



# Potomac Valley Academy Daycare & Preschool

A Ministry of Potomac Valley Assembly

## Parent Handbook

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WELCOME

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Potomac Valley Academy. We are happy you selected our Academy for your child's care and education. You will find a professional team of dedicated people working to provide the highest quality program at affordable prices. God has given us the privilege of working with your child. This is a very significant period in his/her life. Together with you, we can play an important part in your child's developmental years. We are sure that you will find Potomac Valley Academy a truly rewarding experience.

Please keep this information for future reference.

**We Provide care for:**

Infants 6 weeks to 12 months

Toddlers 12 months to 23 months

Twos 24 months to 35 months

Threes (Must be potty trained)

Fours & Fives (too young for MCPS) Pre-school

**OUR PHILOSOPHY** *Teach the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will never part from it. Proverbs 22:6*

Potomac Valley Academy Daycare is a ministry of Potomac Valley Assembly, The purpose of the daycare is to provide a safe, Christian environment for nurturing children where they can grow and develop spiritually, educationally, physically, socially, and emotionally while they interact with others.

We believe that God loves, cares for, and is concerned about children and that we can be His agents in reaching out to children with the love of Christ in practical ways.

Our instructional goals include age-appropriate experiences in Bible, language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. To enhance a child's learning experience we encourage parent participation, utilize community resources, and sponsor field trips. We put play at the heart of our curriculum, encouraging and supporting active participation in the learning process.

Our aim is to enhance the developing personality of each child by providing educational experiences of lasting value:

**Spiritual**—by inclusion of God's word interspersed in the daily program with Bible stories, daily prayers and songs.

**Physical**—by offering experiences that develop large and small muscle coordination.

**Social**—by encouraging participation in-group activities and getting along with others. Further, we help to develop each child's ability to make choices and decisions.

**Emotional**—by communicating the value of every child and by providing a safe environment for each child. In addition we help develop each child's ability to recognize, understand and express thoughts, ideas and feelings in developmentally appropriate ways.

**Cognitive**—by providing experiences in which children can explore and learn, and which build an enthusiasm for learning. Also, we support each child's creativity with age-appropriate activities.

**DAYCARE SPONSORSHIP AND LICENSURE**

Potomac Valley Assembly of God, Germantown, MD, founded Potomac Valley Academy Daycare. Potomac Valley Academy Daycare meets the required local regulatory agencies of childcare. There

are minimum standards for working with children that relate to the age, health, qualifications (both work experience and education) and the required training for the prospective worker. Additional regulations normally deal with the quality of services provided including equipment requirements, staffing, and policies regarding children's health and safety.

## OUR PROGRAM

### Introduction

In a caring and positive atmosphere we create a warm and happy place for children to learn. As we bridge the gap from home to school, we guide children to a continued positive self image while building social skills in a classroom setting. Partnerships with families, staff, and the community contribute to a child's positive sense of self.

Sensory, motor, and language skills are introduced through materials and activities that are process rather than the product, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Our curriculum is developed through teacher observation and evaluation of each child. Concepts and skill are introduced that are appropriate for each child's stage of development and that reinforce spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Based on the theory that children learn through play, classroom routines encourage active involvement, meaningful experimentation and reinforcement through repetition. Opportunities are provided for the children to experience and explore new things through the following major areas: blocks, home living and dramatic play, art, science and nature, books, and music and movement. Schedules are designed to balance structure and free choice, as well as active and quiet time.

At Potomac Valley Academy Daycare, we treat each child as an individual, working from the level each child has attained and moving forward one step at a time. We teach a love of learning by allowing children to develop at their own pace, helping them to enjoy success without pressure.

### Admission Procedure

Children are accepted on a space available basis. A waiting list will be maintained when all spaces are filled.

The following admissions guidelines are followed:

- **Age of child**—The day care is licensed to accept children between the ages of six weeks through five years old.
- **Interview**—Prior to enrollment, parents must schedule an interview which will include touring the center, reviewing the parent handbook, and answering any parent questions.
- **Registration Fee**—A \$50 registration fee will be due upon enrollment and renewable each September. This fee helps with costs such as insurance, administrative costs, and supplies (an extra fee may be charged for additional materials.) Registration fees are non-refundable.
- **Enrollment Forms**—All enrollment papers must be completed and on file in the daycare office before your child may attend Potomac Valley Daycare. These forms include:
  1. Emergency Form
  2. Health Inventory\*
  3. Health Inventory Addendum
  4. Immunization Form\*
  5. All About My Child Form
  6. Consumer Pamphlet
  7. Teacher Questionnaire
  8. Infant/Toddler Resume

*\*These forms must be completed and signed by your child's physician.*

**All students are required to have on file a current annual physical and updated shot record.**

All registration forms and paperwork must be turned into the office with fees prior to your child's first day.

## **MISSION AND PURPOSE**

Potomac Valley Academy exists to provide high quality care and education to children of Potomac Valley Assemblies of God members and the surrounding community. Children ages 6 weeks through 5 years participate in the program. Priority for enrollment is given to student families. The program is licensed by the state of Maryland. Classrooms are staffed with trained teachers and aides. The program seeks to meet the individual needs of children and families within a safe, nurturing, and richly diverse environment. PVA sees itself as an integral part of the community, supporting parents in their effort to work and attend school.

