



the **Growing Place**
A CHILD ENRICHMENT CENTER

Parent Handbook

639-2958
www.alivewesleyan.com

Mission

To provide safe, quality care by ministering to the entire family and encouraging each child's cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

Philosophy

The Growing Place is a service to the community of Central, South Carolina. Our goal is to support families in their efforts to raise well-rounded, whole children.

Our program is designed to be a place of enrichment. We, the staff and administration of The Growing Place along with the church body, will collaborate with the families of the children enrolled in our program to encourage these children to discover their God-given talents and abilities. We will create an environment that fosters self-confidence, respect for self and others, and a desire to explore, learn, and grow.

We believe that the most important people in children's lives are their families, especially their parents/guardians. Children's parents/guardians should be their primary caregivers. Our goal is not to take their place but to support children's parents/guardians in their roles. We will provide safe, loving, quality care to children while they are in our care, and we will also provide support, education, and community to children's parents/guardians.

We believe a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is vital to every person's wholeness; therefore, our hope is that every child will understand God's deep desire to have a personal relationship with every person and that each child in our care will accept that relationship. We will encourage children to follow the example of Jesus in the way He loves the Father and other people.

Program Description

Our early childhood program focuses on assisting parents in developing children who are physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually ready for learning. We would love to have all our children reading before they go to kindergarten, but we believe children should not experience pressure to perform before they are ready. Therefore, our program will focus on introducing our children to language arts, math, science, social studies, music, art, athletics, and biblical stories and principles, through various activities that are focused more on discovery and experience than skills and tests.

We will use curriculum and teacher-led activities, learning centers, guided play, and free play to accomplish our goals.

Program Goals

The following are learning goals that we have for all of the children in our center. We understand that children develop at different paces, and so every child may not be able to meet these goals at the same rate, but we hope to guide children towards maturity and growth. These goals will help us remain focused on this task.

Spiritual

- Develop an understanding that they are accepted, loved, important, and worthy in the eyes of God and God's people.
- Develop an awareness of God's unfailing love and desire to have a personal relationship with each person.
- Recognize that every person has value and is loved by God and understand that they should love and value each person as well.
- Accept responsibility for their behavior.

Cognitive

- Develop intellectual curiosity.
- Become responsible for choosing activities.
- Become aware of shapes, colors, letters, and numbers.

***Before entering kindergarten all the children should be able to write their name, recognize some words, count to twenty, and recognize and know the sound of all of the letters in the alphabet. ***

Emotional

- Become aware of emotions.
- Learn to express emotions in an appropriate manner.
- Develop self-confidence.

Social

- Work and play cooperatively.
- Develop respect for self and others.
- Establish social relationships outside of family.
- Strengthen relationships with family.

Physical

- Develop age-appropriate fine and gross motor skills.

Communication

The Growing Place Staff strives for open communication between parents and staff. The teaching staff will communicate on a daily basis and be available to greet the children and parents upon arrival. We schedule annual parent conferences. Additional conferences may be requested at any time by the parent or the teacher. Daily charts and notes help families and teachers understand each child's unique development.

Daily notes and weekly newsletters will be distributed to parents. Please check the classroom Parent Info Board and your child's cubby daily.

Please contact The Growing Place Director immediately if you have a concern of any nature. Concerns will be handled promptly and confidentially. The Growing Place also provides a comment mailbox located near the director's office if you would like to register a concern anonymously.

Parental Involvement

The Growing Place strongly encourages parental involvement in our program. Parents are more than welcome to visit their children's classrooms anytime during the day. Snack and lunch times are great times to visit without being a distraction to learning. Parents may also volunteer as helpers. If you wish to volunteer, contact the director of The Growing Place and fill out the appropriate paperwork.

Enrollment

Enrollment packets are available to parents during school hours. If parents would like to tour the center, they may set up an appointment with the Director. All forms in the enrollment packet including a medical examination report and current immunization report must be submitted to the Director for the child to be enrolled.

Parents are encouraged to visit the center with their children at least twice before the first day of attendance. During the first visit parents and children should stay for an hour or two. The second visit should be longer, and if possible parents should separate from children for at least an hour. This will give children an opportunity to meet teachers and students before their first day of attendance. This helps a great deal in children's transitions.

