

ABOUT OUR WAITING LIST

As applications for *GCC* Early Education arrive, they are dated and placed in the correct folder according to the year of desired enrollment. We take children off the waiting list according to the date submitted, but reserve the right to take certain situations into consideration as well. Among these are: Guilford residency, whether or not a family needs a sliding fee scale slot, and the age of the child.

GROUPING

We take many things into consideration when placing children into their groups. Just one component is chronological age. We strive to place them where they will meet with success as well as be challenged. The placement of children in their groups is something discussed by staff members and the director on an ongoing basis. At any time of the year, if we feel it would be in your child's best interest to move to another group, we will discuss this with you.

A LITTLE HISTORY AND A BRAND NEW SCHOOL!

Guilford Center for Children was started in 1971 by a group of Guilford residents concerned that children were being left home alone or under the supervision of siblings while parents were at work. We operated in the building near the library for 39 years, with renovation work and the addition of some square footage in 1989.

For the past 15+ years we have maintained an extremely long waiting list and were delighted to move into our lovely new school at 47 Stone House Lane in 2010, where we have the additional space to accommodate more families.

The Town of Guilford has been extremely supportive of GCC Early Education since its inception, and continued that support by leasing us the land and barns we renovated into the current school. It was our goal to preserve the character of the barns as an acknowledgement of Guilford's agricultural past. Funds for the playground were raised in early 2011, and the playground was dedicated in May 2011. The second floor opened in January 2012 and contains a children's kitchen, an atelier, and a very large multipurpose space, in addition to offices.

We have been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children since 1995, which means that our staff and program have demonstrated the highest degree of quality. We are a registered non-profit organization and are governed by a Board of Directors. Board Meetings take place on the third Tuesday of every month and are open to the public.

We look forward to a wonderful future of providing quality early care and education to some of Guilford's youngest residents.



We receive funding from the Guilford Community Fund and from the Human Services Council of the Town of Guilford



We are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

BUILDING SECURITY

All doors at our Center are locked during operating hours. Anyone entering the building must enter through the front entrance door which is locked. At the time of enrollment, parents will need to complete a security system passcode request form. Anyone without a passcode will be required to ring the buzzer and will only be granted access into the building after showing proper identification to a staff member and confirming the reason for requesting entry.

COMMUNICATION

We recognize that the family is of primary importance to our children. Our goal is to work in the spirit of collaboration with the families of children at GCC. All of us want you to be satisfied with all the different aspects of the program in which your child spends a great deal of his/her day. Please don't hesitate to initiate communication or ask for a conference with your child's teacher (s) or the director about topics of interest/concern. Please try not to discuss **in depth** issues at drop-off or pick-up time as staff members need to continue to spend time with the children.

We send out daily emails about our day. If you would like to receive these emails, please make sure the Director has your email address as well as classroom teachers.

Whenever requested or felt it might be helpful, we will offer translations of written documents that are distributed to families.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Prior to enrollment we will ask that you fill out a Family Data sheet, which will give us information about your family traditions and celebrations, your hobbies and interests, and job skills. Staff will consult with you about your willingness and availability to offer specific assistance at particular times.

INFORMATION SHARING

The parent with whom the child resides the majority of the time will be the contact parent when setting up parent/teacher conferences, for issuing written reports on the child's progress, and for all other written communication. Requests that the second parent receive similar contacts will be honored unless prohibited by law.

If your child shares the week equally between both parents, we will put duplicates of all notices on the child's Parent Shelf. At conference time, we will discuss with the parents whether joint or separate conferences would be best.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

We hope that this parent handbook, along with staff efforts will make the Early Education experience an exciting, warm, and loving one for you and your child. If, at any time, you have a concern, it needs to be discussed and resolved as quickly as possible. Please take the following steps in this sequence:

- 1) Discuss your concern with the staff member with whom it is associated
- 2) Discuss your concern with the Director
- 3) Discuss your concern with the Board of Directors
- 4) Discuss your concern with the Office of Early Childhood in Hartford

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Four weeks prior to withdrawing your child from the Center for any reason or reducing the number of days your child attends you must notify the Director. The regular tuition will be charged for this four-week period whether or not your child attends. All outstanding balances are due prior to the last day of your child's attendance.