## **CURRICULUM**

It is the intention of the center to provide an informal atmosphere and a child-oriented, developmentally appropriate curriculum where children learn through play and the exploration of their environment. Children have the opportunity to become independent and successful in this educational environment, begin to successfully solve problems, and learn to express their ideas and feelings. The Maryland State Department of Education (our licensing body) advocates activities for children to be developmentally appropriate. These activities promote success for the child because they are geared to developmental stage and individual ability and interest. **Play is the essential component of a developmentally appropriate curriculum.**

The teachers will observe and assess the children's play on a regular basis. This is an essential tool in planning curriculum, arranging the classroom environment, selecting the activities to be offered, and providing the appropriate props. Curriculum is what *happens* in the educational environment – not what is planned to happen but what actually takes place when all players are present. **Learning is not imposed on the child**, rather, it is what takes place naturally in an environment that offers a choice of activities created with children's needs in mind. Early childhood curriculum arises from the children's individual and collective interests, actions, questions, and manipulations of the environment. When curriculum works, it is a carefully orchestrated moment by the 'set designer,' an unplanned event instead of a scripted scene envisioned by a meticulous teacher.

### **The importance of play**

Our program philosophy is based on the premise that children learn about the world around them through play (active involvement with other children, adults, and materials). Children need years of experience with real objects and events before they are ready to understand the meaning of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning takes place as young children *touch, manipulate, and experiment*, with things and *interact* with people. The teachers' role is to create an environment that supports the ideas and experiences of children and invites them to observe, be active, make choices, and experiment. Children spontaneously engage in activities such as block building, painting, or dramatic play, adding pieces of information to what they already know and thereby generating new understandings. Children learn simple concepts and then use these concepts to grasp more complex ideas (the building blocks of learning). Because our program is designed to maximize individual development and promote developmentally appropriate practices, our activities focus on the *process* of learning. Therefore, the emphasis is on the experiences of the children rather than the results of those experiences. For example, painting is more important than what has been painted; building with blocks is more important than what is built. Each child has his or her own set of possibilities and we help those possibilities unfold. Days are filled with planned and spontaneous moments of learning. There is time allowed for active outdoor play, imaginative games, independent discovery, and group activities.

## STEPS IN THE FOUNDATION TO LIFELONG LEARNING

The premise of the Early Childhood Education philosophy is to acknowledge the value of a strong foundation to early learning. Our program philosophy is strongly embedded in the belief that we, as early childhood educators, must lay a foundation that fosters a child's 'love of learning,' rather than to 'teach' specific academic skills. This early childhood philosophy includes several steps that, if accomplished with enduring quality, will strengthen one's ability to acquire the necessary skills for lifelong learning. *How* a child acquires these skills (i.e., basic skills) is also important to the early childhood philosophy. The six main steps/stages are listed and defined below.

### **Trust**

Developing trust in those around us is the basis of all relationships. A child's first group experience is often the initial try at trusting adults other than the parent. Trust is based in security, protection (without overprotection), and unconditional regard and acceptance.

### **Self-Value**

Building a strong sense of self-identity strengthens the desire to belong to the group experience. Feeling valued and worthwhile increases self-confidence, and, as a result, develops social skills. Feeling positively about ourselves is a necessary step to facilitate pro-social behavior.

### **Self-Control**

The third step in building the strong foundation of early experiences is to recognize our ability to control our own behavior – that is, we can make decisions that affect our behavior. The goal of this emotional control is our ability to discipline ourselves through *intrinsic* motivation as compared to extrinsic control. Assisting the child to problem-solve, adjust to social experiences, encourage independence, decision making, and cooperation enables the child to gain mastery in understanding emotional responses.

### **Learning Tools**

Our ability to feel accepted and secure, possess a strong self-value, ability to problem solve, and make decisions about our own behavior lends easy access to acquiring sound learning skills or learning tools. These dispositions facilitate the innate necessities to go on learning. We seldom learn these skills through drill and rote, yet they are essential to the satisfaction gained through learning. To develop an understanding of language, to be curious, to listen to others, to persist at a task until completed, to concentrate, all will help us learn. To share time and materials, to gain confidence, to comprehend meaning, all are useful in this process. To discover, be inventive, express ourselves, be humorous, be resourceful, all are skills necessary to the ambience of learning.

### **Basic Skills**

Basic skills are the immediate forerunners to academic learning. Pre-reading, pre-math, and pre-printing provide us with the information required to read, compute, and write. These skills are learned as a result of consistency, rote, and drill. It is difficult to separate these units of actions from the disposition to learn as they seem to occur simultaneously. For example, you can learn the words to a song through repetition, but you cannot learn to like to sing in the same way. You can learn the words in a book, but wanting to read is different. Learning to write requires a love of written expression, which cannot be learned through repetitiously printing letters.

The attitudes and interests of the adults in a child's life charge the environment from which the modeling of learning skills or dispositions originates. This natural acquisition emanates from the relationships that have developed in the building of the foundation of early human experience. Through the vehicle of play, these avenues of learning are illuminated, strengthening social skills and language as voracious ingredients to the process.

### **Lifelong Learning**

The cycle of these early childhood experiences can be reaffirmed throughout life. Academic educational opportunity is less complex, more successful, and satisfying with the strength of early education firmly in place. If teachers and parents share this philosophy, the relationship existing between them is sustained.

