

The Mustard Seed

PRESCHOOL & CHILD CARE CENTER

January 2025 Parent Handbook

*“.....if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”
~ Matthew 17:20-21*



The Mustard Seed Preschool & Child Care Center

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Letter from the Owner

**Nancy Koon
Owner**



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Welcome to The Mustard Seed Preschool and Child Care Center! The Mustard Seed is founded on the philosophy that young children thrive in a gentle, relaxed setting that allows them opportunities to freely explore their world. We offer families a safe, loving, positive, and Christian environment for their young children.

The Mustard Seed is designed to meet the needs of young children by providing quality care, excellence in education, and a foundation in faith through experiences consistent with Christian principles. We are dedicated to meeting the developmental needs of the total child; mental, physical, emotional, social and spiritual. Believing that each child is a unique God-created person with individual learning abilities and differences, we offer a child-oriented program with individual learning opportunities, as well as an activity-rich curriculum supplemented by enrichment activities.

Meaningful experiences are offered for your child through exploration and exposure to new concepts and materials. The children are cared for by a loving staff in a cheerful facility created specifically for children. As a mother of three, I know the importance you place in finding a preschool and child care center that you can trust with your most precious treasure – your children. I thank you for selecting The Mustard Seed and I look forward to serving you and your children.

At The Mustard Seed, we want to work closely with you to make sure that your child feels secure, loved and confident while they explore the wonders of their world.

Joyfully,

Nancy

Nancy Wielgosz Koon

About The Mustard Seed



I am often asked how the name of our Center came about and I love to share why I chose the name: The Mustard Seed.

In May 2004, I resigned my position as a weekday preschool director for a local church. My family and I spoke about the possibility of opening a Christian-based facility. After much prayer and with the support of my family and friends, we felt God was calling us to step out in faith. In November of 2004, we purchased our property on Popp's Ferry Road. After renovating the existing building we opened our doors on January 3, 2005, with a full enrollment of 28 children.

I was also sensitive to God wanting me to operate a Center that was a ministry to children and their families—a place of loving-kindness.

"He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.'" ~ Matthew 13: 31-32 21

Thank you for four wonderful years! We can't believe our baby is going to "big boy school." We feel so blessed to have had so many loving people to watch over and teach him so much. Like we have said before, it means so much to drop your child off and go to work and not worry about the care your child is receiving. Thank you all for the love and care you have shown to Adam.

~ The Bienvenue Family

In this parable Jesus used three features of the mustard seed to help us understand the kingdom of God: the size of the seed, the size of plant it produces, and the rapid growth rate it experiences. In the same way, the smallest of children come to us and as we partner together with their parents we see them grow, change, and mature at tremendous rates.

We also see in Scripture that the seed produces a tree that provides a place of protection, provision, and love. Every day, we strive to provide that kind of place for our parents and the children in our care.

Eight months after we opened Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. The Center sustained little damage and we reopened in two weeks. The need came for us to expand leading to a 1200 sq. ft. addition in June 2006, allowing us to increase our enrollment to 57 children. Then, in July 2010, we added another 600 sq. ft. to our facility providing reception, office, and storage space. We are blessed!

Along with the building addition in 2010, we rolled out our new corporate identification including logo, marketing, materials, newsletters, and more. The crayons in the logo express our passion to provide the best quality education possible for Mustard Seed Kids to launch into the elementary years as exceptionally as possible. The plants represent each of the programs offered at The Mustard Seed—from infants through fours. They also capture the wonderful growth we are privileged to witness in the children as they develop and "sprout" into healthy and developmentally sharp individuals. We have lovingly dubbed each program concurrent with a plant's growth.

We have been truly blessed by the children we serve, their families, and by God. If you are considering The Mustard Seed for your child, we hope you will consider joining our family.

Our Philosophy

Why Choose The Mustard Seed?

The Mustard Seed DIFFERENCE is our commitment to your child's future and that our program is based on the knowledge that children are a gift from God. We recognize that you are extending the gift given to you by God to our care. We are truly humbled by such an act. We understand that you want to be certain you have made the best choice for your child and therefore, it's important to us to create a joyful, warm, and safe environment for your child.

