

Gateway Learning Center

Parent Handbook

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A Ministry of Gateway Church

"Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it."

-Proverbs 22:6 NIV

Table of contents

| <u>Topic</u> | <u>Page #</u> |
|--|---------------|
| Mission and Statement of Faith | 3 |
| Goals, Objectives, and Philosophy | 4 |
| Programs/Curriculum and Services, Chapel | 5 |
| Pick-up Policy, Late Charges, Staff, and Admissions | 6 |
| Withdraw, Transition | 7 |
| Transition cont. | 8 |
| Transition cont., Tuition Policy | 9 |
| Tuition cont., Vacation, Attendance, Inclement Weather | 10 |
| Sick Child Policy, Medication Administration, Emergency Procedure, Nutrition Policy | 11 |
| Nutrition cont., Discipline Policy, Screen Time Policy | 12 |
| Outside Play, Change of Clothes, Quiet Time, Personal Possessions | 13 |
| Communication, Open Door Policy, Birthdays | 14 |
| Inclusion Policy | 15 |
| Handbook Confirmation Signatures | 16 |
| Holiday Schedule | 17 |

Mission Statement

Gateway Learning Center's mission is to provide quality care and early educational experiences for children in our community. To serve families and provide quality childcare through a safe and nurturing environment. Through not only instilling biblical values that will solidify a foundation, but also in quality learning that is taught according to the child's individual need. It is our hope and focus to provide care and teaching to build each child's foundation in a way that will be able to sustain them throughout the years to come, and mold them into healthy functioning members of the community.

Statement of Faith

Salvation is given by faith through our Lord and Savior.

Romans 10:9 *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Ephesians 2:8 *"For by Grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God."*

The Bible is God's word to us and reveals His will for us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart."*

The Bible is full of instruction for us to grow and become the children God created us to be. We train the children according to the morals and values outlined for us in His word.

Goals and Objectives

Goals:

- To assure parents/guardians that their children will be in a safe, healthy environment where staff will strive to meet emotional, social, and physical needs.
- To create a happy, warm and exciting environment that is inviting, comfortable, flexible, and manageable for the children.
- To promote respect for self and others, while responsibilities and social skills are both enhanced and encouraged.
- To provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that includes, but is not limited to, arts and crafts, self-directed play, field trips, dramatic play, physical activities (indoor and outdoor), community service, reading, quiet time, or offer an environment where homework is encouraged. The library, computer lab, and cooking opportunities will be provided as resources.
- To support a caring staff who show genuine respect for the children, have confidence in each child's potential, and seek to promote the self-esteem of each child.
- To offer individual guidance to children based upon careful observation of each child's needs and in keeping with parent/guardian direction.
- To accept enrollment to meet the needs of a community, while ensuring the safety and welfare of all children.
- To support and work with the children's teachers in building a stable and consistent team to promote an environment where children may learn and grow.

Objectives:

- Grow in self-confidence and self-respect.
- Enjoy learning through play and guidance.
- Enjoy playing and working with others.
- Accept and express feelings in Christ-like ways.
- Accept and appreciate the similarities and differences of others.
- Becoming a loving, helping, sharing, and giving individual.
- Respect the rights of others.
- Acquire fine and gross motors skills.
- Expand their ability to think, reason, and solve problems.
- Acquire listening skills and visual discrimination.
- Acquire better usage and understanding of our language.
- Gain good habits of health, safety and nutrition.

Philosophy:

Gateway Learning Center believes that all children are uniquely and wonderfully made in the image of God. We believe that each child must learn and grow in their own individual way, which is why our focus is on utilizing the whole child approach. Our center strives to provide each child with an excellent learning experience through creating a safe and nurturing environment, providing quality teaching experiences, and facilitating active

play interactions with peers in a positive atmosphere. Gateway Learning Center believes that each child is a gift from God and that the first years of life are the most important. Therefore, we strive to provide the best quality care to families in our community seeking childcare.

Our Programs

Our center utilizes Creative Curriculum which is a MSDE approved research-based curriculum. Creative curriculum is domain based fostering a whole child approach to learning. Lesson plans are developed weekly and include the domains of learning which are social/emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy, math, science, and arts. Bible Stories are integrated into the daily schedule.

