

# PARENT HANDBOOK

2008/2009

## GUARDIAN ANGEL LEARNING CENTER

Celebrating



75 years

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(Click on Ministries; then click on Ministries in the U.S.)

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Guardian Angel Learning Center is owned and operated by the Sisters of Charity of St. Joan Antida, a Congregation of Women Religious with a special emphasis on the ministry of education. The Sisters founded our Center in 1933 to meet the needs of the neighboring community. It is licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services to care for 85 children ages 6 weeks through 11 years of age.

## **MISSION**

The Mission of Guardian Angel Learning Center is to create a Christian atmosphere in which each child is loved and respected. We embrace our responsibility to care for the young children entrusted to our care, while striving to help them develop their physical, emotional, psycho-social, intellectual, and spiritual growth and well-being.

## **VISION**

Our vision is to provide children in their early childhood years with times of fun, warmth, security, exploration and discovery as they develop through their various stages of growth. We will provide an atmosphere that affirms that children in early childhood are creative and receptive, learning and assimilating the world through their senses and intellect. We will endeavor to partner with parents and family members to foster growth and nurturing in each child, supporting them as they grow and develop during their childhood years.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. To foster each child's physical, emotional, psycho-social, intellectual, educational and spiritual development in a culturally-rich, non-sexist environment.
2. To encourage the growth of the qualities of creativity and receptivity in each student and to develop an appreciation for beauty and nature.
3. To provide each child with opportunities to gain competence in a variety of skills and techniques by providing a safe environment, a healthy and pleasant atmosphere, companionship and growth through the love and care of responsible teachers.
4. To provide a quality, Christian education for the young child in accordance with the practices and teachings of the WORD, the professional standards of the State of Wisconsin.

## **RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION**

Religious instruction at the Center consists in providing a loving and accepting Christian atmosphere. We accept the responsibility to care for and nurture those around us through the teaching of morals and values.

Through simple prayers, songs and stories, the message that God loves and cares for each one of us and asks us to care for each other is conveyed to the children. Religious holidays of all faiths are celebrated and explained to the children in a manner in which they can be understood and appreciated.

## **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

Guardian Angel believes that the credentials of the staff play an important role in providing quality childcare. Our goal is to have all care givers meet the required credentials mandated by NAEYC standards and the State of Wisconsin. Staff currently have BA Degrees, Associate Degrees and Child Development Associate Credentials. Credentials for staff persons are posted in the corridor outside the Center office.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Guardian Angel has an Open Door policy that encourages parents to come and observe/visit their child during the course of the day. If that is not possible, a telephone call is acceptable in order to check on a child. We encourage parents to offer their feedback in evaluating our program, and how we can better meet not only the child's needs, but their own.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Parents are informed about the activities of their children through daily contact and written reports. The written reports provide information on what and how much their child eats and what time, how often the child was changed and any medication that was given, as well as a general overview of their child's day. Parents will receive notices of Center events and changes within the program, should they occur. We will attempt to keep the parents updated in all areas that may have an affect on their children, and family, as a whole.

There is a bulletin board by the check-in computers that provides up-to-date happenings at the Center. Classroom newsletters are sent out on a monthly basis. There is a mailbox for each family that will contain all necessary communications.



## **SUPPLIES**

**PLEASE LABEL** all items that you bring for your child. **WE ASK THAT NO TOYS BE BROUGHT TO THE CENTER.** We cannot be responsible for lost or broken items. If a child needs a stuffed animal for nap time, it must be kept in the child's cubby until that time.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Guardian Angel does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, creed, special needs, disability, or ability to pay.

Children are brought to the Center by their parent or another adult designated by the parents. The parent or designated person **must enter the building, clock the child in on the computer, and accompany the child to the classroom.** The procedure for picking a child up from the Center follows the same guidelines. The parent or designated person **must enter the building and clock the child out.**

## **AUTHORIZED PERSONS**

**No child will be allowed to leave the premises of Guardian Angel with a person not on the pickup list in the office, or with anyone under 18 years of age. No child will be released to a person seemingly under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**

If someone other than an authorized person is picking up a child, the following must happen:

- The child's teacher and/or the office should be notified as soon as possible.
- The person's name and the time the person will pick the child up must be given.
- The person picking up the child must provide a picture ID.