In addition to programs that are catered to each individual learning level, we offer a child-oriented program that focuses on the whole child with individual learning opportunities, an activity-rich curriculum, and fun-filled Bible activities. Your child will discover that learning is *fun*, while making new friends and building strong relationships with teachers who partner with you in your child's education.

Kids with Character: Creating Well-Rounded Children of Character

As part of our philosophy, The Mustard Seed education incorporates our "Kids of Character" program, which explores positive character traits. Each month, the program highlights one of the pillars of character such as trustworthiness, responsibility, caring, respect, fairness, and citizenship. We bring the concepts alive through the characters in children's books and *Bible* stories. We then ask questions and discuss how each child can emulate the positive traits in their own lives. The result is a fun and meaningful way to develop "Kids of Character," providing our future leaders with the strong moral foundation needed in life, elementary school, and beyond.

At The Mustard Seed, the goal of discipline is to help children recognize the good sense in acting a certain way and to want to be children of character. We are committed to maintaining realistic expectations when dealing with the behavior of each child.

When a child is found to not follow the rules, all Center staff utilize positive reinforcement and guidance based on individual needs and development. Common measures include offering choices, using redirection, and giving praise for good choices. Discipline is never associated with food, rest, or toileting. Children will never be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating, or frightening, and corporal punishment is never used under any circumstance.

We will be very direct in letting you know of problems as they arise. If there are any problems that concern you as a parent or with us as a provider, please discuss them with us. It is important that we maintain an open and honest relationship. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Parents will be called in for a conference about a child who consistently disobeys the teacher, disrupts the classroom, is aggressive toward other children, or a combination of these behaviors.

The Mustard Seed is a unique child care experience for families who want:

- ✓ **A cheerful facility designed especially for children**
- ✓ **Nutritious meals and snacks prepared in our kitchen**
- ✓ **Parent involvement opportunities**
- ✓ **A Christian based and developmentally appropriate curriculum**
- ✓ **Safe, clean environment**
- ✓ **Infant care to Pre-K 4**

Mustard Seed Rules:

1. Listen and follow directions
2. Be kind to friends
3. Talk with an inside voice
4. Always clean up your mess
5. Use walking feet indoors
6. Take care of toys
7. Always tell the truth
8. Always use good manners



Admission | Rates | Hours

Admission and Registration

The Mustard Seed is open Monday - Friday, **7:30 AM - 5:00 PM**. We provide care for children One year to age Five. We do retain the right to deny admission if slots are filled. Parents are requested to visit the center before or upon enrollment to meet staff members and tour the facility. To complete your child's initial enrollment each child will need to pay a **\$175 non-refundable initial registration fee** & Curriculum fee, complete the enrollment forms, provide and maintain a current 121 form of immunization, provide custody papers if such papers exist. This applies to all students whether attending full or part time basis.



All children enrolled at The Mustard Seed must pay the full rate of tuition or fees, regardless of the days absent, holidays, or extreme weather closings. This includes all illnesses including Covid-19. If your child will be absent, please notify the Center, however, there will be no deduction in fees.

Parents that apply for "The Certificate Program" will be expected to make payments to the Center until The Certificate program begins to make payments. Any difference in what The Certificate pays and what the Center charges will be due from the parent. We realize that The Certificate Program makes payment in arrears, at times resulting in an overlap in payment. Once your child is withdrawn from the Center and all final payments have been made, you will be refunded any balance on your account. This is the only way our Center can accept The Certificate as payment.

Semester Fees and Updates (Effective March 1, 2025)

1. Spring Activity/Supply/Registration Fee: This **\$175 fee** is due on or before December 1st of each year to cover registration, activities, **Ms. Cherie's Music Class**, and supplies for the spring semester (Jan. – June). This Fee is non-refundable.

2. Fall Activity/Supply/Registration Fee: This **\$175 fee** is due on or before June 1st of each year to cover registration, activities, **Ms. Cherie's Music Class**, and supplies for the fall semester (July – December). This Fee is non-refundable.

The fees will cover cost such as but not limited to: curriculum material, packets, daily notes, site visits from the Hattiesburg Zoo, Santa, Mickey Mouse, the Snow Cone and Ice Cream Truck, Petting Zoos, reading center books, playground toys and balls, craft supplies such as construction paper, paint, channel sticks, glitter, wiggle eyes, sequence, chalk, straws, markers, crayons, glue, pencils, paper plates and bags, sensory items and all types of classroom material for art and education.

