



## Master Mind Parent Handbook



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## Our Mission

Our mission here at Master Mind is to empower the minds of young children so that they can grow and develop positively while exploring the world around them. This exploration is encouraged through the lessons taught in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (S.T.E.A.M.). S.T.E.A.M. Curriculum is geared towards each particular age group allowing your child to learn at their own pace. The young minds of children are like sponges, and they are easily able to absorb this information which ultimately prepares them for a well-rounded future.

## Our Philosophy:

At Master Mind Daycare we believe that children learn and perform their best when they are having fun and engaging in playful yet stimulating educational activities. Our family environment is warm, welcoming, nurturing, and secure. We are your home away from home and you will feel that way when leaving your little ones in our care. Our loving atmosphere encourages children to perform to their optimal potential. We instill life skills that will allow your child to thrive inside of the classroom and beyond. We are a family, and we cater to each child to fulfill their individual needs.

## Curriculum

Our curriculum is geared to encourage children to further develop their inner Master Mind. Learning and growth occur through play, exploration, and discovery. The Master Mind program caters to the physical, cognitive, and social and emotional development of our little ones. Confidence and a sense of self is key in life and we ensure that our children engage in activities and lessons that promote high self-esteem and emotional awareness. Every day is filled with both child directed, and teacher directed activities which promote leadership skills, teamwork, and individuality. These concepts allow children to flourish in their lives and future careers. Discovery and exploration provide the foundation for a fun learning experience. We know that learning starts at a young age and the concepts that we grasp early in life have the ability to impact our development in a positive way and stay with us for a lifetime. We are dedicated to the growth of your child and committed to your family. You are always welcome to stop in and talk to our children about your career, culture, or a fun topic associated with our lesson plan. We encourage parent involvement and would like to work as a team. We welcome you with open arms and are excited that you have made the decision to join Master Mind Daycare. Our goal is to nurture your child and encourage them to discover their hidden potential and talents.

## Qualifications

April Ryans is a mom and the founder of Master Mind. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ where she studied subjects relating to infants and child development, adolescent development, conditioning and learning, and motivation and emotion. She then got her Master's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix and ventured into the corporate world. Before founding Master Mind, April worked as a Project Manager for 15 years. Although she enjoyed the work and was skilled at her job, she longed to be a part of something meaningful and fulfilling. She wanted to make a difference in the lives of others and know deep down inside that she was positively impacting them. She knew that she was being called to do something more with her life. Through Master Mind, April can live out her lifelong dream of providing an enriching and educational environment that will positively impact students encouraging them to live up to their optimal potential. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling where she has studied Child and Adolescent Counseling along with cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness techniques that aid in developing the curriculum at Master Mind Daycare. She uses her background and education to encourage positive interactions in our little ones and to foster further development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills.

April is certified in the following CPR and 1<sup>st</sup> Aid along with Basic Health and Safety

All Daycare employees receive criminal background and fingerprinting clearance from the state of Maryland as well as any other state they have lived in for the past 5 years.

## Hours of Operation

Master Mind is open from 7:30am to 5:30pm Monday through Friday

We ask that children are dropped off no later than 9am so that each child is able to give their undivided attention and completely focus on the activities and lesson plan for the day. Please call ahead if you have a family matter or doctor's appointment so that we can make proper arrangements. Nap time is from 1pm to 3pm and we ask that children are not picked up during this time to ensure that all children are able to recharge and refresh their minds for the day ahead. No childcare will be provided on the following holidays and vacation days:

## Holiday Closings

Martin Luther King Day  
Presidents Day  
Easter  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Indigenous People's Day  
Veterans Day  
Thanksgiving Holiday  
Winter Break

Holiday Calendar (with actual dates) is handed out annually.

## Vacations

2 weeks' vacation

Vacation calendar (with actual dates) is handed out annually.

All holidays and vacations are included in weekly tuition in order to hold child's spot. Please note that Master Mind reserves the right to add and make changes to the holiday and vacation calendar and will give 1 month written notice in the event of any changes.

