

Welcome Students and Families!

Dear Westgate parents:

Welcome to an exciting year!!! Our school's curriculum is designed to promote and enhance your child's growth and development. These very important years promise to be filled with discovery and joy as your child works and plays in an environment that is warm, safe, and challenging.

The structure of the daily activities is carefully planned to encourage independence, self-confidence, and group cooperation through large group, small group, and one-on-one participation in a variety of hands-on interactive experiences. The activities will incorporate instruction and skill reinforcement in reading readiness, mathematics, writing, science, social studies, art, fine and gross motor skills, social/emotional skills and language development.

We use the Creative Curriculum at Westgate. You will notice the focus of the curriculum is centered on theme units. This is the core of our integrated learning, and these units of study will be used to extend across, and connect all of our content areas. In doing so, your child will see the continuity of his or her learning and the application of skills will become more concrete. Learning will be real, and learning will make sense!

At the start of this year, Ms. Mirtha Claros will be our Acting School Director. Please email at her at MClaros@westgatechildcenter.com with any questions or concerns. We are actively searching for a new executive director.

We are looking forward to working with each and every one of you in making this an awesome year!

Sincerely,

The Westgate Child Center Team



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2022-2023 School Calendar

Monday, August 22	1 st day of school
Monday, September 5	WCC Closed – Labor Day
Monday, October 10	WCC Closed – Columbus Day
Monday, October 31	Halloween parade @ 10am*
Friday, November 11	WCC Closed – Staff training
November 24-25	WCC Closed – Thanksgiving Break
Week of November 28	Parent/teacher conference calls
December 19 - January 2	No Lightning Bolt program Little Leaguers - full-day Winter Camp
Monday, December 26	WCC Closed – Christmas
Monday, January 2	WCC Closed – New Years
Monday, January 16	WCC Closed – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Tuesday, February 14	Class Valentine parties*
Monday, February 20	WCC Closed – Presidents’ Day
Week of March 20	Parent/teacher conference calls
April 3-7	No Lightning Bolt classes Little Leaguers – full-day Spring Camp
Monday, May 29	WCC Closed – Memorial Day
Tuesday, June 13	Sunshine moving up ceremony
Wednesday, June 14	Rainbow room graduation
Thursday, June 15	Lightning Bolts graduation party
Friday, June 16	Little Leaguer end of year party Lightning Bolts – Early release
Monday, June 19	WCC Closed – Juneteenth
Tuesday, June 20	1st day of Summer Camp

*Parents may be asked to voluntarily contribute materials such as nut-free treats or Valentine cards for these and other student celebrations. Information and sign-up for contributions usually occurs with individual classrooms.

Additional Notes:

- Additional events will be noticed as they come up during the year.
- During September 2022, there will likely be a Back to School Night. More information will be sent out closer to this time.

Communications: Brightwheel

Westgate Child Center (The Center) uses the [Brightwheel](#) application/website for student check-in/out, communication between the school, teachers, and parents, and for tuition payments. You should have received an email from Brightwheel regarding setting up the application for your child(ren). If you have not received an email inviting you to set up your Brightwheel account, please email Ms. Mirtha (MClaros@westgatechildcenter.com).

Easy steps to set up your account:

1. **Create a free Brightwheel account.** When you receive an invitation via email or text, please create a free parent account using either the [web](#) or [mobile app](#). Make sure to use the same [email address](#) or [cell phone number](#) that the invitation was sent to. Here is a [quick video overview](#).
2. **Confirm your child's profile.** You will see your child's profile after you create an account - you can confirm information such as birthday, allergies, and additional contacts. If you do not see your child's profile, please contact us with the email address or phone number you used to sign up. You will not see updates within Brightwheel until we start to use it regularly.
3. **Set your account preferences.** You can adjust your notification preferences within your profile settings on the app.
4. **Add your payment information.** Brightwheel offers secure, automated online payments that saves time for us and gives you advanced tools and reporting. Please add your [payment information](#). Here is an online [Payments Setup Guide](#) with more info.

See a video tutorial [HERE!](#)

Daily Check-in/Check-out using Brightwheel:

On your first day at school, please use the tablets near the classroom door to [check your child in for the day](#). Enter your child's PIN, select your child's name, sign, and tap "confirm". When you pick up your child, please sign them out the same way. This allows us to ensure that the students are accounted for throughout the day.