Rate Structure (Effective January 1, 2025)

Tuition is due the first of the month and is considered late after the third of the month. A \$5.00 late fee will be assessed for each day your payment is late (invoices go out three days prior to being due). Beginning February 1, 2022 all payments will be submitted through the Brightwheel App., or by cash or check in the office. The ACH, Debit & Credit Card fees associated with the payments will be paid by the parents. Tumble Buggy is offered at an additional charge of \$35 a month or \$10 a week and payment made directly to Tumble Buggy.

_____ **\$755/Mo. (\$175/Wk) (9 ½ hr. day 7:30 – 5:00 M-F)**

_____ **\$695/Mo. (\$160/Wk) (9 hr. day 7:30 – 4:30 M-F)**

_____ **\$630/Mo (\$145/Wk) (8 hr. day 7:30 – 3:30 M-F)**

Holiday Closings 2025

Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Mardi Gras March 3rd, 4th, & 5th. Easter April 17th, 18th and 21st, Memorial Day May 26th, 27th, & 28th. June 19th (Juneteenth), July 3rd & 4th, July 30th, 31st, Aug. 1st (Teacher Work Days), Labor Day, Fall Break (Columbus Day) Oct 10th & 13th, Thanksgiving Nov. 26th, 27th, & 28th, Christmas Break December 23rd close at 3:30 then closed December 24th – Jan. 2nd. The center reserves the right to make additions or changes as necessary due to inclement weather, unforeseen illnesses, utility issues, or other unexpected crisis.

Burt and I would like to thank you for taking such great care of our little boy Augie. It was good to know that he was in good hands when we were not around. We can never thank you enough for the peace of mind you all gave us.

~ The Trammels

Meet Our Staff

Owner/Director
Nancy Koon, BS, MSW

Assistant Director-
Brandy Ring, BS

If an afterhour's emergency occurs, you may reach the owner at 228-697-6597.

High Standards Make the Difference!

Are you looking for a place where teachers have PASSION for education and truly care about your child? You'll find them here at The Mustard Seed Preschool & Child Care Center! Our Center is staffed by dedicated professionals who are skilled, trained, and enthusiastic about creating engaging learning environments that help children reach their highest potential. We want our students to be challenged with the most current learning environments. To do this we provide our teachers with continuing training and educational assistance. Feel free to drop by the Center or schedule an appointment to meet your child's teacher. Our staff love what they do and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have.

Committed to Excellence:

All Mustard Seed Educators and Staff:

- ✓ Meet the requirements set forth by The Mississippi State Department of Health
- ✓ Continue their education through extensive training programs provided on up-to-date child care and child development issues.
- ✓ are mentored through a 90-day education process to obtain and understand the policies, procedures, and standards of our facility.
- ✓ Participate in additional training annually to enhance the use of the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines. ABEKA and theme-based curriculums used in the classroom.
- ✓ Are encouraged and provided time to pursue higher education.

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." ~ Proverbs 22:6

Our Goals

We Strive

- ...to honor your role as a parent and to partner with you in the care and development of your child.
- ...to value your child as a unique individual to be nurtured, protected, and, loved as a child of God, and respected at all times.
- ...to employ committed, dedicated educators are caring for your child.
- ...to enable you to watch your child develop a love of learning and a rich imagination.
- ...for your child develop strong bonds with our teachers and other children.
- ...for you to share in the joy of your child's experiences in our Center through regular communication.
- ...to treat you as an important member of our family.
- ...to listen carefully and respond quickly to any questions or concerns.
- ...to show you that it is our privilege to serve your family.



Health

When to Keep Your Child at Home

In the interest of every child's well being; only healthy children will be cared for at The Mustard Seed. Please keep your child at home if he/she has vomited and/or run a fever within the last **24 hours**. We follow the guidelines that are recommended by The American Academy of Pediatrics, who recommend that a child be kept home from child care if any of the following conditions exist



Immunizations

Each child must be current on their immunizations in order to be admitted to and attend The Mustard Seed. The Mississippi State Health Department requires that each child maintain an up-to-date 121 Form recording the child's immunizations. For more information about immunizations visit the Mississippi State Health Department website.

Insurance

The center will maintain general liability insurance for accidents that occur at the center once a child is in our care.

