



Parent Handbook

WELCOME

Warmest Greetings and Welcome to Great Beginnings!

It is with great joy and enthusiasm that we extend a heartfelt welcome to you and your precious little ones to our wonderful preschool community. We are thrilled to embark on this journey together, creating a nurturing and inspiring environment where your child's early years will be filled with growth, exploration, and fun.

At Great Beginnings, we understand the significance of these early years in shaping a child's future, and we are committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive space for them to learn, play, and develop essential skills. Our dedicated team of educators and staff are passionate about fostering a love for learning while promoting social, emotional, and cognitive growth.

As partners in your child's education, we encourage open communication and collaboration between home and school. We believe that a strong parent-teacher relationship is vital in creating a seamless transition for your child and ensuring their success. Our doors are always open for your questions, concerns, and feedback.

Please feel free to reach out to our School Leader, Alexa Martinez via email at alexa@gbdacula.com or by phone at 770.995.4343 if you have any questions or need further information. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Once again, welcome to the Great Beginnings family! We look forward to a fantastic year ahead filled with growth, joy, and unforgettable memories.

Great Beginnings Team!

AGES OF CHILDREN SERVED: SIX (6) WEEKS THROUGH TWELVE (12) YEARS

MONTHS OF OPERATION: JANUARY THROUGH DECEMBER

DAYS OF OPERATION: MONDAY-FRIDAY

HOURS OF OPERATION: 7:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.

HOLIDAYS THE CENTER WILL BE CLOSED: Our holiday closures include New Years Day , Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and Professional Development Days. Full tuition rates will apply during holiday closures and professional development days.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: In the event of an ice or snowstorm, we will make every possible effort to open. The major consideration will be the safety of your child and of our staff. If there is a power failure at the center and the center needs to close, parents will be notified to make arrangements to pick up their children. .

Note: Tuition fee will be due for the entire month, even though a holiday or inclement weather day may occur during that week.

REGISTRATION

To reserve a space for your child for enrollment at Great Beginnings, please complete the registration form and return it with your child's non-refundable registration fee. This annual registration is due and payable at the time of enrollment and will be charged each calendar year (August). The fee includes processing your child's application, art and school supplies. All applicable forms must be completed prior to your child's attendance.

Applicant understands the importance of and assumes responsibility for notifying Great Beginnings of any changes in enrollment information such as phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, authorized persons, medical information, etc.

Before your child can be officially enrolled at Great Beginnings you must complete and provide the following documents:

- Signed Parent Handbook and Rate Agreement
- Completed Enrollment Application
- Copy of Child's Immunization Record (or Signed Waiver)
- Signed Consent Forms (those that are applicable)
- Registration Fee must be paid

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES/PAPERWORK

Great Beginnings offers quality child care services for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age. We provide specialized infant care and educational preschool programs. We also provide before and after-school programs and summer-camp for school-aged children. The center may offer drop-in programs for school aged children. Please check with the center director for details.

Great Beginnings does not discriminate on the basis of a person's religion, color, race, sex, age, national origin, or disability when determining eligibility for enrollment or hiring.

Great beginnings requests all documentation at the time of enrollment to ensure we are in compliance with state licensing requirements.

- [Phone numbers and address](#)
- [Work location](#)
- [Emergency contacts](#)
- [Child's physician](#)
- [Child's health status](#)
- [Infant feeding plan](#)
- [Medical records](#)
- [Immunization records](#)
- [Allergy, Asthma and/or Seizure action plan](#)
- [Any other information related to the care of their child.](#)

HEALTH IMMUNIZATION By state law, all students must have a Certificate of Immunization on a Georgia 3231 Form, or a Notarized statement of religious exemption on file. Your child may not start Starfish Scholars of Milton without a current Certificate of Immunization on file.