Daily Communication via Brightwheel:

Brightwheel also allows our teachers to send updates regarding classroom activities throughout each day and allows our Director to send school-wide updates and messages. Parents can adjust their email and notification preferences within the application. Please set up your Brightwheel account as soon as possible as it will allow you to get school-wide messages, [send messages](#) to the school or teachers, and receive messages from the teachers.

2022-2023 School Year Tuition

- Effective this school year, our tuition is as follows:
 - **Full-Day Preschool \$1590 per month/\$795.00 bi-monthly**
 - **Half-Day Preschool \$915.00 per month/\$457.50.00 bi-monthly**
 - **Before/After School \$750 per month/\$375 bi-monthly**
 - ****Family Discount 10% off oldest children**
- Please remember monthly tuition is due to Westgate on the 1st of each month.
- If a family elects to pay bi-monthly tuition is due on the 1st and 15th.
- There are two ways to make a payment:
 - Through a linked checking account on your Brightwheel account via:
 - The autopay method (under the “Payments” tab → “Payment Settings” tab) which automatically withdraw the full due amount on the due date OR
 - The “Make a Payment” option (under the “Payments” tab → “Accounts” tab) which requires users to manual complete the payment process; OR
 - Via check to “Westgate Child Center” with the student’s name in the memo line.
There is a lock box in the foyer outside of the office door for tuition payments.
- Tuition is viewed as monthly installments. If your child is present at our school for more than two weeks of the month you will be expected to pay for the full month.
- If you choose to take your child out of our school, we require 30 days notice. Tuition is required through the 30-day notice period. There will be no tuition refunds issued without 30-day advance notice.
- Late Fees:
 - Late Payment Fee: \$15.00/ late payment
 - Returned Check Fee: \$25.00/check
 - Late Pick-Up Fees:
 - 6:31-6:35pm - \$5.00
 - 6:36-6:45pm - \$15.00
 - **** After 6:45pm there will be an additional charge of \$3.00 per minute**
 - Repeated late pick-ups may result in possible termination from Westgate.

General Reminders

Hours of Operation: 7am – 6:30pm

The school's hours are 7:00 am-6:30 pm. Access to the school is generally through the main doors by the front office. A code that unlocks the main doors will be provided to authorized adults, and we ask that this code not shared with your children or outside of the Westgate community.

Please note that parking in the circle by the main doors is not permitted between the hours of 9:30-3:00. Also, since there will be several small children getting in and out of cars, including your own, please drive with extra caution.

Sunblock or Bug Spray: If you would like us to apply sun block or bug spray before outdoor time, please sign and submit the form giving us permission to administer. Children are not allowed to apply their own sun block or bug spray therefore, sunscreen will be kept in the classroom. Please ask Ms. Mirtha for the form. Please clearly label non-expired sunblock and bug spray with your child's name. Sprayable sunblock is preferred for ease of administration.

Birthday celebrations: We welcome celebrations for birthdays; however we are a **nut-free** school so please do not bring any products that contain nuts. We request that treats brought to school are store-bought, and small items in goodie bags are limited. Please limit candy as much as possible, and no hard candy please.

Contact Information: If your address or contact information changes, please inform the school immediately.

Food Allergies: If a child has a food allergy, please complete the form at the front office and notify Ms. Mirtha.

Footwear: All children are expected to wear closed-toed shoes to school in order to play on the playground.

Cubbies & Backpacks: Children are welcome to bring backpacks to school, however, please do not keep food in your child's cubby or their backpacks.

Additional Activities for Sunshine, Rainbow, and Lightning Bolt classrooms – Optional additional activities are available for parents to sign up for an additional charge. These activities (e.g., ballet, karate, and soccer) occur during the school day. More information will be given to parents at the beginning of the school year.

Lightning Bolts Part-Time Preschool Program (Ages 2.5-5 years)

Welcome to the Lightning Bolts Class! We have a fun-filled learning experience planned for the 2022-2023 school year! We will have learning centers planned with age-appropriate activities under the guidance of our wonderful staff, Ms. Donna (lead teacher) and her amazing teaching team. The children will discover their love of learning through our weekly themes and through hands on learning experiences. You will get a monthly calendar showing the themes and what is planned for the week.

