



Parent Handbook

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Silver Spring, MD 20905

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www.lwicc.org/child-care.html

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www.facebook.com/wmscare

Parent Handbook

Revised 5/2021

Dear Parents,

We are so excited about your interest in Living Word's child-care center "Watch Me Sprout."

We understand that the first five years of a child's life are an amazing time of growth and learning that serves as a foundation for future stages of development. Given that each child's learning style is different, our teachers begin at the child's level of development and build upon his/her interests, strengths and abilities.

Watch Me Sprout Childcare Center is committed to protecting the health of our children, families, staff, and community. Policies have been designed in response to guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health, in accordance with best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and with everyone's well-being in mind. While we typically offer onsite tours for parents and children, for the safety of all, we are offering virtual tours for our classroom facilities and play areas.

Thank you for your interest in **Watch Me Sprout!**

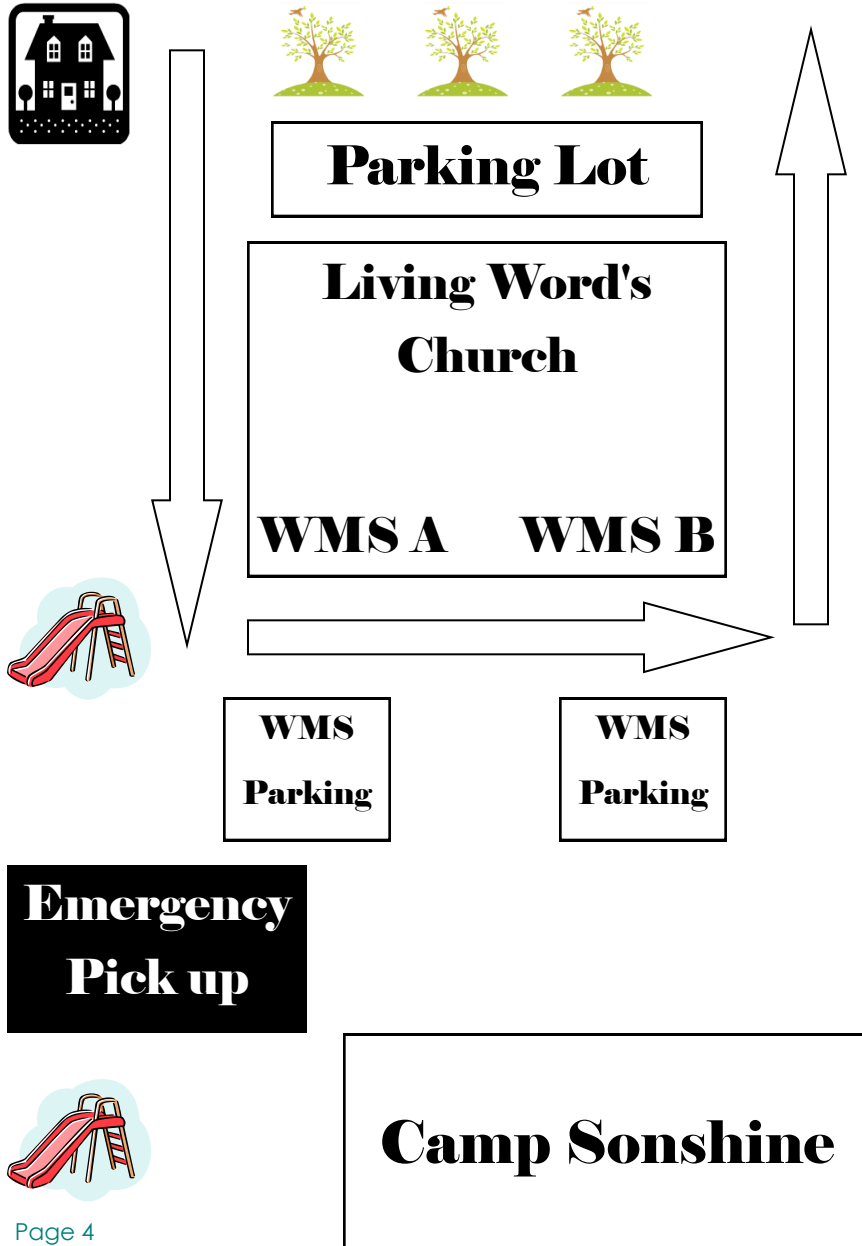
Blessings,

The Watch Me Sprout (WMS) Team

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New Hampshire Avenue



Mission Statement & Philosophy

Mission Statement

Watch Me Sprout provides a safe, warm, nurturing, caring and loving environment where each child learns and grows in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy

WMS welcome all children into our childcare center. WMS believes in the development of the whole child. We provide stimulating activities and group interactions that encourages each child to play and explore, generating interest and curiosity as a child grows. Each child is welcomed as a unique individual and we will attempt to meet their needs.

Our goal is to assist you and support your child to reach their full potential through play and sequential hands-on learning experiences that foster spiritual, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional, and social development. We provide age-appropriate activities to promote cognitive and social development in our warm and nurturing environment. The staff selected to teach and work with the children are committed to our Christian philosophy.

Finally, we encourage our staff to provide positive and loving discipline and examples of Christ's love through our lives.

Hours of Operation

WMS is open Monday through Friday, 8:00AM—5:00PM. Hours of care will be contracted from child to child.

Full day enrollment is a maximum of 9 hours per day. Our half-day enrollment program options are 9:00am -1:00pm (AM care) or 1:00pm -5:00pm (PM care). Extended care hours are offered for 1/2 day students only at a rate of \$9.00 per hour for all ages.