## **CUSTODY ISSUES**

Guardian Angel, or any of its staff people, will not get involved in custody issues. Our position is to follow any written legal requirements mandated by the courts.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Guardian Angel is open **Monday through Friday from 6:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

Children are enrolled at Guardian Angel from the start of the Fall semester through to the end of the summer session. The Center is open year-round, except for the following:

Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve and Day, and the week following Christmas through New Year's Day

Good Friday and the week following Easter

Labor Day

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Two days in late August for Teacher In-service Days

The days and dates that vary will be posted with the yearly calendar.

**It is extremely important that your child be at the Center by 9:00 a.m.** When children are brought to the Center at a later time, it disrupts the routine and learning activities in progress. The child will also have missed out on all of the activities that have taken place prior to arrival at the Center.

**If your child will not be attending the Center on a given day, it is important that a phone call is made to the Center office before 9:00 a.m. Any absence or tardiness should be called in to the Center. The Center will call you if we have not been notified of an absence or lateness.**

The Center is staffed to meet the needs of the ratios required by law. It is extremely helpful for the children to arrive and depart at generally the same time each day.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

In the event that it should be necessary to close Guardian Angel due to weather or other emergencies, please listen to the radio or T.V. for Milwaukee Public School closings. If MPS closes due to weather, then Guardian Angel will be closed. However, should MPS be closed due to cold weather only, Guardian Angel will generally be open.

Should there ever be a time during the day when the building becomes inaccessible for whatever emergency might arise, the children will be transported to the Sisters' Residence at 1329 North Cass Street. It is connected to St. Joan Antida High School, and it was the former site of Guardian Angel. The children will remain there until parents are notified and have arranged to pick up their child.

## FULL- AND PART-TIME STATUS

Full-time status is five full days a week.

Part-time status is anything less than five days a week. The minimum allowed for enrollment is three full days or five half days a week. There are a limited number of part-time slots available.

## VACATION/ILLNESS/ABSENCES

A total of five days for full-time families will be allowed for absenteeism, whether it is for illness or vacation. There will be no absent credit for part-time families. Absent credits will be used at the discretion of the parent by submitting an Absent Credit Request Card to the office at which time the credit will be given. After the allotted days are used, all other days of absence **will be charged the full amount**. The five days run from September through August and may not be accrued from one year to the next. Should a family begin during the year, the number of absent credit days will be adjusted accordingly.

## CURRICULUM

Guardian Angel utilizes a Thematic Child-Centered Approach to curriculum, along with guidelines from The Creative Curriculum. This approach allows the teachers to choose themes and activities that are age-appropriate. This curriculum approach is multi-cultural and anti-biased. Each room is set up based on the appropriate development stage of the group. The rooms contain learning centers that foster a positive self-image, social interaction, self-expression, communication, creativity, large and small motor skills, and intellectual growth. It is our belief that children learn best by play and exploration. Therefore, teachers provide a variety of activities from which the children can choose. They also enhance these interest centers to stimulate growth and development. Large and small group activities are provided each day to increase attention span, to learn problem solving skills and to further develop language skills.

All classrooms have the following centers:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Block Area           |  Manipulative Area           |
|  Dramatic Play Area   |  Circle Time Area            |
|  Library Area         |  Computer Center (3-5 years) |
|  Sensory/Science Area |  Writing Center (3-5 years)  |

In our four-year-old kindergarten, every effort is made to foster reading readiness and beginning writing skills. Active learning, rather than memorization and drilling, is the approach taken. Lesson plans are posted on the Parent Board in each classroom. Information about our curriculum will also be found in our frequent newsletters.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

A child's progress is shared with the parent on a daily basis, as well as at conference time. A checklist of developmental progress is used throughout your child's time here, which indicates your child's progress at each level and in all areas of development. A parent may ask for a special time set aside to discuss their child's progress/concerns at any time. You are encouraged to be involved in the experiences your child has here at the Center.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Each child's readiness for toilet training varies according to the child's development. We will work with the parent so as to provide consistency, encouragement and the patience needed to make the training a positive experience for the child. Potty training does not start until a child is two years old and has moved into the two-year-old room. The Center has a policy that we do not move children to our three-year-old room until they are fully trained. This means that they are in underwear, and that they are capable of the necessary self-help skills. At this age, the staff no longer will assist the child, but rather, monitor and coach the children to ensure the proper cleaning of themselves.

