

## Our Mission

Positive beginnings for young children begin at Dawn's Early Light and never end. Our center provides a nurturing and structured positive learning environment emphasizing developmentally appropriate practice for each age 6 weeks to 10 years. Self concepts such as individuality, social skills, independence and creativity are enhanced through carefully planned lessons and activities. Opportunities are provided each day for children to develop an active curiosity about the world they live in while developing an enthusiasm for learning.

Developmentally appropriate tools and curriculum help the children achieve success at every age from birth to 5 years. Dawn's Early Light follows The Creative Curriculum as a guide for planning that includes social and physical development objectives, math and science skill objectives, music and fitness, literacy skills and an appreciation for art and music. The Creative Curriculum provides not only a guide for lesson planning but allows the teachers to plan daily activities based on developmental assessments for each child. Unlike other early childhood curriculums, The Creative Curriculum includes children birth through age 5.

We try to make sure that staff and families are communicating regularly, to ensure the highest level of education and care for your child. We hope that your years with us will be satisfying, enjoyable and filled with "Dawn's Early Light" memories. Our goal is to welcome you into our family and foster your child's growth and development at each stage of their early childhood.

Our before and after school program provides a safe and healthy environment for children 5 through 10 years of age each day before school and after school where we encourage caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Dawn's Early Light Summer Adventures begins when school lets out and continues until school resumes in August. We provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities led by trained leaders to give the children an unforgettable experience. Children form a sense of community and lasting friendships.

The following pages provide guidelines for care. We hope that they are clear, easy to understand and easy to follow. These guidelines were put into place to ensure the safety and security as well as the consistency of the environment. We ask that you make sure that you are completely familiar with the rules so that when it comes time for the staff to enforce them, you will already be aware of the policies and be ready to abide by them. They are in place for the protection of all of our families, yours included!

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and interest in making this child care experience wonderful for everyone involved.

## Our Staff

Dawn's Early Light understands that it is our staff that maintains the quality level of our center. Understanding this, we strive to hire top quality professionals who believe in the uniqueness of children as set forth in our philosophy.

Our staff members understand that they are continuing to learn each day and with each challenge. Continuing formal education is also very important. While many of our staff already hold degrees of one sort or another, they continue their education through seminars and training. We encourage parents to ask questions and share ideas so that everyone at Dawn's Early Light benefits from the circle of knowledge.

Consistency of care is very important for young children. It is also important to the team effort. Staff longevity is our goal. It is our sincerest hope that through open communication and effective teamwork we can continue to keep staff turnover to a minimum.

Our employees go through appropriate screening techniques, including state and federal background checks. Our directors observe the teachers in their classrooms on an on-going basis. At ninety days they go through an informal review and once a year after that.

Each center has its specific director to assist you. Dawn Bowman is the owner of both centers and the Director in Dunkirk. Dawn is always on site and can always be contacted by calling the Dunkirk center at 410-257-7900 or by email at [del.dunkirk@comcast.net](mailto:del.dunkirk@comcast.net).

Karen O'Connor is the Director of our center located in Prince Frederick, Maryland. Karen can be contacted at the center, 410-535-5625 or by email, [pfcenter@comcast.net](mailto:pfcenter@comcast.net).

Dawn's Early Light won Runner Up Best Child Care center in Calvert County for 2009-2010.

### Classroom Classification

Munchkin Land                      6 weeks to 18 months (Open 7a.m.-5:15p.m. daily)

The Navigators& Trail Blazers 18 months to 36 months

The Explorers                      2, 3 and 4 year olds

The Pioneers                      4 and 5 year olds (Kindergarten Readiness)

## Discipline and Guidance

The most asked about part of our program is always discipline. Our goal is to provide your child with a positive and consistent approach to guidance. Safety is our foremost concern.

If an undesirable behavior occurs, your child will be walked away from the group and talked to about the consequences of his or her behavior. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to clean up his/her area and try another activity. If the problem involves another child, both children will be helped to talk through the dispute. The goal is that sooner rather than later, the child will be responsible for his or her own problem solving.

