



## Parent Handbook

Updated April 30, 2024

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## 1. **PURPOSE**

The Gorton Children's Learning Center (CLC) is a non-profit childcare program serving children from six weeks through five years of age. The purpose of the Center is to provide quality care and instruction for children whose parents need a flexibly scheduled daycare/preschool center between the hours of 8:15 am and 4 pm Monday-Friday.

## 2. **GOALS**

The Children's Learning Center is proud to have goals that provide your child with:

- An atmosphere that promotes physical, emotional, intellectual, creative, and social development guided by a research-based curriculum.
- An environment that is safe and nurturing.
- A program that recognizes each child as a unique individual.
- Positive encouragement for the child's continued growth.
- Opportunities for the child to learn by doing.
- An environment that encourages children's creativity.
- Encouragement for social development, sharing, taking turns, problem-solving, making friends, and respecting others.

All children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and the Gorton Children's Learning Center will maintain an environment free of racial or gender bias, stereotypes, or prejudice. The Children's Learning Center provides its staff with opportunities to increase and further their knowledge of early childhood development through enrollment in workshops and conferences offered throughout the year.

The Gorton Children's Learning Center, established in 1986, is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and complies with or exceeds all of its standards.

## 3. **LOCATION**

The Gorton Children's Learning Center is located in Gorton Community Center, 400 East Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois, 60045. The phone number for Gorton Community Center is 847-234-2778.

## 4. **OPERATING DAYS AND HOURS**

Monday-Friday 8:15 am-4 pm on a school year basis (9 months). See the calendar at the Center for current days off, Winter breaks and Spring breaks.

- If School District 67 is closed due to extreme weather, the center will also be closed. You can hear the school closings on WMAQ or WBBM 780 AM radio or see <http://www.lakeforestschools.org/about-us/district-67/index.aspx>

## 5. ENROLLMENT AND FEES

The annual enrollment fee is due at the time of enrollment. Your standing reservation will not be confirmed until the enrollment fee is paid and all documents are received by the director. The enrollment fee is \$230 or \$275 for a family of two or more.

This fee will be prorated in January, at the start of the 2nd semester. The prorated enrollment fee is \$115 or \$137.50 for a family of two or more.

### **Hourly Rates are as follows:**

\$18 per hour 6 weeks - 24 months (Star Classroom)

\$16.00 per hour 2 - 3 years (Rainbow Classroom)

\$15.00 per hour 3 ½ - 5 years (Sunshine Classroom) *\*toilet training required*

A 15% off sibling discount will be applied when siblings attend simultaneously.

The Discount is applied to the lowest tuition rate.

\$5 lunch charge for children over 15 months of age.

## 6. PAYMENT

Families may keep a signed and dated credit card authorization form on file that will run twice per month. You will be sent a statement via email for charges accrued from the 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> and then the 16<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> for your review. The credit card will run two business days after the statement is sent unless otherwise communicated.

## 7. STANDING RESERVATIONS

We operate on standing reservations only, which means the same days of the week and times for the entirety of the semester. Standing reservation requests can be emailed to the director: joann@gortoncenter.org. Standing reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## 8. ABSENT DAYS

Each family will receive two "free passes" for absent days from the center each semester (two Sept-Dec, two Jan-May). After those two passes are used, you will be billed as if your child(ren) were in attendance. *Free passes are used in the order of absences unless otherwise arranged by the parent / Director or Administrator.*

## 9. ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

You must sign your child in at their classroom table and leave any information about where you can be reached in case of emergency. You will be charged for the time of your reservation. Late pick-up fees and early drop-off fees apply. You may need to wait for your reservation time if you arrive early.

*PLEASE CONTACT THE CENTER IF YOU WILL BE LATE PICKING UP YOUR CHILD.*

State law limits the number of children who may be cared for at the Center at any given time.

**10. NON-PARENT PICK-UP**

If another adult will be picking up your child, please notify the center immediately. All people picking up must be at least 18 years old, per DCFS rule. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone without parents' permission. Your child's safety is our utmost concern.

**11. SNACK AND LUNCH**

We are a NUT-FREE center

Meal times are a great time to socialize and develop life skills! Gorton Children's Learning Center serves snacks and lunch to children over 15 months. Snacks will consist of a fruit and grain or dairy item. Lunch is from 12 -12:30 pm, and is a DCFS-approved menu that includes milk, protein, grain, fruit and vegetable. A state-certified food manager will always be onsite at meal times (the director is certified) to ensure proper food handling procedures.

Children may not bring in their own food unless they have a medical condition and written authorization from their pediatrician. Children under 15 months must bring food, snacks, bottles, etc. \*Please label all items.

**12. CHILD/TEACHER RATIOS**

- Infants (6 weeks-15 months) 4:1
- Toddlers (15-24 months) 5:1
- 2-year-olds 8:1
- 3-5-year-olds 10:1

**13. HEALTH INFORMATION**

The Center will accept only those children whose updated medical forms are on file. Medical forms are valid for two years and must be completed by a healthcare professional. Please remember to bring in verification every time your child receives immunizations. State law requires that all medical forms must be up-to-date. Lead screening and TB test results must be provided for all children. DCFS now requires a copy of a birth certificate for each child.

