of participating in the Purchase of Child Care subsidy program at any time. Please check with the director if POC is accepted. For those who are enrolled under this program, tuition agreements will be written for the time period specified in the voucher. The parent or guardian is responsible for maintaining a current DSS voucher. The parent or guardian is responsible for the full tuition and any other charges agreed upon within the Tuition Agreement.

2.4 Withdrawals

Starmaker Learning Center realizes that unexpected circumstances and situations can arise which may necessitate the withdrawal of a student from Starmaker. Parents must realize that hiring decisions including budgets are prepared based on enrollments and signed contracts. The CEO will review, evaluate and make a decision on the request for withdrawal, on a case by case basis so as not to jeopardize the financial stability of the school. *Parents will be expected to pay their full monthly fee should they decide to withdraw in the middle of the month. Parents wishing to break their contract are required to give **two month's notice in writing** and pay a penalty of one month's tuition. **Parents giving less than two months notice will be required to pay two months tuition as penalty.** Parents who have paid tuition annually and wish to withdraw during the last two months of the year will forfeit their two months tuition including any discounts that may have been applied. Parents who have paid their annual tuition and wish to withdraw the first quarter of the year will forfeit an additional three months tuition and any discounts that may apply.*

Please understand that we must take these precautions as we make hiring decisions based on enrollment. Also, this enables us to keep our tuition reasonably low and to maintain and remunerate qualified teachers.

Following the guidelines set forth below, the CEO will decide whether the parents should be released from the Tuition Agreement for just cause and what portion, if any, of the tuition fees should be refunded:

1. **Health or Disruptive Conduct** - If, at any time, the CEO finds the health or pattern of conduct of a student such that the continued presence of the student in Starmaker might have an adverse effect upon other students, the CEO may discharge the student, terminate the Tuition Agreement, and refund unused tuition less one month tuition penalty.
2. **Additional Educational or Facilities Needs** - If it is determined and agreed upon by the CEO and the parents that due to unforeseen circumstances, the needs of a student are not being met at Starmaker, the CEO will consider, upon written request by the parents or recommendation of the teacher, withdrawal of the student and a refund of unused tuition less one month tuition penalty and a release from the Tuition Agreement.
3. **Geographic Relocation of the Child's Family** - In such circumstances, the CEO will release the parents from their Tuition Agreement, provided a written request is received at **least 30 days** prior to the requested withdrawal date. The One month penalty **may** be waived. *Any request received less than 30 calendar days prior to the withdrawal date will necessitate holding the parents liable for two months tuition.*

No approval for any unused tuition refund will be granted unless all other financial obligations to Starmaker have been satisfied. There will be NO refund of registration or enrollment fees. *Refunds to parents are processed 30 days after disenrollment.*

Starmaker is in the process of investigating tuition insurance programs which will benefit and support the school and parents should they decide to withdraw their child. Information will be shared with parents as soon as this is finalized.

2.5 Disenrollment Policy

Every child in our care deserves to be in a safe learning environment. Thus, continuous inappropriate and disruptive behavior that puts other children and teachers at risk, or minimizes the ability of the teachers to provide an appropriate level of instruction to the class will not be tolerated and will lead to disenrollment. After three incident reports are filed, one consultation with parents and teacher, and one parent teacher conference with director and/or CEO, a behavioral report form will be used to document behavior for two additional weeks. During and after the two week period, the teacher will have a parent conference to discuss behavioral concerns. If no improvement occurs, the student will be terminated.

Starmaker reserves the right to disenroll a student from the school without the benefit of the above process if the parent or child is abusive or disruptive to any of the children or staff. We have a no tolerance policy on this issue.

2.6 Visitors

Non-custodial parents and other visitors must call for an appointment or contact the Director to schedule their visits. All visitors are required to check in at the office when they enter Starmaker. We know you will respect this request as it is designed to ensure the safety of all the children at Starmaker.

2.7 Release of Children to Persons Other Than the Parent or Guardian

NOTE:

No child will be released to a person other than his/her custodial parent or guardian unless Starmaker has the parent's written and signed permission.

We regret any inconvenience this may cause but it is necessary to ensure the safety of your child. If someone else on a regular basis will pick up your child, it must be indicated on the Emergency Card, which is kept in the front office. If an individual will be picking up your child who is not indicated on your Emergency Card, you must fill out an Alternate Pick-Up Form in the front office, which will be signed and dated. An Identification card **MUST** be presented if someone other than authorized parent or guardian is picking up your child. We reserve the right to contact the parents concerning any unscheduled changes.

Parents are required to update and return their emergency cards to the school. If parents have moved or changed telephone numbers, it is the parent's responsibility to update their emergency card. The child cannot attend school without it – this is critical and required by law.

In the event that a separated or divorced parent does not want the non-custodial parent to pick up the child, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the School with a copy of the restraining order or legal document(s).

Children that are the subject of an executed, court approved custody, separation or other form of legally enforceable agreement determining the

custodial status of such children, MUST provide copies of all agreements, amendments and updates to Starmaker Learning Center. The School Director and Class Teacher MUST be notified of any custody situation that exists for a child at the School.

Please understand that our teachers and staff are not to engage in any disputes or custody arrangements between or among families. They are merely to follow the instructions provided by the court.

2.8 Arrival, Tardiness, Dismissal, and Absences

Arrival

Upon arrival at the School, it is critical that *you sign your child into the School using our computerized sign in at the front desk and sign in sheet in the classroom.* This will allow us to account for all children in case of an emergency. The school will not be held liable for any child not checked into the system or the class roster. If the system is down, please notify a staff member so that your attendance can be updated when the system is functional.

Children under the age of six must be escorted to their classroom. Parents/Guardians should take the child to their room (prior to the beginning of class) and help him/her get settled. The teachers will begin to greet the children 15 minutes before class session begins. If you need assistance with dropping your child off, please see a staff member. We are here to help make this process as easy as possible for everyone.

Parents are asked to make a quick goodbye in order to support a smooth separation for their child. Please respect the noise level in the hallways and observe the NO LOITERING and NO CELL PHONE USE in the building policy.

For Pre-Primary programs, please be sure that your child is in class by 8:30 am. Class starts promptly at 8:30 am and it is important that your child not miss any class time. Students arriving after 8:30 am are considered late. Parents are required to ask the assistant to take the child into the classroom so as not to disrupt the teacher. Please do not try to speak to the teacher about your child during drop off. You may schedule a meeting with your child's teacher at a time convenient to her.

