

Village Square Learning

WELCOME TO
VILLAGE SQUARE
LEARNING

Childhood development is the process which prepares children to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.

The Village Squares' positive proactive initiatives address these broader developmental facets with our suite of high quality family solutions. A quality program, which fosters an advanced outlook, takes expertise in early childhood, and collaboration with families, teachers, and our

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community as a whole. The goal of The Village Square is to promote characteristics that constitute this described quality care.

Curriculum

Our curriculum emphasizes daily life as an important part of our program. We are deeply committed to honoring the many relationships that children establish during their day in our care. The staff support children to problem-solve within their social setting, to engage in long-term investigations, and to represent their knowledge of the world in multiple ways. Teachers are constantly working to understand children's thinking and help them form new hypothesis through ongoing explorations.

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At Village Square Learning, we use the environment as another teacher in the classroom. We, therefore, place a high emphasis on the organization, aesthetics, and careful selection of materials in our classrooms to help support children's learning. Though you may find some traditional toys here, you are more likely to find less traditional forms of materials, which are more open-ended. Raw materials are frequently put together by staff or students which can serve many purposes. Students and staff design combinations of materials, which we refer to as "set-ups". These may encourage different uses of materials, challenge children's perspectives, encourage problem-solving, or serve other purposes depending on the children's interests. Students and staff observe children interacting with materials and each other in an effort to understand what children know

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about their world. This careful observation is used to plan new experiences for children, and often leads to change in the presentation of materials, the use of new materials, or a life experience away from the classroom.

Parent involvement in our program is crucial to our staff's understanding of individual children and is highly encouraged. Parent information often helps us in planning for projects and can help us know more about how your child is interpreting his/her experiences. Parents are welcome in the classroom any time of the day! To accommodate parents' visits, it is crucial the visit be scheduled prior so that the appropriate staffing can be coordinated.

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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA is a federal civil rights law that went into effect in 1992. The Act states that people with disabilities are entitled to equal rights in employment, state and local public services, and public accommodations such as preschools, child care centers, and family child care homes. ADA presents an exciting opportunity to plan for and include children with disabilities in early childhood settings. Children and families benefit from inclusion. Children with disabilities share learning opportunities with their peers. Inclusion also fosters caring attitudes and teaches children about interdependence and understanding for human differences. For early childhood professionals it is an extension of continuing

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efforts to meet the individual needs of each child and family.

Enrollment Procedures

Parents can put their child's name on our wait list by filling out an application form during pregnancy, or any time thereafter.

Application forms can be submitted in person or online and you will receive an electronic confirmation in return. Admitted families will receive a letter confirming their registration into the program with instructions on how to proceed from the administrative assistant in our office. We encourage parents who have children with special needs and families of diverse backgrounds to put their names on our waiting list. Declaring these needs allows us

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at Village Square to properly assess our ability to serve you, and to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate each family. Specific needs discovered post-enrollment must be conveyed so that we might make similar accommodations.

With a few exceptions, enrollments are on a first-come, first-serve basis with preference normally given to full-time faculty or staff children. If a family already has a child at the Center, they are given priority over new families for enrolling another child. Children with special needs may also be given a priority. Because we are a lab school, with the exception of families already enrolled at the Center, the program reserves the right to selectively look for a specific age-range or gender when filling spaces. In addition, enrollments may include one or two children

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who represent a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds from the extended community.

Children entering the Infant Room must be between 6 weeks and 1 year of age on September 1st. If by chance a family has been given a space in the Center who is expecting a baby in August and the baby is born in September, we will offer the family the choice to continue care as planned or wait to begin care the following year which would match the child with the age group they will enter public school with. If the family opts to begin care during the current school year, we will negotiate future room options since our preschool is a two-year experience.

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Either before your child begins at the Center, or during the first few weeks of enrollment, the primary teachers for your child will make a home visit to discuss our program. This may happen at a later date in the Preschool. This is an opportunity for the teachers to observe your child in his/her home surroundings and learn about the specific care you would like your child to receive.

We actively encourage parents to "ease" their child into the Center by staying with their child as much as possible in the beginning, particularly in the younger rooms. We have also had past caregivers and other family members help with this transition.

In the infant and toddler rooms we encourage parents to arrange their schedule so their

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child attends day care for shortened hours during the first week or two. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child at the Center as much as possible during this time.