Rules are introduced and children are expected to abide to the best of their ability. Time out is used when the teacher and child cannot find a resolution. Time out is when a child takes a time out from his/her activity when he/she is not following the rules and his/her behavior has disrupted an activity. Time out is spent away from the group with supervision and does not exceed, 2 minutes for a 2 year old, 3 minutes for a 3 year old, etc...

In some cases the parents will be called to have a meeting with the teacher to discuss consistent guidance strategies for both home and school. Persistent behavioral issues or unusual or dangerous aggression to self or others needs to be resolved to maintain a safe environment for everyone. Staff will be in close contact with the family during these times.

If a conference is requested and the family refuses to meet, the center reserves the right to deny service temporarily or permanently for that child or all family members attending the center. If the behavior persists, the family will be called to pick up the child for the rest of the day.

## **Biting**

Biting is the most talked about behavior in the childcare setting. To understand how to handle biting it is necessary to understand the behavior. Biting is a release of frustration. It is a natural behavior frequently exhibited by young children, mostly between the ages of 15 and 36 months. These children are still discovering orally and do not have the processing skills to properly understand their range of emotions. It is important to understand that when children bite, they are sending a signal for help. It is important to understand that there is nothing caregivers or you as parents can do to stop the behavior. In a group care situation, try as we might, at some point your child will bite or be bitten. We as early childhood professionals have to support them through this stage of development. By disciplining or redirecting them, adults are adding to the frustration and increasing the likelihood of repeat biting.

We do, however, take cases of biting seriously. An accident report is prepared and signed by the parent of the biter. The child that has been bitten is given lots of hugs while the bite mark is cleaned with soap and water and ice is applied. An accident report is written for the bite and the parents are informed. As in the case with all disputes between children, no names are given. In cases where the bite is to the face or head, a call will be made to the bitten child's parent.

## **Food Allergies**

We make every effort to consider all food allergies when planning our menu. If your child has a food allergy, we ask that you bring in a week's supply of small snacks that can be kept at the center. If there is a food item that your child cannot have, their teacher can substitute the item with a snack from home.

Allergies are noted on the emergency card that is completed at the time of enrollment, however, parents are asked to speak to the teacher in person so that everyone in contact with the child is well informed about the allergy.

## Parent - Child Discipline

As young children learn skills to enable them to handle social interactions with their peers, we know that there could be upsetting incidents that happen between children. Please, at no time undertake the responsibility of verbally or physically correcting the other child. You must tell a teacher about the incident especially if it is an ongoing or serious occurrence.

If the incident has been reported and you are not satisfied with or don't understand the rate of progress to correct it, you may bring your concerns to the director. Again, do not lash out at the other child; report the incident to the classroom teacher and ask him/her to follow up with you. Any violation of this policy could lead to some form of separation from the center.

## Tuition and Expenses

Tuition is due for the upcoming week by close of business on Friday. Care will be denied if there is a 2 week lapse in payment. A \$5 late fee is applied to each day the payment is not received. Tuition can be paid weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. In order to return to care, you may be required to re-register your child, in which case all registration fees will apply. No records will be provided while any account balance is outstanding.

**We make every effort to stay open for your convenience. On holidays, snow days and sick days, tuition will not be reduced.**

Records - Two weeks notice must be given for records to be reproduced and given to the family.

Deposit - A deposit equal to one week's tuition is due on or before the first day of attendance. The deposit will be credited toward the final week of attendance upon withdrawal of the family from the center provided that you give two weeks notice in advance of withdrawal. Deposits will be forfeited if you fail to utilize a space once a child has been registered or upon withdrawal from the center without notice.

Late Pick Up Fees - Our center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. If you are late, you will be charged \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes or fraction thereof. A charge of \$5.00 for each additional five-minute interval will be added. Please call the center to inform us anytime that you will be late. Calling will not necessarily eliminate the late fee.

If we have not heard from you by 6:00, we will begin to call your emergency contacts. It is important to understand that the staff of Dawn's Early Light is not required to stay past 6:00. Because it is they who are inconvenienced, late pick up fees in the form of cash or check should be paid directly to the waiting staff member.

