



HANDBOOK

2027

Version I

“Little Bubble Child Care, because we care about your Little Bubbles.”



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Welcome to Little Bubble Child Care, LLC! In this handbook, you will find all the answers to questions you may have! This handbook is your guide to all the child care’s policies. Please refer to this when questions arise; if you are unclear of something in this handbook, or you have further questions, feel free to contact us! We are delighted to care for your little bubbles and help them grow in every aspect of life!

We operate on a non-discriminatory status, regardless of race, ethnicity, color, sex, disability, or age.

Operating Procedures

Little Bubble Child Care, LLC is a licensed in-home child care, regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education; Division of Early Childhood. Our license number is 259463. Our Child Care follows MSDE: Office of Child Care's regulations Subtitle 15: FAMILY CHILD CARE. These regulations can be found on the MSDE: Office of Child Care's website at <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations>.

We offer full-time care for children aged six weeks to twelve years. Our traditional operating hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 5:00pm, excluding holidays. We explore a Christian-based curriculum with a focus on the Catholic faith, that also follows MSDE's Public School Standards.

We are operated by one individual, Mrs. Elizabeth DelRicco. Her duties include all administrative duties as well as education and caregiving to each child in care. Because we are an in-home program, back-up care is **essential** in the event our program closes. We have substitutes available, but they are not to replace Mrs Elizabeth in the event a closure is scheduled. Our program is a business as well as a home. We ask each individual to respect our property and belongings while visiting or attending our program.

Program's Philosophy

We believe that children are naturally curious beings that are growing fast. They require love, patience, flexibility, routine, experiences, and time to develop. These ingredients are what we strive to provide to each child in our program, every day.

We believe that a teacher should provide a safe, inclusive environment to which each child feels loved and safe to express themselves, has many opportunities to explore and experiment, and has a developmentally appropriate program that lets the children be children.

The perfect program has to be able to adapt and consistently reflect on their methods and environment. Thus, we strive to create an environment that meets the developmental needs of each child. We bring the best learning experience to children with disabilities ranging from emotional, social, cognitive, or physical by creating an environment that welcomes their differences and interests.

Our teaching philosophy is inspired by the theorist Jerome Bruner, the Waldorf teaching method, and discipline that aligns with Conscious Discipline Model, all centered on play.

It has been proven that play stimulates the child's senses and development by creating new experiences, experimenting, exploring, building on prior knowledge, sharpening skills, and building relationships. Thus, we strive to create a play rich environment. Jerome Bruner and the Waldorf Teaching Method supports the learning through play science.

A positive discipline method such as Conscious Discipline, allows the children to self-regulate and function in a healthy manner without the fear of punishment. Our positive discipline allows for natural consequences as well as tools for self-regulation and teacher support. We believe that **teaching** self-regulation skills and emotions will help the children go through life with skills to maintain relationships and work-ethic.

We center our program around the Christian Faith. Jerome Bruner explains that a child needs not only their physical, mental, and emotional development to be met, but also spiritual development. We center our program with God's love for all of us and show each other how differences make our world work.

Our philosophy is to educate each child from body to soul and mind, with play, creativity, and positive discipline. We believe that with these ingredients, a teacher will have a safe,

inclusive, and positive learning environment where the children can learn about themselves and the world through their own imagination and creativity at their own pace. Innovation is not solely based on intellect alone, but inspired by imagination. If we all think the same, or our imagination fades, we are not able to create new objects, medicines, defenses, etc. Teachers should be embracing each child's thinking and encouraging it throughout their development.

Holidays

We are closed on the following holidays:

- New Years Day
- Good Friday*
- Resurrection Monday*
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day*

*Tuition payments are expected for all Holidays except Good Friday, Resurrection Monday, and Christmas Day.

If a holiday falls on the weekend, we reserve the right to choose a day of observance for that holiday for either the Friday before or the following Monday. These will be posted at the beginning of the year.

Our hours change on the following days:

- Friday of Fair Week – 6:30 am to 1:00 pm
- Halloween – 6:30 am to 4:00 pm
- Black Friday – 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Provider Vacation, PTO, and Emergencies

Every one needs a break from their work environment and home. As the sole owner and caretaker of Little Bubble Child Care, LLC, there are a lot of responsibilities and burn-out happens quick. Ms. Elizabeth is entitled to two weeks (10 business days) of **paid** vacation time every year and 5 (business) days of **paid** time off. When vacation is scheduled, families will be given at least one month notice. When PTO is needed, families will be notified as soon as possible. In the event all vacation and PTO is consumed, we are entitled to take vacation or personal leave **without** pay. One month notice will still apply for vacation.

Emergencies happen and it involves stress and sometimes grief. This can occur with no warning or notice, whether it be personal or due to the facility. In the event of closure for emergencies, tuition will be required up to three (3) business days. Meaning, if we have to close for an emergency and remain closed for more than three days, tuition is **not** required. This excludes early pick-up in the event of an emergency.

In the past, we have been very accommodating regarding tuition and unexpected closures. We will still strive to continue being flexible, but please keep in mind these policies as a general rule.

Back-up care is crucial and necessary. Each family is responsible for finding alternate child care in the event of a closure, early release, or delay.

Professional Development

We are dedicated to keeping our staff educated, trained, and professional. Through the various programs we participate in, we are required to obtain at least 90 hours of continued training each year.