GEORGIA PRE-KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Great Beginnings of Dacula participates in the Georgia Pre-K program which is funded through the State of Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. In order for your child to participate he or she must turn 4 years of age by September 1st of the new school year. Great Beginnings enrollment for the program is open and non-discriminatory. Enrollment is based on a first come first served basis and any child who is currently attending our preschool program and is eligible will automatically be considered as “enrolled” for the upcoming school year. Children will not be denied participation based on race, color, creed, or national origin – only on lack of funded spaces which DECAL regulates at our facility.

TRANSPORTATION / PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION

With a signed Transportation Agreement Form, Great Beginnings of Dacula will provide transportation to our center from the child's local public school for after school.

For school transportation, if there are any changes (leaving early, absences) it will be your full responsibility to notify our center in advance. Great Beginnings will transport to: Alcova Elementary, Harbins Elementary, Dacula Elementary, Mulberry Elementary, Yargo Elementary.

TUITION/FEEES

Your tuition payment reserves your child's space in our program. To ensure quality programming and high-quality staffing, you are responsible for full tuition even when your child is absent. Tuition is paid monthly. Monthly tuition is due on the 1st of the month for the upcoming month's services. If your monthly tuition is not paid by the 5th of the month, a **\$50.00** late fee will be added on the 6th of the month. Failure to stay current in your child's tuition fees may result in the loss of your child's space at Great Beginnings. Your child's tuition is due regardless of weather conditions that may affect the school's opening and closing. Other fees may be charged including, but not limited to, late pick-up fee, returned check fee, early release or closed school days fee, etc. Please see School Leader for a rate sheet listing all detailed fees.

Tuition rates are subject to change. Families should be given at least a one-month notice of any changes to tuition.

Monthly tuition calculation example: Month of January- 1/1-1/31 (Tuition x 52 weeks / by 12 month)

LATE PICK UP

We ask that children be picked-up in a timely manner, by 6:00pm, each normal operation day. Please notify the center management immediately if you will be late picking up your child. We ask that children be picked up by 6:00pm. Great Beginnings management team members will attempt to contact parents first, then will proceed to the listed emergency contacts to pick up the child. If a child is left for an unreasonable length of time and we are unable to locate any authorized adult to care for the child, we must then contact the appropriate regulatory agency including the Department of Family and Children Services. Parents are charged a late fee of **\$2.00 per min** if their children remain at school after the designated closing time. This fee is added to the tuition immediately at the time their children are picked up.

DAILY SIGN IN

Great Beginnings provides a safe environment for your child by following all state regulations. Because these regulations require us to know who is in the building at all times, all parents must check their child in and out of the building each day through the procare connect app. Children must be escorted daily to and from their classroom by their parents/guardians.

Great Beginnings has a soft cut off at 10:00am. If you need to bring your child after 10:00 am then you need to inform a Great Beginnings management team earlier than 10am. If Great Beginnings is not notified then the child will not be able to attend that day.

WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICES POLICY

A **30-day written notice** is required for termination of child care services. Failure to give a 30 day notice will result in paying the full tuition fees for the notice period. not paid on time with regards to termination of childcare services will also be subject to daily late fees, until full payment is received. If fees are not paid, the unpaid bill will be placed into collections.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational materials every day. Because children often find comfort in special objects, your child may bring a blanket, a special soft toy, or a stuffed animal for rest time. Please do not let your child bring other toys or belongings from home, as bringing a treasured object to the center can create tension between children and each child's personal storage space is limited. It's also distressing for children and staff members when things are lost or misplaced.

CLOTHING

We ask that you dress your child in the most comfortable clothing appropriate for the outdoor weather. In cold weather, please dress your child in layers to accommodate the warmth of inside the building as well as the cold outside. It will be necessary to always keep one change of clothing at school in case of any spills, etc. If your child has an accident and there are no provided changes of clothing, we will use "accident clothes" that Great Beginnings has available. Please label your child's coats, sweaters, etc., with their first and last name. Open-toed shoes, flip flops or Crocs will not be allowed.