Tobacco & Other Substances

Smoking (the use of tobacco products in any form), alcohol, or illegal drugs are prohibited on the premises at The Mustard Seed, including staff, parents, and visitors. For the health and safety of the children we ask that you, as the parent(s), honor this policy

- A child with any signs of severe illness, including fever, irritability, difficulty breathing, crying that does not stop with the usual comforting, or extreme sleepiness should not be sent to child care or school.
- A child with diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus should not attend child care or school.
- A child who vomits two or more times in **24 hours** should not attend child care or school, unless a physician feels the cause of vomiting is not an infectious disease and the child is in no danger of becoming dehydrated.
- A child with mouth sores and drooling should not attend child care or school, unless a physician or the local health department authority does not feel the condition is infectious.
- A child with fever or rash or a change in behavior should not attend school or child care, unless a physician has determined that the problem is not caused by an infectious disease.
- A child with diarrhea caused by E-coli O157:H7 or shigella that has been diagnosed by a physician should not attend child care or school. The child may not return to day care or school until two stool cultures (collected **24 hours** apart) are negative for the organisms and the child no longer has diarrhea. For shigella, the child may return if treated with an appropriate antibiotic for five days and if the child no longer has diarrhea.
- A child with conjunctivitis or "pinkeye" may not attend day care or school without being examined, treated and approved for readmission by a physician.
- A child with impetigo may not attend school or day care until **24 hours** after beginning antibiotic treatment and until the child no longer has a fever. Be sure to cover any lesions.
- A child with strep throat may not attend school or day care until **24 hours** after beginning antibiotic treatment.
- A child with head lice or nits may not attend day care or school until the first treatment has been given and approval of the Center Director.
- A child with scabies may not attend day care or school until after treatment has been completed.
- A child with chickenpox must remain out of day care or school until all lesions are dried and crusted, which is usually after about six days.
- A child with pertussis (whooping cough) must remain out of school or day care until five days of antibiotic treatment have been completed. (Treatment is to continue for a total of 14 days.)
- A child with mumps may not return to school or day care until nine days after the swelling begins.
- A child with measles must remain out of school or child care until four days after the rash begins.
- A child with Hepatitis A must remain out of school or child care until one week after the child develops jaundice (yellow skin color) or becomes ill.
- A child with tuberculosis must remain out of school or child care until the child's physician or local health department authority feels the child's condition is no longer infectious.
- A child with an illness that prevents the child from feeling well enough to participate in the usual activities and routines should not be sent to school or child care. For child care only: A child whose illness requires more care than the child care staff can provide without putting the health and safety of other children at risk should not be sent to child care.

Medication Policy

No medication of any kind will be administered at the Center by staff. If a child is on regular medication, special arrangements can be made. When there is a life-threatening circumstance that involves a child who is enrolled at the center we will utilize the following policy:

- The medication will be in the original container with the child's name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication and the written instructions for storage and administration outlined by the attending physician.
- The administrative staff and the staff directly working with the child will be informed of the proper procedure for administering the medication.
- At the time the medication is administered, the details will be documented in a log located in the Center's office.

In the interest of every child's well being; only healthy children will be cared for at The Mustard Seed. Please keep your child at home if he/she has vomited and/or run a fever within the last 24 hours.

Child Safety



Our two oldest children attended preschool at the Mustard Seed when it first opened, and continued until their graduation.

We could not have asked for a more caring, safe, educational environment for our children, and feel that they were more than prepared to start Kindergarten. Each teacher treated the children as if they were their own and there was an abundance of one-on-one learning time. We were so pleased with the quality of care and the educational experience with The Mustard Seed provided that we did not even consider anywhere else for our third child, who is currently attending the Center. The staff is warm and welcoming everyday, and is always available to discuss questions and concerns. We are EXTREMELY happy with every aspect of the care and education provided, and because of that, would not have considered any other option. Thank you!

~ Heather N. Krivanec

Providing a safe and secure child care environment is our number one priority. It's as simple as that. Whether it's the little details like wearing gloves during diaper changes to prevent germs in our classrooms, or the big ones like our electronic touch pad system — they all add up to a safe and clean environment in which you can feel every effort is being made to keep your child safe, happy, and healthy.

Secure Lobby and Classrooms.