## Inclement Weather Closings

If the governor declares a state of emergency Master Mind will be closed. If a state of emergency is declared during normal operations families will be called to pick up their children as soon as possible to ensure that children, parents, and staff can make it home safely. When other types of inclement weather occur, it is always up to Master Mind's discretion if the daycare will remain open, have an early dismissal, or close for the day. We always make decisions considering the safety of our children, parents, and staff.

## Master Mind Tuition and Enrollment

Annual Enrollment Fee: \$155 per child

Weekly Rate Infants through 5 years old: \$294 per week

Enrollment fee is paid upon initial enrollment and annually in May to hold your child's spot.

### Payment:

Monthly or weekly auto pay via credit card or ACH is required on our Pro Care Application. Families have the option of making monthly or weekly payments. Weekly tuition payments should be paid on or before the Friday preceding childcare by 5pm. Monthly tuition should be paid on or before the last day of the month preceding childcare.

Please remember that weekly and or monthly payments reserve your child's spot. A reduction in payment will not be made for absences, illness, holidays, vacations (with the exception of 1 free week of vacation after 1 year of care at Master Mind), or unforeseen emergencies

### Late Fees:

Tuition must be paid to date and current in order for your child to receive childcare services. A \$50 late fee will occur if tuition is not paid by the due date on Master Mind invoices.

All Payments are Non-Refundable

### Returned Check Policy:

Payment via credit card or ACH is preferred however if making a payment via check there will be a \$35.00 charge for any returned checks. If there are two returned checks within a 6-month period a different form of payment will be required moving forward.

### Drop Off/Pick Up

Each child must exit the home with the authorized pickup person. Playing near the street or near vehicles is not allowed at any time. Master Mind assumes responsibility for each child only while the child is on Master Mind property at 161 Powhatan Street Havre De Grace, MD 21078. No child will be allowed to leave with anyone except the authorized individuals on the pickup list. Proof of identification is required if a staff member is unfamiliar with the child's authorized pick-up person. Please make the alternate pick up person aware of these requirements.

### Late Pick Up Fees:

Late fees will be applied after 5:30pm and will be assessed at \$25.00 for every 15-minute increment. A five-minute grace period is provided to all families during pick up time. Please have consideration and call ahead if lateness is expected. After three late charges are applied, a conference will be held to review contract times.

### Court Order

If there is a court order keeping one parent or guardian away from the child, a copy of that order from the custodial parent or guardian must be provided. Otherwise, Master Mind cannot prevent the non-custodial parent from picking up the child.

### Sick/Vacation Days

In the event that your child is ill and needs to miss a day, please call as soon as possible. If I am not able to care for the children for an unexpected reason a qualified substitute will care for the children in my place. All employees receive fingerprinting and background checks and are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) ensuring high quality care for your child. I take 2 weeks vacation each year and will inform you a month in advance so you may find alternate arrangements for your child. After being enrolled with us for one year each family may also take one week of vacation each year without paying weekly fees.

### Notice of Termination:

Parents are required to give two (2) weeks written notice when deciding to terminate childcare. The two (2) weeks must be paid in full, regardless of whether the child is in attendance.

## Inclusion Policy and Transition Plan

Our desire is to provide a safe and secure environment which encourages all children to develop to their full potential. There will be no discriminatory practice or attitude on the grounds of race, ethnic and national origin, sex, marital status, domestic circumstances, disability, sexual orientation, class, religion, or political beliefs. We welcome any child as far as our physical setting allows. This includes children with special needs as well as children with special healthcare needs. We also welcome specialist such as OT and PT to work with children while they are in our care. If providing care is not within our means (care would require a burden of cost that is not within Master Mind's best interest or ability), we may decline service. We welcome all children and are committed to providing a fully inclusive setting.

We will work with children who have Individualized Education Plans or Individualized Family Service Plans. We ask that your family provide us with a copy of this plan so that we can work together for the benefit of the child. We communicate every step of the way and ask that you do the same to ensure that each child is able to progress in their own way.

We will work with your family to encourage your child to transition into our daycare in the most positive way. Exposure to fun, stimulating, and educational environments is something that we encourage here at Master Mind. We also know how important it is for our little ones to socialize with one another and make lifelong friends. We welcome scheduled appointments where your child can meet our staff members, tour our classroom, and even play to ensure that they feel comfortable on their first day.