We also offer flexible part-time program options for 2 or 3 days per week Monday—Friday. Please see *Monthly Program Rate Sheet* for details.

Classroom Extensions:

If your call is unanswered because the staff member is busy with the children, please leave a message on the Office phone and we will contact you as soon as we are able to.

WMS Phone Number (301) 989-4673

Blueberries – 1261

Grapes – 1261

Kiwis – 1244

Apples – 1297

Oranges – 1298

Executive Director—1268

Assistant Director – 1231

Tuition & Enrollment

Tuition in the form of checks or money orders should be placed in the tuition box or mailed to WMS. Please do not hand these forms of payment to staff members. All checks should be made payable to **Living Word**. We also accept cash or credit card, these forms of payment should be handed to Administration Staff only.

Tuition is due on the 15th of the prior month, example (September tuition is due on August 15th, October is due on September 15th and so on). A reminder will be sent home within the first week of the month. A second notice will be sent home on the 15th to any families who have not paid yet with a \$25 late fee added. If tuition and late fee are not paid within 48 hours after receiving the 2nd notice, the child will no longer be able to attend school.

If a check is returned for (NSF), a replacement payment should be made immediately in the form of cash or money order **only**. An additional \$35 NSF fee should be added to the returned check amount.

Tuition is based on enrollment and not attendance, therefore adjustments to tuition cannot be made due to illness, travel, weather closings, or any Living Word emergency related closings etc... Should there be a need to change your child's schedule for any reason, please notify us in writing on or before the 15th of the month.

Enrollment Fees

A non-refundable \$65.00 **registration/re-enrollment fee** is due per child with your application. An annual **activity fee/re-enrollment fee** of \$65 for fulltime and \$45 for part time enrollment will be charged upon admission and at the beginning of each school year.

Requirements for Enrollment

Paperwork

Children are required, by the school and the state of Maryland to have the following paperwork completed, signed and returned to the school **before child may attend class**:

- Maryland State Health Inventory Packet
- Maryland State Emergency Form
- Maryland State Health plan/medical form if necessary due to individual circumstances
- Maryland State All about Me Form
- WMS Handbook Parental Agreement Form
- Photograph Permission Form
- Regulated Child Care Pamphlet
- A copy of any court orders regarding child custody and visitation issues.
- Covid-19 Acknowledgement


Potty Training


We will work with parents/guardians to initiate potty training when the individual child shows an interest.