Our **Infant/Toddler class** focuses on developing supportive, trusting relationships with teachers and class friends. We provide a safe and rich learning environment for infants and toddlers to explore and discover their world and grow to their optimal developmental domain.

Our **Two's class** will work specifically on language development, color recognition, daily routines. They will have gross and fine motor activities integrated in with daily activities, and potty-training skills to accommodate the need at home and center.

Our **Three's Class** will work specifically on number, letter, and shape recognition, social skills, and continued potty training as needed.

Our **Four's and Five's Class** is designed to build a solid foundation for successful entry into Kindergarten. Daily lessons are based upon WCPS standards and focus on letter sounds, formation, and literacy skills. Hands on activities are an integral part of this classroom to keep the children actively involved in learning. The classroom is arranged in centers that focus on art experiences, manipulative play, dramatic play, science and sensory activities, as well as children's literature.

Our **School Age Program** is designed to provide both recreational and quiet activities for children grades K-5 in elementary school. The staff catering to this age group are trained in planning programs that will incorporate homework time and as well as high energy activities.

Our Services:

Gateway Learning Center offers classes from ages 2-5 years old. Our 4-5's class are our Pre-K program, which primarily focuses on school readiness.

Before and After School Care is offered to elementary school-aged children attending Hickory, Williamsport Elementary, Fountain Rock Elementary Schools, and others in the surrounding area. Gateway DOES NOT offer transportation from these schools.

Summer camp is our school Age program offered throughout the summer for ages 6-12 yrs. Summer Camp incorporates fun learning experiences focused in STEM, and

literacy activities to keep children's summer learning loss minimal. Summer Camp also offers field trips, group game play, and center fun days to keep children excited and enjoying their summer break.

Chapel

All classes participate in weekly Chapel service's. Chapel consists of age appropriate interactive worship songs, and Bible inspired teachings. The director and/or pastoral staff will lead chapel services on Friday's 10:00-10:30 AM.

Pick-up Policy

Gateway Learning Center closes its doors at 6:30 pm. Parents are asked to make alternate arrangements for the pickup of their children by designating another individual or family member when running late. This individual MUST be on the child's emergency contact form for staff to allow pickup. Furthermore, if the child is going to be picked up by someone other than the parent, this individual must present valid ID to staff member caring for the child. If the pickup person's name is not listed on the emergency contact form, we WILL NOT release the child under any circumstances. If you are later than 30 minutes late for pickup without any communication from you or emergency pickup personnel, staff is required to report to social services.

Late Charges:

Late fees are charged for children remaining at Gateway Learning Center after closing at 6:30. Please alert the center by calling (301)582-4595 to notify staff if you are going to be late. If there is a child remaining at the center after 6:45, by law the staff is required to report child to Social Services.

*Late Charges are \$1 per minute.

*Payment of late charge must be paid at time of late pickup and given directly to the teachers closing.

Our Staff:

Our center staff are qualified through the Maryland State Department of Childcare. Each staff member has been cleared via background check thus allowing them to work in a childcare center. Gateway Learning Center is regulated by Maryland State Department of Education-Office of Childcare.

Staff members are selected for employment pending experience and education in Early Childhood Education. Staff is encouraged to pursue Early Child Care courses to further education continuously, and work toward desirable certifications. Each staff member is required to complete specific trainings mandated by state licensure regulations.

Admission Policy

Children can be admitted to Gateway Learning Center from 2 years old to 12 years old. Families are asked to arrange a tour of the facilities prior to enrolling in our school. During the tour the family will be given a registration packet. In order to register the following items must be completed and submitted to Gateway Learning Center:

- Complete Registration Form
- Complete Immunization record
- Complete Health Inventory Form
- Full payment of registration fees, and first week of tuition
- Complete Handbook Signature form
- Complete A Parent's Guide to Regulated Child Care
- Any necessary medication paperwork
- Food program application

Next Step after completing the registration packet is to call and schedule an appointment with the Director to register your child. There is a \$50 fee due at this appointment, and the parent will submit the completed registration packet at this time. Individuals who will be routinely dropping off and picking up the child are required to be there to have their fingerprint registered and ready for first day of care.