## **CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS**

When a child is ready to move on to the next room, parents will be informed and the child will begin to visit the new classroom. Each day the child will spend more time in the new room until he/she feels comfortable staying alone and working with a new teacher. As we try to keep the children in a consistent routine each day, there will be times when the adjustment to a different routine might make the child more apprehensive. Should this occur, extra effort will be made so as to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## **BITING**

Experts in the field of child development have told us that biting happens primarily as a result of a child's inability to communicate. Young children are not able to verbalize their frustration with a new experience. These experiences may include another child taking a toy away, or a sudden realization that they are being surrounded by many other children. Biting is the first reaction in many instances.

If a bite occurs, it will be cleaned and a report will be given to the child's parents. The child who did the biting will be redirected, and his/her parents will be notified so as to determine ways to redirect the child. The teachers make every effort to watch biters carefully. When it happens, it happens quickly. We understand the anguish biting causes both sets of parents.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips and walks are an important part of the educational program. Your permission must be given in writing if your child is to participate. Field trip expenses are an extra charge not included in tuition. Buses are frequently chartered for longer field trips. Parents and other adults will be asked to accompany the children on the trips to provide additional supervision. Should you choose not to send your child on a field trip, and there is not an appropriate group with which to leave your child, you will have to look for alternative child care while the groups are gone. Staff is needed to chaperone those on the trip. There is no absent credit for such a day, unless you use one of your free days, if they apply to you.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY**

Photographs of the children are frequently taken throughout the Center in order to share their experiences with you. If they are to be used for any kind of publicity outside the Center, expressed consent of the parent will be sought. Occasionally, pictures will be changed on our web site and in other promotional materials for the Center, but, again, permission will be sought from the parent.

## **CHILD CARE SCHEDULES**

The Center is staffed to meet the teacher/child ratio required by law. *It is extremely helpful for the children to arrive and depart at generally the same time each day.* The staff schedules are adjusted to meet the needs of families. When times are consistently changed, we run into the problem of not having sufficient staff. This is true at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day.

**All children must be out of the Center by 5:30 p.m.**

## **FOOD PROGRAM**

Guardian Angel provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. The cost is included in the tuition payments. The meals are catered by Quality Catering, Inc. These meals are nutritious and follow the standards established by the State of Wisconsin and USDA.

All children participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP is a federal program of the Food Nutrition Services, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This program gives financial assistance to licensed child care institutions to provide nutritious meals. In Wisconsin, the CACFP is administered by the Department of Public Instruction. The primary goal of the CACFP is to improve the diet of children 12-years-of-age and younger. The CACFP's partial reimbursement helps to offset food costs so that care givers are better able to furnish high-quality, nutritious meals and snacks for the infants and children in their care.

The Center will provide one iron-fortified formula. Parents of infants have the right to select the Center-provided formula, or they may provide their own formula or breast milk. The Center will provide cereal, fruits and vegetables for infants should the parent so choose.

The CACFP is operated in accordance with USDA policy, which does not permit discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. If you believe that your child has been treated unfairly in receiving food service for any of these reasons, write immediately to:

USDA  
Director, Office of Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250-9410

or call: 202-720-6382 (TTY)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## **HOLIDAY AND BIRTHDAY TREATS**

A child's birthday is special. We welcome parents to bring a treat if they so choose, however, it is not necessary. The parent must check with the child's teacher as to what would be appropriate to bring. We have many children with allergies that we need to keep in mind.

**Please, do not allow your child to bring snacks, unfinished breakfast, or other food into the Center.** This has a tendency to cause conflict between children when it is out of time and place, and it also places allergy sufferers at risk.

## **MEDICAL CARE**

In the event of serious injury to a child, the parent is called immediately. If it is impossible to contact the parent, and the child requires emergency treatment, the child will be transported accordingly to the nearest emergency room, which is Columbia/St. Mary's Emergency Room. Permission for this procedure is required and becomes a part of your child's file.

## **BASIC FIRST AID**

Should a child sustain a minor injury such as a scrape, superficial cut, a bruise or an insect sting, a staff person will wash the affected area(s) with soap and water. A bandage will be applied as is necessary. Wisconsin State Law prohibits any type of medications to be applied to affected areas or given to the child. Ice or cold compresses will be used for bumps, insect bites and bruises.