Children 2 years and up will be introduced to the potty training process in the Kiwis Class. All children in the process of potty training must wear Pull Ups with velcro sides. During the potty training, please do not send your child in diapers, *overalls* or *rompers*.


All children must be fully potty trained and showing signs of self care skills before entering the [Apple or Orange classes](#).


Arrivals and Departures


 Arrivals will be received in our WMS(A) section of the center. (Please see map)


 All children will be dismissed from their homeroom. **Children must be signed in and out each day by their parent, guardian or authorized pick-up person.**


 Please inform us if you need to drop off or pick up your child outside of your regular scheduled, this must be made in writing & pending approval.

 Children that are not picked up after their scheduled departure time will be charged \$1.00 per minute, **per child**. Payments must be made in **cash** at pickup or within three days. After 3 days your fee will accrue a penalty of \$1.00 per day.

 We will only release a child to an authorized adult, 18 years or older, listed on your child's emergency form. Should there be a need for someone else to pick-up your child, who is not listed on your emergency list, please complete and sign the pink "Pick-up Authorization" form in the morning. The authorized person will need to bring a valid photo ID.

 We will not deny a parent the right to pick up their child unless our center was provided with a copy of court orders regarding child custody/visitation issues.

 If we are unable to contact parent/guardian/authorized pick-up person listed on the emergency form, 30 minutes after closing, Montgomery County Police and Child Protective Services will be called.

 Please make sure to check your child's mailbox at the end of each day, as there is important information that we need to share with you.

Arrival Time & “The Positive Good - Bye

Most children experience some type of separation anxiety during infant, toddler and preschool year. The circumstances and ages can vary widely. Some infants become alarmed when held by someone they don't know, while others are content. A toddler who has been happy in a care setting begins to cry one day when being dropped off - continues this for the next several weeks. This behavior can be frustrating and concerning for both parents and caregivers. Should parents be worried? How can providers console this child and convince parents that all is well?

There are a few things to keep in mind. Remember that this is a normal stage of development. The concept of going away and coming back is complex and a young child's understanding of it builds gradually. Comfort your child and work closely with your childcare provider to look for triggers and patterns to the anxiety.

Most children stop crying and settle into normal routines almost as soon as parents have left. Keep your good-byes **positive, short, and loving**, this will help ensure a smoother transition. Ask your childcare provider for suggestions in order to work together.

~FunShine Express Parent Newsletter “The Positive Good-Bye”.

The Staff at Watch Me Sprout understand that leaving your child can be difficult at times. Please know that we will do whatever we are able to do to partner with you to help with this transition.

What to Wear and Bring

Blueberries Class

- Diapers & Wipes
- Covered Bottles with — Formula/Breast Milk (enough for the day plus extra)
- Infant food (Please incorporate food items of nutritional value)
- Complete change of weather appropriate clothes
- Ointment (Balmex, Aquafor, Destin, Butt Paste etc.)
- 2 Fitted crib sheets and 2 blankets for rest time
- Sample schedule of home routine (New Students Only)

Grapes Class

- Diapers & Wipes
- Ointment (Balmex, Aquafor, Destin, Butt Paste etc.)
- Food for breakfast, lunch & snack (Please incorporate food items of nutritional value)
- Enough drink for the day (milk, 100% juice & water)
- Complete change of weather appropriate clothes
- 2 Fitted crib sheets and 2 blankets for rest time
- 2 labeled pocket folder for classroom work
- Back-pack & Lunch bag
- Water bottle

What to Wear and Bring

Kiwis Class

- Pull-ups with velcro on the side & Wipes
- Complete change of weather appropriate clothes
- 2 Fitted crib sheets and 2 blankets for rest time
- Lunch, plus any food item to supplement breakfast or snack offered by WMS (Please incorporate food items of nutritional value)
- Enough drink for the day (milk, 100% juice & water)
- 2 labeled pocket folders for classroom work
- Back-pack, Lunch bag & Water Bottle