In some instances, trainings and other administrative duties are during the work day and are up the road. To fulfil these instances, we have the ability to close for up to four (4) business days a year - **paid**. These will be planned with at least one month notice.

Snow Days/Power Outages/Facility Malfunctions

Little Bubble Child Care will attempt to stay open during inclement weather. In the event of a tornado, flooding, hurricane, blizzard, etc., we required to shelter in place with the children and contact parents. If the weather is unsafe for parents to commute to child care, we would urge you to stay home until the weather is safe. During inclement weather, if the child attends, a waiver must be signed at drop-off. This waiver explains that Little Bubble Child Care, LLC and it's residents are not responsible for any damage or injury on the property during inclement weather. In the event of a power outage or facility disruption, we are required to notify parents for pick-up. When the program does not have power, running water, or heat, it is unsafe for the children. Tuition will be required.

You may contact us if you are unsure of the program's status.

Admission Requirements

Little Bubble Child Care is open to all families in our community and we operate on a non-discriminatory basis. We encourage families to be open and participate in our programs as we explore each child's culture. The only requirements to participate in our program are to

complete and maintain each child's paperwork and comply with the rules in this handbook and in the parent contract.

Enrollment Requirements and Updates

Under COMAR regulations, we are required to keep updated records for each child.

The Emergency Form is to be reviewed, initial, and revised if needed each year. To minimize disruptions to routines, we will have each family review, initial, and revise the ER form each August. Immunization records are to be updated **each** time a child is administered a vaccine. Lead tests are required at the age of 1 and 2 years for all children enrolled after birthyear 2015. If a child is two or older and has not had a lead test completed before then, only one lead test completed at the age of two is needed. The state also requires us to provide an Infant's and Toddler's brochure to families with children under three, each year. This will be done in August and upon enrollment.

For our program, a contract is required. This contract binds our business with families. This will be reviewed each new year. Please keep in mind, that your child should only attend during the hours on the contract. Fees will be applied if the child has overstayed their contract times, unless otherwise discussed with Ms. Elizabeth.

All required documentation will be provided and a summary of what is needed will be provided in your application packet.

In the meantime, changes to children's address, phone numbers, pick-up persons, authorized pick-up persons ID's, etc, are to be updated ASAP. Failure to do so may result in immediate termination.

Any important information regarding concerns about the child's behavior, health, or safety should be expressed before enrollment. Failure to disclose important information will result in termination.

Waitlist and Enrollment Holding

We maintain a waitlist for families that wish to enroll at times where we are at capacity or cannot accommodate. To be placed on our waitlist, families must provide the child's date of birth, parent name, email, anticipated start date, and preferred care schedule. When we receive this information, we will place the family on our waitlist and email them a waitlist confirmation email. If, at any time, the family wishes to be off the waitlist, please email us or reply to the email. This saves us tons of time when going through our waitlist during an enrollment opportunity.

If a family is enrolled, but they are not to start within two weeks, a Holding Deposit will be applied. This deposit is valid for two weeks and is non-refundable. The Holding Deposit is one week's tuition.

If holding a spot for longer than those two weeks (four total), a Long-term Holding Deposit will be required. The Long-term Holding Deposit is one full week's tuition **plus** half weeks, each month. This is also non-refundable.

Holding deposits are collected at time of application submission and acceptance. Long-term Holding Deposits are collected at time of application submission and acceptance as well as by the first of each month.

If a family should decide to withdrawal from our program, our Termination Policy will be enforced.

Communication

The children's safety is our top priority. One of the ways we ensure safety, is effective and honest communication with families. Families should respond to calls or texts from Ms Elizabeth within a timely manner, especially when their child is at our program for the day. Our main communication source is through text and FaceBook (for our generalized audience). Phone calls from Ms Elizabeth are used in the event of an emergency, unless scheduled. If a phone call was attempted and no answer, Ms Elizabeth will follow up with three more phone calls within minutes. If the primary contact cannot be reached, the alternate authorized pick-up persons on the child's Emergency Form will be contacted.

Routines are our lifesavers. It allows children to feel comfortable, safe, and independent. So trying to keep a consistent routine, will benefit your child, yourself, and our program. If your child has a change in their routine (doctor's appointment, family day, sickness, etc.), you are required to let Ms Elizabeth know. More information about attendance is on page 11.

We hold ourself to the same standard regarding effective communication. We have various communication methods. As mentioned, text is the most common and calls during care are emergencies. Our FaceBook page is for our general audience. This is where we share our day, reminders, and resources. Our Parent Area has many other methods of communication. We have a calendar for families to look at for any changes, important dates, and closures, a monthly newsletter, resources to take home, mail folders, and more. Families are encouraged to take a few minutes each week to check the parent area.

Removing Your Child from Our Program

Little Bubble Child Care requires a two-week (10 business days) **written** notice before removing your child(ren) from our program with tuition before the service period. Re-enrollment will occur if the child will re-attend our program.

Contract Breach/Termination

Here at Little Bubble Child Care, we try to be very understanding and open. We ask that important changes and information, is shared with us as soon as possible. If we are aware of something that may breach the contract because the parents let us know, we may be able to help and void a contract breach. This is depending on the situation, of course. If the contract is breached, there will be a contract breach warning letter sent. With each letter sent, we will ask for a meeting, whenever convenient for the parents. If three letters are sent, care for the child may be terminated with a termination letter. If there is any threat to our business, the children, families, or to Ms Elizabeth, immediate termination will occur. Please note that the letters may be typed, texted, or emailed.