### **Why Are These Steps So Important?**

These steps are all interrelated, building on the step before. Each level of the ladder of learning must be completed with a certain amount of success. Children need to develop a sense of trust in order to develop relationships. To strengthen a sense of self-identity, an individual must feel valued, accepted, and worthwhile by others. This can only occur when trust has been established. Academic learning cannot take place successfully unless a child has acquired some learning tools and emotional control, which is difficult if self-esteem is low. Without listening skills, concentration, and self-discipline, academic

learning becomes a struggle. Early Childhood Educators, together with parents, can guide the young child through each step on the ladder of learning, beginning with trust and continuing with broadening of language and basic skills. At this last level, children should have the skills and confidence to advance to academic learning associated with formal education.

(source: *Measuring Performance: The Early Childhood Educator in Practice*, Barbara Elliott, 2002).

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

1. Assist children in learning to live comfortably in a social environment and in the family.
2. Develop a respect for individual and cultural differences through discussion, literature, and role modeling.
3. Provide opportunities for the children to interact, guided by models of socially acceptable behavior.
4. Enhance the child's self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-confidence by offering many opportunities for a child to succeed, express ideas, and understand his/her emotions and to attain skills to control them.
5. Provide opportunities for math, science, reading, memory skills, language development, and social science.
6. Increase attention span and follow simple directions.
7. Foster creativity and self-expression through art, music, and dramatic play.
8. Develop small muscles by using scissors, paste, clay, blocks, puzzles, beads, pegs, etc.
9. Develop large muscles through outdoor activities such as climbing, riding a tricycle, running, etc.
10. Stimulate and encourage curiosity and provide opportunities for problem solving.
11. Encourage children to take care of their own needs with support from the adults in their environment.

## **Positive Discipline**

We believe that our responsibility is to provide an environment allowing freedom within clearly defined limits. Our goal is to teach children responsible behavior and self-control as they respond to the situations in their lives. This is a Bible based common sense approach.

- Christian love is the basis of our discipline.
- Discipline is teaching, not punishment.
- Discipline must be both firm and loving.
- Respect must be earned to make discipline effective.

We believe that children learn best through experiences. We believe the teachers must lovingly guide and redirect the children in activities that help them learn to cooperate with their peers. We facilitate this by the following:

- Having a variety of activities for the children.
- Limiting the number of children in each area of the room to avoid overcrowding and to give opportunity for constructive interaction.
- Speaking with a child if his/her behavior is inappropriate. Example: "This is the way we use the paint brush" or "Walking only, please," etc.
- Using positive language with the children to give praise for appropriate behavior. Example: "I like the way Johnny is sitting."
- Asking the child to go to another area for if a child continues to have problems cooperating after using the above techniques. Example: "Peter, you seem to be having trouble cooperating in blocks,

please go over to the puzzle table," etc. As this progresses, when a child is redirected to another area, he/she will know the behavior just exhibited was inappropriate.

- Seeking the help and support of the parent to resolve the problem if a child continues to experience behavioral difficulties. If necessary, outside assistance may be sought. Dismissal from the program may be considered when the health, safety, and welfare of this child, another child, the children in the group, or the staff are at risk.
- If a child is unable to demonstrate self-controlling behavior, a brief time-out results for the child to regain control. Time-out occurs only when other measures fail, and is used as an opportunity for the child to re-group, not as a punishment.
- Some negative behavior is best ignored since its goal is often to get attention. This technique is effective for some of the disruptive things children do and it minimizes mimicking activity by other children.
- If a child is unable to gain control and requires more individual attention that can be given within child-to-staff ratios, we may need to contact a parent. A child that consistently requires one-to-one attention may have to leave the center temporarily for safety's sake. Repeated uncontrollable behavior can lead to discontinuation of learning center services.

**Under the law, any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, is illegal and is against our philosophy.**

### **Indoor Environment**

Potomac Valley Academy Daycare is designed in an open-classroom style with some enclosed rooms. The open concept allows space for a variety of well-developed interest centers within learning areas. Children have the freedom to choose from the many child-directed activities provided in the various interest centers. Teachers provided guidance, interaction, small group, and individual activities with the children.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an exciting part of the curriculum, used to reinforce and expand upon classroom experiences. Our intention is to make field trips fun, age appropriate and educational. Parent helpers are always needed for these activities to be successful. We love to have parent participation in the form of chaperoning and carpooling.

### **Rest/Nap Time**

Nap/rest time is a quiet time for the children to relax. Stories and quiet music are used to assist the children transition into this part of the day. Mats, labeled and spaced according to licensing regulations, are arranged with the children's personal items. A blanket and soft toy may be brought from home to help the children relax during this quiet time of the day.

### **Involvement**

You are encouraged to become involved in your child's program. You can expand on the learning experience by asking your child questions or doing related activities at home. In addition, we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities to help with special events and projects at the Daycare.

## Child Pickup

Children are to be released only to those parents or adults who are authorized to pick them up, as identified by the information provided on the enrollment forms. Under no circumstances will we release a child to a person not identified on the enrollment form without authorization from the director. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will the staff compromise a child's safety or the safety of anyone in the Daycare.