Apples and Oranges Class

- Complete change of weather appropriate clothes
- 2 Fitted crib sheets and 2 blankets for rest time
- Lunch, plus any food item to supplement breakfast or snack offered by WMS (Please incorporate food items of nutritional value)
- Enough drink for the day (milk, 100% juice & water)
- 2 labeled pocket folders for classroom work
- Back-pack, Lunch bag & Water bottle

Recommended Donation School Supply List

***1 Box of tissue**

***4 glue sticks**

***Hand sanitizer**

***2 Liquid glue bottles**

***1 box of crayons**

***Gallon zip lock bags**

ALL of your children's items must be labeled with their name on it. This includes but is not limited to, **Lunch Box, Individual Items, Bedding, Diapering Items and Clothing.**

Please make this a daily habit. Thank You!

What to Wear and Bring

Clothes

Dress your child in comfortable ***weather appropriate*** play clothes and **closed toe shoes**. If clothing is deemed inappropriate for any reason, children will be changed into their extra clothes or center clothing. Please wash and return ALL center clothing after use.

- All children will need a jacket, a pair of gloves and a hat, when the weather gets cold.
- All children will need to have an extra change of weather appropriate clothes that will need to be left here at the center.
- Also please provide us with a plastic bag to place clothes in for extremely dirty or soiled clothes.

*While we do wear smocks for messy projects; we do not promise to send your child home stain free. **We believe kids should have the opportunity to learn through exploration and sometimes that means getting dirty! :)***

Lunch & Snack

Each child is required to bring a lunch everyday. All lunches are refrigerated and micro-waved if needed. Lunch items should be nutritious and well balanced. Each lunch item should be labeled.

WMS provides an AM and a PM snack for children in our Kiwis, Apples and Oranges class.

WMS has a NO NUT sharing policy!

Your child may bring nut products in their lunch, but **not** for a snack to share with the class. All children with nut products in their lunches will be seated together.

Bedding

Children are asked to bring 2 fitted crib sheets and 2 blankets. We will send bedding home every Friday, to be washed and returned the following week. **No twin size comforters or sheets.**

Field Trips & Birthdays

Field trips are a fun way to enrich our theme units. The Apples and Oranges class aim to take 2-3 field trips per year. Parents are always welcome to join us for those fun days. Permission slips for each field trip must be signed and returned in order for your child to participate!

Birthdays

Every child at WMS is special and we enjoy giving children extra attention on their birthdays! We have a unique way of celebrating birthdays in the class so please **plan ahead** with your child's Teacher and Director to schedule an appropriate time and way to celebrate your child's special day. Activities **must** be scheduled prior to the date request. Please remember store bought food items only.

***During this time WMS will temporarily not be hosting any special events or Field Trips.**

Communications

We communicate with parents through daily my day sheets, weekly and monthly newsletters, telephone calls, emails, and other notices. Each child is provided with a mailbox and/or cubby. Please check these daily for notes, newsletters and daily reports. Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule before the 15th of the month.

Progress Reports

Parents and teachers conferences are held in the fall and late spring each year. Parent will be notified via email of the dates and times available to help setup for a virtual parent teacher conference.

Parental Involvement

We provide various ways to for our parent's involvement at the center. We value your involvement in your child's education and offer a variety of opportunities for every parent to participate in the center's activities throughout the year. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend all center and off center events.

Such as:

- *Being a chaperone on field trips
- *Reading to the class or sharing information about your career or profession
- *Attending your child's classroom birthday party
- *Attending center functions and celebration events
- *Volunteering to help with projects and games
- *Reviewing newsletter and their student's work at home
- *Sharing about holidays and other cultural traditions

Please speak to your child's teacher about how you can become involved in the classroom and your child's educational experience. Parents are always welcome in the classroom.