Breastfeeding and Nursing

Our program is intended to be a safe place for all who enter. We value privacy and boundaries. For mothers who are breastfeeding or nursing, we have a few different spaces in our program to do so in comfort and privacy. Please let Ms. Elizabeth know if you plan on breastfeeding or nursing so we can ensure your experience follows our values.

Arrival/Pick-up

During arrival, the child(ren) must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Upon arrival, the child must be signed in and we encourage the families to stay in the parent area. Please use the arrival time in the morning to drop off your child, as it will interfere with the daily routine.

Our cut-off time for arrivals is 10:00 am. If the child will arrive later than the arrival time in contract, please ask permission so we are aware and can better prepare. **We reserve the right to refuse care that day for late arrivals.**

When picking up your child(ren), please sign them out and gather their things. Only people who are listed in the child(ren)'s emergency form or have written approval from family, with a valid ID, are permitted to pick-up the child. If someone not listed to pick up the child(ren), we will call the primary parent or guardian to confirm.

Children are **not** to arrive during meal times or nap as this disrupts our eating and nap routine.

Children are to be picked up **BY** 5:00 pm. They should be signed out and out of the program **before** 5:00. Please abide by the contract times, as it will interfere with schedules and routines. Your contract times are in the contract that was signed upon enrollment. You may obtain a copy by speaking to Mrs. Elizabeth.

Late pickup is defined as any time a child is at Little Bubble Child Care, LLC outside of contracted hours and/or outside of our operating hours, without permission from Mrs. Elizabeth. Children are to be off of the property before those times. Arriving at the ended contract time or operating hours, will incur late fees. Staying on the property at or after the ended contract time or operating hours, will incur late fees. Authorized pick-up persons should allow time to gather children's belongings, sign-out, and communicate with Mrs. Elizabeth without going outside of these hours. Fees are as described; before or after contract times - \$5 per 5 minutes; before or after hours, the late fee is \$10 every 5 minutes. To avoid late fees, please ask Ms Elizabeth for permission to stay.

Tuition and Payment

We charge a non-refundable deposit that covers the parent- initiated, two week termination period. This deposit is two weeks of tuition. We offer a Gradual Deposit Option (GDO) that allow families to contribute smaller amounts over time until the deposit is paid. The GDO has a set up fee of \$10 that is paid upfront. An agreement between our program and the family will be required. Families that pay the entire deposit amount before care starts, waive GDO fee.

Families can choose from the options on the contract, of when their payments will be do. The options listed on the contract are **Weekly, Bi-Weekly, and Monthly**. Please note: ALL PAYMENTS ARE DUE ONE (1) BUSINESS DAY BEFORE CARE SERVICE PERIOD. When choosing weekly payments, payments are due every Friday. Bi-weekly payments are due every other Friday. Monthly payments are due on the first business day of each month. We charge for the upcoming care. **Tuition is to hold a child's spot, not their attendance.** This can be compared to rent or a mortgage.

Invoices and receipts are sent through Parachute by KidKare. Upon enrollment, each child is enrolled into the CACFP's KidKare software where they also have an account with Parachute.

There are many payment options that we accept – personal checks, money orders, cashier's checks, cash, and online payments. We have Venmo and Parachute as online payment options. All families are automatically enrolled in Parachute for their tuition account. See Ms. Elizabeth on the transaction fees for online payments.

Failure to pay in full on the chosen payment contract option will result in a verbal and/or written warning and \$10 per day in late fees. After five (non-business) days of unpaid tuition, the

child will lose care until all debts are paid in full. If tuition is not paid within two (non-business) weeks, the child's enrollment spot will be filled and all dues will need to be paid. Failure to pay within one month may result in legal action.

We charge for part-time care and full-time care differently. Each age group will also be different. Tuition is based on **nine** hours; over nine hours is an **additional** \$25/week. In case of a national emergency, where schools are doing hybrid, there will be additional fees in order to accommodate the school schedule and extra labor involved (NOT LISTED IN HERE). Active military and law enforcement officers will receive a 5% discount on service charge each week as gratitude for their service.

Prices below are PER WEEK:

Full-time (Over 4 hours)

Infant and not potty trained - \$265

Preschool and potty trained - \$245

We will provide receipts of payment within two business days of the received payment.

Child Care Scholarships

We participate in the Maryland Excels program that allows us to accept Child Care Scholarships. Child Care Scholarships, here forth referred to as CCS, is a Maryland State funded program for families to aid in finding quality child care. The state will subsidize the child care tuition based on family income, employment, and provider tuition rates.

We encourage EACH family to look into the program, or ask Mrs Elizabeth for more information or how to get started!

If a family participates in the CCS program, the family is responsible for covering tuition if there is an issue with CCS. This may arise if applications are not submitted and approved before the last week of the month, the invoices are not validated by the parent or provider in time, or another issue. If, for whatever reason, the tuition is not paid by CCS, Mrs Elizabeth may inform the family of a tuition balance.

In the case CCS Central has paid tuition late and family has already paid, the family will have the choice between a credit or refund. Late fees will not be applied until 5 (non-business) days have passed since notice of tuition balance.