STAFF BABYSITTING

Guilford Center for Children, Inc. has a policy that prohibits staff members from babysitting for the children enrolled in its programs.

FIELD TRIPS

If we are taking a field trip using Student Transportation of America (STA) for transportation, you will also have to sign a permission slip. We do "counts" of the children before boarding, after boarding, before loading for departure and after loading for departure. Children are assigned to specific staff members for most trips. A first aid kit, emergency medications for those children who have them and a telephone are always taken on field trips. Student Transportation of America (STA) will send another bus should we ever have bus trouble.

Mission Statement

The Guilford Center for Children, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate environment for young children who need out-of-home care during the day.

Philosophy

Guilford Center for Children, Inc. Early Education Center recognizes the importance of a safe, positive, nurturing, inclusive, and consistent atmosphere as the foundation for the social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development of each child. A curriculum that supports the standards set forth in The Connecticut Framework, Preschool Curricular Goals and Benchmarks is supported. The importance of fostering the development of self-awareness, self-expression, independence, and appropriate conflict resolution skills in each child is endorsed. The Guilford Center for Children further acknowledges that each child's family is of primary importance. We acknowledge that open and supportive relationships with these families are essential.

Goals

Maintain a licensed hi-quality program so parents may continue employment.
Maintain a balance between families who need the sliding scale and those who do not.
Maintain accreditation by NAEYC.
Maintain open and supportive relationships with each child's family.
Work together to establish goals for each child.
Communicate progress of each child to his/her family.
Support curriculum approach that supports The Connecticut Framework.
Provide a program that fosters growth in all areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language.
Provide a safe, positive, nurturing, responsive and consistent atmosphere.
Provide for health and nutrition of each child.
Provide referrals to appropriate local agencies whenever necessary.
Support positive conflict resolution.
Support appropriate expression of feelings and frustrations.
Model appropriate ways of listening, reacting, and setting limits for young children.
Meet individual needs of each child.
Encourage staff members' continued professional growth.
Educate the public about the need for and traits of quality early childhood programs.
Maintain an ADA-compliant facility and program.

**We are accredited by the
National Association for the Education of Young Children**



Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing *GCC* Early Education!

We are thrilled to welcome you and your child to Guilford Center for Children. We are a professionally-staffed early education center serving children from three through five years of age. We are open year round from 7:15 AM to 5:30 PM.

Our program strives to provide quality opportunities for the social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development of each child in a safe, positive, nurturing, and consistent atmosphere that includes language arts, gross and fine motor activities, creative arts, science, cooking, music, movement, Spanish and multicultural awareness, and much time for free play. Ongoing assessments help us plan our curriculum and individual and small group time with your child. We encourage each child in the development of conflict resolution skills and in the appropriate expression of feelings and frustrations. Children moving on to Kindergarten have had the opportunity to develop those skills and abilities which are necessary for a successful transition to Kindergarten.

We are thrilled to be part of the wonderful Guilford community and frequently walk to places around our town. We also enjoy field trips to some more distant locations in the community. We firmly believe in the home and school collaboration as an integral part of our program. We have set aside time for frequent interactions with parents and families. In addition, parents and families are welcome to visit *GCC* at any time. Formal parent/teacher conferences take place twice a year and informal discussions between staff and parents take place on an ongoing basis. We keep parents informed about daily activities, policy changes, and our everyday life at *GCC* through daily message boards, daily emails, our monthly newsletter, and through information put onto "Parent Shelves." Our Facebook page is also a great place to hear great school and community news!

We are looking forward to sharing this year with you and your child!

Sincerely,

Lisa Jones and the *GCC* Early Education Staff

BIRTHDAYS

We will provide a celebratory snack at snack time to mark your child's birthday. Please feel free to join us for Snack Time that day if you would like to! If you have a birthday party invitation to pass out, please put them on the Parent Shelves, or not at all. This minimizes hurt feelings in those not invited. Thanks for your help!

CONFERENCES

Conferences will be scheduled at least two times each year. If you would like to have conferences at other times, please see your child's teacher(s).

STAFF

We are proud of our fine professional staff. Our Director, Teachers, and Teacher Assistants have degrees in Early Childhood Education or related fields. All staff members attend classes, conferences, and workshops pertaining to children preschool age. All have quality Early Education teaching experience and are First Aid and CPR certified. In addition to these staff members, we have wonderful Teacher Aides, a great cook and assistant cook, and marvelous substitutes.