Classroom Hours: 9am – 3pm. Children are expected to be picked up by 3pm. Late pickups will incur a fee.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and snack is provided to all children. Monthly calendars listing the meals and snacks are available near the front office. Please do not pack a lunch for your child unless you have a medical reason to do so. Please contact Ms. Mirtha if you need a medical accommodation.

Progress Reports: Progress reports for this classroom go out to families three times per year (November, March, and June).

Rest/Nap Time: Lightning Bolts have rest/nap time from 1:00-2:30pm each day. Children will be asked to stay on their cot for the first hour, and after that they are able to play quietly on their cot.

Please bring the following items for your first day of class (all items should be labeled with your child's name):

- Two (2) sets of clothes: including underwear, socks, and weather-appropriate top and bottom
- A light sweater (when weather-appropriate)
- A water bottle
- A blanket and fitted cot/crib sheet
- Sunscreen and/or insect repellent (remember to fill out the form in the front office to allow us to apply these to your children)
- A picture of your family
- Please remember to have your child wear sneakers and comfortable clothes.

Sunshine Classroom (Full Day, Ages 2.5-4 Years)

Welcome to The Sunshine Family! We hope everyone had a great summer. The Sunshine teaching team, Ms. Laura (lead teacher) and her amazing teaching team have exciting plans for this school year and are looking forward to working with you and your child. Our classroom is divided into different learning centers. Our goal is to help each child develop their cognitive, motor, social/emotional, and language skills. We work extremely hard to create a happy, challenging, and comfortable learning environment. We will be starting “Yoga for Kids” this year. This will enhance their flexibility, strength, coordination, body awareness, sense of calm, and relaxation. Family involvement is an essential key of your child’s success. By showing an interest in their work, asking about their day, and reinforcing the skills learned in the classroom, you are sending a message to your child that education is very important. We encourage you to join and be a part of our reading activities. Research shows that the more parents are involved in their child’s education, the more successful the child will be.

Classroom Hours: 7am – 6:30pm. Children are expected to be picked up by 6:30, late pickups will incur a fee.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and snack is provided to all children. Breakfast will be served until 9am, if the child arrives later, please feed your child at home. Monthly calendars listing the meals and snacks are available near the front office. Please do not pack a lunch for your child unless you have a medical reason to do so. Please contact Ms. Mirtha if you need a medical accommodation.

Progress Reports: Progress reports for this classroom go out to families three times per year (November, March, and June).

Nap/Rest: Sunshine has rest/nap time from 1:00-3:00pm each day. Children will be asked to stay on their cot for the first hour, and after that they are able to play quietly on their cot.

Please bring the following items for your first day of class (all items should be labeled with your child’s name):

- Two (2) sets of clothes: including underwear, socks, and weather-appropriate top and bottom
- A light sweater (when weather-appropriate)
- A water bottle
- A blanket and fitted cot/crib sheet
- Sunscreen and/or insect repellent (remember to fill out the form in the front office to allow us to apply these to your children)
- A picture of your family
- Please remember to have your child wear sneakers and comfortable clothes.

Rainbow Classroom (Full Day, Ages 4-5 Years)

Welcome wonderful children to our pre-kindergarten class this year! Ms. Xiaoyu (lead teacher) and her amazing teaching team are excited to welcome you to our classroom. We have created a loving and educational environment for the children. Our aim is for all children to be kindergarten-ready next year. Our curriculum is thoughtfully planned, with a weekly theme. A copy of the monthly lesson plan will be provided at the end of each month. We will focus on seven domains of early childhood development: Language, cognition, social and emotional, morals and values, gross and fine motor skills, self-help, and adaptive skills. There are seven major learning centers in the classroom: dramatic play, blocks, science, manipulative toys, art/writing, library, and computer. We divide the classroom into 4 groups, and our lessons are both teacher-led and child-driven. No specific “bench marks” are used to measure children’s progress. We are looking forward to a very rewarding and memorable Pre-K year in Rainbow Room! Please contact us if you have any suggestions, concerns or want a conference with the teachers.