Parents are required to have a pre-enrollment conference with the director prior to the child's first day of enrollment. During the pre-enrollment conference, parents are encouraged to share information about their children, voice their expectations of the program and ask questions.

It is the responsibility of the parent to report to director's office any change of address, telephone numbers (home or work), employment, emergency contact person and medical information.

Waiting List *(effective January 1, 2011)*

In order to obtain a spot on The Growing Place waiting list, registration and deposit fees are required. Once the fees are received, a spot will be held at no additional charge, as long as the desired classroom is at capacity.

When space becomes available in the desired classroom, we assign priority by date of application. If the open slot is not desired immediately, the option of paying for that space is available for all parties. Choosing not to pay for the slot will forfeit the right to priority on the waiting list for the desired classroom.

Priority will be given to The Growing Place staff, FWC/ALIVE staff and to families that currently have a child enrolled at The Growing Place, who follow the protocol of enrollment.

Multiple Child Discount *(effective February 1, 2011)*

A multiple child discount will be awarded to an older sibling(s) of a child that is currently enrolled full-time in The Growing Place. The discounted rate is 10% off. The multiple child discount applies only to full-time, 5 day/week slots, birth to 4 years of age.

This discount cannot be combined with any other discounts.

Tuition and Fees

- ***Tuition***

Monthly tuition is due on the 5th of each month. On the 6th or following business day a \$50.00 late fee will be incurred. Should a payment of tuition plus late fee not be paid in full by the 15th of the same month, childcare will be suspended. The late fee is applied on a per enrollee basis.

Semi-monthly tuition is due on the 5th and 15th of each month. On the 6th or following business day a \$25.00 late fee will be incurred. On the 16th or next business day an additional \$25.00 will be assessed. Should a payment of tuition plus late fees not be paid in full by the 25th of the same month, childcare will be suspended. The late fee is applied on a per enrollee basis.

- ***Late Pick-up***

The Growing Place closes at 6:00 p.m. If your child is not picked up by the closing time, you will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$5.00 for the first ten

minutes of lateness and an additional \$1.00 per minute thereafter. The fee should be paid to the administration by the following morning.

- **Registration Fee**
You are required to pay a registration fee of \$50.00 at your child's initial enrollment.
- **Deposit Fee**
You are required to pay a deposit fee at your child's initial enrollment or in order to be placed on the waiting list.
5 days/week: \$125.00
3 days/week: \$80.00
2 days week: \$57.00
- **Supply Fee**
You are required to pay a supply fee of \$55.00 each year.

Hours

The Growing Place is open from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. We ask for your cooperation in picking your child up by 6 p.m. If there is an emergency and you are unable to pick up your child or arrange for someone on your pick-up authorization form to pick up your child by 6 p.m., please call the center immediately.

A staff member will be required to stay with any child who is not picked up by closing time. The morning after you are late you will be required to pay a late pick-up fee to compensate for this staff member's time.

Emergency Closings

In the event that we are closed due to inclement weather, it will be announced on television station WYFF 4 Greenville.

Should an emergency occur during the day causing the center to be closed, parents will be called and expected to pick up their children immediately.

Arrival and Departure

All parents must sign their children in upon arrival and out upon departure. The staff of The Growing Place will not receive children until after 7:00 a.m. and all children should be picked up by 6:00 p.m.

If a person other than a parent/guardian is picking up the child, please notify the teacher and the director. No individual under the age of sixteen will be allowed to pick up any child. **A person who is not listed on your child's pick-up authorization form will not be allowed to pick up your child.**

Any individual with whom the staff is not familiar will be asked to show identification, such as a driver's license, before they are allowed to enter the building to pick up a child.

To prevent unnecessary accidents, parents are asked to take their children directly to their class upon entering the building or to the designated class for students arriving before classes have begun. Parents or adults must accompany students from the building to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the building. **DO NOT ALLOW your child the freedom to run or roam the building, classrooms or hallway.** The Growing Place will not be held liable for accidents, incidents, or injuries that may occur to children who are not under the care of The Growing Place staff. When children are released from the class to parents/guardians, they are no longer under the care of The Growing Place staff.