CURRICULUM

Great Beginnings has partnered with Teaching Strategies, Inc. to implement the Creative Curriculum® System for Preschool, the nationally recognized, early childhood education program.

Creative Curriculum offers opportunities for hands-on exploration and discovery that build lifelong critical thinking skills and foster confidence through their "studies" approach to learning. Every component is intentional, proven, and grounded in child development theory and scientific research, so you can be assured our teachers are able to deliver positive outcomes for your child.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Two times a year, we'll sit down with you and talk about your child's achievements and accomplishments in the classroom. This is a time to partner with you. Because of that, we ask for your help: please bring observations about your child's development at home, as well as any questions or relevant information you want to discuss. We'll refer to your child's portfolio and most recent developmental checklist during this meeting. This is a time to talk about what your child has learned, and what he or she has to look forward to at the center.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES

At Great Beginnings of Dacula the staff and management strive to provide the most positive, encouraging, and consistent environment in each classroom here at our school. A positive, consistent environment helps reduce what might be considered improper or defiant behavior from our children. Should a difficulty arise with your child or another student in the environment, teachers use positive redirection techniques which normally correct the situation. If your child requires additional intervention for correction, he or she may be temporarily removed from the classroom by the Assistant Director or Director, and you will be notified. Great Beginnings of Dacula does not use the discipline technique known as "time-out". Our teachers are trained to use positive redirection as an effective classroom management tool.

SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM

Our School-Age Program provides care for children before and after their normal elementary school day. Safe, state-approved and inspected buses transport children to and from local schools.

The Cranfield Academy After School Program is tailored to meet the interests and needs of school-age students. All school-age students will have a minimum 30 minutes of quiet time where they are encouraged to do their homework. When your child has finished homework they get time to play with friends outside, enjoy learning games, or just relax with a book.

Care is also available on days when school is not in session, including teacher work days, holidays, and vacations. Please consult your School Leader for program specifics for both before/after school and summer camp options.

INFANT CARE

For infants, you will need to complete a form (Infant Feeding Schedule) regarding the feeding and napping of your child. At any time, if there are changes in the amount of formula or food to be served, it will be your responsibility to update the form. All formula bottles and baby food must be labeled with your child's name and date. The use of pacifiers will be permitted within the Department of Early Care and Learning Guidelines. Great Beginnings provides wipes.

INFANT SLEEPING AND RESTING ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Great Beginnings of Dacula provides a safe sleep environment in accordance with American with American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) recommendations as listed in (a) through (g) below for all infants:

(a) Great Beginnings staff places all infants to sleep on the infant's back in a crib unless the center has provided a physician's written statement authorizing another sleep position for that particular infant that includes how the infant shall be placed to sleep and a time frame that the instructions are to be followed.

(b) Great Beginnings does not place objects or allow objects to be placed in or on the crib with a sleeping infant, such as, but not limited to toys, pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft items.

(c) Great Beginnings does not attach objects or allow objects to be attached to our cribs with a sleeping infant, such as, but not limited to, crib gyms, toys, mirrors, and mobiles.

(d) Swaddling will not be used unless Great Beginnings has provided a physician's written statement authorizing its use for a particular infant that includes instructions and a time frame for swaddling the infant.

(e) When an infant can easily turn over from back to front and back again, Great Beginnings will continue to put the infant to sleep initially on the infant's back but allow the infant to roll over into his or her preferred position and not re-position the infant.

(f) Wedges, other infant positioning devices and monitors will not be used unless the parent or guardian provides a physician's written statement authorizing its use that includes how to use the device and a time frame for using the device is provided for that infant.

(g) Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in equipment other than safety-approved cribs, such as, but not limited to, a car safety seat, bouncy seat, highchair, or swing. Infants who arrive at the center asleep or fall asleep in such equipment, on the floor or elsewhere, shall be transferred to our safety-approved crib.