Some families may have a co-payment. This is the difference in what CCS does not cover for tuition. Families are required to pay the co-payment in the full amount and according to their contract.

Program Information

Little Bubble Child Care provides an *Infant and Toddler Program* for children six weeks to twenty-four months of age. In this program, we offer a safe and explorable environment for the children to unleash their curiosity and develop their minds, bodies, and souls. With many opportunities presented to the children, the children will build relationships with staff and other children to promote their self-esteem and academic skills.

Little Bubble Child Care provides a *Preschool Program* that enriches their past experiences with new ones and gather new and improved knowledge about the environment around them. The *Preschool Program* is for children two and older, until they are placed in a school program. This program is centered around play, with a set time for formal instruction. The children will gather ideas from themes and activities they complete.

The infant and preschool programs use Investigator's Club. Investigator's Club is a Maryland State approved curriculum, where we individualize instruction to accommodate children of all abilities.

All of our programs are based in the Catholic faith. We do not require children to practice the Catholic faith with us, however we do encourage it and our curriculum and program is revolved around it. We respect all other religions, and we will explore others as well to let the children know that there are different religions around the world and even in our community.

Lastly, we offer many opportunities for physical activity. We require families to dress their children according to the weather as we are mandated to go outdoors twice a day for a minimum of thirty minutes each session. Read more in Attire. While not being able to go outside safely, we have various free-play activities/materials readily available for free-play. These activities and materials focus on gross motor skills.

Parents Night Out

One of our special programs that we offer is Parents Night Out. Parents Night Out (PNO) is usually the first Friday every month unless stated otherwise. This program runs from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm at a flat rate of \$40 per PNO. Payment must be made in full before the child attends PNO. If payment is not received, the child may not attend this program. Late pick-up fees apply starting at 10:00 pm at the rate \$20 every 5 minutes. Children and families should be off of the property no later than 10:00 pm.

This program is relaxed and treated as a small party for those that attend. Pizza, snacks, and milk/water will be provided. We will watch child friendly, and appropriate movies and shows that reflect our Program's morals and standards. We will provide a different, fun activity

each month and the children are free to choose what they do. Outside play is an option under the conditions that weather is favorable and an adult is able to supervise. Children 18 months or older, whom are currently enrolled or were enrolled and left on favorable terms and their siblings, may participate.

Behavior, sickness, and communication set in this handbook apply to PNO, as does the fees and consequences.

Children do not need to bring anything except diapers. Children may bring toys, pillows, blankets, snacks, pajamas, and anything appropriate. Little Bubble Child Care, LLC, nor their staff, are liable for any damages or lost items while participating in PNO.

Each month, families must RSVP on our website if they wish to participate in PNO. RSVP's are open starting the second Friday each month, until the Monday before. We are still mandated to follow our license, so spots are limited.

Saturday Care

Saturday Care is the third Saturday each month unless otherwise stated, from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm with a flat rate of \$55 / day for each child. This is a structured, free-play program that allows families time for self-care, chores, work, and many other opportunities. Morning snack, 9:30 am, and lunch, 12:15 pm, are provided. A structured curriculum may not apply to Saturday Care, but activities will be encouraged and offered.

Families may use this program every month or sporadically without the commitment. We only ask that families let us know which month they need Saturday Care to make appropriate accommodations **no later than the Wednesday before.**

This is open to all families under the regulations of our license. This means that we must maintain ratios, regulations, and paperwork set forth by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood in our license. Paperwork must be completed and submitted at least two days before care.

All policies set in this handbook apply to Saturday Care!

Daily Routine

We will have daily routines that will guide all of us throughout the day and provide a safe environment for all children. We will attempt to stay by this routine, so that the children will always know what to expect for the day. Below is a rough template of our daily routine. This may change and all changes will be posted in the parent area, newsletter, and on the walls for the children to refer to.

7:00 – 7:15 am	Arrival / child-selected free play / provider greets children and families
7:15 – 7:30 am	Clean up / potty time / dance songs
7:30 – 8:00 am	Breakfast
8:00 – 8:15 am	Clean up / potty time / dance songs
8:15 – 9:00 am	Child selected free play / outdoor play (weather permitting)
9:15 – 9:30 am	Clean up / potty time / dance songs
9:30 – 9:45 am	Morning Snack
9:45 – 10:00 am	Clean up / potty time / dance songs
10:00 – 10:05 am	Circle time/morning meeting (whole group)
10:05 – 10:30 am	Teacher-guided lessons* (small group and individual)
10:30 - 10:45 am	Clean up / potty time / dance songs

10:45 – 11:25 am	Child-selected free play / outdoor play (weather permitting)
11:25 – 11:30 am	Clean up / potty time / dance songs
11:30 – 12:15 pm	Quiet play (reading, art, puzzles)
12:15 – 12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45 – 1:00 pm	Clean up / potty time / provider reads books
1:00 – 3:00 pm	Nap time / quiet time**
3:00 – 3:25 pm	Potty time / afternoon snack
3:25 – 5:00 pm	Child Selected free play / dismissal

* Children with IEPs/IFSPs will have work appropriate for them, while still participating with the group

** School-age children can do appropriate quiet time activities that will not disturb the children who are sleeping; all children under the age of **eight** will be encouraged to nap appropriate to their age.

NOTE: For infants, we accommodate the schedule for their needs, this includes feeding, sleeping, activities. Infant activities are throughout the day and developmentally appropriate.