Safety Tips During Arrival and Departure

1. Please turn your car off and take the keys out of the ignition before entering the center in the morning and afternoon.
2. Please turn off or turn down loud music.
3. Please drive very slowly when approaching the building.
4. Please do not leave small children unattended. We know it's convenient not to bring in your small ones or infants while you take their older siblings to class or pick them up at the end of the day, but many accidents can occur this way.

Absences

Regular attendance is important if your child is to derive full benefit from The Growing Place. When your child is sick, on a family vacation, or taking a day off, we ask that you notify the teacher and administration in advance.

Please remember that you must still pay full tuition, even if your child is absent for a period of time.

Arrival Policy

Consistency within the classroom during the learning day plays a pivotal role in the daily function of the center. Disruptions during critical learning times are difficult on other children in the classroom, the teacher's schedule and classroom management. **The Growing Place is an enrichment center, where we are teaching children and maintaining consistency in the classroom and learning environment.** Staff schedules and daily activities are based off of teacher-to-child ratios. For these

reasons, it is TGP Policy all children arrive at the center no later than 10:00 am each morning.

If your child has a doctor's appointment and will be late, you must contact the center and inform the director. If you plan on your child returning to the center after their appointment, please return to the center by 1:00 pm. This return time will help adjust teacher-to-child ratio the remainder of the day.

Once children are picked up after 1:00pm, they will be considered signed out the rest of the day.

If your child is late for other reasons other than doctor's appointments, the following procedures are implemented:

- The first time a child is late, this will be recorded by the teacher and a note will go home to inform you of your tardiness.
- Extra staff will be sent home at 10:00 a.m. to maintain teacher/student ratio.
- After arriving 1 time after 10:00 a.m., your child will not be permitted to stay for the day unless you have made previous arrangements with the director or have a doctor's excuse.
- Each subsequent time of tardiness will also result in the child being unable to stay for the day.
- This policy will remain in effect for the school year August through July, at which point the cycle will begin again. If arriving after 10:00 a.m. continues on a regular basis, The Growing Place Board will evaluate the situation.

Termination Policy

If parents give two weeks advance written notification of their child's last day of attendance at The Growing Place, then the deposit paid at the beginning of services will be deducted from the final two weeks tuition cost. If parents do not give two week's advance written notification of their child's last day, The Growing Place will keep the deposit as payment for the final two weeks.

If The Growing Place terminates care for a child, two weeks advance written notification will be given and the deposit paid at the beginning of services will be deducted from the final two weeks tuition cost. If The Growing Place does not give two weeks advance written notification, the parent's account will be credited for the amount of the deposit.

Behavior Plan

The Growing Place believes in positive classroom management techniques. When a child has behavioral issues that are not resolved with the use of positive reinforcement in the classroom, the parent/guardian will be contacted to meet with the center director and teacher to discuss a behavior modification plan that would help the child.

Aggressive Behavior

1. If a child becomes physically violent, aggressive and/or a danger to himself/herself or other children or adults in the classroom, a warning will be given to the child.
2. If the child continues the inappropriate behavior a second time, the child will be removed from the classroom to sit with the director until the child is able to calmly return to the classroom and the parent will be contacted. The director will discuss with the child and parent the consequence of being removed from the center for the day.
3. If there is a 3rd incident in one day the child's parent/guardian will be contacted to come and pick the child up for the remainder of the day.
4. If a child is removed from the center more than 2 days in a given week due to physically violent or aggressive behavior, TGP will determine next steps for the child at the center or determine removal from the center.

Biting Procedures

Even though biting is normal behavior for children of this age it is not an acceptable one. Children who bite are not mean or bad. Often they are frustrated by their inability to verbalize their feelings.

For the child that was bitten:

1. We comfort the child who was bitten. It is important to give this child a lot of love and attention.
2. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water.
3. An Accident Report is completed by teacher and signed by teacher, director and parent. (A copy is given to the parent and a copy is kept in child's file.)

For the child that bit:

1. We inform the biter of their wrong action by using phrases such as "No bite, biting hurts".
2. We redirect the behavior of the biter. We show the biter an alternative behavior so he/she learns to substitute biting with a positive behavior. We demonstrate how to pat and touch softly.
3. We remove the biter from the area to one that is less frustrating and engage him/her in an alternate activity.
4. A Parent Report is completed by teacher and signed by teacher, director and parent. (A copy is given to the parent and a copy is kept in child's file.)

When Biting Continues:

1. A teacher shadow is placed with the biter to help prevent further incidents.
2. The child will be monitored by the classroom teachers and classroom procedures evaluated to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.)

3. If the child bites 3 times in one week the director and teacher will conference with the parents to discuss a plan to modify the child's behavior.
4. After the first conference, if the child bites 2 more times, the child will be suspended for 2 business days and the parents will be asked to come in for a second conference to evaluate the original plan and modify if needed.
5. Following the second conference and suspension, if the child bites 2 more times, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements.

If a child, who has been through steps 3 and/or 4, goes 3 weeks without biting, we will go back to step three if the child bites again.

Illness

We can accept only well children. The center is not equipped or staffed to provide care for sick children. The staff will make every effort to protect the health and safety of the children. Cooperation of parents in helping prevent the spread of communicable diseases is of great importance. Daily attention will be given to the child's health, but parents should keep their child home if they observe the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea: Any child who develops uncontrolled diarrhea (that cannot be contained by the child's diaper or the toilet) will be removed from the classroom, and the parent will be called to pick up the child. If a child has three or more stools containing liquid in a three-hour period, the parent will be called to pick up the child. The child may return to The Growing Place when the stool is contained within the diaper or toilet and the stool frequency and consistency have returned to normal.
- Vomiting: Any child, who has vomited more than twice in a 24 hour period, should not come to The Growing Place until he or she is free of vomiting for 24 hours. If the child vomits twice during a day at The Growing Place, the parent will be called to pick up the child.
- Fever: A temperature of 99.4 or above is considered a fever. When a child has a temperature of 100, he must remain at home until free of fever for 24 hours. When a child has a temperature of 101 at The Growing Place, the parent will be called to pick up their child.
- Ear Infections: Ear infections are frequent in young children. Although the child is not contagious, the child must have been on medication for 24 hours before returning to The Growing Place.
- Bronchial Infection: If your child is coughing because of a cold or bronchial infection, he or she is contagious as long as the cough is moist or fever persists. If the infection is bacterial and the child has been on an antibiotic and is fever free for 24 hours, he or she may return to The Growing Place. In all cases involving respiratory infection the child's comfort is a factor. The child must be able to function comfortably in all daily activities at The Growing Place when returning from an illness.

- Pink eye
- Lice
- Ringworm
- Impetigo
- Open, draining sores
- Unidentified rash

Should your child become ill at the center with any of the symptoms noted above, a parent will be notified to come and pick-up your child. After receiving a call, parents should immediately come to the center to pick up their child. If parents cannot be reached or do not arrive at the center in a timely manner, we will contact a designated emergency person. ***Your child should not return to the center without medication or without a doctor's note.***

Please keep The Growing Place informed when your child is ill, as we are also concerned about each child's welfare.

Lice

When lice are found on a child, the parent/guardian will be contacted and the child must be picked up from the center. A check list will be provided to the parent/guardian on how to properly care for lice. In order for the child to return to the center, the parent/guardian must provide the receipt and empty bottle of lice treatment to prove the child has been treated. Once treated, the child may re-enter the center. Upon returning to the center, the director will check the child for lice before returning to the classroom.

The child will be checked daily for up to 10 days to ensure the child is free from nits and/or lice. If lice are found, the process will be repeated. If lice are found more than 3 times in one month, the parent/guardian must also provide a doctor's note or notice from the Health Department stating that the child is nit and lice free.

A notice will be sent home to parents of other children in the classroom, making them aware lice has been found and they should take precautions. The child's name will not be released at any time to protect the privacy of all individuals.

Medication

Prescription medicine must be brought in the original container with the original label including child's name, physician's name and dosage instructions. Parents must also sign a medical release form allowing The Growing Place staff to give medicine to your child. We will not give medication to children without written consent from the parents. A medicine log will be kept to monitor administration of medicine to the children at the center. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered in any way that is contrary to the instructions on the box unless a doctor's note states otherwise.

Medical Emergencies

In the case of an emergency, we will administer first aid and notify parents immediately.

- Life or death situation: We will call EMS who will take your child to a local hospital.
- Non-emergency situation: If there is a non-emergency situation, but your child still needs medical attention (fracture, stitches needed, etc.) and you or your specified emergency contact person(s) cannot be reached, EMS will transport your child to a local hospital. We will continue trying to notify you.

Moving a Child

The Growing Place reserves the right to move a child to the next age group if the staff and administration determine that child is developmentally ready and the parents of the child approve of the move.

Ratios

The Growing Place will not exceed the following teacher to student ratios.

6 weeks–12 months: 1:5

One-year olds: 1:6

Two-year olds: 1:8

Three-year olds: 1:12

Four-year olds: 1:17

School-age:1:23

Clothing and Personal Belongings

The Growing Place requires a full change of clothing in the child's cubby at all times. It is recommended that you label the extra clothing with your child's name.

You are encouraged to bring a small pillow, a favorite small, soft doll or animal, a mat, and a blanket to be used at naptime. Please label these items.

It is The Growing Place's policy to schedule outside play daily. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Children will need coats and mittens in addition to hats for cold weather and cool clothing for hot weather.

Children's play is active and may be a little messy. The children must feel free to be involved in all activities. *Please do not dress your child in dressy clothing and instruct your child not to get messy.* If you have a special need for your child to be in dressy clothes at the end of the day, bring the clothing and the teacher will help the child change just before being picked up.

Parents will supply diapers and wipes for their child. Teachers will ask for a supply of diapers and wipes monthly or as needed. There must always be a day's supply available for your child. *The Growing Place does not supply diapers.*

Outside Play

It is The Growing Place's philosophy that children need outside activity on a daily basis. Therefore, children and teachers go outside every day, unless the weather is inclement. On days when it is exceptionally cold, wet, or hot, we will be outside for a brief time.

Media (TV, video and DVD) viewing and computer use is not permitted for children 2 years of age and under.

All children will be expected to go outside with the teachers each day. We are not able to keep individual children indoors. If you feel your children are too sick to participate in the total program at The Growing Place, we ask you to keep your children at home until they are able to participate. Children are encouraged to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times.

Meals and Snacks

- ***Morning Snack***

The Growing Place will provide morning snack at 8:30. The snack will be a small portion of a healthy food. It will be planned to meet the child's nutritional requirements according to the USDA Child Care Food Program Guidelines in proportion to the amount of time the child is in the center each day with no more than four hours between food services.

- ***Lunch***

Students will eat lunch at The Growing Place. Parents must provide a nutritious lunch. Do not pack soda or items high in sugar or salt content. Only skim or 1% milk is served to children age 2 and above. Also avoid hot dogs (unless sliced lengthwise, then across), nuts, hard candies, whole grapes, popcorn, spoonfuls of peanut butter, whole raw carrots, raw cherries with pits, and raw celery because they are choking hazards. We will not be able to refrigerate lunches. If an item in your child's lunch needs to remain cold, place an ice pack in the child's lunch box or bag. We will be able to warm lunches, but please be careful to send lunches that need less than three minutes of warming time. **All lunch boxes and bags must be labeled.**

We are a peanut free facility, so no peanut products please.

- ***Afternoon Snack***

The Growing Place will provide an afternoon snack after naptime. This snack will also be nutritious. Occasionally this snack may be a sweet snack.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATION OF ANY ALLERGIES.

Birthdays

The staff will be delighted to assist you with any special celebration plans for your child at The Growing Place. Parents are encouraged to be a part of these celebrations. Just notify the teacher in advance. Generally, birthday celebrations are after naptime. The Growing Place can supply drinks, plates, napkins, and assistance in distributing special snacks or favors. We ask that party favors be brought in small individual bags. Since balloons present a safety concern, The Growing Place cannot allow them in the center.

If you plan to pass out invitations to a party, please bring an invitation for every child in your child's class.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Any person who has reason to believe that a child through the age of seventeen has been subjected to physical abuse or neglect is required by law to report such incidents to the Department of Social Services for evaluation.

Pickens County Daytime # 864-898-5810

After Hours # 864-239-8655