Outdoor Play/Indoor Play

Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with. The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Concepts taught indoors can be expanded upon while outdoors.

Students will go outside everyday as long as the temperature and/or wind chill is above 40 degrees and it is not raining. Teachers will take students water bottles with them outside in order to continue hydration during outdoor play.

Water Play

We use water play as a fun activity to help the children keep comfortable on hot days during the summer months. We use water tables, sprinklers, spray bottles and water cups during this activity. Teachers have creative games involving water play allowing children to splash freely at the water table.

Air Quality

Code Red – Very Unhealthy

Code Orange – Approaching Unhealthy

Code Yellow - Moderate

Code Green - Good Air Quality

During the summer months, regardless of temperature, the children will continue to play outside every morning and every afternoon, on their regular schedule – unless the air quality for that day is Code RED. That is the only time – other than rain – that the children are kept inside. When the index is Code ORANGE, outside time will be limited to one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon: the hours between 12:00-2:00 will be avoided because of the heat index at its peak during this time.

Safety & Emergency Plan

Our staff are certified in CPR and/or First Aid through the American Red Cross. For a list of certified teachers, please see our office staff. Should an accident occur, first aid will be administered and parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

If there is a fire or other reason to evacuate school, students and teachers will evacuate the building in a calm and orderly manner. Each class will practice exiting the building with monthly fire drills.

Each class will meet in their fire drill location, take attendance and wait for instructions from the Director or Church administrator. If we are unable to return to the building, students and teachers will proceed to the parking lot by the playground (see map). In that event, students will need to be picked up from the playground location. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as the school has access to a phone.

In other emergency situations:

Students and teachers will move into the church hallways, away from windows. Teachers will bring students emergency forms. If there is any kind of emergency in the area and you wish to pick up your child early, you are encouraged to do so!

Fire Exit and Emergency Evacuation

- Teachers should immediately line children up and stay between/ next to every 3-4 children. Non-walkers should be placed in evacuation cribs with wheels, or picked up immediately, to be exited behind line of children.
 - Lead teacher or acting lead teacher should bring the Sign-in sheet/Attendance Sheet, Emergency forms, and the classroom emergency bag-pack with them outside.
 - All children and staff should exit out of the door on their immediate right and proceed outside, through the parking lot to the Camp Sonshine building at the entrance to the woods.
 - There should be a teacher blocking the crosswalk as the children crossed the street. The teacher's primary responsibilities are the children. Do not leave children unattended at any time, especially during an emergency.
 - The Admin team member on duty will remain to verify that all children and staff have left the area and closed doors before leaving the building. Cell phones and walkies are used for emergency.
 - Teacher will do a roll call of all children. Children will answer by raising their hands and saying here. Teachers will count total number of children in each classroom.
 - We will wait at the designated evacuation spot for maintenance personnel to inform us when it is safe to return in the building.
 - Admin team member will return with the children then record the information on the fire drill/ evacuation chart at the entrance of both WMS side A and B.
 - **If we cannot return to the building**, we will take the children over to the *"emergency and disasters preparedness offsite location"* at the former Thrift store on our Orchard property. The parents, guardians, and/or emergency contacts will be called to pick up students.
- *Please familiarize yourself with the doors use for the evacuation.**

Discipline Policy

At WMS, teachers will consistently and lovingly help children learn to cooperate with peers and adults to create a safe and positive learning environment. We believe in giving children clear rules and expectations and fair consequences. We seek to build children up in the grace and love of God; therefore we do not allow any policies that would breakdown a child's sense of self-worth. Our schedules, activities, and rules are meant to enable our students to succeed. The following points are to assist you as the parent to further understand our discipline policy:

WMS Rules

1. Keep your hands, feet, and everything else to yourself.
2. Follow directions the first time.
3. Use walking feet and inside voice.
4. Listen when someone else is talking.
5. Be respectful of others, school and personal property.