Tardiness

Tardiness is very disruptive to the class and the teacher. Consistent tardiness is a hindrance to your child's academic success. Please try to respect your child's class schedules and make sure your child is on time. We begin each program promptly. After 8:15 am, please allow primary and elementary students to walk down the hallway to their classroom by themselves, so as not to disrupt the classroom.

Dismissal

Dismissal begins five minutes before the close of your child's school day. Teachers will dismiss the children to their parents or the person designated as the pick-up person when the children are ready. When you arrive to pick up your child, please respect the calmness of the room and walk up to your child to get them. Do allow a few moments for them to pack up their lessons.

To help the teachers, please do not take your child without the teacher's knowledge. At times it gets very hectic, so we would appreciate it if you would take the extra time to advise the staff that your child is

leaving – especially when we are on the playground.

When you arrive to pick up your child, you must sign your child out at the front lobby. This ensures that we have a record of each child in case of an emergency. We must know when children leave and with whom they leave. Once you have signed your child out, it is assumed that you have accepted responsibility for your child's safety. Please do not allow your child to wander in the building or run out of the front door!

If another person is authorized to pick up your child, please inform them of our sign-out procedures.

Naps

Children are encouraged to use the nap room to sleep or rest. In the Pre-Primary classroom, it is our policy that all children take a nap due to developmental needs and spacing. In the primary environment, all three year olds will nap or rest in the nap room.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, we ask that you please inform the office as soon as possible.

2.9 Late Pick-Up/Early Drop-Off

Each child is enrolled for a specific time frame and we ask that you do not exceed these times because the scheduling of our staff is determined based on this information. Occasionally, circumstances occur that make it impossible for a parent to PICK UP on time or may require early DROP OFF. Please call Starmaker to make arrangements for these emergencies.

NOTE:

There is an overtime charge for children not picked up by their contracted dismissal time. The late fee is \$5.00 for up to 15 minutes late and \$1.00 per minute thereafter. This is a per child fee. However, if your child is at Starmaker after closing time, the fee is \$1.00 per minute. Closing time is 5:30 p.m. for children 2 years and under, and 6:00 p.m. for all others.

The same fee applies to children **dropped off more than 10 minutes prior to** their scheduled drop off time. You will be asked to sign a statement for late or early drop off with the amount due.

If you need to pick up or drop off your child during class time, please make it as non-disruptive to the class as possible, or allow the office staff to get your child from their class.

2.9-1 Parking Lot Etiquette

Please drive SLOWLY into our parking lot to prevent accidents. Please turn your radio or music down as you enter the parking lot. Please do not ask staff to watch your children in your car while you are inside the school. Please do not leave your car running in the parking lot. All tobacco products must be extinguished before entering the parking lot. Starmaker is a totally smoke-free zone to protect our children.

2.10 Before and After School Students and Absences

If your child is picked up and dropped off at Starmaker by bus, it is critical that you inform the School if your child is not going to be on the bus. If a child does not show up, our procedure is to call the school, then the parents, and then home to determine the whereabouts of your child.

2.11 Fire Drills & Emergencies

It is Starmaker's policy to have a minimum of one fire drill per month. These drills are under the supervision of the Director and/or CEO. If you are present during a drill, please follow the directions of your child's teacher. Emergency escape routes are posted by all exits.

2.12 Emergency Closings/Delays

If there is a need to close Starmaker, we will announce the closing via schoolReach, our automated parent contact system as well as on our phone message machine.

If we need to close early, we will notify all parents who will be affected by the closing using our parent contact system, SchoolReach. A telephone message will inform you of any emergencies, closings, or late starts. It is incumbent that parents give us updated home, cell, and work telephone numbers.

In the event of snow or inclement weather, we usually follow St. Mary's County School System in determining delayed openings, early dismissals or school cancellations; however, the School will make the final decision concerning delays or cancellations via SchoolReach or NBC 4.

We DO NOT give refunds for the days that are missed. Nor do we make up snow days except for the school programs if the number of days in session falls below the State-mandated 175 school days.

2.13 Drug-Free Environment

Starmaker is a drug-free, smoke free environment, during its operational hours. We prohibit the use of illegal substances, as well as, alcohol and tobacco, on the premises. Starmaker is totally smoke-free and drug-free to protect our children. So please DO NOT bring anything onto our grounds that falls into this category. Little children pick up and put into their mouths everything they find! Cigarette butts can make them SICK.

This Policy reflects State mandated regulations for "Drug-Free School Zones." As a school, we are covered under this legislation. You may be fined or arrested for violating this law. The "Drug-Free Zone" starts before you reach our driveway.

2.14 Problems/Suggestion Process

We encourage our parents to talk with the Director and/or the CEO whenever they have any suggestions or problems. We want your help in ensuring that our school maintains its high standards. We welcome all constructive suggestions to improve the quality of the school and the programs we offer.

2.15 Electronic Communication

Starmaker has a web site and email address for all of our teachers and senior staff. The website address is www.starmakerschool.org. Please feel free to send your suggestions to us about documents you would like us to include on the website. Feel free to communicate with teachers via email. Every email starts with the teacher's first initial and last name and ends with @starmakerschool.org.

Our general email address is administrator@starmakerschool.org.

3. FOOD SERVICE

Effective September 1, 2009, Starmaker became a peanut free school! Do not bring any food items containing peanut or peanut products to our campus. Additional information is provided during enrollment.

3.1 Snacks

The children will be provided with nutritious snacks. We provide a mid-morning snack for our Toddler through Elementary classes and a mid-afternoon snack for all the children in the School. Copies of the snack and lunch menus are printed for each month and available at the reception area. If you wish to provide your child's class with a special snack, please talk with your child's teacher and/or the Director prior to bringing it in. They will be pleased to have you plan a special treat for the class. Note that your child's favorite snack or dish may be dangerous to some other child in his or her class due to allergies.

3.2 Breakfast

You may bring your child's breakfast with you and we will provide a place for them to eat (**before 7:30 a.m.**). We encourage you to arrange your day so that breakfast is a shared meal at home whenever possible. In order to be ready for classes we stop breakfast at 7:30 a.m. If you arrive after that time we request that your child wait until morning snack is available and then they may eat their breakfast. With the exception of the Infant/Toddler Rooms, *cups from home are not allowed to be brought in with the child*. Starmaker provides cups if needed.