Children may go home only with those persons identified on the emergency card. If someone comes to take a child whom the staff member or director does not know, the child will not be released until one of the following conditions is met:

- A written note from the parent must be obtained stating approval for a designated person to pick up the child on that specific day. The note must be to the director or teacher in charge.
- A phone call from the parent must be received by the director or teacher in charge authorizing the child be released to the designated person.
- The parent is contacted via telephone to verify the release of the child (in the absence of a parental note or telephone call from the parent).

## Illness and Accidents

When your child becomes ill or injured, the first priorities are to meet the child's needs and inform you of the situation. A staff member will complete an Illness and Accident Report and file it with the director. The description of the illness or accident and injury, what action was taken, and the staff member's signature are included on the report.

You will be notified of your child's situation based on the information you provided on your child's emergency card. Therefore, please keep work and emergency telephone numbers current.

The following guidelines will be used when determining if your child should be kept out of the daycare for illness. Keep your child home if he/she has ...

- A fever (or has one in the past 24-hour period). A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to daycare.
- A constant cough, wheezing, nasal discharge, sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea.
- Symptoms of communicable disease (these are usually reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, and abdominal pain, plus fever). Please notify the director at once if your child does have a communicable disease.

You must make a plan to provide care for your child in case of illness.

## Medication

Children are not given any medications unless proper parental and/or physician's permission is on file. When medication is given to your child, the date, time, dosage, and staff member's signature are recorded on the medication form. All medication must remain in the original container indicating the child's name, type and date of prescribed medication, amount and times of dosage. All other records, permission or conditions that are required by licensing standards must be met. All medications are stored safely out of the reach of children. Nonprescription medicine such as Tylenol, Motrin and cough drops, can be administered by a staff member only with parental permission, and always in the manner set forth by local licensing regulations.

## Meals and Snacks

Potomac Valley Academy will provide a morning snack at 9:15 a.m. and an afternoon snack at 3:00 p.m. Lunch is provided by the parents and is served at noon. Milk or juice is provided with snacks and milk is provided daily with lunch. All lunches must contain items from meat, fruit, vegetable, and grain food groups.

Our goal at Potomac Valley Academy Daycare is to serve all meals and snacks in a relaxed atmosphere. Special efforts are made to avoid children waiting to be served or food sitting out for long periods of time before consumption. The following guidelines are observed:

- Small, child-size portions (with additional portions available) are served rather than large servings.
- Meals and snacks are not withheld as a form of discipline.
- Children are encouraged, never forced, to try each food item.

## Friday Lunch

We provide an alternative lunch on Fridays at an additional cost of \$2.50 per week.

1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of the month:	Pizza
2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month:	Chicken Nuggets
3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month:	Hot dogs on buns
4 <sup>th</sup> Friday of the month:	Macaroni and Cheese
5 <sup>th</sup> Friday of the month:	Fish Sticks (these weeks are rare)

In addition to the above we serve a vegetable, a fruit and milk.

## Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Potomac Valley Academy Daycare provides quality child care services. Abuse or neglect of a child, in any form (physical, sexual, emotional) is never permitted. In Maryland, all personnel working in a licensed child care facility must report suspected child abuse or neglect. This same law shields the person reporting from reprisal by holding all records and reports confidential.

Potomac Valley Academy Daycare staff are obligated to report any signs of abuse or neglect to the director immediately, who in turn will contact the appropriate local agency to report the suspected abuse.

## Safety

Safety of the children, staff, and visitors is of the utmost importance. The day care staff has been trained to be alert for dangerous objects or situations that may arise. The staff is responsible for the safety of the children, their co-workers, and themselves.

In the event of a crisis situation, the staff will remain calm, sensible, and objective. Further, the staff will evacuate the building in the event of fire or disaster using the proper escape routes.

## Playground

Because children learn through active use of their senses, some great opportunities for learning occur outdoors. With proper supervision, the playground can be a fun place for children and staff.

The following playground safety guidelines are practiced:

- Staff members know how many children are in their care at all times.
- Children are counted before going outside.
- Children are continually counted while on the playground.
- Children are counted when coming inside and before moving onto the next activity.
- Children use equipment as it was intended. i.e.: climbing only on climbing equipment, sitting on swings, etc.
- Children are not allowed to engage in hazardous play of any kind. Redirection, distraction, praise and other techniques of positive discipline are used.
- Children are never sent to retrieve a ball, toy, etc. without supervision.
- Children are kept in sight of staff on the playground at all times.
- Staff is actively involved with children and supervising all children closely.
- The number of children is limited to avoid over crowding.
- Children are never left unattended. If a child becomes injured or sick, staff members will call to another staff member to assist.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Each staff member checks with the director regarding specific emergency procedures. While various emergency procedures are necessary in some locations (earthquake, tornado, etc.). Potomac Valley Academy Daycare practices regular monthly fire drills.

### **Daycare Calendar**

The academy operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. during the months of January–December.