Classroom Hours: 7am – 6:30pm. Children are expected to be picked up by 6:30, late pickups will incur a fee.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and snack is provided to all children. Breakfast will be served until 9am, please inform teachers if your child has not eaten breakfast at home. If the child arrives later, please feed your child at home. Monthly calendars listing the meals and snacks are available near the front office. Please do not pack a lunch for your child unless you have a medical reason to do so. Please contact Ms. Mirtha if you need a medical accommodation.

Progress Reports: Progress reports for this classroom are done 2 times per year (middle and end).

Nap/Rest: Sunshine has rest/nap time from 1-3:00pm each day. Children will be asked to stay on their cot for the first 90 minutes, and after that they are able to play quietly on their cot.

Computer time: Most children love computer games. We have a computer in the classroom, but it is not connected to the internet, that children are able to use. We limit each child’s screen time to 2-3 times per week for 15 minutes at a time. If you would like to opt out of this activity for your child, please let us know.

Please bring the following items for your first day of class (all items should be labeled with your child’s name):

- 1 extra set of clothes: including underwear, socks, and weather-appropriate top and bottom
- A light sweater (when weather-appropriate)
- A water bottle
- A blanket and fitted cot/crib sheet
- Sunscreen and/or insect repellent (remember to fill out the form in the front office to allow us to apply these to your children)
- A picture of your family
- Please remember to have your child wear sneakers and comfortable clothes.

Additional Reminders for Rainbow Room:

- Every Monday children are welcome to bring a book from home to share with the class.
- Every Friday will be “show and share” where children are welcome to bring in something special from home to share with the class. Please do not bring very small action figures or tiny items.
- If you would like to be more involved in the classroom, a Parent Participation Survey is available outside the classroom. Please speak with us and we are happy to help!

Little Leaguers (Before and After School Program, Ages 5-12 Years)

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! Thank you for choosing Westgate Child Center as your before & after school provider this year. We are excited for the new school year to start on August 22nd! Ms. Donna and her amazing teaching team are excited to welcome you this year.

KENT GARDEN STUDENTS - If you have not already, please be sure to fill out the [Request For Exception to Ride a School Bus](#) form and return it to Ms. Mirtha and she will submit it to your school to make sure they know you are taking our bus.

LEMON ROAD, WESTGATE, HAYCOCK, CHURCH HILL (pm only) AND SPRING HILL STUDENTS - When filling out enrollment forms for your child and meeting with his/her teacher please be sure to communicate with the school that Westgate Child Center will be providing drop off and pick up services via the van through your school's Kiss and Ride.

If you have any questions regarding your child's upcoming transition, please feel free to speak to your child's teacher at school or Ms. Mirtha in the main office.

Additional Fee: All Little Leaguers will be asked to pay a \$50.00 club activity fee to cover supplies for club activities during the school year.

Meals: Breakfast and snack is provided to all children. Please contact Ms. Mirtha if you need a medical accommodation. Monthly calendars listing the meals and snacks are available near the front office.

Transportation times:

- Lemon Road: leave at 7:50 am and return 3:30 pm
- Westgate Elementary: leave at 7:50 am return 3:50 pm
- Spring Hill: leave at 8:30 am and return 4:00 pm
- Haycock: leave at 9:00 am and return 4:30 pm
- Kent Gardens: bus picks up around 8:15 and returns around 3:30 pm

Please communicate changes to transportation plans in-advance of 3 pm. For last minute changes, please call the front office.

Medications and Sick Policy

With guidance from the Fairfax County Health Department, and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Westgate Child Center has developed the following sick policy:

COVID-19 Policy: The Center follows [Fairfax County Health Department \(FCHD\) Guidance](#). The below policy was developed with FCHD guidance.