3.3 Birthdays

Birthdays are a special day and we welcome you to share it with your child's class. If you would like to bring something to share on that day, please feel free to do so. However, PLEASE coordinate with your child's teacher so that we can make you aware of any special dietary restrictions or allergies that may exist in the class and you can be sure there is enough for each child. Some consideration should be given to the *sugar content of the snacks and the size of each portion* (little appetites). Bagels and cream cheese, finger gelatins, rice krispy treats, applesauce, cheese, carrot sticks, granola bars or other treats with good nutritional value make nice snacks. **We discourage sugary cakes, candy, and gum!**

3.4 Lunch Program

Eating together is an opportunity for social development. Good early eating habits lay the foundation for lifelong healthful eating. Our lunch is a family-style meal in which the children and teachers can participate. Children may bring their own lunch or participate in our lunch program.

The monthly lunch menu is posted outside of the kitchen door. Please advise the staff if there is any food your child **CANNOT** eat. Do not assume your child **WILL NOT EAT** a certain food. We have found that in a setting such as ours, children tend to eat a more varied diet.

The cost of the lunch program is \$65.00 per month and is due the first of each month. The fee includes milk with the meal. Starmaker reserves the right to increase lunch rates. This information will be shared with parents in March and become effective in September of the same year.

The lunch that you pack for your child should provide a healthy and balanced midday meal. A healthy lunch is one that includes protein, vegetable, fruit, and grains. Please do not include candy, gum, or soda or sugary snacks. Parents should put an ice pack in the child's lunch as there is no refrigeration available for every child's lunch box. We ask you not to send any red or purple colored juices since the dye can stain the placemats, tables, and floors. **Please do not send food that must be heated or refrigerated.**

3.4.1 Drop-in Lunch Program

This program is designed *only for those children who have forgotten their lunch*. When signing your child in, please fill out the lunch request ticket and give it to the office or your child's teacher. Place the drop-in lunch fee of \$4.50 in an envelope or attach it to the lunch request form with the child's name and the date and place the money in the payment box next to the front office. This program is intended for emergency use only.

4. PROGRAMS OFFERED

4.1 Infant/Toddler Program (6 weeks through 24 months)

Our Infant/Toddler Program is only for full-time children. The rooms are open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Senior Staff are trained in infant/toddler development and are approved by the Child Care Administration. Our staff to student ratio for this program is 1:3. This is a year round program.

Through careful and loving observation, we make ourselves aware of the special abilities the children have within themselves and give them the freedom to grow and to become who they are meant to be. The focus of the infant program is to foster the development of basic trust and to assist the emerging personality by supporting the developing sense of self as a unique and separate individual. Parents must bring meals for all infants prepared and ready to feed.

Key concepts of the Infant /Toddler Program:

- Basic trust develops in an environment that responds appropriately to the child's communication of needs to be loved, respected, and accepted.
- Individualization develops in an environment that responds appropriately to the child's needs to become independent.
- Infants learn through their senses. They learn by watching and moving freely in the environment.
- The child is respected as a total person. The quality of physical care provided including holding, and feeding, affects the developing personality.
- Freedom to move and explore is essential to the development of the child's potential.
- Learning, which leads to the development of independence, occurs when children participate in their daily routines of care of self and care of the environment.
- Based on the acute sensitivity to the emergence of language, the child needs clear, appropriate models of expressive and receptive language of the community.
- Toddlers enjoy similar curricula areas as the preprimary students but on a more basic level. Toddlers are introduced to practical life, sensorial, language, math, and cultural studies.

Requirements for Admission: INFANTS/TODDLERS

The infant must be between the ages of 6 weeks and 12 months and the toddler must be 12 months to 24 months old. There will be a parent orientation meeting with the student's teacher at which time any prior care records must be presented. Information regarding the student's medical records must also be submitted to the office.

4.2 Pre-Primary Program (24 to 36 months)

This class meets from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. The teachers are trained in early childhood development and education. Our staff to student ratio for this program is 1:6. Full day programs are also available from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. within their environment and from 6:30 to 6:00 in the school. The afternoon includes time for lunch, nap, group activities and outside play. This is a year-round program.

Students within this age group need to work on bonding and separation. At this stage, the child's biggest need is to separate him/herself as a unique individual with opinions, likes, and dislikes. This child is constantly saying NO. Our job is to provide an environment where the child can become an individual while being loved and supported, and where he/she can disagree while following the rules and fitting in socially.

Key concepts of the Pre- Primary Program:

- Help them transition from the unconscious state to the conscious state where they are able to make choices.
- Learning, which leads to the development of independence, occurs when children participate in their daily routines of care of self and care of the environment.
- Transition them from dependence to independence.
- Preprimary students enjoy the same curricula as the primary students but on a more basic level which includes practical life, sensorial, language, math, and cultural studies.

Requirements for Admission:

The child must be 24 – 36 months old and walking to enter the program. There will be a parent orientation meeting with the student's teacher at which time any prior care records must be presented. Information regarding the student's medical records must also be submitted to the office.

4.3 Primary Classes (ages 3 through 6 years)

(Children must be 3 years old by September 1 of the school year for which they are enrolled.)

The Primary Classes meet from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. for children under the age of five. Children of kindergarten age have class until 2:30 p.m., 5 days a week. Staff to student ratio for this program is approximately 1:13. Our programs are State approved educational programs for both preschool and kindergarten children. All teachers meet the State of Maryland teaching requirements. (Montessori teaching certificates are preferred). *Extended care is available for all primary classes from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our primary program is year round including summer. Students who leave for the summer are not guaranteed their spots in September. This program is 10 months for kindergarteners and ends the last day of school.*

The primary program serves the needs of students aged 3 years to 6 years. At this stage, the child is eager to gather knowledge about his or herself and his/her environment. The child's mind is now like a sponge, ready and waiting to absorb many of the details around him/her.

Key concepts of the Primary Program:

- Students in the primary program primary learn through their senses.
- Students are exposed to the following curricula – practical life, sensorial, math, language, geography, foreign language, and science. The classroom experience is further enriched by art and music.
- Further developing their independence, each student works through the lessons at his/her own pace.
- In the primary program, the teacher's role is to encourage independence, sense of order, coordination, and concentration to further enhance the holistic growth of the child.

Requirements for Admission:

The child must be three years old by September 1 to enter the program. There will be a parent orientation meeting with the student's teacher at which time any prior care records must be presented. Information regarding the student's medical records must also be submitted to the office.