If for any reason you are withdrawing your child from the Center, you must give a minimum of 4 weeks notice **IN WRITING** to the administrative assistant for Integrated Professional Studies in C150 Living/Learning. You are obligated to pay for childcare during these 4 weeks even if you do not use the service. Additional notice is greatly appreciated.

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Hours & Calendar

The VILLAGE SQUARE is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Though staff may come earlier and stay later, it is important that you adhere strictly to your established schedule these hours of operation for drop-off and pick-up times. **Plan to pick up your child no later than 6:15 p.m. so that you will have enough time to talk to the classroom teacher about your child's day and leave the Center no later than 6:30 p.m.**

Fee Schedule (see Director)

Tuition

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In our effort to serve families whose work non-traditional hours, Village Square Learning affords an effective way for parents to better manage their resources. We accomplish this by allowing families to only reserve the enrollment slots their family needs. Against this back-drop, we hire and schedule staffing to meet WV State regulatory requirements, as well as to appropriate resources to deliver a quality service.

As such, Parents/Guardians are responsible in full for all scheduled service periods.

Example: If a student is currently scheduled for the hours of 8am – 12noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but does not attend all or any portion of that reservation,

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parents/guardians are responsible for the full cost of the reservation.

Late Fees

The Village Square team understands that an unexpected event may occur which prevent parents from arriving at the facility as scheduled. Late pickups are disruptive to the program, and more importantly, disorienting to your child. In such instances, please notify a member of our team as soon as you realize you will be late.

Late pick-ups occurring between 6:00am and 6:00pm will incur a **Late Fee of \$10.00 plus**

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an hourly fee commensurate with your current hourly rate.

In the event of a late pick-up after **6:15pm**, your account will be assessed a **\$35 fee plus an additional fee of \$1 for every minute after closing until you arrive.** These fees will be added to your statement and will be due before the 1st day of the next scheduled service period.

We are open 12 hours per day to accommodate varying work shifts for parents. However, we believe it is in the best interest of your child to spend less time in the group environment, and therefore encourage parents to find creative ways within their family to keep

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their children's day to a maximum of 8 to 9 hours.

If your child will be arriving late for their assigned schedule, please call and let us know. We often plan walks or field trips, and will need to make arrangements for someone to be here for your child's arrival.

Village Square Learning observes the following snow closing policy. If the Berkeley County Public School district closes for the day, we will have a delayed opening of 8:00 a.m. This will hopefully allow enough time for primary teachers to get to the center.

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As we keep families informed of service impacting weather or events, parents must understand that at least some primary staff must be in attendance for the center to open and if this becomes un-attainable, there may be only a partial center opening or there could be no opening. Our license will not allow us to operate without a primary staff person on the premises and we have state licensing guidelines which must be followed in terms of adult/child ratios.

Additional Charges

Parents/Guardians of enrolled students are responsible for additional school activity

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fees, late pick-ups, lost/damaged school property, and insufficient funds fees.

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Village Square Closings

Village Square Learning will occasionally close for special holidays and professional development sessions. In 2014, we will be closed or have abbreviated operating hours on the following days:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Presidents Day (<i>Professional Development</i>)

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Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day (<i>Professional Development</i>)
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving

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Christmas Eve: Early Closing (4:00pm)
Christmas Day
Week After Christmas
New Year's Eve
New Year's Day

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The center will be closed in observance of the holidays identified above. Tuition is not reduced for holidays.

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Un-scheduled School Closings (USC)

The Village Squares' un-scheduled school closing program is for children ages 5 to 12 years old on days when public/private schools are closed. For active registered enrollees in our Before/After program, the additional charge will be calculated according to the number of additional hours multiplied by your current hourly rate plus 25% (service fee).

EXAMPLE: Berkeley County Public Schools snow day: 8:00am – 4:00pm = 8 hours.

Cost = (8 hours x \$ current rate) + 25% service fee

For students not currently enrolled in our program, the USC cost is **\$55**.

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Nutrition & Meals

In the Infant group, parents supply all of the food for their child. In all the other groups, lunch and snacks will be provided. Staff will not be regulating how much food your child eats, in what order they eat each item, or insisting on the use of utensils, particularly during the toddler years. Toddlers are working on fine motor control skills and independence. If you prefer to send a lunch, we ask that parents pack healthy meals (low in sugar and high in nutrients) for the children. You should remember that "treats" might be the only thing your child chooses to eat. Candy, soda, and gum are prohibited foods for children at the center, so please do not pack these in your child's lunch. A microwave is available to heat foods for

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children. It is important to alert us if your child has any food allergies.

