



## 2018-2019 Parent Handbook



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[www.KidsCoJr.com](http://www.KidsCoJr.com)

**Main Office/Mailing Address:**

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Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879

### Early Learning Center Locations:

Emory Grove  
8507 Emory Grove Road  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877  
240-686-6280

Rockwell  
24555 Cutsail Drive  
Damascus, Maryland 20872  
301-253-0330

Fallsmead  
1800 Greenplace Terrace  
Rockville, MD 20850  
301-417-8732

Brown Station  
851 Quince Orchard Blvd,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
240-912-4910

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# 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

August 20	Staff In-Service Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
August 21	KidsCo Jr. Open House (3:30pm-5:30pm)
August 22	First Day Of KidsCo Jr. School Year Program
September 3	Labor Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
November 6	Election Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
November 12	Staff In-Service Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
November 22 & 23	Thanksgiving Holiday: KidsCo Jr. Closed
November 26 - 30	Parent/Teacher Conferences
December 24 & 25	Christmas Holiday: KidsCo Jr. Closed
December 26 - 28	Winter Break: KidsCo Jr. Open
December 31	New Year's Eve: Closed at 3:30pm
January 1	New Year's Holiday: KidsCo Jr. Closed
January 21	MLK Jr. Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
February 18	President's Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
April 17 & 18	Spring Break: KidsCo Jr. Open
April 19 & 22	Easter Holiday: KidsCo Jr. Closed
April 29 - May 3	Parent/Teacher Conferences
May 27	Memorial Day: KidsCo Jr. Closed
June 14	Last Day Of KidsCo Jr. School Year: Closed at 1pm
July 4	Fourth of July: KidsCo Jr. Closed
August 16	Last Day Of KidsCo Jr. 2018-2019: Closed at 1pm



## Welcome to KidsCo Jr!

We are honored that you have chosen us to care for your child. This Parent Handbook has been prepared to answer many of the questions you may have about our policies and procedures. Through reading this handbook and following its guidelines, we can work together to provide a safe and secure environment for your child. Please read this handbook in its entirety and put it in a convenient place for future reference. If you have questions or concerns regarding the material enclosed in this handbook, please speak with the Director of your center or call our Main Office at 301-740-9600. Thank you for choosing KidsCo Jr., we are glad you are here!

## Our Mission

Our vision at KidsCo Jr. is to provide a home away from home that fosters growth and learning in a comfortable, nurturing, and consistent environment. It is a place where each child's individual developmental stage will be respected and encouraged. We will tap into each child's natural curiosity, discover and develop his or her unique talents, and inspire creative freedom. Above all, we will learn from and listen to all of our families so that we can build a strong community bond. Our goal is to ensure that we care for each child as if he or she is our own.

# Our Philosophy

KidsCo Jr. is designed to offer kids a unique and comfortable alternative to their home care. KidsCo Jr. is child-directed and guided with an emergent curriculum. KidsCo Jr. is an inclusive program where all children are welcome regardless of ability or background. We thrive on drawing from the energy, curiosity, and creativity of the children involved in the program. All KidsCo Jr. team members will work closely with the children to provide love, stability, and guidance. We believe that it is important to provide a family style atmosphere, where everyone is safe, treated with care and respect, and where kids, parents, and the team members work together as a community.

We strive to promote our philosophy through our team members, activities, atmosphere, relationships, and outlook. For all of the age groups that we serve, the positive development of a child's self-reliance and self-esteem is paramount. Our program's activities reflect the children's primary language. Our staff show affection and personal regard, acknowledging and accepting the unique qualities of each child.

KidsCo Jr. provides many opportunities for each child to experience success, to earn praise, and to develop an "I can" and "Let me try" attitude. Our teaching strategies center around Directed Discovery and focus on the whole child. We build positive relationships with both children and their families, creating wonderful memories and a love of learning!

## Hours & Days of Operation

**6:30am-6:30pm**

Our hours of operation will remain the same on most MCPS holidays, professional days, and early release days. Please refer to the KidsCo Jr. Calendar to become familiar with the specific days during which care is not provided.

## Emergency/Snow Closing Policies

KidsCo Jr. will make every effort to be open despite inclement weather, but will close or operate on a modified schedule if driving or walking conditions pose a risk to the safety of the children, their families or our team members. Parents are advised to call the center before leaving home on snowy days to confirm our schedule.



Generally, the KidsCo Jr. policy for inclement weather is as follows:

- If MCPS Administrative Offices close, KidsCo Jr. will be closed
- If MCPS are delayed/closed due to weather, KidsCo Jr. will make a decision depending on the weather

During inclement weather, all updated information will be available in the following ways:

- Voice Mail Announcement by 6:00am 301-740-9600
- Facebook Fan Page by 6:00am [www.facebook.com/kidscojr](http://www.facebook.com/kidscojr)
- Email to each family's primary email address

## Daily Routine & Schedule

KidsCo Jr. is proud to raise the bar by following Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum in all of our classrooms. This supports our progressive program through stressing the importance of self esteem, self reliance, and fostering a love of learning to guide young children into a successful Kindergarten year. By introducing children into a developmental continuum based on social, emotional, physical, and academic goals, a learning plan is customized for each of our families in a loving, safe atmosphere. Join our excitement in sharing this dynamic initiative with your family! Our schedule is flexible, allowing opportunity for uninterrupted play and an environment conducive to emergent themes and discussions. Additionally, this flexibility permits children a "learning curve" in preparing for transitions and practicing life learning.