The entrance to The Mustard Seed is equipped with a security touch pad for parents and family entry into the facility. All parents must know the PIN number to enter, while all visitors are greeted at the door to sign in and be assisted.

Visitor Precautions.

Photo identification is required from all unfamiliar visitors. A visitor listed as an authorized person to pick up a child must still show photo identification if the school director and/or associate do not know him/her. Persons designated by the parents may only pick up children.

Food & Birthdays.

Do not send children to the center with food or sippy cups. Menus are posted in the hallway of the center. If your child has a food allergy please have your physician complete an allergy form and we will provide a food supplement or you may be asked to provide the appropriate foods. When your child has a birthday parents may bring refreshments as prearranged with the office staff. Gifts may not be presented at the center. Party invitations should not be delivered at the center unless every child in the class is invited.

Equipment Safety.

Some of the many equipment precautions we take include child-sized tables that are "non-tippable" and regular monitoring of equipment, toys, and playground equipment to ensure everything remains in safe working order. Since we provide a variety of age appropriate toys we ask that no toys be brought from home unless requested by the teacher for special days such as show-n-tell. The center will not be responsible for any toys brought from home that are lost or broken while at school. The center is not responsible for injuries due to defects in toy manufacturing. At this time the center does not provide transportation for field trips but brings field trip type activities to the center.

Parental Access

During Covid-19 we no longer have the ability to allow parents or others to come and go at will. We now require that parents make appointments to meet with the staff to address your concerns. In addition appointments are needed to tour potential parents.

In your admission packet is our current Covid-19 Guidelines.

"He replied, 'Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

~ Matthew 17: 20-21

Safety Procedures



Bill and I would like to sincerely thank you for providing child care to Collin for the past 2½ years. We never had to worry and we know he loved it. He still talks about his buddies he met while at The Mustard Seed. The teachers have been loving and supportive during his many stages. We wish the business the best and hopefully will be back in the future with more children.

. ~The Snyders

Arrival and Departure

The main entrance and parking is located in the rear of the building. Upon arriving you will need to have your cell phone to scan the QR Code or use one of our iPads to sign your child in and out of the center through Brightwheel. All children will be received at the receptionist desk and the staff will escort children to their designated classroom. We are not responsible for a child who has not been left in the custody of an authorized staff member. It is normal for children to have some difficulty separating from their parents or not wanting to leave when it is time to go home. Please be brief during these transition times. A smile and cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back are all that is needed in the morning. It is our experience that once we get your child involved in the classroom activities the shorter the "cry" time. If you need to speak to your child's caregiver we ask that you schedule an appointment. Child Pick up we ask that one person enter the center and you may pick your child up at the classroom door in the hallway. All children's belongings ready to go home will be located in their cubby in the hallway. Once you have received your child, we ask that you please keep complete control of your child and assist them all the way to your vehicle. An authorized person must bring and pick up your child. Children must be accompanied by an adult (18 and older) into and out of the building. Children may not arrive before 7:30 A.M. Effective May 15, 2017 all children must be picked up by 5:15 pm. **If a child is not picked up within 5 minutes of their elected program a late fee of \$5 per minute will be assessed and paid before drop off the next day.** Every effort will be made to reach an emergency contact to pick up a child in our care. If we are not able to contact anyone to receive your child, the police or child protective services may be contacted.

The absolute deadline for dropping a child off is 8:30 A.M. we will lock the door and sanitize the entryway. This policy has been put into place for several reasons and will be strictly enforced. Our Preschool day begins at 7:45 A.M. It ensures that our classes do not get interrupted during the morning hours which can be a challenge for the teachers and children to get back on track once the interruptions are made. Please make sure you make arrangements to have your child here early.

Permission will be granted by the director for late admission for a "well check up" and dental appointment if the office was notified ahead of time about the appointment and a well excuse is given. This late admission policy will only be accepted if the child can be here by 10:30 A.M. No exceptions to this policy will be made.

Children who leave early for an appointment may not return that day. It is best to make appointments for well child care, dental, and vision in the afternoons. While you may mention appointments to the teacher you must inform the office.

If your child will be out we ask that you call and let us know along with any illness they may have this allows us to alert all staff as to what illness children have and what signs and symptoms to look for.

