

MALBERG
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



HOME OF THE CUBS

Family Handbook

2024 - 2025



2024 - 2025 Family Handbook

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PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME:

Dear Parents and Friends of the Malberg School,

Welcome to the Malberg Early Childhood Center! Our mission is to provide your children with the best possible educational opportunities within a stimulating and nurturing environment. Our instructional program is based on the belief that all young children can learn in an atmosphere that encourages and respects individuals while fostering curiosity, spontaneity, skill development, and the building of a positive self-image.

We are a full-day program and use the Creative Curriculum for Preschool and the Second Step curriculum in our general education and self-contained classrooms. We are very proud to offer a broad continuum of services at the Malberg Early Childhood Center. In both our preschool general education and self-contained classes, we strive to tailor our instructional programs to meet the needs of our students. Our dedicated staff is committed to providing every student the opportunity to reach their potential.

We strongly encourage you to become involved in our school community by joining our Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Through the PTA, you will have the opportunity to support the planning of many schoolwide activities for students and assist with various events throughout the school year.

The entire staff at Malberg is eager and enthusiastic about working with your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 856-429-7283 or dedwards@chclc.org. You may also get additional information about our school through our website at <https://www.chclc.org/ecc>.

I look forward to working with you!

Respectfully,

Danyelle Edwards

Danyelle Edwards, Principal



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ATTENDANCE:

Like all Cherry Hill schools, Malberg ECC maintains high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance and punctuality enable students to benefit from well-planned and well-delivered instructional activities, including classroom discussions, presentations, and cooperative activities. These shared academic experiences are integral to the learning process and cannot be recreated or replicated. In order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefit for each child, the process of education requires continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study.

TARDY: A child not in the classroom by 9:40 AM is considered late. When your child is going to be tardy, please call the Malberg ECC absentee line at 856-429-7283 (select prompt 1). Students, who are tardy for school, should report to the main office upon arrival.

ABSENCE: When your child is going to be absent, please call the Malberg ECC absentee line at 856-429-7283 (select prompt 1). It will be necessary for school staff to call home and/or work if a note or a phone call from a parent/guardian does not verify a child's absence. Also, if your child is transported by bus, please notify transportation @ (856) 489-5851 that your child does not need to be picked up.

A note with a parent's/guardian's signature explaining the nature of the absence is requested upon the first day of return. Students who are absent because of a communicable or infectious disease must return with a note of re-admission from a physician.

TRUANCY/EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM: Referrals for truancy, or excessive absenteeism *may be* made to the District Attendance Compliance Officer, who will investigate the nature and cause of the attendance patterns and take the appropriate action.

SCHOOL HOURS:

The hours at Malberg ECC School are as follows:

- 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Early Dismissal Schedule:

- 9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Delayed Opening Schedule:

- 11:30 AM - 3:30 PM



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STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICK-UP:

- Drop-off and pick-up for the 2024-2025 school year will be at Door 4.
- Please remember that arrival time is 9:30 AM and dismissal time is 3:30 PM. In order to allow all students the full educational opportunity of this program, we ask that parents adhere to the drop-off and pick-up times.
- Parents are to remain with and supervise their children until the children have been signed in.
- Parents or designees must show a photo ID when picking up a child. This will be matched to the names identified in Genesis.
- Any child arriving after 9:40 AM is considered late and must be escorted, through the main (front) entrance, by a parent/guardian to be signed in.

No access will be permitted to the parking lot from 9:00 am - 9:45 am and 3:00 pm - 3:45 pm. Parents or designees must park on Winston Way and escort children to Door 4. **Please do NOT block residential driveways, use the handicapped spaces without proper decals, park in the fire lane, or in the designated NO PARKING section of Winston Way.** Please hold your child's hand as you walk them from the car to the building and use the crosswalks provided for your safety.

Dismissal at Malberg is a busy time with a lot of children, parents, and assistants in the hallways and sidewalks. For safety, please hold your child's hand as you walk them to and from the building each day.

In past years some parents have gathered in front of the school after pick-up and permitted their children to run and play on the lawn directly in front of the school. **As a safety measure, parents are asked not to allow their children to run and play in front of the school. As always, the playground is open to the community during daylight hours, but not when school is in session from 8:15 am - 3:45 pm.**

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE/2-HOUR DELAYED OPENING:

If adverse weather conditions cause the cancellation of school, the District emergency phone system will be activated to provide automated phone messages to the primary phone number you provided. Word of the closing will also be sent to local Philadelphia radio (KYW 1060) and television stations (Comcast-19 and FIOS-24) for announcement. Each school district is assigned a code number; Cherry Hill's code number is **551**. When determining your child's amended bus stop pick-up time, simply add two hours to the regularly scheduled time.