# Infants & Toddlers Daily Schedule

At KidsCo Jr., we recognize the importance of a young child's routines and incorporate them into their care. Our daily schedule is based on Center Rotation, which offers interest within different developmental stages and promotes individualized growth. Therefore, there are no beginning and ending times for our activities; rather, experiences are pre-planned and made available for our entire day. When each child is ready and his/her schedule allows, he/she may experience our centers! Instead of a posted daily schedule, parents can expect to see a detailed written list of what activities we did for the day when they pick up!

## Playful Preschool

In a two-year-old's world, everything is a challenge. Two year olds are observing, imitating, absorbing, and gaining knowledge with each experience! In addition, their drive to make personal decisions and to learn self sufficiency is very strong. We will concentrate on creating scaffolding for success in learning everyday life skills. Putting on clothing, toilet training, exhibiting grace and manners, buttoning, zipping, washing hands, meal etiquette, and social cooperation are some of the skills we will learn throughout our day!

## Early Preschool

During the daily routine, a three-year-old learns minute by minute! Three year olds are socialites and are observing and imitating their friends and teachers. Their drive to make personal decisions is our motivation to guide them into making good choices with activities, social situations, and in goal setting. We will focus on improving life skills and self image by patiently providing windows of practice and celebrations of success! Putting on clothing, toilet training, exhibiting grace and manners, buttoning, zipping, washing hands, meal etiquette, and social cooperation are a focus.

## Preschool

Our preschoolers are given a forum to make personal choices and to find success everyday! We plan our schedule with a blend of individual and group activities, and through experiences that are teacher-directed and those that are child-directed. Our curriculum is based on Learning Centers and Group Activities. We will continue to create a scaffold

for success in learning everyday life skills with our preschoolers. Mastering self dressing, exhibiting grace and manners, tying laces, washing hands, meal etiquette, and social cooperation are key.

### KidsCo Jr. Daily Schedule:

6:30-8:30	Open Centers (w/ Read Aloud & Potty Party as needed)
8:30-8:55	Handwashing & Breakfast
8:55-9:00	Transition from Breakfast to Open Interest Areas
9:00-9:25	Open Interest Areas
9:25-9:30	Clean-Up & Transition to Circle Time
9:30-9:45	Morning Circle w/ Music & Movement
9:45-9:50	Transition to Guided Interest Areas
9:50-10:50	Guided Interest Area Choices w/ Small Group Instruction
10:50-10:55	Clean-Up & Transition to Potty Party
10:55-11:15	Potty Party, Handwashing & Snack
11:15-11:20	Transition to Outside Exploration
11:20-11:50	Outdoor Exploration/Creative Movement
11:50-12:00	Attendance, Transition Inside for Handwashing & Prepare for Lunch
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-12:50	Read Aloud Time
12:50-1:00	Transition to Cots for Rest Time
1:00-3:00	Rest & Relaxation
3:00-3:30	Snack Time & Goodbyes to School Day Friends
3:35-3:50	Gather Everyone at Big Circle
3:50-4:00	Transition to Outdoor Exploration
4:00-4:30	Outdoor Exploration/Creative Movement
4:30-4:35	Attendance & Transition Inside
4:35-5:00	Project/Activity/Craft/Interest Area Choices
5:00-5:05	Transition to Mixed Age Group- Combine Groups
5:05-5:15	Potty Party, Handwashing & Transition to Snack
5:15-5:30	Snack
5:30-6:30	Good Evening/Open Choice Interest Areas

## Curriculum & Materials

All KidsCo Jr. team members are trained at our orientation each year on our curriculum, "The Creative Curriculum" by Teaching Strategies, The Creative Curriculum provides a wonderful foundation of learning where children are encouraged to learn based on their interests. Teachers create lessons that are developmentally and age appropriate, accessible to all children, represent multiple modes of exploration and learning, and reflect the children's interests and support abilities of all children.

## Supplies

Your child's day will be brimming with interactive, hands-on fun! Dress should be casual, non-restrictive, and seasonal. Our outside areas and playgrounds are an extension of your child's learning environment and we conduct outdoor activities whenever possible. Each day, except in cases of extreme weather, we will venture outdoors to meet the children's need to get fresh air, have some large muscle activity, and release energy. Please check the forecast each morning and prepare an outfit accordingly. If it has just rained, please pack boots for puddles and mud; windy days would call for jackets with hoods or hats; if snow is expected, please include waterproof gloves and pants; hot or muggy weather would necessitate sunscreen, loose clothing, etc. When looking for indoor and outdoor clothing, please choose items that are durable, comfortable, washable, and easy for your child to put on and take off. This also includes shoes! Crocs, platform, heeled-soles, and open flipflops hinder toddlers learning to walk and often trip or blister older children. Children at KidsCo Jr. often get dirty or messy in their classroom and outdoor activities. Washable clothes that can get dirty or messy are the best options.

## Extra Clothing

Additionally, children should have two (2) complete sets of seasonally appropriate and well-fitting clothes complete with underwear, socks, and an extra sweatshirt to leave at the center. Don't forget to label items with your child's name and replace items that go home to be washed.

## Personal Belongings

Our vision at KidsCo Jr. is to create a "home away from home." We encourage children to bring special items with them to provide a warm, familiar, and comfortable space for them!