Emergency Procedures & Response

We are concerned and aware of our role in correctly managing situations that require first aid or emergency care. Select staff is certified in CPR and basic first aid and are trained in emergency and safety procedures. In the event of critical illness or injury that requires immediate medical attention, the following procedures will be followed:

1. EMS will be contacted to take the child to the nearest emergency room.
2. The child will be given first aid or CPR as required.
3. The physician identified on child's record will be contacted.
4. The parent will be contacted.

If an injury occurs that does not require immediate medical attention, (i.e., scrapes, bruises, bites, etc.) appropriate care and attention will be administered to the child and the parents will be called or provided an accident report when picking up their child. Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The drills will make quite an impression on your child the first time it is held. As time goes by, your child will become accustomed to the drills and will know what is expected of him/her.



Evacuation Plan

In the event that we need to evacuate the Center and move to a safe location other than the Center grounds, we will implement the following plan:

1. Protect the children by removing them from harm's way.
2. Call 911 as soon as possible.
3. Relocate to a safe area on the grounds. Should it become necessary to leave the premises, we will go the D'Iberville Public Library located on Automall Parkway. Should a further distance be required we will go to the Margaret Sherry Library on Poppo's Ferry Road. Caregiver and Sheriff Department vehicles will be utilized in these very extreme emergency conditions.
4. Place name tags on the children or write their names on their person with a marker so emergency personnel can easily identify the children, if the children are hurt, or separated from adults who know them.
5. Notify parents or emergency contact of the events and need for emergency pick-up.
6. Parents should go to the designated area as soon as possible to pick up their child.
7. Staff will remain with the children at all times and until all children have been picked up.

Inclement Weather

The Civil Defense Alert System calls The Mustard Seed in the event of a severe weather warning. During a hurricane or other severe weather conditions, parents are asked to tune to WLOX TV, K 99 FM, or WAOY 91.7 for information. The Center will follow the local City | County school closings for severe weather. If they are closed, we will also be closed

Regulations & Child Abuse Reporting

A complete copy of the Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities is available in the office for your review at any time. A summary of licensing standards is also provided in your enrollment packet. The Center is required by state law to report any incidence of suspected child abuse or domestic violence. Our first concern is the safety of your child and if we suspect he/she has been subjected to abuse, we will file a report to the proper authorities. We also have the right to refuse to release your child to you or any authorized person on the pickup sheet if we feel they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Withdrawal & Removal of Children

The first 30 days from the child's enrollment date is a trial / adjustment period for the child, parents and the provider (us). During this period either the parents or the provider may terminate care without notice. **Payment for the first 30 days is non-refundable.** After the 30 days has passed, a two-week written notice is required from either party. Should a family be in default of the two-week notice, payment is still required for the full two weeks. When two week notice is given the tuition paid will be prorated and refunded if any is due back. Two week notice must be given in all circumstances including pandemics.

Unfortunately, to protect our children, center, and staff this policy must address the most extreme circumstances. In these extreme circumstances, the center reserves the right to dismiss a child at the discretion of the director and owner without a two week written notice. Reasons such as but not limited to: destructive uncontrollable or violent behaviors, habitual tardiness in pickup of a child and lateness of payment or nonpayment. These situations will be grounds for immediate termination. This decision will always be approached carefully and prayerfully.

Programs



All Mustard Seed Curricula provides:

- ✓ activity-rich curriculum filled with hands-on science experiments, mathematical concepts, creative arts, phonics, and much more.
- ✓ individual learning opportunities and one-on-one attention when required.
- ✓ fun-filled Bible activities and character education.
- ✓ nutrition, exercise, and healthy eating & living education.
- ✓ a wide variety of learning materials arranged in learning centers.
- ✓ parent information boards provide daily information about classroom news and events.

Overview

At The Mustard Seed, we believe in the care and education of the whole child. Our curriculum provides a superior educational foundation but also introduces children to who they are in God's world, the importance of developing a good character, having healthy eating and exercising habits, and much more. The infant and one year old class utilizes the High Reach Curriculum. Our two year old class uses ABEKA and monthly themes. The three and four year olds use ABEKA and the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines. Your children will spend a morning that is filled with a wide array of learning experiences. This time will be structured to focus on specific learning objectives while allowing your child to learn in a fun-filled environment.