Withdrawal - You may withdraw from Dawn's Early Light at anytime of the year. However, your required deposit will not be refunded or applied to your tuition unless two week's written notice is presented to the Director regardless of the circumstances. Written notices may be sent via e-mail to del.dunkirk@comcast.net. Dawn's Early Light is a private for-profit center and as such we reserve the right to refuse care under certain conditions. The following are only examples and are not intended to limit our rights:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Consistent communication difficulties between parents and Dawn's Early Light
- Repeated failure to abide by the regulations set forth in this handbook
- Exhaustion of all reasonable efforts regarding child or adult behavior concerns;
- For any other reason which, in the opinion of the management, is in the best interest of the center.

Returned Checks - A \$35.00 charge applies to all returned checks (NSF). Payment in the form of cash, certified check or money order must be provided within 24 hours of notification of the returned check in order to bring your account current. If payment is not received, service to your family will be discontinued. If your account incurs 2 NSF charges within any 12 month period, all future payments will be due in cash, certified check or money order until management approves the resumption of payment by check.

**Tuition Prices**

Infants.....	\$250.00 per week
Toddlers (18 months to 24 months).....	\$225.00 per week
2 year olds.....	\$180.00 per week
3, 4, & 5 year olds.....	\$170.00 per week
Calvert County Pre-K.....	\$150.00 per week
K - 5 <sup>th</sup> Grades.....	\$100.00 per week
	\$170.00 for weekly summer care

Part Time Care is limited but available to children 2 years old and older so parents should register early. **We do not offer part time care in our infant room due to crib use.**

2 year olds.....	\$85 for Tuesday and Thursday
	\$135 for Monday, Wednesday & Friday
3 years old and up.....	\$75 for Tuesday and Thursday
	\$125 for Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Preschool Only (8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for children 3, 4 and 5 years old)  
September through May:

Monday through Friday.....	\$100.00 per week
Tuesday and Thursday.....	\$50.00 per week
Monday, Wednesday and Friday.....	\$75.00 per week

**Activity Fees** - There is a non-refundable activity fee for each child attending Dawn's Early Light except for our infants. Activity fees are paid annually at the time of enrollment and every September after that. This fee pays for field trips and special events like Family Fun Night. A separate activity fee applies to the summer program which runs from June through August for kindergarten through fifth grades. Activity fees are paid by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

24 months to 36 months.....	\$125.00/year
3, 4, & 5 year olds.....	\$200.00/year
School Age Children.....	\$100.00/year
Summer Adventures Fee for School Age Children Only.....	\$400.00 paid by April 1 <sup>st</sup>

- Prices are subject to change. Advance Notification will be given.

**Infant Deposit** - Due to the high demand for infant care, there will be a non-refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition due upon registration in order to hold your slot. Money will not be refunded on any infant slot that is then not used.

**Activities** - From time to time Dawn's Early Light will offer a la carte activities on our premises such as gymnastics and pictures. These activities are offered for your convenience and are not covered by your tuition or activity fee. Payment for these services should be made directly to the company providing the service. All questions and /or complaints are to be directed to their representatives as well.

**Accounting Information** - All of your accounting questions can only be answered by the Director. For both clarity and consistent information, we ask that you direct all of your account questions to the office. No questions regarding charges or credits can be answered by anyone other than the Director.

**Account Statements** - If you need a receipt notify the Director so that a statement can be printed and handed to you at the end of the day. Year end receipts are printed and kept in the office from January 15<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>. Please stop by the office in order to pick up a copy of your yearly charges.

**Key Fobs** - Your child's safety is our main concern. Access into the center is secure at all times. The doors remain locked throughout operational hours. The key fob allows access into the center. Parents must purchase a key fob per person and pay a deposit of \$25.00 per key. Deposits will be mailed once key fobs are returned to the office.