Withdrawals

Should parents decide to terminate their educational partnership with Gateway Learning Center, a written two-week notice must be given to the director. All fees must be paid in full prior to the end of the remaining two weeks. If notice is not given, the parent will be charged to the account and proper legal assistance will be pursued if necessary, to collect funds.

Transitions

Initial Transition into Center

I/We take many steps to make sure that children transition successfully into my/our program. For example, our center Director welcomes all new families by first scheduling a tour of the facility. During the tour the families are first shown the Center board which gives a visual representation of all the classrooms, teachers, and workers. The center Director then walks the families through each classroom introducing them to the teachers and staff. In addition to classrooms, they are walked through the entire facility including the kitchen, bathrooms, gym, and outdoor school areas. After touring, the next step is for the child to attend their classroom's learning time with their parent. This is however, and optional step. If the child is familiar with preschool or the parent is not interested, this step is not required. The last step of the transition from home to daycare is registration. This step requires one last meeting with the parent before the child starting. During this meeting the parent and Director will go over all required MSDE and center paperwork to ensure everything is there. The Director will additionally go over the parent handbook outlining the important policies, tuition, food program, and child information. The parent will bring in items for the child's cubby, a comfort object if needed, and family photos for the classroom family tree.

One the child's first day of care, the child and parent are completely prepared and ready for the child's first day. Teacher's will call the parent one the first day to report how the child is doing. Additionally, the center uses the KidReport app to communicate the activities throughout their child's day, as well as the child meals and toileting reports. The

parents and teachers use this tool for information and communications throughout the week.

Transition within the Center

When it is time for children to transition within my/our program, I/we make sure that the transition is a success. For currently enrolled children, who are ready to 'move up' to an older classroom, the new classroom teacher will stagger them in by arranging visits two weeks before the expected 'move up' to their new room. This is done every Fall and Spring. Additionally, we use our rainy days for classroom shift play days. On rainy days, the twos will play in the preschool room. The preschool plays in the PreK room and the PreK room plays in the after- school room. This keeps the children entertained and eliminates boredom on rainy days while allowing children to experience their new classroom. During this experience in their new classrooms, their new teachers are also present. This helps them to familiarize themselves and be more comfortable with their new classroom environments.

Transition to School Setting

Transitioning children into new programs or school settings requires careful planning. To make sure that children's transitions are successful, I/we/our children transition to each elementary school starting with the Kindergarten Spring Handout for parents. This envelopment contains a copy of each child's Health Inventory, gives dates of Kindergarten registration at their perspective elementary schools, and informs parents of other documentation needed for Kindergarten registration. Additionally, parents receive their child's portfolio, and assessment records. This allows my parents to be prepared before going to the elementary schools to register. As an added bonus, a community friend visits the center with their school bus. This help our children to familiarize themselves with riding a bus and learn bus safety.

Individuals with Special Healthcare Needs

It is important to have clear transition plans in place, particularly for children with special health care needs or disabilities. In my/our program, I/we make sure these transitions are successful by the center uses ASQ-3 assessment to screen children for developmental delays. If a child's assessment shows a developmental delay, the teacher will inform the Director. The director will set up a conference with the child's parent. At the conference, the assessment and concerns are shared with the parent's choices on intervention. The center uses the Birth to Five Program, The Thrive program at Brook Lane Services and The Pediatric Movement center to give parents choices on intervention. The Director guides parents by sharing resources such as the public library, doctor's offices, and the Maryland State Department of Education as places that can provide additional information on the developmental delay. The Director, also through email, stays in contact with the early intervention program to ensure progress is being made with the child. If parents have additional concerns and questions, the Director and teachers help find resources.

Other Information

Other information I/we have found to be helpful in ensuring successful transitions for children includes: Additionally, during transition times the teachers are very good at changing the classroom material and items around to fit the culture of the new children coming into the room.