Nap Time Policy

Nap time is crucial for children eight years and younger. Their bodies grow the most during sleep. Nap time allows children to regulate their body, rest their minds, and reset for the rest of the day. It also allows our staff time to get tasks done that cannot be done while the children are awake. Naps are non-negotiable. If a child has outgrown naps, they have outgrown our program.

Unless an emergency, visitors, pick-ups, and drop-offs are prohibited. This time is to allow children peace, quiet, and rest without disruptions. Please plan accordingly.

Discipline Policy

The proper discipline has a powerful effect on children's behavior. Showing the children how to act and manage their emotions, is a big part of discipline. The staff of Little Bubble Child Care, LLC model the behavior we expect/encourage from the children. Following this, is the Conscious Discipline Model that we use as a tool to manage and learn our emotions. We have Feeling Buddies and a safe space for the children when they are feeling a strong emotion and need time to understand the emotions by themselves. This is a voluntary action that we encourage the children to participate in.

The children help make the boundaries of the classroom. This allows the children to have a voice in the classroom and helps them to remember the boundaries. We evaluate the boundaries every few months to ensure that our classroom is growing with us!

We use many forms of positive discipline throughout the day by giving them opportunities to make their own choices through various play materials and activities. Redirection is frequently used when a child may be struggling to follow the boundaries set by the class. Redirection involves offering other play materials or activities they may enjoy. They may choose from the options given or suggest another option. The children are free to choose what they play with and how they play, safely. We may use picture cards or point to the activities to ensure the child understands which activities and can physically see what looks appealing to them. Redirection also involves descriptive praise to children who are following the boundaries of the class.

We practice problem-solving with the children by acknowledging their feelings, reflecting on the problem, brainstorming solutions, and testing the solutions. We provide guidance and allow the children to make decisions and effort.

To help reduce negative behaviors, we reward positive behavior with descriptive praise, ensure their needs are met, watch for signs of frustration or anger, ensure a developmentally appropriate program, use appropriate transitions between activities, adjust to the needs of the child, and build and maintain strong relationships with each child.

Electronic Use

Electronic use will be limited to thirty minutes per week and is used to facilitate learning experiences. Very seldom will we use electronic technology in our curriculum, but it can be a helpful tool and we will use it when we believe will be beneficial. We may use services such as YouTube or educational websites to expand our activities and lessons. We use child appropriate interactive videos, such as exercise videos, as transitions, brain breaks, or as a calm down method. We do **not** use screen time for children under **two**.

Community Engagement

As a part of our program, we will try to get the children out to explore our community. We will go on field trips or host community events as a part of our theme for the month. We will send out permission slips to families four weeks before the adventure. We may take trips to the Church for Daily Mass on Thursdays, as part of our religion Thursdays. On Mondays, we may go to the library. More information on all of this, will be posted in the monthly newsletters. Those that do not wish to participate in these activities are to keep their child home until we have arrived back at the program.

Parent Involvement/Volunteers

We encourage all families to be involved in our program. We will have many opportunities for parents to participate in with our program. We also ask our families to be volunteers when we go on our field trips and our Church and library days. This will help us manage the children on our trips, and it will give the families and children time to build stronger relationships. Parent involvement is important in our curriculum, as well as our children.

Screenings and Assessments

To effectively reflect on our curriculum, we will routinely do screenings and assessments on all children. Assessments will be completed upon enrollment, every 6 months, or unless otherwise needed. These screenings and assessments will measure each child's growth and find areas of improvement. With this information, we can adjust our curriculum, environment, and teaching strategies accordingly. All information gathered will be confidential and shared to only the child's family. Families are encouraged to bring a copy of their child's assessment to their pediatrician.

Conferences

Following each assessment, we will ask parents for a conference. During these conferences, we will discuss the child's results and have time to reflect on their growth and development. This will be a time for parents and families to ask any questions or concerns they may have, or to give suggestions that may help their child. Conferences will be done at least twice a year. Notice of upcoming conference dates and times will be sent out in the newsletter and on the parent board. On the parent board, parents will be able to choose the date and time they would like to schedule the conference.

If a parent would like to schedule a conference outside of the normal conference dates, they are encouraged to fill out a “Conference Request” and hand it to one of the staff members.

Educational Professionals and Visitors

Your child’s success is an important goal to us. This also includes having educational professionals and visitors that specialize in certain areas of early childhood development to observe, work with, or give feedback about our program, children, and educators. These professionals are here to support our educators and staff and sometimes, the children. We have many visitors that focus on our program and educators that may come in regularly. These include our MSDE Licensing Specialist, our CACFP Sponsor, our MSDE CLASS Observer, Accreditation specialist, and others. These inspections and observations are vital to the success of our program, educators, and children. Some of these interactions are scheduled, and others are spontaneous. Notice will be given if an observation is scheduled or an inspection has taken place.

Some professionals and visitors may be in the best interest of our program. If Ms. Elizabeth needs extra support in her environment or teaching strategies, she may request an outside agency to come and give guidance. Some of these agencies are Child Resource Connect, Child Find, and Infants and Toddlers. Please note that these agencies are **not** to work with specific children, but to support Ms. Elizabeth. However, Ms. Elizabeth may request an evaluation of a child with **both parents’ or guardians’ permission** if she deems necessary from these agencies or abroad.