- **If your child tests positive (regardless of vaccination status)** your child must isolate at home for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours, they may return to school on day 6, and must wear a mask through day 10. If your child will not wear a mask at school, they must remain home until day 10, and may return to school on day 11.
- **Test to stay for classrooms that have a positive case:** If a child tests positive, we require rapid testing on-site **only for symptomatic children** in the classroom who were exposed to the child who tested positive. Rapid testing will be done at the school using an un-expired test brought from home, a test performed that day signed by a doctor, or a test provided by the school (for an additional \$15 fee, per test), and testing will be performed each day for 5 consecutive days, or as long as the child is showing symptoms. If tests are negative, children are allowed to remain at school. **All children** in the classroom will be required to wear a mask for the following 10 days after the positive case. **To participate in the test to stay program, parents must sign a form found in the front office.**
- If a child tests positive at school, we will remove the child from the classroom immediately, and ask you to pick up your child within an hour.
- If a sibling tests positive, your child will be required to utilize the test to stay program regardless of their symptoms. For each of the following 5 days after the sibling tests positive, your child will be tested at school using a rapid test. If the test is negative, the child is allowed to remain at school.
- **If FCHD determines the school is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19** that has been difficult to control or is unusual in size or scope, FCHD may recommend traditional quarantine and isolation standards be applied until the situation is stabilized or we may be required to close the school for a short period of time. The Center will follow whatever instructions are provided by FCHD.
- These policies are not differentiated by vaccination status of the child. We encourage all children and their families to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. All staff at the school are fully vaccinated and boosted.

General Sick Policy

All students are required to have updated immunization and health forms on file as required by state law. Parents must notify us in writing if their child has allergies of any kind. Staff members are trained in first aid and CPR and can tend to everyday bumps and bruises. If a child has an accident or incident during the day, the appropriate form will be given to the parent for signature. For more serious accidents/incidents, we will attempt to notify parents by telephone and/or e-mail. In the

event of a serious emergency, the school will secure immediate medical attention as described on the “Authorization for Medical Treatment” form filed in the school office. Every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians, or authorized family members or friends.

Sick Policy

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all of our children, we ask that you keep children at home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period (including recurring episodes of diarrhea at school)
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- A constant cough or sore throat
- Fussy, cranky behavior and generally not himself/herself
- Redness and irritation of the eyes
- A skin rash
- Head lice
- Symptoms of a communicable disease

Children may not return to the Center until they have been symptom-free/fever free for 24 hours. Parents/Guardians must inform the Center within 24 hours if any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable diseases. Teachers trained in health screening will perform a quick health assessment of each child upon arrival every day.

We reserve the right to send home any student who shows signs of illness at school. Any student who becomes ill at school will be made comfortable until his/her parent can be notified and the student is picked up from school. A parent or authorized adult must pick up the child within one hour of notification.

Medication

The following rules apply in order for Westgate Child Center MAT staff member to administer medications to children.

- A medication release form signed by the parent/guardian must accompany the medication. The form must specify the dosage to be administered, the time to be administered, and the length of time that the child is expected to be on the medication.
- Written authorization from the parent or guardian is also required in order for us to apply topical products, such as insect repellent or sunscreen.
- **Medication must be in the original container and prescription medication clearly labeled with the full pharmacy label.**

- **Medication must also include the insert with all potential side effects and counter indications.**
- **Medication must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, the name of the medication, and the directions for use.**
- Prescription medication shall be used only for the child named on the label.
- Medication is not allowed in cubbies or book bags.
- The school cannot administer medicines or perform procedures requiring specific skills or prior medical training.
- If the medication is for longer than 10 days, a doctor must sign a form before we can administer the medication.

Daily Precautions We are Taking to Keep Your Child Safe

1. When entering the classroom, the child will be asked to wash their hands.
2. The children will be made to wash their hands after each activity, before and after meals, returning from the playground, when they sneeze or blow their noses, and after using the restroom.
3. Food preparation: Our kitchen staff as well as our teachers have been through the health department food handlers' class and will be using the safety measures that they have learned in this class to ensure that the food is prepped and served in a safe manner . No child will be serving their own food or food to others.

The Center actively follows the guidance from the Fairfax County Health Department, and will update the sick policies accordingly if there are any updates in the guidance in the event of any health concerns and advice. In any events of sick policy updates, the Center will communicate with parents via Brightwheel in a timely manner.

Board of Directors

As a nonprofit organization, the Westgate Child Center is overseen by a Board of Directors, made up of parents and non-parent representatives. The volunteer Board of Directors act as stewards of the school's financial health and future. We are always looking for individuals who have an interest and passion in joining our team to ensure Westgate is providing the best in early childhood education. Meetings are held monthly in the evening September-June on days and times that works best for all members.

If you are interested in learning more and interested in applying, please reach out to Ms. Mirtha (MClaros@westgatechildcenter.com).

You may also reach out directly to the Board of Directors at the e-mail below:
westgatechildcenterboard@gmail.com