General transition periods for children are September and January. The Director and teachers will decide the best times for transitioning children up to the next classroom based on age, availability, and potty-training needs. Any 2-year-old child must be at least partially potty trained before being transitioned into a 3-year-old classroom. Transitions will be discussed with parents before any change is made, and the child will be familiarized with the new teacher and classroom before they are fully transitioned. Director and teacher may request a parent conference if needed to facilitate the transition. PreK students transitioning to Kindergarten will be taught school readiness skills according to the Maryland standards for PreK readiness. Tuition will be reflective of classroom not age of the child. Under special circumstances pertaining to availability this may be waived per Director approval.

Tuition Policy

For our center to operate efficiently, payments must be made by their scheduled dates. We are considered a non-profit organization and the costs to run our center is not subsidized by the church.

- **Tuition payments are due the Friday prior to the week of service rendered.** Payments are considered late if payment is not made by 4:00pm on Monday evening. A \$5 late fee per week will be automatically applied to the Procure account daily if tuition is paid later than this time.
- Payments for tuition can be made by cash, check, one-time debit or credit, or automatic withdraw. If you are paying by check please make check payable to “*Gateway Learning Center*” and include your child’s name on the check and dates of service. **In the event your check is returned for insufficient funds, your account will be charged a \$35.00 NSF fee.**
- 10% multi-child, veteran, police, and Gateway church member discount when applicable.
- Non-payment for two weeks will be treated as a withdrawal. (See withdraw)
- Fees are non-transferable and cannot be transferred from one child to another for any reason.

Tuition and Required Fees

Gateway Learning Center has registration fee of \$50 which is non-refundable and is an annual fee that is due in **September at registration each year.**

***Fulltime** Tuition rates are reflective of a total **50** hours per week. Should the child's needs exceed that total, **additional charge per hour** over will be charged.

| Classrooms | Infants | 2's | 3's | 4-5's | School Age |
|------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|------------|
| Full-time | \$225 | \$185 | \$160 | \$160 | \$125 |
| PT/3 days | N/A | \$140 | \$120 | \$120 | \$75 |
| PT/2 days | N/A | \$105 | \$90 | \$90 | \$50 |

- When local Schools are closed and your child attends Gateway Learning Center for the full day or partial day, the following rates are charged:

| Drop-In Rate | Before School Only | After School Only | Before & After |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| \$45 | \$30 | \$50 | \$80 |

| Part-Time Half Day Daily Program (including PreK at no additional charge) | | |
|---|----------|--------------|
| M-F | 8AM-12PM | \$110 a week |

- Any half/day, part/time requests will be priced according to drop in rates and availability pending Director approval.
- Drop-In considers currently enrolled children.
- Gateway Learning Center offers Summer Camp during schools off season to ages 6-12.

*******Late fee of \$1 per minute late after center closing time due at pickup*******

Vacations

All families which have been enrolled and are attending Gateway Learning Center on a fulltime, 12-month basis, are entitled to a **one-week vacation** in which they are **not** required to pay normal rate of service. Parents are required to give a two-week written notice prior to the vacation period and tuition payment is required fully before that vacation time begins.

****Vacation time cannot be taken during holiday weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's; these are black out weeks for vacation.**

Attendance

Learning times differ according to individual classroom schedules, however typically run between 9:30-11:00. This structured time is very important for your child, please be mindful of this when determining drop off times. Additionally, if your child is absent for more than 2 consecutive days, please notify the center.

Inclement Weather

If there is inclement weather, Gateway Learning Center will take in consideration Washington County Public Schools closing procedures along with the safety of our children and staff. Announcements will be available by 6:00 AM the morning the morning after or of weather happenings. Gateway Learning Center text alerts are available for these times by texting the word **Daycare** to **22383**. Parents can also visit our Webpage, and Facebook page for their convenience. In the event of early dismissal, center staff will make phone calls to parents, and send messages via Kid Report, and text alert system. We ask that in the event of early school closings, that you make conscious

efforts to pick up your child as soon as possible. **Tuition payments will not be affected or changed because of any early closing or inclement weather delays/closings.**

***Late fees will be applied as normal if late picking up for an early dismissal. (\$1 per Minute)**

Sick Child Policy

Children who appear ill or feverish are taken to the office and parents are called. Parents must pick up their children as soon as possible. In the event that your child has been exposed to a contagious virus, a notice will be issued and posted in your child's classroom informing you of the illness and symptoms to look for.