### **Holidays**

Holidays observed by Potomac Valley Academy include the following:

- New Year's Day\*
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July\*
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve\* (center closes at 12:00 p.m.)
- Christmas Day\*

*\*If this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the day prior to or the day after will be observed. For example, if Christmas Eve and Christmas Day fall on a Saturday and a Sunday, Potomac Valley Academy will be closed Friday and Monday.*

## **Weather-related Closings**

We realize that daycare is for working parents, consequently, we try to keep our center open during inclement weather. Regarding weather-related closings, we observe the following guidelines:

- Potomac Valley Academy Daycare will close in the event of inclement weather (sleet, freezing rain, snow, or other hazardous weather conditions) only if Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) declare they are closed.
- In the event that the Daycare is closed due to inclement weather, tuition will not be refunded.
- MCPS have a one (1) hour delay; PVA will open at 8:00 a.m.
- MCPS have a two (2) hour delay; PVA will open at 9:00 a.m.
- We suggest you call the Daycare before leaving from home to be sure staff have arrived and the Daycare is open.
- If hazardous weather should occur while the Daycare is open and the decision to close-early is made, you will be notified at least two (2) hours in advance. Please attempt to pickup your child early so staff will not be delayed from leaving and thus jeopardize their safety in traveling. We appreciate your cooperation.

## **Attendance**

We ask that you notify the daycare if your child will be absent on a scheduled day of attendance. This allows us to maintain a quality program and proper staffing. More importantly, we care about the welfare of you and your child.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Your child must be brought into the building by an adult each day to be received by one of our staff. Please sign your child in and out of the daycare daily using the sign in sheets located in the classroom. For your protection, we require you to write a note if your child is to be picked up by anyone other than the authorized persons listed on the emergency card. If your child will be absent from the daycare, or if the circumstances cause late arrival, please call the daycare.

You are encouraged to drive slowly in the parking area. Please watch for children and adults who may be in the parking lot coming from between parked cars. Please be sure to TURN OFF YOUR CAR ENGINE when arriving or dropping off your child at the center.

## **Fees**

### **Registration:**

\$50.00 per family, non-refundable plus \$100 deposit if beginning date is more than 30 days after enrollment.

### **Late Departures:**

Late fees will be charged as follows:

- \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 p.m.—to be paid directly to staff members at the time of late pick up. You will be billed if payment is not immediately made.
- If the designated pick-up person is continually late, the child's enrollment may be withdrawn at the center's discretion.

### Tuition Guidelines

- Tuition is due weekly with payment to be made on Monday of the current week. Tuition not received by close of business on Tuesday of the current week will be considered late and a \$25 late payment fee will be added to your account.
- Tuition payments may be made by personal check, cash, or money order. However, if any family has more than two checks returned by the bank during a twelve (12) month period that shall be required to make all tuition payments in cash or by money order. The fee charged by the bank for returned checks will be charged to your account.
- If you do not make the tuition payment by Friday of the week it is due, the Director will notify you in writing that your child will not be admitted to the daycare the next Monday unless payment for two weeks child care are submitted (The week now overdue with \$25 late fee payment added, and the present week). Continual delinquency may result in enrollment withdrawal.
- Licensing requirements and our program require us to engage staff based upon the number of children enrolled; therefore we cannot give deductions or refunds from the stated fees for absences for part of the day, week, or month.
- There will be **no refunds** for days when your child is absent from the center.
- Parents who have more than one child enrolled in the daycare, receive a 10% discount for the child who has the lesser tuition.
- Active Potomac Valley Assembly members receive a 20% discount for their children enrolled in the daycare.
- Siblings of children already enrolled have priority enrollment.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in your employer flexible spending plan (if available) for childcare to reduce your total cost and to also use the childcare provider credit on your taxes. We can provide the tax ID number upon your request.
- Potomac Valley Academy reserves the right to change its tuition policy as deemed necessary.

### Schedules

All schedule changes must be approved IN ADVANCE through the office. Based on availability, the change will be granted or denied. Please do not assume that additional time can be added. If your scheduled time is decreased, upon your request, the available time will be filled by someone on our waiting list. Please do not assume that you can automatically return to your former schedule. This must be discussed with the Director.

### Free Vacation Week

Families enrolled at Potomac Valley Academy Daycare are entitled to one-week vacation per calendar year. Vacation weeks do not go into effect until after attending PVA for **ONE** year. You are not required to pay tuition for the one-week period your child is on vacation. Please notify the day care office for any planned vacation time. Full tuition will be charged for any additional weeks of vacation taken.

### Birthdays

You may bring a special treat for the class to celebrate your child's birthday. Please let your child's teacher know if you plan to bring something. A donation of your child's favorite storybook is also a great way to honor your child's special day.

## **Toys from Home**

Appropriate books, tapes, and CDs are always welcome. Please label them clearly with your child's name and give them to the teacher. Toys should not be brought to the daycare except for designated show and tell days. Toys may get lost or broken or be given away without your child's consent, which may result in tears on the part of your child.

## **Clothing**

We recommend you dress your child according to the following guidelines:

- Dress in comfortable, washable clothing. Although children wear smocks during messy activities such as painting and cooking, sometimes their clothing may become soiled.
- Dress in comfortable shoes for running, jumping, pedaling, and climbing. All shoes must have a strap or back to keep them in place on the children's feet. Flip-flops are not appropriate footwear for the playground and are not permitted according to licensing regulations.
- Dress appropriate for the weather. Outdoor play is important for good health and physical development. We are required to have daily outdoor play, so please dress your child in clothing appropriate for the season.
- All children must have a complete set of extra labeled clothing in their cubbies. Accidents can happen at the snack, lunch, or art table at any time. Children always feel more comfortable changing into their own clothing after an accident has occurred. If soiled clothing is sent home, please replace the articles with a clean set the next morning.
- PVA clothing that is borrowed should be washed and returned as soon as possible.