## Toys

Each child is welcome to bring their special security toy or item to school; however, discretion should be used when choosing items from home. Some types of toys are discouraged because they are frequently hard to share with classmates. Additionally, there are items that are not appropriate to bring to KidsCo Jr. Please do not bring toy weapons, video games/handhelds, violent/fighting themed action figures, collectables, or items of value.

## Screen Time Policy

KidsCo Jr. follows the American Academy of Pediatrics' Recommendations on Screen Time:

- Children under 2 should have no screen time
- Children age 2 and over should watch less than 30 minutes per week at child care, and less than 2 hours per day total.

KidsCo Jr. understands that TV and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others, which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development.

Therefore; we will restrict screen time by:

- Allowing a maximum of 30 minutes total per week of educational material directly related to facilitated learning experiences that are age appropriate screen time (television, video, and DVD).
- Having zero screen time (TV, video, and computer) for children under the age of two.
- Screen time that is shown is related only to what children are currently learning about in class.

## Assessments

At KidsCo Jr. we recognize the importance of on-going observations and assessments of children enrolled in our program. We use a variety of assessment techniques to identify the children's strengths, needs, interest, and progress. Teachers will document this through anecdotal records, checklists, and a collection of work samples. Teachers use information they collect daily to help plan for future activities in the classroom. Observation data is shared with parents at Parent Teacher Conferences or as needed throughout the year.

## Rest Items

### Infant & Toddler

KidsCo Jr. asks that all parents provide a sheet each Monday to be sent home on Friday. If a replacement sheet is needed, KidsCo Jr. will provide one. Stuffed animals, heavy blankets, and pillows are not

appropriate for children in cribs. If your toddler is sleeping on a cot, a small pillow may be comfortable for them!

## **Preschool**

Each child will be given a rest period, even if they choose not to nap. Every Monday, a pillow, blanket, crib sheet for cot cover, pillow case, and lovey/special item should be brought to the center. Families may pack these items on Monday and they will be sent home each Friday for laundering. Additionally, we request that all pillows be labeled and small enough to fit in your child's cubby. Typically, this is more convenient for families because we can send just the pillow case for washing and the actual pillow can stay in your cubby. Large pillows will be sent home in following appropriate sanitary and hygiene practice. Each child should have a ventilated (lightweight or knitted) blanket, along with a comfort item available for their rest time each day. Families may pack these items on Monday and they will be sent home each Friday for laundering.

## **Nutrition**

Nutrition is an important part of healthy development. If your child has special dietary needs or any food allergies, please make us aware upon diagnosis.

### **Infant & Toddler Feeding Guidelines:**

In order to accommodate the rapid changes in infant growth, and to provide consistency from home to center, we schedule infant feedings according to their own individualized schedule. Responsive care is also paramount and caregivers are constantly in tune with your infant's physical cues that may indicate hunger. Parents will need to bring a daily supply of formula and baby food, all labeled with your child's name. Breastfeeding mothers need to provide both a supply of expressed milk for the day and an extra supply of two bottles worth to be kept frozen for up to one month at the center. If possible within a parent's schedule, a private lactation room is available to breastfeed at the center. Each time your infant is fed, a separate, unused bottle should be provided. Your child's bottle should be plastic and include a cap/ lid, and each piece to each bottle should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Once a child has begun to drink from a bottle containing formula or breast milk, the contents will be discarded within 60 minutes to avoid contamination. Containers of baby food may be kept at the center, but once opened, the unfinished contents will be returned home that evening. All bottles, sippy cups, dishes, and utensils will be rinsed and returned for sterile cleansing each evening.

Solid foods and possible food allergens will not be introduced for the first time to any child while in KidsCo Jr's care. Please make our team aware of any symptoms that are noticed when a new grain, vegetable, fruit, or protein source is introduced. We will continue introducing foods at a parent's discretion and will also be observant of any abnormal reactions. \*Note: Solid food should not be fed to an infant in a bottle, unless a clear, specific directive is described in writing by the child's physician. Solid food in bottles models incorrect eating habits and can present a choking hazard.

### **Preschool Feeding Guidelines**

All children enrolled over the age of two will need to bring their lunch. Each classroom does have a microwave to reheat items, but we ask that lunches requiring preparation be packed only on occasion, so that we have ample time to assist all children and to spend time with them at the lunch table. KidsCo Jr. provides whole milk and filtered water at lunch times. Our programming encourages nutritionally balanced and wholesome foods. Packing a balanced variety of healthy options is important! Cookies, chips, or treats should be accompanied by fresh fruit and vegetable baggies. We have found that most children like "finger foods" as an alternative to a traditional "lunch box" meal. Plastic food containers are a great idea for packing fruits and vegetables, cheese, chicken pieces, pasta leftovers, and more. All food should be ready to eat, cut into manageable pieces, and easy to swallow. Please make sure all lunch boxes, bags, and containers are labeled with your child's name. All of our lunches are kept in the refrigerator, so we suggest that you use a brown bag or Bentgo-style container. For all children over the age of two, we will augment the food and snack supply that you bring with a variety of healthy choices for breakfast in the morning and an afternoon snack. Each family will receive a monthly menu of snacks to be served.