BREASTFEEDING

Great Beginnings will provide Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place (other than a bathroom) to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area has an electric outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water. Mothers are also welcome to breastfeed in front of others if they wish.

Great Beginnings will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the center.

ILLNESS/INJURY: Should your child become ill or suffer from an injury during the time he/she is in our care the school will take all necessary first aid or emergency measures. The school will contact the parents and if for some reason we are unable to contact you, the school will attempt to provide all the necessary medical attention for your child. A child with a temperature of 100.0 degrees f. will not be allowed to attend school. If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be notified, and the child will be separated from the rest of their group until you pick them up. They will not be able to return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours. In cases of serious communicable or infectious diseases, your child may not return to school until the disease is no longer contagious. A doctor's note may be required. A child will not be permitted in the school if they have any of the following:

.A communicable disease (including COVID-19)

·Sore or discharging eyes or ears

.Any undiagnosed rash

·Has had a fever within the past 24 hours.

.Profuse nasal discharge

·Diarrhea or Vomiting

Please see the posted Communicable Disease Chart in the front lobby of either building advising you of a reported illness that may be present in the school. Notices are posted weekly as necessary. Great Beginnings will post a notice when your child may have been exposed to a communicable disease while in school, and we must be notified when your child is exposed outside of school. No child will be permitted to attend school with a communicable disease in accordance with Georgia State restriction procedures. Should your child have an illness that may be harmful to the other children, then your child may be temporarily excluded from the program and perhaps referred to the local Health Department.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, your child will be transported by ambulance for emergency treatment. The center's primary medical resource will be Northside Hospital Gwinnett, 1000 Medical Center Blvd. NW, Lawrenceville, GA, (678)-422-4321

MEALS AND SNACKS

Great Beginnings of Dacula will provide nutritional and well-balanced meals and snacks each day for your child. We will offer breakfast, lunch, and a mid-afternoon snack each day. A copy of the weekly menu will be posted in the office for your information. No outside foods, other than baby foods, are permitted. The only exception will be a special dietary program implemented by your child's doctor. Great Beginnings does not permit outside food for meals or snacks. Menu alternatives for children with food allergies documented by a physician can be discussed. We do not serve beef or pork products. It is your responsibility to advise us of any food allergies or food restrictions in writing at enrollment and to

keep such information up to date. Please have your children finish any snacks before entering the building, as they cannot be admitted with outside food. Any food brought in for special occasions such as birthdays or class parties must be brought to the Front Desk for inspection.

MEDICATION

Before any medication is dispensed to my child, I will provide a written authorization, which includes date; name of child, name of medication, prescription number, dosage, date, and time of day medication is to be given. The medicine will be in the original container with my child's name marked on it. Medication will only be administered once a day and only one medication per child per day will be given. All medications must be signed in at the front desk. Only medications specifically labeled with a doctor's name, child's name and dosage procedures outlined will be administered. "Over the counter" medication can only be administered with written authorization from the child's physician. With any prescription antibiotics children may not return to care until they've had a full 24 hours of dosage, are no longer contagious and ready to participate in the full child care day, to ensure they are well on the road to recovery.

CUSTODY ORDERS

Please inform the center immediately if there are any custody orders concerning your child/children. The center must abide by any standing court order documentation that is in the child's file. We are unable to withhold a child from any parent having custody or joint custody.

The center staff or management are unable to become involved in custody disputes or mediate any visitation or pick-up details between the child's parents.

BITING

Biting is common among young children. During early childhood, children are sensory learners and often explore orally. In addition, children at a young age do not have fully developed language skills. Impulse control can lead children to bite as a way of making their needs known. We realize that biting can be a big concern, and we strive to minimize the behavior whenever possible. Our teachers and staff are trained to recognize triggers and how to prevent and decrease incidents. If your child bites or is bitten, you and the parent(s) of the other child involved receive an Incident/Accident Report that keeps the identity of both children confidential. If you have any concerns regarding a biting incident involving your child, please talk to your child's teacher or the School Leader.