## **SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME** **(SIDS)**

It is recommended by pediatric and health-care officials that infants be placed on their backs to sleep. Other precautions include avoiding the use of heavy blankets and crib bumpers, along with stuffed animals.

All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. Should there be some medical reason your child requires another sleeping position, written permission from your child's doctor is necessary for the staff to comply with your wishes.

## **ILLNESS POLICY**

It is in the best interest of the sick child, all other children, and the staff at Guardian Angel for a child to stay home when ill. The following guidelines are an indication of when a child should NOT be at the Center:

- if the child has a high fever of 101 degrees or more  
(A child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the Center.)
- if the child has diarrhea three times in the course of a few hours
- if the child has vomited
- if there is a rash other than in the diaper area

- if an eye infection occurs, such as pink eye
- if profuse bodily discharges occur
- if persistent coughing is present
- if the parent feels that their child cannot go outdoors, weather permitting  
(We are required to take the children outdoors each day. Therefore, please dress your child appropriately for the weather at hand.)

If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be notified to pick up their child as soon as possible.

### **INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

When a child is suspected of having chickenpox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, whooping cough, lice, pink eye, ring worm or other reportable communicable diseases, the child will be excluded from the Center.

If it is determined that a child has a communicable disease, signs will be posted in the Center to inform parents. The public health department will also be notified. All children will then be watched for symptoms of the disease.

A child may be readmitted to the Center with a written statement from a physician or public health nurse, or if the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest usual incubation period of the disease as specified by the health department.

### **ALLERGIES**

If a child has any allergies, whether it be to food, medication or the environment, it is very important that these be indicated on the health form as another way to safeguard your child. A special diet, based on a medical condition, excluding food allergies, but including nutrient concentrates and supplements, may be served only upon written instruction of a child's physician and upon the request of the parent.

A special diet based on a food allergy may be served upon written request of the parent.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

Prescription or over-the-counter medications may be given to a child only under the following conditions:

- A signed and dated Authorization to Administer Medication form is given to the child's teacher by the parent before any medication is given. These forms are found outside the Center office.
- Prescription medication is in the original container and labeled with the child's name, the name of the drug, the dosage, the directions for administering the drug, the date of the prescription and the doctor's name
- Over-the-counter medication is labeled with the child's name and includes the dosage and directions for administering the medication
- Applications such as diaper rash ointment, teething gel and gas drops must have written permission
- All liquid medications must include a measuring device to ensure proper dosage

## **CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Guardian Angel staff training and education includes information about identifying signs of possible abuse, as well as the appropriate procedures for reporting any suspicion of abuse.

Procedures require that any unusual wounds or marks on a child's body (examples: bruises, cuts, abrasions, suspicious welts, excessive weight loss or irritability) be assessed and parents be questioned as to the possible reasons for these. If a staff person believes these signs are extensive or excessive, we are required by the State of Wisconsin to report all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. The parents may or may not be informed ahead of time, depending on the circumstances.

## **GUIDANCE POLICIES**

Acceptable behavior is encouraged by giving positive, verbal rewards. This reinforces a child's good feeling about his/her behavior and serves as an example to the other children that positive behavior receives praise. Asking a child to stop and think about his/her unpleasant behavior enables that child to work at self-control.

Our teachers are required to communicate with each child at his/her eye level and use age-appropriate language, gestures and tones. The teachers turn disputes and conflicts into positive experiences by understanding developmental stages and individual needs. The child is engaged in the conflict resolution process and learns that there is more than one side in a dispute. The children gain an understanding of how to respect the needs of others, while meeting their own needs during a dispute.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

Appropriate disciplinary action will be carried out by the responsible staff member and will follow these general guidelines:

### **1. Identify the problem**

The child will be made aware that the behavior being exhibited is inappropriate through a teacher's quiet word, glance or a gentle gesture.

### **2. Remind the child**

If the behavior continues, the teacher will again remind the child of the appropriate acceptable behavior.

### **3. Redirect the child**

The teacher may also attempt to redirect the child before he/she behaves in an inappropriate manner again. "Redirection" means focusing the child's attention on a different activity.

### **4. Remove the child**

The teacher will remove the child from the situation for a "time-out" period if the child continues to demonstrate unacceptable behavior. "Time-out" means removing the child from the situation in a non-humiliating manner and placing the child in a designated location in order to interrupt the behavior being exhibited. A "time-out" is not a punishment, but rather, an opportunity for the child to calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for, and decide for her-/himself when they are ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior.