### **Peanut Butter/Peanuts Policy**

Throughout our tenure at KidsCo Jr., we have successfully accommodated children who have many different food and environmental allergens. We have maintained egg, tree nut, dairy, legume, gluten, and peanut allergies present in our students. Our practice has been to separate a child with allergies by either seating him/her across from instead of next to a friend at lunch, or even designating an "allergen-free" table at lunch time. Additionally, we have posted allergy signs, avoided nut products when ordering snack foods, and requested labeled alternate food supplies. Our entire team is well trained in exposure prevention





and symptom identification. Injectable epinephrine (Epi-Pen) training is also given to teachers with allergic students. We kindly ask that no foods that have peanuts as an ingredient be brought to the center. We appreciate your support in this matter. We know that some children identify their favorite lunch item as peanuts or peanut butter; however, listed below are some peanut butter alternatives:

- Cream Cheese
- Guacamole
- Cranberry Sauce
- Hummus or Bean Dips
- Soy or Seed Butters
- Different Nut Butters

## Keeping In Touch

### Open Door Philosophy!

At KidsCo Jr., we pride ourselves on running awesome programs that our children, parents, schools, and staff are excited about! We always welcome family input, so if you have any suggestions regarding an interesting activity or ways we can improve our center, please don't hesitate to share them with us. We strive to create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere and invite families to stop by and visit us! Parents may visit at any time, and are always welcome to speak with the Director. We welcome suggestions and will accommodate parents in any way we can.

### Come On By!

Our families of currently enrolled children are welcome any time, any day, unannounced! Some parents have the flexibility to come in on their lunch hour to give their infant a bottle, finger paint with their preschooler, or to play with our group outside in the

sun! Our team members bring with them a skill set that includes their personal traditions, heritage, hobbies, and preferences. We are aware that all of our families can add value by sharing these elements with us as well! Families are continuously encouraged through postings, newsletters, and flyers to share everything from photos, to occupational specialties, to a special food we may enjoy. Volunteers are always welcomed and encouraged! Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles can help in a variety of ways: help a group build a castle, make play dough, perform a puppet show, read a book out loud, set up before an event, and much more!

### Website - Parent Tab

For flyers, calendars, forms, and other information, visit the KidsCo Jr. website at [www.KidsCoJr.com](http://www.KidsCoJr.com), and click the "Parent Tab" at the top right hand corner.

### Monthly Newsletters

Our team is just as excited as your family for upcoming activities! Each month, we will email a center newsletter. The newsletter will provide an updated calendar and schedule of events, as well as interesting information about our staff, children, and center events.

## Parent Communication

### Daily Log Sheet

You are your child's first teacher and we realize that you not only cherish the milestones, but his/her daily activities as well. KidsCo Jr. strives to keep all parents informed of the daily adventures experienced by their

child! Each day, our team will record a log of their daily progress and activities for you to take home. It is our goal to keep you up to date and excited with your child's development.

### **Parent Conferences**

KidsCo Jr. will schedule two conference weeks during the school year. During your personal parent conference, you will have the opportunity to speak privately with your child's teaching team. During this one-on-one meeting, you will learn your child's strengths, and areas for improvement with regards to development in the classroom. Your child's teacher will have a chance during your conference to review their classroom observations and curriculum assessments as they relate to your child's development and growth. Families are invited to communicate with us through personal chats, notes, phone calls, and/or surveys.

### **Personal Chats**

Every day, when parents drop off and pick up their children, the Director or a Lead Teacher will be available to chat about casual topics, updates, suggestions, information, or concerns. KidsCo Jr. is a small company, so all of the Directors are on site each day and play an active role with our children. Additionally, each center is equipped with a phone, complete with a voice message service. Although we make every effort to answer each call as it comes in, all messages are checked periodically throughout the day.

### **Quick Communication**

The many responsibilities of our parents are sometimes overwhelming. We understand that, at times, it is difficult for families to find time to chat with or update staff. Within each parent area, there is a "Help Us Remember Book" that is right next to the sign in and out form. This book is designed to be a place for parents to jot down a note or reminder for staff. Each day, the Director will check the Help Us Remember Book, initial each entry as it is read, and translate the message to the appropriate staff members.

### **Parent Surveys**

Two surveys will be utilized to learn our parents' perspective throughout the year! One will be given out mid-year (January) and another will be created as a wrap-up survey (June). Both surveys include a structured evaluation with a grading scale and give parents an opportunity to write comments. Each of these surveys will be reviewed by KidsCo Jr.'s management team, lead teachers, Parent Advisory Board. Additionally, we will provide a hardcopy of the results at the parent table for any families wishing to read.

## **Health & Safety**

### **Sanitization/Cleanliness**

When working with children, it is imperative to adhere strictly to the sanitary guidelines required by the state. At KidsCo Jr., we are well-equipped to follow all licensing guidelines with regards to the proper cleaning of the facility, food area, furniture, toys, and all items within the program. An authorized, sanitizing bleach solution is used (in the absence of children) to ensure sterilization and to minimize the spread of germs.

### **Child Abuse**

All KidsCo Jr. team members are trained to identify and report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the police or the Department of Social Services.

### **Children with Special Needs**

Working within this industry demands a flexible model to accommodate children with special needs and to be ADA compliant. KidsCo Jr. uses *Teaching Strategies: The Creative Curriculum* within our classrooms where children are "learning by doing" and our interest areas (centers) offer a variety of activities that are scaffolded to meet different children's learning styles and abilities. This model has been found to be successful with children who have special needs and families who require individualized learning plans.