WMS Positive Strategies

- Verbal warning or gain the child's attention.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Redirect the children to engage in alternate activity as needed.
- Provide children choices in activity throughout the day.
- 2 to 5 minutes time in the reflection chair based on the child's age. This time is used to allow the children a calming period so that they can reflect on the inappropriate behavior and then problem-solve alternate solutions.
- Child is taken to the Administration office and will miss activity time, if child is able to regain composure, child can return to class.
- Child is taken to the Administration office and parents are called to pick child up to go home for the day.
- Child may not attend WMS for one day suspension and discussions with the Directors will determine further attendance.

Discipline Policy Continued

The power of choice: Our goal is to guide and correct, rather than to embarrass. Once children know and understand the class rules and consequences, they have the power to choose between following the rules or the consequence.

Time out: Occasionally it may be necessary to remove a child from an activity or the main group of children. The child will not be isolated completely apart from the class; the child will remain in sight of the teacher. This time out is not punishment, rather a short time when the child may calm down and have an opportunity to discuss their choices and actions with the teacher.

Partnership: In addition to calling parents about the incident, teachers will attempt to meet with the parents and provide a face to face conversation. This is to make parents aware of the behavior and give them a chance to discuss the situation with their child. We encourage parents to come see us if they have any questions or concerns. Teachers and parents working together to help a child grow and learn can have amazing results. Parents will be contacted for a conference if there appears to be a consistent problem that needs to be worked through together.

We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency and firmness.

Corporal punishment is NEVER an acceptable method of discipline at WMS.

Health Policy

Healthy kids and healthy teachers make a happy school! Help us all stay well together by knowing and following our policies.

Please keep your child home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms within 24 hours of school: fever, rash, cough, diarrhea, vomiting or any infectious disease.

- If a child should develop symptoms of illness while in class, the teacher will notify parents immediately. If we are unable to reach parents, we will try your emergency contacts. Please pick up your child as soon as possible.
- If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, such as but not limited to Chicken Pox or Pink Eye, please notify the staff. At that time we will notify the other WMS families without disclosing the child's name.
- If your child misses 3 or more days of school due to illness, Maryland State Law requires us to have a form signed by a physician stating that your child is in good health and able to return to school.

Allergies: Please notify the school **in writing** of any allergies your child may have. An **allergy action plan** accompanied by MSDE Medication authorization form is also required.

Medication: Please notify the school **in writing** if your child is taking any medication. You must fill out a MSDE Medication Form in order for us to administer any medication (including OTC meds). Prescribed medication must have doctor's signed authorization. We will give (OTC) medication to a child, once per illness. WMS follows MSDE medication guidelines.

We strictly abide by the Health Department's guidelines and regulation concerning facility safety and sanitation.

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Medication Policy

It is recommended that medications be given at home however in some cases this is not possible. If your child must take medication while at WMS, please abide by the following procedures:

Prescription Drugs

Local health regulations permit child care centers to administer prescription drugs under the following conditions: unexpired prescription drugs must be in a properly labeled container provided by a pharmacy and accompanied by a doctor's signed MSDE medication authorization form. Please complete the required MSDE form if your child will need to take prescription medication any time while in our care.

For children who need to have medication continuously throughout the school year, (this includes emergency medications such as bee sting kits, inhalers, diabetic conditions, epi-pens, etc.) medication must be left at WMS as we are not allowed to have medication travel back and forth. Most pharmacists will prepare medication specially for you if you explain that your child needs to have medication left at their childcare center. For the safety of your child and others, there can be no exceptions to the above guidelines.

Non-Prescription Drugs (OTC)

WMS is permitted to administer non-prescription drugs only if prior written permission on a MSDE medication authorization form is received from the parent and/or doctor. A child may receive only **one dose per illness**.