ABSENCES

Please call *GCC* as early as possible on those mornings that your child is scheduled to attend but will not for any reason (illness, vacation, etc.) More than several unverified absences during the course of the program year is a cause for dismissal from the program.

MANDATED REPORTERS

All Early Education staff members are Mandated Reporters for the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Our own policy states that all staff members have responsibility to prevent child abuse and to report abuse or neglect of any child involved in our school. This means that in cases of abuse or neglect or suspected abuse or neglect, we are required to call DCF about our concerns. DCF determines any action needs to be taken. *GCC* staff receive annual trainings on this matter.

REST TIME

After lunch every day, the children have a quiet time. Each child will need a blanket to be used during this rest period. Label it well and take it home for laundering at least weekly. Some children like to use a small pillow and nap with a stuffed animal. Sheets are provided by GCC.

Children who do not fall asleep may get up after resting. The staff will wake those children who have not awakened on their own. If your child is getting too much sleep at school, please talk to a staff member about this as we are happy to wake your child a little earlier.

TOYS

Because we offer a wide variety of toys and equipment for your child to use while at GCC, and because it is easier for preschool children to share the school's toys, we ask that your child not bring toys from home other than on days of "Show and Tell." Transitional objects, like soft dolls or stuffed animals, which are used at nap time, are encouraged. We do not allow guns, war toys, or other toys of destruction at GCC.

ASSESSMENTS

We assess your child's growth and development throughout the year through informal written observations and a systematic informal evaluation of specific goals and objectives. This assists us in planning for your child's continued growth and in identifying your child's interests and needs. We share this information with you at parent conferences.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If your child has a special need, we will make a plan with you to address it at GCC. If we feel it would be helpful to have additional input, we will assist the family in using local community resources.

SHOW AND TELL

Please check the monthly calendars for "Show and Tell," which will take place on different days each month. Many of the "Show and Tell's" will have a special theme (Bring something yellow, for example). We would very much appreciate your support in assisting your child in selecting appropriate items for our "Show and Tell" days. If they can carry it themselves, they can bring it!

ABOUT OUR EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT

Children who enroll at GCC Early Education must need care because their parents are working or searching for work. If a parent becomes unemployed, we will allow the child to stay for six weeks while the parent seeks employment. Children Guilford residents are given priority. We then enroll children whose parents work Guilford and then those who live along the shoreline.

The registration fee of \$75 must be paid at the time of enrollment. In addition, the following paper work must be in place before attendance: application, current health form, income verification if applicable, permission slips, emergency contact and authorized pick-up forms, the first week's deposit, insurance information and the eligibility application for the CACFP food program. This information must be updated annually.

Guilford Center for Children, Inc. does not discriminate against any child or family based on race, color, religious creed, civil union status, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, sex, age, and/or disability.

CONTRACT YEAR

As we are a year round program, the contract signed for a child's care goes from late August (or the date of enrollment if starting at a time other than the beginning of the "school year") until approximately the end of the third full week of the following August. The weekly fee for tuition is due each week except the week at holiday time that the school is closed. The family's "Unpaid Days" may be used during this time.

Each spring, parents will be asked about plans for summer enrollment. At this time, parents may opt to reduce the number of days their child attends during the "summer weeks." Our "summer weeks" are determined each spring and generally run from the Monday after "graduation" in June until approximately the end of the third full week in August. If a parent opts to withdraw his/her child from the program entirely during the summer, the weekly tuition for these weeks will still be due. If a parent opts to withdraw his/her child from the program entirely during the summer and does not make the payments for these weeks in full, the child will be removed from the enrollment list and will be placed on the waiting list for the following school year. Should a spot for the upcoming school year become available, the \$75 registration fee will have to be repaid again.

DISCOUNT FOR ADDITIONAL CHILDREN

It is the policy of Guilford Center for Children, Inc., Early Education Program that the first child from a family attending be charged the scheduled rate as determined by GCC. The second child and any subsequent children from the same family attending GCC at the same time will pay 85% of the first child's fee. Discount does not apply to children on the sliding fee scale. Registration fees will not be discounted.

HOURS OF OPERATION

GCC is open from 7:15 AM until 5:30 PM year round, except as noted below.