At KidsCo Jr., we actively promote inclusive practice in order to best meet the needs of the children, families, and staff at our center. All children are welcome to attend regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic circumstances.

We value the partnership we have with Montgomery County PEP programs, Montgomery County Infants & Toddlers Division, and other entities of MCPS to ensure that we are able to provide the best services and education to our enrolled children. KidsCo Jr. is also open to working with pediatricians or other specialists not named above to do whatever is needed to help a child succeed.

### **Allergies**

Please make the Director aware of any allergy issues that pertain to your child. For quick reference, all known allergies will be posted next to a photo of each child in food preparation areas.

### **Hand Washing & Hygiene**

Knowing the best way to wash hands is the first step in staying healthy! Children are taught the proper way and times to thoroughly wash their hands. Our schedules are flexible to allow time to promote healthy habits. Children who are unable to wash are assisted by

a staff member and have their hands and faces wiped at each changing. Skills that ingrain beneficial routines are also practiced daily. Keeping clean, picking up after playing, wiping a nose, cleaning up, and neatness are demonstrated.

### **Breastfeeding**

At KidsCo Jr. we welcome mothers who choose to breastfeed. Each KidsCo Jr. location has a comfortable designated area for mothers to use to nurse their baby or express milk. Additionally, all infant and toddler teachers are trained in skills that enable them to support mothers who choose to breastfeed their baby.

### **Diapering and Toilet Training**

Parents are required to supply KidsCo Jr. with diapers and wipes for each child. Our team will notify families if supplies begin to run low. All of the children's diapers are checked periodically and changed as needed in a sanitary routine. KidsCo Jr. is also committed to working in conjunction with parents on toilet training their children. Children are never forced or punished when toilet training. We use positive reinforcement and encouragement as our strategy. In order to provide a consistent model, our staff members will make every effort to communicate with parents in order to compliment the efforts and tactics used at home. MSDE licensing prohibits portable toilets from home or the use of food as a reward item when toilet training.

### **Illness & Medication Addendum**

Included at the end of this handbook is an Illness & Medication section. Please read it carefully!

## **Security**

The safety of your child is our number one concern. The following procedures are how we can work together to ensure the safety of your child:

### **Dropping Off And Picking Up Your Child**

There will be a designated place in each center for you to sign your child in each morning, and to sign them out each evening. Not only is this a good way for us to touch base with you at the beginning and end of each day, but it is a requirement of the state.

### **Persons Authorized to Pick Up Your Child**

You will be asked to list individuals who are authorized to pick up your child from our center. If someone other than the child's parents or legal guardian will pick up, please have him/her prepared to show a picture ID upon arrival. Your child will not be released to someone not listed as authorized to pick up your child. If there is an emergency, and someone other than those authorized will be picking up your child, you must call

the center and inform a KidsCo Jr. team member. For the safety of your child, please let us know if there are issues pertaining to the legal custody of your child.

### **Emergency Cards**

You will be asked to fill out an Emergency Card for each of your children enrolled in our program. Please make sure that the information on this card is kept up-to-date. It will be the first place we look to locate you in case of an emergency, so make sure that it is accurate.

### **Emergency Policies and Preparation**

We have an extensive staff orientation at the beginning of the school year, during which staff are trained on KidsCo Jr. emergency policies and procedures. They also attend a brief orientation at their center where they are given important information on locations of phone numbers, fire drill meeting locations, attendance procedures, and any other site-specific information. In addition, monthly staff meetings are held to keep them updated on current issues. Team members have been trained in a MD Certified Emergency Preparedness course and are also equipped with a Crisis Kit.

### **Fire Drills**

KidsCo Jr. and the state of Maryland require that every center conduct a mock fire drill every month. The director will designate meeting places and will assign individual responsibilities for all team members. These drills will also be recorded in a labeled logbook and kept on file. In addition, emergency exit procedures will be posted at every exit.

## **Discipline Policy**

### **Positive Guidance**

The goal of our policies is to help each child develop recognition of positive self-worth, individual competence, and mastery. Discipline at KidsCo Jr. is in line with the age and needs of each child. Teaching by example, positive reinforcement, redirection, and one on-one discussion are strategies that provide resolution. We provide an opportunity for children to learn problem solving techniques and to think through actions by providing consistent and logical consequences. We set realistic limits for the children to follow and provide a wide variety of positive choices to give each student the greatest chance to succeed. We believe it is important to help the children understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable choices. KidsCo Jr. team members provide all children with clear rules and expectations for how one should act at KidsCo Jr. Team members review the

expectations daily before, during and after activities and at times when a child is not acting appropriately.

## **Steps to Success**

All staff are trained on and informed of our discipline policy at our staff orientation. Parents and staff will receive written copies of this policy within their respective Handbooks.

**Step One:** Assess the situation by kneeling down to the child's level and asking clarifying questions in a calm and even voice.

**Step Two:** While practicing active listening, allow the child to use words to express his feelings about the situation.

**Step Three:** Use positive words to remind the child what is an acceptable action and reaction, and give them verbal cues on ways to fix the problem if it should occur again.