Closing school early due to inclement weather is avoided as much as possible. However, please discuss your family's emergency plan just in case safety dictates an unanticipated early dismissal. We will attempt to make contact with parents/guardians through our automated telephone service. Children whose parents/ guardians cannot be reached will remain at school until an emergency adult contact is notified.



TRANSFERS/WITHDRAWALS:

Please contact the office as soon as possible when planning to move; we will provide you with information on how to proceed to make the transfer as smooth as possible.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM:

The Malberg Early Childhood Program in Cherry Hill is a preschool that services both typically developing and special needs children, ranging in age from three to five years old. The program services about 300 children, approximately 62% of whom are children with special needs. The teachers at the Malberg Early Childhood Center are Dual Certified by the New Jersey Department of Education in both preschool and special education. The goal of our program is to provide our students with an exceptional early childhood learning experience. Our standards-based curriculum is designed to help children reach their potential with individualized support, as needed.

Early Childhood Education classes at Malberg offer a variety of programs that are designed to meet the specific needs of each child. Our highly trained teaching staff involve the children in numerous activities that focus on developing the following areas: sensory integration, fine and gross motor skills, social skills, cognitive abilities as well as language skills. Teachers and specialists utilize a multi-sensory approach when teaching concepts and skills.

Children with Individualized Educational Plans may receive additional interventions specific to their individual educational needs. These may include speech and language therapy, as well as physical and occupational therapies. These therapies are delivered by state-certified personnel, who are housed full-time at the Malberg Early Childhood Center.

The Malberg Early Childhood Center staffs a full-time Child Study Team. The CST includes a school social worker, a learning disabilities consultant, and a school psychologist. The teaching staff and specialists, along with the Child Study Team, work as a cohesive team, to best meet the needs of our children.

Program Offerings

Children may be recommended for placement in one of our programs depending on their specific educational needs. The Malberg Early Childhood program provides a continuum of services for our special education population. These include:

Preschool General Education (Inclusion)

These classes meet for 6 hours per day, five days per week. One certified teacher, two educational assistants, and one-on-one aides, as needed, according to Individualized Education Plans, instruct each class. Teachers in this program utilize the Creative Curriculum for Preschool. These multi-age (3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds) classes are capped at 15 children. The ratio of typically developing children to children with special needs is generally 3:2.



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Self-Contained Preschool Disabled

These classes meet for 6 hours per day, five days per week. One certified teacher, three educational assistants, and one-on-one aides, as needed, according to Individualized Education Plans, instruct each class. Teachers in this program utilize the Creative Curriculum for Preschool and eclectic instructional strategies, including Applied Behavior Analysis, Verbal Manding, Play Skills Development, and Sensory Support. These multi-age (3-, 4- and 5-year-olds) classes are capped at 12 children.

Therapy Integration

Self-regulation and/or adult-assisted regulation are needed for students to participate and progress in a school environment. To help increase a student's attention and focus for engagement and play, some of the following strategies may be used. These strategies are only used with students who have an Individualized Educational Plan and the teacher will inform you if these items are being incorporated into your child's program:

- Weighted materials, such as weighted blankets, vinyl stuffed animals, hats, lap pads, weighted kettlebells, pushing weight carts, and weighted backpacks.
- Vibration materials, such as a vibrating cushion, a vibrating noodle, and a vibrating toothbrush.
- Deep pressure and movement...such as massage, squeezing hands with or without wiggling arms, and stress balls.
- Tactile materials, such as lotions (to be sent from home), cold therapy, and chewing items

The following items may be used without parent notification:

- Flexible seating options, such as t-stools, seat cushions, therapy balls, rocking chairs, and tactile containers.

Resource

Push-in service for students with IEPs provides additional support within the classroom setting.

Encore Classes

Physical Education

Each class receives Physical Education, from a certified P.E. teacher, twice per week.

Malberg's Population of Typically Developing Children

Malberg's population of typically developing children is determined through an application process in February of each year. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats, a selection process is held to determine enrollment.



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REPORTING PROGRESS:

Parent-teacher conferences are the primary means by which to inform parents of a child’s progress in school.

Malberg ECC is committed to effective communication between students, teachers, and parents. Conferences will be held once a year. Additional conferences may be initiated, as needed, by parents or teachers throughout the year. If you think your child is experiencing academic, social, or emotional issues, please do not wait for the regularly scheduled conferences—contact your child’s teacher as soon as possible.