## Pets

We have two cats, Pinky and Pepper, who are twin girls. They stay upstairs in their bedroom but are kid friendly lovable creatures.

## Emergencies

Fire Drills are practiced on a monthly basis. Emergency Disaster Drills are practiced twice per year.

## Positive Guidance



Our discipline policy is encouraged through positive guidance. We are dedicated to cultivating the Mind, Body, and Playful Spirit of each child through enriching experiences. Positive behavior is encouraged through redirection in order to quickly change focus and garner a young child's attention. Rewards are provided daily to praise and reinforce positive behavior. Rewards that are used can include coin systems, sticker charts and selecting an item out of our treasure box in order to encourage and reinforce positive behavior. We work together with our little ones to develop clear rules and to set guidelines and expectations.

Our curriculum instills social and emotional skills which assist children in identifying and expressing their feelings in a positive way. Children want to feel independent and in control. We cater to this need by providing our little ones with choices. A simple choice like "would like to play with the blocks or with the Legos", "would you like to play with friends or play alone", "would you like milk or water" allows children to feel both in charge and in control. If undesirable behavior occurs redirection is always key. Modeling is also taught in an effort to consistently show children the desirable behavior. If the undesirable behavior continues, we provide 3 positive prompts and then encourage reflection time in a calm soothing area where children can identify the emotion that they are feeling, practice taking deep breaths, and take the necessary time to calm down by sitting quietly, meditating, playing with play dough, blocks or blowing bubbles. Children receive rewards when they are successfully able to practice positive mindfulness techniques during challenging emotional times which ultimately reinforces behavioral management.

When the child is calm we talk about the behavior and the emotions that caused it. We also discuss healthy techniques that we can use moving forward to manage our emotions. Communication and positive interactions are empowering and aid in building social and emotional lifelong skills while managing positive behavior.

## Meals

Morning and afternoon snacks are served daily by Master Mind and families are responsible for providing a lunch for their child. Please remember to label all food products, drinks, and containers with your child's first and last name. Morning snacks are served at 8am, lunch is served at 11am, and an afternoon snack is served at 3:00pm each day. We encourage healthy eating habits and ask our families to refrain from packing sugary soft drinks and snacks in your child's lunch. We are required to send all sugary soft drinks and snacks home with your child and replace them with healthier options. Sugary snacks are only allowed during special events. To ensure space for each child lunches should be brought in brown paper bags or clear zip lock bags. Lunches will not be heated up and should be ready made in order to be easily served to our children. Please visit the link below for some no heat lunch examples that are kid friendly and healthy.

<https://www.yummytoddlerfood.com/toddler-lunch-ideas-for-daycare/>

Bottles and breast milk will be heated. Children are encouraged to use lunch time to practice table etiquette and manners while sharing their experiences with one another. Any food allergies must be listed on your child's medical report. Any special diet must be furnished by the parents.

### Activities

Age-appropriate activities are scheduled with flexibility allowing teachers to respond to the individual needs of each child. Activities such as outdoor play, stories, instruction, and naps are offered according to each child's age, interest, and ability. Your child is given tender loving care, understanding, patience and guidance in a happy family setting. Chores, such as cleaning up and putting toys away will be part of each day. Free play is offered daily and is an important part of a child's early years. During free play children learn social skills that will last a lifetime.