Requirements for Admission: KINDERGARTEN (57 MONTHS – 60 MONTHS)

The child must be 5 years old by September 1 to be considered a Kindergartner in our program; however a child who is younger than 5 years old (by no more than 3 months) may be evaluated for Kindergarten level work and readiness. If a child misses the cut-off and dependent on whether the child is academically, socially, and emotionally ready for the Kindergarten work, they may take part in the Montessori Kindergarten curriculum with their parents and teacher's agreement.

Since our program is a three year program, a child who enters the 3-6 program solely for Kindergarten may not be ready for the Montessori Kindergarten curriculum and will work on a curriculum best suited for their needs. There will be a parent orientation meeting for new incoming Kindergartners with the student's teacher at which time any prior medical records must be presented. Information regarding the student's medical records must also be submitted to the office.

4.4 Elementary Classes (6 – 9 years)

These classes meet from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Our program is a State approved Elementary Program. Our average class size is 15 students per staff. We offer a Lower Elementary Class for children 6 to 9 years. The teachers have degrees and/or have Montessori teaching certificates. Before and after care is available for all elementary classes from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The school year runs from September to the last day of school in June. Summer is optional. Parents who intend to have their children attend our summer program must register for it separately since spots are not guaranteed. However, our elementary and homework center students receive first priority in our summer program.

The Montessori curriculum strongly emphasizes math and language, and then uses them to study other subjects including anthropology, astronomy, philosophy, political science, and sociology. Art, music,

and foreign language are lessons that are integrated throughout the Montessori curriculum.

Requirements for Admission:

Students must be six years old by September 1. Previous Montessori school attendance is preferred but not required. The student must be able to handle the expectations of a Montessori elementary program such as choosing work, working independently, and as part of a community, handling materials carefully, respecting other children's space, respecting adults, following multi-step directions, accepting direction from a teacher, and attending group lessons.

To be successful, students must be able to learn to make choices, cooperate with peers, develop and maintain a sense of order, demonstrate self-discipline, function independently, and participate non-competitively in a classroom community. There will be a parent orientation meeting with the student's teacher at which time any prior care records must be presented. Information regarding the student's medical records must also be submitted to the office. Proof of kindergarten graduation is required.

4.5 Homework Center/Before School & After School Program (for children up to 13 years of age)

Our Before and After School Care Program is available from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We offer this program to students from local schools in our busing area. We also provide for care when the schools have early dismissal and teacher workshops. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of Child Care approves the staff. Group size is approximately 30 students with a staff ratio of 1:15.

Parents must inform the office during registration if their child should participate in the homework center program.

The goals of our Homework Center are as follows:

- Relieve parents of the stress of dealing with sometimes complex and involving projects from school by having the students conduct research onsite in the high-tech library.
- Provide parents additional free time for quality family time.
- Students will have an opportunity to go to bed on time – adequate sleep hours needed for healthy growth and well-being of children.
- The homework center experience will ensure that students are attentive, relaxed, and abreast of their classmates.

Program Features

- ✓ The homework center offers Technology Center with computers with internet access for research.
- ✓ Quality supervision of students in our care to ensure that they complete their homework before they are picked up.
- ✓ Focus primarily on Math and English homework
- ✓ In the absence of homework, engage in academic activities.
- ✓ A hi-touch, hi-tech before & after school program helping 6-13 year olds achieve better grades in school
- ✓ Full day care when schools are closed
- ✓ Summer programs are intellectually stimulating

4.6 Summer Program (for children 6 to 13 years old)

Care is available during the operational hours of Starmaker, with specific activities for the children starting at 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. A summer camp registration is required in April for Elementary and Homework Center students to secure their spot. Activity fees are not included in the camp fees. A separate activity fee charge must be paid in advance during summer camp registration. This is a full time program throughout the summer. The group size is a maximum of 30 students, with a staff ratio of 1:15.

4.7 Holiday Care

Child care on school holidays is available for all our students but it must be reserved at least 30 days before the holiday. This program is also available on a space-available basis for non-Starmaker students. Please discuss with Director for space availability.

5. STAFF

All prospective staff are interviewed and are subject to reference checks. The State then performs a background check for any accusations of child abuse, utilizing both the State and Federal child abuse databases.

Each staff member is also required to have a medical exam with a written statement from their physician stating that they are physically capable of working with children.

When a staff member is hired, they are hired with the understanding that they are under a 90-day probation period. This policy helps us to screen potential staff members so that we select only the best possible person for each position.

The teachers at Starmaker all meet the State of Maryland requirements for teachers and/or a Montessori Certification appropriate to the level at which they teach. All of our Senior Staff members and teachers are required to hold current certificates in child and infant CPR as well as being trained in first aid. Our staff is made up of various types of trained people. We use the State terminology to define our staff positions. We are providing the following definitions (provided by the State of Maryland) to help clarify the positions within a childcare Center and a school.

5.1 Primary and Elementary Faculty

In the primary and elementary environments our lead teachers are college trained personnel qualified to teach at the level in which they are hired. The State of Maryland deems a teacher qualified when she has had at least 120 hours of college and is qualified to teach at the level they are teaching. We require our lead teachers to have their Montessori training or commit to starting their Montessori training prior to employment. We require all lead teachers to take twelve (12) hours of continuing training each year on addition to their CPR and first Aid classes.

5.2 Senior Staff/Group Leader Teachers

The Maryland Office of Child Care approves Senior Staff teachers. They have had at least two college classes in child development and education or obtained a 90 hour certification in early childhood development. They also have had a minimum of one year of childcare experience and are over 19 years of age. We employ Senior Staff teachers in various positions throughout the school. Senior staff teachers are required to have 12 hours of continuing education training each year.

5.3 Teacher's Assistants

Teacher's assistants help the faculty or the Senior Staff teacher with the children and perform general housekeeping duties in the children's rooms. Teacher's assistants must be 16 yrs of age and must demonstrate a passion to work within the early childhood environment. We strongly encourage our teacher's assistants to have current CPR and First Aid training. Teacher's assistants are now required to have at least 6 hours of continuing education training each year.

5.4 Others

We also utilize specialized instructors in other areas of our programs, such as foreign language, Music, Religion, Art Appreciation, and physical education.

We have made use of various types of volunteers over the years. Our volunteers have come from our Starmaker parents, grandparents, local colleges and high schools. They have helped us in all sorts of ways. To name a few -- they read stories to the children, supervise playground activities, build furniture, make repairs to school equipment and improve the school grounds with the planting of ornamental plants and trees.