If your child has a fever, diarrhea or is vomiting, they should not return to Gateway Learning Center until they have been free of these symptoms for 24 hours without medication.

Please do not bring your child to school or allow your child to attend classes if your child displays the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Yellowish eyes or skin
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)- Must be under treatment for 24 hours prior to returning to school
- Chicken pox- must remain home until all lesions are dried over
- Head lice
- Impetigo
- Runny nose with yellow or green discharge or
- Any other condition that may be deemed contagious

Medication

We realize that there are times when it is necessary for children to be administered medicine while at Gateway Learning Center. All medications must be in the appropriate prescription bottle with a dated label with child's name. Bring all medication to Gateway Learning Center office. Do not take medication into the classroom. **A medication form must be completed before we can administer medicine to children.** Over-the counter medicine can be administered, per doctors note.

Emergency Procedures

Parents are required to provide the Gateway Learning Center staff with current emergency contact information upon admission and to update annually. Any changes to emergency contact information should be given to office when they occur.

In the event of a natural disaster, proper child releasing policies will remain in effect. If a situation does arise, parents will be contacted. Your child will be kept at Gateway Learning Center until you are able to pick him/her up.

Nutrition Policy

Gateway Learning Center participates in the Child & Adult Care Food Program which allows us to provide daily meals including breakfast at 8:30 daily, lunch at times ranging from 11:15-11:45 depending upon class, and an afternoon snack following naptime at 2:30 daily. There is no cost associated with this program. There is an application that must be completed upon enrollment, and annually thereafter. A menu and nutrition guideline will be posted in the entry hallway by the Director's office, and in the cafeteria for your convenience. Parents may not bring food from home. If there are special dietary needs, the Director must be made aware of that, with medical documentation.

*Parents of Infants provide breastmilk or formula, the center provides solid food components

Discipline Policy

The purpose of discipline is to help children develop self-control and responsibility for their own actions. Teachers are responsible for interacting with children in a consistent, respectful, and positive manner. Positive statements and redirection will be used to guide children from making poor choices to better choices. Additionally, positive reinforcement will be used to redirect children towards more desirable behavior. More specifically, Gateway Learning Center uses Conscious Discipline methodology practices which is a widely used evidence and research-based practice to assist in this developmental process. The conscious skills that are taught and utilized includes composure, encouragement, assertiveness, choices, empathy, positive intent, and consequences.

Additional discipline strategies include:

- Setting clear and consistent expectations for age appropriate classroom behavior.
- Classroom teachers and children work together to develop clear and concise rules.
- Valuing mistakes as learned opportunities.
- Modeling skills that help children solve their own problems.
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors towards desirable outcomes.
- Giving children choices of ways to modify behavior or activity.
- Encouraging children to use their words and work together to solve problems.
- Guiding children in methods to resolving conflict.
- Children are offered time to reflect on their behavior.

In the event, that a child's behavior becomes consistently disruptive or harmful to others, the parents will be notified by the director. Communication may be formal or informal or done through daily teacher reports or conferences. If a conference is scheduled, the parent or teacher will discuss strategies to promote positive behavior and develop a plan for change and/or accommodations that will promote desired change. If the behavior continues or worsens after implementation of plan, a child may be asked to leave the program. With that said, it is Gateway Learning Center's intent to fully work with families and be a support to help in any way.

The Director of Gateway Learning Center has the discretionary authority to make determinations and apply these guidelines to specific situations. The Director will finalize all disciplinary action decisions.

Child Care Screen Time Policy

In order of compliance with the State of Maryland Childcare Regulations, Gateway Learning Center will only allow 30 minutes of age-appropriate, educational passive technology per week. **Md. Code Regs. 13A.17.09.01(E)(3)**
An occasional exception may be made only in the special event of a holiday, project, or special event day.

Outside Play

Outside play is a vital part of our daily program. Children will be going outside to play when the weather is acceptable meaning temperatures between 35-90 degrees. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play according to the season. Gateway Learning Center will incorporate at least one hour of active gross motor play per full day.