VACATION

Please note that we do not offer credits for absences due to vacations, and the full monthly tuition remains due. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, feel free to reach out to the School Leader

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Our doors are always open to parents who would like to be involved in their child's care and education. We welcome any comments or suggestions from parents about programming or the care of their children. If any parents wish to volunteer at the center, or on outings please contact the School Leader so we can make necessary arrangements.

SECURITY

Keeping your child safe and secure is our priority. In addition to the built-in security features at the center, we strictly follow established procedures for your child's arrival and departure. When you first enroll, you'll complete an Enrollment Agreement including the Primary and Emergency Contact and Release sections. Please inform anyone listed on your Enrollment Application that they'll be asked to verify their identity. Staff members will ask for government-issued photo ID for anyone who is not positively known to them. We know you'll feel more secure and confident when we're aware of who may and may not pick up your child. We will not release a child to any Emergency Contact younger than 18 years of age unless the individual is the legal parent/guardian. Please do not post photos or videos that contain images of children other than your own on the Internet.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

At Great Beginnings, the protection of the children and staff is of the utmost concern, so every effort is made to be thoroughly prepared-should an emergency arise at the center. Emergency exit plans are posted in every classroom as well as in the front lobby. Tornado, fire, and emergency situation drills are conducted regularly so the children and staff are ready to follow emergency procedures with confidence. A complete copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan is available for review at the front desk. If the building were to become unsafe and require evacuation, the children will be transported to the emergency evacuation location determined by the center. The name of the location can be found in the Emergency Preparedness Plan and posted in the lobby of the center. Parents will be notified in the case of an emergency to be given details of the situation and to be provided with pick-up procedures. Please contact the director of the center for specific details on communication.

BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

We will be happy to help your child celebrate his or her birthday. You may bring nutritious, store-purchased refreshments for your child's class. Please check with your child's teacher and/or the center director or owner ahead of time before planning the event.

Please be aware of potential allergies in the classroom and that Great Beginnings does not allow nuts or nut products in the center. Due to state regulations, balloons or lit candles are not permitted in the center.

CHILD ABUSE AND MANDATED REPORTING

All staff and administrators of Great Beginnings are mandated by law to report any suspected case of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or deprivation of any child in our care to local authorities. All center staff receive initial training on preventing and identifying abuse and neglect during new teacher orientation and are required to receive ongoing training each year.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information contained in your child's records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with childcare licensing, protective services, or other government agencies will not have access to the records without your written authorization or court order. As a parent or guardian, you can request access to your child's records. We are happy to provide access at reasonable times to records kept at the center, including the Enrollment Agreement, Incident/Accident Reports, Family Communication sheets, or progress notes. For information about the process needed to access other documents that may be included in your child's records, please contact the Head of School. As a primary parent or legal guardian, you have the right to add and update information, comments, data, or other relevant materials to your child's records. If you withdraw your child from the center, we will maintain your child's records for the minimum period referenced in child care licensing regulations. If you want a copy of your child's records at the center, an administrative fee may be charged to offset copying and delivery charges.

TAX STATEMENTS

Tax statements are available at the end of the calendar year. Please see the School Leader for more information.

Parent/Family Handbook and Fee Agreement

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Type of Care (please circle one) : **Full-Time Care** **Before\After School** **Summer Camp**

Monthly/Weekly(CAPS) Child Care Fees: _____

I/We (the undersigned) have read the parent handbook for Great Beginnings and understand all the information, policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. We (the undersigned) have also received a copy of these policies and procedures for our own records and reference.

By signing this agreement we consent to all the handbook policies and procedures and agree to them, including payment policies and late fee procedures. By signing this agreement, we acknowledge that the information supplied in the registration form regarding our child(ren) and the information supplied below is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date:

School Leader Signature

Date: