



Gardena Christian Academy

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Elementary Student Handbook

School Year 2020-2021

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Gardena Christian Academy & Preschool

Our Vision

Gardena Christian Academy considers educating children as a ministry and a service unto God. We are accountable not only to the children and their parents, but also to the Lord. We believe that preparing a child for adulthood is larger than teaching basic academic knowledge. In addition, children should be enriched with basic truths that will strengthen them spiritually and will provide them a solid foundation which can help them face the challenges of our modern world. We teach the truth that every person is a child of God. And in appropriate age level, we explain that meaning on their way of living. We do this through structured learning, Christian focus, and of course, playing and doing what children teach us daily – to have fun with life.

GCA provides a loving and positive environment that instills Christ-centered values by ministering to the child as a whole: spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. We are a family-oriented center and we pride ourselves on having a concern about each child's family.

GCA's Philosophy of Early Childhood Education

Our philosophy is based on the research that young children best learn and develop when they are actively involved in a loving and safe environment. It is important that in this environment, children are given the opportunity to learn and to experience new things. It is also important that they feel valued and loved. Our classrooms are designed to be child oriented, rather than teacher oriented. We also strongly feel that the most impactful way a child can learn about the world is through a hands-on approach.

Our curriculum is broken up into specific areas. Through these areas, we hope to bring a wide variety of experiences and talents into the child's life. The goal of the curriculum is helping the whole child to grow and to develop at their own pace. Weaknesses can become strengths and confidence can be built in this exploratory classroom setting. Children will learn to lead, as well as to follow, as they grow and develop their personalities. We hope that our students are challenged but never pushed and become independent yet teachable. As we strive to balance an academically rich environment with a creative/exploratory one, fostering a love for learning is our goal.

Staffing

Our teachers are qualified professionals. The members of the elementary teaching staff possess, or are, earning advance degrees.

Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the program and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Gardena Christian Academy.

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Curriculum

The A Beka curriculum is used at GCA. The curriculum focuses on at least four areas of development: social/emotional, cognitive, language and physical development. To develop social/emotional skills, our preschool staff aims to make children feel comfortable in school, to trust their new environment and to make friends and feel that they are part of a group. Preschool students need to experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life. In the area of cognitive development, the staff wants the students to become confident learners. This is accomplished by letting the children try out their own ideas and experience success. By helping students acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings, success has been accomplished. The third area, language development, involves listening and speaking activities (understanding and following directions, asking questions, participating in conversation) and reading/writing activities including being introduced to the alphabet. The final area is physical development, wherein the staff works with the students to increase their large and small muscle skills through various movement activities and arts and crafts which are designed to aid coordination and fine motor skill development.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Children who are 5 years old and up are eligible to enroll in GCA. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin or religion.

The Admission Process

The parent or guardian must obtain and complete an admission package. The admission package includes the following items:

- Registration form
- Parental rights form
- Identification and emergency information
- Emergency form
- Physician's report form (Form must be turned in within in thirty days).
- Consent to medical treatment
- Birth certificate
- Immunization records
- Registration fees
- Material fees

Registration

A registration meeting must be held with at least one parent (or legal guardian). During this meeting admission packet will be reviewed and the child's placement in class will be guaranteed. Any remaining questions will be addressed at this time.

TUITION AND FEES

Registration and Materials Fees

Registration and materials fees are due at the beginning of each school year (September). These fees must be paid before your child can attend class. Registration and material fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

- Elementary registration fee: \$125.00 per year
- Elementary materials fee: \$190.00 per year

Tuition Payments

Elementary tuition is \$5,500.00 per year. Tuition is payable in 10 equal payments (\$550 per month). Payments are due on the 1st of each month. A late fee of \$5.00 per day will be assessed if tuition is paid after the first of the month.

Before and After School Care (B&A Care) fee is \$1400 per year. B&A Care fee is payable in 10 equal payment (\$140.00 per month).

Gardena Christian Academy bills in advance on the first of the month. In the event that Gardena Christian Academy requests the withdrawal of a child for reasons other than account delinquency, we will refund any unused portion of tuition.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$3.00 per minute will be assessed beginning at 6:30PM if enrolled in B&A Care or 3:30PM if not enrolled in B&A Care. Payment will be due the next morning.

Late Payment Charges

If payment is not received on the day that it is due (the 1st) a late fee of \$5.00 will be added for each day that it is late. If your account has not been paid in full within 3 business days, your child may be discharged from the program.

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks will be charged a fee of \$25.00. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on

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a “cash only” status.

PROCARE

In 2019, Gardena Christian Academy implemented the use of the PROCARE School Management System to track student enrollment, attendance and finances. As of June 2019, all parents are required to set up a parent account through the system and to use the system to sign students in and out. For more information on the PROCARE system, please contact the G.C.A. Administration.

ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL

Absences

NO deduction from regular fees is made if your child is absent from school.

Withdrawal from School

If a child needs to be withdrawn from school, a one month written notice is required. If one month’s prior notice is not given, the monthly tuition fee will be billed to the parent or guardian. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child’s records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instruction to where the records should be sent is required. Please be advised, if account is not at a zero balance by the first week of June of the current year, GCA will not release or transfer your child’s report cards, SAT scores, awards and certificates until balance is paid in full.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP OF CHILDREN

Days and Hours of Operation

Hours: Monday through Friday - 6:30AM to 6:30PM

Delivery and Pick Up of Children

Please do not bring your child to school before 6:30AM (if child in B&A Care). Children should be picked up before 6:30PM.

If you do not have B&A Care children must be dropped off NO more than 15 minutes before

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class starts. Children must be picked up before 3:00PM.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Policy

This policy has been created to protect the safety of the children and in compliance with state law. It is crucial that we know the population of the facility at any given time. In case of emergency or natural disaster, the staff must know exactly who has been dropped off or picked up. Please follow the policy outlined below:

- Sign your child at the morning drop off.
- Sign your child out at the evening pick up.
- No other than the parent or guardian may sign a child in or out, without written consent from the parent or guardian.
- If you forget to sign your child in or out, you will receive a phone call from our staff. You will be required to return to the school and provide the appropriate signature (per state law: title 22).

Authorized and Unauthorized Pick-Up

Your child will only be released to you or the person(s) you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing or verbally if your verbal ID can be assured. Only in cases of necessity or emergency should an authorization for pick-up be made over the telephone. Staff will call the parent/guardian back to confirm the information regarding the change, and the person picking up the child will be required to present identification when they arrive at the school. Your child will not be released without prior authorization. Please notify your pick up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contact listed on your Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child for as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to contact you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

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Child Custody

We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/ guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. Without a court document, both parents/ guardians have equal rights to custody. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which Parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court order.

Parental Conduct

The behavior of parents or guardians can result in the suspension or expulsion of a child from Gardena Christian Academy. These behaviors include but are limited to the following:

- Failure to pay tuition on time. Tuition is due on or before the first business day of each month. Suspension will occur if payment is not received on the morning of the third business day of the month.
- Failure to pay late pickup fees. Picking a child up after 6:30PM is considered late pickup. The fee for late pickup is three dollars (\$3.00) a minute per child. This fee is due the following morning. This fee must be paid before your child will be allowed to attend school.
- Inappropriate Parental behavior can result in a child's suspension or expulsion from GCA. Inappropriate Parental behavior includes but is not limited to:
 - Use of vulgar language on school property or at school sponsored events.
 - Aggressive and/or threaten behavior on school property or at school sponsored events.
- Those on Subsidized Childcare:
 - Failure to submit required paperwork to sponsoring program in a timely manner.
 - Failure to complete time sheets according to program policy
 - Failure to pay co-payment on or before the fifth (5) business day of each month.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

We request that you do not bring food from home into the center unless your child has a medical or religious need for a special diet. Prior approval from management is required before outside food may be brought into the center.

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Prior approval
- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store bought and in original packaging.
- Foods should be labeled with child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food

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is intended for sharing with all the children.

- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/ or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened or at parent request not to discard.
- **No peanuts/tree nuts or peanut/tree nut products are allowed at any time.**
- If your child's special dietary needs restrict him/her from eating an element of our menu, we ask that you provide a healthy alternative to that element. For example, a child with a gluten free diet would be expected to bring in an entrée on the day sandwiches are on the menu. We would however serve your child our fruit/ vegetable offering that accompanies the entrée being served.
- Foods brought into the center must be nutritious and low in sugar content with the exception of special celebrations.

Food Prepared For Or At The Center:

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www/fns.usda.gov/cnd/care>) and the state requirement for food service. Our center is a participant of the child adult care food program (CACFP). Our breakfast, lunch, and snack menus follow the guidelines of this program. Minimum serving sizes are mandated by the program and a copy of the guidelines can be obtained from the front desk staff.

Meal Times

Meals will only be served at the designated times.

Breakfast

8:00AM – 8:30AM (Elementary)

8:30AM – 9:00AM (Preschool)

Lunch

11:00AM (Preschool)

11:45AM (Kinder and First)

12:15PM (2nd – 5th grades)

Monthly menus are available at the front desk.

Food Allergies

If your child cannot have what is offered from our menus, we require you to provide an alternative. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

PROGRAM POLICIES

Open Door Policy

GCA has an open door policy for parent classroom visitation. We understand that adjusting to school is sometimes not only difficult for the child but also the parent. You are welcome to observe your child through the door window at any time throughout the school day. We ask that if you do choose to exercise the 'open door' policy that you remain unobtrusive and unobserved to the students so there is no disruption. If your child is having a particularly tough day, you are more than welcome to call the office and a staff member will quickly check on your child.

Behavior Management

Our staff uses positive guidance, redirection, "time-out" and the setting of clear-cut limits that foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, to respect property and to be responsible for their actions. Discipline involves teaching character and self-control. Under no circumstances will children be subject to physical punishment or abusive language, as these approaches teaches children to respond in the same manner.

Staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to adults and peers. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or other children is unacceptable. Staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. As a result, staff will show children positive alternatives rather than just telling children "no". Good behavior will be encouraged and praised.

We employ the following method of behavior management

- Stop the Action and Look for the Positive (Acknowledge the positive intent and point more positive method.)
- Educate (Let the child know the effect of his/her action)
- Set Verbal Limits ("Paul, you may not shove Kendra like that, it's not nice.")
- Set Physical Limits
- Provide Options
- Explain Consequences
- Me Time (based on the child's age. One minute per year)

Regarding acts of aggression and fighting (i.e. biting, hitting, etc.); the parents/ legal guardian of the children will be immediately notified of the incident. Each incident is documented and reviewed by the Executive Director to assess adequacy of caregiver supervision and appropriateness of response. Physical restraint will not be used, except when necessary, to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and only for as long as necessary for control of the situation.

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Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communications will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service professional.
- Accommodation of the child's needs creates an undue burden on our resources and finances.

Child Abuse Policy

By law, teachers, aides and the support staff at GCA are considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. Therefore, all observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to child protective services.

Complaint Procedure

Any concerns a parent/guardian has regarding the school should be brought to the attention of the school director. Questions or concerns that are not satisfactorily resolved between the parent/guardian, the teacher and school director after one week should be brought to the attention of Executive Director (Pastor Joe) who will investigate the matter.

Parent Evaluation Of Program

Once a year, parents/guardians will be given a program satisfaction survey to gain important feedback regarding their child's and family's experience with the GCA program. The information gathered from the survey will be reviewed with school staff in an effort to enhance and improve services.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Progress Reports

Progress reports are given the 5th week of each quarter. These reports are issued to commend the student for outstanding work or to communicate the need for improvements. Additional reports will be sent if deficiencies occur. Careful attention should be given to the grades and to the comments noted by the teacher.

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Report Cards

The academic year is made up of four 9 week quarters. Credit for classes is given on the basis of quarterly work grades. Report cards are issued at the end of first, second, third, and fourth quarters.

Quarter Grades

Quarter grades are an evaluation of the student's progress for an entire 9 week period. These grades are recorded on the student's report card after the end of each quarter. Although these grades are not part of the permanent academic record, they do reflect progress for a significant part of the semester grade.

Letter Grades

Letter grades are defined below:

A= Excellent	D= below average	SI= Shows Improvement
B= Above Average	F= Failure	I= Incomplete
C= Average		

Awards

At the completion of each quarter, the students who have achieved academic distinction will be honored during Chapel. These honors will be based on quarterly grades. A certificate will be given to the student.

Special Awards

Special awards are defined below:

4.0 GPA	Principal's Award
3.7-3.9 GPA	Pastor's Honor Roll
3.0-3.6 GPA	Dean's List Special Award

Each year the President of the United States requests that schools designate two students from each grade level to bestow the honor of receiving the President's Award (4.0 or above) and the Most Improved Award (in any academic subject). These awards are signed by the President and sent to our school along with a pendant. Students who receive these prestigious awards are recognized and pinned by their parent(s) during our award assembly.

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Achievement Test

SAT Stanford 10 achievement test is administered to all students in the spring of each school year. This test provides GCA and the parents with a clear indication of how students are performing relative to the national norms. Each student is required to take this test.

Homework

Homework is an integral part of the curriculum and is a day-to-day connection between home and the school. Homework is important because:

- It reinforces concepts and skills learned in class.
- It prepares student for upcoming lesson topics and tests.
- It aids in evaluating student progress.
- It helps students develop organizational and time-management skills.
- It helps students assume responsibility for their work.

GCA will depend on you to see that your child completes all homework assignments and turn the assignments in the next day. You child should be able to complete the homework assignments within 25 to 30 minutes.