Schedules and Closings

- Labor Day—September 2
- Columbus Day—October 14
- Veteran’s Day — November 11
- Thanksgiving Break—November 28 & 29
- Christmas Break—December 25—January 2
- Martin Luther King Day—January 20
- Professional Day for Teachers —January 27
- Presidents’ Day — February 17
- Easter Monday — April 13
- Memorial Day—May 25
- Independence Day—July 4

Inclement Weather Instructions:

1. Call the weather hotline at 301-989-4673 and press 4
2. Check our Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/wmscare

Watch Me Sprout Childcare Center is a ministry of Living Word Church, therefore we operate according to LWICC closings and holidays. Please know that if Living Word is closed for any reason, WMS will also be closed. All closing decisions will be made by 6:00am. Please check our WMS calendar for upcoming events.

IN THE EVENT THAT WMS ENCOUNTERS AN UNSCHEDULED CLOSING FOR ANY REASON, PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

Withdrawals

If a problem exists involving our program, we will make every attempt to correct the situation and meet the needs of the class as best of possible, while adhering to our policies and procedures.

WMS reserves the right to request the withdrawal of a child for “good and just cause” at any time of the year. Examples include but are not limited to: failure to comply with standards set forth in the parent handbook, failure to turn in State-required forms, discipline issues and concerns, endangerment of students and/or faculty, unpaid tuition, disruption of class etc. Causes are determined by the Directors in consultation with staff members.

The Center requires a 30-day written notification of your intent to withdraw your child. This also gives our families a minimum of 30 days to allow their children to transition into new classroom routines and environments.

If you choose to withdraw your child from our center for any reason, we are unable to provide a refund without this 30-day written notification due to planning for staffing and enrollment numbers. You will also need to fill out & return our Withdrawal Survey Form.

Child Neglect and/or Abuse

WMS staff are MSDE mandated reporters of child abuse and/or neglect. We are required by law, to report any suspected instances of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Human Services and the Office of Childcare.

Special Needs

During enrollment parents are provided with an additional Department of Special Need Services Questionnaire. This include questions related to any ISP or IEP information that parents may wish to share with the center.

Any information obtained through this questionnaire is to assist us in determining the best course of providing an effective childcare program for your child. For further information about this policy please feel free to contact us.

Non Discriminatory Statement

Watch Me Sprout does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or participation in its programs, services and activities.

Special Education Services Questionnaire

Watch Me Sprout will make reasonable accommodation that your child may need to be successful in our program.

Has your child ever seen a physician, counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist for any type of social, behavioral, emotional learning problem? If yes, please explain.

Is your child currently enrolled in a (DSES) Department of Special Education Services or Montgomery County Public School Early Intervention Program?

If Yes, Please select from the list below.

- Infant & Toddlers
- PEP
- Speech-language services
- Comprehensive Autism Preschool Program (CAPP)
- Other (Please Specify) _____

If you answered yes to the previous question, please state the nature of your child's need and describe any behavioral concerns.

- Does your child have an IEP/IFSP? Yes or No
- Does your child have an AIP (Academic Intervention Plan?) Yes or No
- Does your child have a BIP (Behavioral Intervention Plan?) Yes or No
- Does your child have a 504 Plan Yes or No

If yes to either, please provide a copy to Watch Me Sprout at the time of registration. This will allow us to fully support you and your child in the classroom as well as schedule any services your child may need from outside service agencies.

Watch Me Sprout does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or participation in its programs, services and activities. Any information obtained through this questionnaire is to assist us in determining the best course of providing an effective childcare program for your child. For further information about this policy please feel free to contact us.

WMS Handbook Parental Agreement

By signing my name below, I affirm:

- I have read the Watch Me Sprout Handbook in its entirety.
- I agree to comply with the policies described within the handbook.
- I understand that while I may offer creative suggestions for future growth and improvement to the school, policies outlined in the handbook will not change during the current school year.
- I understand that failure to abide by the policies, guidelines and standards set in the Parent Handbook can result in the withdrawal of my child from this school at any time during the year.

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Director Signature: _____

Date: _____

***This form must be signed and returned to the school
before your child may attend classes.***