**Step Four:** Redirect the child to an acceptable activity. Allow the child to make a new positive choice.

Communication is the key to each child's progress! If there are changes in the home or with a child's routine, we encourage families to let the Director know. Likewise, our team will keep parents up to date with any situations that we feel should be addressed. We are committed to working with families to remedy any issues or circumstances that may arise. However, KidsCo Jr. does reserve the right to ask parents to find an alternate source of care, either on a temporary or permanent basis, should our team deem it necessary.

## **Your KidsCo Jr. Team!**

### **Our Most Valuable Resource!**

Each team member was hand chosen to work with our children. We pride ourselves on our exceptional staff, as they truly make KidsCo Jr. a great place to be. As part of our continued dedication to raise the bar, we compensate our staff members at well above the average rate within Montgomery County. All team members are valued, appreciated, and encouraged to have input on the program, which fosters a sense of ownership. We continually strive to create a fun, rewarding, and solid place for our staff to call "home!"

### **Background Checks**

Each staff member is required to pass a background check before working at one of our centers. All staff must submit fingerprints to the State of Maryland and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. KidsCo Jr., as well as the Office of Child Care, also receives written notification of the results.

## **Selection Process**

All potential team members will successfully demonstrate a passion for children, a positive upbeat attitude, a commitment to our philosophy, and a willingness to go above and beyond to raise the bar within our industry. We schedule an extensive interview process that includes an in-office interview with KidsCo Jr.'s owner and an on-site interview with the center director and staff. Prior employment and personal reference checks are thoroughly examined. Newly hired employees are assigned to an experienced team member for training.

A 30-Day Formal Review is conducted; all new staff are on a 60-day probationary period thereafter. After completion of the probationary period, they are reevaluated by the center director. Throughout the year, our center directors continuously monitor and assess all employees; a formal Mid-Year Review is also conducted.

## **First Aid/CPR Requirements**

The state of MD requires that, for every 20 children, one staff member is certified. KidsCo Jr. provides First Aid/CPR training to all senior staff, even if we surpass state requirements.

## **Professional Development**

### **Orientation**

At the beginning of each year, we host an extensive team orientation, during which all staff are educated to prepare them for the year ahead. Each year, we choose an exciting venue for these all-day events to promote team bonding, motivation, and to enjoy an awesome day together! Our entire team gains expertise in KidsCo Jr.'s history and vision, philosophies and core values, tactics and approaches, teamwork and communication, teaching styles and strategies, and corporate policies and procedures.

Individual center teams attend another orientation at their center led by the Director. Here, they are given important, site-specific information on group meeting areas, locations of supplies, as well as emergency information (fire drill meeting locations, phone numbers and attendance procedures).

### **Team Meetings**

We expect all staff to attend monthly team meetings. These meetings will be scheduled by each center's Director and will take place on a scheduled evening at a local restaurant. Each center will cover upcoming projects, themes, events, observations, curriculum planning, and overall daily plans. We want to include all staff members' input into the program because their ideas are important to us and participation will promote a well organized and unified team.

## **Continuing Education**

Here at KidsCo Jr., we pride ourselves on our ability to hire and retain talented, top-notch team members! To maintain cutting edge strategies, rejuvenate and introduce new skills and ideas, we provide twenty four hours or more of current and interesting continuing education to all of our lead staff members. Assistant Teachers receive twelve hours worth of courses. Additionally, each of our team members is MD State Credentialed, which mandates double the amount of continuing education!

## **Resource Center**

KidsCo Jr. will have a professional staff resource center within the center's staff area. These resources will include the following: up-to-date professional journals, suggested reading lists, curriculum guides, current articles of interest, supply catalogs, motivational and educational books; resource idea books to further staff development and provide daily assistance

## **KidsCo Jr. Tuition & Fees**

Monthly installment rates are based on an annual fee and are paid in 12 monthly installments, from August through July.

### **Tuition Payments**

You will receive a billing statement each month. Tuition is due by the 15th of each month, prior to the month of service. Your tuition payments secure your child's enrollment in our program. Days missed due to illness, vacation, etc. will not be credited. If tuition payments are late (see below), a late fee will be applied. If tuition is not paid in full (including late fees) by the first day of each month, your child may not be allowed to attend KidsCo Jr., and you risk losing his/her space in our program. Once your tuition balance is caught up, your child may resume attendance in our program, provided that we have not given his/her space to another family.

### **Summer Opt-Out**

KidsCo Jr. understands that some families do not need care during the summer months. Therefore, families do have the option to "opt-out" for summer without a fee. The start of "summer" is determined by the first Monday of summer for MCPS. Once a family opts-out for the summer, they will forfeit their space until the new school year begins in late August.

### **Sibling Discount**

A 10% Sibling Discount is available for any family with more than one child enrolled in KidsCo Jr. This discount also applies if a sibling is enrolled in a school-age program with KidsCo, Inc. The discount will be applied to the oldest child enrolled. \*Please note that discounts may not be combined.

## **Receipts**

If you need a receipt to submit for a child care flex spending account, tax preparation, or personal records, please log into your parent account online. If you have trouble accessing your account, please call our Main Office for support.

## **Subsidies & Tuition Assistance**

KidsCo Jr. will gladly accept Working Parents Assistance (WPA), Department of Social Services (DSS), Purchase of Care (POC), NACCRRRA, and FEEA vouchers for child care.