Police, firemen and other professionals and crafts people occasionally present programs describing their occupations with interesting and informative demonstrations. We also encourage our parents, grandparents and special friends to volunteer to provide special programs for our students.

STUDENTS

Sibling Policy (Primary Class):

It is our policy to separate siblings in our Primary classrooms to enable them to develop their own individuality and further help strengthen their independence.

5.5 Parent/Teacher Conferences

Scheduled formal Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year, for children in the Pre-Primary, Primary and Elementary Programs: once in the fall and again in the spring. Informal conferences are held when requested by either the parent or the teacher. Parents are encouraged to have frequent contact with their child's teacher to discuss issues of concern as they occur. The best way to communicate with your child's teacher is to write a note in the classroom or send an email. Each teacher has a message book in their classroom and an email address. If it is an emergency situation, please contact the Director or the CEO.

Parents of our infants and toddlers are required to have monthly communication with their primary caregiver. At this age, the child is changing so rapidly that monthly meetings are needed to keep both the staff and the parents informed of the child's changing needs. The staff member will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian at a time convenient to both.

5.6 Discipline Policy and Behavioral Concerns

Starmaker's policy is one in which a supportive and humanistic environment is provided which fosters positive interaction between the child and the adults.

Discipline is the slow time consuming task of helping children to see the sense in acting in a certain manner. Discipline means teaching and it refers to a set of rules and expectations used to teach children how to behave. The ultimate outcome is self-control by the child. In our classroom, natural and logical consequences are implemented as part of an effective discipline process as follows:

1. The teacher will discuss the acceptable behavior prior to the event.
2. The teacher will talk about what it will look like for the child to successfully manage the experience.
3. The teacher will express confidence that the child can be successful.
4. The teacher will talk about what the consequences will be if the child is not successful.
5. The teacher will get the child's agreement.

If the child is successful, the teacher will express her appreciation. If the child is not successful, the teacher will calmly and firmly apply consequence and then express confidence that the child will be successful the next time.

The preferred method of discipline is to stop an action before it happens or to redirect the child's actions. The following methods are the only methods to be modeled by our staff:

- **REDIRECTION (consequence)** – redirection is a way of helping children get control of themselves. The thinking chair or peace center is a safe haven for the child's self reflection and observation.

The following guidelines are used for the effective redirection:

- Separate the child from the activity. The spot should be a designated spot away from others and toys. The spot should never be frightening. The thinking chair or peace center is an appropriate spot.
- Offer a positive alternative to help the child regain self control.
- The redirected activity may last until the child is ready to return to their activity or group.

If the child is unable to attain self control within the classroom setting, the teacher may take the child to the Director. In the event the teacher feels some other method of discipline is necessary, the teacher will consult with the Director to determine a consequence that is related to the behavior. The Director will consult with the parents, the teacher, and the child to determine what additional steps are needed.

If a child has to be removed from their classroom more than twice during the school day, the parent will be called to pick up their child.

Biting/Hitting/Kicking

Biting, hitting, kicking is a behavior that is prevalent with 1 or 2 year old children. Because children of this age have very limited language ability, this type of behavior can become a way of expressing their feelings. Starmaker's procedures include removing the children from the situation, washing the area that bite occurred with soap and warm water, completing an incident report, and informing both children's parents. We will conference with parents should this type of behavior occur to help provide some guidance. **If the behavior continues, with a child or staff more than twice in a day, the child will be sent home.** If this behavior continues, disenrollment may occur.

In the primary and elementary classrooms, this behavior is not age-appropriate and will not be tolerated.

Disenrollment Process

Every child in our care deserves to be in a safe learning environment. Thus, continuous inappropriate and disruptive behavior that puts other children and teachers at risk, or minimizes the ability of the teachers to provide an appropriate level of instruction to the class will not be tolerated and will lead to disenrollment. After three incident reports are filled, one consultation with parents and teacher, and one parent teacher conference with director and/or CEO, a behavioral report form will be used to document behavior for two additional weeks. During and after the two week period, the teacher will have a parent conference to discuss behavioral concerns. If no improvement occurs, the student will be terminated.

Starmaker reserves the right to disenroll a student from the school without the benefit of the above process if the parent or child is abusive or disruptive to any of the children or staff. We have a no tolerance policy on this issue.

5.7 Student Supplies – What to Bring

Since every room is different, your child's teacher will provide a list of needed supplies before the first day of the school year or at the time of enrollment. Most of the teachers also have a list of items that they would like parents to bring in on a rotational basis. Following are other items that are required:

1. **A small plastic shoe-box drawer with a change of clothing** - A change of clothes is required for each child. All items must be labeled with your child's name and stored in the plastic shoebox size drawer. The drawer will be placed in your child's cubby. The clothes will be used in case the child has an accident, requiring a change of clothes. For infants and toddlers, send at least two sets of clothing. If your child is not fully toilet trained, please provide diapers or pull-ups and wipes to last for a month.

NOTE:

Inside shoes or slippers are required for all children who are more than two years old, including the elementary children.

2. **Nap Items** - Full-day children under the age of five may have a rest period each day unless the parents and staff agree otherwise. We will provide a mat or cot for each child and we request that you provide a small blanket, sheet, and nap bag with straps for hanging on a hook. Mark all nap items with your child's name. The coverings will be sent home each Friday for laundering. Please return them promptly. Infant sheets will be washed at Starmaker at least twice a week and/or as needed.
3. **Bottles** - Bottles for infants and toddlers should be provided daily with the formula or milk in them. Bottles should be made of unbreakable material. **All bottles must have covers and be labeled with the child's name and date they were filled.**

5.7.1 All Children

Beginning on the first day of school, all students are requested to bring a pair of inside shoes or slippers to wear indoors. All indoor shoes must be rubber-soled to prevent slipping. These will be worn daily and kept at school. Your care in selecting comfortable inside shoes is appreciated.

To help our students toward self-reliance, we strongly urge you to send your child to school in clothes that can be easily removed when necessary. Every time a child needs to ask for help with a task they could be doing for themselves, their sense of independence and self-confidence is lessened. We discourage shoulder straps, tight snaps, belts or rompers for our younger children. **All children MUST wear underwear to school. On the playground, all girls must wear shorts underneath their skirts or dresses.**

If your child has just become, or is working towards being toilet trained, it is a good idea to send in several changes of clothing with extra underwear. If your child is wearing diapers, your child's teacher will tell you where to leave their supply of diapers, pull-ups and wipes.

Leave all jewelry and irreplaceable valuables at home. Jewelry is unsafe and a distraction. We will not be responsible for lost or broken jewelry.