**Note:** Every classroom in the center uses a bleach solution (as required by licensing regulations) to disinfect tables and clean toys. There may be times when your child's clothing can be ruined because they come in contact with a recently washed table. We try hard not to let this happen, but we cannot guarantee that it won't. This is another reason you should send your children in 'play' clothes.

## **Toilet Training/2 year old room**

We have a bathroom in the 2 year old room. Please work closely with the staff in communicating where your child is in their toilet training. For children who are beginning toilet training, please provide flushable wipes and extra supplies/clothes needed for this transition. Also please don't expect the staff to toilet train your child if your child is not ready. All children will have opportunities throughout the day to toilet train, but all children develop at different times. Some children in this room may not be physically ready to train. Please have your child wear easy on/off clothing that they can pull up and down themselves.

## **Visitors**

Throughout the day various people may visit the daycare, including perspective parents, licensing representatives, and church personnel. All visitors are greeted and referred to the director's office or church office.

## **Telephones**

There may be a few times during the day when the day care staff will not be able to answer the telephone. In such cases, you may leave a message on the answering machine. The Potomac Valley Assembly church telephone number should only be used in case of an emergency and you are unable to reach us on the daycare line.

## **Smoking/Alcohol**

Smoking and alcohol are not permitted on Potomac Valley Academy Daycare property. If a parent is intoxicated when they come to pick up a child, the next person identified on the emergency card will be notified. If the parent is persistent about taking the child, the director or teacher will call the police.

## **Termination of Enrollment**

A child's enrollment may be terminated by withdrawal by the parent or guardian or by the director of the daycare.

Parents must give a two-week notice in writing when withdrawing their child from the daycare. Failure to give this notice will result in the forfeiture of your tuition deposit.

A meeting with the parents will be sought before the day care terminates enrollment. All cases of termination initiated by the Daycare will be reviewed by the Pastor and Church Board before becoming final.

PVA reserves the right to discontinue child care if we decide that either the center, child, or family is not benefiting from the arrangement. The daycare will give as much notice as possible when initiating the termination of enrollment. All measures will be taken to work through a difficult situation. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- If a child's behavior indicates s/he is not adjusting to the program, has needs the program cannot fill or accommodate, or is detrimental to the functioning of the class as a whole. Staff members will hold consultations with staff, parents, and professionals in order to determine if the child would be better served by another program. If it is determined the center cannot serve the child's needs, or if a child significantly disrupts the program for other children, parents will be given two weeks to find alternate child care.
- If a parent or guardian exhibits behavior that is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children or staff in a classroom, or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom, s/he will be given one week's notice and asked to find alternate child care services. In an instance in which a parent is deemed verbally or physically hostile or abusive to center staff or children, the center reserves the right to take measures to maintain a harmonious and safe center environment and child care may be terminated immediately.
- Failure of a parent to abide by center policies and procedures may result in the parent's being asked to find alternate child care. Disregard of center policies and procedures might include, but are not limited to: delinquent payments; leaving a child past closing time; leaving a child unattended; endangering the well-being and safety of children; parents' reluctance to provide information or seek assistance for their child; failure to comply with agreed upon plan of action relating to child's behavior; failure to submit or update medical forms; arriving or departing with a child while under the influence of substances that leave the parent incapable of safely caring for a child.

Although we pride ourselves on serving a diverse population of children and families, with a wide variety of needs, we cannot maintain enrollment for a child or family who requires more time and attention than we are reasonably able to give. Although some children may require extra time and attention on occasion, we cannot continue to provide care for a child who is unable to function within the routine of the classroom, and within the stated ratio. Some examples include a child who needs a constant one-on-one, displays chronic aggressive behavior (beyond what is typical), cannot manage transitions or the daily routine, cannot function or behave appropriately in a social setting.

We understand that, as a parent, you are concerned about the welfare of your child but, as a center, we need to be concerned with the welfare of all children enrolled in our program. Be assured, however, that it is NOT our goal to exclude children and families from our program. On the contrary, it is our goal to work with families in providing the best possible care for their children.

There are many times when a parent may decide another child's behavior is inappropriate and warrants dismissal. We want to be clear that there is a range of behavior for children of all ages that although not acceptable (biting, hitting, use of profanity, etc.), may be developmental and manageable within our setting. The center's professional staff will make the determination if a child's behavior is beyond this developmental range to the extent we feel we are not able to successfully work with him/her.

### **Trial Period**

All new children will be cared for on a two-week (14 calendar days) trial period beginning on your child's first actual day of care. During that time the parent or provider may terminate the child care agreement with 24 hours notice. No pre-paid fees will be credited upon cancellation during the trial period. After the trial period, a two-week's written notice is required by either party to terminate the agreement.

### **Drop off & Pick up**

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents in the morning or not wanting to leave when it's time to go home. Please be very brief (no more than 5 minutes is sufficient) during these transition times. The longer you prolong the departure the harder it gets, and we need to focus our attention on the other children. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back are all that is needed in the morning. In our experience, children are nearly always quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as parents are gone. This is a time of testing when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the provider). All the children will test to see if the rules still apply. Please be in control of your child during pick up times. Children are not permitted to go out to their car unattended at pick up times.