Miss Sarabeth "Library Lady"

Miss Kelly is also a very popular visitor at The Mustard Seed. Missy, a librarian at the D'Iberville Public Library, visits the Center once a month. She reads a story to the children, gives a very animated puppet show relating to the story, and provides other activities such as felt storyboards, and more. The children absolutely adore her. Her obvious love of reading is contagious and as a result, the children are motivated to pick books up books and explore them more frequently.

Music with Miss Cherie

The Mustard Seed is happy to enrich the curriculum with an exciting music program provided by Cherie Prentiss. Ms. Prentiss is a licensed *Kindermusik* educator and the mother of four children. She has a Bachelor's degree in Music Education and has taught *Kindermusik* classes on the Gulf Coast for the past 15 years. Music plays a vital role in the development of a young child's brain. Music classes are an excellent way for children to enhance their love of learning through music. Children participating in the music program will be introduced to the basic elements of music, learn appropriate vocal development, develop better listening skills, and be provided with movement experiences that will expand their listening and movement repertoire. Children will have the opportunity to play a variety of basic rhythm instruments such as bells, shakers, sticks, and sand blocks. They will be introduced to basic rhythm and vocal patterns. The songs and activities explored in music class will also enhance their learning and speech skills thereby reinforcing traditional preschool concepts they are being taught. Classes are offered for children ages 1 through 5 years. Lessons will occur once per week for 30 minutes each.

Tumble Buggy

The kids are crazy for Tumble Buggy!! This is a gymnastic program geared for student's age 20 months to 5 years. There is a \$35 a month fee or \$10 a week. Once a week the Tumble Buggy Bus will come to our facility and provide basic gymnastic skills. This is a great way to help develop the children's fine and gross motor skills.

Themed Activities

In addition to our regular curriculum, The Mustard Seed regularly supplements the schedule with themed activities. This provides a perfect balance of structure with an element of surprise to keep the children interested and engaged in the learning experience. For example, during fire safety month, the D'Iberville Fire Department visits the Center. The children are taken on a tour of the engine and the equipment. The firemen explain fire safety, the stop, drop, and roll concept. The children are introduced to what firemen look and sound like in their gear so they won't be frightened should they ever be in a fire. Of course, the fire truck is a big hit with the children.

A Day in the Life at The Mustard Seed



Dress For Play

When dressing your child keep in mind that we do many “messy” activities such as painting, playing outdoors, and use many “messy” things such as glue, shaving cream, paint, and markers. While we will try to keep children’s cloths free from the above sometimes we lose this battle. We play outside weather permitting so tennis shoes are best. No Flip Flops or Cowboy Boots are allowed in the center. Parents may apply sunscreen their child prior to arriving at school.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Each classroom has a parent information board that contains important information about our daily plans and routines. Each day we provide you with communication about your child’s day through the brightwheel app.. Our weekly newsletter is called Musings goes out each Friday in an email. You also will receive a monthly calendar with our weekly themes and our monthly newsletter Morsels is also sent out by email. These items are also found on the parent information board.

WHOLE GROUP TIME

Group time provides an opportunity for children to develop social skills, learn to share ideas and listen to others. With frequent opportunities for group experiences, children gain an awareness of others and a sense of group identity.

SMALL GROUP TIME

Teachers implement small group activities with a few children at a time, developing the unique interests and abilities of each child. Our teachers use the time to work individually on specific skill development.

CHILD-DIRECTED LEARNING

Child-directed play in learning centers is an important part of a young child's day. The activities they choose within the learning centers allow for exploration and discovery at the child's pace. During this learning time, teachers individualize attention by encouraging children to make choices appropriate to their needs.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Served in a family-style setting, meals and snacks are tasty, healthy, and foster valuable learning opportunities. At the table, children build social skills through casual discussion with each other and teachers. Discussions about food and nutrition teach children about healthy lifestyles. Mealtimes also provide an opportunity for children to discuss the day's events and to communicate their feelings with one another.

REST TIME

Napping in the afternoon helps children relax and prepare for more learning. The teacher is always present and children can read, draw or do a puzzle if they wake up early. After some quiet time, children are re-energized and ready to take on the remainder of the day!

OUTDOOR PLAY

Playing outdoors isn't just fun--it helps children grow and stay active and healthy. By extending classroom activities into our outdoor areas, learning takes on new meaning and involves opportunities to interact with nature.



The Mustard Seed Preschool & Child Care Center

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