## Health and Safety

Should your child take ill while at the center you will be notified and asked to remove the child within one hour of notification. If every attempt has been made to notify you we

reserve the right to notify people listed as emergency contacts on your Emergency Card. Continued lack of response to our request that you remove your ill child is cause for termination of services. If a child is sent home, the child may not return to care on that day. They may only return if they are symptom free and behavior is normal. A good rule of thumb is that if your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities, then they are not well enough to return to school.

While controlling illness in a child care center is never easy, we are obligated to keep the children's environment safe and healthy. It is important to keep all children home if they are still contagious or not feeling well. Many working parents are affected when their children become sick. Here are some of the definitions and guidelines that will be used to determine if a child must go home and when he/she can return to care:

- Temperature of 101 or higher (100.5 for infants)
- Rash - Child may not return without a doctor's note or if rash is open, oozing or itching; open skin has to be healed before returning to care
- Vomiting - Child may not return until 24 hours after symptoms have ceased and has resumed eating normally
- Diarrhea - Child may not return until symptom free and is eating normally
- Red and runny eyes - Child may not return until they have been on medication for at least 24 hours and there is no goop or drainage in or around the eye. If the child is documented to have a medical reason (clogged tear duct or allergies) the child may return the next day if "pink eye" is not present in the center.
- Noticeable change in behavior
- Virus - Child may not return until all symptoms have disappeared and the child is medication free for at least 24 hours
- Coxsackie's - Child may not return to the center until all blisters have disappeared and the child is eating normally.
- Strep Throat - Child may not return until she/he has been on medication for at least 24 hours and have been fever-free and Tylenol free for at least 24 hours.
- Chicken Pox - Child may not return until all blisters have had the scabs fall off.
- Thrush - Child may not return to the center until the child has been on medication for at least 24 hours and has resumed normal eating patterns.

While this in no way covers all illnesses, it takes care of most of what we see. It is important to remember that teething itself does not cause a fever of over 100.5. It does, however, lower the immune system making it easier for an infection to enter the child's system. So if your child has a fever and is teething, it probably means that the child has caught a secondary infection and needs to stay home.

We do alert parents when there is an outbreak of an illness when 2 or more children have the same symptoms and/or diagnosis.

Medication - Dawn's Early Light believes strongly in the communication of parent and doctor. With that in mind: We will dispense any medication as specifically prescribed when a

medication form accompanies the medication and is signed by the physician. Medication orders must be specific, we will not follow instructions that read "as needed".

The form must be filled out completely and signed by both parent and physician. The parent must administer at least one dose of the medication at home. The exception to this is the application of over-the-counter topical ointments or lotions, such as diaper rash ointment or sunscreen, which will be applied per the parents' instruction with a parent signed medication form unless the rash involves open sores.

Medication must arrive in its original container. Medication brought in secondary containers will be promptly returned. For safety reasons, please deliver all medications to your child's teacher and do not allow medicines to stay in the child's lunchbox or bag. Medications have to be taken home at the end of the day.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION TO CHILDREN UNDER 24 MONTHS**

1. Over-the-counter medication will only be given to children under 24 months with a medication form signed by the doctor.
2. Acetaminophin may be given one time **ONLY** for children over 24 months old if a medication form is signed by a parent and is on file stating "as needed".
3. Topical products such as diaper ointment, sunscreen and lotion may be used with a parent -signed medication form unless the rash has produced open sores and then the child must be seen by the doctor to return to care.

Accidents - While all efforts are made to protect your child from injury, occasionally accidents do occur. If a minor accident such as a scrape, bump or small cut should happen, the area will be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. A proper bandage will then be applied and an accident report will be completed for you to sign upon picking up your child at the end of the day. If a more serious injury such as a wound to the head, sprain, or allergic reaction should occur, you will be notified immediately and the proper medical attention will be sought. Parents are required to be notified through an accident report completed by the teacher.

Face or Head Injury - If a minor visible mark is on the face or a staff member witnessed a minor bump to the head and is not a medical emergency, the parents will be notified immediately. More serious injuries would require a call to the parents to pick up the child and decide if further medical attention is needed. In an emergency situation, the center will call 911, requesting a paramedic on the ambulance and have a staff member accompany the injured child to the hospital (Calvert Memorial). The staff member will stay until a parent arrives.