5.7.2 Summer Program

During the summer we do not require the children to follow our dress code. However we strongly encourage your child to wear non-character clothing. We do not want the children to wear any clothing that encourages violence or advertises any products. Summer children should bring in a change of clothing as well as slippers. **All girls must wear shorts underneath their skirts or dresses.**

NOTE:

NAME TAGS and labels should be put on all items brought to school, including: coats, jackets, boots, hats, etc. Each child has his/her own cubby to put these items in, BUT we find, all too often, they get mixed up. Please label all personal items.

5.8 Toys and Personal Items

Books or other educational material that might be of interest to classmates are welcome in the classroom but please let the teacher know about each item. Be sure your child's name is clearly marked on all such articles. **Students may NOT bring toys to the classroom.** Personal items that are brought into the classroom are the responsibility of the student and parent. The staff and children will use care in sharing items that are brought into the classroom but they cannot guarantee that an item will not be broken or a page in a book torn. Please do not send in any items that would cause you or your child to become upset if it were damaged. All Show and Share items must be brought into school in a brown paper bag, labeled with your child's name and classroom.

Full-day children may bring a security blanket or stuffed animal, if needed, for naptime. These should be left in the child's cubby until nap time and put back after the nap.

5.9 Destruction of School Property

In keeping with our philosophy that the child needs to be held accountable for their actions, we expect the child, who willfully destroys School property, to be held responsible. This may include having the parent replace the damaged equipment and the child being made to work to correct the action.

6. MEDICAL POLICY

In accordance with the laws of the State of Maryland, any child entering a school or day care facility

must provide evidence of primary immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, German measles (rubella), and lead screening. Such immunizations will be in accordance with the current schedule provided by the State of Maryland. **We will provide you with the State required Medical Form that must be filled out and signed by your doctor PRIOR to your child's first day at Starmaker. This form must be updated at least once a year or as needed.**

6.1 Medication

The following medication procedures are mandated by the State of Maryland for childcare centers and schools.

The essence of this policy requires **BOTH THE PHYSICIAN AND THE PARENT** to complete a "Physician and Parental Authorization Form" (see Figures 1 and 2). **This form is required for ALL PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION INCLUDING TOPICAL MEDICATIONS.** These forms are available at the reception area or request one from the Director.

Every time you take your child to the doctor, you need to have one of the forms with you so your doctor can fill out and sign the Physician Authorization portion if he/she prescribes any medication and you must complete the Parent Authorization portion. Even for non-prescription medication like Tylenol, topical creams/salves and Benadryl cream, your doctor still needs to fill out and sign the Authorization Form for each type. Then you will need to fill out the entire Parent Authorization portion. **YOU MUST HAVE A FORM FOR EACH TYPE OF PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION YOU FEEL IS NECESSARY FOR YOUR CHLD.**

ALL NON-PRESCRIPTION AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER FROM THE PHARMACY AND MUST BE HANDED ONLY TO A MEDICATION ASSISTANT. Medication assistants are available from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm to receive medication and return medication. The Director is a trained medical assistant. Several other staff are trained as well. Please obtain this information from the office.

What to remember: (forms are available online at www.starmakerschool.org)

- Keep several blank forms handy for when you visit the doctor. Remember, your doctor may issue more than one prescription at a time or you may simply want him/her to authorize the "over-the-counter" treatments like Tylenol for when your child has a fever or antibiotic cream if your child has a scrape on the playground.
- Remember, you need one authorization form for each type of medicine - whether prescription or non-prescription. These forms are only good for one year.
- Make sure the form is ENTIRELY completed - medicine cannot be administered if the form is not filled out properly. This is for your child's safety.
- A Parent may not administer medication to their child within the building at any time.

Also, as part of this policy, we are required to have a delegating nurse. The nurse is responsible for ensuring we are correctly administering medications, reviewing our medical records and providing periodic training for our staff. Ms. Kathy Brigham is our delegating nurse. If you have any questions regarding this policy, form, or the delegating nurse, please contact the Director or CEO.

IMPORTANT!!!!
 Parents - Please keep this example handy to familiarize yourself with the proper format your Doctor must use to complete this form

Starmaker Learning Center
 23443 Cottonwood Parkway
 California MD 20619
 301.863.7740 fax 301.863.2602

**PHYSICIAN AND PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION FORM
 MEDICATION ORDERS**

(to be filled out by physician ordering medication)

Note: If possible, arrange time of dosage so that medication(s) will not have to be given while the child is in school.

PHYSICIAN'S AUTHORIZATION FORM: MEDICATION

Date of Order 9/16/01
 Name of Student Shannon A Doe D.O.B. 4/13/95

Medical Diagnosis _____
 Medication _____ Dosage _____

ONE (1) FORM PER MEDICATION

Time of Administration _____ Route of Administration _____

Duration of Administration Start Date Ex. 9/6/01 Stop Date Ex. 6/6/01

Is this medication to be self-administered? Yes No
 (Students who self-administer will demonstrate their skill to the medication assistant and follow school medication guidelines.)

Other Medication(s): LIST ALL OTHER MEDICATIONS HERE

Side Effects: For all medications, list all side effects which may be observed by school personnel:
LIST SIDE EFFECTS FROM 'OTHER MEDICATIONS'

This form must be kept current. Whenever there is any change in medication or dosage, the parents must have a new form completed by the physician. All medication orders must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

Physician's Signature _____
 Physician's Name (Print Clearly) _____
 Date _____ Telephone Number _____

Possible entries are "headache" "fever" or "teething."

Acceptable entries must include the specific medication and the exact dosage. For example:
 Children's Tylenol Regular Strength Tablet - 325 mg or
 Children's Tylenol Elixir 160 mg/1 teaspoon
 OR
 Children's Tylenol Infant Drops 80 mg/.08 ml

Examples of acceptable entries include "every 4 hours" or "every 4-6 hours" or "2:00 pm." Examples of unacceptable entries include "as needed" or "PRN."

Entries for stop date and start date must be specific dates, not the words "school year."