### Daily Activity Schedule

Activity	Child/Teacher Directed	Start	End	Details
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Breakfast/Free Play	Child Directed	7:30 AM	8:15 AM	
Clean Up	Teacher Directed	8:15 AM	8:30 AM	
Yoga/Movement (Outdoor Weather Permitting)	Teacher Directed	8:30 AM	9:00 AM	Gross Motor Skills
Circle Time	Teacher Directed	9:00 AM	9:30 AM	Songs, music, movement, Gratitude, meditation, Calendar & Weather
Bathroom Break	Teacher Directed	9:30 AM	9:45 AM	
Story Time	Teacher Directed	9:45 AM	10:00 AM	Reading Comprehension, Literacy Development
Letter of the Day	Teacher Directed	10:00 AM	10:30 AM	Letter Sounds, Reading Development
Journaling (small groups)/Free Play	Child Directed	10:30 AM	10:50 AM	Writing daily Affirmations, Drawing a picture that correlates with Affirmations and emotions and Repeating them in a child safe Mirror
Lunch Prep/Hand Washing	Teacher Directed	10:50 AM	11:00 AM	
Lunch	Teacher Directed	11:00 AM	11:30 AM	
Bathroom Break	Teacher Directed	11:30 AM	11:45 AM	
Outdoor/Indoor Play	Child Directed	11:45 AM	12:15 PM	
Math Readiness	Teacher Directed	12:15 PM	12:45 PM	Shapes, Shape Recognition, Number Recognition, Number Concepts, Number Sequence, Patterns, Sorting,
Bathroom Break	Teacher Directed	12:45 PM	1:00 PM	
Nap	Teacher Directed	1:00 AM	3:00 PM	
Bathroom Break	Teacher Directed	3:00 PM	3:15 PM	
Snack/ Free Play	Child Directed	3:00 PM	3:30 PM	
STEAM	Teacher Directed	3:30 PM	4:30 PM	Science and Math Development
Closing Circle Time	Teacher Directed	4:30 PM	4:45 PM	
Story Time	Teacher Directed	4:45 PM	5:00 PM	Reading Comprehension, Literacy Development
Bathroom Break	Teacher Directed	5:00 PM	5:10 PM	
Outdoor/Indoor Play	Child Directed	5:10 PM	5:30 PM	

\*This schedule is subject to change based on the needs of children in care as well as if a child in care has an IEP or IFSP \*

## Water Play

We encourage water play when the weather is warm and have a blast doing so. We will notify our families ahead of time so that your little one can arrive ready in their water shoes, and bathing suits and or swimming trunks. An additional set of clothes, and a towel will be needed on water days.

### Health and Safety:

In an effort to keep all children safe and healthy any sick child must stay home. A child with a temperature of 100 Fahrenheit or above must stay home. Children should be allowed to recover fully from an illness in the comfort of their own home. Parents are responsible for making alternate childcare arrangements when a child is sick. Minimizing exposure and providing good hygienic practices keep all children healthy and safe. Accordingly, for the benefit of all involved, the following policies will be strictly enforced:

Children who have exhibited ANY symptoms of infectious illness within the proceeding 24-hour period are likely to be contagious and should remain at home. If a child is sick throughout the night, the child CANNOT attend daycare the following day. Master Mind reserves the right to determine whether a child should remain in the home when illness is a consideration. Parents of children who become ill during the day will be promptly notified and are expected to arrange to pick up their child as soon as possible. The sick child will, if possible, be isolated from the other children to minimize exposure. If the parent cannot be reached, the person designated as the emergency contact will be notified.

### Medications:

No child will be given any medication, prescription or over the counter, unless written permission is given by the parent via the medication administration form. Prescription medication shall have the child's name, name of medication, Doctor's name, name of pharmacy, prescription number, date, and directions for administering. The medication must be in the original container as dispensed by the pharmacy. Administration of any medication will be logged on a Medication Administration Record.

### Medical Emergencies:

Constant supervision is given however if a minor injury occurs first aid will be provided. If the injury is more serious, the parent will be notified so that the child can be transported to the hospital or doctor's office. All costs associated with injuries to the child will be the responsibility of the parent. In case of a medical emergency, I will attempt to contact you immediately. If I am unable to reach you, I will start calling the people designated as your emergency contacts. If I am unable to reach you or your emergency contacts, your child will be transported to his/her doctor or to the hospital, if necessary. If immediate intervention is required, I will take appropriate action including calling 911 and having your child transported to the Hospital. You or your family insurance is/are responsible for the cost of medical help or treatment due to accidents or illness while in childcare.

## Screen Time

Children under the age of 2 will not view any passive screen time. Children 2 years of age and older will receive no more than 30 minutes of age-appropriate educational passive screen time during a 1-week period. An occasional exception to the weekly passive technology may be made for a special event or project, including a holiday, or birthday celebration, or for educational content that is related to the family childcare home's curriculum.