Poisons - All poisonous materials will be kept out of reach. However, should your child ingest a poisonous substance, we will follow the instructions of the Poison Control Center. 1-800-222-1222

Dawn's Early Light requires of its staff members to be qualified and current in Infant and Child CPR and First Aid at all times. We ask you to remember that we are not physicians but will attempt to help sick and injured children to the best of our ability.

Sunscreen - From May through September each year we will help families who would like their children to use sunscreen when they go outside. We ask that you do the following:

- Bring in a bottle of sunscreen with your child's name on it that can remain at the center
- Check to see that the date on the bottle is current for the period of use
- Fill out a medication form to accompany the bottle of sunscreen
- Give the sunscreen to your child's teacher
- Apply the first application of sunscreen to your child before arriving to the center

## Your First Day

Please understand that even the most organized parents find the first morning at a new center to be hectic and often something gets forgotten. It is for this reason that we have prepared this checklist to help during last minute preparations.

What to bring:

1. **Backpack** - A backpack is recommended to hold bedding items while in your child's cubby. Space is very limited in child care centers and keeping bedding isolated helps prevent the spread of germs. These bedding items for naptime include: a crib size sheet, a small blanket and a small pillow. Personal items such as stuffed animals are not permitted as they cause a great distraction at naptime and throughout the day.
2. **Extra Clothes** - It is very important that you pack two extra seasonal complete sets of clothes each day. Accidents do happen and out of respect for the child we need to make sure that we respond to them quickly and with familiar clothing. If your child does not have extra clothes and an accident should occur, you will be contacted to bring an extra set of clothes.
3. **Lunch from Home** If you choose to bring lunch from home all lunch boxes must be placed in your child's cubby with all perishables being put in the fridge. We also serve milk to every child at lunch and at snack time. We suggest that you try to avoid treats since they may cause conflict within the group. At lunch we put all your children's items out at one time. The children are allowed to make choices as to how much of an item they will eat and in what order it will be eaten.

4. **Microwaves** - No microwave ovens are allowed for use with the children at Dawn's Early Light to heat up meals. Microwaves are used for snack preparation only by the teachers employed at Dawn's Early Light. Crock pots will be used for warming bottles in the infant room.
  
5. **The Paperwork** - Please understand that this is the most important part of you start to childcare. WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ADMIT YOUR CHILD TO CARE UNLESS THE FOLLOWING ARE COMPLETED AND RETURNED.
  - Health Inventory & Immunization Record (both parent and doctor completed)
  - Dawn's Early Light Signed Parental Contract
  - Emergency Card (every line completed)  
Pamphlet form returned
  - Infant Plan (under 2)
  - Picture / Web Approval
  - Email address submitted to [del.dunkirk@comcast.net](mailto:del.dunkirk@comcast.net) (Dunkirk) or [pfcenter@comcast.net](mailto:pfcenter@comcast.net) (Prince Frederick)

Plan to spend at least 30 minutes that first day helping to acclimate your child (and yourself) to the center and to make sure the paperwork is in order. Your last stop before leaving should be the office to ensure that all needed monies and paperwork are completed.

It is important to build trust between yourself and your child. Always saying goodbye will help him/her realize that you are leaving and will be returning. It may be tough as first, but it is always easier on the child than if you "sneak out".

We are here to serve your childcare needs. Please feel free to call at anytime or pop in for a visit at your convenience. Our telephone number is 410-257-7900 in Dunkirk and 410-535-5625 in Prince Frederick. Our website is [www.dawnsearlylight.net](http://www.dawnsearlylight.net)

## Parent Involvement

Parent participation is encouraged by each family. This can be done through a variety of activities and opportunities including but not limited to newsletter input, chaperoning field trips, parent/teacher conferences, classroom volunteering, and reading at story time. A log book is kept in the front office to record visitors at the center. We thank you in advance for your support of the program.

Newsletter Input - We are always listening to comments and suggestions from parents concerned about our children's environment. We accept all practical suggestions and / or recommendations to make our center meet the needs of the children. Send comments to [del.dunkirk@comcast.net](mailto:del.dunkirk@comcast.net).