Families are encouraged to seek outside resources if they feel the need. These professionals are more than welcome to work with your child at our program. This could include speech therapy, physical therapy, socio-emotional therapy, or anything else that helps support the

child. Please just ask permission and give a schedule to Ms. Elizabeth so we can plan accordingly.

Inclusion Policy and IEP/IFSP

We want to ensure that each child gets the opportunities and experiences that help them develop knowledge and skills. If a child has a disability that may interfere with their learning and they have an IEP or an IFSP, we ask the family to provide a copy of it to include in the child's portfolio. This is optional and confidential. We will make the necessary accommodation and modifications to ensure that the child receives the best experiences and education. There will also be community resources in the parent box and can be made available upon request.

We also strive and encourage to create a relationship with the early intervention services and health care providers to ensure communication and to help support the family and child. Assessments may be performed more often than typical to strategize and reflect on the care given. This allows the family, health care providers, and anyone else working with the child, as well as Ms Elizabeth, to track the progress and re-evaluate care and curriculum to better serve the child.

We value each individual difference and strive to build confidence and self-esteem for each child.

Accommodating Family Requests

We strive to make our environment as comfortable for each child and their families within our abilities. We are able to fulfill accommodations and modifications for children and their families that have medical needs, developmental delays, and other necessary circumstances as described under the ADA. Personal preferences are not accommodations that we can fulfill.

Toilet Training

Toilet training can be time consuming and frustrating. We offer support for toilet training for children three and under. Because consistency with young children is key, families need work with us as partners.

Children develop at their pace and the same goes with potty training. It is best to encourage toilet training by being positive and offering stories, games, and other engaging activities that support toilet training. We encourage families to be on the lookout for toilet training readiness cues from their children and share them with our staff. When both parties feel the child is ready to start toilet training, we can come up with a plan. Our program is flexible with many toilet training options. Feedback from both parties on the child's growth or regression is imperative. Consistent and clear communication should be practiced. And remember, toilet training can be scary and hard for children just as it is frustrating for adults.

A child is considered fully toilet trained when they are able to

1. have less than two accidents in a two week period – not including nap times;
2. independently wipe;
3. put clothing on and off;
4. postpone going if the toilet is being occupied;
5. recognize their need to go to the toilet before it becomes an emergency;
6. and wash hands appropriately;

all without prompting or consistent help from an adult for more than two consecutive months.

Once the child has mastered the above, Mrs. Elizabeth will evaluate a rate decrease and a new contract will be assigned. If the child begins to have accidents and/or shows signs of regression, Mrs. Elizabeth will ask families to re-evaluate possible triggers. Please note that this may result in tuition raising to the “Not Toilet Trained Care” until the child has mastered the above.

Nutrition Policy

Proper nutrition of all humans is required to be happy and healthy. We ensure that each child gets the proper nutrition. With guidance from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Maryland child care standards, we closely monitor the ingredients and quality of the food we serve by **limiting sugar, fats, and salt** and comparing them to the serving sizes and resources provided by CACFP and MSDE. More information on our participation in CACFP is in the following section labeled “Child and Adult Care Food Program”.

Our Breakfasts are different each day and cereal is always available. We strive to cook and serve whole food lunch that rotate on a five-week schedule. Our snacks are closely monitored with their ingredients. Our menus change every Lenten Season, Spring/Summer, and Fall/Winter. We encourage families to send us their favorite recipes to try.

With a medical form completed by a physician, we accommodate and provide alternative meals for children with sensitivities or allergies. These alternative meals follow the CACFP guidelines.

We do not believe in forcing a child to eat, but we do give the child full serving of the food provided. We encourage them to taste the food each and every time it is served, at least two times. If they do not like it, they do not have to eat it. We encourage children to eat by explaining

how it's good for them, what it tastes like, and how it's made or where it came from. We also allow the children to spectate and sometimes help prepare food and this helps to make the children more comfortable with the food. Doing small lessons and activities or simply reading a book about trying new foods, encourages the children and they enjoy the activities!

Foods from home are acceptable, under the conditions that they are nutritious. This includes, but is not limited to; sugar intake, grains, and ingredients. There are more guidelines on acceptable foods from home that are permitted at our program, in the parent box attached to the parent area. Families are welcome to take home the resources that guide in making healthy food choices, how to encourage healthy eating habits, recipes, and more. Foods that do not follow those guidelines will be put in a Ziploc bag if opened, returned to the parent, and the child will be given appropriate substitutes.

While at our program, children are to eat snacks and meals at the designated snack and meal times unless of a medical accommodation. Children are not to graze outside of these times. This includes during drop-off and pickup. If a child walks in with food, we will ask the family to take it with them, or put it away until the next snack or meal time. If the food is inappropriate for our program as described, it will be given to the parent immediately.

While eating, all children should be sitting down at a table. This is a safety concern as well as mannerism. Children are expected to sit at the table with their friends until all children have finished. This fosters a sense of respect for others, appreciation for food, patience, and allows children not to feel rushed when eating. Children will often finish their food while others are also at the table waiting. This encourages strong, intentional conversations. We strive to teach appropriate dining manners to children, please help us accomplish this by following our policy while in our classroom.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Little Bubble Child Care participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). By participating in this program, we are ensuring that the children in our care, are getting the appropriate nutrition based on their age. We are required to take attendance of each child every day, and record what they all eat throughout the day. This is not a requirement for your child to participate in, but they do have to be enrolled. We get reimbursed for the meals we serve and how many children we serve, every month. The amount depends on the attendance, so your participation is greatly appreciated! More information can be found in your enrollment packet. If you have any questions, contact us!