Healthy snacks for the toddler and preschool rooms will be provided by the staff. These snacks will include various types of fruits and vegetables, bagels, crackers, breads, cheeses, and juices. If you have any questions about the snacks, please do not hesitate to see the primary teacher in your room or the Head Teacher of your child's program.

Parents may wish to bring in a special treat for their child's birthday, and this is acceptable with the staff. There are lots of alternatives to cakes and ice cream however, that are not high in sugar and fats. Other possibilities might be: low-fat, low-sugar muffins; low-fat

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frozen yogurts which are fruit juice based;
pizza; fruit sundaes topped with yogurt, and
modified cake recipes.

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Health & Safety

All mentor teachers are certified in Infant/Child CPR. Staff will administer minor treatment of injuries (e.g., Band-Aids) as needed, and parents are notified of any injury by a written report, a duplicate of which is included in the child's file.

All children must have a completed Health Form signed by his/her physician on file before starting at the Village Square. We also require that all children be immunized following the American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization Schedule. You should provide our office, or teacher with a

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copy of the official immunization record as future vaccinations occur.

It is very important that parents let us know if they are not going to be at their regular phone number during the day. **Please make sure we know how to get in touch with you in case there is an emergency. Please also let teachers know if you are out of town and someone else is responsible for your child.**

Child Abuse & Neglect

We are obligated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

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Parents will be contacted if we believe there is any possibility of abuse or neglect.

Emergency Contact Information

Each parent must have on file a list of names and phone numbers of emergency contacts. The emergency contacts are persons in the area who are authorized by the parent(s) to pick up and/or care for the child in case of illness or emergency when the parent cannot be reached. Please be sure the persons whose names you give are aware that they have been listed for this purpose and that staff members will ask for identification of any person with whom they are not familiar. In the case of legal issues, the registered parent must indicate who has legal custody and who may pick up the child on the enrollment

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form. We assume no liability if not properly advised. If you won't be at the number you have listed to contact you during your child's day at school, please leave a note with a staff member and/or on the sign-in sheet with the number at which you can be reached.

Whenever there are changes to be made, it is your responsibility to update the emergency cards located in the center's front office and your child's classroom. Written authorization is required for changes in this respect.

Children will only be released to persons whose name appears on the emergency cards.

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Special Circumstances

The safety and well being of the children in our care is of primary importance. If a staff member perceives that the person picking up the child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, **the child will not be released.**

Another person authorized to pick up the child will be called. If any child care staff believes that an adult who is picking up a child is not in a condition to drive or adequately care for the child's safety, the staff will not release the child to the adult until the child's safety is assured. Staff will offer to call a cab for the person or call another authorized adult to assist in picking up the child. Determining whether or not to release a child in this situation is difficult for the parent, the child, and the staff member.

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The local police stands ready to assist us in any decisions we make.

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Administering Medications

If your child is to be given medication at school, you will need to bring in the original bottle of medication, labeled for your child, and fill out an authorization form stating the amount and time the medication is to be administered. Your child's mentor teacher or an aid under the direction of a mentor teacher will administer the medicine as directed.

Any topical medications which you wish to have administered to your child (Desitin, sun-tan lotion, etc.) must be approved by you in writing.

Emergency Medical Treatment

In the event of a serious injury, the staff will immediately call 911 rescue squad and then

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the parent. Your signature on the admission form authorizes emergency medical care for your child, should such be necessary. It also lists your hospital preference.

Sick Children

We are not equipped to care for sick children, and ask that if your child is not well enough to participate in the normal school day, including outdoor play and walks, that he/she be kept home. It is a state regulation that children will be excluded from the Center with the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees orally (101 degrees rectally) or higher (Your child is not allowed to come to the

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Center if his/her fever is under control by the use of medications)

- Severe cough
- Vomiting
- Un-diagnosed rashes
- Diarrhea (5 loose stools beyond what the child normally has in 24 hours, or loose stools persisting for more than 48 hours)
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Others, as staff deems necessary

According to regulation and good practice, if your child has any of the above symptoms or if for other reasons the staff feels that your child is too ill or potentially contagious to remain at the center, you will be contacted to pick up your child. It is expected that parents will come immediately to take children out of the center if called by staff. If you are unavailable, we will call your emergency

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contact to come and pick up your child. Young children occasionally do not register a fever, but are too sick to cope in a group care. We are not staffed to provide one-on-one care.