Please note that arrangements for conferences should be made in advance. Upon arrival for a scheduled conference, please report to the main office. When the need arises to informally contact the teacher, email and voicemail are the most expedient.

- December 9, 2024** – *Early Dismissal for Students* – Conferences held from 2 pm - 4 pm
- December 10, 2024** – *Early Dismissal for Students* – Conferences held from 6 pm - 8 pm
- December 11, 2024** – *Early Dismissal for Students* – Conferences held from 2 pm - 4 pm
- December 12, 2024** – *Early Dismissal for Students* – Conferences held from 6 pm - 8 pm
- December 13, 2024** – *Early Dismissal for Students* – Staff Professional Development

REFERRAL SERVICES:

How is a student referred for a Child Study Team Evaluation?

Students between the ages of 3 and 21, suspected of having an educational disability, may be referred to the Child Study Team for an evaluation by a variety of sources but generally, they come from one of the following:

- 1. PARENTS:** Parents may request a Child Study Team Evaluation by contacting the Principal or Case Manager at their child’s school and forwarding the request in writing three months before their third birthday.
- 2. ADMINISTRATORS or OUTSIDE AGENCIES:** The Principal or other building administrator or an individual from an outside agency (doctor, social worker, etc.) may refer a student for a Child Study Team Evaluation.

Who are the members of the Child Study Team?

The New Jersey Department of Education requires that the Child Study Team include a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher consultant, and a school social worker. These professionals are all certified and employed directly by the Cherry Hill Board of Education.



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What is the procedure after the referral is made?

Once the referral has been made the Case Manager has twenty (20) days to schedule an Identification Meeting. The necessary personnel expected to attend this meeting include a social worker, psychologist, learning disabilities teacher consultant, classroom teacher, speech & language specialist (if the suspected disability included that area or the child was age 3-5), and certainly the parent.

Are students automatically tested if the request is made?

No. Once a request for a Child Study Team evaluation is made, an Identification Meeting must be scheduled. At that meeting, it is determined if a Child Study Team Evaluation is warranted. If so, an Evaluation Plan is developed.

What is the procedure if the student is going to be tested?

Once it is determined that testing is necessary, an assessment plan is developed and the parent/guardian gives written permission. The district then has ninety (90) days to complete the necessary evaluations. Within the ninety (90) days, an Eligibility Conference is scheduled where the evaluations are interpreted and it is determined if the student is eligible for special education and/or related services.

If a student is eligible does that mean he or she will be in a special education class?

Absolutely not. Before a student receives services, an Individual Education Program must be developed and agreed to. The Cherry Hill Public Schools offer a full continuum of service delivery options for students with disabilities, and consideration is always first given to general education programs.

How do I know if I need to refer my child?

If combinations of the following behaviors are observed, and are affecting the child’s ability to interact with others and/or are interfering with the child’s ability to learn age-appropriate skills, a referral should be made.

Poor coordination	Visual difficulty	Over-reaction to noise	Inability to process information
Toe walking	Hearing difficulties	Delayed speech and language	Dislike being touched
Inability to use hands to manipulate toys	Inability to recall a sequence of sounds or words	Limited vocabulary	Inappropriate loss of emotional control
Excessive clumsiness	Difficulty following directions	Disorganized expressive language	Distractibility



CHILD STUDY TEAM SERVICES:

The Child Study Team (CST) is a group of specialists employed by the Cherry Hill School District to provide consultative, evaluative, and prescriptive services to teachers, parents, and students. The CST, along with the school principal, makes recommendations for programs and placements that best address the unique needs of students who experience school-related difficulties.

HEALTH SERVICES:

Mrs. Setchel, our school nurse, is available if your child becomes sick or injured during the school day. Parents will be notified if the situation cannot be remedied by simple first aid. It is very important that all the information in Genesis is correct so that parents can be contacted promptly in an emergency. If any of the contact information changes, particularly parents'/guardians' work numbers, please notify the school nurse and the main office of the new number so that we may reach you when you are needed.