### **Preschool (2, 3, 4 & 5 year old rooms)**

Potomac Valley Academy provides a program which facilitates the child's expression of his/her ideas and help him/her to expand his/her own self-initiated activities. Individuality and originality will be encouraged, thereby developing a positive self-concept, as well as, accepting and respecting the "uniqueness" of others. Classroom experiences will be designed to make the child aware of his identity as a member of a peer group and as a member of the community.

Frequently and whenever necessary, laps, hugs, and positive, verbal expressions will be provided as reassuring signs of acceptance throughout the day. Each child will be called by name and respected. PVA believes this to be a very important part of a child's development.

Each child will participate in activities that will be based on a specific, planned unit of discovery. These units will encompass colors, numbers, shapes, sizes, and letter recognition. The activities will be age appropriate, stimulating and creative. These units will stress the developmental skills of cutting, pasting, coloring, tracing, painting, and following simple instructions. The program will be rounded out with field trips (over age 3), and special guests.

Learning areas will be set up in the Center, where children can discover numerous environmental experiences at their own pace, as well as, teacher directed. They will learn about plants, animals, and the numerous wonders of science. A dramatic play area will be provided for cooperative play. Puppets will be used with children for dramatization, language development and the encouragement of originality.

Exposure to music, dance, food, and customs from a wide variety of cultures will be an integral part of

the program. Music and rhythm instruments will enhance the learning of songs.

Free play periods will be part of each day. When properly guided and supervised, play can provide the preschool child with most of the learning experiences appropriate to his/her age. Also, the social experiences that come about naturally during play activities are an important part of the child's learning. Cognitive skills for more effective communication and interaction are developed as children are making choices and solving problems individually and in a group.

Equipment, posters, books, etc. that illustrate differences among children and human beings will be used in our program. Children will be encouraged to accept differences through the use of ethnic dolls, and puppets, mirrors and learning about other countries.

### **Infant/Toddler Rooms**

Our infant room cares for children ages six weeks through one year old. Our toddler room cares for children ages 1 year through 2 years. We follow the Maryland Licensing regulations for teacher to child ratio which is 1:3 with a maximum group size of six.

In the Infant Room each child shall be allowed to form and follow the child's own pattern of sleeping and eating. In the Toddler Rooms, the children rest after lunch in the afternoon. Emphasis in activities shall be given to play as a learning and growth experience. Each infant and toddler shall receive physical contact; such as being held, rocked, talked to, sung to, and taken on walks inside and outside the Center. Routines, such as at bedtime or while feeding and/or diapering a child, shall be used as opportunities for language development and other learning experiences. While a non-walking child is awake, the child shall have the opportunity during each day for freedom of movement, such as creeping and crawling in a safe, clean, open, and warm uncluttered area. For the infant under one year old, "tummy time", during wake time, will be permitted and supervised.

Infants and toddlers shall be encouraged to play with a wide variety of safe toys and objects. Infants and toddlers shall be taken outdoors for part of each day, except during inclement weather or when a physician has ordered otherwise.

Teachers will help the children reach developmental milestones that are age appropriate i.e. rolling over, reaching and holding toys, sitting up, crawling, walking, self feeding and holding bottle, transition to sippy cup, and age appropriate language skills. Music will be played, stories will be read, and projects will be made. Children will have the opportunity to play with the teachers as well as play in bouncy seats, swings, exersaucers and on the floor.

Each child will receive a daily report that states when and what they ate, when they had their diapers changed and what they did during their day.

Shoes are not worn in the infant room as a means of trying to keep dirt and germs outside the room.

Food and formula brought from home shall be labeled with the child's name and refrigerated, if required. Open containers must be taken home each day and/or discarded within 24 hours. The contents of unfinished bottles must be discarded. Breast milk and formula will be warmed in a bottle warmer. Caution is used to check temperature before feeding. Bottles will never be propped. If a child is unable to hold their bottle, they will be held.

### **Items Needed by Parents to Ensure Quality Care**

We want to assure your child is properly cared for while in our center. Parents are responsible for providing the following items:

### Infants: 6 weeks to 12 months

Diapers – weekly or unless otherwise noted on daily sheet

Wipes and any creams or powders your child needs for diapering – when noted on daily sheet

Clean Bottles with caps and nipples-daily with breast milk or formula

3 Complete changes of clothes (seasonal) – at all times

1 Set of clean crib linens – at all times

baby cereal, baby juice & jar foods for those children that are of age

### Toddlers: 13 months to 24 months

Diapers – weekly

Wipes – weekly

2 changes of clothes (seasonal) – at all times

1 set of clean crib linens – at all times

2 labeled sippy cups- cleaned at home daily

Lunch in a lunch box

We provide whole milk and snacks to those children that are ready (as specified by the parent).

### Twos: 24 months to 36 months

Diapers/Training Underwear (if child isn't potty trained)

Change of clothes – at all times

One clean set of linen – at all times

Lunch in a lunch box

(Pacifiers are not allowed)

Note: When potty training begins, please dress children in clothes that will help increase independence of this new skill. Clothes to avoid: overalls, onesies undershirts, jumpers, & body shirts.