Field Trip Chaperones - When we take class trips it is necessary to have chaperones. We ask that if you decide to take on this responsibility that you remember to use a respectful approach when interacting with the children. Keep in mind that chaperones are needed to

make trips run smoothly, you are responsible not only for your child but for the safety of the other children.

Classroom Volunteers - You might find opportunities for guest reading, organizing a holiday gathering, helping with a cooking project, leading a special activity or bringing odds and ends into the classroom for the children's use.

Parent Teacher Conferences - Conferences are offered at your request. We ask that you keep in mind that our day is very busy with the children. If you need to conference with your child's teacher please give enough notice and plan to spend a few moments in the morning after drop off to talk with the teacher.

Family Fun Night - Each September we host a family night full of fun for our DEL families including a moon bounce and other fun activities for families to enjoy.

Halloween Parade - Parents are asked to help us escort the costumed children to the surrounding offices in the office park for trick-or-treating. We do respect everyone and their individual beliefs, a teacher will remain at the center with children who would prefer not to participate in this parade.

Holiday Parties - Parents are asked to volunteer to provide food and goodies for the classroom parties throughout the year. Parents can sign up at the beginning of each school year to host one party with another parent some time during the year. Please provide enough food and drinks for the amount of children in that class. Games and favors are permitted but supplied at the parent's discretion. We celebrate the following holidays with a party:

Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Summer Pic Nic

## Meals

We understand the importance of using mealtimes as a means of helping children communicate and socialize with their classmates and teaching staff. A well balanced lunch consists of a protein (meat, egg, cheese, poultry, beans and lentils), a starch (bread, pasta, rice, potato, and cereal), a vegetable and one or two fruits. Milk will be served to every child at every lunch per Maryland regulations. Microwaves cannot be used for heating lunches.

We believe in having a choice. We will not force a child to eat any part of his/her lunch before something else. We will also not force your child to "clean their plate" wanting this to become a wonderful learning time instead of a battle of the wills. Eating times are a good time to encourage health and safety practices as well as positive social interactions and other learning areas. We provide well-balanced morning and afternoon snacks. Snack menus are posted on each refrigerator throughout the center.

**Parent Information Area** - The board at the front entrance will address important information requiring parent's attention. Parents are asked to take a moment to read the information posted on the parent information board.

### **Summer Camp Field Trips**

Our "Summer Adventures" program for school age children ages 5 to 10 during the summer months offers field trips, fun activities and a reading program through Calvert Library from June through August. We do not participate in water parks or trips to wading pools. All forms and permission slips are completed before any child can participate. The children must follow all rules and regulations read to them in order to attend each trip. The activity fee for Summer Adventures is due by April 1<sup>st</sup> each year. The school age program requires two activity fees to be paid throughout the year.

## **Communication**

**Parent Board** - As you walk into the center there is a parent communications area set up in the foyer. This will update you on illness alerts, calendar of upcoming events, schedule of public school closures, community events and special happenings throughout the center. Please check this area daily so that important information is not missed. Parent boards will also be found in each classroom with information about that class posted.

**Newsletters** - Monthly newsletters will be distributed at the end of each month notifying you of important information. If you lose your newsletter you can go to our website and download another, [dawnsearlylight.net](http://dawnsearlylight.net).

**Assessments** - Developmental assessments about your child will be done throughout the year. (November, February, and May) We will schedule conferences at your request. Annual conferences are scheduled for November for parents and teachers to discuss developmental goals for their child.

**The Staff and the Office** - The most important communication will be through your daily interactions with the teachers and the office. We cannot address your questions and concerns unless they are brought to our attention. Please feel free to inform us as they arise. This will make for a productive team between the office, the staff and you.

**Telephone** - Please keep in mind that our teachers are responsible for your child as well as others. They may only take phone calls from parents during the day for emergencies. Please identify yourself when calling and give your child's name and classroom so we can better serve you.