For the protection of your child and his/her classmates, your child should be *kept home* if he/she shows **ANY of these symptoms:**

- **HAVE VISIBLE NASAL SECRETIONS OR COUGH**
- **COMPLAINTS OF SORE THROAT, EARACHE, STOMACH ACHE, HEADACHE, AND/OR CHILLS**
- **DID NOT EAT DINNER, BREAKFAST OR SLEEP, AS USUAL**
- **HAS HAD BOWEL MOVEMENTS DIFFERENT THAN USUAL**
- **RASH**
- **FEVER REQUIRING MEDICINE YESTERDAY or LAST NIGHT**
- **EYELIDS STUCK TOGETHER WHEN WOKEN UP**
- **NOT THEMSELVES BECAUSE THEY ARE OVER-TIRED OR GETTING SICK**

Young children have immature immune systems. Sending a child to school when he/she is not themselves may delay his/her recovery and/or spread the infection to other children. **Before returning to school, it is necessary to be symptom & fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours.** Please contact our school nurse, Heidi Setchel at 856-429-7283 ext. 4012 or hsetchel@chclc.org. If you have any questions regarding whether your child should stay home from school.

IMMUNIZATIONS

IMPORTANT NOTE: FLU SHOT MANDATED!

The State of New Jersey has mandated that all preschool students under 59 months receive a Flu Shot prior to **December 31, 2024**. Students who are not in compliance with this mandate **are to be excluded** from school beginning on **January 2, 2025**. Please schedule an appointment for a flu shot with your pediatrician early to be assured that there is adequate supply for your child.



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A Board of Education regulation requires that whenever it is necessary, in exceptional cases, for a child to take medication during school hours, the medication, even over-the-counter, must be prescribed by a physician and arrangements must be made through the office of the school nurse to complete a form for administration of medicine.

The school must be informed of any special health problems that a child may have (allergies, asthma, diabetes, rheumatic heart, etc.) so that proper steps can be taken to ensure adequate care in emergency situations.

School personnel may not provide students with Tylenol or any medication whatsoever, except as stated above. Students may not bring aspirins, vitamins, or any medications (whether un-prescribed or prescribed for short-term illnesses) to school.*

***Parent/Guardian must bring medicine to the Nurse. DO NOT SEND MEDICINE ON THE BUS, IN A CUP, OR IN BACKPACKS.**

Please practice these self-care skills with your preschooler:

- Washing hands – back, front, and in-between fingers; sing Happy Birthday twice to ensure long enough time (approx. 30 seconds)
- Recognizing a cough, sneeze, or runny nose
- Blowing nose and disposing of tissue in trash
- Covering mouth for cough or sneeze and washing hands

On the rare occasion that a child comes to school with head lice, the parents of the children in the classes exposed will be notified by the Nurse.

Physical exams are required of all new enrollees as well as students in kindergarten. Physicals must be completed by the student's family physician.

Your child will be screened yearly for height, weight, blood pressure, sight, and hearing. Deviations from the norm will be screened a second time. If deviation is noted again, the parent will be notified.

Thanks for remembering this is a Peanut/Nut Free School. 

When sending in snacks to the classroom, we request that **you do not send any products that say "CONTAIN" OR "MAY CONTAIN" peanuts and tree nuts**. We must keep the classrooms "peanut/tree nut free". Close proximity to peanuts can cause severe life-threatening problems for some of these students.



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CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT:

Any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect must be reported immediately to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (formerly The Division of Youth and Family Services). Failure of a staff member to make a report is a violation of the law. All information is kept confidential. The building principal, school nurse, and school counselor have further information relating to this process.

STUDENT DRESS:

- Be sure that your child's clothing is comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing. **SNEAKERS OR CLOSED-TOE RUBBER-SOLED SHOES ARE BEST!** PLEASE, NO **CROCS** or **FLIP FLOPS**.
- The children are learning to be independent with their clothing. Please use clothing that is "kid" friendly.
- We also work with messy materials almost every day: paint, glue, markers, chalk, etc. We encourage the children to participate and explore materials freely.
- We go outside on all days except when it is raining.
- You will be asked to send in a change of clothing to be kept in the classroom. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's first and last name.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION OR BULLYING (HIB):

Per the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-24) and Board policy 5131, the Cherry Hill Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or physically aggressive behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in an emotionally and physically safe and disciplined environment.



TRANSPORTATION/BUS SAFETY:

Transportation provided by Cherry Hill Board of Education is a privilege, and as such, proper bus behavior is expected and required. Two bus evacuation drills are scheduled during the school year.

Students must ride the bus to which they have been assigned. Additionally, the following is expected:

Be Safe — Be Respectful — Be Responsible	
Be Safe	Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
	Keep the aisle clear
	Remain in your assigned seat
	No open food/eating
Be Respectful	Obey Bus Driver’s Instructions
	Use appropriate language
	Treat others with kindness and respect
Be Responsible	Report problems
	Use indoor voice

STUDENT RECORDS:

Your child’s records contain only information that is relevant to their education and is objectively based on personal observation or knowledge of the originator of the record. Parents and children have a right to individual privacy and the right to know concerning information gathered by the school. If you wish to see your child’s records, you may do so by making an appointment with the principal’s office.