HOLIDAYS

GCC is closed for one week in August, five non-holiday days in December at holiday time, and the following holidays: New

Year's Day

Presidents' Day Good

Friday Memorial Day

Fourth of July Labor

Day Columbus Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Christmas

WEEKLY FEES

Weekly fees for income-eligible families are set by the state and based on family income and size. Our Board of Directors sets competitive fees for other families. Any increase in these fees most commonly takes place at the beginning of a new contract year (usually late August).

Fees are due during the week in which care is given. Fees paid late will be assessed a \$10 Late Payment fee. Inasmuch as your weekly fee is the same each week unless you choose to use an "Unpaid Day" for an absence, we do NOT bill you. Statements are emailed weekly. If you pay for more than one week at a time, you must pay for future weeks, not past weeks. If an account is overdue by two weeks, the child will not be allowed to attend until the account is paid. Families in state-subsidized slots must report any change of income to the Director as these changes occur. Fee charges will be redetermined at least annually.

Provide simple clothing, free of complicated fasteners. Send your child in pro clothes as we use messy art materials, sit in the sandbox, and play hard! Please make sure your child has outer clothing in keeping with the weather and time of year. In the winter, children need warm jackets or snowsuits, as well as boots, mittens, and hats.

During the rest of the year, please make sure a warm jacket or sweatshirt and leggings are available for the days that turn cold.

We ask that children limit their footwear to sneakers as they provide the best traction on our floors, blacktop, and outdoor equipment. Please also have your child wear socks each day or have them available. We do not let the children wear open-toed sandals, Crocs, or flip-flops.

OUTSIDE PLAY

We play outside **every** day unless it is raining or extremely cold or there is a high heat index. The amount of time spent outside may decrease if it is very hot or very cold, but outside play is a part of our program. If your child is not well enough to play outside, please keep your child at home for the day.

MEALS AND SNACKS

The importance of good nutrition is emphasized by our healthy meals and snacks. Our cook follows the FDA guidelines when planning menus. The current week's menu is always posted on the front hall bulletin board and on our website. In addition, menus are emailed so you can be aware of what we are serving each day.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Each family is required to volunteer a minimum of seven (7) hours during each program year for fund raisers, house and grounds projects, membership on the Board of Directors, or activities for which we have sign-up sheets.

FIRE DRILLS

We conduct fire drills on a regular monthly schedule. All children are escorted from the Center to the dispersal area by the fence around the playground. Attendance is taken to ensure all children are present.

EMERGENCY DISMISSAL

Should it ever become necessary to evacuate GCC, we will walk to the Henry Whitfield Museum and call you or one of your two Emergency Contacts to pick your child up from there.

STORM DAYS

If the Center will not open because of seriously inclement weather, an announcement will be made on Channel 8. Weather-related closings will also be emailed and posted on Facebook. If we must close early because of the weather, we will call you or an Emergency Contact and request that your child be picked up by a specific time.

CLEANLINESS

We have a cleaning service that does a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the Center each evening. In addition, floors are swept after lunch, and tables are cleaned after each meal. Each child is assigned to his/her own cot and cubby, and sheets are laundered weekly.

CLOTHING

Each child must have two sets of extra clothing (appropriate for the time of year) in his/her cubby to start each day. Please label all clothing. Be sure to check your child's cubby for any clothing needing laundering.

A fee box for checks is on the Director's desk in the office. We accept payment in the form of personal checks, bank checks, and cash. If you are paying by cash, please put the cash in a labeled envelope and hand it to a staff member. You may opt to have your bank automatically mail payments to us weekly. We also highly suggest enrolling in Tuition Express. If you are using an "Unpaid Day(s)" (see below), please mark your check or envelope with the date(s) of these days.

UNPAID DAYS

Full-time children may take a credit for 5 days each contract year (August - August) for which they are scheduled to attend but do not. Families who begin in June, July, or early August are not eligible for Unpaid Days until the beginning of the "school year." The number of Unpaid Days is prorated according to the number of days per week that your child is enrolled. Credit may be taken for snow days, ill days, holidays, or vacation. Except for credit for these Unpaid Days, you must pay the regular weekly fee each week except for the week in August and the five "regular" days during the December holiday time that the Center is closed.