**Website** - Dawn's Early Light has a website where most of your questions can be answered. You will find the monthly newsletter and activity calendar, this handbook, special announcements, and weather related closings. We also provide links to important information you may be interested in.

To reach us by email:

Dunkirk - [del.dunkirk@comcast.net](mailto:del.dunkirk@comcast.net)

Prince Frederick Center - [pfcenter@comcast.net](mailto:pfcenter@comcast.net)

In your packet of paperwork is a permission form for you to fill out permitting us to put your child's picture on our website and in the classroom. If we do not receive permission from you, your child's picture will not be posted. [www.dawnsearlylight.net](http://www.dawnsearlylight.net)

## Inclement Weather and Vacation Policies

**Vacation** - Children who are enrolled for one consecutive year on a **full time basis** receive one vacation week when they are away on vacation. You must give two week's notice to receive your vacation credit. Vacation weeks do not accumulate. Vacation credit may only be used for full weeks ( 5 consecutive days). No partial credit will be granted. No vacation credit will be granted if your account is not current. Unused vacation time is not carried over from year to year.

**Inclement Weather** - Inclement weather does affect the opening of the center. We do not follow any regulated government or school district closing schedule. Closings, late openings and early dismissals are posted on our website within a reasonable amount of time during bad weather. Parents are required to submit their email address to us so we can get information to you quickly and efficiently. Weather closings are posted on the answering service and on the website.

*Dunkirk phone: 301-855-6300 Prince Frederick phone: 410-525-5625  
[www.dawnsearlylight.net](http://www.dawnsearlylight.net)*

### **Holiday Closings for 2012-2013**

The center is closed on the following days:

Labor Day (September 3, 2012)

Thanksgiving Day and the Day After (November 23 and 24, 2012)

Christmas Eve (December 24, 2012)

Christmas Day (December 25, 2012)

New Year's Eve Day Open 8 to 4 p.m.

New Year's Day (January 1, 2013)

Good Friday (Friday before Easter April 6, 2012)

Memorial Day (May 28, 2012)

Independence Day (July 4, 2012)

If one of these holidays falls on a Sunday, the center will be closed the following Monday except in the case of Easter Monday.

### **Unforeseen Closures**

If for some reason the center is closed for unforeseen reasons, no discount in tuition will be available. Some examples of this might be:

- Hurricane or Tornado Damage
- Flood or Electrical Outage
- Government Request
- Emergency Plan in Effect

## **Center Gatherings & Field Trips**

**Birthday Parties** - Your child's birthday is a special day. As such we are happy to participate in the celebration. We ask that you confer with the classroom teacher as to scheduling, allergies or special concerns that might alter your plans. We also ask that balloons, gifts and special visitors (Barney, Dora, etc..) be excluded from your plans because of health and child comfort concerns.

**Holiday Parties** - Certain times throughout the year the center will celebrate with center-wide parties. Parents are asked at times to contribute party food items.

**Field Trips** - Our center takes 3 to 4 field trips per year. No outings to water parks or pools are offered at anytime due to safety concerns. Permission slips will be put out in each classroom for parents to review and sign allowing their child to attend a field trip. We use a private bus company to travel to and from our destination. Chaperones are asked to follow the bus in their own vehicle due to bus capacity.

**Transition to School Day** - The children who will attend kindergarten the following year are invited to the local elementary school for an hour in May of each year. The children travel by bus to Mt. Harmony (Dunkirk) or Calvert Elementary (Prince Frederick).

**Preschool Graduation** - This ceremony marks the end of preschool for children who will be starting kindergarten in the fall. All families are welcome to join us.

## **Other Important Information**

**Parent Information Area** - The board at the front entrance will address important information requiring parent's attention. Parents are asked to take a moment to read the information posted on the parent information board.

**Visiting** - Dawn's Early Light has a complete open door policy. We welcome you, the parent, unannounced visits. If there is a custodial arrangement in place, a copy of the custody agreement or court order must be included in your child's file so that we can comply with your visitation and pick up needs. All other visitors must show ID to enter the center.