#### 14. IMMUNIZATIONS

Age	<u>Immunization</u>	
Birth	Hepatitis B	Dose 1 of 3
2 months	Hepatitis B	Dose 2 of 3
	DTaP	Dose 1 of 5
	Hib	Dose 1 of 4
	IPV	Dose 1 of 4
	PCV	Dose 1 of 4
4 months	DTaP	Dose 2 of 5
	Hib	Dose 2 of 4
	IPV	Dose 2 of 4
	PCV	Dose 2 of 4
6 months	DTaP	Dose 3 of 5
	Hib	Dose 3 of 4
	PCV	Dose 3 of 4
6-18 months	Hepatitis B	Dose 3 of 3
	IPV	Dose 3 of 4
12 months	TB test	
12-15 months	Hib	Dose 4 of 4
	MMR	Dose 1 of 2
	PCV	Dose 4 of 4
12-18 months	Varicella	Dose 1 of 1
15-18 months	DTaP	Dose 4 of 5
4-6 years	DTaP	Dose 5 of 5
	IPV	Dose 4 of 4
	MMR	Dose 2 of 2
	(NEW) 2, 4, & 6 months	ROTA

## 15. **ILLNESS**

As required by state law, each child will be given a visual health check upon arrival. All children must have their hands washed upon entering the Center. A child who exhibits any signs of illness will not be able to stay at the Center. If a child becomes ill during his/her stay, a parent or emergency contact will be required to pick him/her up immediately. The child will be isolated and given proper care until an authorized adult arrives. It is essential to your child's safety to leave a telephone number where you can be reached.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- is unable to participate comfortably in program activities, this includes outside activities.
- needs greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- has any of the following conditions: fever, sore throat, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, or other signs of possible severe illness
- has diarrhea (defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased water and/or decreased form)
- has vomited in the previous 48 hours
- has a fever or has had one during the previous 24 hours (temperature should be normal for 24 hours)
- has had a cold for less than 4 days
- has been taking antibiotics for less than 24 hours

## 16. **EMERGENCIES (MEDICAL)**

In the event of an injury, the staff will administer first aid to the child. If the injury requires medical attention, we will attempt to contact a parent immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency numbers. In the case of an emergency, the staff will call an ambulance to transport the child to Lake Forest Northwestern Hospital. It is important that you keep the Center up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

## 17. **DAILY PROGRAM**

The Children's Learning Center provides a daily schedule that is guided by a research-based curriculum that includes:

- Indoor free play with developmentally appropriate toys
- Small group and large group activities
- Creative art projects
- Gross motor and outdoor play
- Snack
- Language activities
- Science
- Simple musical instruments, songs and movement

## 18. PROGRAM PARTICIPATION/BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

We encourage children to:

- Help pick up toys in the classrooms
- Respect the property of the Center
- Respect others
- Share (when appropriate)
- Wash hands upon entering the Center, again before eating, and after using the bathroom
- Problem-solve
- Be tolerant and accepting of others
- Self-regulate

Acceptable behavior is encouraged and nurtured through positive reinforcement and modeling by the staff. Should a child show inappropriate behavior, that child will be redirected and the behavior discussed.

If these techniques have been exhausted, and the child is in danger of hurting himself or others, removal from the group may be necessary. After the child has had time to regain self-control, he or she may once again participate in the activities. Removal from the group shall not be used for children less than 24 months of age.

### **Public Act 100-010 Preventing Expulsion of Children Birth-Five**

At Gorton Children's Learning Center, we are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children. This act emphasizes the prevention of expulsion of children from birth to five years of age in early childhood programs. We firmly believe that every child deserves a fair chance to learn and grow, regardless of their unique circumstances. Our transition policy ensures that children and families receive the necessary support and resources to prevent expulsion and address challenging behaviors. We work collaboratively with families, educators, and specialized professionals to develop individualized behavior support plans, implement positive behavior interventions, and provide ongoing coaching and training. By fostering a supportive and understanding atmosphere, we strive to create an inclusive community where every child can thrive and reach their full potential. In cases where it is determined that a child's unique needs are better suited to be met in a different program, we understand the importance of a smooth and seamless transition. Our transition policy includes provisions for assisting families in finding and transitioning to a program that can better cater to their child's specific requirements. Our primary goal is to ensure that every child receives the appropriate care and educational environment that best suits their individual needs, promoting their growth and success.

## 19. **ITEMS TO BRING TO THE CENTER**

- Bag or backpack with the child's name on it
- Complete set of extra clothing
- Sunscreen when necessary before drop-off
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing (boots, hats, mittens, coats, snow pants, all labeled with your child's name).

### **Infants and Toddlers**

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Bottles or sippy cups
- Bibs
- Security items (blankets, etc.)
- Finger foods (under 15 months)

*Please be sure to label all items.*

## 20. **APPROPRIATE DRESS – Dress for MESS!**

The Center encourages parents to send their child dressed for active play. We suggest comfortable clothes, free of complicated fastenings. Our daily schedule does include potentially messy art projects and outdoor play.

Please send your child with shoes that are appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. The children will be climbing, running, and riding toys. The Children's Learning Center does not allow children to walk around without shoes.

21. **TOYS FROM HOME** are not permitted. Toys may get lost, mixed in with Children's Learning Center toys, or create problems for other children. A soft toy or blanket that is necessary for the children's comfort is permitted.

22. **TOILET TRAINING** When your child begins toilet training please put a pull-up on the child until the child has gone several days without an accident. This practice ensures the room stays sanitary in case of toilet training accidents.

## 23. **PEST CONTROL**

Our pest Management service is ARC. Pest control is done on an as-needed basis.

## 24. **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parent volunteers are always needed to help organize various events at the CLC. This includes fundraisers, holiday monetary gift collections for staff, teacher appreciation week lunches, or other special events like Halloween and a Santa visit. Please look for an email from the director at the beginning of the school year and throughout the year as needed for volunteer opportunities.