Links to these organizations are provided on our website. Our administrative team is very familiar with these organizations and can provide information and guidance on how to receive tuition assistance, and answer any questions about the process. Parents will be responsible for any part of the tuition not covered by the vouchers. KidsCo Jr. will consider a scholarship or reduced tuition for a special needs family after all other financial avenues have been explored. The decision to provide a scholarship or reduced tuition will be made solely by KidsCo Jr., based upon input from the family's social services representative, and if applicable, the child's MCPS team.

## **Payment Methods & Fees**

For families choosing to pay by credit card, there will be a 3.5% processing fee charged to each payment made.

## **Returned Check Fee**

There will be a \$35 charge for all returned checks. KidsCo Jr. reserves the right to ask that your tuition be paid in cash, by money order, or cashiers' check if there is a history of returned checks.

## **Collection Fees**

In the unlikely event we must refer your account to our attorney or collection agency to aid in the collection of an outstanding balance, you shall be responsible for any collection fees KidsCo Jr. incurs.

## **Changes to Enrollment**

If you need to make a change to your child's enrollment plan, please contact our Main Office. To withdraw your child from our program, you must inform us at least two weeks in advance. Please contact our Main Office and/or provide written notice.

## **Late Fees**

Tuition is prepaid and is due by the 15th of each month, prior to the month of service. After a 15 day grace period, a late fee of \$30.00 is applied if tuition has not been paid before the 1st day of the month of service. If a parent is late picking up a child in the evening, a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged to the parent.

# Illness & Medication Policies

## Exclusion from Care

It is in the best interest of both your child and the center to keep sick children at home. Illness spreads easily, so please be courteous to everyone and don't bring your child to KidsCo Jr. if he/she is ill. Please use the following guidelines in assessing your child's health and determining if he/she is able to attend school. Your child should not attend school if:

### General Precautions

He/she does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in daily indoor and outdoor activities.

The level of care would necessitate attention by staff that may compromise the health or safety of other children in attendance. Symptoms or indicators are typical in illnesses for which exclusion for care is recommended.

### Fever & Behavioral Change

Please keep your child home if he/she has a temperature that is 100 degrees or higher when taken under the arm.

A child should not attend if he/she has a fever (of any temperature or grade), or if a change in behavior is present along with other signs of illness such as:

- Body rash
- Diarrhea
- Earache
- Excessive crying
- Individual's pain indicators
- Lethargy or listlessness
- Restlessness or agitation

- Sore throat
- Swollen glands
- Vomiting
- Wheezing

Your child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to KidsCo Jr. This time period should begin when the fever breaks with no medicinal assistance.

### Vomiting

Policy pertains to vomiting, regardless of cause or trigger, after first incident of vomit during the day (exceptions for infants - may be due to diet). Your child must not have vomited for 24 hours before returning to KidsCo Jr. This time period should begin when vomiting ceases with no medicinal assistance.

### Diarrhea/Constipation

- More than two loose stools during the school day
- Presence of runny, watery, and/or uncontrolled, and/or unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet
- Stools containing blood or mucus
- Any stools that cause discomfort or pain when passing or are impacted

Your child must not have diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to KidsCo Jr. This time period should begin when diarrhea ceases with no medicinal assistance.

### Colds & Flu

Being the most probable illness in young children, we ask that you use your best judgment when considering whether or not to bring your child to KidsCo Jr. Please remember that full participation in programming should be an enjoyable experience for children. Here are some facts to consider:

- The contagious period with a cold or flu is during the initial onset of symptoms. Additionally, your child's resistance to germs is reduced, which makes him/her more vulnerable to other infection.
- Colds often begin with consistent, clear nasal discharge (actually the most contagious period, and then move into a thick, creamy yellow or green color.

### Eye Discharge

Any mucus or pus draining from the eye.

- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge
- Excessive or bothersome itchiness or discomfort

**Please note:** Viral Conjunctivitis usually has a clear, watery discharge and may not require medication or exclusion, but does need a diagnosis from your pediatrician



### Coughing or Wheezing

- Severe coughing or wheezing that causes a child to get red or blue in the face or causes a loss of breath
- After coughing, a high-pitched whooping sound is indicated
- Any respiratory distress that causes an inability to rest comfortably or participate in daily indoor and outdoor activities

### Head Lice or Nits

Any observed lice (living or dead) or nits (eggs) on a child's scalp or hair.

Your child may not return to care until his/her hair and scalp have been treated with a medicated shampoo that is indicated for the treatment of head lice, and all nits have been removed with a specialized comb. No symptoms should be observed.

### Communicable Disease

Children with a communicable disease will not be allowed at KidsCo Jr. during the contagious period. Please notify the Director upon diagnosis. Examples include:

- Chicken Pox
- Fifth Disease
- Giardiasis
- Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease
- Hepatitis
- Impetigo
- Measles
- Meningococcal Disease
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Pinworms
- Poliomyelitis
- Ringworm
- Rubella
- Salmonella
- Scabies
- Scarlet Fever
- Streptococcal Infection
- Tuberculosis

### **Illnesses at KidsCo Jr.**

If, after being dropped off, your child complains of feeling sick or symptoms are noticed, we will provide temporary isolation while contacting you to require that you come and pick him/her up. We will notify other parents if your child experiences any of the above symptoms. Respectfully, to reduce risk of contamination, we request that your child be picked up within one hour of calling. In the event that you are unable to come to the center, a designated alternate person listed on your child's Emergency Information Card will be contacted.