Because parents are the keys to making homework a positive experience for their children, GCA expects the following:

- Establish homework as a top priority for your child.
- Schedule a daily homework time.
- Provide an appropriate place and environment for doing homework.
- Provide the necessary supplies
- Provide positive support when homework is completed.
- Contact the teacher if your child is having problems with homework.

Fairshare Requirement

The Fairshare program is a way to recognize and encourage families to volunteer at school. Fairshare also invites families to be an active part of our school community, encouraging friendships and camaraderie with others. All Fairshare commitments must be completed by April 30th.

Fairshare Hours: Gardena Christian Academy encourages each parent to volunteer at least 15 hours of their time per school year to promote a family centered environment for our students. Any hours served for the benefit of your school will count toward your Fairshare Hour commitment. Volunteer opportunities include but are not limited to:

- FaithFest
- Christmas Program
- Graduation

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- Fireworks (Any hours that are volunteered at the fireworks stand will count towards the upcoming school year).
- Donation of School Supplies in lieu of hours (see staff for list of needed items).

Fairshare Fundraising: Our yearly fundraising sale is one of our largest fundraisers of the year. Each family is required to sell at least 10 items or make a cash donation of \$150 if they wish to opt out of sales.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Health Information

Each child is required to have a health statement on file, which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations and the signature of the child's source of medical care. If a child's health care summary is not complete at the time of enrollment or within thirty (30) days after enrollment, the child will be not be eligible to participate until the necessary requirements for enrollment are met. The school must have on file for each child signed "Permission for Health Care" from authorizing emergency care and transfer of medical records to the local hospital. Emergency numbers for reaching the parent/guardian and another authorized person must also be on file.

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every December, we check with the Public Health Department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates on the recommended immunization schedule.

Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 277 on June 30, 2015. SB 277 changes immunization requirements for children entering child care or school.

Starting January 1, 2016:

- Parents or guardians of students in any school or child-care facility, whether public or private, will no longer be allowed to submit a personal beliefs exemption to a currently-required vaccine.
- Medical and personal beliefs exemptions will be allowed from any new immunization requirement initiated by CDPH for attendance at school or child care.

Illness & Transmittable Disease

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children you may not bring sick children to the center. If your child is ill and won't be attending school, we do ask that you call the school office at (310) 527-0348. In the event that a student

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becomes acutely ill at school, we will need to contact the parent/guardian to pick the child up early. The following guidelines are meant to assist parents with the decision to keep their child at home:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities of the program.
- The staff cannot care for the sick child without interfering with the care of the other children.
- The child has any signs or symptoms that indicate a contagious disease or an immediate need for medical evaluation
- For more information please visit web MD <http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/features/your-child-too-sick-for-school> or the Keep Kids Healthy site_ <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/infectionsguide/schoolexclusion.html>

If head lice are present, the teacher and/or classroom aide will check the heads of all students to make certain no other infestations are present. The child is not permitted to return to school without proof of treatment (i.e. note from pediatrician that the child is “nit-free”; box evidencing treatment, etc.).

The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we provide.
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101 °F in the mouth, above 102° F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea- stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting- green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not communicable.
- Pink or red conjunctivitis with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours of treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours of treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours of treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping cough) until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours.

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- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in all activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling not related to teething unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event your child sustains a minor injury (i.e. scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be notified immediately.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we try to contact you or an emergency contact. .

Medication Use at School

Medication will be administered to a student at school only when absolutely necessary. It is requested that medication be given before or after school hours whenever possible. However, if it is essential that a child receive medication during school hours, there must be a physician's prescription prior to administration of medication. Medicine must come to school in the original container with the prescription labeled by a pharmacist or a physician and be handed to the teacher by the parent or legal guardian. The label must contain the child's name, physician's name, pharmacist, medication, dosage, frequency, starting date and expiration date if applicable. Medications having a specific expiration date are not used after the date of expiration. Medication sent in unlabeled containers cannot be administered. Any drug container having a detached excessively soiled or damaged label is returned to the parent for re-labeling by the pharmacist. (Any change in the type or dosage of medication must be reported to the teacher immediately and a new set of forms will need to be completed.)

If a child has an allergy that requires an epi-pen or asthma and requires an inhaler, one should be

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obtained from their doctor and left at school where it will be kept in case of an emergency.

THANK YOU

Thank you for choosing Gardena Christian Academy & Preschool for your child. We strive to give your child the best early learning experience possible. We recognize that parents are truly the first and most important teachers. As we continue to provide a rich educational and developmental experience for your child, we encourage your active participation in the learning process.