"Time-outs" will not be used for children under the age of three. A child on "time-out" will be required to sit one minute per year of age, not to exceed five minutes.

## 5. Removal from the Center

If inappropriate behavior still persists, and causes a threat to the staff or other children, the parent will be required to attend a conference with the teacher and the Administrator. Together, a plan will be devised to help the child to behave in an acceptable manner. If the problem is severe enough, it might be suggested that the child get outside professional help.

Every effort will be made to help the child, however, if no progress is made, the parent will be required to find alternative child care.

At the Center, the staff does not discipline by:

- spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment
- humiliating or verbally abusing a child, using threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family
- binding, trying to restrict movement, or enclosing in a confined space, such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle
- refusing to meet the child's needs, such as, but not limited to, the use of the bathroom, forced or withheld meals and snacks, or forced naps

## **DISCHARGE POLICIES**

It is the aim of the Center to provide children with the best possible care. In order to do this, it might become necessary to discharge a child under the following circumstances:

- A child is consistently disruptive to the program and/or does physical harm to other children or staff members
- The Center cannot realistically meet the child's needs and the needs of the other children
- The parents are uncooperative in payment of fees and tuition
- The parents do not provide the Center with required information or adequate health forms
- The parents are consistently late in bringing their child/ren or picking them up from the Center

No child will be discharged without adequate warning. Parents will be notified by the Administration and will be given an opportunity to comply with Center policies. Refunds will be granted accordingly.

In the event that a parent wishes to withdraw a child, **a written notice must be given two weeks prior to the final day of attendance.**

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Fees and rates for the childcare program are established to meet the Center's fiscal needs. Tuition rates cover staff salaries, benefits, utilities, maintenance, the food program and the general upkeep of the Center. The annual supply fee covers the supplies needed, such as facial tissue, vinyl gloves, hand towels, art materials, etc.

The tuition rates are established on a full-time basis of five full days per week, and on a part-time basis of three or four days per week. Should five half days be requested, that would mean up to five hours per day. A limited number of part-time slots are available.

**Tuition** is paid to the Center at the times specified on the contract between Guardian Angel and the parents. By signing the contract, you have not only agreed to financial terms, but you have also contracted for your child's spot. This means that the spot belongs to your child only, therefore, if you pay to maintain that spot. Guardian Angel in turn assures that there is sufficient staff to care for your child.

**W-2** Program recipients are welcome with the following stipulations:

- The W-2 authorization must remain current.
- New authorizations must be received within one week after the current authorization ends or you will be billed for the full amount of fees incurred. If those payments are not kept current, termination may transpire until the new authorization is received.
- There is generally a co-pay for W-2 parents; this payment must be kept up-to-date.
- W-2 parents must abide by all rules and guidelines spelled out in this handbook.
- W-2 parents are responsible for the registration fee, the supply fee and field trip fees.

**Vacation/Sick Days** are paid for in full unless you are using the absent credits available to full-time families. When the allotted credits are used up, absent days are paid in full. This is because operational expenses are arranged on the basis of fixed enrollment levels and must be met on a continuing basis.

**Holidays** such as Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day and July 4<sup>th</sup> are considered paid holidays. If the Center is closed on other days, such as Easter and Christmas break, a fee is not charged.

All tuition payments are due prior to services being rendered. If payments fall behind, you might be asked to withdraw your child from the Center until payments are made in full.

1. Parents paying tuition one month in advance; that is, paying in full the last week of the preceding month for the following month, will have one free day credited to their account for that month. This does not apply to families receiving any other financial aid.
2. Absent credits are used at the discretion of the parent. When using a credit, the request slip should be filled out and returned to the box in the Center office. You will then receive the credit on your statement.
3. A refund of tuition will be given if the Center terminates an enrollment.
4. The Center charges a separate supply fee for the school year and this fee is non-refundable. Field trips are also a separate fee.
5. A \$30.00 fee will be charged for any **NSF check**.
6. **Children must be out of the Center by 5:30 in the evening.** If a parent is **late**, there is a **fee** of \$5.00 for every 15-minute period beyond 5:30.
7. If siblings are enrolled in the program at the same time, there will be a 10% discount given to the family.
8. There will be a **\$5.00 fee charged if a parent fails to check a child in or out of the Center.** Checking in and out is mandated by licensing laws.