### **Required Notification of Illness**

In addition to the regular notification you provide if your child will not be attending KidsCo Jr. on a regularly scheduled day, we ask that you notify us should your child be absent due to illness.

## **Signs of Illness in Children as Provided by the CDS Guide**

If a child in your care exhibits any of the following common signs of acute illness, you (provider) should contact the child's parent immediately and try to keep the child separated from the other children until the parent arrives.

<b>General Appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive crying, clinginess, fussiness</li><li>• Doubled over in pain, unable to move</li><li>• Listless, lethargic, unresponsive</li><li>• Vomiting, diarrhea</li><li>• Feverish</li><li>• Seizure (although child has no history of seizure disorder)</li></ul>
<b>Breathing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fast, shallow, gasping breaths</li><li>• Difficulty breathing, wheezing</li><li>• Sucking in around ribs</li><li>• Flaring nostrils</li><li>• Persistent or uncontrollable coughing</li></ul>
<b>Skin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pale, grayish, flushed, yellowish skin</li><li>• Hot or cold and clammy skin</li><li>• Skin rashes, sores, swelling, or bruising</li><li>• Scratching at skin or scalp</li><li>• Skin doesn't spring back when pinched</li></ul>
<b>Eyes, Nose, Ears, and Mouth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eyes swollen, red, crusty, watery, yellowish, or sunken</li><li>• Nose congested or runny</li><li>• Ears draining pus or blood</li><li>• Pulling at ears</li><li>• Mouth or lips with sores</li><li>• Sore throat, difficulty swallowing</li><li>• Excessive drooling</li></ul>
<b>Appearance of Urine/Stool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gray or white stool</li><li>• Black or blood-flecked stool</li><li>• Unusually dark or tea-colored urine</li></ul>

## Medication Administration

Parents will need to complete authorization for the Administration of Medication Form for each and every type of medicine to be administered. These are printable from the KidsCo Jr. website and are available at the center. All medications need to be personally given to a staff person with verbal instruction. For safety, no medication should be kept or stored in cubbies, lunchboxes, or backpacks. A designated staff person shall administer medications according to the Five Rights of Medication: 1) Right Child 2) Right Medication 3) Right Dose 4) Right Time 5) Right Method. Each time a medication is given, a record will be kept, detailing dose, time, and any reaction.

## Prescription Medication

“As needed” medications to treat symptoms at their onset must be provided to keep and store at the center. This includes EpiPen, Albuterol, nebulizer treatments, seizure medications, etc. All medications must have a valid expiration date and should be replaced before expiration.

## Non-Prescription/OTC Medications

For all medications, parents must provide the following:

- A completed Authorization Form, specifying the name of drug, reason for administration, time to be given, dosage, treatment start and end date, and method of administration. Physician signature is required. We suggest that families take the medication authorization form with them to the pediatrician to complete
- Medication in the original container that has the current pharmacist label and instructions. Child’s name, dosing instructions, drug name and manufacturer, current date, and contact information for the prescribing doctor. Current expiration date must be clearly displayed.
- A spoon or measuring device for any liquid medication. Please clearly label this, along with the medication box with your child’s name.

## Returning to Care

### Medication Requirements

No child may return to KidsCo Jr., unless they have been symptom free without the aid of over-the-counter remedies (Tylenol, Imodium, Benadryl, Robitussin, etc.)

If a fever is present during a flu/cold like illness, no child may return to KidsCo Jr. until they have been fever-free (without OTC remedies) for 24 hours.

Any diagnosed illness requires a 24 hour period of antibiotic treatment before returning to care.



## Doctor’s Notes

Doctor’s notes must include:

1. The date of appointment
2. What has been diagnosed?
3. Why the child is not contagious and is able to return to care?
4. What is the treatment or antibiotic?
5. When we should notice an improvement in symptoms?

Families will need a doctor’s note to readmit a child in these circumstances:

- If a child suffers from the same above illness indicators for two days or more, we will request the parent to pick up and to provide a doctor’s written statement
- If your child is medically absent for 3 days or more, a note from your physician is required before returning to care

Additionally, communicable diseases will require exclusion from care during their contagious period.

If applicable symptoms are observed, we will call you requesting that you pick up and provide written release from your doctor before returning. Please refer to the illness indicators for examples of communicable disease. (page 26)

In addition to your family doctor, KidsCo Jr. refers to the Communicable Diseases Summary, which is produced exclusively for Health Services in Group Care. You may refer to a copy at the MD Community Health Administration at [www.edcp.org](http://www.edcp.org). This resource, as well as MD approved Medication Administration Training, is the foundation for all of the above mentioned policies.



# Acknowledgement & Receipt of Parent Handbook

**Please read this acknowledgment and keep one copy for your records and return one to KidsCo Jr.**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the KidsCo Jr. Parent Handbook and any applicable Addendums. I understand that they contain important information pertaining to the policies, procedures, and operations of KidsCo Jr. I also understand that this Handbook is not intended to cover all possible situations and cannot be all inclusive. It is a general guide, for parent reference, to educate readers on KidsCo Jr.'s policies, procedures, and operations.

I recognize that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself and my family with all of the provisions of this Handbook. I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures stated in this Handbook and those that are posted in the Center.

Additionally, I understand that KidsCo Jr., at its sole discretion, reserves the right to make exceptions to, depart from, interpret, and apply the policies within this Handbook as they may determine.

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Child's Name

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Please Print Name