Figure 1. Physician and Parental Authorization Form (Side 1)

Starmaker Learning Center

23443 Cottonwood Parkway
California MD 20619
301.863.7740 fax 301.863.6659

PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION FORM: MEDICATION

I hereby give my permission for _____ to take
_____ at school as ordered by the physician, nurse practitioner or dentist.
(name of medication)

I understand that it is my responsibility to furnish this medication. I understand that the medication must be brought to school in the original pharmacy container appropriately labeled. This includes my child's name, name of medication, dosage, time of administration, route, name of prescriber, date of medication order, and expiration date of drug. _____ (Initials)

I further understand that the Medication Assistant who administers any drug to my child, in accordance with written instructions from the prescriber and Starmaker Learning Center, shall not be liable for damages as a result of an adverse drug reaction suffered by my child due to the administration of the drug. _____ (Initials)

I further understand that *each* time my child is prescribed an antibiotic that my child may not return to Starmaker Learning Center until twenty-four (24) hours after the first dose of the antibiotic and/or fever has subsided. _____ (Initials)

Medication(s) Given at Home: _____

Side Effects: For all medications given at home, list all side effects which may be observed by school personnel:

Date: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

**When this form is completed and signed by both physician and parent, return it to the Medication Assistant at Starmaker Learning Center with the prescribed medication in the original pharmacy container.
Thank you.**

Figure 2 Physician and Parental Authorization Form (Side 2)

6.2 Health Policy

Children are expected to be in good health when in school. Please do not send your child to school if they show any sign of illness. We reserve the right to send a child home if they show definite or continued signs of ill health that might jeopardize the general welfare of the class. If your child has a communicable disease, please notify us the first day of its occurrence and send a note to their teacher stating when their doctor has released them to return to school. It is very helpful for us to know when children are put on and taken off medication. **The first dose of any medication, either prescription or over-the-counter should be given at home at least 24 hours before bringing the child to school in order to monitor the child for any side effects.**

The following are considered contagious and should be reported to the office immediately: **Impetigo, Conjunctivitis, Head Lice, Streptococcus, Hepatitis, HIV, AIDS, and Chicken Pox.**

State Law requires that children with fevers or communicable diseases are not permitted to attend school. If, at any time, the staff feels that your child is too sick to remain in school, you will be called. We expect you, or someone you designate, to pick up the child immediately. Your child will generally be isolated from their group. If you are not able to have your child picked up within one hour, you may be assessed a surcharge of \$10.00 per 15 minutes. We do not have staff available to sit with sick children. It is to your advantage to establish a backup person or persons on whom you can depend in such circumstances. Remember that we have to think of the safety and well being of **ALL** the children and staff.

Your child will be sent home if they have any of the following:

- Elevated temperature (100 or above, 101 or above for infants). After the fever breaks, the child must be given a 24-hour recovery period before returning to Starmaker.
- Low-grade fever with any one of the following additional symptoms: diarrhea, vomiting, rash, runny thick nasal discharge, and crankiness that is not normal for the child.
- Unidentifiable rash.

Please keep your child at home:

- If they have a low-grade fever, or had one during the previous 24-hour period.
- At least 24-hours after their first dose of an antibiotic each time the antibiotic is prescribed. The reason for this policy is due to the possibility of an allergic reaction by the child to the antibiotic.
- If they have three (3) diarrhea or vomiting episodes.
- If they have pink eye.
- If they have symptoms of a possible communicable disease. (These are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache and abdominal pain, or a fever.) Please notify the school at once if the child does have a communicable disease.
- If the child is vomiting. If the child is ill during the night or early morning, keep them home that day. Allow 24 hours after the child has stopped vomiting before sending them back to the School.
- If they have a rash, keep the child home 24 hours after each rash appears to determine if it is contagious.
- If more than one nebulizer/breathing treatment is required daily.

- If they have a cold that is less than four days old.
- If they have heavy, green-colored, nasal discharge.
- If they have a constant cough.
- If they are fussy, cranky, and generally out of sorts.
- If the child is not acting normal and/or is over-tired. (Rest at such times may prevent the development of serious illness.)

Your child may come to school if they have been exposed to a communicable disease, provided the school has been notified so that the incubation period can be discussed and it can be determined on what dates your child should stay home.

6.3 Emergency Policy

Prior to starting your child at the School, you must fill out an Emergency Card. This form is required by the State of Maryland Department of Human Resources Child Care Administration. This form is required to be updated **annually and as needed**. All parents must supply detailed medical information regarding any information important to their child, e.g., what over-the-counter medications their child can take, any allergies they may have, and immunization records. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information.

If your child has a known condition that might require special treatment, please fill out the "Other Special Medical Procedures" portion of the Emergency Card. This will allow us to be prepared to treat your child quickly and accurately. As with all information we have on your child, this information is kept strictly confidential.

In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach you, we may call the child's physician or our school nurse. We will also call an ambulance or paramedics if we determine one is needed. Until the arrival of a parent, the physician, an ambulance or paramedics, the director or CEO or the School's designated person in charge will make all decisions about the care of the child.

6.4 Minor Injuries

All of our Senior Staff are trained in CPR and first aid to handle minor injuries such as cuts, scrapes and bruises. If your child is involved in a minor accident, the staff will provide simple first aid.

Parents will be notified immediately if the teacher and the Director feel the injury warrants such action. Normally, you will be immediately notified about eye and head injuries. All other minor injuries will be brought to your attention at the end of the day by the use of our Incident Reports.

Staff are required to fill out an *Incident Report* whenever they provide first aid. Parents are requested to review and sign the report. These reports are kept in the child's permanent file. If requested, the parent will be provided with a copy of the report.

7. PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

Your support is a vital part of the school's success. Throughout the years, parental support has helped the teaching and administrative staff to maintain the educational goals of the children as their primary objective. Fund raising events in the past have provided capital to purchase curriculum materials and play equipment for the children. By volunteering in some capacity parents develop a greater

understanding of school life, get to know members of the staff and other parents and provide many needed services to the school.

If you have a talent, career or hobby that you think would be interesting to the children, you are encouraged to make arrangements with the Class Teacher to share this knowledge with the children. Parents are also encouraged to share anything they may have to aid in our different curriculum studies.

Parents can participate in the following ways:

1. Attend the required school events: back to school night in September and an Afternoon of Montessori in February or March.
2. Class parents – call other parents on behalf of the teacher, coordinate class functions, chaperone field trips.
3. Sharing your special skill with a class – teach the children your specialties (i.e., art, music, science, language, sewing, carpentry, or any skill that would supplement our programs and contribute to the children’s entertainment and education.)
4. Fund raiser coordinator(s) – help with school fund raising activities, counting money, sorting and distributing the items, phoning other parents to encourage support of the fund raiser.
5. Field Trips – provide transportation and/or supervision on monthly field trips to the public library or on other field trips that may be arranged.
6. Special events coordinator – helping to plan and run special events such as parent education night, holiday events, annual picnic, etc.
7. Community Work Day – parents and staff help beautify the school classrooms and campus on a Saturday.
8. Promoting the school via word of mouth to friends, neighbors, and families with young children.