If your child contracts head lice, we require that he/she stay home for 24 hours after treatment. We will rigorously check heads of all the children for several days, proceed with disinfecting the classroom materials, and check the child who returns for several days. We realize this is a problem we will have from time to time, but it is very contagious and we need to be vigilant with our procedures.

Communicable diseases such as rubella, mumps, measles, chicken pox, impetigo,

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hepatitis, conjunctivitis, head lice, strep throat, scarlet fever, etc., require medical treatment. Children should not return to the Center for a specified period of time, depending on the disease. Please see the classroom head teacher or your child's mentor teacher to determine the length of time your child should remain out of the Center.

Parent Involvement

Village Square Learning welcomes input and information from parents. You are your child's first and most important teacher. The partnership you form with your child's primary teacher at the Center is vital to our program. We feel it is important to maintain open communication at all times. While much information can be shared informally

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during drop-off and pick-up times each day, your caregivers will also schedule 2 parent/teacher conferences during the year to discuss concerns or questions about a child's development. It will help us meet your child's needs if you keep us informed of any changes in your child's life (pregnancy, moving, divorce, death, etc.). Outside of the two scheduled conferences, parents or teachers may request additional conferences.

All information you share with our staff is confidential, as is information that students learn about children during their participation at Village Square Learning. All staff and students who participate in this program sign forms of confidentiality. Because information regarding your child is confidential, please do not expect us to discuss other children's behaviors with you.

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Under exceptional circumstances, we may call families together to discuss particular behavioral issues in the classroom. Questions other than those regarding the day-to-day routine of your child should be directed to the mentor teacher in your child's classroom or the Head Teacher for your child's classroom.

It is really important to our staff that you keep a constant line of communication open with them. If there is a problem or disagreement, please go directly to the staff person involved. If you are unable to speak with a Mentor Teacher, please speak with either Head Teacher or the Director.

Program information and information about your child's day is available to parents

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through newsletters, posted daily activities and/or charts in your child's classroom, documentation on hall boards, or your child's portfolio. If you have questions or would like more information about your child's day, you are encouraged to call the classroom at any time. To phone the Center you will find the following numbers useful:

Chinelle G. Duncan: 304-279-8556

Parents are invited to participate in the parent council which meets once a month to discuss our community's ongoing goals and challenges. This is a wonderful way to gain insight into the Center and its operation and to meet parents whose children are in other classrooms.

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Room by room, parent gatherings come in various formats that change slightly from year to year, depending on the desires of the staff and parents. These can be parent luncheons, late afternoon gatherings for a pot-luck dinner or tea, evening meetings, or other variations.

Because Village Square Learning also serves as a teacher training site, parents need to recognize that enrollment in our program also entails an obligation to support our educational mission. This support can mean agreeing to have a teacher-student present during parent conferences, having a teacher-student participate in a home visit with your child's teacher, keeping in contact

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occasionally by phone or attending parent meetings run by teacher-students.

We will do our best to schedule meetings at as convenient a time as possible. We also recognize that being a parent of young children and working full-time can result in a hectic schedule and that it may not be possible to attend all of the meetings. All we ask is that you recognize your obligation and do your best to honor it.

Sibling Visits

We at Village Square have always enjoyed and welcomed visits from our alumni and their siblings. It is wonderful to see how much they have grown and learned, and that they still feel a sense of community with all of us.

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Our insurance policy, however, does not make it possible for un-registered children in the center to be in a classroom unless accompanied by a parent. Further, during these visits, it must be the parent who assumes full liability responsibility in the unlikely event of an accident. Thank you for your understanding.

Staffing

Village Square's staff is highly trained and dedicated to providing the best in early childhood practice. All staff regularly attends professional development training, aid in the training of students at the university, and may participate frequently in giving workshops throughout the state and beyond. The staff consists of a Preschool Head Teacher, 2 Mentor Teachers, and

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Early-Childhood Education work study students. All mentor teachers have a minimum of 4 years training in early childhood or a related field. Work study students function as regular aides in the classroom and are trained by the classroom mentor teachers. Any questions regarding the work study students can be directed to either the mentor teacher or the Head Teacher for your child's classroom.

During the summer months (May through August) the mentor teachers remain constant (except for vacation times), but the secondary staff changes. As much as possible, our aides for the summer consist of recent early childhood students and work study students who are already familiar with

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the children. There may also be student teachers in the classrooms.