CELEBRATIONS:

Throughout the school year, classes have opportunities to celebrate various occasions. However, class festivities are limited to the following events:

- Halloween parade/parties
- Winter celebrations
- End-of-year celebrations

Researchers estimate that up to **15 million** Americans have food allergies. This potentially deadly disease affects 1 in every 13 children (under **18** years of age) in the United States. That's roughly **two** in every classroom. And it’s critical to note that these statistics would suggest that there are many children with food allergies who have yet to be diagnosed.



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On a related note, we are bound by federal and state guidelines and District policy, which prohibit us from allowing:

- foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations;
- all food and beverage items listing sugar, in any form, as the first ingredient; and
- all forms of candy.

Consequently, in response to the need to keep all of our children safe and remain in compliance with state and federal regulations, Malberg ECC has taken the progressive stance of not allowing candy or food to come in for birthdays and holidays.

To avoid hurt feelings and distractions from the education process, invitations to **birthday parties** may not be distributed in school.

VISITORS:

As mentioned previously, parents are always welcome to visit Malberg ECC, but as a matter of courtesy, the classroom teacher should be notified in advance and the volunteer form in Genesis must be completed. All Malberg ECC visitors must sign in at the main office for all school business, including the delivery of items, when picking your child up early, and/or to see a staff member.

Consistent with all schools in the District, we require all parents/guardians/family members to present photo identification and the student identification number of their child before being admitted to our school.

All other visitors, including alumni, must establish an appointment before arriving at Malberg ECC and will be required to present photo identification to be admitted to our school.

Once checked in, we ask that you wear a visitor's pass lanyard at all times while in the building so that our students and staff know that you have been "cleared" by the main office.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

It is essential for your child's health and safety that the school has a local telephone number of someone who is to be contacted, and who is available to pick up your child, in the event of illness, injury, or an emergency early dismissal. Parents/guardians are reminded that if at any time they change their home, work, or emergency phone numbers or contacts, the school nurse and main office should be notified immediately.



EMERGENCY DRILLS:

There will be two emergency drills conducted per month as required by state statute; one fire drill and one school security drill (evacuations, lockdowns, etc.). The purpose of all drills is to regularly practice emergency protocols so they become second nature to both our staff and students. In all cases, the nature of the drill will be tactfully and sensitively discussed with the children, in age-appropriate terms, prior to each drill.

PARENT INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION:

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The educational welfare of our children is best served when there is mutual understanding and cooperation between the home and school. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled once during the school year in the fall. Additional conferences may be initiated, as needed, by parents or teachers throughout the year. If you think your child is having a problem or you have a concern about his or her progress, please do not wait for the regularly scheduled conferences—call your child’s teacher or the case manager (if applicable) as soon as possible. Parents are urged to utilize parent conferences to establish active communication that will assist in the progress of their child.

CHERRY HILL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Our weekly parent newsletter is shared every Friday with families via the email address that is on file in Genesis. It is important your contact information is updated to receive this communication weekly.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The Malberg Early Childhood Center has an active Parent Teacher Association. The Malberg PTA meets monthly to plan school-wide activities and other family events. Our 2024-2025 PTA governing board is currently being formulated. Please contact Crystal Lucas (clucas@njpta.org) if you have any PTA questions and/or are interested in joining.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA:

The Cherry Hill Public School District and each of its schools have recently introduced a new web presence that boasts extensive resources that can be accessed at www.chclc.org. We encourage you to visit often to review. Additionally, the school website provides a dynamic calendar of events, so please be sure to come back often.

As another mode of communication, Estelle V. Malberg Early Childhood Center maintains a presence on Twitter. Links are provided on the school’s homepage.



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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:

The Building Affirmative Action Officer is:

Tanya Myers, Resource Teacher

1220 Winston Way

Cherry Hill, NJ 08034 (856) 429-7283

The District Affirmative Action Officer is:

Carole Roskoph

Lewis Administration Building

45 Ranoldo Terrace

Cherry Hill, NJ 08034 (856) 429-5600

The District 504 Officer is:

Shavonne Carter

Lewis Administration Building

45 Ranoldo Terrace

Cherry Hill, NJ 08034 (856) 429-5600

SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

The following are policies are mandated to be included in parent handbooks. For a complete directory of Cherry Hill Board of Education policies, please visit the district's website, www.cherryhill.k12.nj.us. If you do not have internet access, paper copies are available in the school office.

The policy link is [here](#).