### Threes

Change of clothes – at all times

One set of clean linen – at all times

Lunch in a lunch box

Note: Please dress children in clothes to have fun in. Children should not have to worry about getting clothes soiled while they are learning

### Fours

Change of clothes – at all times

One set of clean linen – at all times

Lunch in a lunch box

Note: Please dress children in clothes to have fun in. Children should not have to worry about getting clothes soiled while they are learning

### **Expectations of Parents**

- Read the bulletin boards, notices and newsletters that are sent home. Important information is shared with you on a regular basis, but you must make the effort to read it.
- Give your child time to adjust to child care before leaving them here. Parents can help set a positive tone for the rest of the day by taking a few minutes in the morning to greet the teachers and help involve your child in an activity.
- Value staff members and show them common courtesy. Caregivers are more than just babysitters. We employ teachers who have training and education in child development. Show respect for their position as an important part of your child's development.
- Focus on your child when you pick him/her up. Take time to greet staff and your child and see if there is anything the teacher wishes to communicate before you leave.
- Pay your child care fees on time. We are providing a valuable service and deserve prompt payment. Don't put the director in the position of begging you for payment or having to threaten disenrollment.
- Be respectful and support center policies. If we ask that you don't bring in toys, then please don't allow your child to do this. It is impossible to fully enforce all policies at all times, but know that your disregard for a policy is causing a problem.

- Make sure your children follow center rules. Please don't allow them to run away from you, climb on furniture, etc. Your child's safety and well-being is our primary concern.
- Make sure your child is wearing appropriate clothing. Children will get dirty in child care. It is not realistic to send them in good clothing and expect teachers to keep them clean. Make sure clothing is easy to remove if your child is in diapers or in the process of toilet training (don't send them in overalls or 'onsies').
- Keep a sick child home. The state mandates health regulations to prevent spread of infectious illness. Although it may seem inconvenient at times, these rules also keep **your** child from being infected by others as well. It is up to you to have a back-up plan for a child who cannot attend.
- Address concerns in a respectful way and to the appropriate person. Do not bad mouth staff to others-- seek to resolve your problem with the appropriate staff member.
- Try to minimize your child's time in child care. Most children have had a full day after 8 hours and need to re-fuel emotionally by spending time with their family. Allow them a break every now and then (a 'day off' when possible).
- Communicate with teachers about what's going on at home.
- Make sure children get a good night's rest so they are ready for their busy day.
- Pick children up before the center closes. Staff need to get home too.

### **Concerns/Slanderous Comments**

The daycare does its best to provide a good, safe, Christian environment. Our teachers are dedicated and committed to each child's well being. If at any time you have a concern, we encourage you to schedule a conference with the director to discuss your concern. Slanderous public comments towards the Daycare, Potomac Valley Assembly or its teachers and staff are unacceptable and may result in termination of your child's enrollment in the Academy.

In our never-ending quest to serve you to the fullest, please do not hesitate to call, write, or email us with any of your problems or concerns regarding your child. In fact, even if you are completely satisfied, we would love to know! Your thoughts and suggestions will enable us to better serve you and your child!

### **Final Thoughts**

When you enroll your child at Potomac Valley Academy, we as a staff assume the responsibility of giving you assistance with your child's unique needs. We will become the "parent for the day" in your absence. We will love and respect your child and help him/her grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, and mentally. Your child will be given our maximum consideration as an individual. We will look after the health of your child while at school, and present a planned program to provide a beneficial and educational experience. Our goal is to provide high quality care in an atmosphere of love and respect that fosters growth in moral and spiritual values. Thank you for sharing your child with us!

## Tuition Fees 2009

### Registration Fee

A \$55.00 registration fee, per family, is due upon registration and is renewable each September. This fee is non-refundable.

### Infant & Toddler Room – Per Child

Full-time rate	(4-5 days)	\$299.00 per week
Part-time rate	(less than 4 days)	\$ 68.00 per day

\*\*\*Part time slots can be taken over by a full-time infant at any time.

### Rates for Two Year Old Room – Per Child:

Full-time rate	(4-5 days)	\$226.00 per week
Part-time rate	(less than 4 days)	\$ 63.00 per day

\*\*\*Part time slots can be taken over by a full-time student at any time.

### Rates for 3-5 – Per Child:

#### Full-time Tuition – Per Child 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

4 or 5 full days	Monday – Friday	\$215.00 per week
3 full days		\$163.00 per week
2 full days		\$126.00 per week

#### Morning Session Only Tuition – Per Child 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

4 or 5 half days	Monday – Friday	\$137.00 per week
3 half days		\$116.00 per week
2 half days		\$ 84.00 per week

\*\*\*An additional \$15.00 fee (per child) will be charged to families who arrive before 8:55 a.m. and remain after 1:05 p.m. (morning session families only)

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\*\*\*Tuition Checks are due on Monday of the week attending. A \$25.00 late fee will be charged if tuition is not paid by close of business on Tuesday.

\*\*\*A 10% sibling discount is applied toward the **LOWER** tuition rate.



Attached is a copy of the Potomac Valley Academy Parent Handbook. Please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter to indicate you have received and read the handbook.

Thank you,

Kristy Malseed  
Director  
Potomac Valley Academy

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I have read the Potomac Valley Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in the Academy Handbook.

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Parent Signature

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Date