MORNING ARRIVAL

To enable us to keep accurate attendance records for the state, upon arrival an adult must sign each child in. We ask that all children arrive by 9:20 AM. This allows time to play before Large Group time begins.

DEPARTURES

You must sign your child out at the end of the day with your initials and the time and notify a staff member of your departure.

Please note that as long as the child's parent is on the Guilford Center Children's premises, the parent is responsible for the child.

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP LIST

At the time of enrollment, you will be asked to complete and sign an Authorized Pick-Up List form, naming those people to whom we may release your child.

If you want to give permission on a specific date for your child to leave with someone not on the list, please send in written permission. Telephone requests to release your child to someone for whom we do not have written permission will not be honored.

LATE PICK UP CHARGES

If your child is picked up after our 5:30 PM closing time, a Late Pick-Up fee of \$15 for each 15 minutes or part thereof will be assessed. The Late Pick-Up fee will increase to \$30 for each 15 minutes or part thereof after you have been assessed the \$15 fee twice in a contract year. A Late Pick-Up Slip will have to be signed in addition to signing your child out. We appreciate your consideration in respecting the fact that staff members have family obligations at the end of the day. If your child is "reluctant leaver" please allow time for departure routines by arriving prior to 5:30 PM for pick-up.

TOILET TRAINING

All children attending the Center **MUST** be toilet trained before enrollment. Children need to be independent about using the bathroom. They must be independent about handling their own clothing at bathroom time, as much as is age-appropriate. If a child demonstrates over a period of time that he/she is not yet toilet trained and independent about using the bathroom, we will ask that he/ she takes a two-week "toilet training leave." You may use "Unpaid Days" for this purpose if you wish. Upon return, if there continues to be a problem, we will not be able to keep your child enrolled at GCC.

HEALTH

CT Office of Early Childhood regulations require that your child have a physical examination each year, and that GCC has a health form on file to verify this.

The Director will notify you when your child's physical must be updated. Your child's continued attendance is contingent upon keeping the health records current.

Our efforts toward protecting your child as well as others from contagious illnesses can sometimes be an inconvenience for parents, but we trust that you will understand that we have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. We need your cooperation for this.

If your child has a fever of 100+ degrees and/or other symptoms and is unable to keep up with the daily activities, we will contact you so that you may pick your child up from GCC. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call one of your two Emergency Contacts. Your child will be placed in isolation under a staff member's supervision. The ill child must be removed immediately.

Please keep your child home if he/she has a cough that is excessive or a cold with excessive discharge from the nose or eyes. In addition, please note the guidelines for the following common childhood illnesses:

Diarrhea/vomiting: Will be sent home immediately after two unexplained episodes; 1 for vomiting must be kept out for 24 hours after the last episode. **Conjunctivitis:** Must remain out for 24 hours after the first dose of medication has been given;

Ear Infection: Must remain out until all excessive cold symptoms have left and/ or must be fever-free for 24 hours

Head Lice: Must remain out until medicated shampoo has been administered and **all nits** been removed

Fever: Must remain out for 24 hours after a fever of over 100 degrees has disappeared without the use of medication for fever reduction

Strep: Must remain out for 24 hours after the first dose of medication has been administered.

MEDICATION

Trained staff members will administer medication with the prop documentation from your child's physician and on the approved forms at with your signature. Medications must be in their original containers and have a prescription label attached.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Matters of confidentiality are serious to everyone at GCC. Information about children/families obtained by any staff member as a result of employment will be kept confidential at all times.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR POLICY

If a child exhibits harmful and/or inappropriate behavior, the staff will speak with the child. If talking alone does not yield the desired results, we use the "1- 2 Magic" system, which gives the child three chances before a short "time out" takes place. The "time out" will be followed by a short discussion to make sure the child understands the reason for the "time out." If concerning behavior persists over a period of time, parent(s) will be contacted. Staff and parent(s) will agree on a plan which addresses the elimination of the undesired behavior and the plan will be implemented. Parent(s) must be willing to utilize outside resources if the Director so requests. If the behavior persists without progress after the plan has been implemented, the child will be dismissed. If the plan is in place but not being followed through by parent(s), the child will be dismissed. If the child does not have the control to allow for the time necessary to implement the above steps, the child will be dismissed after a two-week trial period.