Change of Clothes

Parents are asked to bring one change of clothes labeled and placed in their cubby. Please be aware that your child's clothes will need to be exchanged according to the change of seasons and growth of your child. Additionally, parents are required to provide all pullups and wipes for their child. **Pull ups** must be **Velcro tab** only.

Quiet time

Children have a need for both active and quiet times. The center balances active times by incorporating a planned rest period each day from 12:30-2:30 pm. Parents are encouraged to provide a fitted sheet to cover the child's cot for sanitary purposes. Additionally, parents must supply a blanket and pillow which will be taken home at the end of every week to be washed. Additionally, children may have one soft cuddle toy for naptime. All belongings need to be labeled and taken home on Fridays to be cleaned.

Personal Possessions

Gateway Learning Center is not responsible for any lost or stolen items brought to school. It is recommended that toys are not brought in. Your help and cooperation with this is greatly appreciated.

Communication

Gateway Learning Center believes that communication with parents is an important part of our educational partnership. Regular notices of events, menus or other materials are posted throughout the center, reported through Kid Reports, and typically sent home with each child. Any communication regarding your child's progress will be sent through Kid Reports, and/or a note sent home to the parents. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's progress and/or behavior, please first discuss with classroom teacher directly. If at any time you feel that your concerns are not being addressed appropriately please contact the director.

If at any time you have a concern with your child's teacher, please do not discuss the concerns in the classroom or in the presence of the children. Set up a scheduled conference with the director.

***Please make sure to have the Kid Reports app downloaded on your cell phone for daily reports.**

Open Door Policy

You are always welcome to stop in and observe your child's progress and interaction in the classroom.

Please be mindful that we do observe a 2-hour rest time everyday beginning between 12:30-2:30.

Birthdays

For birthday celebrations, cupcakes may be brought in during snack to share with the class. Please let your child's teacher know if you are planning to bring in anything special.

Gateway Learning Center

Inclusion Policy

Gateway Learning Center does not discriminate against anyone based on religion, sex, gender, race, color, national and/or ethnic origin or disability.

All students of Gateway Learning Center will participate in an annual developmental screening. Should any concerns arise after the screening, we will partner with parents and local referral agencies to ensure your child's needs are being met.

We welcome children of all abilities including those with special healthcare needs. If your child has an IEP/IFSP please provide a copy to the director to ensure that appropriate accommodations/modifications are met. Additionally, if your child has a special healthcare need please be forthcoming in communicating that need to the Director and teacher to facilitate appropriate communication and accommodations.

Please sign and detach this page and return to director

Please READ and SIGN:

I have read the policies in the Gateway Learning Center Parent Handbook and understand their application to me and my child.

Parents Signature: _____

Date: _____

Photo Release Permission Slip

As a parent or guardian of this student, I hereby consent to the use of photographs/videotape taken during the course of the school year for publicity, promotional and/or educational purposes (including publications, presentation or broadcast via newspaper, internet or other media sources). I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use, or for damages.

Yes, I give consent for Gateway Learning Center to photograph my child for school purposes and/or at school events.

No, I do not authorize Gateway Learning Center to photograph for my child for any event.

Child's Name: _____

Parents Name: _____

Parents Signature: _____

Date: _____

Holiday Schedule 2020

The following holidays will be observed by Gateway Learning Center:

New Year's Day; Wednesday, January 1st, 2020

President's Day; Monday, February 17, 2020

Good Friday; Friday, April 10th, 2020

Memorial Day; Monday, May 25th, 2020

Independence Day; Friday, July 3th, 2020

Labor Day; Monday, September 7th, 2020

Thanksgiving Day; Thursday, Nov. 26th, 2020

Black Friday; Friday, Nov. 27th, 2020

Christmas Eve, Thursday, Dec. 24th, 2020

Christmas Day, Friday, Dec. 25th, 2020

******Tuition payments will remain the same during the Gateway Learning Center closings.******

******Tuition payments have been set with closings in mind and will remain the same each week. ******

*****If the scheduled holiday falls on a weekend, the center will either observe the Friday before or Monday after, holiday closings will be posted on door for your convenience. *****