7.1 Field Trips

All of our programs utilize field trips as part of the educational training of children. As such, we encourage the visiting of some of the wonderful educational/historical sites in our area. It is the policy of Starmaker Learning Center to require all children to have a signed permission slip to attend any off-site field trip held Monday through Friday only. Three year olds and under are not allowed to ride the bus and need parents to take their children to the field trip. Staff members are not allowed to stay behind with children who do not have a ride as they are needed on the field trips. Please make other arrangements if you cannot attend a field trip with your child (three and under).

We ask for parent participation in ALL of our off-site trips to help us maintain a safe student/adult ratio.

8. Effective **June 30, 2008**, Maryland law requires children to be in a car seat or booster seat until their 8th birthday, unless they weigh more than 65 pounds or are 4'9" or taller. The law further states that the car seat must fit the child by age, height and weight, and the child must be secured in the seat and vehicle according to the instructions of the vehicle and car seat manufacturers.

SCHOOL/HOME COMMUNICATION

Collaboration and communication between home and school is the key to success for all our children at the School. We use the following means to communicate with our parents:

1. **Parent Handbook** – this document provides parents and interested persons with detailed information about the School and its policies. The handbook is given out to new parents upon enrollment. Updates are distributed to the entire parent community as and when they occur.
2. **Starmaker Newslines** – this newsletter is published and distributed every month September through May. If you have any information to share in the newsletter, give the information to the front office on or before the last week of the month.
3. **Bulletin Boards** – these boards are posted at the front door and in each classroom. The Director, Teachers, and staff use these boards for announcements and information of interest to the parents – please be sure to take a few moments and read the bulletin boards for important information.
4. **Daily Parent/Teacher Communication** - Parents are encouraged to check the “Parent Box” daily. They are located in each classroom. The Parent Box is the vehicle for distributing correspondence from your child’s teacher as well as notices from the School staff. Additionally, parents wishing to communicate with their child’s teacher should make use of the Teacher’s folder inside the Parent Box. Please use this to drop notes to your child’s teacher. Your child’s teacher can then contact you. Each senior staff and teacher now has an email address. Parents may wish to communicate via email but remember that the teachers are not always checking their email since they are teaching and caring for your children.
5. **Parent/Teacher Conferences** – Aside from the twice yearly scheduled conferences, parents can request informal/additional conferences to discuss any questions, concerns or problems. Please schedule these directly with your child’s teacher. If you wish to schedule a conference with the Director or CEO, please do not hesitate to do so – we encourage an open-door policy at the School.
6. **Back to School Night** - This night is designated in September in order to introduce parents to the teachers and to familiarize them with our academic philosophy, expectations, and goals. **Parents are required to attend.**
7. **An Afternoon of Montessori**– This program is held in February or March to highlight particular aspects of the educational curriculum and philosophy. **Parents are required to attend.**
8. **Starmaker Web Site** – Starmaker has a web site www.starmakerschool.org. You can send email messages to the school at administrator@starmakerschool.org.
9. **Email** – All senior staff and teachers have email addresses. Use the teachers’ first initial and last name plus @starmakerschool.org.

9. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All educators, employees and volunteers at Starmaker Learning Center who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect are **required by law** to immediately report such suspicions to the Department of Social Services or to the police.

Child Abuse and Neglect is defined by law as any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm

Types of Abuse:

1. Physical
2. Neglect
3. Sexual abuse/exploitation
4. Emotional abuse
5. Parental substance abuse
6. Abandonment

9.1 SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Sexual harassment is **unwanted** and **unwelcome** behavior of a sexual nature which interferes with a person's right to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate in school activities in a comfortable and supportive atmosphere. Sexual harassment is not a joke, nor is it flirting! It is illegal.

It could be sexual harassment if you are:

- staring or leering at parts of someone else's body
- sharing comments, gestures, or jokes of a sexual nature
- displaying sexual pictures or objects
- spreading sexual rumors or commenting about sexual behavior
- repeatedly pressuring for dates or unwanted sexual activity
- touching, grabbing, or pinching
- asking for sexual favors in exchange for something
- physical sexual assault.

Sexual harassment towards any student or staff will not be tolerated. It will be grounds for immediate disenrollment/termination.

**APPENDIX A
OBSERVATION POLICY**

OBSERVATION POLICY

To help you make the most of your visit, we have prepared this information sheet. Please take a few minutes to read our policy prior to your visit.

1. As part of Starmaker's orientation process, a scheduled observation of your child's classroom is required
2. Each observation visit is limited to approximately 30 minutes.
3. During the visit, the teacher will have a chair for you to sit in during your observation visit. The children are told that you are observing and they know that you are there to watch them work, not to interact with them.
4. Please keep in mind that you are a stranger in the room and some children may be curious and wish to socialize with you. If so, please keep the interaction as brief as possible. This will help to ensure that you see a true picture of the normal activities in the classroom.
5. Keep a pad of paper with you to take notes. At the conclusion of your visit, the CEO will answer any questions you noted during your observation of the class. If you wish to speak with the Teacher about the class activities, you may contact the teacher later. The Teacher and the Assistant will not be able to talk with you during your observation visit. You must remember the classroom belongs to the children and the children are the Teacher's primary focus of attention at that time.

APPENDIX B
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY RULES

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY RULES
FOR FIELD TRIPS IF BUS IS USED

1. Students may not board or leave the bus while it is in motion.
2. Students may not extend hands, feet, head or any other part of their bodies from the bus windows.
3. Students may converse in a normal tone but loud, profane, or obscene language will not be tolerated and may lead to refusal of bus service.
4. Students will cooperate in keeping the bus clean and free of trash. Any malicious or willful damage to the bus will result in the child being forbidden to ride the bus and the parents will be held responsible for any financial cost to repair damage caused by the child.
5. No firearms or dangerous weapons will be allowed on the bus.
6. No food or drink will be consumed on the bus.
6. Students may not move from their seats while the bus is in motion.
7. Students may not throw things from the bus.

Handbook Receipt and Acknowledgement Form

Please sign below, indicating that you have received the Parent Handbook. Please return to School Director.

Child's name and age

Child's name and age

Child's name and age

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date