## Parent Engagement

We encourage our parents to become an active part of our classroom in order to create the best learning experience for our little ones. During the warm months we plan fieldtrips and welcome all of our families to accompany us to places like the Baltimore National Aquarium, the Maryland Science Center, and the Baltimore Zoo.

We celebrate our parents all year round however we plan a special Muffins with Moms and Doughnuts with Dad as we get closer to Mother's Day and Father's Day. We open 30 minutes earlier in order to allow our families to enjoy that special one on one time with their child before the workday begins.

Composting is a green initiative that helps our fruits and vegetables thrive. At Master Mind we have an area set aside in the backyard next to our garden for composting. Children learn about items containing carbon that contribute to the compost such as hay, fall leaves, sawdust, cardboard, brown paper bags, and paper. Children also learn that nitrogen plays an integral role in composting and includes items such as grass clippings, fruit scraps, vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, plant trimmings, and tea bags. During certain times of the year, we invite our families to put aside items at home that may contain carbon or nitrogen in order to contribute to our classroom composting initiative.

We would love for you to share your favorite kid inspired “no cook” recipes with us. Examples include rice crispy treats, fruit and cheese kabobs, or Chex Party Mix. Parents can lead our class in cooking up their favorite recipes in person or via zoom.

Everyone loves a good story time! Parents are welcomed to share their favorite story with our class in person or via zoom. You can even get creative with it and provide props that will entertain our little ones and keep them engaged as they listen to your favorite kid’s story book.

## Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled in advance and held twice per year. Children are screened per CDC Developmental Milestones and during conferences we will discuss your child’s progress along with any skills that we can work together to enhance. Families will be notified in advance of the conference date and times. We will communicate with families on our Procure application in order to sign up for conferences. If you wish to speak with us outside of this time, we can always schedule a convenient time to talk and discuss your family’s needs.

## What is needed for your 1<sup>st</sup> Day

Your child’s first day of care will be a very exciting time. Please remember to bring diapers, pull-ups, and wipes if your child is not potty trained. As a safety precaution your child’s shoes should not have shoestrings that are required to be tied. Each child will need 3 outfits that are weather appropriate at the daycare at all times. An outfit includes a shirt, pants, underwear and or diapers, and socks. All clothing should be labeled with the child’s first and last name. We advise that you bring these outfits in a clear Ziplock bag that is also labeled with your child’s first and last name.

The forms required for your child’s first day at Master Mind include the following:

- Emergency Contact Form

- Health Inventory
- Immunization Records
- Lead Blood Test
- Master Mind Signed Contract
- Master Mind Signed Family Handbook

## Procare

Our Procare application is used to record all classroom activities including snacks, meals, reading, learning, play, signing your child in and out, and communicating with families throughout the day. Please download Procare to your phone or tablet and create an account so that you can sign your child in and out and view pictures of your little one throughout the day. Our Procare application will enable you to feel as though you are here with your child experiencing the joy of learning with them.

**Please note: Book bags and lunch boxes are prohibited at this time**

## Admission of Care Agreement

By signing below I/We agree that I/We have received a copy, carefully read, and agree to all terms and conditions set forth in the Master Mind parent handbook.

I/We hereby express agreement with all information stated in the parent handbook and accept them as conditions for enrolling our child(ren) in Master Mind. A 2-week notice is required before terminating our child's enrollment at Master Mind. Should I/We fail to provide a 2-week notice, I/We will be responsible to pay 2 weeks of tuition.

In the event of an accident or injury it is understood that Master Mind and Master Mind staff will not be held responsible. I/We have received a copy of "A Parent's Guide to Regulated Childcare".

This signed admission agreement must be accompanied by a non-refundable enrollment fee and 1 week of tuition. All tuition is to be paid in advance before service is rendered. No refunds will be made due to absences, illnesses, holidays, field trips, vacations, unforeseen emergencies, or inclement weather closings. Should legal action be required due to non-payment of tuition, the responsible parents/guardians will be responsible for all legal fees incurred by Master Mind.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent /Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_