**Front Door** - The front doors will be locked for the entire day to prevent strangers from accessing the building. Each parent who enters the building is required to have a key. Key fobs are purchased in the office and a deposit of \$25.00 is required. Deposits are returned by mail upon receipt of the key when you withdraw from the program.

**Parking Lot Safety** - Children are not permitted to roam inside or outside the center without supervision. Parents are required to escort children to and from the center responsibly by holding their child's hand. Children are not to be left unattended in cars or in the center at anytime. For everyone's safety parents are asked to watch children closely and hold their hand arriving and departing. The speed limit is 10 mph in the parking lot.

**Dropping Off and Picking Up** - It is important for your child's safety that you drop off and pick up within your child's assigned classroom. Do not allow children to "find their own way" to their group. The child will be released to either parent listed on the emergency card unless a copy of a custody agreement or court order is in your child's file.

If within 30 minutes after the official closing time (6:00) of the center we have not heard from either parent or guardian and we have not been able to reach anyone authorized to pick up the child, we will call child protective services. A message as to the whereabouts, phone number and instructions will be left taped to the front door.

**Absenteeism** - Parents are required to report all illnesses to their child's teacher. Please call the center when your child is sick to help us protect the other children in our care. If your child has not arrived by 10:00 a.m. the teachers will assume they are absent for the day. Please notify the center if your child will be arriving late.

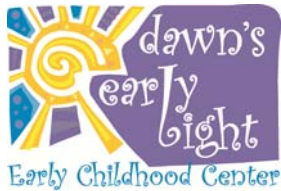
**Clothing** - Remember that we are in a constant state of discovery. Discovery is messy business. Do not dress your child in something that would inhibit their movement or their ability to explore. Please remember to dress them appropriately for the season and as if everyday they will be outside. Shoes are very important and should not be worn carelessly. Our playground is grounded with large wood chips that find their way into sandals and flip flops. It is best to wear tennis shoes, if possible, while at the center.

**Toys** - We have gone to great lengths to select toys that are appropriate and promote discovery through safe and positive messages. On certain days throughout the year we will have Show and Tell days where children may bring an item from home to share and discuss with their friends in class in order to expand classroom learning. Otherwise, please leave all toys at home.

**Class Pictures** - Teddy Bear Portraits is here one day in March of every year to take the children's picture as well as the class photo. A company representative returns two weeks after picture day to review the pictures with each parent and to collect payment. This is a one day only event from 3 to 5:30 p.m. to view your pictures and make payments.

**Jump Bunch** comes to the center each week to provide fun, athletic games to children 2 to 5 years old. Parents must sign up individually using the JB forms displayed on the wall. Payments are \$28 per month and made directly to Jump Bunch.

**Babysitting** - We understand that from time to time parents may want to hire staff members to baby sit for their families outside the center. Please maintain a professional respect between yourself and your child's teacher for this practice to continue. DEL does have the right to terminate an employee following some form of conflict.



## PARENTAL AGREEMENT

I have read the Parent Handbook and all policies contained within for the year 2012-2013. I agree to uphold and follow all stated policies set forth by Dawn's Early Light while my child is enrolled in the program at Dawn's Early Light Early Childhood Center. I understand any breach of this contract is cause for dismissal from Dawn's Early Light, Inc. and no money is refunded to me.

Any money due to Dawn's Early Light, Inc. at time of departure will be sought and all legal fees will be included to be paid by the client.

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Parent Signature

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Child's Name

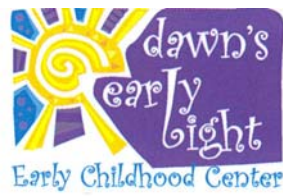
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Parent's Email Address

Dawn's Early Light, Inc.  
3150 West Ward Road  
Suite 405  
Dunkirk, Md. 20754  
410-257-7900

Dawn's Early Light, Inc.  
301 Steeple Chase Drive  
Suite 407  
Prince Frederick, Md. 20678  
410-535-5625

**DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT  
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER  
PARENT HANDBOOK  
2010-2011**



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*[www.dawnsearlylight.net](http://www.dawnsearlylight.net)*