Safety and Security

To ensure the safety of the children, all of our staff is highly trained in CPR and First Aid. We have evacuation routes with emergency numbers by each exit and we have an emergency bag ready to go. We also ensure our environment is safe and secure at all hours of the day. Our door remains locked under a passcode that **only** regular pick-up persons should know. To reiterate, persons picking up children that are **not** authorized or regular, should **not** have the door code. They should ring the doorbell and wait for either us to come to the door, or for the door to beep, signaling it is unlocked. This allows families access to their children, while ensure unwanted visitors are kept out. Families are to lock the door behind them when leaving the program if the door was locked upon arrival. Upon arrival, the door's lock will have a checkmark that lights blue or orange. The orange light means it is locked, the blue means it is unlocked.

Our premises is video surveillance 24/7. The recordings are only for the residents of our home, our license specialist, and law enforcement. Families do not have access to video surveillance to protect the other children's privacy. The purpose of the surveillance is to monitor

unwanted persons, as well as protect our program, children, and families from potential harm or threats.

If families would like copies of our emergency protocols, they can request them at any time by asking Ms Elizabeth.

Child Abuse and Neglect

As an educator, community partner, and licensed child care program we are a mandated reporter. Ms Elizabeth is trained in identifying, preventing, and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Unfortunately, many children are victims of abuse and/or neglect from friends, family, and strangers. Our program is dedicated to being a safe and inclusive environment for all children, especially those with past traumas.

Photography and Publicity

As part of keeping our children safe, we do not post pictures of children's faces or any identifying information on our website or social media. We do share pictures of the children and their activities, but faces are covered and names are blurred.

Pictures and videos of other children by a family is **prohibited** unless granted permission from all parties. Immediate termination will occur if this is broken.

Open Door

We love having our families in our program! Our program has an open door policy which means families are able to come in our program at most times of the day. However, we do ask that families give us a heads up before entering. If your child has a hard time adjusting with their family leaving, we ask that visitations are kept to a minimal and not during meals, lessons, or nap

times. **Only persons on the child's emergency form are permitted to come in unless discussed with Ms. Elizabeth.**

Respect and Expectations

Sometimes, we may be disappointed in an interaction with another person. We understand that dispute can happen between families, a parent and staff member, or within a child's family. Disputes can be a healthy interaction as long as respect and communication take place.

Disputes between any party should be kept away from the children. If a parent is not satisfied with their service or has an issue they would like to resolve, they should contact Ms. Elizabeth and set up a time for a productive discussion. A request can be made either through a letter or text message.

During interactions, respect should always be maintained regardless of emotional state. If any party feels uncomfortable or unsafe, it is advised to take a break and schedule a different time to continue the conversation. Sensitive conversations should **not** take place in front of other families or children.

Disrespect from a client to any person visiting or residing on the property will result in immediate termination and further action may take place. Intentional damage to any property of Little Bubble Child Care, LLC will be reported to the St. Mary's County Sheriffs Office and the responsible party will need to pay for repairs and/or replacement.

Child Behavior and Endangerment

In rare cases, a child may be terminated for unsafe behaviors. This will occur if the family refuses to work with us on potentially dangerous behaviors with their children or the child

has shown no improvement and is posing a threat to other children, the persons that reside in the program, or the property. Unsafe behaviors include, but are not limited to; meaningful threats, continuous hitting, kicking, biting, consistently refusing to follow directions that violate safety of themselves, another person, or property, and aggressive language. Some of these behaviors mentioned are developmentally **typical**, not developmentally **appropriate**, as children are learning to manage their behaviors. However, children who exhibit these behaviors on a regular basis (5 or more times a week), will need a parent-teacher conference and a Behavioral Intervention Plan to support the child.

The first step when we notice unsafe behaviors is to document, inform the family, and try different strategies to support the child. If this does not work or becomes worse, a parent conference will be requested. This will allow Mrs. Elizabeth to gain insight on the behaviors and concerns at home as well as share her observations and strategies with the family. A plan will be implemented that both parties should agree on. Upon implementing the plan, both parties should document and communicate any changes they observe with each other. This can be done through various communication styles including another conference. Mrs. Elizabeth may request an outside agency to come in the program and work with her and the child, with parent permission. If at any time Mrs. Elizabeth or the staff do not feel comfortable continuing care, termination may occur.

As your child's educator, we are committed to working with your child and their families. We strive to build a partnership that extends out of the classroom and into the child's home life and abroad. Families are expected to support their child in the school setting, at home, and any place outside of the classroom.

Sickness

Keeping our program safe, also means reducing the risk of sickness. We strive to provide the cleanest space for our children, but sometimes being clean, disinfected, and sanitized does not help. If your child is feeling under the weather, we advise them to stay home until 48 hours of no symptoms unless discussed with Ms. Elizabeth. Symptoms include: inconsolable, excessive runny nose or cough, low-grade fever, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, red-ish/pink eyes, excessive snot or cough, pale/flushed skin, watery eyes, etc.. Doctor's note is **NOT** accepted. The staff of Little Bubble Child Care, LLC have the right to refuse care or send a child home if they feel the child cannot participate appropriately, are acting out of their normal (within reason), or the child shows any signs of being uncomfortable.

If a child becomes sick under our care, we will contact the parent to have them pick up the child. The child needs to be picked up **immediately**, no later than an hour. This hour is meant for traveling families, not for families to take advantage of the hour. Your child needs you and their home. If the child is not picked up within an hour or there is no response from the family within 30 minutes, emergency contacts will be contacted **AND** fees of \$10/five minutes may occur. Meanwhile, we will attempt to keep the sick child away from the others and make them as comfortable as we can until they are picked up.

We **require** notice if any child has contracted any disease or sickness and/or any persons in the child's home has a communicable disease or sickness. We will inform other families if there is a contagious illness reported at the program. Names and any identifying information are confidential. When reporting a sickness in the child's home, details of the person(s) sick, are **not** necessary. We only require that the family contacts Ms. Elizabeth **before** care or asap of the

sickness or symptoms. We require the child to stay home for at least **48** hours depending on the sickness (like flu, RSV, etc.).

Failure to follow the sick policy will result in **immediate termination**. This includes, sending a child in with a fever on medication, failure to report any contagious diseases or sickness within the child's home, or attempting to send child back within **48** hours of symptoms or against the staff's instruction. This means that we reserve the right to refuse care **more** than 48 hours based on the severity of the sickness and type of sickness. Flu, COVID, RSV, and other serious sicknesses will need to be discussed with Ms. Elizabeth before returning to child care.

Please understand that we have weaker immune systems, so when one of us get sick, all of us do. This impacts all of our other families. We have always strived to be flexible, but we cannot do that if families do not communicate with us.

Medications

Our staff is equipped with the qualifications, knowledge, and experience in administering medications. If your child needs medication administered during our care, there are several options to administer the medication. With a completed and signed Medication Form, we are able to administer the medication to the child; we will document every step on a separate paper for the parents to look over. The parent may also come to the program to administer the medication to their child. The last option is to have the child's health care provider come and administer the medication to the child. The choice is whatever you feel comfortable with!

Vaccinations

MSDE recommends following the CDC's guidelines for vaccinations. A copy can be provided upon request. We do not require children to be vaccinated to attend our program, however we do still need an alternative to vaccine records.

Sun Screen/Bug Spray

We value outdoor play, but in the summer months, it can be nasty. The sun is very powerful and the bugs are very buggy. We encourage parents to provide us with sun protection and bug spray for their child, along with a signature for permission for us to apply the sun protection and bug spray. For younger children, we suggest bringing the child with a sun hat to protect their scalp from the sun. Sunscreen and bug sprays will be sent home at the end of each calendar year and new ones will need to be acquired before the warm weather occurs. Sun screen and bug sprays will be unopened and unexpired.

Attire

Please bring your child in weather appropriate attire. We suggest keeping a few pairs of clothes in their cubbies in case of weather changes, or mistakes. A good rule of thumb is to be prepared for the crazy Maryland weather changes. Try to regularly switch out their clothes every season. We suggest a pair of tennis shoes and water shoes, along with child appropriate water clothes. We do not allow our children to wear bikinis or be shirtless, even during water play. We will try to provide clothes if needed for that day, but we would like for them to be returned, so that other children may be able to wear them if needed.

If a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, they may not attend until they are changed. We are required to go outdoors twice a day for a minimum of 30 minutes, weather permitting. It is our responsibility to ensure children are dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. If a child is not dressed appropriately, it puts our license at risk.

Children whom are being toilet trained are not to be brought in clothing that hinders their ability to undress and dress themselves. This includes but is not limited to: onesies, button-up shirts, rompers, tight clothing, etc.. A good rule of thumb is if you have to snap, button, or

struggle to undress or dress your child, they should not be wearing it. Shoes should also follow this standard. We will wash clothing that has been dirtied from our care and returned to the child's cubbies.

Child Hygiene and Wellness

Children are expected to be dressed for the day and maintain appropriate hygiene practices outside of our program.

While in our program, we will foster appropriate hygiene practices that include proper handwashing and toileting techniques, dressing and undressing themselves, child appropriate cleaning and maintaining the classroom environment (cleaning toys they are done with, cleaning their food space with appropriate materials, etc.), shielding their mouths while coughing or sneezing, appropriate use of the tissue station, and appropriate table manners. We encourage families to bring unopened, unexpired, labeled toothbrushes and toothpaste so that we can practice dental hygiene if we have the ability to do so. This will not take place of teeth brushing at home.

Items from Home

We all want to show our friends our cool stuff from home, but we want to limit how much we bring to the program, to avoid confusion and arguments. We allow items from home, but we encourage the children to take their items home with them each night and to keep them in their cubbies when they are not using them.

Supplies

Families of all children are expected to supply the child's diapers, clothes, pacifiers, lotions, toothbrush (optional), toothpaste (optional), and any other personal item. These items should be **unopened**, **unexpired**, and **labeled** except for clothing. Any kind of topical ointment,

including sunscreen and bug spray, will be unopened, unexpired, and have a Topical Ointment Form completed and on file. We will try our best to keep extra supplies on hand in case of emergencies. We provide formula (decided by Ms. Elizabeth), wipes, snacks and meals, water bottles, craft supplies, blankets, sheets, and pillows. Items are washed weekly or as needed. We appreciate any donations!